Noncircular Answer to the Question, "Why Be Moral?" On Dale Snauwaert's *Teaching Peace as a Matter of Justice*

Greg Seals
College of Staten Island/CUNY

Abstract: Snauwaert uses equality, recognition, reciprocity, and impartiality to assess society's morality. Educational theory supports a thought experiment on relations between societal well-being and factors constitutive of society by discerning three distinct theories of social efficiency: Darwinian, humanitarian, and utilitarian. Humanitarians address all four elements of social well-being, promising to function without fundamental flaw. The problem is how to start it and keep it running. Darwinians pay little heed to equality, reproducing inequalities disruptive of natural societal selection. Utilitarians pay lip-service to recognition, recognizing persons for their worth to society and not for their worth *per se*, causing widespread anomie. Humanitarian social efficiency may be sustained in society, Snauwaert argues, if individuals are taught to enact peace not as an absence of violence but as the presence of justice.

Dale T. Snauwaert describes his book as "a philosophical framework for, and a pedagogical approach to, the development of moral reasoning and judgment pertaining to basic questions of justice, including the knowledge of those questions and their normative basis." [1] In carrying out his project in these terms, Snauwaert lays ground for adequate answer to the question, "Why be moral?" Examination of an initial axiom and a "basic premise" animating Snauwaert's argument show how Snauwaert avoids charges that the question, "Why be moral?" is a pseudo-question, unanswerable without circularity. Snauwaert's axiom reads, "Peace is a necessary social condition for the pursuit of a good life." His basic premise holds, "…that the educational cultivation of citizens' moral reasoning and judgment capacities is of singular importance." (6) The false impression that "Why be moral?" is a pseudo-question arises when answers to the question confound two different aspects of the issue: a skeptical challenge that asks what reason an agent has to be moral at all and a priority challenge that asks why an agent's reasons to be moral tend to outweigh that agent's nonmoral reasons to act.[2] Prudential reasons typically given to answer the skeptical challenge make it difficult to give independent reasons to address the priority challenge. The result is a question-begging answer to "Why be moral?" that says something like, "Because it's the right thing to do." Keeping his axiom and his basic premise as logically distinct elements of his argument allows Snauwaert to meet the skeptical challenge and the priority challenge separately on grounds appropriate to each. Snauwaert's axiom answers only the skeptical challenge by demonstrating that, on the whole, being moral makes for an optimally well-functioning society. Snauwaert's basic premise answers only the priority challenge by arguing that education is key to forming habits among a citizenry that commit individual members to acting morally in their day-to-day interactions with one another, mostly as a matter of course. Morality, it seems, may not necessarily come all that naturally to humans. However, to function well, a society offering freedom for all requires love for one another. Therefore, morality must be cultivated among us.

[1] Dale T. Snauwaert, *Teaching Peace as a Matter of Justice: Towards a Pedagogy of Moral Reasoning* (Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2023), 1. Subsequent references to Snauwaert will be made with parenthetical page numbers in the body of the paper.
[2] Douglas R. Paletta, "Frances Hutcheson: Why Be Moral?" *Journal of Scottish Philosophy* 9, no. 2 (Autumn, 2011): 149-159.

Examples of circularity in answering the question "Why be moral?" may be found in philosophical traditions of both the East and the West. For example, W. H. Davis draws upon the Western theoretical tradition of innate moral sentiment when he asserts, "We are intuitively and irreducibly aware of the *moral* imperative within our field of experience, and it is experienced as the ultimate and imperative judge of all we say, do, think, and even desire."[3] Similarly, neo-Confucianism constructs an answer to the question of "Why be moral?" upon the presumed fact that to be genuinely human is to find joy in performing moral actions. Moral action is the distinguishing mark of humanity in the sense that the more fully moral an agent becomes, the more that agent becomes fully human.[4] Neither example succeeds. Both commit the naturalizing error, a generalized version of the naturalistic fallacy. The naturalistic fallacy is the meta-ethical error of assuming "human nature as such was a fit source from which to draw moral norms."[5] The more general naturalizing error is the methodological mistake of "appeal to nature as a self-justified description dictating or limiting our choices in moral, economic, political, and other social contexts."[6] Without an independent account of the goodness of what is put forth as "natural," the "natural" has no claim to goodness beyond the potentially limited and limiting unilateral say-so of the enunciating moral theorist. Naturalistic answers to "Why be moral?" run in a circle by assuming what they need to prove. Worse, projecting one's own view of the "natural" onto others not only privileges the author of the canons of naturalness but also risks detaching understanding of moral thinking and description of moral action from the lived circumstances and shared experiences of actual moral agents.[7] In addition to an independent account of the good, then, an adequate answer to the question "Why be moral?" requires an account of how we intend to get folks to do moral things. Snauwaert supplies both, but independently of one another, thus avoiding circularity in explaining why morality is the way to go. Separate treatment of the skeptical challenge and the priority challenge breaks the circle that commonly foils attempts to answer adequately, "Why be moral?"

