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Comparative and International Education: A Diversity of Voices aims to provide a comprehensive range of titles, making available to readers work from across the comparative and international education research community. Authors will represent as broad a range of voices as possible, from geographic, cultural and ideological standpoints. The editors are making a conscious effort to disseminate the work of newer scholars as well as that of well-established writers. The series includes authored books and edited works focusing upon current issues and controversies in a field that is undergoing changes as profound as the geopolitical and economic forces that are reshaping our worlds. The series aims to provide books which present new work, in which the range of methodologies associated with comparative education and international education are both exemplified and opened up for debate. As the series develops, it is intended that new writers from settings and locations not frequently part of the English language discourse will find a place in the list.

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5. THE HABIT AS A MEANS TO PERSONALISE TEACHING

Education professionals should be expert in the subject(s) they teach. In addition, they should also strive to foster the aesthetic, ethical and civic capacities of students. In this regard, teaching is an ethical act which grounds a reciprocal relationship between individuals and whose purpose is to encourage the development of a set of habits among students as well as teachers. This chapter tackle with the idea of habit and with its contribution to the development of an ethics of teaching. The Aristotelian view of habit as personal enrichment through the stable harmonisation of spontaneity with the good is addressed. Then, the classical Aristotelian conception is further explored in light of the contemporary recovery of practical reason, read in relation to habit, freedom and personalisation in the education process. Finally, the ways in which current perspectives outside the Aristotelian tradition, such as Dewey's philosophy, may also encompass the concept of habit as a cornerstone of personal integration are also examined.

INTRODUCTION

In a radical sense, discussing professional ethics for teachers means focusing on the *character* or personality of teaching professionals. In a secondary sense, it also means studying the rights and duties involved in the everyday practice of teaching.

Although this statement may at first seem paradoxical, it is worthy of further consideration, above all in the light of the demands that are made on teachers today. Such requirements include combining effectiveness and responsibility and being an expert in one's subject while knowing how to cultivate the aesthetic, ethical and civic dimension of pupils' education (García López, Jover, & Escámez, 2010; Goodson, 2004; Hargreaves, 1994; Giroux, 1988; Jackson, 1987; Gusdorf, 1977).

To put these aims into practice 'the first thing that the educator must do, as a teaching professional, is to ensure that his or her own actions are of an ethical type. That means to act ethically, as a person addressing other people, and to give the reciprocal relationship that is thereby established a morally good meaning. At a deeper understanding, the teacher's acts must be morally good, in themselves and in their consequences. The teacher must be a good teacher because he or she is good (Cardona, 1990, Bárcena & Jover, 1991).

In this framework, it is particularly useful to draw on the far-reaching concept of the habit as a way of establishing the foundations for the *ethos* of teaching

(Altarejos Masota, Ibáñez-Martín, Jordán, & Jover, 2003; Bárcena & Jover, 1991; Carr, 1991, 1999, 2000, 2005). This means undertaking something similar to the task envisaged by Taylor in his book *The Ethics of Authenticity*, when he proposed that this concept should be preserved to help us to restore a proper understanding of the practice of the teacher (Taylor, 1992; Day, 2004).

To this end, in this chapter we will first discuss the notion of the habit as such in classical Greek philosophy, particularly in Aristotle. Then, we will examine the role of pleasure and suffering in the process of acquiring habits. We shall provide a development of classical thought concerning what has been termed the recovery of practical reason. Finally, we shall explain an alternative way of understanding the notion of the habit, namely that of Dewey, which, though different, shows the continuity of thought and the need to place an emphasis on the concept of habit in order to personalise educational practice. Practically all educational thinking from Socrates, through Locke, Dewey and others to our own time, has stressed that education means the *formation of habits*, in both teacher and learner, even though the understanding of what a habit is varies greatly from one author to another (Altarejos Masota & Naval, 2004).

Habits in Aristotle

Aristotle states that three principles are necessary for human fulfilment: nature, habit and reason or learning (Naval, 1992, 2000; Carr, 1999). He points to the habit because: 'for the way we learn the things we should do, knowing how to do them, is by doing them' (Aristotle, trans. 2002, pp. 34–35).

