



Forces canadiennes

Collège militaire royal de Saint-Jean  
Richelain (Qué)  
JOJ 1R0

Canadian Forces

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28 September 1992

Colonel M.M. Wakin  
HQ USAFA/DFPFA  
USAF Academy CO 80840-5701

Dear Colonel Wakin,

I am taking the liberty of enclosing the first draft of a paper I would be more than happy to present at the upcoming JSCOPE next January. I am taking the risk of sending this by courier in the hope that it will reach you by the deadline of October 1st. I apologize in advance if the paper itself arrives a day or two late!

As you will see by the nature of the paper itself, the topic treats of a Canadian Military College, but the ramifications of the paper itself can be applied to any military institute of education or formation. I trust that you will find the paper interesting...I know that I found it an interesting topic to contemplate.

I would be more than happy to present the enclosed paper at the upcoming conference...if you judged it worthy of consideration, that is!

Until I hear from you, all the best as you prepare for JSCOPE XV and, regardless of the outcome with the paper, I would hope to see you in Washington in January.

Fraternally,

  

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*A PROLEGOMENON TO THE TEACHING OF ETHICAL ISSUES*

*IN A MILITARY COLLEGE ENVIRONMENT*

*A PAPER SUBMITTED TO*

*THE FIFTEENTH JOINT SERVICE CONFERENCE ON PROFESSIONAL ETHICS*

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*WASHINGTON, D.C.*

*by PADRE (CAPTAIN) ERIC T. REYNOLDS*

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*All opinions expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect official views or policy of the Department of National Defence, the Canadian Armed Forces or the Chaplaincy Division (Protestant).*

A PROLEGOMENON TO THE TEACHING OF ETHICAL ISSUES

IN A MILITARY COLLEGE ENVIRONMENT

*It has often been argued that intellectual excellence as such is not what the military are all about. Their task is to produce practitioners capable of running their country's defense, not to engage in intellectual debates or issue academic publications.<sup>1</sup>*

*On the surface, such a pragmatic assertion appears to smack of common sense: soldiers, after all, exist to implement the will of their political masters in all types of activity ranging from the ordered application of force to total war. What need have we of intelligence when it is simply a question of following a "legitimate command"?*

*On the other hand, the professional soldier must recognize that military leadership is both an art and an activity in which skill and intellectual acumen are necessary if not crucial.<sup>2</sup>*

*Janowitz distinguishes the military intellectual from the intellectual officer in these terms:*

*The intellectual officer is the soldier who brings an intellectual dimension to his job. His intellectual quality is held in check by the needs of the profession. He sees himself primarily as a soldier, and his intellectuality is part of his belief that he is a whole man. The military intellectual is a markedly different type. Although he is a professional soldier, his attachments and identifications are primarily with intellectuals and with intellectual activities. He would have no trouble shifting from military to university life, for his orientation are essentially scholarly. [...] His position is essentially advisory, but in the military setting, the advisory post is institutionalized and accepted.<sup>3</sup>*

*While there are skills whose availability in the profession of arms is deemed essential (the "practitioner" and his "trade", so-to-speak), other activities are required which would develop the physical, mental, and moral qualities of those who would command. "The performance of public duty is not the whole of what makes a good life; there is also the pursuit of private excellence."<sup>4</sup>*

*Far from being an accidental adjunct in the education of the military professional, intellectual integrity and the pursuit of knowledge can only enhance. In addition to specific skill training, the military leader of today and tomorrow can little afford to isolate himself from intellectual and ethical pursuits; to do so would vindicate the position of those who would maintain that "value-neutral teaching methods result from technology overpowering tradition."<sup>5</sup>*

*The title of this paper may seem perplexing at first! Suffice it to mention that a "prolegomenon" is usually construed as a prefatory or preliminary remark and thus an introduction to a given topic... a "foreword", if you prefer. Prior to focusing on the content of ethical instruction, we must first have a grasp of the nature of the environment from which our military personnel emerge.<sup>6</sup> If any ethical approach refers to the process whereby individuals and groups choose to act responsibly in concrete situations according to a value system, then it is crucial for educators to understand the "roots" of such value systems so that they may be able to educate in the moral demands of conscience.*

*Even though this paper restricts itself to a Canadian Military College (CMC) setting, the reflections contained herein are universal. The vast discussion by individuals and groups about their choices, values, actions, and future in a given societal context poses challenges of an ethical nature not only to individuals in particular and society as a whole, but also to institutions*

*themselves. Military training establishments - whether recruit schools, military colleges, Command and Staff Colleges, etc - are neither immune nor exempt from fostering the development of basic aptitudes for inquiry, dialogue, criticism, creativity, autonomy and commitment - aptitudes that will assist in defining their institutions amidst the transformations that are taking place within society as a whole.<sup>7</sup>*

*All educational institutions have always been involved in ethical training and military colleges are no different. However, their responsibility has become more complex as a result of the changes going on in society today. It could be said that all educational institutions are being challenged in their mission. They must decide how to strike a balance between technical training and comprehensive education, efficiency and responsibility, individual advancement and the collective good, as well as the transmission and regard for traditional values and the action necessary for change.<sup>8</sup> Hopefully, the reflections that follow will contribute positively to that debate.*

### *I - CHANGES IN THE HALLOWED HALLS OF "ACADEME"*

*A rapid glance at the prospectus of any Canadian Military College provides a statement with respect to its role and objective. We can read as follows: "to prepare candidates for effective service as commissioned officers in the Canadian Armed Forces by:*

- (1) providing a university level education in appropriate disciplines designed on a broad basis to meet the needs of the Forces;*
- (2) developing qualities of leadership;*

- (3) *developing the ability to communicate in both official languages and an understanding of the principles of biculturalism;*
- (4) *developing a high standard of personal fitness; and*
- (5) *stimulating an awareness of the ethic of the military profession.*<sup>9</sup>

