

Is the Honor System the Best System?

**A Philosophical Inquiry Into and Defense of The Honor System at
Washington and Lee University**

Jordan Campbell

Honors Thesis

Washington and Lee University

April 11, 2008

Introduction

While the Honor System at Washington and Lee (W&L) is widely regarded as one of the most important and consequential aspects of the school by both alumni and current students, and while it is regarded as one of the most effective Honor Systems or Codes among all universities in the United States¹, there still remain a number of questions about it. Though it seems to be attacked from a multitude of angles, I believe all of the issues center around one question: is it the best system, or is there a better system? Certainly opponents of the System acknowledge that there may be some beneficial aspects of or side effects of it. However, opponents of the System have questioned both the goals of the System as well as its methods of achieving, or trying to achieve, those goals. Are the ends that the System seeks appropriate ends for an Honor System to strive for? Is basing a school's ultimate judicial system on Honor, a seemingly nebulous concept that can be widely interpreted, with no codification fair to the students governed by it? Is having only a single sanction, dismissal from the university, fair to the students found guilty of an Honor Violation, and is it the best punishment system? So certainly these questions make us wonder whether or not it is the best system. The purpose of this paper, then, will be two-fold. First, we will examine what the goal(s) or end(s) of the Honor System is/are. Secondly, we will examine whether or not the means by which it goes about attaining those ends are fair or the best way of attaining those ends. What I will argue for in this paper is that once we understand the ends of the Honor System, then we will be able to defend

¹ McCabe, Personal Interview

against its greatest objections, objections to the means of attaining those ends. And thus we will ultimately be able to conclude that, indeed, it may very well be the best system.

I. The "Best" System

Introduction

When we ask the question of whether or not a system is "the best," there are really two questions being asked. First is whether or not the output that it generates is the best compared to that of other systems. That is, does it attain the goals or ends of the system better than any other system? The second question embedded in the initial inquiry is whether or not the means used in attaining that end are the best. Let us take, for example, the question which company is the best at making shoes. What we are actually asking is two-fold: first, whose shoes are simply the best, taking into consideration factors such as comfort and durability? Secondly, who has the best way of making shoes? So we may think that Nike has the best shoes in terms of comfort and durability, but we may object to their ethically questionable methods of outsourcing, using child labor, and paying extremely low wages to workers in highly objectionable work environments such as sweatshops. In that case, we may think that, for example, Puma makes the best shoes. While they may be second in terms of the actual product itself (comfort, durability), we may agree with their methods of production more, assuming they use ethically sound methods (paying a reasonable wage and with good working conditions for the laborers).

Perhaps more applicable to the inquiry in this paper would be thinking about a government. Certainly the ends of a government are complex, but for simplicity's sake let us assume that the only thing that we want from a government is a minimal crime rate; a low crime rate is the criterion we use for determining which the best system of government is. We may then recall that a government such as that of the Spanish Inquisition had a really low crime rate, but we may object to their coercive tactics in achieving it, such as trumping up charges on innocent people so as to set an example. In that case, we may deem the current United States government the best government. While it may have a higher crime rate, we may agree with their methods of attaining it, such as granting due process to all those accused of a crime.

Let us now apply this notion to our current inquiry into the Honor System here at Washington and Lee. The structure of this section will be to first determine what the goal of the Honor System is. That is, we will ask what the purported aim of the Honor System is. Next, we will then determine whether or not it achieves that end. The second course of action is then to determine what the goal of Honor Systems at large is, or rather ought to be. That is, while the Honor System may achieve what it sets out to attain, the objection may still remain that while it attains what it sets out to do, that end is flawed from the beginning; so while it may be the best at achieving what it seeks, it may not be the best honor system because it does not seek to achieve what the ideal honor system ought to achieve.

The second part of this paper will then seek to answer the question of whether or not its methods of achieving its end are the best.

The End(s) of the Honor System at Washington and Lee

To determine the end or ends of the Honor System, we will consider two factors. First we will look at the history surrounding its origin so as to determine why it was developed in the first place. Secondly, we will consider the goal as stated by "The White Book," which details the Honor System and will give us a full understanding of the purpose of the Honor System.

While the exact date of the Honor System's inception is not known, Professor John Gunn, Lewis Whitaker Adams Professor of Economics, Emeritus at Washington and Lee and resident guru of the Honor System (he has studied it extensively and has been a part of the Washington and Lee community since 1941), maintains that Washington and Lee has had an Honor System since the mid-1840s.² While we do not know exactly how or why the Honor System was created, Gunn does note that "the introduction of an Honor System at Washington College in the 1840s was parallel with similar developments at other nearby colleges."³ In particular, he names the University of Virginia. A quick look at the origins of the Honor System at UVA may help us understand why the Honor System at Washington College was created, since it seems to have been in line with a trend in the area. The Honor Committee at UVA has a section entitled "History of the Honor Committee" on their website that gives reasons for the creation of their student-run Honor System. In 1842, in an effort to give students more autonomy on the campus, offered that students less monitoring on exams in return that they sign "I, A.B., do hereby certify on my honor that I have derived no assistance during the time of this examination from any source whatsoever."⁴ The students ran with the gesture and created

² Gunn, "A Historical Note about the Honor System of Washington and Lee University"

³ Gunn, "A Note on the History of Some Other Collegiate Honor Systems"

⁴ <http://www.virginia.edu/honor/intro/honorhistory.html>

their own Honor System in which they governed themselves. This would indicate that one of the first impetuses for the Honor System was to strengthen student autonomy.

Returning to Washington and Lee, the first official records that the university has date to 1858, wherein a mathematics examination has written on it a pledge that reads, "I have neither given nor received any aid on this exam,"⁵ a pledge that is almost word-for-word the same as the pledge we have today. This pledge indicates that one of the goals of the Honor System would have been to reduce cheating on academic work. So from looking at the history behind the Honor System's creation, we may assume that it was at least in part created both to monitor student academic integrity (through invoking their sense of honor) and to give them increased autonomy.

A detailed reading of the "Philosophy" section of "The White Book" will give us a further understanding of what the end(s) of the Honor System is (are). The following is the introductory paragraph of the "Philosophy" section of "The White Book:"

The Honor System of Washington and Lee is based on the fundamental principle that a spirit of trust pervades all aspects of student life. The spirit of trust makes Washington and Lee a unique educational institution. By demanding that all students act honorably, and thereby securing for themselves the resulting benefits, the System instills in the men and women of Washington and Lee an enduring respect for the value of honorable conduct.⁶

There are a few things that we must take from this opening paragraph. First of all, the most salient point that the introduction makes is emphasizing the importance of a "spirit of trust." Secondly, we must not underestimate the importance that the introduction discusses "all

⁵ Gunn, "A Historical Note about the Honor System of Washington and Lee University"

⁶ "The White Book," p. 2

aspects of *student life*" [italics added]. The term "student life" is of the utmost importance in understanding the Honor System because, as we will see from further reading of this section of "The White Book," the Honor System is not meant to govern, necessarily, all aspects of personal life or morality, but rather student life. Making this distinction is pivotal for understanding the Honor System because one possible objection that I have heard follows this reasoning: "The Honor System surely fails. Just look at the party culture of students here. Where is the honor in getting drunk and partying once a week, if not more? The Honor System fails to teach students morality or honorable conduct." I believe this objection is a misunderstanding of the end of the Honor System. It is not mean to govern the students' personal lives completely but rather only to govern them where they coincide with *academic life*, with *student life*.