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[3] W. H. Davis, "Why Be Moral?" *Philosophical Inquiry: International Quarterly* 13, nos. 3-4 (Summer-Fall, 1991): 1-21. The quote may be found on 1. See Gregory W. Trianosky, "On the Obligation to be Virtuous: Shaftesbury and the Question, Why Be Moral?" *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 16 (July, 1978): 289-300 for an explanation as to how "Why be moral?" haunts theories of ethics based on supposition of an inherent human moral sentiment.

[4] Yong Huang, "'Why Be Moral?'" The Cheng Brothers' Neo-Confucian Answer," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 36, no. 2 (June, 2008): 321-353. Connecting humanity to morality is also a feature of Aristotelian philosophy. See Jennifer Whiting, "Aristotle's Function Argument: A Defense," *Ancient Philosophy*, 8 (1988), 32-43 and Rina Marie Camus, "Comparison by Metaphor: Archery in Confucius and Aristotle," *Dao: A Journal of Comparative Philosophy* 16 (March, 2017): 165-185.

[5] For this nice turn of phrase see 370 of Francis Michael Walsh, "The Return of the Naturalistic Fallacy: A Dialogue on Human Flourishing," *Heythrop Journal: A Bimonthly Review of Philosophy and Theology* 49, no. 3 (May, 2008): 370-387. For the original statement of the naturalistic fallacy see G.E. Moore, *Principia Ethica*, revised edition, ed. Thomas Baldwin (Cambridge University Press, 1922/1993), Chapter I, "The Subject Matter of Ethics," Section B., 10. Standard commentary on the idea may be found at David P. Gauthier, "Moore's Naturalistic Fallacy," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 4 (October, 1967): 315-320. Darryl F. Wright, "Diagnosing the Naturalistic Fallacy: *Principia Ethica* Revisited," *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 32, no. 4 (Winter, 1994): 465-482 digs deeper to find logical roots of the naturalistic fallacy in Moore's discussion of 'the doctrine that all propositions assert a relation between existents' (*Principia Ethica*, Chapter IV, "Metaphysical Ethics," Section A., 67 and Section B., 69). Finally, see Julian Dodd and Suzanne Stern-Gillet, "The Is/Ought Gap, the Fact/Value Distinction and the Naturalistic Fallacy," *Dialogue: Canadian Philosophical Review* 34, no. 4 (Fall. 1995): 727-745 for a careful delineation of three related but distinctive errors in argumentation.

[6] Douglas Allchin and Alexander J. Werth, "The Naturalizing Error," *Zeitschrift fur allgemeine Wissenschaftstheorie* 48, no. 1 (March, 2017): 3-18.

[7] Michael D. Bayles, "The Complexity of 'Why Be Moral'?" *Personalist* 54 (Fall, 1973): 309-317.

In undertaking the work of defining the constitution of a just society (8), Snauwaert exploits a happy ambiguity in the idea of "constitution."[8] Constitution may refer to some written procedural document(s) guiding action in some social-political context(s). In this sense, actions may be described as constitutional in the sense of "being in accord with the constitution" of some society. Call this the practical sense of constitution. But constitution may also signify "that which is constitutive of," as in "the basic structure of society" (39) or "defining a just society in principle" (72). Call this the philosophical sense of constitution. Snauwaert's fundamental philosophical argument in answer to the skeptical challenge to "Why be moral?" is that societies are best positioned for continued flourishing when their practical constitutions comport well with the philosophical constitution of society.[9]

Because it is important to prevent charges of circularity when dealing with the question, "Why be moral?" I am stating this proposed connection between practical and philosophical constitutions of societies causally in the following hypotheses: Societal well-being improves to the extent and the degree to which equality, recognition, reciprocity, and impartiality are commonly practiced in a society. Contrapositively, the hypothesis runs, societal well-being declines as equality, recognition, reciprocity, and impartiality are found absent from or thwarted by common social practice. Societal well-being may be measured in two ways: individually, in terms of the likelihood of continued survival of a society, and ecologically, in terms of the capacity of a society to reproduce organizations that also exhibit societal well-being.[10] Restating Snauwaert's argument as two hypotheses helps avoid moral language, including a common distinction between moral truth and normative rightness. Normative rightness is concerned with what we might call meta-moral rules, rules that guide the creation of social rules: "If you want a good game of society then proceed thusly in setting it up and carrying it out."[11] In contrast to this meta-moral approach, I am giving the idea of the constitution of an optimally sociable society a more empirical spin to make constitution something analogous to what we mean when we speak of a person having a hearty constitution. That is, the philosophical constitution of society identifies a set of causal, rather than normative, factors by which to measure the health, strength, and appearance of any body politic. As already listed in the hypotheses offered above, Snauwaert discusses four elements of societal well-being: "equality, recognition, reciprocity, and impartiality" (52). He details each as follows:

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[8] In making good use of the ambiguity, Snauwaert follows Akhil Reed Amar, *America's Unwritten Constitution: The Precedents and Principles We Live By* (New York: Basic Books, 2012).

