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Inquiries into Responsibilities of Teachers

Abstract

Despite a lot of works on teaching and teacher education, little attention has been paid to the search for the essence, contents and conditions of the category of “responsibility” as presented by the contemporary philosophers. In this paper a variety of theoretical references to the approaches and traditions dealing with the widely seen field of responsibility in the philosophy is presented, and consequently an attempt to translate them into the problems of pedagogical responsibility, which amounts to resolving doubts inherent in the area defined by the question about relationships between the teacher’s responsibility and the social function s/he performs, is undertaken.

The problems dealt with in my paper may constitute an important contribution to the development of our knowledge about the teacher’s profession. The obtained analytical results of the research prove the existence of the need for the educational sciences to solve a lot of significant problems. In order to deal with them the answer to the question “What teacher does the modern school need?” must be found. In connection with this the answers to the following questions should be given: What conditions teacher’s responsibility? Who does the teacher feel answerable to and how is (or will be) his responsibility evaluated? What or/and who is the teacher responsible for? Does the fact that the teacher’s work is monitored and assessed by the units of educational authorities mean that the teacher is answerable only to them? Do teachers focus only on carrying out orders and achieving their own goals and the goals of the “insiders” in the system? How do teachers perceive the contemporary world and its future? What tasks is the contemporary teacher assigned in the light of the demands of the changing world?

Key words: *pedeutology, teacher’s profession, teacher in modern school, responsibilities of teacher and their kinds.*

To be responsible for something means to be answerable for it. We have responsibilities not merely as individuals, but as members of organizations, in our case – teachers as members of schools. And this raises the question of how far teachers are responsible for the actions of their schools. Do they bear responsibilities peculiar to them? In what sense might teachers have responsibilities different from those of any other member of society?

In this paper a variety of theoretical references to the approaches and traditions dealing with the widely seen field of responsibility in philosophy is presented, and consequently I undertake an attempt to translate them into the problems of responsibilities of teachers, which amounts to resolving doubts inherent in the area defined by the question about relationships between the responsibilities of teachers and the social functions they perform. The presented considerations are based on the assumption that knowing the notion of responsibility and understanding its essence not only guarantees the increase in the human being's knowledge about the world, but also can determine the ability to behave suitably in certain situations. Undoubtedly, even the best understanding of the notion of *responsibility* is not the responsibility itself, but achieving the proper understanding of it constitutes *conditio sine qua non* of exercising it.

1. The positive dimension of responsibility – from duty and obligation to the concept of prospective responsibility

In order to fully understand the notion of responsibility, initially one must reflect on the way of understanding of the essence of the phenomenon of responsibility, thus it must be looked at comprehensively, which means that it is important that it should not be defined by means of judging a single deed, but also by means of referring it to the individual's attitude towards responsibility. To expand this approach two kinds of responsibility must be distinguished: retrospective one and prospective one.

Traditional understanding of responsibility is connected with the so-called *restrictive* (Filek 1996) or *retrospective responsibility* (Duff 1990; Williams 1993; Zimmerman 1988; Jonas 1979), which is referred to the relationship between an action and its results, with special attention paid to the results of this action, and it is defined as a causative relationship between human being's activities and the events caused by them. In other words, retrospective responsibility refers to what an individual does, omits or fails to do, in discharging his/her prospective responsibilities. This understanding of responsibility is objective, because mainly the results of one's actions are assessed, most obviously an individual is responsible for

those results s/he brings about intentionally, and most frequently it appears when a person suffers the negative consequences of his/her deeds. Such responsibility is often (but not always) legal or moral and it is partly determined by the individual's prospective responsibility.

In the contemporary philosophical considerations one can more and more often encounter the stance according to which the present place of duty and norm which justify a human being's conduct becomes occupied by the notion of responsibility, which concentrates on positive experiencing it, which consists in taking responsibility for the good that depends on people. Responsibility understood in such a way is viewed in the context of the task, which is given to a human being and a human being's response to it. Prospective responsibility is that an individual has before the event, it is up to an individual to attend to or to take care of. This approach towards the responsibility indicates that it can be specified as a value embedded in certain attitudes and types of behaviour which are of interest to us, teachers, as a value whose fuller, extended meaning they can seek. In this context, responsibility is described in the positive dimension and it is connected with taking responsibility for what a human being was burdened with. Thus, it is characteristic that it is seen in its active dimension – it is not focused only on the past but also looks into the future. The active aspect of the responsibility shows that this category is directly connected with undertaking tasks the results of which are welcomed. Contemporary attempts to define the essence of responsibility clearly aim at the interpretation shown above: as a task which an individual should fulfill (Levinas 1969, 1985; Casey 1971; Jonas 1979; Lukas 1993; Filek 1996).