To see this clearly, let us examine some further excerpts from the "Philosophy" section of "The White Book." For example, when it discusses the benefits from the Honor System, it talks about academic freedoms such as "students typically schedule their own final examinations, all students take their exams unsupervised, property is generally safe on campus, most University buildings remain open twenty-four hours per day, and a student's word is accepted and respected."⁷ So we can see that the benefits as stated by "The White Book" are academic-related. Further down, we read that the Honor System requires that "students should do their own work, represent themselves truthfully, and claim only that which is their own."⁸ It then stresses that the System is not a collection of regulations but rather is one of mutual trust. But the key point I am trying to convey is that these requirements are all academic. Lastly, it

⁷ "The White Book," p.2

⁸ "The White Book," p.2

says, "The notion of honorably conduct is essential to the University's *educational* objectives, for the *learning* process, like society, flourishes best in an environment where mutual trust and respect..." (italics added).⁹ Again, the language of "The White Book" indicates that the Honor System is meant strictly for the academic. Of course, sometimes the academic and personal life may overlap in certain instances, such instances of lying or stealing, but those relate to academic flourishing because they form the foundation of a learning culture. Something like Washington and Lee's party culture is widely embraced by the students and thus does not compromise their trust between one another; the Honor System is not intended to govern such areas of personal choice or arguably dishonorable conduct since they do not interfere with the trust that ensures academic flourishing. Gunn also recognizes this in his "Essay on the Honor System of Washington and Lee and the Culture of Truthfulness and Trust that it Supports." He states as one of the reasons for the effectiveness of the System that it "has not attempted to be a comprehensive system of moral behavior."¹⁰

From these passages as well as from the history briefly discussed above, we may now determine what the ends of the Honor System are. First off, in total, the word "trust" is used nine times in the "Philosophy" section, while the phrases "spirit of trust" and "community of trust" are used four times collectively. So we may determine that the ultimate objective of the Honor System is to achieve a spirit of trust in the community. The way of achieving this spirit of trust seems to be through honorable conduct from the members of the community (where they coincide with the academic realm), which seems to be conduct in which students "do their own

⁹ "The White Book", p.2

¹⁰ Gunn, "An Essay on the Honor System of Washington and Lee University and the Culture or Truthfulness and Trust that it Supports"

work, represent themselves truthfully, and claim only that which is their own." Furthermore, "The White Book" states that "responsibility" and "self-governance"¹¹ are important in the community. From this, combined with the history of the system, we can determine that increased autonomy is another coinciding end. With all of these things considered, I maintain that from the history of the system as well as from "The White Book" the ends of the Honor System are the achievement of a community of trust that will allow for educational flourishing and academic integrity, a student body that conducts itself honorably so as to build that trust, and autonomy (responsibility and self-governance).

Now that we have an understanding of what the aims of the System are, we may now assess whether or not it meets those goals. Perhaps the most easily assessed is whether or not it has achieved the goal of academic integrity. Dr. Donald McCabe, a professor at Rutgers Business School and the director of the Center for Academic Integrity, is "the foremost voice and authority on academic integrity research."¹² McCabe has performed surveys on academic integrity at over 165 institutions¹³. In his research, McCabe states that there are three schools that are in the highest echelon of academic integrity, of which Washington and Lee is one. Washington and Lee, according to McCabe, has the second-lowest rate of cheating of all the schools he has surveyed. The only school above Washington and Lee is a small women's liberal arts college in the northeast (the name of which I cannot disclose, in accordance with Dr. McCabe's wishes). The student body numbers roughly 1300 undergraduates. McCabe attributes their excellence in academic integrity to the philosophy of the institution, which encourages

¹¹ "The White Book," p.2,3

¹² Dodd, Timothy "Honor Code 101: and Introduction to the Elements of Traditional Honor Codes, Modified Honor Codes and Academic Integrity Policies"

¹³ McCabe, "Re: Quick question on your surveys."

confronting members who have cheated or compromised their integrity in other ways rather than turning them in. The school offers "Conflict Management Services" for all of its students in order to facilitate the ideal of confrontation and accountability rather than reporting. While they do have a lower rate of cheating than Washington and Lee, McCabe believes that the system they have is unique to the institution and would not necessarily work at any other institutions. That is, he maintains that the fact that it is a women's college (with the idea that women are more relational on average than men) and also of such small size create unique conditions under which their system can thrive. McCabe believes that their system would not work at almost any other institution due to those facts. As a result, in terms of other, more "normal" schools, if you will, Washington and Lee does in fact have the lowest instance of cheating.

McCabe's research then allows us to conclude that the Honor System at Washington and Lee in fact is the best system when it comes to decreasing cheating and maintaining academic integrity. The reasons for that are certainly up to debate, but those will be discussed later in this paper.

The second goal that we will examine is that of autonomy. "Autonomy" is derived from the Greek words "auto" and "nomos" and quite literally means "one who gives oneself his/her own law." The Oxford English Dictionary further lists as the two primary definitions:

a) The right of self-government, of making its own laws and administering its own affairs

b) Liberty to follow one's will, personal freedom.¹⁴

Let us then examine how the Honor System at Washington and Lee increases or grants autonomy to the students residing under it, beginning with personal freedom, particularly in the academic realm. "The White Book" states that "students enjoy unparalleled academic and social freedoms."¹⁵ It then describes how students here are allowed to schedule their own exams during finals week and how they are allowed to take exams unsupervised. So from this perspective, we may say that students, on account of the Honor System, surely enjoy greater academic autonomy than students at most institutions, as such practices are very rare to find, especially at larger schools.

With regards to the former of the definitions, that of self-government, the Honor System grants what I contend is unrivaled autonomy. The Honor System is currently completely student-run. At the orientation speech in Lee Chapel, the President of the University makes a symbolic gesture by greeting the freshmen, giving a brief introduction, and then walking out, leaving only the EC members on stage, so as to show that the System is entirely in the hands of the students. Now, it has not always been that way, as Gunn notes that from its inception until sometime between 1867 and 1905, while primary responsibility was in the hands of the students, appeals were still taken to the faculty. However, during that stretch from 1867 to 1905, the system became completely student-run, and in 1905 its administration was formally

¹⁴

http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50015226?single=1&query_type=word&queryword=autonomy&first=1&max_to_show=10

¹⁵ "The White Book" p. 2

placed in the newly-formed "Executive Committee of the Student Body."¹⁶ It has been almost unchanged since 1905, and today the Honor System is almost completely administered by the elected representatives of the Executive Committee. All honor matters are brought to the Executive Committee, heard by the Executive Committee, and the final verdict is reached solely by the students on the Executive Committee. Furthermore, the Honor Advocates, those who aid the accused in honor matters, involved in honor matters are also fellow students.

