Joel C. Sagut
Moral Education in a Craft-Tradition

The article talks about a conception of moral education in a craft-tradition. Reading Alasdair MacIntyre's moral theory, it argues that moral education in a craft-tradition is a threefold concern for: 1) an apprehension of the "human good", 2) the birthing of virtues through formative habits, and 3) sustenance of the life of virtues in a community through its practices. The article moreover talks about the importance of rules and norms, and the formation of relevant dispositions and passions in one's progress towards moral maturity. As it is important to train the intellect to know the first principles, it is also equally important to train the appetite in order to pursue the unqualified human good. Failure in either task will constitute a problem in our existential moral conduct.

1. Introduction

In his *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, Alasdair MacIntyre refers to Aquinas as a philosopher «who understood philosophical activity as that of a craft and indeed of the chief of crafts»[1]. Craft here is understood not in its contemporary but in its pre-modern use, that is, as «trades that had been studied and mastered by craftsmen»[2]. A craft-tradition is characterized by long years of training and apprenticeship. In craft-tradition, learning happens through the instruction of the master to his apprentice where the master's wealth of experience and expertise become the apprentice's guide.

MacIntyre proposes two important distinctions that a student of 'moral philosophy as a craft' has to learn: «distinction between what in particular situations it really is good to do and what only seems good to do but is not in

---

[1]   A.MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry: Encyclopedia, Genealogy and Tradition* [TRVME], University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame 1990, p. 127.

[2]   Simon Newman speaks of this distinction saying that «crafts in the Middle Ages have a different connotation than crafts today. Largely, Middle Ages crafts were not hobbies or artistic demonstrations, but trades that had been studied and mastered by craftsmen. Craftsmen joined forces and organized in craft guilds that allowed them the opportunity to gain prestige, power, and wealth through the practice of their trades». (See more at http://www.thefinertimes.com/Middle-Ages/crafts-in-the-middle-ages.html#sthash.lQXUvgqH.dpuf).

fact so… and, between what it is good and best for me with my particular level of training and learning in my particular circumstances to do and what is good and best unqualifiedly»[3]. So, when I propose to write about "moral education in a craft-tradition", I refer to the task of looking into the process of "initiating" a moral agent into the kind of craft that is called moral philosophy[4]. I deem it worthwhile then to look into a particular contention about the central role that the concept of "human good" would have to play in the education of a moral agent, especially because, as MacIntyre contends, the *telos* of moral enquiry includes 1) excellence in the achievement of both the theoretical understanding of the specifically *human* good and the practical embodiment of that understanding in the life of a practical enquirer[5], and 2) the role that the community would have to play in the educative process[6]. This contention finds its root in the Aristotelian claim about a person's natural desire towards the good as an end[7], where the "end" is particularized for every person yet subordinated to an understanding of a *human* good as an ultimate end[8]. In moral education understood as a craft, the recognition of the human good as an end provides the *arché*, the beginning of a life-work[9], which can only be achieved in a successive attempt to realize it via a person's individual actions. The task of practical judgment is to inquire whether or not the concrete decisions and actions that a particular agent is about to make contribute to the realization of the human good conceived as an "end". Practical judgment must lead to the recognition of an end that influences the actual actions and choices that the moral agent has to make in the here and the now. Practical judgment becomes a faculty that the agent has to exercise in order to discern which of the concrete options laid in front of him/her could serve as appropriate means toachieve his/her "good" as a human person. So, I begin with the question about the "human good" as an end.

---

3   TRVME, pp. 61-62.

4   TRVME, p. 129.

5   TRVME, p. 63.

6   A. MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animal: Why the Human Beings Need the Virtues* [DRA]*,* Open Court, Chicago 1999, pp. 70-71, p. 99.

