

DEWEY'S PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION IN RELATION TO VIRTUE ETHICS

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Abstract – This article endeavors to analyze Dewey's progressive education in relation to virtue ethics. This is motivated by the great relevance that the concept of virtue has to the integral formation of the human person and to the whole process of progressive education. The definition of the concept of virtue from its etymological root, descriptive meaning, and a philosophical definition will be given. In examining the concept of progressive education in relation to virtue ethics, from a historical perspective as developed by Aristotle will lay a good foundation for this analysis. The Division of virtue will be laid out as understood from the various ways in which virtue manifests itself in the human person depending on various dispositions. This manifestation itself is in action. More unambiguously, it is an action that counts for the person to be virtuous. According to Aristotle, this happens when a person holds themselves in a stable equilibrium of the soul, in order to choose the action knowingly for its own sake.

Keywords: virtue ethics, rational animal, person, eudemonia

Introduction

In this article we will try to unfold Dewey's progressive education in relation to virtue ethics. This is based on the great relevance that the concept of virtue has to the integral formation of the human person and to the whole process of progressive education. We will define the concept of virtue from its etymological root; give a descriptive meaning and a philosophical definition. We shall begin by examining the concept from a historical perspective particularly as developed by Aristotle in his *Nicomachean Ethics*. Division of virtue will be laid out as understood from the various ways in which virtue manifests itself in the human person depending on various dispositions. This manifestation itself is in action. More explicitly, it is an action that counts for the person to be virtuous. According to Aristotle, this happens when a person holds themselves in a stable equilibrium of the soul, in order to choose the action knowingly for its own sake.

Definition of Virtue from it's Etymology

The term virtue comes from the Latin word *virtus* suggesting "manliness or courage" (Bernard, 1985). From its broadest meaning the term virtue means the "excellence or perfection of a thing". (Leibell, 2013) The human person is defined by his rationality. Man being a human person is therefore a "rational animal" (Aristotle, 1986). Man is distinguished from other animals by his mind as well as his will. Human actions are guided by the power of rationality for them to be classified as rational activities. The ultimate end of these actions of man in the world is happiness. Therefore apart from being rational actions, freedom and will are constitutive factors in defining the human act thereby rendering the doer of the action either as blameworthy or praise worthy

The contemporary meaning of virtue echoes past endeavors to explain and interpret behavior exhibiting high moral standards and desirable personal qualities (Nell, 2013). This natural yet multifaceted noun also contains a broad meaning closely connected to values of civilization.

Meaning of Virtue as applied to progressive education

Virtue is as a behavior showing high moral standards. It is a well-established disposition and readiness of man's power in directing the person to some specific objective goodness of an act. Actually it is moral excellence. Virtue therefore becomes the source of a good act with the end of doing well as opposed to an approval or disapproval of an action. Virtue calls for an action to be done and motivates the same."Moral virtue is simply a matter of performing well in the function of being human (Nell, 2013).

Virtue is the disposition of an individual to act in a certain way. Virtue animates habits and traits to become a character. However not all habits, traits and actions are compatible with virtue. Every action that does not have objective good as its end is not a virtuous act. For example one who is endowed with material property but cannot be moved by the physical needs of the poor lacks the virtue of Justice. By understanding virtues as skill, it becomes easier describing the problem of virtue. Virtue is not a technique that is taught but a skill that is acquired and practiced. These skills guide the individual's life and actions and also give meaning and value to the actions. As it is demonstrated below:

Virtue is distinguished along the same lines. Some virtues we say are intellectual, such as wisdom, judgment and practical wisdom, while others are virtues of character, such as generosity and temperance. For when we are talking about a person's character, we do not say that he is wise or has judgment, but that he is even-tempered or temperate. Yet we do praise the wise person for his state, and the states worthy of praise we call virtues (Aristotle, 1986).

These different virtues are applied differently in different circumstances but all make the person to be virtuous in his dealing with other people. Human relationships are grounded on the character of the person and on how they have been socialized through education in their stages of growth.

Nature of Virtues

Virtues by their very nature are dispositions to behave in the right manner and as a mean between two extremes of deficiency and excess. They exist as different aspects of a virtuous life.

According to Aristotle, virtues are good habits of the heart and mind that are essential for developing and maintaining good ethical character and behavior. In Aristotle's view, virtues are equivalent to excellence and are socially situated and cultivated. They are also the most important habits for people looking to achieve *eudemonia* (Aristotle, 1986). The concept of *eudemonia*, which is central to Aristotelian philosophy, is often translated into English as happiness. In ethics, it is known as human flourishing, well-being' or good life, though all these terms do not accurately describe it in its entirety. According to Aristotle virtue is of two kinds, intellectual and moral which is virtue of character. Intellectual virtue has its foundation and development mainly from teaching meaning that it is acquired through experience and time (Nell, 2013). On the other hand moral virtue (*ethos*) (Aristotle, 1986) is as a result of habituation hence acquiring the name virtue of character. These two dimensions of virtue indicate that virtue is acquired and that virtue does not arise in us by nature. There is nothing natural that can be made to behave differently by habituation. A good example is that a stone that falls naturally downwards cannot be habituated to rise upwards just as fire that burns upwards cannot be habituated to burn downwards.