*While their mandate is thus markedly different from civilian institutions of higher learning, military colleges are not isolated bastions immune from the signs of change in the academic world that must be acknowledged if ethical competence is to be developed. A number of significant phenomena are occurring in the academic world that reflect a change in attitudes to which all educational systems are attempting to adjust. Important questions of an ethical nature have arisen as a result of those phenomena and their consequences.*

*One of the marked phenomenon in the area of knowledge is undoubtedly the different types of access that new generations have to an abundance of information. Such an access is more akin to an instantaneous approach linked to the power of the image than the power of the rational. It is mainly the televised image, whose suggestive and emotive power is obvious in which all kinds of information are juxtaposed with little or no concern for sequence and in which information accumulates without being differentiated from opinion. The mass media disseminate data of all sorts, dealing with science and technology, politics and economics, war and peace (although the latter is not necessarily "newsworthy!"), in a kaleidoscopic fashion. The information age has entered the world of training and education.*<sup>10</sup>

*Given this, teachers of ethics must realize that their role is not to compete with the many effective sources of information, but to teach their audiences to recognize misinformation, to structure information and to receive it in a manner that provides meaning. As teachers of ethics,*

*we must prepare individuals to live in an information society, i.e. to "decode" images, to discern essential messages, to criticize content, to evaluate information received, to acquire a frame of reference, and to assimilate it for their personal use.<sup>11</sup>*

*Another pronounced phenomenon related to knowledge is the broadening notion of competence. Beyond the mere obtaining of a diploma or university degree, a complex and pluralistic society in perpetual flux requires competence that encourages adaptability, mobility, the ability to solve problems through teamwork and multidisciplinary effort, and an aptitude for dialogue while respecting different points of view. Autonomy and versatility have become essential to competent performance as well as to the normal mastery of important actions in daily life.*

*Another marked phenomenon with respect to knowledge is the emphasis now being placed on "scientific" education. Ethicists are realizing more and more that a sound scientific and technical education has become essential to an understanding of society and to participation in it. At all levels of education, albeit to differing degrees, the emphasis on science and technology has fostered a desire to grant an almost preeminent status to these disciplines in the curriculum and improve the teaching of them. Not only can science and technology put obvious pressure on any educational institution, but they can even create an imbalance in the curriculum, with less emphasis being placed on the arts and social sciences. In addition, the hierarchy of disciplines - normally reflected in the number of credit hours devoted to each - is itself the consequence of the fragmentation and compartmentalization of disciplines which mirror the dominant ideology of industrial society.<sup>12</sup>*

*The military college environment (as any other educational milieu) is likewise undergoing*

*major transformations in its awareness of the rest of the world. Primary among these is the broadening of people's social horizons. Again, the media make us feel that we are more and more a part of a vast world and a global village within which every event, regardless of where it occurs, has immediacy. Our awareness of the world is greater, more concrete, more vivid and stronger than ever before. Teachers of ethics are becoming increasingly aware of this development and are realizing that their audiences must be better prepared to understand and experience this reality through scientific and literary cultures that have no apparent boundaries and through the social sciences that are open to the whole of creation.*

*Another marked change is the growing pluralism amongst those who attend our educational institutions. Students, like staff, have become more heterogeneous. The socio-economic origins of our various populations, their ethnic and religious backgrounds, the diversity of their family situations, the variety of their lifestyles, and greater individual differences, can foster more openness and tolerance. It can also cause significant linguistic or cultural tension.<sup>13</sup> The pluralism of our populations calls not only for institutional changes, but for changes in attitude as well.*

*The fact that our educational institutions have themselves become pluralistic societies forces them, whether they want to or not, to question their actions, the services they offer, the education and training they impart, as well as the very spirit of their mission. This, of necessity, leads to questioning of an ethical nature.*

*The transformation of basic relationships between men and women, people and institutions, leaders and subordinates, and teachers and students also demands ethical reflection. Many have experienced the fragility of ties within the family and many have experimented with*



*relationships with those in authority that leave more room for autonomy and initiative. On the other hand, most have witnessed the whittling away of traditional models with the isolation, insecurity, and anonymity that often result.<sup>14</sup>*

*Once again, all educational institutions (including military colleges and military training schools) must learn to adapt to these realities. New forms of interaction, instruction, and supervision must take into consideration the changes that have occurred in families. Creating a military community resplendent with values is often difficult when the values of truth, duty, valour, etc appear to have little or no place in the civilian world of the secular.*

*Other pronounced phenomena point to ethical challenges in our educational and training systems. One in particular that still "hangs on" as a remnant of "boot camp" is the question of violence. Verbal abuse is rampant and is, in fact, the first type of violence that elementary school students encounter daily in the form of insults, threats, blackmail, as well as other types of demeaning and degrading language.<sup>15</sup> Even though some advances have been made to improve the quality of life in our academic institutions, all educators must question themselves about the frustration of individuals, the satisfaction of basic needs, how to render people more responsible, the values of competitiveness and individual performance, the quality of student and military life, etc. Questions arise such as: how can the institution become an environment where people feel secure, where each one feels at home regardless of his or her origins? What constitutes true discipline and how does it enhance the development of the person? These, too, are questions that demand ethical consideration of the mission of the institution itself.*

## **II - BROADER SOCIAL CONCERNS IN AN ETHICAL PERSPECTIVE**

*It goes without saying that the signs of change in the academic world are not peculiar to any one educational institution. They reflect, rather, a much broader social transformation that poses serious ethical challenges.*

*Science and technology, for example, have become so inseparable that the word technoscience has emerged. The synergetic relationship of technology and science has made each field more complex. No longer isolated domains, science and technology have merged to form a technoscientific culture. Technology has become the embodiment or the visible product of scientific knowledge. In one sense, science is the foundation of technology and makes its exercise possible; on the other hand, technology supports and directs science.*

*Because of its strategic nature, technoscience is closely linked to the various forms of economic, political and military power. Since it requires funding, scientific research is dependent on the sources of cash and the powers that direct it. As an applied science, it runs the risk of becoming the cart behind the sponsor's horse!*