7   NE 1094a1-2. It may be helpful also to notice that Aquinas' commentary to this passage has pointed out that this 'good' may not be necessarily taken to imply a moral character. The "good" referred to here is not any single good but good in general (see CME, §11). Aquinas also affirms that such conception of the good (in general) is the 'moving principle of the appetite' (CME, §9). References used in this paper for the *Nicomachean Ethics*, and Aquinas' *Commentary* on it, are taken from Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics*, translated by C.I. Litzinger, O.P. with a foreword from Ralph McInerny, Dumb Ox Books, Notre Dame 1993. Aristotle's text is referred as *NE* while Aquinas' commentary is referred as *CME*.

8   Aquinas also points out that Aristotle's reference to the notion of good as end does not refer to a single good to which "all tend" (CME, §11 & §§108-109). He further points out however that in Aristotle, «the highest good is in some way desired in every particular good» (CME, §11). See Kevin Flannery, S.J. "Thomas Aquinas and the New Natural Law Theory on the Object of the Human Act", «*National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly*» 13/1, 2013, pp. 81-84.

9   C. Baracchi, "Aristotle on becoming human", in «Topicos. Revista de Filosofia», 43, 2012, pp. 93-121.

2. The human good as an end

Alasdair MacIntyre argues that the commitment to the understanding of a distinctive "human good" allows Thomistic-Aristotelian moral philosophy to admit a source of legitimation and evaluation for the kind of narrative that a specific moral agent designs for oneself. In his 1990 Aquinas Lecture at Marquette University, MacIntyre has even emphasized the need to discern the first principles which will serve as *arché/principium* for human actions. These first principles are translatable in the realm of moral philosophy as the specifically *human good*; and they could serve as "ends" that will afford us the standards by which we could evaluate our purposes, desires, interests and decisions[10]. MacIntyre's moderate foundationalism emphasizes the role of these "first principles" and claims that: «one may, nonetheless, genuinely know, without as yet possessing that further knowledge of first principles»[11]. Moreover, MacIntyre noted that such openness to a form of provisional knowledge will not be readily identified with postmodernism's disrespect to truth-claims that allow postmodernists to treat truth-claims as if they are only ideologies[12].

This "moderate foundationalism" presents the possibility of seeing moral education as a craft, which requires learning to do at least three things: 1) acquiring the capacity to know the distinction between what *seems* to be good from what is *really* good, 2) acquiring the capacity to discern mistakes done in the past and on how to learn from them, and then to understand the limitations one had in the past, and the resources that one can use in order to surpass those limitations, and 3) learning to make the distinction between what is good for a person in the here and now from that which is good for the human person unqualifiedly[13]. The third, especially, is a useful guide for practical reasoning given the fact that a moral agent exercises such capacity amidst the vicissitudes of one's finite human existence. MacIntyre himself gives the warning about the temporality of our moral practical reasoning and claims that it «not only requires new ways of applying the above distinctions but is in itself sometimes an outcome of new ways in which these distinctions are applied»[14]. Each moral philosopher has to inquire about the "good of the human person as human person", in the same way that a particular moral agent also raises questions about his good as an individual person. The answer of the individual moral agent to his own question somehow presupposes the answer of the philosopher's question. Hence, the moral philosopher could no longer ignore the relevance of his task to the day to day circumstances of the ordinary person. The answers formulated by the former are meant to become responsive to the daily concerns of the latter, and «there is no form of philosophical inquiry

---

10   A. MacIntyre, *First Principles, Final Ends and Contemporary Philosophical Issues* [FP], Marquette University Press, Milwaukee 1990, p. 6.
11   FP*, p. 6.
12   FP*, p. 20.
13   TRVME, p. 127.
14   *Ibid*.

which is not practical in its implications, just as there is no practical enquiry that is not philosophical in its presupposition»[15].

Moral education in this craft-tradition may then be viewed as the process of initiating the moral agent to such needed intimation of the *human* good vis-à-vis his understanding of his personal good in the here and now. Such initiation is facilitated by an important kind of transition that MacIntyre discussed in *Dependent Rational Animal*: the transition from «being only potentially rational animals to being actually rational animals»[16]. Our talk of moral education then is to be understood as an investigation on the nature and scope of this initiation, and the corresponding transition from a more primitive to a more mature state of moral reasoning fitted for rational animals.

