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德行一體說對於品格教育的啟示

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摘要

對於以「德行教學」界定品格教育的常見質疑是：品格教育不過是被L. Kohlberg戲稱為「美德袋取徑」的翻版而已。為了消除這項疑慮，必須闡明各德行之間的關係。此論題過去是在具爭議性的「德行一體說」中被探討的。在為一種可信度較高的德行一體說辯護後，筆者歸結出該學說對於當前品格教育的重要啟示，包括：一、既然德行之間的整合是德行教學中必不可少的重要環節，則以分隔化的方式來教導各個德行是有問題的，尚須教導學生處理道德要求多於一種的複雜的道德情境；二、道德氣質的培養以及各德行所需的（評價性）知識的學習，乃是德行涵養的兩個主要任務；最後，「道德人格的多樣化」獲得該學說的支持，亦即，有德的人實際上是各具特色、多樣類型的，「道德品格的個殊化」這項重要議題也因而獲得彰顯。

關鍵詞：品格教育、「美德袋」取徑、德行一體

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The Doctrine of the Unity of the Virtues and its Implications for Character Education

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Abstract

A doubt often cast on the common practice of defining character education in terms of the inculcation of virtues is that it is simply a duplication of the "bag of virtues" approach, as derogatorily dubbed by L. Kohlberg. To dispel this misgiving, it is imperative to expound the relationship between the virtues, which was addressed in the controversial doctrine of the unity of the virtues in the past. After the author argue for a more plausible interpretation of it, some implications for character education are drawn in this study. Firstly, since the integration of the virtues is integral to the inculcation of virtues, it is problematic to teach the virtues in a compartmentalized way. Instead, it is necessary to learn how to confront a complex moral situation where more than one moral requirement is (are) demanded of the moral agent. Secondly, it is made explicit that the cultivation of moral dispositions and the learning of (evaluative) knowledge requisite for the various virtues are the two major tasks of the inculcation of virtues. Lastly, the unity thesis backs up the idea of the "varieties of moral personality," i.e. virtuous people are actually of different sorts, and hence the important topic of the individualization of moral character is brought to the fore.

Keywords: character education, the "bag of virtues" approach, the unity of the virtues

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Introduction

Character education has been popular in current educational policies and practices in many countries (Kristjánsson, 2002, p. 136; McLaughlin & Halstead, 1999, p. 133), Taiwan included. However, "what is character education?" is itself a perplexing question. As well expressed by an American school principal, "Everybody's talking about it, but nobody really knows what it is" (Lickona, 1998, p. xv). A major reason for this is that there are a great variety of approaches developed and gathered under the fashionable generic term of "character education". No wonder, Arthur puts it that "to enter a discussion about character and even more about character education is to enter a minefield of conflicting definition and ideology" (2003, p. 1). Also, it is claimed that " 'character education' is clearly no single thing, and is capable of being interpreted in a number of different ways" (McLaughlin & Halstead, 1999, p. 133). As a result, the researcher has to specify the particular version of character education under consideration.

Related to this, in his critical review of literature on character education, Carr (2007) claims that "it is not enough to assert the moral primacy of character in the absence of some specification of what counts as moral character"; "for example, is the approved form of character Aristotelian, or Kantian, or utilitarian (and if so, under which interpretation of Aristotle, or Kant, or utilitarianism)" (2007, p. 395)? In his view, character education as a distinct approach to moral education which is generally characterised by its core purpose of the formation of moral character in general and the inculcation of virtues in particular is theoretically underdeveloped and ethically undetermined. For this reason, Carr (2007, p. 395) takes it to be a category mistake to contrast character education with some substantial moral educational views, such as Kohlbergian cognitive developmentalism and care ethics.

In my view, Carr is right to point out that, unlike the latter two established distinct approaches to moral education, it can be easily detected that character education is

not unified by any definite, unitary substantial ethical perspective. The various ethical systems can propose their different versions of character education as long as such key concepts as character and moral character have a role to play in them. For instance, Lickona (1992) claims that there are three distinct theoretical approaches to character education, namely, traditional, cognitive-developmental, and caring communities, and Bajovic, Rizzo and Engemann's paper (2009) is a good example of the second approach. That is, character education is not a privilege reserved for any specific ethical theories. Quite the contrary, character education can take various forms. As far as that is concerned, it is understandable why Carr objects to putting character education on a par with Kohlbergian cognitive developmentalism and care ethics, and accuses it of committing a category mistake.

Nevertheless, it has to be stressed that Carr's criticism is directed at character education in general which is not sufficiently profound in its theoretical sophistication, but contemporary character education in practice is mostly in its specific, non-expansive sense,[1] which is relatively well-defined by its intellectual root in Aristotle's ethics and the contemporary Aristotelian virtue ethical perspective.[2] This version of character education is generally characterised in terms of the inculcation of transcultural virtues.[3] For that matter, there is no good reason to doubt that character education, thus specified, can qualify as a substantial moral educational view, and hence, can safely escape Carr's critique.

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[1] For a ready-made framework of classification of character education, please see McLaughlin and Halstead (1999) and Kristjánsson (2002). Both schemas classify the various factions of character education into two categories, namely, non-expansive and expansive.

[2] The close connection between character education and Aristotelian virtue ethics is widely recognised, if not always explicitly articulated. Basically, they converge on stressing the primacy of character in the enterprise of moral education. Kristjánsson's remark (2006, p. 39) is a case in point.

[3] It is widely agreed that the contemporary character education movement is concerned with the notion in a non-expansive sense (Kristjánsson, 2002, p. 137; McLaughlin & Halstead, 1999, p. 139).

As far as this version is concerned, it has been argued elsewhere that the common practice of defining character education in terms of the inculcation of virtues is not without problems; some shortcomings of this simple characterisation must be taken into full account and properly remedied, if character education is to proceed more productively. Among others, this paper is centred on a common misconception to the effect that character education is nothing more than a duplication of the 'bag of virtues' approach which is in vogue at one time in the history of moral education.[4] Put plainly, a serious defect of this notion is that the formation of moral character is seen merely to be the aggregation of lots of freestanding virtues acquired in such a way that the virtues are treated as if they were completely separable and disconnected to each other. This state of affairs is well depicted by Kent (1999, p. 111):

> Virtuous character threatens to dissolve into a hodgepodge of admirable traits, leaving moral development to look like nothing more than a matter of acquiring more such traits, no matter which combination or in which order.