Therefore virtue arises in us neither by nature nor contrary to nature but nature gives us the capacity to acquire them. This acquisition is made complete through habituation. Unlike other capacities that we acquire prior to exhibiting them we acquire virtues by first exercising them. We become just by doing just deeds, temperate by temperate actions and courageous by courageous actions. Just as virtues are acquired and developed through practice so are they corrupted and lost through practice and habituation; we become unjust by doing unjust deeds, unfaithful by habit of unfaithfulness and fearful by becoming habituated in feelings of fear and lack of confidence" (Nell, 2013). This is why we must give a certain character to our activities, since it is on the difference between them that the resulting states depend" (Aristotle, 1986). It is therefore important how one is habituated right from his or her early days. This is what makes the difference in virtuous deeds and in those that lack in virtue.

Virtue is practical in that it is expressed practical actions of the very person who learns and grows. Any study of virtue considers the matter of human action, in particular the manner in which the actions are performed, the value

of the actions and the culpability of the person performing the action. This is guided by the principle of acting within the dictates of right reason which generally accepted (Nell, 2013). Although virtue has a common characteristic with vice, that of disposing potency to a certain determined activity, it nevertheless differs specifically from it in that it disposes the potency to good acts. That is to say acts in consonance with right reason.

According to Aristotle virtue is in the middle. He calls it the golden mean. According to this theory moral behavior is the mean between two extremes, at one end is excess, at the other deficiency. The call is to find a moderate position between those two extremes. That way the individual is acting morally. Agents must look at what is appropriate in each case as it happens since the state of the action is corrupted by deficiency and excess. For example too much exercise and too little ruin one's strength, too much food and drink and too little ruin one's health while the right amount produces, increases and preserves one's health. In the same way temperance, courage and all other virtues as Aristotle argue that:

The person who avoids and fears everything, never standing his ground, becomes cowardly, while he who fears nothing, but confronts every danger, becomes rash. In the same way, the person who enjoys every pleasure and never restrains himself becomes intemperate while he who avoids every pleasure-as boors do- becomes as it was insensible. Temperance and courage, then are ruined by excess and deficiency, and preserved by the mean (Aristotle, 1986).

Aristotle takes as an indication of a person's state from the pleasure and pains consequent on the actions performed. He does this by showing that the person who abstains from bodily pleasures and finds his enjoyment in doing so is temperate while the person who finds abstaining oppressive is intemperate (Larry, 2001). Similarly the person who enjoys facing danger or at least doesn't find it painful doing so is courageous. However the person who finds does find it painful is a coward. Therefore man needs to have been brought up in a particular way from young age in order to acquire virtue.

There are three objects of choice on the one hand- the noble, the useful and the pleasant. On the other hand there are three objects of avoidance- the shameful, the harmful and the painful. These sets of objects are contraries (Larry, 2001). Man regulates his actions with pleasure and pain. Our whole enquiry must therefore be concerned with the two concepts because whether man feels enjoyment and pain in good or bad way, this has great influence on his actions.

Plato in his book the *Republic*, holds that early habituation is unreflective and that the actions of those who attain full virtue, are supplemented by reflection and deliberation (Dewey, 1999). Likewise, Aristotle and the Stoics understand habits as a matter of practice, not mindless and repetitive practice but a highly intelligent type of practice supplemented by philosophical education directed to grasp the reasons for these practices. Aristotle explains the nature of the relationship between virtue and habit in terms of an analogy between virtue and the arts. Virtues are seen as sets of skills gradually developed over time through practice.

Aquinas also understood virtue as habits. He argues that moral virtues are habits of appetite caused by the direction of reason. A virtue is a habit that perfects a power a thing has. Human beings have intellect and appetitive powers, namely, the will, an irrational appetite for various physical pleasures and an irrational appetite for emotions such as anger and fear. He saw virtue as a habit by which we live righteously, of which no one can make bad use of since God works in us. Therefore it a "habit that disposes an agent to perform its proper operations or movement"(Aquinas, 1976) Dewey referred to the role of habits as the nature of character. As he puts it, without the "continued operation of all habits in every act, no such thing as character could exist" (Dewey, 1922).