3. Transition, community and moral education

It is already well known that MacIntyre's conception of a flourishing life is centered on the exercise of virtues[17]. Here, he furthers the tradition that can be traced from Aquinas and Aristotle. His discussion on the virtues includes a critical appreciation of the Ciceronian list of virtues, among those is the virtue of *phronésis*, which is understood as the «exercise of a capacity to apply truths about what it is good for such and such a type of person or for persons as such to do generally and in certain types of situation to oneself on particular occasions»[18]. It is both a virtue that a practical reasoner must aim to achieve as it also serves as a sort of pre-requisite for the development of other virtues. This is the reason why a moral education within a craft-tradition has to be open to the universal nature of moral knowledge «which human beings have by nature and that, since we are all human beings after all, we can surely all judge equally… plain persons and philosophers or theologians alike»[19]. Quite clearly, moral education in a craft-tradition admits some forms of natural inclination to which the good of the human person is seen as embedded, and it considers as an important goal for education to assist learners in forming those types of inclinations that will allow them to understand their good as human persons.

In the process of discerning the good, two issues need to be taken into consideration: 1) that the first principles (the good of the human person unqualifiedly) may not easily become evident when the practical reasoner begins

---

15   TRVME, p. 128.

16   DRA, p. 56.

17   A. MacIntyre, *After Virtue* [AV], 3rd ed, Notre Dame University Press, Notre Dame 2007, pp. 181-203).

18   A. MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* [WJWR], Notre Dame University Press, Notre Dame 1988, pp, 115-116.

19   TRVME, pp. 135-136. Also see Kevin O'Reilly, O.P., "The Church as the Defender of Conscience in our Age," in «Nova et Vetera», 12/1, 2014, p. 196; and Summa Theologiae I-II, q. 94, a. 4 <http://www.newadvent.org/summa/>.

to appropriate them as guides for practical actions, and 2) that the moral agent has to be initiated into the practice of evaluating his immediate understanding of the good against the conception of the good as good for the human person *unqualifiedly*. Consequently, the education process requires that a) we must have at least an understanding, even if vague and provisional, of the human good, b) we must be open to a possible revision of our initial understanding of what the human good is, and c) we must learn to provide directions to our maturing understanding of what the human good is so that what has been initially a provisional conception of what is good for us as individuals either gets strengthened and reinforced or revised.

This means then that moral education has to aim at *developing* the learner's capacity to *discern* his good, not just as an individual but as one who possesses the "nature" of a human person. If this is so, then we argue that the emphasis on virtue-formation, particularly the virtue of *phronesis*, can be a central task in moral education. MacIntyre, for example, admits that «the *telos* of moral inquiry, which is excellence in the achievement not only of adequate theoretical understanding of the specifically human good, but also of the practical embodiment of that understanding in the life of the particular enquirer, most of all requires therefore not just a craft but a virtue-guided craft»[20]. If Aquinas is correct in saying that a virtue is a habit which «is a disposition whereby that which is disposed is disposed well»[21], then moral education in this craft-tradition will also imply that we give sufficient attention to the kind of dispositions that get developed among the learners.

We will again borrow MacIntyre's insights on the kind of transition needed in the maturing process of a practical reasoner: «in moving from the earliest and most primitive apprehensions of our good to a mature understanding of it we have to explore the meaning and use of such concepts as those of end (*telos*), happiness, action, passion and virtue. What is constant in this movement is the core of our initial apprehension, that is, if we are to achieve an understanding of good in relation to ourselves as being, as animal, and as rational we shall have to engage with other members of the community in which our learning has to go on in such a way as to be *teachable learners*»[22]. I find two important components in this claim: First, it suggests that human reasoning, including moral reasoning, goes through a process of development and maturation as illustrated by the "movement from the earliest and most primitive apprehensions of our good to a more mature understanding"; and secondly, it suggests that the discernment of the human good is done vis-à-vis the community where the moral agent dwells, that is, the presence of the other members of the community has undeniable contribution to the maturation of one's moral reasoning. Hence, the talk of moral education in a tradition that looks at moral philosophy as a craft has to give premium to these two

---

20   TRVME, pp. 62-63.
21   ST I-II q. 49, a1.
22   TRVME, pp. 136-137 – emphasis given.

important aspects: the process of transition, and the role of the community in the discernment of the human good.