This reminds us of the "bag of virtues" approach, derogatorily dubbed by

4 Kohlberg's criticism of the 'bag of virtues' approach is well summarised in his paper, *Education for Justice: A Modern Statement of the Platonic View* (Power, Higgins, & Kohlberg, 1989, p. 129). In fact, this paper is intended to illustrate Kohlberg's view of the nature of virtue, which is called "the Platonic view", given its affinities with that of Socrates, and particularly Plato. In Kohlberg's view, a systematisation of the objections to the "bag of virtues" approach starts him on the road to a more Platonic view of virtue. According to Kohlberg, psychologists reject this approach because it is found that there are no traits of character corresponding to the virtues and vices of conventional language. This is well demonstrated in H. Hartshorne and M. A. May's monumental experimental studies of children's cheating and stealing (Kohlberg, 1970). Besides, Kohlberg points out that the approach encourages the assumption that everyone can be a moral educator. However, the assumption is questioned because his empirical studies support Socrates's "bitter observation that good fathers don't have good sons or don't qualify as teachers of virtue (Kohlberg, 1970, p. 65)."

Kohlberg, who criticises the problematic way in which the virtues are taught in an entirely compartmentalised way, as if they were randomly scattered in a bag. The case will be made that to dispel the common misgiving that character education is simply a duplication of that approach, the relationship among the virtues must be expounded. Since this issue is traditionally addressed in the long-running controversial doctrine of the unity of the virtues (UV, for short), I will first elaborate on an orthodox version of that doctrine, and then put forward a more plausible interpretation of the unity of the virtues in a weak sense. Finally, some important implications for character education will be illustrated.

The unity of the virtues

UV is open to many interpretations. Hursthouse (1999, p. 153), for instance, indicates that Chappell once claimed that there were thirty versions of the doctrine of the unity of the virtues. Among them, a classic version holds that one can have a virtue in a developed form if, and only if, one has all of the virtues, and this view is claimed to be representative of Aristotle's notion of the doctrine (Badhwar, 1996, p. 306; MacIntyre, 1985, p. 155). More specifically, it contends that one cannot possess one virtue without possessing the rest, and one can possess a virtue if, and only if, one has all of them. In other words, the possession of any virtue entails the possession of all the others, and the absence of any virtue entails the absence of all of them. At this point, UV is meant to express "the mutual implication of the virtues" (Halper, 1999, p. 115).

UV is a celebrated doctrine in ancient Greek ethics, and it is held by Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics, and even in some sense by the medieval thinker, T. Aquinas (MacIntyre, 1985, p. 179; Wolf, 2007, p. 145). However, UV is mostly scornfully dismissed, ridiculed, and rejected in contemporary moral philosophical discussion, under the impression that it is not worthy of any serious consideration (Badhwar, 1996, p. 306; Cooper, 1998, p. 233; Stangl, 2008, p. 665; Watson, 1984, p. 57; Wolf, 2007, pp. 146, 164). The apparent implausibility of UV has to do with the fact that it contradicts our common sense. For example, it is not uncommon to find that John is noted for his

temperance, but notorious for his penny-pinching. In other words, UV is generally dismissed mainly because it conflicts with our familiar observation of the moral life, which is that most people seem to have a colourful mix of virtue and vice (Carr, 2003, p. 224). It is said that "most of us are neither firmly nor uniformly fixed in virtue or vice. We are in the crowded 'mixed' space between them (Jacob, 2001, p. 66)." Furthermore, even moral paragons such as Mother Teresa and M. Gandhi were not entirely virtuous, since they did not possess the full complement of virtues (Flanagan, 1991, p. 6; Wolf, 2007, p. 146). In short, the challenge to UV can be put this way:

> It would need an extremely cogent argument to overthrow the apparent teaching of human experience all the world over that a man may be very laudable in some respects and very faulty in others. (Stangl, 2008, p. 677)

Given the extreme demandingness, and even utter implausibility, of the orthodox interpretation of UV, whether or not character education should take it on board is doubtful. In this paper, the case will be made that UV need not be interpreted in so strong a way, and rather, a more realistic notion drawing on Wolf's account is proposed, which can not only perfectly accommodate our ordinary experience, but also match my proposed notion of character education.

Aristotle's argument for UV

Aristotle touches on the issue of UV when illustrating the interdependence of moral virtue and practical wisdom. In order to highlight the indispensability of practical wisdom to moral virtue, it is necessary to first distinguish moral virtue from natural virtue. To begin with, Aristotle (1998, pp. 156-157) indicates that "each type of character belongs to its possessors in some sense by nature; for from the very moment of birth we are just or fitted for self-control or brave or have the other moral qualities." The main idea is that it is nature, i.e. human nature, which stimulates the cultivation of the virtues in humans, and that "we are adapted by nature to receive them (Aristotle, 1998, p. 28)." This is the first sense in which virtue is said to be natural.

In addition, Aristotle (1998, p. 157) indicates that “both children and brutes have the natural dispositions to these qualities.” A possible explanation is that, in their very early years, children are observed to show some signs of virtue, namely, natural dispositions of the virtues. For instance, some little children are observed to be more compassionate than others, and virtue in this sense is utterly given by nature, and not an outcome of nurture, and clearly enough, natural virtue in this sense is utterly beyond anyone’s control. It is in this specific sense that children can be said to possess the virtues. Moreover, natural dispositions as such are not restricted to the human species. For example, it is widely recognised that lions are brave, lambs are meek, and dogs are loyal (McKinnon, 1999, p. 62; Wolf, 2007, p. 152). However, a crucial difference which needs to be pointed out is that, in contrast to brutes’ natural disposition which seems to be equally distributed among individuals, there are conspicuous individual differences in mankind’s natural virtues, namely, some people have the happy gift of fortune to have inherited a natural disposition to do what a particular virtue requires on occasions, while others have not (MacIntyre, 1985, p. 149).