Division of virtues

Aristotle was one of the first philosophers to articulate on the theory of virtues. He classified them into intellectual and moral categories. Intellectual virtues owe their origin and development mainly from teachings meaning they are acquired through experience and in time. On the other hand Moral virtues are informed by the habits or *ethos*. This implies that moral virtues are not implanted in us by nature since that which is natural cannot be changed by habit. Today we classify virtue as intellectual, moral and Theological. In this way we take Intellectual virtues as a "habit perfecting the intellect to elicit with readiness acts which are good in reference to their proper object namely truth"(Nell, 2013). Intellectual virtues are further classified as speculative on the one hand and practical on the

other. Speculative intellectual virtues are wisdom, science and understanding while the practical intellectual virtues are art and prudence.

Intellectual virtues

By definition intellectual virtues are the exercise of habits that perfect the intellect to make ready for good acts in reference to the truth. They are deep personal qualities or character strengths required for good thinking, learning and doing which is in order with truth. Intellectual virtues are classified according to the two-fold functions of the mental faculty namely speculative and practical. We therefore have speculative intellectual virtues which include wisdom, science and understanding on the one hand and practical intellectual virtues namely art and prudence on the other hand.

The purpose of reason is comprehension, understanding and judgment. Aristotle holds that the object of this process is truth (Dewey, 1976). This is connected to Aristotle's intellectual virtues which are expressed through scientific knowledge (Larry, 2001), excellence in art, intuitive reasoning, practical wisdom and philosophical wisdom. Intellectual virtues become the instrument of right reasoning. This is what Plato held as the greatest tool in leadership when he argued that philosophers should be kings and kings should be philosophers (Leibell, 2013). Many other ancient philosophers believed that virtuous people lived a better life than ignorant people. Knowledge helps one to live a better life since it opens one to better and informed choices. A virtuous person is open to a range of areas and makes an effective and fulfilling judgments and acts in an appropriate way.

Rational Virtues

In defining rational virtues we first revisit the definition of virtue as a moral habit which generally results in the gaining or maintaining of values. Virtues are pre-thought out methods for achieving values. This means that with rational virtues, acting virtuous leads to a happy and successful life. Examples of rational virtues are self-reliance, productiveness, integrity, honesty, pride, justice, benevolence, rationality among others (Dewey, 1976).

Self-reliance has to do with the independence of one's intellectual capacity in managing one's affairs without depending on others. Man's independence in acting should yield values. Therefore the use of judgment in choosing between right and wrong and going all the way to achieve the good makes man self-reliant and therefore rationally virtuous (Leibell, 2013). Productiveness and fruitfulness illustrate that man must achieve values in order to lead a good life and live it well. Productiveness itself illustrates fruitfulness in life. It is the fullest use of man intellectual potentiality in seeking and gaining values.

Integrity is the practical interpretation of believe. It is practicing what one holds, says and believes is right. There is a reason why integrity is considered as virtue. When one practices his beliefs he benefits in his life. Acting against one's own believes is tantamount to claiming incompetence and inadequacy of reason. This is misleading life and living a lie. Life is the means of achieving survival and acting against one's beliefs is an abandonment of the very life. Another reason is that when dealing with others a person who practices what they believe is predictable and reliable. It makes others lay trust on the individual as they realize his consistency. Acting without integrity creates mistrust and unreliability.

Honesty is the ability to recognize truth and face the principle that "what is *is* and what is not *is not*" (Leibell, 2013). It also guides the human mind that what is unreal has no value. Pride is the virtue of self-respect. Pride calls for self evaluation resulting to the recognition of self worth. However pride is sometimes misconstrued for arrogance and self-centeredness. But true pride is rational and results to motivating the individual to self-improvement and serves as a pillar supporting one's mind. (Leibell, 2013)

Moral Virtues as guide to the good

In the Nicomachean Ethics Aristotle developed his account of virtue through an appeal to rationality as the function of human nature. *Eudemonia* is first identified as the highest human good and the ultimate aim of all human endeavors. Rather than being a state, bodily sensation, or particular emotion, successful is characterized as an activity that objectively fulfills us by realizing our nature and rendering human action intelligible and explaining why we do particular things like plan ahead, become educated, work, play, etc (Dewey, 1976). The claim is that all

human beings normally desire a flourishing life: the life that exhibits certain virtues or Excellencies that make it good, a life well lived, including achieving worthwhile goals, fulfilling social and family obligations, perfecting one and maintaining close friendships.

Aristotle, on whose intellectual legacy this concept is largely based, developed his ethics clearly in terms of virtues. These are understood as quality of the soul, stable habits and a disposition that enables certain actions to be carried out easily. It could also be argued that through frequent repetition, one becomes more at ease with a certain activity and thereby acquires habit (Aristotle, 1986). In the case of virtues in respect of morally good acting, it stands in the middle between two undesirable positions. Aristotle divided virtues into those improving reason and those perfecting the will and sensual assiduity. Various virtues are manifested in various areas of human life, among which Aristotle ranks fortitude and temperance (Aristotle, 1986).