The process of transition. Moral education in a craft-tradition is not interested with mere enumeration of dos and don'ts even if it could not avoid talking about rules. We agree with MacIntyre when he said that the first stage of moral development is the student's initiation to the reason-giving processes that he has to learn in order to respond to the question of what is proper to do or not to do in the here and the now. He moreover argues that our "reasons for actions" are mostly handed to us by the community where we belong[23]. Hence, we could hardly ignore the fact that we learn the distinction between good and bad according to the standards of our community. But moral maturity is only facilitated when one begins to *transition* from a reason-giving capacity that is heavily dominated by what one has learned from others, to that reason-giving capability that relies on one's independent practical reasoning[24]. Moral education, understood in a craft-tradition, then gives special attention to this process of transition.

So, we ask the question: what sort of "education" is needed if it has to facilitate this transition of the moral agent from "the earliest and most primitive apprehensions of his/her good to a mature understanding of it?" I argue here that it is the type of moral education that gives special attention to the kinds of dispositions that a student acquires. Hence, an educative process that is hospitable to this conception of "education in a craft-tradition" needs to be characterized by the availability of opportunities that are *disposition-forming* where students are helped to clarify their understanding of what the unqualified human good is. This talk about "dispositions" will lead us to the talk about habits.

Habits[25] provide the facility for the moral agent to act. In fact, habits become the immediate guide for the actions of most people especially those who do not necessarily engage in systematic moral inquiry. Those which MacIntyre calls as plain persons will mostly rely on their habits when they make moral decisions. There are even moral agents who no longer have to explicitly raise moral questions because they were already initiated into the exercise of virtues due to their knowledge of the moral good that was brought about by "connaturality"[26]. Decision-making in this case does not always require the weighing of alternatives. Some decisions remain to be free even if there is only one option to take and therefore the burden of choosing no longer exists. In some cases, in fact, the struggle between alternatives

---

23   DRA, pp. 15-16.
24   MacIntyre calls as independent practical reasoners those «who not only have the ability to reach their own conclusions, but also can be held accountable by and to others for those conclusions» (DRA, p. 84).
25   Baracchi argues that habits enjoy a certain remarkable degree of stability: «Habits are the formations that come to be layered and structure what nature has left unstructured» (Baracchi 2012, p, 117). Hence, when acquired, «habits cannot be easily shed, dismantled, as it were, at will. One can work on deactivating them, on replacing them with other habits… But it is an arduous task» (Baracchi 2012, p. 118).
26   TRVME, pp. 128-129.

in decision-making because of equally compelling choices can well be a sign of the absence of "connaturality" and can be symptomatic more of a lack, rather than a guarantee, of freedom.

Interestingly however, connaturality does not happen overnight. Mostly, connaturality comes as a product of a long-term commitment to pursue a pre-decided end; and it is facilitated best when one's passions are aligned with the identified end. Aquinas argues that the voluntary decision of the human person is always a product of the interplay of one's reason, will or appetite and passions. Habits may strengthen the passions of the person, and so it is important to set these passions aright by setting one's habits aright. The state becomes ideal when the lower faculties of the human person, especially passions and desires, already become trusted guides for moral decisions. In other words, setting the passions and the habits aright should be understood to mean that one has been able to identify one's good as a human being and has trained one's appetite to incline oneself to her "good" as a human person. A moral agent must then aim at two important things: a correct apprehension of what the unqualified human good is, and a proper disposition of the emotions and passions that will incline her to pursue the unqualified human good. When this ideal is achieved, the good of the human person as an individual – that good which the individual desires and is inclined to do – is no longer opposed to the human good unqualifiedly; that is, the discernment of that good that is proper to the human person as human person has already become instructive for, and not restrictive of, what the individual has to desire as an individual.