However, natural virtue in the second sense is not Aristotle’s major concern, since natural dispositions are simply an inclination to act in certain ways, and without the guidance of reason, they are liable to lead people astray and are, therefore, harmful. In short, natural virtue without reason is like a strong body which may stumble badly without sight (Aristotle, 1998, p. 157). Aquinas’s remark that it is better for a blind horse if it is slow (Foot, 1978, p. 16) is a case in point. It is exactly the presence of practical wisdom which crucially distinguishes moral virtue from natural virtue. Besides, in terms of origins, different from natural virtue, moral virtue comes about mainly as a result of habituation. That is, we become just by performing just acts, and temperate by doing temperate acts (Aristotle, 1998, p. 34). It is emphasised that moral habituation suitable for the inculcation of virtues should be appropriately understood as being a kind of “critical practice” (Sherman, 1989, pp. 178, 180). Mere mindless repetition of behaviour in accordance with virtue is not sufficient for the purpose of cultivating the virtues. Rather, since critical reflection of what we have done, and the

correct grasp of the gap between our doing and the ideal state is needed, rationality is more or less involved in the gradual educational process.

Despite these distinctions, the close connection between natural and moral virtue should also be properly recogniszed. Firstly, in the first sense of natural virtue, human nature is generally congenial to the development of moral virtue. Human beings are adapted by their nature to receive moral virtue, although they are made perfect by habituation (Aristotle, 1998, p. 28). Secondly, natural virtues in the second sense are favourable characteristics which are unequally distributed among people by the lottery of fortune. In the case of lucky people, their natural virtues offer favourable raw materials on which moral virtues can be developed or partly constituted. As a result, the moral habituation of virtue can be formulated as follows: we transform our naturally given dispositions into virtues of character by gradually coming to exercise those dispositions according to the right reason (MacIntyre, 1985, p. 154).

As already mentioned, moral virtue and practical wisdom must work together. Practical wisdom is required for the proper exercise of moral virtue. On the other hand, practical wisdom also needs virtues of character or it degenerates into merely a cunning capacity (cleverness, in Aristotle's terms) for linking means to any ends, rather than to ends which are genuinely good for mankind (MacIntyre, 1985, p. 154). Inasmuch as practical wisdom is indispensable to moral virtue, the acquired admirable character traits are not blind dispositions to act in certain ways, but dispositions which take an appreciation of what is good and worthwhile into consideration (Wolf, 2007, p. 156).

Having rejected the dialectical argument that virtues can exist in isolation from one another, Aristotle (1998, p. 158) contends that a man who is good without qualification, with the presence of practical wisdom, will be given all the virtues. That is, in the case of a fully virtuous person, his/her practical wisdom entails the possession of all of the virtues. More specifically, since practical wisdom is necessary for any virtue, and the absence of any virtue will distort moral judgment, and thus, the absence of any virtue entails the absence of every virtue (Halper, 1999, p. 116). If an individual is to be virtuous, he/she cannot possess one virtue without having all the others. As a

result, the conclusion of the unity of the virtues is reached.

It should have been clear that since Aristotle's argument for UV mainly focuses on the close relationship between practical wisdom and moral virtue, the exact relationship among the individual virtues is not clearly addressed. In contrast, Wolf's notion offers an explicit illustration of how the virtues are unified by practical wisdom.

Wolf's interpretation of UV

In an attempt to substitute for the unconvincing classical, strong interpretation of UV, Wolf proposes a more plausible weak version of UV, which is said to regard the common observation that someone has some virtues without the coincidence of others as a platitude. Comparatively, Wolf's version of UV is more congenial to the moral psychology of real people in the world, since it conceives of UV in terms of character development. In contrast, UV in Aristotle tends to be regarded as an end product of the inculcation of virtues, and it is only expected to be embodied in the rare fully virtuous people.

According to Wolf (2007, p. 148), UV is a corollary of Aristotle's general normative view about the close connection between moral virtue and knowledge (namely, practical wisdom, in Aristotle's terms). More specifically, UV is a conclusion drawn from two premises, and the whole structure of the argument can be formulated as follows (Wolf, 2007, p. 150): premise one notes that each virtue essentially involves knowledge, while premise two states that the knowledge required for virtue is essentially unified. The conclusion is that the virtues are unified in the sense that perfect and full possession of a virtue at least requires the knowledge needed for the possession of all the others.

First premise: each virtue essentially involves knowledge

This premise highlights the point that a virtue is not merely a disposition, readiness, or propensity to act in a certain way. For example, courage is not simply a matter of finding it easier or less painful to confront oneself with physical danger (Wolf, 2007, p. 152). This straightforward view of virtue in question is not sufficiently

profound because dispositions of this sort may lead people astray, and result in erroneous conduct (Watson, 1984, p. 58), and for that matter, it is rather similar to natural virtue.

The essential role of knowledge in virtue is made clear in Aristotle's definition of virtue, according to which virtue is concerned with choice lying in a mean relative to us, which is correctly determined by the man of practical wisdom (Aristotle, 1998, p. 39). That is, the requisite knowledge is only possessed by practically wise people. It is worth mentioning that Wolf abandons the term, "practical wisdom", in favour of specific knowledge appropriate to individual virtues. It seems that Wolf intends to underscore the particularity of knowledge demanded by the various virtues. After all, it is plausible to believe that the knowledge most centrally required for one virtue will differ from that most centrally required for another (Badhwar, 1996, p. 309; Wolf, 2007, p. 150), because individual virtues are supposed to be concerned with knowledge of the value of the different concerned good pursued in human life.

The significance of this sort of knowledge to virtue is also recognized by J. McDowell. According to him, different virtues equip their possessors with reliable sensitivities to different sorts of requirements imposed on their behaviour by the situation. For example, a kind person has a reliable sensitivity to other people's feelings, and a generous person has a reliable sensitivity to people's needs. Each virtue makes its owner aware of a specific kind of moral salience of the situation, and a specific type of requirement. In McDowell's (2003, p. 122) terms, sensitivity is a sort of perceptual capacity, and the deliverance of reliable sensitivity can be appropriately described as knowledge. In summary, the main point of the first premise is that knowledge which is mainly constituted of a reliable sensitivity is necessary for the possession of virtue (McDowell, 2003, p. 122).