Thus, this dual understanding of the category of responsibility shows that on the one hand, it can be seen as a social phenomenon (somebody bears responsibility for somebody or something), and on the other hand, as a psychological category (to feel responsible). The former way of describing responsibility is objective, because in this case responsibility is analyzed as a relation between a person's actions and their effects, with special attention paid to its results. Thus, it is defined as a causative relationship between an individual's deeds and the occurrences caused by them and it is these occurrences that are the main object of evaluation. The latter way of describing responsibility is rather subjective, since responsibility reflects a person's attitude, which belongs to his/her set of skills. This approach to the category of responsibility shows that it can be defined as a value inherent in an individual's attitudes and actions. In this context the responsibility can be viewed in its positive, prospective dimension and it is connected with taking on responsibility, which means that it is not only a static phenomenon, but it is a kind of a task the result of which is important for a person's life. The picture produced by both ways of looking at responsibility can often be similar, however, it is not a rule.

This dual dimension of responsibility shows us, that, on the one hand, in order to talk about it we need to have some formulated norms, a kind of a code (e.g. a teacher's professional code); on the other hand, responsibility is connected with an attitude, it is personal in character and can be treated as an ontological characteristic of a human being. In everyday language the formal aspect of responsibility is prevalent (bearing responsibility for somebody or something), which often leads to the loss of its personal dimension. It is worth making the point that retrospective and prospective responsibilities flow from a conception of our moral duties and relationships, or are ascribed by a legal system. However, as R.A. Duff (1990) rightly stresses, only responsible agents, those with the capacities necessary for accepting and discharging responsibilities, can be held prospectively or retrospectively responsible, because only a moral agents can have moral responsibilities, only moral agent can be held prospectively or retrospectively responsible.

2. Responsibilities of teachers

In the next part of this I will attempt to answer the following questions: What are the conditions of the teacher's responsibility? When and how is the teacher responsible? Who or what is the teacher answerable to and how is (or will be) his responsibility evaluated? (What types of teacher's responsibility can be distinguished?) What is the ultimate source of teacher's duties? Who gives the teacher *the power* which helps fulfill these duties? The analysis of the notion of the teacher's responsibility needs taking a wide context into consideration, both legal and moral.

2.1. The conditions of the teacher's responsibility

The conditions of the teacher's responsibility describe the factors that decide both about bearing and taking responsibility. Taking into account the philosophical context of the phenomenon of responsibility, the one saying that the responsibility for a human deed always assumes soundness of mind (*imputabilitas*) while doing it and its sensibility is worth highlighting. The teacher who is the author of his/her own actions (performs deeds which are independent of the outside world, causatively conditioned in him/herself) may be viewed as a responsible creature in a formal, ontological sense (being actively responsible). The strength of a relationship between, on the one hand, his/her freedom of action, psychological freedom and the feeling of it, and on the other hand the actions whose content, direction and level correspond to values decide about the intensity of the teacher's responsibility (Michalak 2003).

The level of the teacher's awareness, his/her feeling of psychological freedom, possibility to make a choice are the factors deciding about the teacher's causative power. It is worth reminding that Hans Jonas (1979) introduces the notion of the causative power in order to describe the action that has an influence on the world, is controlled by the doer and the effects of which should be predictable to some extent. The author treats the causative power as the first and the most general condition of responsibility.

While discussing the issue of the conditioning of the teacher's responsibility, special attention should be paid to the suggestion of Z. Kwieciński (1998, pp. 81–85), who considers moral maturity, wisdom, kindness and the drive towards success (professional, financial and prestigious) to be one of the most important factors deciding about the level of responsibility. Moral maturity stems from the possessed ability to use consequently the previously internalized moral principles and is defined by the author as the readiness to make agreements with other people and follow them, as well as the focus on permanent principles and conscience, as the factors determining the directions of social behaviour, building up respect and trust.