The emphasis on habit-formation echoes Aristotle's repeated emphasis in the *Nicomachean Ethics*[27]. Aristotle's distinctions of moral failure are important to recall here. The first form of moral failure happens when one fails to distinguish an apparent good from the real good. Vice sets in when reason neglects the task of identifying the *unqualified* human good. One is then prone to vice when she no longer has the aptitude to make the distinction of what is good from that which is bad[28]. A second form of moral failure happens when one, despite a correct apprehension of the human good, gets pulled by an opposing appetite. This

27   It is interesting to note here the argument of Kristjánsson who claims that the Aristotelian concept of "habituation" need not be contrasted to the "dialogical" method characteristic of a phronetic method of inquiry. Dialogue and *phronesis*, he argues, are embedded in Aristotle's moral theory. His arguments are even instructive of how habituation could degenerate into mere "routine" about which he counsels that ethics education in the classroom and elsewhere, even one that follows Aristotelian habituation as a framework, must not deprive the young of the opportunity to dialogue so that «teachers of moral education may have contributed for the young's development of practical wisdom» (K. Kristjánsson, "On the Old Saw that Dialogue is a Socratic but not an Aristotelian Method of Moral Education", «Educational Theory», 64/4, p. 348).

28   Hence, Aquinas argues, the vicious man «desire as good the pleasurable, which is not good, and seek to avoid as evil which is for them painful but in itself good» (CNE, §495).

happens when the passions are ill-trained and therefore reign over reason[29]; and when the moral agent, despite doubts on the moral quality of certain actions, does not mind the warnings set by reason because she could not resist the urges of the passion (Aristotle's *akratic* person)[30].

Moreover, Aristotle makes a distinction between continence and virtue. Even if it is not a form of moral failure, continence still falls short of virtue. The continent individual (*enkratic*) successfully manages to influence the passions with the commitment to the unqualified human good so much so that one has endeavored and has succeeded in aligning her inclinations to her intellectual apprehension of what is *really* good for her as a human person. MacIntyre himself describes the enkratic person as one who «knows what is good and rational to do and does it, but his passions have not yet been fully transformed… the enkratic person does what the rational and virtuous person does, but his motivations are not the same as those of the fully virtuous»[31]. It is the nature of the virtuous person to correctly pass judgment on things related to her activity. Hence, for the virtuous person, «that which is really good seems to him to be good»[32].

To note this distinction between virtue and moral deficiency is important because habits and character affect the way a person makes choices. Behavior is a color of our perception as affirmed by Aristotle when he said, «according to the character of each man, so does the end seem to him»[33]. The insistence on the complementarity of roles between the moral philosopher who is adept in the

---

29   In relation to this, MacIntyre argues that the transition which is needed for moral maturity must allow the learner to realize that his/her immediate desires do not really constitute the human good, and so they must be frustrated here and now in order to give way to some nobler ends (see DRA, p. 70).

30   In MacIntyre's words, the akratic person is one whose «passions are not yet under his rational control, because in one way or another, his knowledge of what is good is not brought to bear on them» (WJWR, p. 128).

31   WJWR, p. 128.

32   CNE, §494. The concern about the "good" as an end - that has to be elected by "reason" and should be tended by the will, has of course been made more complicated by questions raised especially in recent debates in bioethics. Though this matter is not the explicit concern of the present paper, the debates between NNLT which argues that «moral responsibility is to be found first and foremost in one's choosing», (Flannery 2013, p. 92) and those natural law theorists who continue to maintain that «since choice is a sort of a conclusion of counsel… it is necessary that the goodness of the end and the goodness of that which is ordered toward the end coincide with the will of the person choosing» (Flannery 2013, p. 100) is instructive about the difficulty of arriving at common rules that would serve as guides for practical reasoners in conceiving a morally guaranteed course of action. These perplexities will have to remind us of the importance of both the cultivation of the virtue of *phronésis* among ordinary moral reasoners and the continuous efforts of moral philosophers to provide instructions and norms that will help guide the day-to-day ethical practice of the former. As Baracchi counsels, «[e]thics is, then, about establishing principles, i.e., by describing facts and allowing them to become manifest, luminous. Ethics is not absolutely precise, precisely as it undertakes to account for principles "beautifully" and adhere to the multiplicity and fluctuation of phenomena» (Baracchi 2012, p. 108).