It is necessary to learn first, and then to do what you have learned, but acts become habits only when you perform them repeatedly. In the human being, habits are acquired when the principle of action is maintained in the subject, and the subject's perfection is the ultimate purpose of the act. It is essential for this act to be voluntary (Aristotle, trans. 2002, pp. 9–19), that is, performed freely. According to Chevalier (1940):

the extent of the problem is considerable if we think [...] that, psychologically, the phenomenon of the habit is at the point of contact between the spirit and the body, the conscious and the unconscious, the will and the mechanism; that pedagogically, all education consists of habit formation; and finally, that morally speaking, virtue has been defined as the habit of doing good (pp. XIII–XV).

If we take a deeper look at the word exercise (*ethos*), we will find that it has many meanings, and is sometimes used to talk of custom. But in all cases, the role assigned to it in education is that of consolidating impulses, by gradually creating and strengthening the way that tendencies are arranged. Educational practice is supposed to act directly on the *ethos*, predisposing it in one direction or another. The result of this exercise is a *habit*. A habit thus implies practice, practice which acts to guide or moderate the underlying impulse.

On the other hand, customs and nature complement each other from the very beginning, since, as Aristotle observes in the *Rhetoric*, these are aspects of reality which are related to each other 'because what often happens is close to what always happens'; custom is a matter of frequency, while nature is a matter of permanence (Aristotle, trans. 1996, pp. 5–10). 'So it does not make a small difference whether people are habituated to behave in one way or in another way from childhood on, but a very great one; or rather, it makes all the difference in the world' (Aristotle, trans. 2002, pp. 23–25).

Aristotle is an outstanding exponent of what was to become an undisputed principle of education in the Ancient World: the constitutive power of practice and custom, as ways of orienting one's impulses towards what is good. In other words, the steady enrichment of properly guided spontaneity, which configures what Aristotle calls our second nature, which makes us inclined towards what is just. 'What we might call a sense of smell to detect what is just and a certain skill in executing it' (Galino, 1973, p. 209; see also Davidson, 1971).

In his account of progress in the virtues, Aristotle focuses on the study of the impulses and their regulation, without excluding reason, which is one of the three elements mentioned above which play a part in the process of education.

We ensure that training in the virtues is taking place when the movements of nature, *pathe*, are oriented towards the good even before reason has taken up the reins of our behaviour. From this we can derive the leading role played by custom in character education. The virtue of character comes from custom, from which it takes its name (Aristotle, trans. 2002).

Here, the emphasis is on the need to act, without which we cannot conceive of any practice or any kind of learning. One might object that if, to acquire a virtuous habit, one has to act in conformity with virtue, we are asking those who are merely on the way to becoming virtuous to perform something that properly belongs to those who have already acquired virtue: namely, to do good (Aristotle, trans. 2002). So how can we perform good actions if we ourselves are not good? Put another way, only if our habits are good can we perform good acts, and good habits are formed as such only if the acts we perform to acquire them are good (Ross, 1957).

In concrete, human beings are virtuous if they act in full knowledge of what they are doing, choosing that act for itself, and as a result of a permanent disposition. So a certain *knowledge* must be present as the first requirement for a good act, since in Aristotle's words (trans. 2002):

what is intermediate is 'as the correct prescription prescribes' 'because 'there is (...) a kind of mark that determines the intermediate states, which we declare to be in between excess and deficiency, being as they are 'according to the correct prescription (pp. 18–23).

But not only knowledge is necessary (Sabine, 1982). The good act must be accompanied by knowledge (Aristotle, trans. 2002).

Freedom of choice is the second requirement, meaning choosing the act for itself, that is, not because of some other factor that is not part of its nature: 'what is

chosen before other things' (Aristotle, trans. 2002, pp. 18–19). The third requirement for acting as a virtuous person – that the good act should be the result of a *permanent disposition* – means that a temporal dimension is involved, which is a basic condition of a *praxis* and which situates us in the realm of active potency, where the habit – the permanent disposition – acts as the driving force behind the morally good act (Chevalier, 1940; Aristotle, trans. 2002).

