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## **An Ethical Indicator in the Decision- Making Process. Transcendent Motives**

The conceptualization of transcendent motives - together with the extrinsic and intrinsic motives - opens a channel to unite theory and practice in the realm of moral education. The conceptual axis of the analysis is the decision-making process framed in a context where there are "others" that receive the impact of our actions. Transcendent motives clarify the real value we assign to those others, if we treat them like persons, or rather "in function of, or "as a means to" further our personal interests. Rational motivation based on these motives makes us prudent and develops in us the valuative knowledge that serves us to discover in an experiential (rather than theoretical) manner personal realities. Via the case method students are taught the three types of criteria needed to learn how to internalize persons as a value in and of themselves.

### **1 Introduction**

Ethical reflection is far from being at the margins of current philosophical debates. The concern with the manner in which it can illuminate the practical aspects of reality is very much present in issues such as education, new technology, or the foundations for the legitimization of the social system. In all these ongoing debates we could find, with appreciable differences, the same preoccupation to offer an answer to the demoralized relativism that pervades our society: a recovery of a Kantian formalism in the dialogic ethics (Habermas, Apel, the late Kohlberg); a return to the Aristotelian concept of virtue and its concomitant social values (MacIntyre); an effort to set the bases for a common framework of fundamental values within a pluralistic society (Peters, White and other English authors); a deepening of the democratic values reconciling individualism and solidarity (the intellectual legacy of Arendt and the contribution of the Esprit group from France). These, and many other efforts that could be mentioned here, form a global landscape that is far from disheartening.

Liberal rationalism - the leading ideology nowadays - lacks the tools needed to reconcile personal education with civic education, a circumstance that is leading to a notorious ethical disintegration in the so called first world countries, accompanied by the also notorious repercussions in other countries, as in the case of terrorism. What we are witnessing is not a confrontation between democratic freedom and fundamentalism, but the tremendous consequences of a generalized moral collapse. In modern

times economy and work occupy the public space while morality and religion withdraw to the private spheres.

How can one be a good professional, whether businessperson, politician, banker, professor or engineer, while being also a good person? Is it a contradiction that professional excellence can occur in the absence of moral virtues? The channel opened by the conceptualization of the transcendent motives that exist behind a decision - together with the extrinsic and intrinsic motives already known from different scientific perspectives - contributes a way to unite theory and practice in ethical endeavours, and a possibility to learn where are we failing when we engage in a rigorous analysis of our behaviour from an ethical perspective.

## **2 Decision- Making: The Leading Character in the Human Drama**

For human beings the mechanism of decision-making is not only a way to live their lives, but to decide how to live them. Once a decision has been made, the person can control, from within itself, its actions, it can live its life holistically: it has a *biography*. However, this control is not guaranteed beforehand, since, as we know, the dominion over the intellectual self-awareness and the freedom from its desires and sentiments is politic and not despotic, and it is formed through action.

It is in action and in decision, and in the knowledge that their exercise implies - practical reason - where the unity of all the operational strands of man is reached, because they all converge in one sole action. The theoretical reason, or speculative knowledge, that emerges as the specific capacity of human beings that differentiates them from the other animals - the element that allows man to say "I" - does neither perfect human beings as such, nor is compromised in subjectivity. While this last one feels compassion, commits and perfects itself in the practical reason, in the decision. To choose is to choose *oneself*. The real unity of human beings within themselves and with the outer reality is won or lost in the exercise of free action.

The *ethical value* of action (the value it has for the decision maker) is different from the *social value* (the value it has for others). It is important to mark this difference in order not to reduce ethics to mere sociology. Hence, the ultimate criterion in deciding the ethical value of an action is not the "social acceptability" of the consequences of said action. This conception would make the mechanisms of the theory of human decision tremendously trivial, since it eludes the delicate articulation of human knowledge in the decision-making process. It also neglects to analyse the inner consequences the action has within the subject itself. Understanding this gives us an understanding of how moral virtues grow within ourselves, an essential condition for the issue at hand, since to talk about ethics ignoring the moral virtues is like talking about mechanics ignoring gravitational forces. We could make a more or less poetic discourse about it, but nothing even remotely close to a rigorous analysis.

The virtue so acquired manifests as an increase in the vital intensity that each of us adds to its own capacity. We are empowered. We have *more* power because we *are* more. That the end result of this operation remains inside us as agents of the action is something that needs to be stressed to palliate the neglect suffered by this very important inner dimension of human actions. It affects our manner of being. We make ourselves through it.