33   NE, 1114a32.

theoretical endeavor of raising and answering questions about the human good and the ordinary moral agents who need not raise this question every time but will normally follow their inclinations and dispositions (that is, their habits) is important in the realization that for some, if not most people, it is the habit that becomes the guide for moral decisions. Hence, even if moral philosophy is, strictly speaking, concerned with the theoretical questions on the human good, moral education in this craft-tradition has to be concerned *also* with the formation of the habits of the human person. The kind of activities, the kind of exposures, the kind of literature to read and the kind of advocacies to join are among the examples of those factors that may affect one's progress in moral life, and these can become important considerations in moral education[34]. A wrongdoing that results from complacency remains to be fully voluntary. Aquinas even argues, «since a man in some measure is the cause of his own evil by reason of his continual sinning… it follows that he himself is also the cause of the imaginative reaction that follows such a habit, i.e., of the appearance by which this thing seems to be good in itself»[35]. Moral philosophy as a craft precisely argues that our choices are not constructed only in the present. Choices are products of histories especially our personal history. Therefore, past choices are connected to the present as they will both influence our future decisions. This link is especially evident in the kind of habits that we acquire. As our individual choices are habit-forming, so those habits will also greatly color our present and future decisions and actions, and it is by virtue of this influence that moral education has to pay attention on "habits" and "habit-forming practices".

Moral education and the community. The emphasis on upbringing and formation brings our attention to the habit-forming practices[36] that are encouraged within our communities. Practice refers to a set of activities, and it has a specific set of goals

34   In relation to formal schooling then (although our claims here need not be limited to the scope of formal schooling), we could raise the question as to whether it becomes the responsibility of the school to discriminate the kind of exposures that students are provided with in their student life. Will the school be justified, and in fact mandated by their moral responsibility, to consciously include this when it plans for the student activities inside the school? It seems that, despite the objections of those who believe that it is no longer the business of schools to educate their students in moral matters (see Stanley Fish, "I Know It When I see It: A Reply to Kiss and Euben", in Elizabth Kiss and J. Peter Euben, eds, *Debating Moral Education*, Duke University Press, Durham and London 2010, pp. 82-85), the kind of education promoted in a craft-tradition precisely advocates for this. The offices of campus ministry and student affairs, for example, could have important contributions for the moral formation of the students; and moral education in a craft-tradition would have to include these offices in the educative process.

35   CNE, §520.

36   MacIntyre used the technical term "practice" to mean «any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended» (AV, p. 187). This study however employs the word "practice" not in its strict technical sense but in the other usage of MacIntyre that resembles the ordinary

or ends internal to itself. Practices then provide an opportunity for practitioners to engage in repeated activities that will initiate them to the goods that are internal to such practices. Since habits are formed *in time*, habit-formation requires commitment for repeated performance of actions[37]. Hence, practice becomes a relevant avenue for the formation of good habits or virtues. The relationship between a person's view about the human good, the kind of upbringing and formation that she is provided with or by which she has been brought up, and the kind of communal customs that support the formation of certain habits[38] cannot then be ignored.

Moral education in a craft-tradition roots for a commitment on an "integral process" of formation. Initiating the learner to a mature understanding of the human good could hardly be guaranteed by classroom instructions alone, and this is the reason why we argue here that formal schooling may not be sufficient to address fully the concerns for moral education. The moral education envisioned in a craft-tradition then looks at such practices as mentoring and accompaniment as vitally important in the educative process[39].