[9] Snauwaert's strategy parallels that of Robert Kuttner's *Everything for Sale: The Virtues and Limits of Markets* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996). Kuttner uses ideal conditions of markets (perfect information, perfect competition, mobility of factors, exogenously set preferences, and absence of externalities. (See 16-17 of *Everything for Sale*) to recommend regulation of non-ideal market circumstances to keep markets undertaken in nonideal circumstances from malfunctioning. In the same way, Snauwaert establishes ideal conditions of sociality and recommends a regulative reconstruction of society in schools and beyond to promote the realization of ideal conditions.

[10] See William P. Barnett, "The Dynamics of Competitive Intensity," *Administrative Science Quarterly* 42, (March, 1997): 128-160.

[11] Snauwaert borrows the idea of meta-moral rules from three sources: John Rawls, "The Independence of Moral Theory," in *John Rawls: Collected Papers*, ed., Samuel Freeman (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990): 286-302; Jürgen Habermas, *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*: *Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1990); and Ranier Forst, *The Right to Justification: Elements of a Constructivist Theory of Justice*, trans., Jeffrey Flynn. New Directions in Critical Theory (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012).

1) Equality: "the presupposition that every human being should be considered as possessing an equal, inherent value." (52)[12]
2) Recognition: "respect for one's inner dignity" (54).
3) "*Reciprocity… what one claims for oneself, one cannot justifiably deny to others*" (57, emphasis in original).
4) Impartiality: "free of the bias of exclusive self-interest" (58).

Making equality, recognition, reciprocity, and impartiality crucial elements in thought and in deed is fundamentally what Snauwaert means by being moral. A society is moral when its members are in the habit of treating each other as respected equals interested in working things out together to mutual benefit.

The history of educational theory provides material to run a brief thought experiment on the question of the causal relation between societal well-being and factors constitutive of society.[13] Recent revisionist historical work on the idea of social efficiency in education finds a pluralistic rather than a monolithic concept.[14] Null describes the situation as one in which "the idea of 'social efficiency' meant different things to different people depending upon the different ends they sought to achieve by using it."[15] Three discernible versions of social efficiency have been described — Darwinian, humanitarian, and utilitarian — that range between extremes of mutual struggle and mutual aid.[16] The humanitarian version of social efficiency addresses all four elements of social well-being and, as a result, promises to function without fundamental flaw. The problem is how to get it started and keep it running. Both the Darwinian and utilitarian versions of social efficiency slight an element of social well-being and suffer because of it. The Darwinian version pays too little heed to equality and, as a result, tends to reproduce inequalities that run contrary to purely natural processes of societal selection. The utilitarian version of social efficiency pays only lip service to the element of recognition by recognizing persons primarily for their worth to society but not, for the most part, for their worth as persons *per se*. The result is a widespread malaise of anomie among people living in conditions of utilitarian social efficiency.

Late-19th Century British sociologist Benjamin Kidd got the conceptual ball rolling by giving social efficiency a Darwinist spin.[17] Social life is to be understood as "a silent and strenuous rivalry in which every section of the race is of necessity continually engaged."[18] Knoll further quotes Kidd, saying, "Other things being equal the most vigorous social systems are those in which are combined the most effective subordination of the individual to the interests of the social organism with the highest development of his own personality."[19] For Kidd, education

[12] The quote from Snauwaert borrows from Will Kymlicka, *Contemporary Political Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).
[13] In treating the factors as independent variables I depart from Snauwaert to some degree. The departure is for analytic purposes only. Snauwaert (52-60) discusses the interconnectedness of the four factors.
[14] J. Wesley Null, "Social Efficiency Splintered: Multiple Meanings Instead of the Hegemony of One," *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision*, 19, no. 2 (Winter, 2004): 99-124 and Michael Knoll, "From Kidd to Dewey: The Origin and Meaning of 'Social Efficiency'," *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 41, no. 3 (June, 2009): 361-391.
[15] Null, "Social Efficiency Splintered," 99.
[16] Beth Eddy, "Struggle or Mutual Aid: Jane Addams, Petr Kropotkin, and the Progressive Encounter with Social Darwinism," *The Pluralist* 5, no. 1 (Spring, 2020): 21-43.
[17] Benjamin Kidd, *Social Evolution*, new edition (New York: Macmillan, 1894).
[18] Knoll, "From Kidd to Dewey," 364, paraphrasing Kidd, *Social Evolution*, viii-ix.
[19] Knoll, "From Kidd to Dewey," 364, quoting Kidd, *Social Evolution*, 65.

contributes most profoundly to social efficiency when it focuses not so much on academic learning but on inculcating self-discipline and strength of character.[20] Perhaps surprisingly, Kidd's plan for schools leaned heavily towards

> Equality of opportunity… [as] a crucial element in his concept of democracy, liberty, and social efficiency. It included, among other features, provisions for free public education, an extended electoral franchise, equal access to the market, and sharply increased taxation for the rich. Society profited best, Kidd contended, when all children had a chance to develop their potential to the utmost and — starting from the same point — compete successfully with their fellow citizens. By equalizing the basic conditions of life and helping people to 'stand on their own feet', democracy — combined with huge space for contest, competition, and differentiation — provided, in Kidd's opinion, the most efficient system for recruiting skilled specialists, competent experts, and able elites, i.e. those individuals who should run the companies, direct the colleges, and rule the country.[21]