I stated earlier that the system is "almost completely administered" by the EC. I used the qualifiers "almost completely" because there is one step in the administration of the Honor System of utmost importance that I believe contributes the most to our self-governance. That step is the ultimate step in the administration of the Honor System, the student-body hearing. When an accused student has been found guilty of an Honor Violation by the elected EC, he has the options of immediate withdrawal from the university, or he can appeal the verdict to the student body in an open hearing. The jury is comprised entirely of students. The "prosecution" is three of the student EC members. The "defense" is student Honor Advocates. The Chair of the hearing is a student agreed upon by both the Honor Advocates and the EC. So from top to bottom, the Honor System is completely student-run. The only step in which a faculty member may play a role is in turning in a suspect Honor Violation. In my research, I have not encountered nor can I conceive of a system that may grant more autonomy to the students in the sense of self-government.

The next goal that we shall examine is what I asserted earlier is the primary goal of the Honor System, that of building a community of trust. This goal is a bit difficult to completely

¹⁶ Gunn, "A Historical Note about the Honor System of Washington and Lee University"

gauge, but there are certainly examples that we can cite that can give us a good understanding of the kind of community that there is on campus. Certainly that exams are not proctored or are often take home indicates a trust of the faculty in the students. Other examples will simply be stories that I believe illustrate quite nicely the trust on the campus. One of my favorite stories was told to me my senior year of high school and was actually a motivating factor in my decision to attend this university. A friend of mine, Rob Rain (who would later become the President of the Executive Committee), had a friend from Purdue who transferred to Princeton (another school with an Honor Code) visit him. Rob told him about the Honor System and the spirit of trust that it created on campus, but his friend remained ever-skeptical. So Rob took his wallet out and put it on a bench in the quad and left it there for several hours. He told his friend that either it would still be there when they came back later or someone would have simply turned it into the security desk at some point during the day, a proposition that seemed absurd to his friend. At the end of the day, the wallet was gone; it had been turned into the security desk just like Rob indicated may have happened. Surely anybody who came across it could have been tempted to steal it. However, the trust that we place in one another allowed Rob to leave his wallet out without worry of it being taken.

A second example is a much more general example that I can think of, something that many students indeed take for granted: leaving our personal property around campus without worry of it being taken. For example, many students leave their laptops and books in the library overnight or all day only to return to them much later, finding everything exactly where they left it. While this may seem like a small detail, I will offer a counter example experienced by one of my good friends who attends the University of Texas at Austin, another school that has an

Honor Code (established in the 2004).¹⁷ Working in the library, my friend got tired. While sitting in his chair, he shut his brand new laptop, put it underneath his chair, and proceeded to take a thirty minute nap. When he awoke, he found that his laptop had been stolen from underneath him. While this is one example, any student I know at another school does not dare to leave personal property overnight or unattended in their library, or anywhere else at their school for that matter. Again, while this is just one small example, I believe it does indicate how there is indeed a certain community of trust at the University that is almost unheard of at other universities.

Other smaller examples would be that freshmen generally leave their dormitory room doors unlocked at all times, that sophomores residing in the fraternity houses leave their rooms unlocked as well, that athletes do not need locks on their lockers (again, something not normally enjoyed at other institutions), or alumni posting a one dollar bill on a common bulletin board simply to see whether it will be taken or not (something that I noticed during alumni weekend this year). Again, these are all small things, but I believe they are truly indicative of a community of trust that strongly pervades every aspect of student life here.

What I hope to have done so far is to show how the Honor System at Washington and Lee is certainly the best way of attaining the goals that it sets forth. However, I realize that this line of reasoning is open to one very significant objection. This objection has been made to me along these lines: "Certainly the Honor System fulfills its purported goals, but those in and of themselves are flawed. The Honor System here does not accurately reflect what Honor Systems or Codes at large are meant to attain." So the objection would seem to be that we should not

¹⁷ http://www.utexas.edu/news/2004/04/29/nr_honor/

evaluate the Honor System by its own standards, but rather by more “objective” or outside standards. What the next section of this paper will do then, is to show that the Honor System at Washington and Lee actually does abide by universal Honor Code ends. In fact, it goes above and beyond those ends.

Universal Ends of Honor Codes or Systems

In order to gauge what seem to be the ends of most honor systems or codes, I examined honor systems and codes from over twenty different universities, thirteen of which I chose to cite. This sample includes large public universities, such as the University of Texas at Austin, as well as universities or colleges from around the country, from other East Coast schools, such as William and Mary and the University of Virginia, to Mid-Western schools, such as The University of Colorado at Boulder and Kansas State University, to West Coast schools, such as the California Institute of Technology. It also includes Honor Codes that have originated in different eras, from the earliest Honor Code at William and Mary (established in 1736) to very recently developed codes, such as The University of Texas at Austin (established in 2004). The idea was to find some norms between all of the universities to get an accurate idea of what Honor Codes or Systems generally strive to achieve. What follows are excerpts from the Honor Codes of these schools (all italics are added).

College of William and Mary¹⁸

- “The essence of the honor system is individual responsibility in all matters relating to a student's honor.”

¹⁸ <http://www.wm.edu/so/honor-council/honorcode.htm>

- “The Honor Code today informs all students, regardless of academic status, of the level of honor expected and seeks to promote a university-wide *community of trust among scholars.*”
- “The Honor Code outlines the conduct that cannot be tolerated within a *community of trust.*”

University of Virginia¹⁹

- “Although a student should always conduct himself honorably, a student is only formally bound by the Honor System in Charlottesville and Albemarle County, and elsewhere at any time when he identifies himself as a University of Virginia student *in order to gain the trust of others.*”

University of Carolina, Chapel Hill²⁰

- “For more than 120 years, Carolina students have *pledged not to lie, cheat, or steal. Students enjoy a great deal of freedom* at Carolina and have been entrusted to hold each other accountable for maintaining a *just and safe community. As such, students hear and decide all alleged cases of conduct and academic integrity violations.*”
- “The guiding force behind the students' *responsible exercise of freedom.*”
- “The University endeavors to instill in each student a *love of learning, a commitment to fair and honorable conduct.*”
- “The guiding principle of University regulation of conduct is that of *the responsible exercise of freedom.*”

University of Miami²¹

- “This code is established for the undergraduate student body, to *protect the academic integrity* of the University of Miami, to encourage consistent ethical behavior among undergraduate students, and to *foster a climate of fair competition.*”

Haverford College²²

- “As Haverford students, we seek an *environment* in which members of a diverse student body can *live together, interact, and learn from one another in ways that protect both personal freedom and community standards.*”
- “The code makes it possible for a *climate of trust, concern, and respect* to exist among us, a climate conducive to personal and community health.”

Middlebury College²³

¹⁹ <http://www.virginia.edu/honor/>

²⁰ <http://honor.unc.edu/honor/index.html>

²¹ http://www6.miami.edu/dean-students/pdf/undergrad_honorcode.pdf

²² <http://www.students.haverford.edu/code/code.html>

- “The students of Middlebury College believe that individual undergraduates must assume *responsibility* for their own *integrity on all assigned academic work*. This constitution has been written and implemented by students in a community of individuals that *values academic integrity* as a way of life.”