Second premise: knowledge required for virtue is essentially unified

Since the various virtues are concerned with different domains of activity, and they are supposed to be responsive to different types of moral requirement, the requisite knowledge for each virtue is specific and different. A follow-up question is that if

more than one moral consideration is relevant to a particular moral situation, what will the agent's knowledge advise him/her to do? This problem is well expressed in McDowell's (2003, p. 123) example of a kind person who is confronted with a complex circumstance:

> If a genuine virtue is to produce nothing but right conduct, a simple propensity to be gentle cannot be identified with the virtue of kindness. Possession of the virtue must involve not only sensitivity to facts about others' feelings as reasons for acting in certain ways, but also sensitivity to facts about rights as reasons for acting in certain ways; and when circumstances of both sorts obtain, and a circumstance of the second sort is the one that should be acted on, a possessor of the virtue of kindness must be able to tell that that is so. So we cannot disentangle genuine possession of kindness from the sensitivity which constitutes fairness. And since there are obviously no limits on the possibilities for compresence, in the same situation, of circumstances of the sorts proper sensitivities to which constitute all the virtues, the argument can be generalized: no one virtue can be fully possessed except by a possessor of all of them, that is, a possessor of virtue in general. (my emphasis)

To act rightly, the kind person has to take into account all of the relevant moral considerations involved in this particular moral situation. Otherwise, his/her exclusive attention to other people's feelings may hinder him/her from making a sound moral judgment, and mislead his/her action. That is, for a person to acquire a particular virtue, say, kindness, he/she has to possess not only specific knowledge appropriate for that virtue, but also knowledge required for all the other virtues. Otherwise, he/she is unable to make an informed judgment in a complex moral situation to appropriately exercise his/her possessed virtue. This case highlights the fact that moral excellence involves the capacity to pursue a proper balance of conflicting values where possible (Watson, 1984, p. 64). In the case at issue, having deliberated, the kind person should know that what

he/she should perform here and now is a fair act.

Another point to make is that the knowledge required for the virtues is comparative by nature in the sense that one cannot know the value of something without knowing its value relative to everything else. This is because a good life is composed of a lot of ingredients, and one's understanding of the place and importance of any ingredient must exist against that of all the others (Wolf, 2007, p. 160).

In a nutshell, the knowledge in question is knowledge of value, importance and worth of such things as a long life and material comfort, and to fully comprehend each value, one has to know its worth relative to the value of everything else (Wolf, 2007, p. 159). In this way, the evaluative knowledge demanded of the virtues is, in some sense, unified and holistic. In Aristotle's terms, this kind of knowledge belongs to practical wisdom which grasps the true conception of eudaimonia, including its constituent elements, and their interrelations (Badhwar, 1996, p. 313). Since the knowledge of each element of a good life forms an organic union, it is impossible to fully understand any part of the good without fully understanding the whole (Badhwar, 1996, p. 313).

Conclusion: virtues are unified in the sense that perfect possession of one virtue requires at least the knowledge requisite for the possession of all of the others

For Wolf (2007, p. 161), since the possession of each virtue requires the relevant knowledge specific to it, and the knowledge required for all of the virtues is essentially unified, it follows that virtues are unified in the sense that one cannot fully and perfectly possess one virtue without the knowledge required for the possession of all of the others. Obviously, this interpretation of UV is weaker than the classic one. In the light of this weak version, a kind person need not really possess courage, justice, generosity, and the rest of the virtues. Yet, if he/she is to fully possess kindness as a virtue, he/she must at least possess knowledge of the value of specific human good pursued by all other virtues as being an essential point of reference. Only in this way, can he/she correctly weigh their respective importance and make a sound moral judgment when confronted by a complex moral situation.

To this point, it is crucial to point out that Wolf's account somehow transforms "the unity of the virtues" into "the unity of knowledge". This shift is significant, since possessing the knowledge required for gaining the other virtues is not the same as possessing the other virtues themselves (Wolf, 2007, p. 161). An advantage of this version is that it can perfectly accommodate the common situation in which someone may have some virtues but may lack others. According to this version, this person can be said to possess some virtues (albeit less than fully), as long as he/she also has the relevant knowledge required for the possession of all of the other virtues, but not those virtues themselves. In contrast, in the light of the classical, strong interpretation of UV, since the possession of virtue is an all-or-nothing affair, and the absence of any virtue entails the absence of every virtue, the person is not virtuous by this standard. Nevertheless, it should be noted that, since Wolf's version still requires the agent to possess the knowledge required for the possession of all of the other virtues, his/her lack of virtue in these respects (namely, being non-virtuous in them) is critically different from his/her being vicious in respect of them. This point will be clarified later.

This interpretation of UV in terms of the unity of knowledge is also accepted by other scholars. For example, Irwin puts it (1988, pp. 68-69):

> A true conception of a particular virtue as a mean does not simply consider a specific range of actions or feelings to reach some balance internal to it, but also considers the co-operation of one state of character with the others, for the benefit of the appropriate people. This is why the mean in which a virtue lies must be determined by the sort of reason by which the wise person would determine it. Only wisdom takes the global point of view that is required for finding the appropriate mean that constitutes any of the virtues. (my emphasis)

In order to appropriately exhibit a particular virtue, the moral agent must take a global point of view to weigh its value in relation to that of all the others. The critical role of practical wisdom in the thesis of UV can be summarised as follows. Practical

wisdom consists of the true conception of a good life as a whole, and its constituent goods and their interrelations (Badhwar, 1996, p. 313; Irwin, 1988, p. 71). Since the varieties of good form an 'organic' unity, one cannot fully appreciate one good without fully understanding the others (Badhwar, 1996, p. 313). Therefore, the unity of the virtues is a natural consequence of the unity and organic nature of the (knowledge of) good (Irwin, 1988, p. 71).