*As one author has maintained: "Technoscience has multiplied tenfold, a hundredfold, humanity's power over nature, the human species and human life."<sup>16</sup> The continuous reduction in the lead time between a discovery and its use (not to mention the various technology transfer strategies) favours the appearance of the spin-offs of technoscience in all areas of life in society.*

*Major questions ensue: who defines needs? Who is the final arbiter in judging whether research and inventions are relevant? What should be done with the findings? What should be done with technical inventions that enhance the well-being of the individual, but destroy the ozone layer or change climatic conditions? Are all innovations necessarily good for the*

*advancement of the person or are they, at best, ethically neutral? These questions place all of us firmly in the realm of "technoscientific" ethics.*

*Scientific and technological research is no longer conducted on the fringe of society. In order to grow, such research requires an organization and structures now found in all areas of society: industry, educational institutions, hospitals, the armed forces and government departments. Given almost unlimited financial resources, technoscience is a major social institution.*

*Technoscience is always viewed as a gauge of progress and prosperity; it also raises fears: what are its effects on health and the quality of life? Should all possible technological progress be implemented? Are the consequences of discoveries assessed before their application is generalized? Technoscience calls for an ethic and power requires wisdom.<sup>17</sup>*

*Linked with the phenomenon of the meteoric rise of technoscience is the contribution of this latter to information. Society has become aware that with the mastery of information technology comes power. Information can be manipulated and transformed into disinformation or information saturation, in which substance is submerged in the superfluous and the sensational replaces the essential.<sup>18</sup>*

*Coupled with the above is a growing pluralism within our culture. Culture has become pluralistic in the sense that individuals have greater latitude in deciding what to do with their lives on the basis of their values. This pluralistic society is also the product of the demarcation of age groups, each with its own culture and related values. It is also fuelled by the diversity of ethnic forms of kinship and the dynamic between the culture of origin and the culture of choice.*

*The pluralistic question of culture has major consequences and repercussions. From a personal standpoint, living in a pluralistic society poses challenges in terms of choices, values, attitudes and behaviour. In such a society ethical dilemmas and creative tension between values constantly arise and unanimity evaporates. Each individual is confronted with the options and values of others in political, religious, educational and socioeconomic domains. Living in a pluralistic society therefore demands much from people and raises challenges in terms of interpersonal relationships. It becomes essential for people to understand others and the reasons for their behaviour and lifestyles. When differences in language and ethnic origin are added to differences in values, it goes without saying that interpersonal relations require immense effort and flexibility.*

*A pluralistic culture challenges our military institutions. Characterized by their stability, conceived by a specific type of society, and unable to adapt quickly, institutions may become dysfunctional in a pluralistic society. Questions raised in this context clearly concern values and are therefore of an ethical nature: what does a society (any society) require to be cohesive? When is a balance achieved between the affirmation of the identity of the other and the affirmation of self, between respect for pluralism and the need for cohesiveness?<sup>19</sup>*

*The family is also undergoing profound changes.<sup>20</sup> The models according to which generations have defined themselves are more diversified and increasingly precarious. A recent study in the province of Québec (Canada) indicates 79% of all families are made up of two-parent or reconstituted (after divorce) families, but single parent families make up 21%, eight out of ten of which are headed by women.<sup>21</sup> In two parent families, the couple with two incomes is now the dominant model, the maternal role is less important in women's lives than before, and*

*the paternal bond is more fragile, with a particular effect on the emotional upbringing of our young people who will eventually frequent our military schools and academies. Families of origin have a lasting influence upon our relational behaviour and social development. As one US Army Chaplain points out:*

*Joining the military has been one of the traditional "first steps" that people make in their journey toward maturity and separation from family. After the initial adventure and glamour wears off, the positive and negative reminders of past family interactions remain. We carry these emotional interactions with us as we journey toward personal individuation, but for one just beginning the journey, these interactions are recent and, if conflictual, may be unresolved.<sup>22</sup>*

*Generally speaking, our young (and not-so-young!) military personnel must now learn to build their identities in more precarious, less durable relationships. In addition, the sense of belonging to a group is more fragile, individualism has increased and detachment with regard to structured institutions has been accentuated. Such transformations challenge individuals to define what they intend to become.<sup>23</sup> These are difficult ethical challenges which carry with them feelings of insecurity and anguish, and which sometimes leads one to want to escape all forms of personal responsibility.*

*All the social transformations outlined above (and there are many more!) raise relatively new forms of ethical challenge that concern society in general and the education and training of military personnel in particular. Ethical matters can no longer be discussed in vitro, in the laboratory or simply form the content of quaint conversation at parties. Current social changes force us, both as military professionals and as teachers of ethics, to reformulate a number of*

*ethical questions and responses. Because we are rational individuals, we must ask ourselves: "Why are we doing this? What is our goal? What do I want to become? Which option should I now choose among those open to me? What should I do in this situation?" These are, in fact, ethical questions and challenges, a "trial by fire" for the actions we must take. It is a test of our consciences which are questioning, searching and deciding in a way that seems ultimately to lead to the fulfilment of the human person.<sup>24</sup>*

*To agree to consider the questions that spring from social transformations, to probe the depths of the inner struggle they create, to reach the end of the collective debate they require is to act in an ethical fashion. We are, in many ways, a society looking for an ethic.*

### III - ETHICAL CHALLENGES TO MILITARY EDUCATION

*Since the ethical challenges or dilemmas raised by current social transformations are those of society, military educational institutions cannot escape them. In fact, each challenge has a particular relevance to military training and education. We are challenged in terms of the action we intend to take in carrying out our mission (and not just as the first and most important principle of war!) and in terms of the meaning we hope to give to our mission: what type of people do we wish to form? What choices and values will form the basis of our action?*

*Unfortunately, the emphasis on knowledge has been accompanied by an (exaggerated?) emphasis on technological mastery. In sum, comprehension and transformation of the world are the two inseparable dimensions of modern rationality. But this rationality oftentimes assumes*

*an exclusive character and becomes transformed into what we could call a "technoscientific faith", even to the extent of denying or ignoring the value of any other vision of the universe.*