University of Richmond²⁴

- “The University of Richmond’s Honor System was *created by the students and for the students*, in order to maintain high standards of *academic integrity*. Through both student and faculty support, the *Honor System helps to create a community of trust and equality* for all students. The Honor System does *not serve the university as a set of laws*, but rather as a set of expectations and a way of life accepted and promoted by each member of the university community.”

Texas A&M University²⁵

- “Within the university, *academic integrity* is the most critical core value of the learning community. *Integrity makes trust among people possible. Without trust -- and honesty that breeds trust-- our society and our universities cannot flourish.*”
- “*Learning depends on honesty and trust* among students and faculty. Trust and integrity cannot exist in the face of academic dishonesty.”

Kansas State University²⁶

- The Introduction to the Honor page is entitled “*A Community of Integrity and Trust.*”
- “...In academic matters that one’s work is performed honestly and without unauthorized assistance.”

University of Texas at Austin²⁷

- “The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are *learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility*. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through *integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.*”
- “*Academic honor, trust and integrity* are fundamental to The University of Texas at Austin.”

Rice University²⁸

- “To quote the Constitution, Rice students are placed on their honor by the group “*not to violate the trust* placed in them in any way.”

²³ <http://www.middlebury.edu/about/handbook/student/>

²⁴ <http://www.student.richmond.edu/~urhc/>

²⁵ <http://www.tamu.edu/aggiehonor/About%20Us/Philosophy/philosophy.html>

²⁶ <http://www.k-state.edu/honor/>

²⁷ http://www.utexas.edu/news/2004/04/29/nr_honor/

²⁸ <http://www.ruf.rice.edu/~honor/bluebook/overview.htm>

- “The *advantages* of the Honor System are many. Most obvious is the freedom afforded the student and faculty in taking and giving examinations. Students may leave the room at any time during the examination. Also, instructors may choose to give take-home examinations and self-scheduled finals.”
- “In addition to these concrete examples, there is the more important advantage of *mutual trust and respect* among students and between students and faculty.”

University of Colorado at Boulder²⁹

- “As citizens of an academic *community of trust*, CU-Boulder students *do not lie or cheat* whether they are on campus or acting as representatives of the university in surrounding communities.”

California Institute of Technology³⁰

- “No member of the Caltech community shall take unfair advantage of any other member of the Caltech community.”
- “The Honor Code aims at promoting an *atmosphere of respect and trust* that allows Caltech students to *enjoy privileges* that make for a more relaxed atmosphere. For example, the Honor Code allows professors to make the *majority of exams as take-home*, allowing students to take them on their own schedule and in their preferred environment.”

These excerpts from this variety of colleges and universities provides with a good idea of what the “norms” of Honor Codes and Systems are. First, in almost all of the schools examined above, there is at least a notion of (phrases such as “foster a climate of fair academic competition”) or explicit reference to a community of trust or the idea that trust is the central theme of the Honor Code or System. And as we have already seen from previously in this paper, that is the primary goal of the Honor System at Washington and Lee. Secondly, we can see that there is universally a mandate for academic integrity, be that the Honor System explicitly forbidding lying and cheating or simply mentioning the idea of “academic honor.” Again, the goal of academic integrity and honor is another aforementioned end of the Washington and

²⁹ <http://www.colorado.edu/honorcode/index.htm>

³⁰ http://donut.caltech.edu/about/boc/ug_handbook.php

Lee Honor System. Furthermore, we can see that many of them were established “for the student and by the students” or are completely overseen by the students. So this would further solidify the notion that autonomy is indeed a norm amongst Honor Codes or Systems at large, just as it is with the System at Washington and Lee.

Lastly, Joseph Beatty outlines what he calls “justifications” for honor codes and systems in his paper “For Honor’s Sake: Moral Education, Honor Systems, and the Informer Rule.”³¹ He gives these justifications as an answer to the question, “Why then, are [Honor Systems] adopted and perpetuated?” So what he calls “justifications” we can certainly interpret as, and I shall call, “ends,” of which there are five. This will again provide us with a set of norms for Honor Systems and Codes. The first is the “institutional” end. He says that “it is important for that community to promote policies that inculcate the virtues of truthfulness and honesty and that safeguard procedures productive of truthful exchange.” So there is the idea that the achievement of truthfulness and integrity is one end of honor systems.

The second is the “utilitarian” end. Beatty asserts that it is related to the institutional end but goes beyond it. Specifically, he states, “Greater harmony or flourishing of a community is achieved when its members are able to respect one another, pursue their activities in an atmosphere of mutual trust, and remain free from various sorts of institutional restrictions.” He goes on to say that such trust accomplishes the other end of “a sense of community.” So the utilitarian end is one of achieving a trust-based community.

³¹ Educational Theory. Winter 1992. Volume 42

The third is the "autonomy" end. Beatty claims that one central aspect of all Honor Systems is the idea of self-government. He says that Honor Systems try to establish some sort of self-government since it is purported to cultivate "a mature autonomy in students."

The fourth end is the "moral education" end. Beatty maintains that Honor Systems try to cultivate certain moral virtues in their students, such as "honesty, trust, integrity, responsibility, and communal concern." So there ought to be some sort of moral education inherent in Honor Systems.

The fifth and final end he calls "the argument [for] justice and social certification." He argues that most institutions are ordinarily involved in grading comparative merit. So recipients of grades should have personally merited them. If students have not personally merited their grades, then the system is unjust, "and the function of the college or university in social certification is undermined."³² We can interpret this to mean that Honor Systems are to encourage and achieve academic integrity.

The Honor System at Washington and Lee meets all of these ends or "justifications." First, "The White Book" explicitly states that it achieves a "cultivation of truthfulness."³³ And I would maintain that the examples and stories mentioned earlier in this paper as well as Dr. McCabe's research illustrate that the System does indeed inculcate truthfulness and honesty. Secondly, the "utilitarian" justification has almost identical language to that of "The White Book." And I have illustrated already in this paper how the Honor System indeed does achieve a sense of community founded upon trust. Washington and Lee's Honor System also achieves the

³² All quotes from Beatty, p. 42

³³ "The White Book," p. 3

“autonomy” end, as we have already discussed in this paper. The fourth end that Beatty listed, the moral education end, is perhaps the trickiest to argue. However, the certain virtues that Beatty lists, honesty, trust, integrity, responsibility, and communal concern, are all inherent in the Honor System, as they are integral in attaining the community of trust that the Honor System attains. That is, by observing how the community of trust works, a student at Washington and Lee is able to see the value of such virtues, since they enable one to realize all of the freedoms that one enjoys on campus. So we could argue that though there is not explicit moral education, per se, the community itself instills these virtues in the students. Lastly, Washington and Lee certainly meets the “argument from justice and social certification,” since we interpreted it as saying that an end of Honor Systems is academic integrity, and this was already demonstrated through Dr. McCabe’s research.