Moral virtues are generally positive personal qualities that guide a person to lead a life characterized by self-control, altruism and good acts. Moral virtues are exemplified by courage, temperance, and liberality. Some of the moral virtues include Justice, temperance, prudence and fortitude. Moral virtues are to regulate the passions and employ them as aids in the progress of spiritual life (Leibell, 2013). It is natural for a just man to experience great joy, great hope and confidence as he endeavors to perform duties of piety and in the process of administering justice. Moral virtues are those which perfect the appetitive faculty of the soul, namely the will and the sensuous appetite.

Moral virtue is so called from the word *mos*, which signify a certain natural or quasi-natural inclination to do a thing. The inclination to act is properly attributed to the appetitive faculty, whose function it is to move other powers to action. Consequently that power is called moral which perfects the appetitive faculty (Leibell, 2013). Justice is morality on an individual level that is the willingness to recognize the impact of both good and bad actions. A person who is committed to justice will reward the good in both himself and others, and will punish the bad.

Temperance is the quality of self-control and moderation. It may be applied to the intake of alcohol and food, sexual passion or any urge or desire that has the power to overcome the balance of a person's mind. A person who has developed temperance in herself is able to step away from momentary urges and to look at them objectively, thus reducing their power to control the mind (Aristotle, 1999). The word "temperance" was widely used in the early 20th century in connection with campaigns against alcohol. Any attempt at self-control and moderation is an exercise in temperance.

Prudence is related to temperance but encompasses a wider variety of thoughts, activities and circumstances. A prudent person doesn't act rashly, but considers the impact and results of his actions. Prudence implies presence of mind, reason and the ability to predict future outcomes, whether positive or negative. Prudent people are reserved in spending, dedicated to the safety of those who are dependent on them and committed to avoiding extremes in thought or action. Prudence implies prioritizing the needs of a community over one's personal desires.

Fortitude is another word for strength and determination. A person who pursues the virtues of justice, temperance, and prudence will also require fortitude in a world that is not only dedicated to these things, but actively seduces people away from them in favor of indulgence and short-term pleasure (Aristotle, 1999). Fortitude included self-confidence in the rightness of one's own actions, immunity to the condemnations or mockery of other people, and faith in the personal philosophy that underlies unpopular decisions. A mindset that is grounded in fortitude can actually be strengthened rather than weakened by opposition.

Virtues versus vices in man's character

Aristotle's doctrine holds that virtues are connected to rationality and hence to sound reasoning. To be virtuous involves avoidance of the interference and control of emotions and passions in the reasoning process (Aristotle, 1999). However since man is not perfect he sometimes finds himself in situations where his reasoning process is affected. Where man lacks full knowledge, will and freedom in his actions he is however not held responsible since these impediments of the human act diminish his culpability. According to Aristotle moral virtues are related to actions as well the emotions that accompany these acts. The virtuous person moderates the amount of emotions that come with the actions in different circumstances. In this way moral virtues become character traits that are identified with the moderation in emotion and action. The outcome of this is the relationship between intellectual

virtues and moral virtues since moderation is determined by the rational principle discovered by a person of practical wisdom.

"The first in intention is always the last in execution" (Leibell, 2013). Applied to the human action the good of the act is first desired and reason connected to achieve it as a goal. Virtuous actions depend on practical wisdom guiding the choice and controlling the passions. This moves the individual towards the good and away from the vices. A good person uses reason in understanding the self, the others and the world. Virtues assist the person to get into contemplation and in the process attempts to understand the supernatural. A virtuous person is able to make judgments on his conduct and does not allow deficiency and excess of emotions to interfere with his reasoning process.

According to Aristotle being good is beyond mere actions. The person must be conscious of what they are doing. This means being aware of the fact that the action being performed is constitutively good with an objective good and a good intention. This is connected to intellectual virtues and to knowledge. Simply put the person should choose the action as a virtuous act on the one hand and again choose it as an end on the other hand. The action chosen in this way becomes an expression of character and must be accompanied by the proper feeling or emotion.

When man is conscious of his actions and his choice is toward the common good, the choice is objective and hence virtuous. The actions flow from the character with minimal interference of the emotions (Dewey, 1916). Aristotle believed that being a good person would never be in isolation, rather it would only be possible in the presence of certain factors such as health, integrity, material prosperity and being integrated with other people that he called city dwellers. He argued that devoid of these it would be impossible to live a good life (Birsch, 1979).