*It would appear that our educational and training establishments may still be struggling with creating a balance between the need for scientific training and the recognition of other means of understanding reality. In most academic milieu, we have seen excessive emphasis placed on mathematics and the sciences to the detriment of the humanities, literature and the arts. The goals of developing well rounded individuals and providing fundamental training, including ethical competence, are placed on the back burner. The educational system runs the risk of contributing to maintaining the imbalance between values linked to scientific progress and those of social progress. This is a debate of an ethical nature, one at the heart of the mission of any institution of higher learning, and one to which educational institutions should give much thought.*

*Other questions that may arise with respect to the social phenomena described above can likewise be viewed from the perspective of two other value systems that continue to clash: that of expertise and participation.*

*Expertise, a value widely recognized in a society where specialization, or even hyperspecialization reigns supreme, represents power based on knowledge. In his classic work, Samuel P. Huntington acknowledges that "the professional man is an expert with specialized knowledge and skill in a significant field of human endeavour... It (expertise) is the basis of objective standards of professional competence for separating the profession from laymen and measuring the relative competence of members of the profession".<sup>25</sup>*

*In all fields, the primacy of competence and specialization is affirmed and professional*

*power is highly valued. Along with efficiency of service, expertise should guarantee quality, whether in the field of science, technology or information.*

*It goes without saying that current professionalization and expertise are rooted in the industrial society. Viewed in the best of lights, they may be interpreted and experienced as a social commitment and responsibility; but they can also result in misappropriation of the autonomy of users of services, domination by those who possess knowledge, manipulation of consciences and the exclusion of many from the legitimate exercise of power or authority.*

*A set of values with participation at its core is increasingly emerging as a complement to expertise, affirming the need to share in authority (delegation?) and decision-making, autonomy, and faith in each person's capacity to contribute to decisions concerning orientations to be undertaken.*

*When these two value systems confront each other, it becomes a question of professional competence versus democratic participation, the power of the expert versus the autonomy of the individual. Basic ethical questions are raised: what purpose does the exercise of power serve? To what extent should our destiny be entrusted to professionals? Does legitimate command always imply blind compliance?<sup>26</sup>*

*The quest for efficiency through expertise poses other challenges in the world of education and training: does the competence of leaders automatically exclude other categories of individuals from decision-making about the content and organization of academic life? Questions such as these are related to the values that form the ethical foundation of any educational mission and, if properly understood, can ensure the high quality participation of people by developing their competence and by encouraging responsible commitment.*



*Another dichotomy from the viewpoint of values is that of identity versus openness. Identity is related to the values of self-affirmation and the kinship of individuals and communities. The values conserved and promoted are the preservation of heritage, the right to be oneself and to affirm one's integrity as a person, and the fundamental value of specificity or diversity, rooted in the creative freedom of individuals. There is, however, a danger for the individual in becoming so self-centred that he or she becomes intolerant of others.*

*Openness, on the other hand, is related to the acceptance of others, precisely because they are different, tolerance for another person's way of thinking and acting, and acceptance of change. The risk associated with this value is that, improperly understood, openness might lead to a uniform perception of all and a challenge to one's own individuality.*

*Ethical questions arise at the point where these two poles intersect: should I welcome others (or other ways of doing things) at the risk of denying, submerging, or even destroying my personal identity? How can I be open to change, to accept other value systems, etc. without risking the loss or the compromise of my own values? Who are we and what do we want to become?*

*The ethical dilemma of identity versus openness may take the form of a fundamental debate on the mission of the institution as a place where heritage is transmitted. Any educational system (including the military) is expected to transmit heritage, history, language and common values. It is to be hoped that it will also serve as a place where identity is built, where the social integration of individuals is fostered, and where social cohesion is maintained.*

#### IV - DEVELOPING A UNIQUE MILITARY ETHICAL COMPETENCE

*Social change, as life in the academic world and in the social realities described above testify, presents dilemmas and ethical challenges not only for society generally but for the military in particular. It requires, for leaders and followers alike, nothing less than the development of an ethical competence commensurate with the spirit of the times.*

*The ethical competence implied here is not acquired in any magical fashion. The road to be travelled is long and, in a sense, never-ending. From early childhood, the development of the elements of such competence is gradual and painstakingly laborious. The path taken by such a development, as it is a path we all must follow, is strewn with obstacles, discoveries and disappointments. Psychologists have in fact identified various stages of development which do in fact substantiate that nothing is acquired all at once, and that the development of ethical competence is both a long and continuous process.<sup>27</sup>*

*If they are to develop an ethical competence rooted in the requirements of our present social situation, all military institutions must begin with what is the very foundation of ethical thinking: developing aptitudes for inquiry and dialogue. Professor Allan Bloom's comments are incisive:*

*But both as citizens and soldiers in this kind of democratic society, you have a responsibility to have thought, and to continue to think, about the nature of this political regime and its claims to justice, particularly in relation to the claims of other kinds of regimes. You also have to think about your choice of career and what it means for the polity and yourselves. Otherwise you would be simply thoughtless, and other people would be making the most fundamental decisions for you. The theme of liberal education is the good and just life, a theme treated in no other discipline, but on the face of it,*

*the most important of all studies.<sup>28</sup>*

*The ethical quest for competence begins at the intimate, personal level. In this sense, the encouragement of ethical questioning will involve, for the whole of the military establishment, the arousal in each person of a taste and a desire for knowing and for knowing oneself, through real life situations, and the arrival at the knowledge of one's own sense of incompleteness. Present social change requires more than anything else the knowledge that society and even the world in which societies function are imperfect. A simple reading of the ecological, economic, social, cultural, political and even religious climates reveals societies and a world which are fragmented and even chaotic.*

*Any restructured educational system must emphasize the need for personal inquiry in the domain of learning. Inquiry recognizes the existence of discrepancy in one's society and in the world. Every individual has the task of seeking his or her own growth and the creation of new forms of society. Educators themselves must realize that their lives and their world are incomplete creations and that their participation in society (even in one as structured as the military) is an on-going challenge.*