So, what I hope to have argued for so far in this paper is that the Honor System at Washington and Lee is indeed the best Honor System in that it best meets the ends that it purports to do. And these ends seem to be normative across all Honor Systems, and in some sense are even grander than the basic ends purported by many institutions. However, as I argued earlier, this is only one criterion by which we can truly call an Honor System the best system. What we must now do is to examine the means by which these ends are attained, for if the system attains those ends through objectionable or unjustifiable means, then it is perhaps not the best system at all. This will be the aim of the second part of this paper.

II. The Means of The Honor System

Introduction

Though the Honor System does in fact attain very lofty ends, there are still a number of qualms with it. I believe that they all stem from two main concerns about the means through which the System achieves those goals. The first concern challenges the very notion of an "Honor" System. That is, the concern is whether or not it is fair to base a system on something as seemingly nebulous and widely interpreted a concept as honor. What makes this objection troubling is the fact that there is no written code of conduct. That is, the technical definition of an Honor Violation is simply "acts that the current student generation views as breaches of the community's trust."³⁴ This leaves, as I can personally attest to, a wide range of interpretation or "grey area." What happens when one student thinks that a certain act is a breach of the community's trust while another may not? Tangential to this first objection is the idea that basing a school's judicial system on something like honor is inherently wrong, if we understand the origins of honor, namely the inegalitarian and aristocratic origins of honor. So the question becomes whether or not something like honor is an appropriate basis for a school's ultimate judicial system. The second main objection concerns the feature that makes Washington and Lee's System unique and is perhaps the single most controversial of the Honor System: the single sanction, that the only punishment for an Honor Violation is immediate dismissal from the school, regardless of the gravity of the offense committed. The single sanction has created

³⁴ "The White Book," p. 2

and continues to create serious objections of fairness and questions of how it can possibly be justified. It raises the question of whether or not there is a better alternative punishment scheme, a graduated scheme such that punishment is equal to the violation. This section of the paper will attempt to address those concerns and demonstrate that indeed the Honor System is fair to the students, that its means are completely justifiable, and that those means of attaining the best ends are in fact the best.

Codification Issue

As I just mentioned, that there is no codified set of rules, no written down list of acceptable or unacceptable conduct seems to be one major problem that many people have with the Honor System. They suggest that it is unfair to the students because it does not let students know what is permissible; they may do something that is deemed an Honor Violation without knowing it. To further give this argument strength, objectors to the Honor System may say that a person could "accidentally" commit an Honor Violation. Take for example the hypothetical student writing a paper. He may very well be trying to follow the guidelines but still accidentally plagiarize something. Or he may be unaware of what constitutes plagiarism. Or the student who tells what he thinks is a white lie but actually offends another student.

Admittedly, this argument is very attractive. However, there are a number of problems with it, and ultimately I will hope to show that having no written code or set of rules is not only justified but also strengthens the System and actually makes it *fairer* to the students. To begin, simply because there is no codification does not necessarily mean that there are no rules. As Professor Lad Session writes in his book, *Honor For Us: A Philosophical Inquiry Into Personal*

Honor Today, there may be rules that are understood implicitly: "Those living in honor communities certainly understand their own honor – they know intimately what their own community requires as matters of honor, i.e., they know quite well even if they cannot fully articulate, the particular code of honor and ideal expectations of their own group."³⁵ Certainly I would argue this is the case with students at Washington and Lee. Take for example cheating on an exam. While it is not a written rule that nobody should cheat, every student here knows implicitly that cheating, be it on an exam or paper or on something "small" like a quiz or routine homework assignment, is wrong or dishonorable. Or another example may be lying to a professor. Certainly we know that, again, there is something inherently wrong about it. These are just two examples but I would argue that there are many other such examples and that they make a strong point that there may be such things as understood rules within the community.

A further important point to make on this subject that I believe is of critical importance is that most frequently, persons who object to the Honor System along these lines are generally not students nor tenured professors. Rather, they are "outsiders" of the community, prospective students, visiting or first year professors, and parents. Sessions gives us and understanding as to why they may object so:

Those living apart (or so they imagine) from honor communities may be fascinated, dismayed, or even aghast at the spectacle of honor so fervently pursued by others – but always others, never by themselves...Their understanding [of honor] is usually defective because it is partial.³⁶

³⁵ Sessions, Ch. 1

³⁶ Sessions, Ch. 1

What Sessions points out is that unless one is truly integrated into an honor community, that person cannot or generally does not understand the sense of honor pursued by those within the honor community. So it would make sense for an outsider to criticize the Honor System by saying that it is too vague or devoid of any meaning or rules. However, I contend that those of us living within the community, particularly the students, understand very well what we mean by "honor" here.

This certainly begs the question, then, of how a student here can know the supposed rules if they are not given to him. So to that I would reply the following: it all boils down to the issue of trust. "The White Book" clearly states that breaches of the community's trust are honor violations. So the notion of trust becomes a central issue. Every student understands what trust is. Whether it is through relationships with friends or family or newly discovered with a professor, every student understands what it is to trust someone else. If that is in fact the case, then certainly every student understands what it is to breach someone else's trust. They know because they understand what would breach their trust in a relationship. And if that is the case, then certainly there are understood rules in the Honor System. The System does not explicitly state or codify Honor Violations because they are understood. They are understood because students understand what trust is. And they understand what constitutes as breaches of one's trust.

So to those who would object that a student may commit an Honor Violation without knowing it, I would say they are wrong because students here understand what it means to breach the trust of others. And as to the objection that a student may be found guilty of an

Honor Violation without intending to do so, I can first draw from personal experience of sitting through countless honor hearings over the past two years to say that it is never the case that a student is found guilty of an Honor Violation if his act was an honest mistake. Such things as intent are certainly taken into account in the deliberations after a closed hearing, and the threshold of reasonable doubt, the highest threshold there is, further makes it the case that a student's guilty verdict is not a flippant decision. Secondly, I will draw from another essay of Professor Gunn, "A Note on the Performance of the Executive Committee." In it, Gunn first commends the level of professionalism and dignity that he has observed in members of the Executive Committee. Secondly, he strongly concludes the essay by stating, "I know of no case in more than half a century in which there were credible grounds to believe that an innocent person was found guilty of an Honor Violation."³⁷ So I must admit that certainly it is theoretically possible for a student to commit an Honor Violation on accident, I would argue that practically speaking, such instances have not been met with a guilty finding in a hearing.