However, while Kidd recommended compensatory, competition-enhancing measures within his own society, he did not extend those considerations to societies in competition with his own society. Instead, he unsurprisingly argued, "'strength and energy of character, humanity, probity and integrity, and simple-minded devotion to conceptions of duty', distinguished the members of the Anglo-Saxon race. And it was the high ethical standard of social efficiency that justified the UK's benevolent rule over India and Egypt and the US's imperialistic aspirations in the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean."[22] By taking this tack, Kidd expresses the problem facing any attempted Darwinian approach to social evolution. What is in the interest of the overall competition is not necessarily in the interest of any individual competitor. Yet, even among the most dedicated of social Darwinists (for instance, Kidd), devotion to the survival of the overall competition often gives way to devotion to the survival of some competitor(s) over some other(s). As competition routinizes around perpetual winners and perpetual losers, inequality links to chauvinism and chauvinism to imperialism. When that happens, weak competitors are likely to survive.[23] Such intervention has no place among processes of "natural" social selection. However, the "naturalness" with which interference of this kind creeps into enacted social Darwinism virtually guarantees a spoiled competition every time. Considerations like these have prompted biologist Douglas Allchin to point out that not only was Darwin himself *not* a social Darwinist, social Darwinism has *nothing at all* to do with Darwin. Allchin demands fellow scientists openly challenge the phrase "social Darwinism" every time it is voiced in their presence.[24]

Certainly, perpetually (re)institutionalized inequality is how social Darwinism has played out for schools. As Laurie Rudman and Lina Saud explain, social Darwinism is marvelously well-designed for reinforcing structural inequalities of gender, race, class, etc. Social Darwinism

[20] Knoll, "From Kidd to Dewey," 365.
[21] Knoll, "From Kidd to Dewey," 365.
[22] Knoll, "From Kidd to Dewey," 364. The quote within the quote is from Kidd, *Social Evolution*, 325.
[23] Barnett, "The Dynamics of Competitive Intensity," 144.
[24] Douglas Allchin, "Was Darwin a Social Darwinist? What Is a Proper Evolutionary View of Human Culture and Morality?" and "Social Un-Darwinism: How Does Society Relate to Nature in an Evolutionary Perspective?" *American Biology Teacher* (National Association of Biology Teachers) 69, no. 2 (January, 2007 and February, 2007): 49-51 and 113-115, respectively.

operates as a "system justification belief" by providing, first, a rationale for competition in the claim that competition is good for humankind because competition makes competitors stronger and, second, a mechanical explanation for the results of competition in the idea of natural selection.[25] Neither the rationale nor the justification is necessarily true, and both have recently been refuted by attempts such as No Child Left Behind and Race to the Top. These programs, designed to bring schools into competition with one another to decide who continues to receive federal funding and/or who will receive enhanced federal funding, have predictably failed many competing schools. The fatal flaw is to be found in the spirit of bad faith in which faulty "meritocracies" were built into the programs. Poorer schools tended to be penalized from the start of the competition for serving populations less ready for formal schooling than were students in schools in already better-off and better-educated parts of town.[26] Without competitiveness-enhancing compensations like Kidd described in initially proposing social Darwinism, the game was over before the game was afoot.

Kidd, of course, was not without critics. Most trenchant among them, John A. Hobson, an economist and journalist at the University of London, decried Kidd for assessing societal well-being in purely quantitative terms. Quality of life had to be brought into serious consideration, as well. As Knoll remarks, "For Hobson (in opposition to Kidd), social efficiency depended upon the limitation of competition, contest, and conflict and upon the realization of participation, co-operation, and unconditional solidarity." From Hobson's criticism grew a humanitarian interpretation of "social efficiency" to challenge social Darwinist interpretation of that idea. For humanitarians: "Social efficiency had nothing to do with struggle, survival, and the 'quantity of goods' but with peace, justice, and the 'quality of life.'"[27] William Bagley, one of the principal founders of the Essentialism movement in education, did much to systematize and promote the humanitarian point of view. Seemingly on a mission from 1909-1934, "He [Bagley] argued relentlessly against excessive individualism…. [Bagley] referred to the concept social efficiency-social service using different terms, such as simply social service or fidelity to humanity." Other phrases used by Bagley as synonyms for "social efficiency" included "moral character" and "social harmony."[28] Main themes expressed in Bagley's humanitarian synonyms for social efficiency find efficient summary in McLinn's concise description of social efficiency as "the all-important matter of developing the boy and girl into capable and efficient members of society, strong in initiative, willing in co-operation, ready in resource."[29] Despite holding some