*As uncertainty is today part of ethical decision-making (no "black" or "white" but tons of "grey!"), new situations arise over which traditional values may have no authority. In this context, ethical reference points inherited from the past may seem insufficient and past moral precepts may be inadequate.<sup>29</sup> There is no longer an assured ethic that can be tailored to fit particular situations. The context in which we live calls all our systems of reference into question and there is a renewed questioning of the meaning of personal life and social destiny. Ethical courage is thus identified with the courage to risk and to seek.*

*The ethical competence that educators must help develop, and which they must first cultivate in themselves, includes the acceptance of uncertainty and risk. Individuals must now act knowing that they may be wrong and, in the absence of any decisive model, must dare to risk and experiment. The military has cause to view such an approach with concern as it appears to challenge the very foundations of structure and training. Some would have us believe that true soldiering requires "blind" obedience and that reflective or critical thinking interferes with doing what one is ordered to do. As pointed out by Ewing:*

*Soldiering by this assumption requires skills that must be trained and practiced until they are automatic because the command to do them under duress must be followed without question. The implication here is that the liberally educated soldier cannot reconcile differences between situations needing reflection and situations needing action.<sup>30</sup>*

*In the context of a pluralism which itself takes on multiple forms, in situations in which moral or ethical homogeneity no longer exists and during a time of explosion of cultural and societal models, it is no longer easy for educators or students to respond to current situations by simply parroting the models of the past. Ethical competence in today's military must begin with educators and students welcoming questions, seeking out causes and reflecting about the meaning of events. Ethical competence for today presupposes that each individual will question choices which seem to be taken for granted, will probe basics, will accept doubt, and will even sometimes live with precarious solutions resulting from a search that must remain open.*

*What must I choose? What has value and why? What must I do? What is worthy of action? What should I aim for? What does it mean to be a human being? In whatever form, the basic ethical question remains: the accent is placed on choice and values, on action and*

*decision, on the achievement and advancement of the person and the society of which he or she is both a part and player. As strange as it may seem, those responsible for formation in our military institutions must foster personal reflection, detachment and thought, in which each person seeks to understand the facts of the situation in question, tries to discover the basis for these facts, considers the forces at play, compares the possibilities offered, distinguishes the values involved and weighs the motives for the action to be taken. The greatest challenge for educators in the military is that they, like their students, must learn to question themselves, share their solutions with others, discuss life-sustaining and life-enhancing values, seek consensus in basic questions and practice open dialogue.*

*Another challenge pertinent to military institutions and their personnel is the developing of both a creative and critical spirit. This includes all the aptitudes that enable individuals to exercise the objectivity and discernment necessary in the exercise of ethical conscience. Once again, the military environment may feel threatened by such a view as it emphasizes a certain "distancing" from existing social reference points that we are all asked to abide by in varying degrees.*

*Mores and institutionalized morals constitute examples of such reference points for persons who question themselves and seek ethical answers. The strength of moral precepts arises from the fact that they constitute the dominant behaviour patterns in a given society. Mores dictate what is currently done in a society and express a collective recognition of standards and habits of behaviour. Mores affect not only individual behaviour but also collective choices. They have the authority of the moral atmosphere of the times whose ethical conscience is not easily challenged. Maintaining a certain objectivity with regard to mores remains a personal*

*requirement in the development of ethical competence.*

*Institutionalized codes of behaviour are standards and rules of conduct developed by specific groups and are useful indicators for those who need a basis for their behaviour and who find in them grounds for acting in a prescribed manner. The family, law, and cultural heritage are examples of such moral focal points upon which people can draw in their ethical quest. None of these reference points, however, replaces the critical and creative conscience of the person. Ethical competence for today requires of us all a sound knowledge of these reference points, an awareness of the influences and conditioning that affect us, as well as the ability to stand back from them. While they may indicate possible paths, point to directions and act as signposts, they can never substitute for ethical creativity and cannot replace the deep inner choices of conscience.<sup>31</sup> While most young people (and not so young) are in tune with questions concerning ethical behaviour, they expect to be given a reason when told to do something and do not always accept established traditions without question.<sup>32</sup> Or as one classic military author noted:*

*The art of war is subjected to many modifications by industrial and scientific progress. But one thing does not change, the heart of man. In the last analysis, success in battle is a matter of morale. In all matters which pertain to an army, organization, discipline and tactics, the human heart in the supreme moment of battle is the basic factor. It is rarely taken into account; and often strange errors are the result.<sup>33</sup>*

*In concert with the above, ethical creativity and competence come about as a result of understanding given situations and distinguishing operative values. Both are inseparable, for values are distinguished according to the situation and the situation is only properly understood*

*when it is seen from the standpoint of values.*

*Ethical judgments relate to real situations. One must try to comprehend the forces at work, identify tendencies and pinpoint main characteristics. When values are discerned, individual conscience identifies and distinguishes values at the heart of a situation. One is then oriented to pursue a favourable decision and motivated to action.*

*When an individual arrives at the process of discerning values, the presence of genuine ethical models is essential. All would admit that the admiration of a hero, a wise man, a genius or a saint can contribute both to motivation and personal growth. The importance of the "relational" aspect in the development of an ethical conscience and competence is most important. Insofar as possible, all staff in military training establishments should be appointed because they embody those ethical qualities we wish to impart to our military personnel: loyalty, honour, courage, trust, integrity, duty and the like. A young man or woman "recognizes a man (or woman) of integrity and can be inspired to trust such a man (or woman). This trust can serve to close the gap between the values of the soldier and his commander, for trust creates a sympathetic attitude and a propensity to obey."<sup>34</sup> Or put another way, it is difficult to expect integrity from the rank and file if the rank and file do not see that same quality in those who lead.<sup>35</sup>*

*The development of ethical competence in our military institutions presupposes educators and leaders who are capable of inducing their students and subordinates to analyze situations, helping them to use available reference material and information to attain a better grasp of events, teaching them to distinguish between the accidental and essential, to identify the forces and values inherent in situations in their own lives, to help them resolve ethical dilemmas of*