Returning to the justification of not having an explicitly written code, Sessions later states in his book that there are certain reasons that a code may not or should not be explicitly stated. He says that the code,

"may be too complicated, subtle, nuanced, profound, and comprehensive to be set forth in its entirety...the code permits wide latitude of interpretation and explicit rules may be unhelpful in guiding conduct...reliance upon or undue interest in the explicit letter of the law casts doubt on one's commitment to its spirit; and each person of honor is ultimately responsible for maintaining his own honor, not some legal authority."³⁸

³⁷ Gunn, "A Note on the Performance of the Executive Committee"

³⁸ Sessions, Ch. 3

His first two reasons are easily understood; however, the last two reasons I believe cut to a deeper issue, and it is for these reasons that I believe that lacking codification actually strengthens the System, makes it better and, when combined with the fact that the System is completely student-run and student-governed, actually makes it fairer to the students. As I interpret Sessions' last two points, the problem is that codification undermines the very notions of honor and dignity. To make a list of rules would undermine the dignity of the individuals. To codify honorable action would imply that students are not able to surmise it for themselves. It would inherently imply that students are not honorable enough to understand what is honorable and what is dishonorable, or what is right and what is wrong. Indeed, a lack of codification is an affirmation to the students that they know honorable conduct or that they are free to determine it responsibly on their own. They do not have to be told explicitly because they already understand it for themselves because they understand what trust is. They understand what violates trust. In this sense, a lack of codification actually makes the System better because it credits students with knowing how to behave rather than assuming that they need to be told to how to do so.

Along these same lines, I would also argue that it increases the autonomy of honorable persons. Would you really be honorable if you were only acting honorably because you were told to do so, or because you were given a set of guidelines or rules? I contend that not having a written code of rules, then, further strengthens the Honor System in that it actually allows for students to understand and appreciate honorable conduct through their own development.

And to understand how it makes it fairer for the students, we must understand certain characteristics of Honor. In his book, *Sessions* details some of those characteristics. Among the many that he lists is honor's relativism: "Honor is relative...Honor groups not only differ in their senses of honor, but change over time."³⁹ So honor is something that changes over time. Certainly what is honorable now differs greatly from what was considered honorable in the 1840s, when the Honor System seemed to be introduced, or even from what it was fifty years ago. While some may see this as a problem with honor, I believe it makes the System fairer to the students.

There are two reasons that I believe it makes for a fairer system. First, because each different student generation has its own sense of honor, it seems only fair that they would be judged according to that standard. So not having a written code seems fairer to the students because they are held accountable to what they understand honor to be, not some list of rules and regulations tied to an antiquated sense of honor that was drafted years before they ever arrived on campus. Of course, I believe that this has to go hand-in-hand with the second reason that the System is fairer, that being that it is completely student-run, that the Executive Committee, elected members of the current student body, hears all honor matters and that the ultimate appeal, the open hearing, is heard only by a student jury. It seems that if the administration were to preside over the Honor System, it would be less fair to the students because they would be being judged based on another generation's understanding of honor.

The last objection that I mentioned previously was that an "Honor" System is inherently wrong if one thinks about what honor meant when the System was born. Honor used to be

³⁹ *Sessions, Honor For Us: A Philosophical Inquiry Into Personal Honor Today*

inegalitarian and elitist. It was seen as something belonging only to the aristocratic, a tool of exclusion rather than a noble end after which we should strive. Indeed, the college of William and Mary openly acknowledges these roots: "The College originally...served almost exclusively the sons of gentlemen of the planter aristocracy, who took special pride in their reputation as men of honor."⁴⁰ This objection was raised to me first by a professor of the Journalism department, Ed Wasserman,⁴¹ but it is also an objection that Sessions summarizes very well: "Honor is inegalitarian and elitist, the offspring of ruling social elites...their way of distinguishing themselves as 'higher' from the 'lower' classes."⁴² The first objection I would make to this criticism is that, as we have just discussed, honor is relative and thus changes over the course of time. Indeed, such an understanding may have been the roots of the Honor System, but that is certainly no longer the case today. The honor out of which the System was born is not the same sense of honor that we have today: we do not see honor as a privilege of the aristocracy or the rich today, but rather as a lofty ideal meant to inspire students to good conduct. Secondly, as to the notion that it seems to be exclusive, a way of separating the "higher" from the "lower," I would simply say, "So what?" What is the problem of seeing honorable persons as possessing something that separates themselves from others? Is there anything wrong with Washington and Lee students seeing themselves in a "higher" status? Certainly not. Imagine if this were not the case. Imagine the school slogan, "Washington and Lee: where we strive for mediocrity!" This sounds absurd. I would contend that indeed there is something about honor that should make students feel as though they are above those without it. There is something to be said for

⁴⁰ <http://www.wm.edu/so/honor-council/honorcode.htm>

⁴¹ Wasserman, Personal Interview, 1/28/2008

⁴² Sessions, *Honor For Us: A Philosophical Inquiry Into Personal Honor Today*

knowing that all the work that one turns in and the grades that one receives are completely self-made, that they are one's own work. Is this really a bad thing?

What I hope to have shown in the last few pages is that a lack of codification and a system based on honor actually makes the system stronger and fairer to the students. However, there remains one very strong objection to the Honor System in terms of its fairness, and that is the single most controversial aspect of it, the aspect that most makes the system unique, namely the single sanction. This is the most hotly debated and objectionable aspect of the system, and for that reason I have chosen to address it last.

The Single Sanction

The single sanction has created more controversy than any other aspect about the Honor System. It is the single aspect about the Honor System that makes it unique. Advocates for the single sanction argue that it is indeed the only way that our System works. However, there are many objectors to the single sanction, and from what I understand, there arguments against it are three-fold. First, they argue that it is simply not justified. While punishment may be warranted, that degree of immediate exile cannot be warranted. Secondly, they argue that it is simply not fair to the students. The issue here is that what some may consider very small violations are punished just as much as what they may consider great violations. So then they propose the third argument, that a better system would be one that has a graduated punishment scale, one in which a "smaller" violation would be met with a proportionate punishment, such as a failing grade in a class or suspension, but certainly not dismissal from the University. What I must argue, then, is that the punishment is indeed justified. Secondly, it is

indeed fair to the students. And lastly, it is the only appropriate punishment; there truly cannot be a different punishment regardless of the "size" of the violation.

We may think of the Honor System as a punishment system, similar to that of the law of a country. There are rules or laws (implied or unwritten), and there are punishments, or rather punishment, for breaking those rules. Furthermore there is a judicial process, including an investigation and a hearing with an appeal system, when a student has been accused of breaking the laws/code. So we may think of it in a sense of the law at Washington and Lee. Therefore consulting traditional defenses of criminal punishment may help in justifying the punishment system at Washington and Lee, the single sanction. Perhaps the most famous argument in favor of punishment is the utilitarian argument for punishment, which is described by Richard Brandt in his essay, "The Utilitarian Theory of Criminal Punishment."⁴³ In general, we may say that to attain the maximum net expectable utility for society. Traditional utilitarian thinking about criminal justice has found rationale in the practice of three main points:

"(1) People who are tempted to misbehave...may be deterred from misconduct by fear of punishment, such as death, imprisonment, or fine, (2) Imprisonment or fine will teach malefactors a lesson; their character may be improved...(3) Imprisonment will certainly have the result of physically preventing malefactors from misbehaving."⁴⁴

With these arguments in mind, utilitarian thinking argues that laws forbidding bad behavior are justified in that they maximize expectable utility.