In the context of the considerations presented so far, one can say that the phenomenon of the teacher's responsibility is especially constituted by:

- the teacher's cognitive power manifested in the sense of being responsible, in certain moral intuition revealing itself when one is internally convinced of the necessity to take responsibility, for instance, for the pupil (its sources can be found in a specific understanding of responsibility – as a response) and in being objectively responsible for the duties connected with the performed function of the teacher. The strength of the cognitive power is determined by: the awareness of duties and obligations, teacher's consciousness of his/her deeds and their effects, readiness to bear the consequences of one's actions; the teacher's sense of psychological freedom; possibility of choice; strength of the emotional bond between the teacher and the pupil;
- responsible actions – embracing the sense and the goal, predicting the means and forecasting the effects;
- moral maturity;
- wisdom (prudence and judiciousness while making moral choices or taking decisions).

2.2. The kinds of teacher's responsibility

The analysis of the notion of the teacher's responsibility requires taking a broad context into account, both legal and moral, in order to examine it deeply. Therefore I suggest that for the purpose of our further considerations we should distinguish more problematic areas connected with the answers to the following questions:

- When and how is the teacher responsible?
- Who (or what) is the teacher answerable to?
- What is the ultimate source of the teacher's duties?
- Who gives the teacher *the power* allowing for the fulfillment of these duties?

In these areas there are hidden factors deciding about the possibility of distinguishing various kinds of the teacher's responsibility.

2.2.1. Legal responsibility

Among various kinds of the teacher's responsibility, the "legal responsibility" seems to be the strictest one concerning the basic transgressions occurring during the fulfillment of the duties entrusted to the teacher. Within the legal responsibility one can distinguish an employee's responsibility, as well as civil, disciplinary and penal responsibilities. The legal significance of responsibility is connected with negative consequences of the conduct not in keeping with the legal requirements and bans. Every body which is constituted in order to adjudicate about the teacher's legal responsibility takes into account the following elements which comprise a full picture of one's conduct and allow for its legal evaluation (usually the lack of any of them results in inability to ascribe any responsibility):

1. the behaviour of the teacher bearing responsibility which may consist in active or passive behaviour (i.e. action or desistance);
2. illegality – understood as inconsistency of the teacher's behaviour with the model of the right conduct in a certain situation. In other words, a teacher does something s/he was prohibited from doing (illegal action) or does not do something s/he was obliged to do (illegal desistance);
3. causative relationship between the illegal behaviour and the illegal effect described by lawyers as the principle of an adequate causative relationship.

2.2.2. Moral responsibility

Within the general meaning of moral responsibility there is a different scope of the same category, i.e. a scope of this for what and to whom we should be responsible in the social practice. The basis for the analyses conducted over the teacher's moral responsibility is the distinction, according to which we can distinguish various evaluators of responsibility and ascribe various kinds of moral responsibility to them (Michalak 2003):

- *personal responsibility* in which it is the subjective "I" (autoconsciousness) who is the evaluator. It is the responsibility for one's own identity, development, for "who and what one is" in relation to "who and what one could be" and "who and what one should be";

- *social responsibility* in which it is “the other human being” and “the society” who are the evaluators. Therefore within the social responsibility one can distinguish two categories depending on two of their aspects – the allocentric and the sociocentric one. In the allocentric aspect the responsibility concerns “the other” in the direct, interpersonal contact. While the sociocentric aspect of the social responsibility concerns the responsibility for people constituting some groups, social macrostructures (nation, society);
- *historical responsibility* in which history is an evaluator. It goes beyond personal actions, it is responsibility for personal and social deeds, it is a consequence of taking part in the shaping of history, therefore it is responsibility for the present, future, and perhaps past of a human being.
- *global responsibility* in which “Earth – the people’s planet” is the evaluator.

Personal responsibility

Personal responsibility means answering to “myself” for the content of individual identity, for “me as a product of self-creation” (Sartre 1957). It is worth stressing that self-consciousness as an evaluator of responsibility may seem of little importance and basically metaphysical. However, it can be very harsh on a human being who lacks the feeling of self-fulfillment. An individual who chooses “oneself” in a variety of possibilities offered by reality is responsible for self-creation. Thus, the teacher is responsible for him/herself, for his/her broadly-understood development, for the behaviour towards him/herself and others, for his/her attitude towards values and fulfilling them, for the way in which s/he constitutes him/herself morally, for the consciousness of the goals and means of his/her actions which are at his/her disposal. Being a responsible teacher is inseparably connected with reflecting on oneself, with undertaking actions leading to personal and professional improvement. Generally speaking one can say that the teacher is first and foremost responsible for his/her own causative power. Among many powers that are at the teacher’s disposal and which decide about responsibility, there is, for instance, knowledge. The teacher is responsible not only for his/her deed, but also for what he has not done, for example, for not gaining available knowledge, the obtaining of which implies the obligation to gain it.