*daily life and by taking risks and displaying courage. These conditions are essential to a creative ethical conscience. Meeting the needs of the individual has never been foreign to the military establishment; unfortunately, responding to such needs has usually come under the rubric of "administration" or "logistics". Emphasis must be redirected to awaken the individual consciences of our military personnel, for "preventing moral casualties is as important as the tactics and strategy employed to wage war."<sup>36</sup>*

*An interesting example of creating a climate for ethical competence and creativity was the German Kriegsakademie (War Academy), closed in 1919 under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles but reopened by Hitler in 1935. Faithful to Clausewitz's dictum that war is, above all, a matter of character, instructors evaluated such untranslatable qualities as Anstaendigkeit (uprightness, decency, reliability), Verantwortungsfreude (joy in responsibility), and Seelenkraft (spiritual and mental force).<sup>37</sup>*

*All educational and training institutions, including those of a military nature, can be instrumental in developing ethical competence through all the disciplines taught and courses given, through institutional rules governing conduct and, more importantly, through an institutional code of ethics.*

*Ethics courses themselves are an ideal means for developing ethical competence for today's changing world. Such courses should emphasize and foster a greater assumption of responsibility and openness to others, reflection and commitment, building a scale of values, and learning how to live more fully in rapidly changing world, as well as the individual search for meaning and identity. Such courses can lead students to perceive the organic connection with other courses, whether in the domain of natural science, the humanities, technology and the arts,*



*military and strategic studies, etc. Each course given says something about social change to which ethical creativity and competence must address themselves.*

*All the courses in any given curriculum can assist in the development of ethical creativity and competence. As there are ethical questions, and perhaps even an ethos, inherent in the practice of each discipline, each can stress the respect for facts, honesty of argument, the need for dialogue and the development of a critical spirit. The practice of the humanities, for example, may result in a radical questioning of democracy, of obsolete quantitative methods that denigrate human beings, etc. The study of literature could lead to the identification with characters who question themselves about the meaning of life and may lead to reflection about the ethical foundations of expression and communications, or to an explanation of the ethical dilemmas faced by the hero of a novel. Strategic and military studies can lead to a critical examination of situations, the ethics of choice, and an analysis of values leading up to the choice of one solution over others. As stated by Ewing in this regard:*

*An integrated approach to teaching war fighting accepts the moral dimension of war. It asserts that tactics and strategy are moral rather than amoral because planning, conducting, sustaining, positioning and engaging are done by human beings. Meeting needs of the individual, which includes provoking rather than silencing conscience, strengthens the organization.<sup>38</sup>*

*There is, then, an ethos inherent in the practice of any given discipline and each discipline may lead to questioning of an ethical nature or enhance awareness of the ethical issues involved in its practice.*

*Each disciplinary practice eventually involves professional ethics. There may be a common set of fundamental professional moral principles, based on such values as respect for*

*the autonomy of individuals receiving professional services and the meaning of limits or threshold not to be exceeded in the professional act; but there are also specific deontologies. All professional disciplines have their own ethical code. Those interested in the forms of the development of ethical creativity on competence might find food for thought in the experiment of Alverno College in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. To obtain a degree from Alverno the student must demonstrate that they have mastered certain skills and gained a certain competence indicative of a sound general training: the capacity to comprehend the relations between the individual and the environment, the capacity to understand the contemporary world with its challenges at economic, political, social and cultural levels, the capability to make value judgements and take independent decisions (implying that the student make value judgments, discern values through a process of decision making and acquiring a set of values to guide his or her own life.<sup>39</sup>*

*In developing a unique military ethical competence, we must struggle to create an institutional culture with an ethical message. By "institutional culture" I mean the atmosphere of the institution (either the "military" in general or its education and training establishments in particular), its management methods (personnel administration), the rules it lays down (codes of behaviour, etc.), as well as the daily practices of those involved in leadership, formation and training. The institution itself has its own message to give and has obvious potential for the development of ethical competence. In fact the ethos of an institutional culture is a powerful means of ethical development in a changing social context. Everything it is and does is what determines whether an institution can successfully handle the ethical implications of its educational mission and contribute to the development of ethical competence. Every aspect of an institution's life conveys a message, and this message is more than educational; it is, in a*

*real sense, ethical.*

## CONCLUSION

*There can be no doubt that social change and upheaval, which find a powerful echo in all educational and training situations, pose an enormous ethical challenge to all our institutions, demanding of each the development of an ethical competence whose requirements may seem impossible to attain. Educational institutions in general and military institutions in particular have always been involved in ethical training. But it is the point of this paper that their responsibility has become more complex as a result of the dramatic changes occurring in society today. Military educational institutions are first of all being challenged in their very mission. They must strike a balance between technical scientific training and comprehensive education, efficiency and responsibility, individual advancement and the collective good, the transmission of traditional values and the action necessary for change, etc. These are not only educational dilemmas but ethical tasks which we must face if sound ethical leadership is to be infused into all aspects of military education and formation.*

*Institutions that intend to make any worthwhile contribution to the promotion of ethical competence are first responsible for cultivating amongst teachers, instructors, administrators and students, general and professional skills that enable them to understand present social change. Ethical creativity and competence does not dispense with the disciplines and techniques that allow one to come to grips with the changing social scene. They make possible a mastery of facts and situations and an understanding of their dynamics. A just reading of these situations and facts is necessary for ethical competence.*

*Finally, military institutions have an obligation to develop an ethical competence that resides in an aptitude for inquiry and dialogue, in the ability to exercise a critical and creative*

*spirit and the on-going development of personal conscience. Our goal can be nothing less than the education and formation of the "whole" person and this is an ethical task in itself. As one author bluntly states:*

*Effective national security and defense depend upon the ethics and moral obligations of men and women tasked with these responsibilities. It is imperative that we in the military seek an ethical reawakening. Otherwise, we may be forced to accept external attempts at reform.<sup>40</sup>*