Now, certainly we may substitute the phrase "dismissal from the university" in place of "imprisonment" in the passage above so as to make it applicable to the Honor System. So then

⁴³ Arthur and Shaw, eds., p.246-252

⁴⁴ Brandt, p. 248

dismissal would deter people from dishonorable conduct as well as possibly teach them a lesson. Thus, through the threat of dismissal we might achieve the maximum expectable utility. And indeed this is the case, as the freedoms provided by the Honor System already discussed as well as the low rate of academic misconduct in Dr. McCabe's studies show us. So we may argue that the single sanction, in that it in practice has maximized the net expectable utility for the community at the school. Furthermore, to those that may argue that there is significant disutility achieved for the guilty students, something that a more moderate punishment system would lessen, the utilitarian could reply that since there are so few guilty verdicts per year, the net utility is still the greatest because the disutility suffered by those guilty students is far less than the utility enjoyed by the entire community.

While this reasoning may be sufficient for some, it is certainly not sufficient for many. All it does is to say that the ends justify the means, but that may surely not be the case for many objectors to the single sanction. There are two further objections that they may have. The first is to say that an Honor System should not achieve its goal through imposing fear of punishment in the students. Rather, it is meant should achieve its goal through inspiring students or through teaching them the value of honorable behavior. So in answer to that, I would suggest that an alternative theory of criminal punishment may better help us understand why we should have punishment, such as the one proposed by Jean Hampton in her paper, "The Moral Education Theory of Punishment."⁴⁵ Hampton says that the threat of punishment gives people a non-moral incentive to follow the law (or code in this case), namely the avoidance of punishment or pain. And if the state makes good on that threat of punishment, then it has justified its

⁴⁵ Arthur and Shaw, eds., p. 259-262

punishment, since people will be less likely to commit a crime if they know that the transgression will indeed end in punishment. However, this has a very unattractive tone to it; as Hegel says, "If we aimed to prevent wrongdoing only by deterring its commission, we would be treating human beings in the same way that we treat dogs."⁴⁶ Hampton then employs an analogy to help elucidate her point. She says that in this view, punishment is no different from an animal learning its boundaries by running into an electrical fence. However, what she points out is that humans, unlike animals, will be able to reflect on the reasons why there is a barrier there. She then asserts that the humans can realize that the reasons the boundaries to actions are in place is because those actions are morally wrong. So, with this understanding in mind, she concludes, "The theory maintains that punishment is intended as a way of teaching the wrongdoer that the action she did (or wants to do) is forbidden because it is morally wrong and should not be done for that reason."⁴⁷

I contend that at this university, we may substitute the term "dishonorable" for "morally wrong" in her argument. So the Honor System, by virtue of its punishment, is able to teach students that acts that breach the community's trust are dishonorable. Furthermore, I would here argue that by having only the single sanction, the System conveys just how important honorable behavior is. Since it is the bedrock of our community of trust, it is imperative that we understand the significance of honorable behavior. Indeed, in this theory then, the Honor System is able to teach its goal that honorable behavior, and furthermore, the single sanction only gives it more weight in asserting that honorable behavior is of the utmost importance.

⁴⁶ Hampton, p. 259

⁴⁷ Hampton, p. 260

Again, this argument like the utilitarian argument may persuade some, there may still be a large contingent of objectors that argue that the System is simply not fair because it treats all dishonorable acts the same. These people would argue that like any other legal system, it should have a scaled punishment system that makes the punishment proportional to the crime. One argument I was given is that the United States could punish theft by a swift chopping off of the hand of the criminal, but that would simply not be fair because there would be no due process and furthermore the punishment seems in great disproportion to the crime. A proportionate punishment system would seem like a better alternative. Even Jeremy Bentham, the champion of utilitarian thought who first proposed the utilitarian justification for punishment, said that the more serious offenses should carry the heavier penalties so as to make the punishment proportionate to the degree of disutility caused by the crime.⁴⁸ I will argue against these objections in two ways.

First, I would contend that the notion that it is unfair is not necessarily true. I argue this way because students here know that what the punishment is when they commit an Honor Violation. It is not a surprise to them, and as such, they are fully aware of the risk that they are taking should they get caught. Furthermore, as to the cutting off of the hand example, there is a clear difference between that and the system that is set up at Washington and Lee, namely that students have the choice to live under it. Unlike a legal system of a country that one is born into and thus is forced to accept, students here *choose* to accept the System here, along with its single sanction. Most all students who come here are aware of the single sanction before even arriving on campus. Furthermore, every freshman as well as any transfer student are required

⁴⁸ Brandt, p. 248

to attend the Honor System orientation, in which the System is explicated and the single sanction is clearly stated. Every year the President of the Executive Committee tells every new student that if they feel they cannot live up to the Honor System, if "you feel that answering the call of duty is too difficult, then our tradition and our school are not for you, and consequently, you are to leave this university now."⁴⁹ So students have the System explained to them, understand its punishment, and fully accept to live under it. Now one may certainly argue that such a setting, in Lee Chapel with the entire freshmen class there, one is truly not free to just get up and leave. But are they not free to do so in their own privacy? Can they not withdraw at a later time, therein avoiding the embarrassment that would probably prevent them from leaving in Lee Chapel? Again, they choose to do live under the System and accept its single sanction, and in doing so they make the punishment, should it befall them fair. They understand the terms when enrolling in the System, and through their own free choice (unlike one living in a country under its legal system), they accept the single sanction. In this sense, we could certainly maintain that a guilty student receiving the punishment of a single sanction is fair in that they have willingly accepted it as the punishment should they commit and honor violation.

While I have found this argument sufficient, I recognize that some people may still argue that while students may choose to accept it, they should never be forced to do so in the first place. They would maintain that students should simply never be forced to make that decision. Instead, they argue that there should simply be in place a proportional punishment system. This is certainly the hardest point to argue, especially if we agree that the benefits created by the

⁴⁹ Payne, "Freshmen Honor System Orientation Speech"

single sanction are not grounds to justify its existence. However, there is one line of reasoning that I can follow to hope to demonstrate that there really cannot be a proportionate system or punishment, that indeed there truly only can be a single sanction. To understand this, we must understand what any Honor Violation truly is. "The White Book" states, "No violation of trust is more egregious than another, and no breach is too small to be ignored. Thus, dismissal from the University is the only appropriate sanction for an Honor Violation."⁵⁰ This at first seems like an oversimplification. However, if we truly understand the nature of the Honor System and what an offense to it is, then we may understand what "The White Book" is saying.