However Aristotle acknowledges that mental illness and physical challenges can cause moral disadvantage since the person with mental challenge lacks the same opportunities for knowledge and practical wisdom with those who are mentally upright. This would hinder the disadvantaged person from achieving the goals proper to intellectual capacity. Similarly people with critical illness would not achieve full degree of well-being. Virtue is concerned with the process of reasoning as well as the consequences of the human acts. Ethical actions flow necessarily from an ethical character and ethical character is a matter of good education and good habits. Ethical character is a result of intellectual as well as moral virtues (Dewey, 1916). Ethical persons act spontaneously regardless of the code of conduct or interpretation of the individual actions.

Acquired and infused virtues relates the learner to the good

According to Aristotle infused virtues have acquired habits whose role is to relate the agent in a determinate way to the good attainable in life (Birsch, 1979). These dispositions are gifts as opposed to acquisitions and they are infused into the soul and hence they relate to man's supernatural end while acquired virtues relate to man's natural end as described naturally. These virtues are the guide to man as he strives to achieve the good.

Theological virtues as guides toward the supernatural

Among the virtues Faith, Love and Charity are clustered together and termed as Theological Virtues. This follows the inadequacy of man's natural principles towards a supernatural end. Progressive education guides the learners toward the supernatural end (Dewey, 1916). It becomes necessary that man is endowed with supernatural powers to attain his final destiny. Faith, hope and charity, are actually the fundamental principles of Catholicism, and are also known as the theological virtues. St Thomas Aquinas elaborated on the three supernatural virtues amply in his seventh and eighth volumes of the of *Summa Theological* (Chinese edition). The first of all virtues is Faith. This is faith in the existence of God (Aquinas, 1992).

The attributes of God as all beautiful, all good, all mighty are contained in this virtue. God is the creator of the universe and all things as well as the arbiter who punishes evil and rewards good. Man should have the divine command to worship Him and follow His commandments. After faith is the virtue of hope. This is the faith in God as the final destination of man. Man aspires to attain God and receive God's grace and blessing (Dewey, 1916). This guides man in the reverence and love of God which is demonstrated in the passion for virtue, obedience of God's commandments, in acts that please God, and generally in the love God and love of men (Aquinas, 1999).

These three virtues are oriented toward God. Knowing and believing God makes one aspire for Him and then adore Him. The three are related to one another with God in the center.

Cardinal Virtues as Demonstrable in Progressive Education

Etymologically Cardinal virtues come from the Latin term *Cardo* meaning hinge or door. These are the virtues that support all other virtues meaning that all other virtues are hinged on them and develop from them. These virtues include prudence, fortitude, and justice and Temperance.

Prudence which is being wise in practical affairs through the ability to govern and discipline oneself by the use of reason, the sagacity or shrewdness in the management of affairs, skill and good judgment in the use of resource and the caution or circumspection as to danger or risk (Pieper, 1999). Temperance, fortitude and justice are related to prudence according to Dewey who was a virtue ethicist and a precursor to contemporary ethics of character. For Dewey virtues are not primarily moral ideas but the sum total character derived from the process of moral judgment.

Fortitude comes from the Latin word *fortis* meaning strong. This is the strength of the soul that enables the individual to take a reasonable cause of action especially when faced with danger and particularly the danger of death (Pieper, 1999). Fortitude consolidates one's endurance in suffering and in facing hard and painful moments. This way one is able to conquer the fear of death. Fortitude helps to control anger in the person. The gift of patience, courage and perseverance are properly associated with fortitude.

Justice is one of the cardinal virtues which dispose the individual to render to all their due rights. Justice is the strong and firm will to be fair. The individual will is the subject of justice while the object of justice is what is owed to someone. Justice is distinguished from privileges. What is given to a person out of will and gratitude is not justice since the receiver does not merit or deserve it. Justice applies where one has particular rights owed to them. Justice is founded on the natural law and expressed through registration of the state or positive law (Greeley, 2010). Positive law expresses what is due to who and what rights belonging to whom. Justice like other virtues helps in the life of the people as they seek common good and the ultimate good (Pieper, 1999). Positive laws strengthen the natural law and helps individuals in seeking their rights.

However positive laws can be just or unjust. When it is in accordance with the natural law it is just but when not in accordance with the natural law it is unjust. No one is obliged to follow an unjust law as Martin Luther King Junior would put it One has not only a legal but a moral responsibility to obey just laws. Conversely, one has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws (Pieper, 1999).

Temperance is defined as moderation or voluntary self-restraint. It is typically described in terms of what an individual voluntarily refrains from doing. This is the moral virtue that regulates the sensual appetite in the human being. Some of the sensual pleasures and appetites associated with human beings include food, drink and sexual appetite. It is fortitude that regulates these pleasures to conform to the human nature (Greeley, 2010). Temperance does not eliminate emotions and cravings but rather regulates them in order for the person to have a balance between immaturity and insensibility. Temperance makes the person mature in desires and is connected with sobriety and the moderation in food and drinks.