The philosopher MacIntyre (1987) has shown that the difficulty in recovering the original meaning of the word *virtue* comes from the loss of the theological, or finalist, sense of reality, and consequently, of the obscuring of the notion of human nature, of the blurring of our characteristic way of being as humans. This is because virtue is the realization of those potentialities characteristic of the way of existing and behaving of human beings. If this way of being does not exist, or if it has a purely material character, the very sense of virtue disappears. It is at this point when we incur the risk of attempting to construct a conventional ethic with notions such as duty, consensus, emotion, usefulness, likeability, dialogue, love, pleasure or solidarity, all very well in themselves, but - with the anthropological sense dissolved and disconnected of each other - incapable of leading anywhere other than towards utilitarianism or relativism, realms both in which disorientation is insurmountable. On the other hand, the accumulation of rules and prescriptions to guarantee a positive human conduct ends up producing Pharisees.

In the exercise of choice, something is chosen, but ultimately what we end up choosing is ourselves. It is not a matter of wanting something for oneself, but *eo ipso*, a matter of wanting oneself for something. This is self-realization and hence, it is also self-construction, because a person is not the same person depending on the values or tasks that is committed to.

### **3 Decision- Making within a Human Context**

Any satisfactory conception of the process of formation of the ethical character has to integrate the basic tenet that we are not isolated individuals and, on the other hand, we can only approach human achievement when living closely and solidly with other people. Our self-realization demands an ongoing dialogue with other human beings that are, in some sense, part of us and vice versa. And this is not in addition to the individual, but a constituting part of the person as an essentially social being. Living in partnership with others is an essential condition to live with dignity.

The person is an absolute, in the sense that is something unique, irreducible to anything else. My self is not interchangeable with anybody else's. From a phenomenological-psychological perspective, the human *personal* character is perceived in the quality of this self, this *I*, being open to a *you*. This minimum mutual acknowledgement between human beings, besides conditioning the acquisition of a fully human identity on the part of the individuals, is what makes possible the subsistence of this larger we

that is the fabric that allows life in society in communities such as the business environment, the neighbourhood, the city or the political society. The *person* is essentially and simultaneously an individual and a relational being. The individual aspect alone cannot be stressed because "having no *mirrors* in which to reflect itself, the human being develops a fragile and poor personality, empty and full of complexes, and with the added difficulty that the *societal relation is relegated to the merely accidental*" (Alvira 1988, 24).

This is not a matter of generating altruistic actions or beneficent attitudes at random. A person, whoever it may be, and regardless of its circumstance, is untouchable, it has an incalculable value, it can never be exchanged for money or any other external or internal good. Woman and man are universal and transcendent realities. The wounding of anybody's dignity wounds, somehow, our own dignity, because the injured woman or man are never far from us, they are not strangers or indifferent to us.

To *be* means always *to be before the other*. The richer the reality, the better this notion is understood. *Life*, particularly the life of the spirit, is unthinkable without *relation*. We are in the same measure that we depend, and to try to begin from *cero* is a fatal mistake. Our freedom can only be explained by the manner of our dependence. We are not the origin of ourselves. Once this is recognized, we can set on the appropriate path to orient ourselves. The dependence on our parents is so radical that it determines the entire development of our future capacities and potentialities, even before birth. "The person is not made to be alone: this can be seen even at the biological level. At birth, the corporal, nervous and psychological development of man is rather incomplete; precisely because the decisive factor in him is the learning process (instinct needs habits to exercise all its functions). He needs to be fed, taken care and taught by others during many years before being able to fend for himself" (Yepes 1996, 184).

What *real value* do we assign to those present in our lives? What real weight have those "others" in our decision-making process? Our reason allows us to identify them as human beings, but to value them as such, to internalize them as other "selves" we have to incorporate them in our decision-making process.

#### **4 Decision- Making and Transcendent Motives**

The Psychology of Learning (Bandura 1980) and the business environment (McGregor 1966) have familiarized us with the distinction between the so-called extrinsic and intrinsic motives. The first type refers to the world of sensate realities and aligns with the rewards or punishments the environment sends as responses to the actions of the individual: money, raises, prestige, rewards, etc. The satisfaction provided by the second set of motives is generated by the direct outcomes the action has on the subject executing the action, and not by an environmental response. Satisfaction such as that felt after performing a duty, engaging in professional learning,

the acquisition of various skills, the sense of achievement, etc., are all intrinsic motives.

Pérez López (1993) breaks this dichotomy proposing a third type of motivation: the transcendent motives. These motives respond to the Franklian concern with the search for sense outside the subject, in the opening up of the person to the world. They address the consequences the action may have for those "others", or "other", that will receive the impact of our action, regardless of the effect the same action may have on the subject. These are the motives guiding those that are working to support their family, or on behalf of their country, or wanting to offer a good service to their clients, or those trying to be helpful to their workmates. These motives may not be confused with self-realization or with the enjoyment derived from the regard of others, since self-realization is not concerned, other than instrumentally, with the repercussions of our own behaviour on others and the regard of others does not flow from the one who acts to the others but the other way around.

The knowledge of the existence of transcendent motives is not only the result of the observation of behaviour. It is deduced from the study of the dynamics of the action. The behaviour of the decisor while interacting with one or more persons produces several types of outcomes, each susceptible to attract attention and become a powerful source of motivation.