[25] Laurie A. Rudman and Lina H. Saud, "Justifying Social Inequalities: The Role of Social Darwinism," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 46, no. 7 (July, 2020): 1139-1155. See Kurt W. Back, "Biological Models of Social Change," *American Sociological Review* 36, no. 4 (August, 1971): 660-667 for the claim that the mechanical nature of the explanations sought by social Darwinists for social phenomena are a main attraction of the thinking.
[26] Rodolfo Levya, "No Child Left Behind: A Neoliberal Repackaging of Social Darwinism," *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies* 7, no. 1 (June, 2009): 364-381 and Christopher Tienken, "Neoliberalism, Social Darwinism, and Consumerism Masquerading as School Reform," *Interchange* 43, no. 4 (May, 2013): 295-316.
[27] See Knoll, "From Kidd to Dewey," 367 for both quotes in the paragraph.
[28] Null, "Social Efficiency Splintered," 103-104 and "William C. Bagley and the Founding of Essentialism: An Untold Story in American Educational History," *Teachers College Record* 109, no. 4 (April, 2007): 1013-1055. Also, see William C. Bagley, *The Educative Process* (New York: Macmillan, 1905): 58-59. The beginning and end of Bagley's crusade for social-efficiency as moral service to society are marked, respectively, by "Pedagogy of Morality and Religion as Related to Periods of Development," *Religious Education* 3 (April, 1909): 91-106 and *Education and Emergent Man: A Theory of Education with Particular Application to Public Education in the United States* (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1934).
[29] Knoll, "From Kidd to Dewey," 103-104 quotes C. B. McLinn, "The Social Side of High School Life," *Journal of Education* (1911), 345.

sway for some time, Bagley's idea of social efficiency as social service met an unhappy fate when it bifurcated into opposing lines of thought, one emphasizing associational aspects of social efficiency, the other emphasizing service aspects of social efficiency.

Bagley's idea of social service as broadly philanthropic in spirit was severely twisted out of shape by thinkers inclined towards a utilitarian understanding of social efficiency. Utilitarian appropriation of Bagley began with a redefinition of social service as vocational service: In Bobbitt's words, "Occupational labors clearly represent the basic service to humanity, the most fundamental social service."[30] New definition in hand, curriculum became mostly a matter of training students to do a job, keep the job, and advance in the job.[31] The nature of jobs to be planned for children in schools was roughly to parallel the design of jobs in the work world.[32] As industry became the inspiration for curriculum, Holt notes: "Industrial personnel expert Charles R. Mann stressed that 'the personnel game is the educational game ultimately,' and suggested a system whereby 'industry will be setting down specifications all the time, and schools will be using them all the time as instruments for the discovery and development of capacities in children."[33] On this model, schools were imagined as rightly transformed into sorting machines for productive employment of students.[34]

The planned transformation, however, was not without belligerence and remonstrance from the utilitarians. In what was designed to be an exchange of ideas, Bagley and David Snedden, a proponent of utilitarian social efficiency who was at the time Commissioner of Education for the State of Massachusetts, presented papers on their respective points of view at the 1914 meetings of the Department of Superintendence of the National Education Association held in St. Paul, Minnesota. The title of their session was "Fundamental Distinctions between Liberal and Vocational Education."[35] For his part, Bagley reiterated arguments about quantitative measures missing qualitative aspects of the good life and expressed new concerns that the task of sorting students into occupational categories would require for accurate placement an administrative maze of tests, trials, and interpretation of data collected in those assessments. For his part, Snedden avoided substantive issues and "painted Bagley as hopelessly old-fashioned, unscientific, and 'unprogressive.'"[36] Elsewhere, Snedden referred to his opponents in Bagley's

[30] Null, "Social Efficiency Splintered," 113 quoting Franklin Bobbitt, *The Curriculum* (Cambridge, MA: Riverside Press, 1918), 55-56.
[31] Charles A. Prosser, [Executive Secretary of the NSPIE (National Society for the Promotion of Industrial Education)], and Thomas H. Quigley, *Vocational Education in a Democracy*, revised edition (Chicago: American Technical Society, 1912/1950), 454-455 quoted in Null, "Social Efficiency Splintered," 173.
[32] Arthur G. Wirth, "Issues Affecting Education and Work in the Eighties: Efficiency versus Industrial Democracy, a Historical Perspective," *Teachers College Record* 79, no. 1 (September, 1977): 55-67, especially, 59.
[33] Mara Holt, p. 76 "Dewey and the "Cult of Efficiency": Competing Ideologies in Collaborative Pedagogies of the 1920s," *Journal of Advanced Composition* 14, no. 1 (Winter, 1994), 73-92 quoting from the final page of Charles R. Mann, "Scientific Personnel Work," *Business Management as a Profession*. ed. Henry C. Metcalf (Chicago: Shaw, 1927): 126-141.
[34] Classic discussions include Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, *Schooling in Capitalist America* (New York: Basic Books, 1976) and Raymond E. Callahan, *Education and the Cult of Efficiency* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).
[35] David S. Snedden, "Fundamental Distinctions between Liberal and Vocational Education," and William C. Bagley, "Fundamental Distinctions between Liberal and Vocational Education," *Proceedings of the National Education Association* (Winona, MN: National Education Association, 1914): 150-161 and 161-170, respectively.
[36] Null, "Social Efficiency Splintered," 108 quoting Snedden, "Fundamental Distinctions between Liberal and Vocational Education," 158.