Some implications of UV for character education

A serious examination of the doctrine of UV helps to shed light on the nuts and bolts of character education. Firstly, the integration of the virtues is an inevitable outcome and an accompaniment of the inculcation of virtues. Secondly, on account of the essential interrelation among the virtues, character education doesn't fall prey to Kohlberg's criticism of the 'bag of virtues' approach. Thirdly, having knowledge of the virtues is not sufficient for possessing the virtues. Fourthly, both knowledge and moral disposition are indispensable to the virtues; they specify the contents of the inculcation of virtues. Finally, UV helps to bring the 'varieties of moral personality' to the fore and it represents a missing piece of the puzzle of character education which needs to be recovered.

The integration of the virtues goes with the inculcation of virtues

In terms of the local-global spectrum of virtue,[5] an Aristotelian fully virtuous

[5] It has been argued elsewhere by the author that given that the empirical evidence clearly shows that what are widely possessed by ordinary people are at best local virtues, while global virtues are pursued as a worthwhile ethical ideal, it is empirically more appropriate and workable to re-conceptualise the inculcation of virtues by means of the proposed notion of converting local virtues to more global ones. It helps to direct our gaze to the great intermediate developmental stages of virtue, which mark out a whole spectrum of virtues of varying degrees that fall short of full virtue. For that matter, this new notion works with the traditional Aristotelian account together to provide a full account of how to effectively undertake the age-old educational business of the inculcation of virtues.

person is supposed to stand at the most global end of the continuum, and his/her fully developed moral character is to embody the single state of full-blown practical wisdom and a full set of global virtues.[6] This virtuous person fits in with the classic notion of UV, according to which the virtues are so tightly unified by practical wisdom that they must come together as an organic whole and in an all-or-nothing form. However, it has been argued that practical wisdom and moral virtues on this account are unrealistic, and are even non-starters for humans to pursue, and this view of a virtuous person is of little practical value, given its extreme demandingness. Put differently, the classic version of UV is often easily discarded, since it has almost nothing to offer to the practice of moral education and, at best, it portrays an inspiring ethical ideal with little practical value (Kent, 1999, p. 110).

[6] For Aristotle, each virtue has its sphere of application (Badhwar, 1996, p. 309). For example, courage typically has to do with physical danger; temperance is concerned with bodily pleasure; and justice is about the distribution of worthwhile goods. In Swanton's (2003, p. 20) words, each virtue has a specific "field" which consists of those items which fall within its sphere of concern, and require the agent's proper response in line with that given virtue. Furthermore, the field specific to each virtue is broad, in that the concerned items are numerous, and it seems impossible to exhaustively specify the field with a comprehensive list of relevant items or circumstances. It explains why virtues are often abstractly defined as stable dispositions to act in trait-related ways in trait-relevant circumstances. Given the characteristics of virtue analyszed above, the virtues proposed for inculcation are global, in the sense that moral agents are expected to be disposed to act virtuously in the broad field specific to the virtues, rather than in a narrowly specified subset of relevant situations. For example, we hope to educate a person to be honest, per se, rather than honest only with his/her family members. However, empirical evidence shows that what are widely possessed by people are at best local virtues. Local virtues are virtues that are specific to a narrowly specified range of situations. In consideration of the disparity between the actuality and the ethical ideal, this pair of concepts, local virtues and local vices, is proposed to better account for people's actual state of character, more specifically from a developmental perspective. Accordingly, I suggest that the long-standing educational business of the inculcation of virtues should be conceived in terms of the notion of the local-global spectrum, and the idea of converting local virtues to more global ones is hence proposed.

A more plausible interpretation of UV is hence proposed, which leaves room for the view that the possession of virtue is not an all-or-nothing matter. Rather, with the improvement of practical wisdom and moral disposition, which is indeed a lifelong mission, the acquired virtues are more globalised, and develop greater integration over time. This version of UV is congenial to my suggested way of thinking of the acquisition of virtues as a matter of degree, particularly in terms of the conversion process. Wolf is well-aware that the possession of any virtue is mostly imperfect, and for that matter, she approves of the necessity to further develop the acquired local virtues on the one hand, and to cultivate all of the other virtues, which are lacking in the moral agent for the time being, on the other.

The conversion notion implies that the conversion of individual virtues along the spectrum from local to global is a principal way of becoming more virtuous. A major problem with this is that, as the focus of concern is narrowed down to the acquisition of individual virtues, moral growth may be misunderstood as being nothing more than acquiring more admirable traits, and the targeted moral character merely an aggregation of freestanding virtues. UV helps to highlight the shortcoming of this popular compartmentalised view of the inculcation of virtues according to which the virtues are supposed to be acquired in an entirely separate manner.

It is demonstrated that the virtues are unified in the sense that to fully possess a particular virtue, one needs to acquire at least the knowledge requisite for all of the other virtues. This is because, in terms of the acquisition of a given virtue, say, justice, there must be certain circumstances in which the proper exercise of that virtue demands the presence of (at least the knowledge of) certain others, say, courage or temperance. For example, it is widely known that injustice often comes from excessive fear, or appetites of various kinds, and so there are certain cases in which justice can be successfully exercised if, and only if, its possessor is also equipped with the knowledge of courage and temperance and their relative value in this case. Likewise, there may be other situations in which justice can be secured if, and only if, one has knowledge of generosity, honesty, benevolence, and so on.

In this regard, a major lesson is that the integration of the virtues must accompany a project to convert individual virtues into more global ones of necessity. That is, in the process of converting specific local virtues to more global ones, the acquired virtues also become more integrated with each other over time. The globalisation of the virtues and the integration of the virtues necessarily go hand in hand in the process. In the process of converting a local virtue to a more global one, the moral agent inevitably will be confronted with the previously mentioned complex moral situations where the given virtue can be successfully manifested if, and only if, he/she also has knowledge of the other relevant virtues. In brief, for the given virtue to become more global, it is imperative for the moral agent to increase knowledge of other virtues. In so doing, his/her moral character will become more integrated in the sense that the virtues (and their specific knowledge and their relative weight) are nested in a single moral character. At this point, it can be said that how virtuous one is not only judged by the standard of how many virtues one has, or how global one's acquired virtues are, but also how integrated one's character is. The extent to which one's virtues are integrated with each other is another key indicator of one's state of moral character.