*Ethical competence is not a luxury or a "nice-to-have" for military institutions; neither is it an esoteric issue that is separate from the military function.<sup>41</sup> In the final analysis, it is the entire institution that accomplishes this mission. An honest search for truth, while respecting open discussion and debate, can only lead to the "internalizing" of a service ethic that will face up to the challenges from within and without the profession of arms. Military institutions have a sacred trust of "reading the signs of the times" and educating future leaders to develop an ethical frame of reference within the context of social change. In ignoring or abdicating such a trust, the military profession suffers and will get the mediocre leaders they deserve. To put it another way:*

*A man can be selfish, cowardly, disloyal, false, fleeting, perjured, and morally corrupt in a wide variety of other ways and still be outstandingly good in pursuits in which other imperatives bear than those upon the fighting man. He can be a superb creative artist, for example, or a scientist in the very top flight, and still be a very bad man. What the bad man cannot be is a good sailor, or soldier, or airman. Military institutions thus form a repository of moral resource that should always be a source of*

*strength within the state.<sup>42</sup>*

*The ethical challenges are there. What can we do as brothers and sisters in arms to respond with all the tools at our disposal?*

## NOTES

1. *Martin von Crevald, The Training of Officers: From Military Professionalism to Irrelevance, The Free Press, N.Y., 1990, pp. 103-104.*
2. *Some authors believe that many military professionals are sceptical in this regard because of their belief that technology has supplanted intellectuality in the conduct of war. (Y.D.A. Zoll, "The Moral Dimension of War and the Military Ethic", in Parameters, (Journal of the U.S. Army War College), vol XII, no.2, pp.2-15).*
3. *Morris Janowitz, "The Future of the Military Profession, in War, Morality, and the Military Profession (ed. Malham M. Walkin), Westview Press, Boulder, Colorado, 1981, p.66.*
4. *Bertrand Russell, "Authority and the Individual", Reith Lectures, 1949, cited in The Profession of Arms, by Lieutenant General Sir John Winthrop Hackett, Times Publishing Co. Ltd., 1962.*
5. *Linda M. Ewing, "Amorality - The Product of Teaching", in Moral Obligation and the Military: Collected Essays, National Defense University Press, (Washington, D.C.), 1988, p.203.*
6. *Padre Arthur Gans, one of my brothers in the military chaplaincy to the Canadian Armed Forces states in clear terms:  
  
[...] many of the young people entering our military today, do so with what might be called ethical cataracts, because their background and upbringing no longer provide them with the ethical lenses needed to function within the institutional matrix of service that the modern military demands.  
  
(Ethics and International Humanitarian Law, M. Th Thesis, Toronto School of Theology, May 1991, p.22).*
7. *The writer of this paper draws on his relatively short experience as a military chaplain in the Canadian Armed Forces: militia (reserve) chaplain (1984-1987) and Regular Force (1987 to present). Presently posted to Collège militaire royal de Saint-Jean in the Province of Quebec, Canada (one of Canada's three military colleges), he provides chaplaincy services to this college as well as teaching an introductory course on values clarification and ethics in the profession of arms.*

8. *"Traditionally, technical and moral competence both exerted pressure on the profession life of a soldier. In the military school system, pressure was expressed as a tension between soldier skills that need training and soldier values that need educating. Training subjects were and are still perceived as the "hard" soldierly skills, while educating subjects are pejoratively perceived as "soft", less "manly". (Linda M. Ewing, loc.cit., p. 204).*

*Malham M. Wakin reflects the same idea in these terms: "The values of American Society are said by many to be "liberal", yet the military services responsible for defending those liberal values are said themselves to be "conservative", for those who would defend the status quo are so labelled. Concern for the individual dignity of each person suggests a liberal orientation while those who would fight to preserve individual dignity must be asked to sublimate in many ways their own individualism for the sake of the group. It is in this sense that contemporary commentators are quick to point out a paradoxical discrepancy between supposed civilian values and the military virtues" (Malham M. Wakin, "The Ethics of Leadership, in War, Morality, and the Military Profession," p.215).*

9. *One could question both the understanding of "ethic" as employed here and its relevance when considered in contrast to the other roles and objectives. We could presume that some ethical underpinnings would be found in roles (1) through (4), but that could be the topic of yet another paper!*
10. *Cf. Edgar Morin, Pour sortir du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle, Fernand Nathan, Paris, 1981, p.52.*
11. *Interestingly enough, this has been a problem that moral philosophers have been struggling with from the days of Plato and Aristotle. Or as one author put it: "What are the categories which thought employs in seeking order and intelligibility and how should it employ them?" (D.J.B. Hawkins, Crucial Problems of Modern Philosophy, Sheed and Ward, (N.Y.), 1957, pp.35).*
12. *"It was characteristic in the past that a great general, like George Marshall, kept Thucydides' History of the Peloponesian War on his desk for real guidance about the nature of war and peace. Such people have become rarer and rarer, and the fact that so many Pentagon generals have Ph.D.'s only covers over the fact that they are narrow technicians and never reflect on these absolutely central questions." (Allan Bloom, "Liberal Education and its Enemies", The Joseph A. Reich, Sr Distinguished Lecture on War, Morality, and the Military Profession, USAF Academy, 14 November 1991).*
13. *The Collège militaire royal de Saint-Jean is a sample case in point. Approximately twenty-five percent of our Cadet population claims English as their mother tongue and various forms of Protestantism as their religious preference. Tensions are bound to arise in a milieu that is predominantly French-speaking and Roman Catholic. Many come from single-parent families and hope to find a surrogate family in the military.*