Aristotle (trans. 2002), referring particularly to the virtue of courage, says that:

a person also seems more courageous if he is fearless and undisturbed in the face of sudden fears as of ones that are foreseen; for it was more the result of a disposition, in so far as it was less the result of preparation. For in the case of what is clearly foreseen, one can decide also as a result of calculation and reasoning about it; with what comes suddenly one decides according to one's disposition (pp. 18–23).

Ravaisson (1955) states that once a habit has been acquired, 'receptiveness wanes and spontaneity increases' (p. 28). Education in habits is thus intended to form the character, irrespective of the fact that:

For everyone thinks each of the various sorts of character-traits belongs to us in some sense by nature – because we are just, moderate in our appetites, courageous, and the rest from the moment we are born; but all the same we look for excellence in the primary sense as being something other than this, and for such qualities to belong to us in a different way. For natural dispositions belong to children and animals as well; but without intelligence to accompany them they are evidently harmful (Aristotle, trans. 2002, VI, 13, 1144 b 4–10).

The subject of habits – their cultivation and history – is about the way we use our freedom, about the way habits enrich the person if they are freely exercised.

But not all habits are virtuous. For them to be so, they must be regulated. It is easy to get annoyed, but 'doing so when it is appropriate, about what is appropriate, for appropriate reasons, is what gives [them] the character of a virtue' and this is in no sense easy. Mistakes can be made in various ways, because what is bad belongs to the kind of things which have no limit; but there is only one way of getting things right, because 'it is easy to miss the target and hard to hit it' (Aristotle, trans. 2002, II, 6, 1106 b; II, 5, 1106 a 1–6, 1106 a 35). The topic of practice in education is thus discussed by Aristotle not as a means for acquiring some kind of habit, but as a means for acquiring those which are associated with the virtues.

The educator gives the child the opportunity to imitate an act repeatedly. With each repetition, the trace left by the act will become deeper and longer-lasting, and in the long term this will provide a path on which the child can advance safely and conveniently. This is because we are all transformed into what we do, because in some way we *are* our actions. The gradual reduction in effort goes hand in hand with an increase in pleasure when we perform this action (Aristotle, trans. 2002,). But in addition, at the same time, the consolidation of the habit means an increase in freedom: this is moral freedom. In this sense, we could say with Lewis (1986)

that educating in the virtues is a kind of 'propagation': human beings who transmit humanity to others. Educating without taking into consideration the virtues and the notion of what is good would be a kind of propaganda

In all circumstances, including those of education, the most complete act is also the pleasantest one (Aristotle, trans. 2002). The moment comes when, because of the perfection which is reached or the ease with which it is executed and the enjoyment it produces, the act which has been repeated a sufficient number of times exerts an *irresistible* attraction on the tendency to which it is directed, which brings it closer in some way. The help given at the outset may then disappear, and the habit that has been acquired will replace it.

'In that case the excellences develop in us neither by nature nor contrary to nature, but because we are naturally able to receive them and are brought to completion by means of habituation' (Aristotle, trans. 2002, II, 1, 1103 a 23–26). Ultimately, the virtues are born within us in a threefold way: through education, which teaches us what they consist of, through nature, which makes us capable subjects, and through habits, which allow us to develop them effectively.

Education is characterised by this harmony between virtue and pleasure, because if what is right were inextricably linked to pain, we would never be able to acquire any moral habits, since our nature flees from suffering and seeks enjoyment.

This is why those who educate the young try to steer them by means of pleasure and pain; and it also seems that taking pleasure in the things one should, and hating the things one should, are most important in relation to excellence of character: their effect extends through every part of life, constituting a powerful influence in regard to excellence and the happy life, for it is pleasant things that people choose, and painful ones they avoid (Aristotle, trans. 2002, X, 1, 1172 a 16–25).