In summary, the whole idea can be put this way: the more global one's acquired individual virtues are, and the more integrated they are with each other, the more virtuous one is. Therefore, the formation of a virtuous character should be fully understood both in terms of the conversion of the virtues along the spectrum from local to global, and the integration of the acquired virtues. A virtuous person is expected to not only possess all of the virtues as globally as possible, but also develop greater integration among the acquired virtues over time. In this regard, UV can be seen as a further step of the conversion notion. In addition, it helps to correct our strong inclination to think of the virtues in an entirely compartmentalised manner, as if an individual's life can be neatly compartmentalised into a good many specialised areas of experience, which individually ground the various virtues. In some sense, UV beneficially turns our attention from acquiring individual virtues to the formation of a virtuous character as a whole.

Brief response to Kohlberg's critique of the 'bag of virtues' approach

It is time to reflect on whether or not character education really falls prey to Kohlberg's critique of "the bag of virtues" approach. Since it has been shown that the virtues are unified in some sense, it is false to teach the virtues in a totally isolated way. A bad consequence of such a defective practice is that the learner may lack sufficient ability to deal with complex moral cases. It is a pity to find that this problematic practice is not uncommon in the contemporary character education movement. This state of affairs is vividly described by Kohn, who expresses the same concern:

> A second strategy, also consistent with the dominant philosophy of character education, consists of emphasizing one value after another, with each assigned its own day, week, or month. Common sense suggests that this seriatim approach, which might be called "If It's Tuesday, This Must Be Honesty," is unlikely to result in a lasting commitment to any of these values, much less a feeling for how they may be related. (Kohn, 1997, p. 154)

The major cause relates to people's misconception of character education as the inculcation of "a plurality of freestanding virtues", in Kent's term, without recognising the essential interrelation among the virtues. It should have been clear that if contemporary character education is to escape the misgivings in question, it must take the lessons of UV seriously.

Knowledge alone cannot lead to virtue

Wolf's notion of UV demands only the holistic knowledge requisite for the possession of all virtues rather than the virtues themselves. That is, "to have one virtue, one must have the knowledge required for the possession of the others, but this is not the same as the requirement that one possess the other virtues themselves (Wolf, 2007, p. 161)." This highlights the point that, if one is to possess the virtues, what is demanded is more than the relevant knowledge, and that appropriate dispositions specific to the virtues are also needed. In this regard, Wolf (2007, p. 162) clearly remarks that "having

the knowledge that is required for generosity or for courage does not guarantee that one has the "natural" abilities required for these traits."

For instance, after deliberation, the kind person in McDowell's example knows that he/she should give priority to other people's rights rather than their feelings. His/her knowledge tells him/her that, in this particular situation, he/she should perform a fair act. Furthermore, virtue issues in nothing but right conduct, as indicated by McDowell, his/her kindness ensures that he/she will follow his/her sound judgment to perform a fair act. However, it is unclear whether he/she is disposed to act fairly in other simple situations in which only fairness is demanded, since he/she may lack a moral disposition specific to fairness. Therefore, in these circumstances, there may be a gap between his/her knowledge of what he/she should do and what he/she actually does. In order to bridge the gap, he/she has to cultivate the moral disposition specific to fairness.

The indispensability of moral dispositions to moral virtues is made clear in Aristotle's (1998, p. 157) critique of Socrates's famous doctrine, i.e. "virtue is knowledge":

> This is why some say that all the virtues are forms of practical wisdom, and why Socrates in one respect was on the right track while in another he went astray; in thinking that all the virtues were forms of practical wisdom he was wrong, but in saying they implied practical wisdom he was right.

Virtue needs knowledge but cannot be reduced to it. The gap between knowledge and virtue can be explained by invoking Aristotle's definition of moral virtue that, in the strict sense, virtue is the combination of practical wisdom and moral disposition (Wolf, 2007, p. 152). More precisely, both elements are necessary and sufficient conditions for moral virtue. One cannot be virtuous without practical wisdom or the relevant moral disposition. For instance, a person who knows that he/she should risk his/her life for a certain cause, but is unable, unwilling, or strongly reluctant to do so, is

not brave exactly because of his/her lack of a brave disposition (Wolf, 2007, p. 162).

Two essential ingredients of virtue: practical wisdom and moral disposition

An analysis of UV brings the two major ingredients of virtue to light, i.e. practical wisdom and moral disposition. At this point, the inculcation of virtues can be understood in terms of the learning of evaluative knowledge and the cultivation of moral dispositions.

Cultivation of moral dispositions

Since virtue involves both action and passion (Aristotle, 1998, p. 32), the habituation of behaviour and the education of emotions are the main task of the inculcation of virtues. The key to the former is generally recognised as practice, that is, "we must become just by doing just acts, and temperate by doing temperate acts (Aristotle, 1998, p. 34)." A person can form "a second nature" of moral virtue only by practical rehearsals of virtuous behaviour. As to the latter, its importance is made clear in Aristotle's consent to Plato's view that "both to delight in and to be pained by the things that we ought; this is the right education (1998, p. 32)." The point is further illustrated by MacIntyre (1985, p. 149):

> Virtues are dispositions not only to act in particular ways, but also to feel in particular ways. To act virtuously is not, as Kant was later to think, to act against inclination; it is to act from inclination formed by the cultivation of the virtues. Moral education is an "éducation sentimentale".

Since both tasks are time-consuming, they must be undertaken as early as possible. To cite Aristotle (1998, p. 32), "we ought to have been brought up in a particular way from our very youth."

Learning of practical wisdom

An advantage of Wolf's use of "specific knowledge" required for individual virtues, rather than practical wisdom, is that it prompts a promising way to conceive the nature of practical wisdom. According to Aristotle, the notion that practical wisdom is a single state implies that one either has it or lacks it, and there is no middle ground in between. Since practical wisdom is traditionally seen as a holistic ability, the classic version of UV works on the assumption that, if a man's habit of sound moral judgment is vitiated anywhere, it is vitiated everywhere (Geach, 1977, pp. 164-165). In contrast, Wolf's version leaves room for the possibility that the specific knowledge required for particular virtues can exist relatively independently of the knowledge demanded by others insofar as the concerned moral situations are so simple that the proper exercise of the former virtues does not involve the latter.