Dewey's Virtue Ethics

According to the theory of virtue ethics, the virtues are qualities of a person in addition to actions. The theory resembles deontology in accepting morally right actions not only to be means to an end, and holds the utilitarian view that morally right or wrong actions have an inherent value in relation to their consequences. Yet, the essence is studying character traits with the aim of human prosperity. Thus, virtue ethics moves the focus from the actions to the person by emphasizing the role of one's character in order to evaluate ethical behavior.

According to Hursthouse, she challenged these values by claiming that they can be unified, in her book *On Virtue Ethics* (Rosalind, 1999). What is of interest here is first that she supports the Neo-Aristotelian theory and refers to human nature by claiming that "human beings need the virtues in order to live a characteristically good human life

(Rosalind, 1999). She agrees with Anscombe by insisting that modern moral philosophy has found it necessary to revive the ancient approach of virtue ethics.

Moreover, by examining the content of the character traits, she asserts that they both need to benefit the possessor and enhance his or her life (Rosalind, 1999). Thus human beings need qualities that combine the state of mind and emotions towards actions. She proclaims that these character traits need to provide guidance as to what kind of act should be performed. Emotions must also play a part in reason because they motivate the agent morally. Aristotle stated that virtues are connected with both actions and emotions, but they should be morally significant as well. Moving the focal point from actions to people is a significant contribution to the claim of the innateness of the virtues.

Aristotle holds that virtues are necessary for people to accomplish the basic function and live a good life. "According to him virtues are habits of the soul by which one acts well; they enable one to live a noble life. For the sake of what is fine and noble. As he puts it, virtuous actions express correct or right reason (Aristotle, 1999). They are acquired through practice and habituation. One becomes virtuous by acting virtuously, that is to say, by acting as the virtuous person acts, doing what one should when one should and in the way one should. And the virtuous person comes to take pleasure in acting virtuously. Hence, one sign that we have not acquired a certain virtue is that when we perform actions of the sort associated with that virtue, we do not take pleasure in those actions but instead find them burdensome.

By the same token, one becomes vicious by allowing certain defective ways of acting to become habitual. Virtue is difficult to attain, since if we simply follow our inclinations, we become vicious. Hence, even though we have a natural desire for happiness, our inborn inclinations often lead us away from our true happiness (Aristotle, 1999). It is for this reason that a good upbringing is essential. We must learn to both act correctly and feel correctly. Aristotle here disagrees with those who think that becoming virtuous entails being unaffected by pleasure and pain (Aristotle, 1999). On his view, the virtuous person takes delight in what is fine and noble and is pained at what is shameful.

Nonetheless there is a reason to believe that virtue ethics is a more open approach than the other two in the way that it "allows the virtues to ground at least some reasons, perhaps alongside other moral reasons or non-moral reasons grounded in the good of the agent. Aristotle believed that the nature of human beings would be perfected by exercising the virtues rationally (Aristotle, 1999). Anscombe considered this to be a possibility, despite difficulty with advancing such an argument, which would depend fundamentally on the definition on human nature and well being (Anscombe, 1958).

Virtues are character traits that promote the well-being of an individual who acquires them. This means that the first beneficiary of virtue is the person who acquires them. They enable the person to live a worthy life (*eudaimon*). Virtues add value to human action thereby making the person who acquires them a good human being. Man definitely requires virtues in order to live a good life. The same virtues make man to flourish as a human being and generally live a good life. The objective of *Nicomachean Ethics* is that at the end of it all man lives a good life not merely a life that filled with happiness or pleasure. This he says is life that is good and one that enables one to have achievements is wisdom, moral excellence and knowledge. He adds that it should also be a long life. Aristotle connected a good human life with the man's function. His argument is that the human person is defined by his rationality. Therefore the function of man is one of reasoning as opposed to any other animal.

Dewey's ethics is radical in many ways and difficult, but once his moral philosophy is laid out somewhat systematically it is clear that he holds the virtues in human conduct to be a key element in the development of character and the progress of moral inquiry. Ethical theory was found in ancient Greek. By comparing Dewey's perspective on ethics with Plato and Aristotle's, all of them respond to the same social concern that was asked by Socrates (Dewey, 1934). However, Dewey explains that philosophers work involved creating an ethical theory which enhances traditional morality.