I again agree with MacIntyre when he says that moral reasoning begins with one's initiation to reason-giving processes. This initiation however can only happen within a community. This is one fact that is oftentimes overlooked by those traditions of moral philosophy that concentrated only on the distinction of the human rational

---

usage of the term. Hence, the word "practice" is used here to refer to any social activity that has become customary, and has thereby become "habit-forming".

37   Baracchi, despite claiming that «ethics is about establishing principles» (Baracchi 2012, p. 108), argues that since there is «no artful technique, *tekné*, able to provide a prescriptive ethical code *stricto sensu*» then «ethical reflection» even if it «would provide the intellectual analyses and clarifications propaedeutic to a more skillful encounter with what is the case… could *in no way replace practical upbringing (the formation of character)*» (Baracchi 2012, p. 109 – emphasis is added).

38   Sidney Winter (2013) used the term "habit" to mean "routine". This prejudice against habits, as contrasted to "deliberate action", is precisely premised by the inadequacy of "routines" to provide us reasons for actions. The study however is interesting because despite the prejudice against habits as routine, the author could not also totally ignore the influence of habits to human actions when he affirms that given one's belief in free will, it becomes hard to bear that «most of daily life is driven by automatic, non-conscious mental processes» (Sidney Winter, "Habit, Deliberation and Action: Strengthening the Microfoundations of Routines and Capabilities", in «The Academy of Management and Perspectives», 27/2, p. 135).

39   My reading of MacIntyre, especially his *Dependent Rational Animal*, allows me to see three important stages in moral formation: initiation to reason-giving processes, transition from being a potential to becoming an actual moral agent, and the exercise of independent practical reasoning. Though a discussion of these stages needs to be done in another occasion, I would argue that each stage needs nurturing "practices" that shall engender relevant "virtues". For the stage of initiation to reason-giving, the practice of mentoring is important. The stage of transition (as mentioned in the earlier part of this paper) is facilitated by the practice of accompaniment; and the exercise of independent practical reasoning needs the practice of dialogue or friendship. This present paper will at least attempt to mention two of these practices, namely mentoring and accompaniment, in order to illustrate the important role that the community will have to play in the educative process.

animal from the non-human intelligent animal. In variance to these positions, moral education in a craft-tradition will argue that we would hardly understand human agency without first looking into the semblances between human and non-human animals[40]. Both human and non-human intelligent animals like dogs, dolphins, chimpanzees and other trainable animals, develop their perception of their immediate surroundings according to the kind of initiation that their mentors have afforded them. Hence, when animals react to their environment, they react according to the customary reactions afforded them by their class – either by the adults of their own community or by their human trainers. In the same way, children also perceive their immediate environment according to the kind of initiation that the mentors (or the adults) have provided. Hence, the initiation of the human child to the dos and don'ts in moral life happens, and could not happen otherwise, in the context of a community.

It is for this reason that a moral education in a craft-tradition will look into the communal practices that initiate the young to a series of dos and don'ts and will consider such initiation to rules and norms as *integral* to the educative process. While there are those who would look at this process as an act of indoctrinating, a practice that is treated in some circles of ethics educators as outdated[41], moral education in a craft-tradition, while arguing that this is not the core of moral education, could not also dispense with the formative component of rules. A moral education in craft-tradition will not discount the importance of orienting the child toward the communal practice of respect to authority, and exercise of constraints on her freedom in matters like free speech, free expression, etc. In this conception of moral education, local cultures and traditions are treated as valuable sources for moral reasoning, although they need not constitute the entirety of the learner's journey towards moral maturity and development.

The practice of mentoring that initiates the learner to the reason-giving processes of the community, that is, the norms and rules of the community, has to however eventually give way to another practice, that of accompaniment, which is important for the stage of transition that constitutes a movement from the earliest and most primitive apprehensions of our good to a more mature understanding. What is referred to here as a more mature understanding is the capacity for independent practical reasoning, where an independent practical reasoner is one who defines and then realizes (that is, acquires) her own sets of goods independently.