Hence the importance of educating our feelings to learn to reject evil and enjoy what is good, as Lewis (1986) argues in masterly fashion in the first chapter of his book *The abolition of man*. As Aristotle (trans. 2002) argues:

[f]or excellence of character has to do with pleasures and pains: it is because of pleasure that we do bad things, and because of pain that we hold back from doing fine things. This is why we must have been brought up in a certain way from childhood onwards, as Plato says, so as to delight in and be distressed by the things we should; this is what the correct education is. (pp. 9–13).

Education therefore consists of placing pleasure at the service of what is good. The attraction which draws us to the former thus also draws us to the latter when both have previously been joined together in the same act. In consequence, to promote moral virtue we must enable the child to acquire habits which are at once pleasant and directed towards what is good (Defourny, 1920). Along these lines, Lewis (1986) made the following observation:

The head rules the belly through the chest – the seat, (...) of Magnanimity, of emotions organised by trained habit into stable sentiments. The

Chest-Magnanimity-Sentiment these are the indispensable liaison officers between cerebral man and visceral man. It may even be said that it is by this middle element that man is man: for by his intellect he is mere spirit and by his appetite mere animal (p. 34).

For it is the case that 'and we measure our actions too, some of us more, some less, by pleasure and pain', since 'achieving pain or pleasure well or badly' is important for our actions. For this reason, Aristotle (trans. 2002) went so far as to say that

So that for this reason too the whole concern both for excellence and for political expertise is with pleasures and pains; for someone who behaves well in relation to pleasure and pain will be a person of excellence, while someone who behaves badly in relation to them will be bad' (pp. 3–12).

Distinguishing the pleasure of what is good from the pain of what is bad is not the only thing that makes it possible for us to direct our actions towards the good. But being able to perceive this correctly is fundamental. Virtue consists of knowing how to behave towards these phenomena, which means distinguishing between what is good and what is not.

This is why it is so important in education for young people to learn 'good taste' through proper habits. If they do not, then what is genuinely good will not be agreeable for the young person, because he or she will not recognise it, 'for the person who lives according to emotion will not listen to talk that tries to turn him away from it, nor again will he comprehend such talk' (Aristotle, trans. 2002, X, 9 1179 b 24–28).

In concordance with his style of practical philosophy, Aristotle does not understand educating people in how to recognise and perform what is good for the human being as mere instruction or as an intellectual process of learning techniques and practical strategies. Education is the process of forming habits so that people will become subjectively interested (in terms of personal commitment) in what is objectively interesting, and so that they will take subjective pleasure in what is objectively pleasant, because it is good.

In real life, on both an individual and a collective level, the human being only aims to achieve what interests him or her – the object of his or her natural leanings – and what affords him or her pleasure. The point is not to lose interest or stop experiencing pleasure, but rather to be interested and take pleasure in a fitting way. One should find satisfaction in what is truly satisfactory, through proper education of one's tendencies.

From this, we can deduce that we need to pay attention to the joys and sadness of the people we are educating, since as we are looking at acts and habits, the feelings that accompany these are obvious signs of whether or not the person concerned is in possession of the relevant virtue. But virtues and vices cannot be confused with affect, since habits are the objects of choice and merit praise or criticism, which cannot properly be said of affective phenomena.

Educating in Virtues, Educating in Freedom

Now that we have examined the role which, according to Aristotle, habits play in education, let us move on to consider the relationship between habit, freedom and the personalisation of the education process. To this end, we shall draw on the contemporary re-reading of Aristotelian philosophy which has inspired much of the current interest in reviving the concept of practical reason.

It is a commonplace that the ethical turn of contemporary philosophy was consolidated in the late 1980s. This consisted of a re-evaluation of ethical and practical reflection as a solution to the crisis in instrumental theoretical rationality. In fact, modern reason of the scientific and technical type had excluded practical reasoning from the sphere of reason; but at the same time, this instrumental reason, which presented itself as the only form of reason by developing a theory by which it could be generalised, actually worked itself out through its own attempt to be all-encompassing. In the face of this seeming impasse, the reaction was a rehabilitation of the concept of practical reason.