In this regard, two points can be made about the nature of practical wisdom. Firstly, practical wisdom as specific knowledge of the value of individual virtues need not be seen as an all-or-nothing matter. As a matter of fact, most people's knowledge of this type falls somewhere in the continuum. Secondly, the knowledge of value is in the process of development, and can therefore be continuously corrected, refined, and improved. Since such knowledge is acquired through "a combination of experience and reflection" (Wolf, 2007, p. 155), people are supposed to be on the road to the full possession of it.

As already mentioned, Badhwar argues against seeing practical wisdom as an all-or-nothing affair. Basically, her reasoning is as follows (Badhwar, 1996, pp. 313, 315): Firstly, she questions the perfectly organic unity of the good, and contends that it is reasonable to think that not all good is interrelated in such a way that fully understanding one requires the full understanding of them all. Secondly, since practical wisdom involves knowledge of the particular, if practical wisdom is a single state, being practically wise demands one to live so widely as to cover all areas of human life. Since this is psychologically impossible for humans to attain, it must be concluded that no-one has practical wisdom. To break the deadlock, a moderate interpretation

of practical wisdom in terms of individual domains of activity is thus proposed. In the light of this, we can reasonably describe someone as being practically wise in a particular area of life, say, as a judge or a mother. Practical wisdom thus characterised need not exist across all fields of life, and is not an all-or-nothing affair, but a matter of degrees.

Virtuous people are of different sorts

A doubt possibly cast on UV is that it seems to imply that any two virtuous people are identical in terms of moral character, since they are supposed to ultimately fully possess the same package of virtues. However, this is not a problem in Wolf's version according to which a virtuous person can be virtuous in some respects, but not in others. Therefore, the observation that even moral paragons like Mother Teresa, Gandhi, and King individually displayed different excellences of character is readily accepted. In other words, the fact that virtuous people are of different sorts is perfectly consistent with the unity thesis, and it backs up Flanagan's (1991) idea of the "varieties of moral personality".

As noted, in response to the traditional notion that UV means that a virtuous person has to possess a full and complete complement of the virtues, Wolf (2007) contends that this need not be understood so strongly. In addition, Flanagan (1991) argues that the idea of "a full complement of virtues" is incomprehensible, because there are innumerable good traits of character which qualify as virtues, and new social circumstances may create new virtues.[7] Thus, the idea cannot be exactly specified, and no one can afford to make a comprehensive list of the virtues in question (Flanagan, 1991, p. 10). In short, the notion of an individual possessing the full complement of virtues is inconsistent, and indeed, it is a nonstarter (Badhwar, 1996, p. 306; Flanagan, 1991, p. 10). One way to replace this tricky concept is to make a clearly specified list of virtues. In fact, this tactic is widely used in contemporary character education. Schools

[7] For instance, environmental friendliness is a "relatively newly discovered virtue" (Swanton, 2001, p. 35).

are encouraged to cooperate with parents and other community members to arrive at a common consensus on the virtues which should be inculcated in their children. This practice may give a false impression that all pupils are expected to ultimately turn into virtuous people of the same sort of moral character, who are in full possession of all of the virtues on the list.

Taking to heart the ideas "virtuous people are of different sorts" and "virtuous people need not be alike", I shall argue that the inculcation of virtues should pay sufficient attention to individual differences in terms of moral character. Among other things, temperament, social roles and occupations, and the pursuit of a different good life are suggested as certain main factors which may be conducive to the individualisation of moral character in question.

Temperament

The influence of temperament on the cultivation of moral virtues is briefly touched on in Aristotle's treatment of natural virtue, but does not receive its deserved attention in contemporary character education discourse. If it is sensible to suppose that some character traits are more associated with temperament than others, and since temperament is largely innate, the acquisition of those character traits raises the issue of "moral luck", and this idea is supported by some psychological evidence. For example, shyness as a personality trait is found to be highly related to heredity, and quite impervious to artificial intervention (Flanagan, 1991, p. 271), and since shyness is in conflict with warmth and gregariousness, if we are to acquire these two morally desirable traits, it is imperative to rid ourselves of the impact of shyness, at least to some extent. However, given the power of temperament, a shy person seems destined to have a gap in these respects (Flanagan, 1991, p. 271). That is, it is difficult, if not impossible for him/her to be a warm and gregarious person. The same point is captured very well by McKinnon (1999, p. 62):

> If someone is naturally disposed to be lazy, she may find it difficult to develop virtues that require perseverance or industry. If someone is naturally self-

> centred, she may find it difficult to appreciate the need to empathize with other humans…Of course, the converse of this holds as well: some people have generous, or relaxed, or energetic temperaments, any of which, in the absence of other countervailing factors, makes it easier for them to acquire certain virtues.

A striking implication of this thought for character-building is that character cannot be voluntarily constructed at will entirely irrespective of the constraints of temperamental dispositions or personality broadly, and for that matter, moral agents "do not start their moral lives on a level playing-ground" and the issue of "moral luck" turns up accordingly (McKinnon, 1999, p. 62).

In summary, given the effect of temperament on virtue, the individualisation of character is the natural consequence of the inculcation of virtues. In this regard, it is imperative for character educators to think about how to deal with the adverse effect some unfavourable temperamental dispositions may exert on the acquisition of certain virtues. Also, some favourable temperamental dispositions may pave the way for the cultivation of certain related moral virtues, and how to take advantage of this fortunate condition for educational sake needs to be thought about.

Social roles, occupations and different forms of life

Since different social roles and occupations and various forms of life tend to place more weight on varied virtues, and it is argued that people playing different social roles, assuming different occupations, or choosing different ways of life are apt to stress, and give priority to, different virtues. For example, courage is typically seen to be a military virtue, because military men are supposed to be constantly confronted with risky circumstances by the nature of their jobs, and therefore need to summon a great deal of courage, which demands a willingness to expose themselves to physical danger when necessary. By the same token, we are inclined to think that policemen and firemen also need this specific virtue far more than common people, since their courage is tested every day (Wolf, 2007, p. 157). In fact, the practice of assigning different virtues to

various social roles and occupations is not uncommon. For example, policemen are expected to be courageous, judges just, nurses compassionate, and so on.