Dewey describes the ethical theory as an orientation which creates an ideal for life. On the other hand, Aristotle describes the ethical theory as a life activity that is happens with virtue (Dewey, 1934). Ethical theory can also be explained as the most road man to a pleasant life, and it is a law from God that should be followed. From Aristotle, the Middle Age inherited the picture of a closed universe, an ordered, limited and hierarchical world order. In the

order of nature, we begin from the sphere of fixed stars- called fixed because their relations to one another do not change: the location of the greatest perfection in nature. The ladder of nature descends from the perfection of the stars to the less regular and perfect forms of life on earth (Aristotle, 1999).

Dewey believes in the role of science in ethics while many philosophers insist that science is inappropriate method for ethics. Dewey defines science as an idea of civilized life of the sciences and the humanities. "Dewey regards the following as key features of the scientific method in several points: ideas are instruments for solving problems, problems arise in concrete circumstances, in "situations." discovery requires interaction with the environment, that is, action upon the environment accompanied by observation of what emerges from that interaction. These ideas are all relevant to Dewey's view on how to think about ethics (Dewey, 1934). Dewey's opposition to hard and fast distinctions between means and ends is significant for education. He always conceived education as having a moral dimension. Education, for him, is a passage from the worse to the better, or it is not deserving of its name (Dewey, 1934).

Dewey's Moral Deliberation

Virtue defined from the Aristotelian sense is a mean between excesses and deficiencies of passions. For example, the virtue of Christian magnanimity is a mean, where one is neither slothful, choosing to ignore the greatness God gave one, nor taking pride in thinking of themselves as great in their own right. According to Aristotle ethical virtues are "habits disposed towards action by deliberate choice of being or the mean relative to us and defined by reason (Dewey, 1934). According to him habits are acquired only through the deliberate act of practicing them meaning that by acquired ethical virtues become dispositions that one possesses at all times. Ethical virtues are the mean between excessive expression of virtue and the deficiency of the same.

In Theory of Moral Life, Dewey defines ethical deliberation as "a dramatic rehearsal of various competing possible lines of action". According to Caspary there are three characteristics of moral deliberation from his definition: First, moral deliberation focuses on the possible lines of action. This means, in each problematic situation, we should clarify the relationship and imagine the possible lines of action. Second, with each possible line of action, we should also predict the possible responses and consequences. Third, we should know that moral deliberation is interpersonal and sensitive; it takes account of emotional feeling and intuition (Caspary, 1991).

According to Dewey, "Moral theory cannot emerge when there is a positive belief as to what is right and what is wrong, for then there is no occasion for reflection (Anscombe, 1958). First, Dewey rejects the idea that moral inquiry happens when a person is tempted to do something that he or she is sure is wrong. Dewey believes that moral inquiry happens only in a problematic situation where no single standard seems to be morally justified. A person has to inquire in order to come to a decision. Second, Dewey believes that values cannot be obtained at once, the moral inquiry needs to be done over and over again, in terms of the conditions of concrete situations as they arise (Anscombe, 1958). Third, moral inquiry seeks mutual determination, in which both individual freedom and the common good is enriched. To Dewey, first, the definition of moral virtue depends on "qualities characteristic of interest.

In Moral deliberation, a series of virtues have a tentative status, each virtue cannot be given a fixed meaning, because each expresses an interest in objects and institutions which are changing. An interest, to Dewey, must be wholehearted, continuous and impartial. Second, to Dewey, virtue depends on the influence of the social and the physical environment. Each virtue may show different moral effects according to different social environments. We cannot separate the concept of each virtue from the concrete situation. Third, for Dewey, virtues are not isolated from each other. Instead, different virtues work together in each situation. Some time we emphasize one of the virtues, but we could not teach that virtue separately. Fourth, to Dewey, virtue is an important mean for human inquiry. Dewey believes that humans could accomplish more impossible things if, they develop certain virtues.

Character education seeks to cultivate good character as the true aim of education. Cognitive moral development focuses on promoting the development of children's moral judgment. Character education has been criticized for didacticism and for its deemed phasing of reflection and moral judgment (Dewey, 1934). In contrast, the latter has been criticized for its inability to cultivate the content of morality and its ignoring of moral sentiment. Both approaches have their strengths and weaknesses. A close look at these two approaches using Dewey's concept of moral deliberation is a good way to bridge the divide.

According to Dewey, the cognitive moral development approach should integrate reason and feeling. Cognitive moral development emphasizes the important of moral cognition, used as the sole standard for moral development. Even Dewey believes that moral knowledge depends on the process of moral reasoning, but he insists that “in their root and essence moral judgments are emotional rather than intellectual. Dewey also insists moral reasoning is guided by human goals and interests (Ralston, 2010). For Dewey, the process of moral inquiry includes not only cognition but also sentiments, socialization and developing habits of conduct; it is more than moral thinking.