The practice of accompaniment requires that in the relationship of learner and teacher, the teacher has to evolve from one whose role it is to introduce the norms and rules of the community (the role of a mentor) to one whose presence is mostly to assure the learner that she will not be totally alone in the process of identifying her own goods as a human person (the role of a companion). The companion's task is less about "instructing the learner or the young on what to do", but she is there in order to help the learner clarify some ambiguities in the process of identifying

---

40   See DRA, pp. 11-19.
41   Fish 2010, p. 81.

those goods that are fitted for her as a human person[42]. It is very important then for the practice of accompaniment that both the learner and the companion allow two crucial dispositions to develop on the part of the learner: the disposition to be accountable over one's actions as she attempts to formulate her own goods as a human person, and the disposition to listen and be corrected, especially in those instances when her inclinations and passions have not yet been fully formed so as to align her goods in the present to that which is really good for her as a human person. The end of such practice as accompaniment then is not to secure previously identified goods to become the enshrined goods of the learner, but rather to allow the learner to formulate her own goods within the context of her relationships inside a community of moral agents. In other words, what the practice of accompaniment hopes to achieve is to train the *phronetic* virtues of the learner to decide for her own good as a human person, without necessarily relativizing such good. Such practice of accompaniment then will help moral agents exercise their autonomy as individuals, but only in the context of their awareness of themselves as members of a community. The community does not and need not impose any value upon the individual, but the individual also understands that she could hardly define any value outside the context of her relationships in the community. In a sense, moral agents who have gone through a moral formation in the context of a craft-tradition understand that they do not only decide by and for themselves, but rather would have to deliberate with others and decide within a community with regard to the identification even of their individual "good". It is perhaps in this sense that moral education in a craft-tradition insists on the important role that traditions and communities would have to play in our exercise of our moral agency.

4. Conclusion

Given the above discussion then, I argue that the talk of moral education in a craft-tradition leads us, to an important extent, to the investigation of what really is the "human good" that will constitute as the "end" for our human actions. Certainly, there is a considerable degree of pluralism in the understanding of such "good", and there are those who would even argue that we could not arrive at a common understanding of the 'human good' and must therefore settle only with

---

42   The discussion of Matt Ferkany and Benjamin Creed ("Intellectualist Aristotelian Character Education: An Outline and Assessment", in «Educational Theory,» 64/6, 2014, pp. 567-587) on the Intellectualist Aristotelian Character Education (IACE) has pointed out this important role of the teacher as a companion. They support IACE where «direct instruction plays the lesser role whereas *experiential insight* into the good of the virtue is fundamental» (p. 570). Moreover, they pointed out that the aim of character education «is not mere virtue-conforming behavior, but progress in moving from stages of pre-continence and moral ignorance to incontinence, from incontinence to continence and self-control, and from continence to practically intelligent virtue» (p. 577). These aims are strikingly similar with the aims of a moral education in a craft tradition even if the latter's emphasis would have to include the indispensable role of passions and emotions.

a political and plural articulation. A moral philosophy seen as a craft-tradition is however insistent on the possibility of a metaphysical understanding of the human good, and thereby argues that it is the only 'good' that could serve as a legitimate end for moral education. Moreover, I also believe that we could hardly articulate the human good, and therefore initiate our learners towards that articulation, without explicit attention to our communal deliberations and processes. Our human communities have important contributions in our personal understanding of our good as individual human persons, and it has been the contention of a moral education in a craft-tradition that we pay attention to those communal dimensions when we articulate our good, and train our young in that articulation, as human persons.

Joel C. Sagut
University of Santo Tomas
joel.sagut@ust.edu.ph

Joel C. Sagut, Ph.D. is Assistant Professor at the Institute of Religion, University of Santo Tomas (UST), Manila, Philippines. He also serves as the Faculty Secretary of UST Ecclesiastical Faculties of Sacred Theology, Philosophy and Canon Law. He teaches Philosophy of Religion, Social Philosophy and Catholic Social Thought; and he does his research at UST Center for Religious Studies and Ethics focusing on questions in moral and social philosophy, and the social teaching of the Church.