The teacher who cannot or does not want to take responsibility for him/herself cannot be responsible for others. In the light of philosophical considerations being towards oneself and being towards others are not the same “I am primarily responsible for myself, and then for the fellow human being,” stresses Filek (1996, pp. 82-83). It must be noticed that the teacher who tries to ascribe the responsibility for his/her own decisions and actions and for the principles preached by him/her-

self to some vague “groups of people bearing responsibility”, deprives him/herself of the possibility of having authentic educational impact.

Social responsibility

Allocentric aspect - the answerability “towards oneself” is directly connected with bearing responsibility for one’s own choices related with the world of “others”. With reference to educators one can talk about their responsibility for the children and youth entrusted them. This responsibility has a character different from the responsibility for a single deed. It is something permanent, something that demands constant activity and at the same time something that cannot be omitted or avoided. With reference to educators one can talk about their responsibility for the children and youth entrusted them. This responsibility has a character of a task ahead of them and it not necessarily must be connected with any transgression and suffering its consequences, it demands constant activity, according to the above-mentioned positive dimension of responsibility. The concern about the good of a pupil and respect for his/her personal dignity may be treated as a reference point for taking decisions by the teacher. They become especially important in the situations involving support for the pupil in his/her development, in his/her “becoming”, in awaking his/her readiness and ability to take responsibility for him/herself. Being a responsible teacher is connected with creating situations in which a pupil can learn to be responsible.

The relationship in which a teacher is responsible for a pupil requires giving an answer to the question: What can decide about the quality of relationships between a teacher and a pupil which stem from the concern about the good of the pupil and belong to the area of the responsibility for “the other”? Responsibility can also have roots in love understood as a real form of a bond with the other person. As mentioned in Buber’s opinion (1962) love is the responsibility of *I* for *You* and only on this basis one can educate, support or help somebody. This thesis, in the light of “swanning”, i.e. pretended love, which we encounter every day, discloses the basic doubt concerning the possibility of its realization in reality: Does pedagogical love exist in the relationships between a teacher and his/her pupils? “Perhaps,” it is about some kind of protective love, and not a demanding one; or maybe only about talking about one’s love for others (declaring it) – rather about emotions than about an engaged action. Maybe there are few teachers authentically loving their pupils, i.e. being concerned about their development and future, since there is little true, not instrumental love among young people (attitude of giving “oneself to others” and not mainly taking). The features of the teacher such as kindness, helpfulness, and understanding decide about the character of the relationships with pupils, which constitute “the horizon of the teacher’s self-creation”. It is worth demanding

the existence of such personal features among educators, if we cannot talk about the love towards their pupils.

Sociocentric aspect of responsibility - while attempting to define the teacher's responsibility one should also pay attention to the fact that this responsibility is extended onto the social structures in which they work, social groups, institutions, organizations and associations. It is a relationship that requires the subject to generalize his/her attitude towards other people and does not mean the identification with persons, but rather with the systems of values motivating social actions. "Being responsible also means being aware of what is expected from the individual by the group, what helps its development. It also means the acceptance of the "common thinking" spirit as the main factor of actions. Therefore the support for the social responsibility of the school which is an institution having both external obligations towards the state and society, as well as internal obligations towards pupils, teachers and parents, can be found in dialoguing responsibility. One should think then: What requirements towards arise teachers?

In the context of sociocentric aspect of teacher professional responsibility it is worth stressing that for some years the social services in the western world have been heavily influenced by systems of accountability which is associated with a sense of compliance and conformity to the agendas set by other people, often government. It relates to the culture of measured prescribed outcomes and standards. Such a culture runs the risk of creating a culture of blame when outcomes are not achieved, and a fear of failure. In such an environments there is more attention paid by teachers to "doing things right" rather than "doing the right things". A culture of accountability does not rely on building teams of educators who collectively operate in the best interest of the students and of wider society.