Second, according to Dewey, cognitive moral development should deal with real problem situation instead of hypothetical dilemmas. Cognitive moral development tends to use moral dilemma stories. For Dewey, moral deliberation is preparing to affect the future development of an existing problematic situation, and hypothetical dilemmas are little help to achieve this goal (Ralston, 2010). Caspary offers a good example of the process of Dewey’s moral deliberation through Sartre’s dilemma. Caspary explains that the young man is expected to use his intelligence and wisdom to evaluate all the possible lines of action. His decision is depending on his evaluation of all these possible factors; he also should realize his role as a social being.

Third, for Dewey, cognitive moral development should integrate concept and context. Cognitive moral development tends to emphasize moral concepts and moral structure. For Dewey, moral concepts and processes are closely related to the specific conditions of human life. Therefore, moral thinking and moral judgment should always take into account the present situation and the social environment (Ralston, 2010). Cognitive moral development creates a “just community” in school. Dewey insists that if we could facilitate democracy in a small social circle, this small social circle will later influence the whole society. In this way, moral deliberations aim at renewing the society.

Dewey on Virtues in Education as Developing Human Potential

In a progressive education system, the primary focus is the child. As part of developing all of the elements of the child, the teacher concentrates on educating the human potential. Through character education, the system is able to help each child unlock their personal potential. Virtue education allows each child to explore the field of morality and learn to choose between good and evil (Dewey, 1934). This leads to practical decisions in cases that call for it.

In the same breath virtues are understood to be universal and should be recognized by people of all cultures. Unfortunately, this is not the case due to other factors that affect human formation reasoning and judgment. However virtues are necessary for a child’s well-being and happiness. Once they are learned, they can last the child a lifetime. Teachers should make sure that students learn the following virtues (Caspary, 1989). Wisdom, courage, perseverance, honesty, kindness, patience, helpfulness, humility, compassion, hard work, creativity, independence, confidence, respectfulness, grace, courtesy, sociability, responsibility, self-sufficiency, curiosity, joyfulness, gratitude, and service. These virtues help build a child’s character and inspire others around them to be better people.

Progressive Education; a means to Developing Virtue

In guiding the learner develop virtues they are guided to acquire moral alertness. This is a concept that has not hitherto been demanded by many education systems, but is revealed in the tranquility, patience, charity, and humility of the learner. Virtues become the qualifications of the learners. In order to develop these virtues, the learners are exposed to stories and experiences that model them. They are guided to make it a point to display these virtues on a daily basis, so they serve as role models to the other students. The teachers also concentrate on positive activities in order to prevent the formation of negative traits, bad habits such as laziness and disorder are quickly replaced by good qualities such as self-sufficiency and hard work. Cultivating virtues leads a child to develop a more purposeful life.

Students learn virtues like service and helpfulness by participating in practical life activities. Such exercises include teaching children to care for the environment and peer to peer collaboration, in which an older student helps a younger student (Macintyre, 2007). Macintyre holds that the virtue of courage is good as a quality that sustains the society and the virtue of friendship is necessary as it is the ingredient for fidelity. The exercise by the heroic virtue thus requires a human being and social setting. The fundamental ethical question in human beings has for a long time been "what should I do?" or "how should I act?" Ethics has the task of providing ethical principles or universal

rules that answer to the man's question on how to act (Macintyre, 2007). Ordinarily many people will feel obligated to that which will result to the greatest good for the greatest number.

Moral principles focus primarily on specific human actions. Their applications are based on what these principles require of the person in particular circumstances in deciding to act. An example is when the person decides to tell a lie or to commit suicide. The principles are also applicable to professionals such as doctors, lawyers *inter alia*. In addition they are required in the formulation of social policies and institutions. They have recently been applied in the formation of "Business Ethics", "Legal Ethics", "Medical ethics" and Ethics in Public Policy. By focusing on what people should do or how they should act, the moral principles' approach neglect the more important issue: What people should be. The fundamental question of Ethics should not be, How should I act? Rather it should be "what type of person should be?"

Conclusion

This article has endeavored to present the concept of virtue as motivated by the great relevance that this concept has to the integral formation of the human person and to the whole process of progressive education. Having define the concept of virtue from its etymological root we went ahead to give a descriptive meaning and a philosophical definition. We then examined the concept from a historical perspective particularly as developed by Aristotle in his major work *Nicomachean Ethics*. The division of virtue was laid out as understood from the various ways in which virtue manifests itself in the human person depending on various dispositions. This manifestation itself is in action. More explicitly, it is an action that counts as virtuous. According to Aristotle, this happens when a person holds themselves in a stable equilibrium of the soul, in order to choose the action knowingly and for its own sake. Eventually it is the stable equilibrium of the soul is that constitutes the character of the parson.

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