I hope to demonstrate that the problem with arguing for a proportionate punishment system rests on a faulty assumption, namely that there are different crimes, or acts of different magnitude or gravity. One who would argue for a proportionate system would say that it is not fair to punish, say, a student who copies one answer on a homework problem the same as a student who steals a car. These two acts seem to be of grossly different magnitude. Certainly this would at first seem to make sense. However, if we truly understand what is happening in both cases, then we may see that there may not be a significant difference. Since an Honor Violation is a breach of the community's trust, then we may view all acts that breach that trust as equivalent. That is, the crime is not stealing a car or cheating on a paper. Rather, the crime is breaching the trust of the community. And the effects of the crime are not simply that a car was stolen or that a person's homework does not reflect that person's own work. Instead the effect is that the entire System is undermined. In both cases what the guilty student has done is not simply hurt the person whose car they stole or beguile the professor whose assignment it

⁵⁰ "The White Book," p. 2

was; rather, they took advantage of the entire community. They took advantage of the trust that every student placed in them to act honorably. So those injured by the act are not simply the one person who it may seem they injured, but rather every student in the community, since that act took advantage of every student in the community's trust. So in effect, every student is violated by an Honor Violation. This is what "The White Book" means when it states, "No Violation of Trust is more egregious than another."⁵¹ Every violation is the same because they all have the same effect in that they all breach the community's trust. So in this light, what I hope to have shown is that the reason we cannot have a proportionate punishment system is because all violations are actually the same. There is really only one crime being committed, breaching the community's trust, and thus there is only one sanction for it. Thus, I argue that having a single sanction is most fair to the entire student body, since the entire student body is violated in the same way in every case of an Honor Violation. There truly can be only one punishment because there truly is only one crime being committed.

The last thing that one may object is that even if a single sanction is warranted, why does that single sanction have to be dismissal, instead of a less harsh penalty, such as suspension? I contend that it is because of (1) the very nature of trust and (2) the goal that we seek and the assumptions under which the System works, that of achieving a community of trust, that dismissal is the only appropriate punishment. Sessions states that "without trust, social cooperation and coordination are impossible, and a person is cut off from meaningful human relations."⁵² And when we combine that statement with the fact that all students are

⁵¹ "The White Book" p.2

⁵² Sessions, Ch. 2

assumed to be honorable, we can perhaps see the problem of allowing someone to come back to the community after a short period of punishment. That problem is that we cannot assume that that person is trustworthy, that that person is honorable because he/she has already proven himself to be otherwise. So if we cannot trust the individual who has committed an Honor Violation, if he has proven himself unworthy of our trust, then our very community is undermined, "social cooperation and coordination are impossible." For these reasons, not just *a* single sanction is necessary, but rather *the* single sanction is necessary.

III. Conclusion

This paper has argued that the Honor System is indeed the best system. In Part I demonstrated that the ends of the Honor System are the best ends that such systems can strive for. Furthermore, I showed that Washington and Lee achieves those ends better than any other institution. In Part II I hoped to have shown that the means through which the Honor System achieves those ends, namely through having no written code and through having a single sanction of dismissal, are completely justified and actually may be the best means of doing so for this Institution. If these are the case, then indeed Washington and Lee may have the best system.

References

Arthur, John and William Shaw, eds. Readings in the Philosophy of Law. 4th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2006.

Brandt, Richard. "The Utilitarian Theory of Criminal Punishment." Arthur, 246-252.

Hampton, Jean. "The Moral Education Theory of Punishment." Arthur, 259-262.

Beatty, Joseph. "For Honor's Sake: Moral Education, Honor Systems, and the Informer Rule." Educational Theory 42 (1992): 39-50.

California Institute of Technology. The Honor System Handbook. 1 Apr. 2008.
<http://donut.caltech.edu/about/boc/ug_handbook.php>.

The College of William and Mary. The Honor Code. 2005. 1 Apr. 2008.
<<http://www.wm.edu/so/honor-council/honorcode.htm>>.

Dodd, Timothy M. "Honor Code 101: An Introduction to the Elements of Traditional Honor Codes, Modified Honor Codes and Academic Integrity Policies."
<http://www.academicintegrity.org/educational_resources/honor_code_101.php>.

Duke University. Honor Council. 2008. 1 Apr. 2008
<<http://honorcouncil.groups.duke.edu/index.php>>.

Executive Committee of the Student Body. *The White Book*. Lexington, VA: Washington and Lee University: 2007.

Gunn, John M. ""An Essay on the Honor System of Washington and Lee University and the Culture of Truthfulness and Trust That It Supports."¹

---. "A Historical Note About the Honor System of Washington and Lee Universtiy."

---. "A Note on the History of Some Other Collegiate Honor Systems."

---. "A Note on the Performance of the Executive Committee."

Haverford College. Honor Council. 2006. 1 Apr. 2008.
<<http://www.students.haverford.edu/code/code.html>>.

Huntley, Robert E.R. Address. "Oasis of Honor: The Importance of Honor In a World of Eroding Morality." Lee Chapel, Lexington. 16 Jan. 2004.

¹ The papers from Professor Gunn are unpublished and appear to be personal papers of his. As such, I am not exactly sure how to cite them, as I have not found anything about MLA citation for those kinds of papers.

Kansas State University. K-State Honor & Integrity System. 2007. 1 Apr. 2008
<<http://www.k-state.edu/honor/>>.

Lyman, R.L. "The Problem of Student Honor In Colleges And Universities." *The School Review* 35 (1927): 253-271.

McCabe, Donald. Personal Interview. 26 Feb. 2008.

---. "Re: Quick Question on your survery." E-mail to the author. 7 Apr. 2008.

McCabe, Donald and Linda Trevino. "Honesty and Honor Codes." *Academe* 88 (2002): 37-41.

Meckel, Robert D. "Honor Code Based on Core Values Adopted by the University of Texas at Austin." The University of Texas at Austin News. 2004. 1 Apr. 2008.
<http://www.utexas.edu/news/2004/04/29/nr_honor/>.

Middlebury College. Student Conduct, Policies and Procedures. 2008. 1 Apr. 2008
<<http://www.middlebury.edu/about/handbook/student/>>.

Nicholson, Peter. "The Internal Morality of Law: Fuller and his law." *Ethics* 84 (1974): 302-326.

Payne, Joshua. Address. "Freshman Honor System Orientation Speech." Lee Chapel, Lexington. 5 Sept. 2007.

Regents of the University of Colorado. Honor Code Office. 2001. 1 Apr. 2008
<<http://www.colorado.edu/honorcode/index.htm>>.

Rice University. Overview of the Honor System. 2006. 1 Apr. 2008.
<<http://www.ruf.rice.edu/~honor/bluebook/overview.htm>>.

Sessions, William Lad. *Honor For Us: A Philosophical Inquiry Into Personal Honor Today*. Working Paper. Draft 23 Jan. 2008

Texas A&M University. Aggie Honor System Office. 2006. 1 Apr. 2008.
<<http://www.tamu.edu/aggiehonor/About%20Us/Philosophy/philosophy.html>>.

University of Miami. University of Miami Undergraduate Student Honor Code. 2008. 1 Apr. 2008
<http://www6.miami.edu/dean-students/pdf/undergrad_honorcode.pdf>.

University of North Carolina. Honor System. 2006. 1 Apr. 2008
<<http://honor.unc.edu/honor/index.html>>.

University of Richmond. University of Richmond Honor Councils. 2007. 1 Apr. 2008
<<http://www.student.richmond.edu/~urhc/>>.

University of Virginia. The Honor Committee. 2008. 1 Apr. 2008

<<http://www.virginia.edu/honor/>>.

Wasserman, Ed. Personal Interview. 28 Jan. 2008.