14. Consider how often today's children are left on their own when compared with other generations and how many times both parents have to work outside the home for personal and/or economic reasons. Oftentimes such children have no brothers or sisters and do not know their neighbours; they are often more individualistic and less accustomed to sharing, since they live in small families. They are also accustomed to a relationship of equals with their elders and, therefore, no longer automatically accept authority.
15. Many school authorities have discussed this issue. An interesting study was Preventing and Controlling Violence in the School, Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec, (Brief), Québec, 1988.
16. Guy Rocher, "Redéfinition du rôle de l'université", in L'Éducation 25 ans plus tard! et après?, Proceedings of a seminar organized by the Institut québécois de recherche sur la culture, November 1989, p.181.
17. Y. David Morris, "Science Should Test Wisdom of Ancients", The Gazette, Montréal, December 4, 1989, p. B.3.
18. Cf. Arthur F. Cordell, The Uneasy Eighties: The Transition to an Information Society, Science Council of Canada, 1985.
19. "The unsettling nature of change is not military unique, but there is the potential for great harm when change is wrong or poorly understood in the military... This is why military schooling must educate professionals on the theory as well as the methodology of change." (Linda M. Ewing, loc.cit., p.203).
20. See for example: "The 21st Century Family," Newsweek, Winter-Spring 1990, special edition, and Louis Roussel, "L'avenir de la famille," La Recherche, Vol 20, October 1989. See also "The Marriages of Military Personnel: A Special Question", in Military Chaplains' Review, Winter 1988, Department of the Army, Washington, D.C., pp.29-39.
21. Guy Corneau, Père manquant, fils manqué, Montréal, Éditions de l'Homme, 1989.
22. Joseph A. Gibilisco, "Expanding the Boundaries of Single-Soldier Ministry, in Military Chaplains' Review, Fall, 1991, p.81.
23. One interesting aside in Canada's military colleges is the motivation of young people in seeking an education with a view to serving as commissioned officers. The great majority of our officer cadets are ROTP (Regular Officer Training Plan) candidates whose education (inclusive of textbooks, etc) is paid for by the Canadian government. The only obligation incumbent upon them after graduation is to serve a minimum period (usually five years) in the Forces. Many of our young cadets openly admit that they are attending a military college to get a free education and be assured of a job upon graduation. Many

- come from economically deprived backgrounds, single-parent families, within which it would otherwise be impossible to pursue higher education due to prohibitive costs. Perhaps there is some truth to the assertion that military service is adopting an "occupational" significance where military life is best seen as a job in which monetary and educational incentives are more important than the traditional ethical values of loyalty, obedience, service, etc. (Cf. Charles C. Moskos, Jr., "From Institution to Occupation: Trends in Military Organization", in War, Morality, and the Military Profession, (Malham M. Wakin, ed.), Westview Press, Boulder, Colorado, 1979, pp. 219-229).
24. Neil Postman, Teaching as a Subversive Activity, New York, Delacorte Press, 1969.
  25. Samuel P. Huntington, The Soldier and the State, Bilnap Press, Cambridge, Mass., as cited in "Officership as a Profession", in War, Morality, and the Military Profession, op.cit., pp. 12-13.
  26. Ivan Illich, Tools for Conviviality, Harper and Row, New York, 1973 has advocated "conviviality" as a possible solution to this apparent clash of values. He foresees a community on a human scale in which autonomous people have a feeling of solidarity, in which an attempt is made to place cultural institutions, political means, and social tools within everyone's reach while maintaining respect for competence, in which there is the will to limit expertise and democratic participation in a reciprocal fashion, and in which efficient service and creative autonomy are reconciled. See also Guy Bourgeault, "Une éthique de la responsabilité: perspective, repères, jalons", in Cahiers de recherche éthique, No. 14, Fides, Montréal 1990, pp. 106-111.
  27. Cf The works of Jean Piaget and Lawrence Kohlberg. Another interesting work is Carol Gilligan, In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development, Howard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1982.
  28. Allan Bloom, loc. cit., p.8.
  29. Guy Bourgeault, "L'Éthique face à la technologie", loc. cit., p.37.
  30. Linda M. Ewing, loc.cit., p.205.
  31. "Codes of conduct, whether they be framed as honor codes for service academics, moral commandments for religious groups, prescriptions for medical or legal practitioners, and so on, all seem subject to the same sort of narrow interpretation which may cause distortions in our general view of moral behavior. The immature or unsophisticated frequently narrow their ethical sights to the behavior specifically delineated in the code so that what may have originally been intended as a minimum listing becomes treated as an exhaustive guide for ethical action." (Malham M. Wakin, "The Ethics of Leadership," p.203).

32. Michael O. Wheeler, "Loyalty, Honor, and the Modern Military", in War, Morality, and the Military Profession, *op.cit.*, p. 186.
33. Colonel Ardant du Picq, Battle Studies (quoted in Roots of Strategy, Vol 2, Stackpole Books, Harrisburg, PA, 1987, p.135).
34. Michael O. Wheeler, *loc. cit.*, p.210.
35. Malham M. Wakin, "The Ethics of Leadership", *loc.cit.*, p.209.
36. Linda M. Ewing, *loc.cit.*, p.210.
37. Martin von Crevald, *op.cit.*, p.30.
38. "Amorality - The Product of Teaching", *loc.cit.*, p.210. See also Susan L. Downie, "Ethics, A Choice for the Future: An Interdisciplinary Program," English Journal, Vol. 78, No.5, September 1989, pp.38-40; David L. Adams and Robert E. Baker, "Science, Technology and Human Values, An Interdisciplinary Approach to Science Education", Journal of Contemporary Science and Technology, February 1986, pp. 354-358; H. Michael Hartoonian, "The Social Studies: Foundation for Citizenship Education in Our Democratic Republic", The Social Studies, January-February 1985, pp. 5-8.
39. See Margaret Earley, Marcia Mentkowski and Jean Schafer (ed), Valuing at Alverno: The Valuing Process in Liberal Education, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Alverno College 1980; and Jacques Laliberté, "Alverno: une réforme pédagogique riche d'enseignements", Pédagogie collégiale, Vol. 2, No. 4, May 1989, pp. 38-42.
40. Thomas C. Linn, "Ethics versus Self-Interest in How we Fight", in Moral Obligation and the Military, *op.cit.*, p.220.
41. Ibid., pp. 222-223.
42. Sir John W. Hackett, "The Military in the Service of the State", in War, Morality, and the Military Profession, *op.cit.*, pp.124-125.