The book edited by Manfred Riedel (1972) has become a classic reference work concerning this rehabilitation exercise. As D'Agostini (2000) has pointed out, this move towards rehabilitation began in Germany around the 1960s, and can be regarded as a continuation of the debate on the relationship between the natural sciences, on the one hand, and the humanities and philosophy, on the other. What is surprising is that this ethical or practical turn brings together philosophical approaches of a very diverse nature such as hermeneutics, critical theory, analytical philosophy or the developments of postmodernism. The reason for this confluence lies in one particular common thread running through contemporary thought, which is a kind of rebelliousness against modern instrumental rationality, arising from a desire to return to the practical reason found in Aristotle and Kant. In fact, the contemporary revival of practical reason takes its inspiration from these two thinkers, and this Aristotelian inspiration has also helped to renew interest in the notion of virtue. It is essential to mention two particular authors in this area, MacIntyre and Rhonheimer. In what follows, these thinkers will form the basis for our arguments concerning a modern re-reading of the Aristotelian notion of habit. A brief but thorough account of the main authors who have played a part in the rehabilitation of practical reason can be found in González (2006).

The way in which Rhonheimer – following MacIntyre – approaches the question of the circular argument arising in Aristotle's explanation of how habits are acquired and exercised is particularly illustrative. Habits are only acquired through practice, but in order to perform good actions it is necessary to be virtuous. How is it possible to escape from this apparent paradox? This problem has already been alluded to, in the context of the Aristotelian view that 'the possibility of acquiring a moral virtue appears to presuppose that one already possesses it' (Rhonheimer, 2000, p. 223). In attempting to resolve this supposed paradox, Rhonheimer introduces the notions of authority and benevolence.

How can education in the virtues be put into practice? How can the pupil know what actions are virtuous and be motivated to perform these actions, if he or she does not possess the relevant virtue? (MacIntyre, 1988, p. 113). It is precisely the pupil's recognition of the teacher's authority which enables him or her to learn the virtue in question. Moreover, this is not mere formal subjection to the other person's command, because this would hardly be conducive to virtue formation. The fact that recognition of authority is the first step on the road to acquiring the virtues basically means that authority has to be recognised through perception of the benevolence of the person who exercises that authority. As MacIntyre says, the first step towards virtue is to do what the person in authority says and to follow that person's example in order to *please* that person (MacIntyre, 1988). Before love for virtue comes love for the virtuous person who teaches us what virtue is because he or she is good. In this way, MacIntyre shows how affective orientation towards the good is possible.

Rhonheimer's (2000) explanations are of interest because of the conclusions he draws about how authority and freedom can be reconciled if a relationship of friendship, love or benevolence is established between the parties. As he takes pains to show, a free being can only be educated in freedom, not through coercion, which implies that authority cannot suppress freedom, but should rather show the way to exercise it properly. For him, '[t]he love shown by the person who exercises authority is the only way that we can recognise that this authority is fully compatible with freedom. For it is not in vain that love is an act of freedom' (p. 227). This means that the true process of education is a reciprocal personal relationship, a personal act, and education cannot be characterised simply as a process of socialisation in which certain norms of behaviour are imposed (Rhonheimer, 1982).

Habits and freedom are two ideas that are inseparable, even though a superficial view might take them to exist in opposition to each other. Only the habit makes the will free, because freedom is not initially a property of the will. In fact, the native will, that is, will as nature (*voluntas ut natura*), is directed *ad unum*, that is, is not free. The will is endowed with freedom after making contact with the intelligence (*voluntas ut ratio*). This is where the virtues come in, because when the will makes contact with the intelligence, it becomes capable of acquiring virtues (Polo, 1996). Far from being something automatic that lessens our freedom, the moral virtue is a habit which strengthens and perfects freedom insofar as virtue is a habit that is chosen rightly. Virtuous action cannot be compared to a semi-automatic process, because it involves exercising the conscience and the will in a particular contingent matter, and this requires the maximum attention of the conscience and the maximum effort of personal determination (Rodríguez Luño, 1988). The will is only free once it has accomplished its first independent action, and this action has a washback effect on the will itself, making it capable of carrying out a series of actions. Freedom comes into being at the same time as the habits are formed, and the power that is generated is tremendous, because the habits give freedom to the extent that the will can even act against them. Habits give the capacity to perform subsequent