Given this, some people may wonder whether someone who determines to lead a different kind of life, say, be a scholar, also needs courage. This doubt relates to the common problematic practice of defining a particular virtue too narrowly. For example, although courage is paradigmatically concerned with physical danger, it also involves other sorts of harm; likewise, generosity should not be confined to money giving, for it also concerns other valuable things, such as material goods, time, and emotional energy (Wolf, 2007, p. 158). As a result, generosity is no longer a privilege of the wealthy, and courage is not only needed by policemen and firemen. In general, they are fundamental traits for all good human lives. Although different social roles and occupations, and different forms of life, lay special emphasis on different virtues and require the various virtues to varying degrees, "any or almost any kind of life might have need of any of the basic virtues, abstractly defined (Wolf, 2007, p. 158)."[8]

In summary, two points must be taken into account, the first of which is that, since some basic virtues are essential to any good human life, they must be inculcated in each individual. The other is that, since people who assume different social roles and occupations, and pursue different forms of life, are inclined to stress different virtues, these factors affect the extent to which the various virtues are developed in different people. By and large, this corresponds to G. Watson's analysis of two aspects of moral character, namely, virtue and style. The former stresses that whoever lives a worthwhile

[8] A follow-up question is "what are basic virtues?" It is generally acknowledged that the answer is premised on how we define a good human life. Since what a good human life consists of is also under dispute, there is no common consensus on the content of basic virtues. This question is also raised by Oakley and Cocking (2001, pp. 31, 32), who ask "how do we determine what the basic virtues are, and thus, what a virtuous agent would be like?" A general answer is "which character-traits count as virtuous is determined by their involvement in human flourishing or their admirability". In any case, the main point is that the virtues "cannot simply be taken as given; rather, they must be shown to reflect a commitment to an important substantive human good which contributes to our living flourishing human life (Oakley & Cocking, 2001, p. 75)."

life must give due concern to moral considerations which pertain to all the basic virtues, whereas the latter indicates that each life or character has a different focus and emphasis, which reveal one's moral personality or moral individuality (Watson, 1984, pp. 64-66).

Two implications for character education are as follows. Firstly, the current practice of specifying certain virtues for inculcation is understandable, but a major problem with it is that the close connection between the virtues and a good human life, and the fundamental question of "why people need the virtues" is seldom addressed. In this regard, Kohn (1997, pp. 160, 161) suggests that character education should engage students in a "deep, critical reflection about certain ways of being." Secondly, the idea that basic virtues are demanded by any good human life does not mean that all morally good lives will manifest each of them equally (Watson, 1984, p. 66). In fact, different ideal lives pursue different virtues in varying degrees (Wolf, 2007, p. 158). However, it should be noted that what is implied by the view is not the incompatibility of the virtues, but the impossibility of a particular way of life to give full and equal expression to all of the virtues (Watson, 1984, p. 65). In this case, the individualiszation of character comes from necessity.

A missing piece of contemporary character education puzzle-the individualiszation of character

Under the general idea that character is mainly composed of a number of character traits, character education is often devoted to the inculcation of specific virtues at the cost of constructing moral character as a whole, and the individualisation of moral character.[9] To correct this defect, such ideas as moral identity and integrity (see Blasi,

[9] Davidson's (2005, p. 226) observation below is a case in point:

> In other words, I would suggest that character education has broken character down into its composite elements, but has failed to present an adequate vision of character in its wholeness-especially for pre-adolescents and adolescents who acquire a deeper rationale of what it is and why it's important.

2005, p. 96; Bohlin, 2005, p. 6; Davidson, 2005, p. 226) are proposed to remind us to consider the formation of moral character as a whole. Among others, Davidson's criticism is representative, and is therefore worthy of a full citation:

> Moral identity, I believe, is the missing piece of the character education puzzle, a theoretical concept that pulls the constituent pieces of character education practice into a coherent whole-even at elementary levels where identity formation isn't an active developmental reality, the idea of moral identity offers a sense of direction and purpose, a reason for existing, for character education practices. (Davidson, 2005, p. 226)

The simple characterisation of character education in terms of the inculcation of virtues is at risk of overlooking the individual's active role in constructing his/her character as a whole. Also, the important question of "what sort of person do I want to be?", and the individualisation of character are less addressed. This is a missing piece of the puzzle of character education which needs to be recovered.

In summary, a more plausible interpretation of UV indicates that the integration of the virtues must accompany the conversion of local virtues to more global ones of necessity. For that matter, UV is a further step of the proposed notion of the conversion of virtue. It can be said that the more global one's local virtues are, and the more integrated these virtues are with each other, the more virtuous one is. In this case, becoming more virtuous is judged both in terms of how global one's acquired local virtues are, and the extent to which they are integrated with each other. Since this version of UV highlights the varieties of moral personality, the generally overlooked issue of the individualisation of character is proposed for further investigation.

Conclusion

In order to respond to Kohlberg's suspicion whether or not character education is simply a duplication of the "bag of virtues" approach, it is imperative to elucidate the close connection among the various virtues which is rendered by the doctrine of the unity of the virtues. I suggest that considering its extreme demandingness and implausibility with respect to actual embodiment in real people, we should abandon the orthodox interpretation of Aristotle's thesis of UV in favour of Wolf's version of UV. Taking this weak interpretation of UV on board, character education can drive Kohlberg's criticism away by highlighting the point that if the virtues are to be full, the inculcation of virtues along the spectrum from local to global must go along with the integration of the acquired virtues of necessity. For that matter, moral character is not barely the aggregation of the various freestanding virtues which are individually independent and detached one another; quite the contrary, they are organically united into a whole. Therefore, the more global one's acquired virtues are, and the more integrated they are with each other, the more virtuous one is. Also, the doctrine of UV thus understood naturally brings out a missing piece of contemporary character education puzzle, i.e. the crucial issue of the individualisation of character, which is incarnated in the day-to-day observation that virtuous people are at bottom of different sorts.

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