camp as "simple-lifers" and "romantic impracticalists" yearning for days gone by. Universal education in an age of industrialization required "…school grades, uniform textbooks, promotional examination, … strictly scheduled programs, mechanical discipline and hundreds of other mechanisms…."[37] Granted, life may become routinized at school and work under a system of utilitarian social efficiency, but specialization in production would promote longer, more comfortable, leisure-filled lives for all. For Snedden and the social efficiency utilitarians, the "American dream" was all about everyone sharing in an ever-increasing cycle of material prosperity.[38] Snedden similarly alienated John Dewey by saying in a letter published in the *New Republic* that he felt discouraged "to find Dr. Dewey apparently giving aid and comfort to opponents of a [namely, Snedden's] broader, richer, and more effective program of education." Dewey lashed back in his own letter in the same issue of *The New Republic,* explaining that the sort of vocational education he could support "is not one which will 'adapt' workers to the existing industrial regime… [but one] which will first alter the existing industrial system, and ultimately transform it." Snedden expressed only hurt and bewilderment at Dewey's reply.[39]

The seeming incapacity of proponents of utilitarian social efficiency to recognize the arguments of opponents as valid positions needing to be assessed and debated in an ongoing discussion points out a flaw in the theory itself. The theory of utilitarian social efficiency fails to recognize people as persons in their own right. Instead, the view recognizes people only as they are perceived to fit into the economic system. The system is not to be adapted to the students, but the students to the system. In this way, utilitarian approaches to social efficiency depersonalize schooling or, rather, make personalization of schooling a process of finding students' best fit within a preselected menu of options. Student preferences take a backseat to productivity needs. To fit students into the preset system of occupational categories, vocational education must teach students habits of thinking and habits of doing that make them the sort of persons they are destined to be in the workplace. Among these habits for most students, however, are obedience to and acceptance of orders from the boss. In a prototypical program set up at the Dunwoody Institute in Minnesota to retrain adult workers for industrial jobs, "Students punched in on time clocks, and instructors behaved like shop foremen rather than public school teachers. A no-nonsense attitude prevailed. If students were not punctual, orderly, and efficient, they were asked to leave."[40] The system of education envisioned by utilitarian social efficiency was permeated with a spirit of what Mara Holt calls "scientific paternalism, the expectation that those who are categorized by ability should be content with their categories because they are objectively determined, and therefore indisputable."[41] Paternalism of a more political nature also permeated the social utilitarian conception of the work of teachers. Writing to history teachers about the relation of their work to the examination and assessment of social values, Snedden advised that "the teacher should remember that he was a public servant and as such had the obligation to teach the 'opinions and valuation of the controlling majority.'"[42]

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[37] David Snedden, *Toward Better Educations* (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College Press, 1931), 330-331 quoted in Wirth, "Issues Affecting Education and Work in the Eighties," 58.
[38] Arthur G. Wirth, p. 177 "Philosophical Issues in the Vocational-Liberal Studies Controversy (1900-1917): John Dewey vs. the Social Efficiency Philosophers," *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 8 (September, 1974): 169-182.
[39] See David Snedden and John Dewey in *The New Republic* 3 (5 May 1915), 40 and 42, respectively. Quoted in Wirth, "Philosophical Issues in the Vocational-Liberal Studies Controversy (1900-1917)," 176.
[40] Wirth, "Philosophical Issues in the Vocational-Liberal Studies Controversy (1900-1917)," 174.
[41] Holt, "Dewey and the "Cult of Efficiency," 85-86.
[42] Wirth, "Issues Affecting Education and Work in the Eighties," 59. The quote within the quotes is from p. 280 of

Updated developments in the theory of utilitarian social efficiency only make matters worse. Use of big data and artificial intelligence (AI) to select workplace production roles for students, argue researchers at the National Education Policy Center, creates a situation in which "even a person with knowledge of a black box AI program's initial coding cannot explain how it produced its results. Not surprisingly, machine learning inevitably produces outcomes that may be incomprehensible, untrue, or incorrect in a variety of unknowable ways. If such systems are used, neither teachers nor administrators will be able to understand, explain, or justify the conclusions the programs reach, much less audit or document their validity."[43] "Learning technologies" purporting to "personalize" schooling actually take education out of the hands of persons (students and teachers) and promote among students the corporatization of learning processes, goals, and outcomes. The system of utilitarian social efficiency stresses "human capital development, the expansion of data-driven instruction and decision-making, and a narrow conception of learning as the acquisition of discrete skills and behavior modification detached from broader social contexts and culturally relevant forms of knowledge and inquiry."[44] As paternalism spreads throughout the system of schooling and more and more major life decisions are made *for* rather than *by* individuals, feelings of powerlessness spread throughout the system, too. Snauwaert notes: "*Powerlessness* designates being in a social position where persons have limited power to decide the conditions of their lives. Persons in a position of powerlessness must *prove* their worth rather than having it recognized as inherent in their humanity" (18, emphasis in original). Recognition of worth as a person becomes perverted into recognition as a commodity of value to the production of goods and services. Such recognition tends to come with a hierarchical assessment of worth to the system rather than assumption of worth as an individual *simpliciter*. As the number of winners shrinks and the number of losers grows, recognition gets harder and harder to come by. Feelings of powerlessness predominate among the populace. Hopelessness may become rampant, a social problem expressed in Dante's *Inferno* when Virgil says of himself and others condemned to the first circle of hell:

> "Lost are we and are only so far punished,
> That without hope we live on in desire."[45]

Under such circumstances, hopes for creation of sustainable social structures tend to succumb to avaricious pursuit of short-term gain, attempts at fairness meet with frustration.

Discounting of their ideas by opposing theorists did not stop social efficiency humanitarians from continuing to develop their own theory. Humanitarian social efficiency proposed cooperation and community and opposed both the competition endorsed by Kidd and the elitist specialization favored by Snedden et al. In a felicitous phrase intended to complement the organization under whose auspices he completed his work on the history of social efficiency, Knoll, perhaps inadvertently, summed up the idea at the heart of humanitarian social efficiency

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David S. Snedden, "Teaching History in Secondary Schools," *History Teachers Magazine* 5 (1914), 277-282. On this issue also see Snedden, "Liberty of Teaching in the Social Sciences," *School and Society* 12 (1921), 185-186.

[43] Ben Williamson, Alex Molnar, and Faith Boninger, *Time for a Pause: Without Effective Public Oversight, AI in Schools Will Do More Harm Than Good* (Boulder, CO: National Education Policy Center, 2024), 20. http://nepc.colorado.edu/publication/ai

[44] Heather Roberts-Mahoney, Alexander J. Means, and Mark J. Garrison, "Netflixing Human Capital Development: Personalized Learning Technology and the Corporatization of K-12 Education," *Journal of Education Policy* (January, 2016): 1-16. The quote comes from p. 1.

[45] Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*, Inferno, Canto 4, trans. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow https://www.logoslibrary.org/dante/comedy/inferno04.html

when he described his working conditions as "an atmosphere which stimulates friendship and thought."[46] In *Democracy and Education*, Dewey put the position in the following terms: "social efficiency as an educational purpose should mean cultivation of power to join freely and fully in shared or common activities." But Null attributes the best statement of the view — for its detail, comprehensiveness, and historicity — to Irving King's *Education for Social Efficiency*. There King forthrightly states humanitarian social efficiency's intent "…to make of them [students] not individual self-seekers, but *members of a real social community*, capable not merely of cooperating with others not merely for their own individual gain, but *also able to appreciate and strive for the welfare of the community*."[47] Humanitarian social efficiency seems to verge on a sort of prototypical Freiren conception of education "as a transformational mechanism to improve lives rather than a tool to train and inculcate children to imitate and be subservient to the dominant culture."[48] In a way, for the humanitarians among theorists of social efficiency, schools model an ideal conception of the welfare state. In an ideal welfare state, government action provides fluidity of opportunity without loss of security, enables habits of self-help, and builds supports for social soundness and preventions against social dysfunction.[49] The humanist program for social efficiency sees schools as places to develop sociality among students by upholding in word and in deed ideals of "communication and participation, interaction and co-operation, social intelligence and social service."[50]

To object that humanitarian social efficiency eliminates the possibility of competition from the model is to misunderstand competition. True, social humanism discredits social Darwinism's evolutionary war of all against all just as it rejects Snedden and Bobbitt's competition of many for the placement of a few in the upper echelons of hierarchical work structures. In place of these socially dysfunctional conceptions of competition, humanitarian theorists of social efficiency recommend competitions that are not merely healthy but are also healthful. Social efficiency humanitarians seek to take us beyond competitions that are going strong, whatever may be the (potentially ill-) effects of those competitions on competitors, to participation in active competitions that are strengthening competitors as they compete. Competition theorist Sheryle Drewe argues that competition is inherently positive when understood in terms of an original meaning of "to strive (alongside another) for the attainment of something." Drewe further suggests that this sort of competition expresses an ideal relation between teachers and students in their shared educational spaces as they develop skill in attainment of excellence.[51] Alice Kildea has developed a Model for the Conception of Competition useful for assessing the positive and