acts, and when freedom is introduced, the will is capable of acting in accordance with habits, or not doing so, because the will is now the master of its actions (Polo, 1996). As the habit is the starting point for freedom, it boosts and strengthens the exercise of freedom until this free will can even decide against the habit. This is the anthropological reason why virtue can be lost, and why vice can be rectified.

As we saw above, habits make the will free. This leads us once more to the subject of learning, because it is precisely because the person is free that he or she is capable of positive learning (virtues) and negative learning (vices). If we could only grow in one direction, we would not be free, and in this case we would fail to understand many dimensions of the human being. As Polo (1996) argues:

We would be formulating a reductionist anthropology, which would confuse human beings with animals or with beings that are simply natural or physical. To avoid reductionism, it is necessary to introduce the capacity to learn, to perform different actions, and to permit the alternatives of virtue and vice (p. 109).

Precisely when learning is directed towards the acquisition of virtue, in reality it is enabling the person to strengthen his or her capacity for possessing what is good. In general terms, virtue consists of the capacity to adhere fairly consistently to the good, and in the same way, virtue participates in the good, and is itself good. Goodness may be noble, but it is necessary for the person to be capable of wanting it and persisting in this desire. To be happy, it is not enough for me to be given what is good, or for me just to possess it; the person has to cling to it, or possess it completely or constantly. This steady possession of goodness is what is peculiar to the third possessive dimension of the human being: virtue (Polo, 1996).

In this sense, the moral virtues strengthen the will: they are habits which perfect the will, and for this reason they strengthen the will's capacity to persevere, that is, to love. The virtues make the will capable of possessing the good in a stable manner, that is, of loving it, because love is constant attachment to the good. This enables us to understand what we saw above in another light – the virtues increase our ability to exercise freedom. In fact, the virtues are the capacity to love goodness in a constant manner, and this love must be completely free (Polo, 1996). Virtue is a totally free adherence to what is good.

But, as Rhonheimer concludes, the acquisition of virtue is not exclusively enacted in the dimension of affect and will. Education in the virtues must somehow incorporate a cognitive dimension. To acquire virtue is also to grow in knowledge of what is good, because education cannot be a non-rational process. When the learner recognises the teacher's authority because he or she perceives the teacher's benevolence, an affective dimension opens up which enables the learner's reason to grow so that they can exercise their own practical rationality. In the educational process there is a means of transmission of virtues which is not limited to the mere affective relationship between people, because it also equips the learner to make his or her own practical judgement in accord with virtue. This is a learning process with an inventive structure: the teacher does not inculcate convictions in the learner, but rather the learner develops his or her own capacity

for knowledge. The learner learns because he or she attains knowledge under the teacher's guidance (Rhonheimer, 2000).

The circular argument observed in Aristotelian ethics, mentioned at the start of this section, far from leading us to refute this ethical system, has led us to a revised theory of education. The Aristotelian view can be further developed if we take into consideration the possibility of gaining practical knowledge of moral principles, irrespective of the possession of moral virtue, which can open up the way to devising a theory of the cognitive conditions for moral virtue (Rhonheimer, 2000). This means that we have to recover the notion of practical reason, understood in a modern way.

Habits in Dewey

The concept of habit has been understood quite differently by other authors in the course of the history of education. The notion developed by Dewey has been particularly influential (Molinos, 2002).