The philosophical understanding of responsibility remains suspended between the community and individual approaches towards it. The majority of teachers tend to be interested in their work only in the micro-dimension – for example, in the classroom – and to a much lesser extent in the consequences of their behaviour for the school or local community or even greater social groups. However, the cooperation of teachers with each other is very important, since if a few teachers educate a child, this is their joint task and only together can they perform it well. Teachers must attend to collective, or shared, responsibilities; the responsibilities of schools or teachers' groups; the responsibilities teachers have as members of schools as organizations. Teachers should decide together about the curriculum and ways of monitoring and evaluating pupils, but first of all they should talk to each other openly and learn from each other. Without cooperation it is hard to create a good school, even if in the staff there are a lot of excellent educators. Teachers should discover why they are dependent on each other and make sure that this interde-

pendence will be able to develop and manifest itself in the form of personal responsibility to children, schools and communities for the tasks both undertaken and fulfilled. The teacher's professional development takes the fastest pace when the teacher works in the team openly talking about their work (McLaughlin, 2002). Good educational materials, methodological advisers, courses, conferences and workshops are extremely important, but the exchange of experiences with teachers-colleagues seems to be much more crucial. To conclude, in reviewing the ways in which teachers can consider their roles and responsibilities there are many reasons for promoting "a culture of responsibility" within schools and moving away from "a culture of accountability".

Historical responsibility

The above-mentioned social responsibility is directly connected with the historical responsibility. The ontological meaning of responsibility for history seems difficult to deny. The historical responsibility places a human being in a certain *continuum* of human destiny. It is to a different degree present in the awareness of the teachers who in their thoughts on education are far from its global and prospective character (Massa 1997). However, a specific situation of the contemporary civilization, the changing shape of the world, economic and social transformations call for serious and significant changes in thinking about reality, in its explanation, in people's attitudes which have a great influence on the future of the societies and the world. The changes we are witnessing make the historical responsibility of a human being even more obvious.

In our civilization of technocracy and consumer productivity, the material results of human activity in the world reveal the threats both for the Earth and man, who becomes the object of interaction with the reality created by nobody else than him/herself. A human being, as Fromm (1979) puts it, no longer experiences him/herself as the centre of the world, as the doer of his/her own deeds, but his/her actions and their effects begin to take control over him/her. Pedagogical reflections on that subject unveil the existence of a dangerous discrepancy between modern man and the world of the civilization he created.

The comparative analysis of the international educational reports edited by Xavier Perez de Cuellar: *Notre Diversité Créatrice* (1998), Jacques Delors: *Learning: The Treasure Within* (1996), Frederico Mayor: *Un monde nouveau* (1999) and the UE report: *Accomplishing Europe through education and training. Report by study group on education and training* (1977) allows for the statement that their authors take into consideration new dimensions of education, i.e. education for pluralism, for representational democracy, for tolerance and respect for others, for equality, for negotiations and coexistence, for and through culture, and education for global

responsibility. The latter type consists mainly of ecological education and creating a 'peace culture'. Global responsibility means co-responsibility for the destiny of the world because of the axiological reasons, one's own choices and actions, despite the limited cognition, especially of the future events.

The messages that are comprised in the contemporary educational reports reflect the international community's concern with the shape and future of education. The range of problems described by the authors reveals new areas of the teacher's responsibility, a new horizon of the teacher's moral responsibility emerges. It is global responsibility being part of the historical one. Treating the future in unpredictable categories changes the perspective from which we look at education. The reconstruction of the existing order is no longer the central goal of education, preparation for the encounter with the unknown becomes it. The greater and greater complexity of the world surrounding us, the prospect of globalization and a planetary citizenship in connection with insecurity make the teacher's responsibility gain a new, deeper dimension.

2.3. The scope of the teacher's responsibility

One general question about the teacher's retrospective moral responsibility concerns its scope: what is the teacher responsible for? An answer to this question depends mostly on an account of the scope of the teacher's prospective responsibilities. The teacher is obviously responsible for the directly intended results of his/her actions. The teacher makes him/herself responsible for them by directing his/her action towards bringing them about. The teacher is also responsible for at least many events which he/she is certain will ensue from his/her actions. Conceptions of prospective and retrospective responsibility help to determine the descriptions of the teacher's actions or omissions. It is worth stressing that in the social practice the awareness of the tasks of particular human occupations basically has a formal meaning, so it consists in fulfilling certain external tasks, while educational responsibility is exceptional in character. In addition to the formal aspect of responsibility (bearing responsibility for somebody or something), which is uniquely popular in everyday language, the personal meaning of the notion deserves special attention (teacher's moral responsibility in its personal, social and historical dimensions). This personal meaning reveals the scope of the professional teacher's responsibility for specific spheres.