[46] For the quote see Knoll, "From Kidd to Dewey," 384. Knoll makes the point about humanitarianism's opposition to social Darwinism and social efficiency utilitarianism on 380.
[47] Irving King, *Education for Social Efficiency: A Study in the Social Relations of Education* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1913), 138-139. Emphasis in original. Quoted in Null, "Social Efficiency Splintered," 107. The quote from Dewey may be found at Null, "Social Efficiency Splintered," 115 and at John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* in *John Dewey: The Middle Works, 1899–1924,* Vol. 9 (1916), Jo Ann Boydston, ed. (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press), 1980.), 113.
[48] Tienken, "Neoliberalism, Social Darwinism, and Consumerism Masquerading as School Reform," 295.
[49] See Johano Strasser, "Organized Solidarity between Social Darwinism and the Over-protective State: Toward a Modern Concept of the Welfare State," *PRAXIS International* 6 (April, 1986): 32-42.
[50] Knoll, "From Kidd to Dewey," 381.
[51] Sheryle Bergmann Drewe, "Competing Conceptions of Competition: Implications for Physical Education," *European Physical Education Review*, 4, no. 1 (1998): 5-20. Although Drewe frames her argument specifically for Physical Education classes, the same applies to other academic areas. Where students and teachers are viewed as striving together for mastery of course material competition is both healthy and healthful. For the word history of 'competition' see the entry in the *Online Etymology Dictionary* at https://www.etymonline.com/word/competition

negative effects and outcomes of competitions. Much depends on the theory and working definitions that frame the competition: zero-sum, two-way, many-winner, win-win, etc.[52] The conceptual framework of the competition identifies what counts as fairness in the competition. In answer to the question, "Why be moral?" business ethicists have discussed the possibilities of reframing the idea of competition in business. John Corvino sees the question, "Why be moral?" as likely unanswerable for businesspeople until corporate reform takes place.[53] Such reform, argues LaRue Hosmer, requires as a beginning point of consideration that "Trust, commitment, and effort on the part of all of the stakeholders are essential for long-term corporate success."[54] At the macro-economic level, Eric Ricker sees as crucial to humanistic corporate reform a move away from economic growth as a guiding principle of capitalist competition to a conception of corporate success as economic development. Whatever the rate of economic growth, economic development aims at production of a culturally fulfilling and materially satisfying life among a population. Economic growth, however, can be at a high rate but run on the exploitation of natural resources and human beings, which is the antithesis of economic development.[55] "Healthful competition," then, is the brief, humanitarian social efficiency answer to the skeptical challenge to "Why be moral?"

To object that humanitarian social efficiency offers only ethical idealism when what we need is moral realism is simply to restate a fundamental problem of moral philosophy: the distinction between moral theory and moral motivation. Once you know what it means to be moral, you are left with the problem of how to get people to act in accord with the moral code. As David Hume infamously describes the difficulty, "It is not contrary to reason to prefer the destruction of the whole world to the scratching of my finger."[56] But not only does the motivation to be moral lie beyond reason, the world also seems resistant to moral behavior. Applying that point to business ethics, Edmund Byrne fears that, guided as business practice is by social Darwinist thinking and military-style strategizing, "Business ethics will remain futile, unfortunately, so long as its practitioners assume a peacetime state of affairs and businesses assume a state of war."[57] So, what can be done to answer the priority challenge to "Why be moral?" What will it take to get the morality of peace — equality, recognition, reciprocity, and impartiality — working in a world that sees itself in a state of war? Enter Snauwaert. We have to teach peace not as the absence of violence but as the presence of justice — expressed in the equality, recognition, reciprocity, and impartiality we feel at work in our lives and the lives of others (2). When people form emotional attachment to peacemaking by seeing it work to the benefit of all at school in their social interactions and academic inquiries, peace education will have helped produce world peace. Snauwaert is right that education needs to be hard at work designing curriculum and delivering lessons that are most likely to incline people to live

[52] Alice E. Kildea, "Competition: A Model for Conception," *Quest* 35, no. 2 (!983): 169-181.
[53] John Corvino, "Reframing 'Morality Pays': Toward a Better Answer to 'Why Be Moral? in Business," *Journal of Business Ethics* 67, no. 1 (August, 2006): 1-14.
[54] LaRue Tone Hosmer, "Why Be Moral? A Different Rationale for Managers," *Business Ethics Quarterly* 4, no. 2 (April, 1994): 191-204, 191 for the quote.
[55] Eric W. Ricker, "Economic Thought and Educational Policy Making: An Historical Perspective," *The Journal of Educational Thought (JET) / Revue de la Pensée Éducative* 14, no. 3 (December, 1980): 168-186. See 180 for the quote.
[56] David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1896/1978), 416 http://files.libertyfund.org/files/342/0213_Bk.pdf
[57] Edmund F. Byrne, "Give Peace a Chance: A Mantra for Business Strategy," *Journal of Business Ethics* 20, no. 1 (May, 1999, Part 2): 27-37, 27 for the quote.

amicably together. In coming up with a plan to teach peace, Snauwaert breaks the circle typically stymying answers to the question, “Why be moral?” His curriculum inculcates moral motivation independently of but collaterally along with growing conceptual awareness that society functions optimally when all are moral together. Education is a way to inculcate morality as a second human nature. While moral sense theorists are wrong that humans are innately oriented to sensing that the moral thing to do is what *must* be done, Snauwaert rescues the theory by arguing that a moral sense can be instilled in humans through peace education. On Snauwaert’s view, school is a place where everyone needs to have the chance to learn and share the human joy of doing moral things.