In *Soul and body* (1886), Dewey says that the spirit directs the human being's activity by means of repeated actions in order to achieve his or her goals, and thereby shapes the different organs, most particularly the brain, which is responsible for mental functions. The habitual structure resulting from repetition of actions is thus located in the brain. This structure serves as a point of reference and contrast with which any recently perceived phenomenon can be compared, so that it is given a meaning and the person can act in consequence.

Localisation of function is, in short, only the physiological way of saying habit. The organisation of function is not indwelling in the brain as so much matter: it has been *learned* by the brain and learned through the tuition and care of the soul (Dewey, 1886, pp. 239–263).

On the concept of habit in Dewey, we refer to Molinos (2002). Later, in *Human nature and conduct* (1922), Dewey maintains the same basic concept of habit as an organic structure resulting from the repetition of actions, whose function is to direct people's activities in an intelligent and discriminating manner. However, in this later period, the spirit is no longer understood as immanent in the body, and is instead an organic function, made possible by the existence of these habitual structures which have been consolidated in the brain.

In Dewey's (1957) words:

Concrete habits do all the perceiving, recognizing, imagining, recalling, judging, conceiving and reasoning that is done. 'Consciousness', whether as a stream or as special sensations and images, expresses functions of habits, phenomena of their formation, operation, their interruption and reorganisation (p. 167).

He summarises the functions of the habit as being those of perception, memory and projection (Dewey, 1957). These functions form the basis of the circuit or process of experience, and of the generation of ideas. Dewey describes the organic circuit

as 'the psychical organism of which sensation, idea and movement are the chief organs' (Boydston, 1969, p. 97). *Movement* is understood in a sense that is not merely physical but mental, as affecting the motor response of the reconstruction of what the stimulus means (Boydston, 1968). Hence Dewey establishes the habit as the organic structure which generates knowledge. This interpretation may well contain a kind of intellectual reductionism.

The functions of perceiving, remembering and projecting, which are attributed to the habit, consist of, respectively:

a) filtering the perceptions which come from one's surroundings so that one only registers data that encode something significant for the subject, that is, which evoke impressions formed by previous experiences; this filter imposes its own colour on reality: '[i]t is a reagent which adds new qualities and rearranges what is received' (Dewey, 1957, p. 32);

b) the function of remembering, which takes place through the habit's capacity to retain, like a memory, the ways that things behave, which makes it possible to configure the present situation by interpreting it in terms of previous behaviours; in effect, when a given previous action has proven effective, this result increases the flow of meanings for the individual, because it means that the individual was right about the nature of the object, and this new meaning can be transferred automatically or reflexively, according to what is appropriate, to later situations. At this point, the third function comes into play.

c) the function of projecting, according to which the habit, after having interpreted the current situation in terms of previous ones, ratifies this interpretation in and through the action which it instigated, reproducing or putting into practice the causes which will produce the desired results. Intelligent action thus emanates from habits. The starting point for this is the externally adapted habit, that is, practical knowledge, which is not reflexive. But when this is not sufficient to deal with a particular situation, the available habits have to be restructured in order to give it meaning. In this way, the restructuring of habits suggests the idea and means needed to handle the situation appropriately. Dewey considers that the end or idea can only be perceived in its real dimensions or meaning as it is gradually brought forth through mediate entities or means; the habits are these means which come into play, and they are therefore the immediate version of the ultimate end, formulated in terms of the acts which guarantee that it will be achieved: '[t]hought which does not exist within ordinary habits of action lacks means of execution. In lacking application, it also lacks test, criterion' (Dewey, 1957, p. 63).

The origin of habits. According to Dewey, habits find their origin in social interaction. When the individual acts, the surroundings communicate a response which he or she registers, and the repetition of which will provoke or prevent his or her behaviour on future occasions through a specific conduct of recognised efficacy. Thus, for example, the newborn baby cries and moves around, but its impulses are mere energy which only starts to take on special meaning when it demands food or warmth, or security, as a result of the function of the social

responses which adults select from their repertoire of habits in order to perceive, interpret and attend to the child's wants (Dewey, 1957).