The considerations in this article has so far concentrated on the types of the teacher's responsibility and its content and they make it possible to pose the following thesis: the teacher him/herself decides about the scope of the responsibility taken daily and nobody can relieve him/her of the burden of constant defining its dimension in specific situations. In other words, the general meaning of the teach-

er's responsibility comprises a scope of that for which the teacher is responsible in his/her educational practice. In this practice we very often encounter on the one hand pedagogism or megapedagogism, i.e. the expectation that solving all the problems and crises bothering the world, freeing from all oppression, dependence and domination depend on education, on the school and on pedagogy. On the other hand, we observe the escape from the categories of any broader responsibility, surpassing the contents of the school subject curriculum or of the academic subdiscipline, or we observe the psychological reductionism, offering temporary, short-term assistance that improves the disposition through participating in workshops and individual or group meetings (Michalak 2003).

It is worth reminding that the notion of responsibility has its roots in the field of the law, where primarily this person is "responsible" who acts "in place of" somebody and at the same time "on behalf of" him/her. Taking responsibility for somebody means putting oneself in the position of somebody and pleading his/her cause. The Latin word "pro" comprises in its meaning this moment of substituting, being "in place of" somebody and the moment of interceding "on behalf of" somebody, acting "for the good of" somebody (Filek 1996, p. 55). The essence of responsibility understood in such a way is substitutability. However, D. Bonhoeffer (1966) warns against changing responsibility into "an abstract god", against absolutizing it. Responsibility is not absolute or limitless. The limit of my responsibility is where the responsibility of the other is. The action becomes really responsible when one remembers about this limit. On the other hand, responsibility – within limits – comprises, in Bonhoeffer's opinion (1966), all reality. Since the world is the area of specific responsibility given to us. In this context we can state that the limits of the teacher's responsibility indicating its scope mark the boundaries of the world in which the teacher is present and the limits of identification with that for what I feel responsible (the feeling of community with the object of responsibility). They are not prescribed, they mainly depend on the teacher's individual attitude, so the teacher determines the scope of his/her retrospective responsibilities, at the same time the teacher determines the scope of his/her prospective responsibilities; where the teacher's moral responsibility is at stake, that must be a moral determination.

Conclusions

My considerations were an attempt to overcome the ambiguity of the concept of responsibility. The critical analysis of the publications belonging to the most representative of the contemporary philosophical thoughts on the category of responsibility forms a basis for the considerations about the essence of responsibility. Responsibility which is thought of as a significant characteristic of a society, as

the factor shaping the society, is at the same time felt to be a burden, as one of these 'unfortunate gifts' such as freedom, love, sense of dignity and sensitivity of conscience. These are the sources of being afraid of responsibility, the wish to run away from it.

Based on the conducted analyses, I come to a conclusion that there exists a possibility of experiencing and understanding responsibility differently to the everyday way of doing it, responsibility can be seen as an entirely positive experience. This stress put on the prospective responsibility may be significant for undertaking empirical research. Rooting responsibility in guilt, which is typical of everyday understanding of the problem, is an error, because responsibility does not result from guilt, but just the opposite – guilt from responsibility.

In the course of my considerations I was guided by the premise that the understanding of the essence of responsibility not only gives hope to increase the knowledge about the areas of human activity, but also decides about the ability to behave properly, because every change of the concept usually involves the change in its understanding, which in turn involves the change in our knowledge and as a result a change in our behaviour. The look from the philosophical perspective at understanding responsibility by teachers not only allows for its deeper understanding, but also can serve teachers themselves for clearer realization of both assumptions and results of the concepts accepted by them.

Teachers' prospective and retrospective responsibilities, as individuals, are often defined partly by his/her role within school. Such responsibilities are defined initially by the school itself, in the light of its purposes and values. However, there is room for controversy (often moral one) about what the teacher's role – responsibilities ought to be, and about when and whether they may be overridden by moral responsibilities which transcend the teacher's role. In so far as the teacher has responsibilities within school, s/he shares responsibility with other teachers for what the school does. But is that responsibility limited to the part which teacher plays directly, or could and should play, in the school's actions? Or can the teacher be held responsible for the actions of other teachers in the school even though the teacher does not him/herself have authority or control over them? Answers to such questions depend on getting clear about what it is to be a member of a teacher group, and about what it is to be responsible.

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