Habits and personality. As far as the idiosyncrasy of the human being is concerned, the habits shape it while determining its differential nature. In Dewey's view (1957): '[c]haracter is the interpenetration of habits' (p. 37).

Dewey explains how he understands the shaping of the personality through habits by using the example of the way bad habits work. Using the evidence, familiar to all of us, of the harmful power that bad habits exert on people, Dewey accounts for the general role of the habit in personality formation:

These traits of a bad habit are precisely the things which are most instructive about all habits and about ourselves. They teach us that all habits are affections, that all have projectile power, and that a predisposition formed by a number of specific acts is an immensely more intimate and fundamental part of ourselves than are vague, general, conscious, choices. All habits are demands for certain kinds of activity; and they constitute the self. In any intelligible sense of the word will, they are will. They form our effective desires and they furnish us with our working capacities. They rule our thoughts, determining which shall appear and be strong and which shall pass from light into obscurity (Dewey, 1957, p. 26).

In Dewey's view, the integration of the personality is given by the degree to which a person's habits fit together (Dewey, 1957, p. 37).

In this view, the habit could ultimately be defined as follows:

The word habit may seem twisted somewhat from its customary use when employed as we have been using it. But we need a word to express that kind of human activity which is influenced by prior activity and in that sense acquired; which contains within itself a certain ordering or systematisation of minor elements of action; which is projective, dynamic in quality, ready for overt manifestation; and which is operative in some subdued subordinate form even when not obviously dominating activity (Dewey, 1957, p. 39).

Final Reflections

This second approach differs from the first in many respects, although it joins with it in emphasising the fundamental importance of habits. Perhaps the greatest contrast is the functionalist sense in which Dewey writes of the habit, which implies a whole way of understanding the human being, and which results in the loss of the concept of *praxis*, of immanent action (because it is an intellectualist view of the habit, which operates without a concept of *praxis*). This is what underlies a pragmatist approach to education.

As Ryle (1972) comments:

so to have acquired a virtue (...) – we could think about professional habits, for example – is not a matter of having become well informed about anything; and it is not a matter of having come to know how to do anything. (...) the learning terminates in being so-and-so, and only derivatively from this in knowing so-and-so – in an improvement of one's heart, and only derivatively from this in an improvement of one's head as well (p. 444).

This has various implications for the subject at hand here, that is, the personalisation of teaching, even though there is no space to discuss these in detail. Examples of such implications are:

- The need to include in the notion of 'professionalism' in teaching the moral character that inherently belongs to it. One is only a good teacher if one is a good person, because the task of teaching is an interpersonal action based on the awakening of good habits or virtues.
- The irreplaceable role of experience – of practice – in the formation of the professional ethos.
- The relative, subordinate value of professional training that is reduced to a mere set of pedagogical techniques. Although knowledge of methodology is essential, it is not the key element for professional development. In harmony with Aristotelian philosophy, we can state that education in knowledge and the pursuit of the good for the human being is not mere instruction or intellectual learning relating to techniques and practical strategies. Education is the process of forming habits so that the learner comes to be subjectively interested in, that is, personally committed to, what is objectively interesting, so that he or she can take subjective pleasure in what is objectively most pleasant or good.
- In the educational process there is a kind of transmission or awakening of virtues which, on the one hand, are based on an affective relationship between people, in which the authority of the teacher is acknowledged because his or her benevolence is recognised. This process also includes equipping people to judge for themselves in accord with virtue.
- In view of the foregoing, teaching is fundamentally an act directed toward the learner's growth in freedom, to the same extent as it is an awakening of virtue. A moral virtue is a habit which strengthens and perfects freedom, specifically the habit of choosing wisely. In addition, habits are the origin of freedom. They liberate the will by making it capable of performing subsequent acts. Freedom and the capacity to exercise the supreme act of freedom which is the act of loving draw on virtue. What is proper to virtue is the stable possession of the good. In fact, this stable possession of the good implies the love of the good. A person is thus virtuous if he or she chooses, in complete freedom, to live according to what is good.

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