1. Extrinsic outcomes: The interaction itself, called the efficacy of the plan of action.
2. Internal outcomes: The learning of the active agent or the efficiency of the plan of action.
3. External outcomes: the learning of the reactive agent, or the consistency of the plan of action.

One or several of these outcomes could very well go unnoticed or be underestimated by the decision maker, but he can notice them and, if interested, he may want to pursue them, turning the results into motivation for action. This is how the three types of motives indicated can be deduced:

1. Extrinsic motives: What we expect to receive in exchange for the action. These motives respond to the most basic needs, those we could call material needs. They mean, ultimately, the possession of things or the possibility to establish sensate relationships with things.
2. Intrinsic motives: What we expect to learn or enjoy while performing the action. These motives respond to cognitive needs. They address the subject's inner world, the capacity to do things, to get what we want. Through the appropriate learning process, a person develops what is called operational knowledge, a set of skills needed to manage the surrounding environment. The sense of power and, somehow, the feeling of security derived from the psychological states that depend upon the satisfaction of these needs.
3. Transcendent motives: The manner in which others are expected to benefit from our actions. These motives address the affective needs, not only the need to be loved, but most specially, the need to love. These motives are linked to the attainment of appropriate relationships with others, that love us as persons and appreciate us

for who we are, and not for the presence or absence of certain qualities, or because we are useful to them. The satisfaction derived from actions based on these motives is made manifest in the certainty of knowing that whatever affects us affects the other as well, because it affects us. "People have the ability to internalize - make their own- everything that happens to other people. This internalization process is what we call, in a strict sense, love. People are capable of loving and being loved, and this relationship is what satisfies the emotional or affective relations" (Pérez López 1993, 60).

These three motives may be present when performing the action. A doctor's foremost concern, for instance, is the health of his patients, although by caring for them he acquires prestige, new knowledge and good earnings at the same time. These motives are not the exclusive prerogative of those who generously spend their life on behalf of others. They are present in any human activity. This is a personal attitude towards work and life. The three motives intervene in any action, but the pre-eminence of one upon the other depends on each individual. The manner in which a person allocates importance to each motive defines his or her motivational quality.

The differentiating factor of this type of motivation is that the action seeks to satisfy the needs of a person or persons other than the subject's. The category of the need to be satisfied may be in any of the categories mentioned above: quenching their thirst, helping them become better technicians or learn a new software application, helping them become better parents, or quitting a drug habit. The determining factor is that we are seeking not a change in ourselves, or a result for ourselves, but a direct improvement of the other person's circumstance.

The search for transcendent motives as a guiding principle of movement is one of the main traits that differentiate humans from animals. This is the type of motivation we refer to when talking of generosity, or the orientation towards service, or solidarity, etc. Colloquial language offers us a sample of this: when we qualify a person as "very humane", we mean this person takes into account what happens to other people and is willing to help them, that is, the transcendent motives are very present in his or her actions. The opposite concept, that of a selfish or not very humane person defines a person whose actions are only directed to his or her own satisfaction, and do not take into account the difficulties that this behaviour may be inflicting on others.

### **5 Three Different but Interconnected Motives Present in the Decision- Making Process**

These three outcomes of the action are three different levels of reality, but are not detachable from each other. They are not mutually independent, but interconnected. The type of feasible actions each of us engages in depends on our inner state, that is, of the level of development of our will and our rationality. Not everybody is prepared to rescue somebody from a house on fire. To be able to do this, the person has had to previously develop the will

and the capacity to help others. Hence our capacity to engage in increasingly costly interactions will depend on the level of development of our inner states. On the other hand, the inner states of the reactive agent, coupled with the exercise of individual freedom of action, determine.

We see then, that these three categories of reality called efficacy, efficiency and consistency affect the outcome, which is also influenced by the level of trust the reactive agent has in us, indicative of a particular inner state. A high degree of trust between two people allows a great deal of interactions between them that will be accompanied by the corresponding satisfaction they generate. It can be said that in this state all feasible interactions are already possible.

These three different levels of reality, since they are all significant in themselves, can be the motivating factors of our actions, and the outcomes of said actions will, in turn, cover different human needs.

The real value of a specific action depends upon the value of all of the outcomes and thus it would be incorrect to analyze the value of an action considering only one or two types of outcome, since the three are present whether the decision maker wants it or not.

## **6 The Motivational Quality of the Decision**

Virtue cannot be learned in the same manner as theoretical knowledge is acquired. We do not become prudent merely by reading all the books written about prudence. It is a type of knowledge that must be exercised to really know it. This knowledge is updated via the solutions we give to "intermotivational" conflicts, that is, conflict that arises amongst different types of motives. Conflict that arises within the same type of motive is called "intramotivational".

There can be no conflict of values in the theoretical line, or the unity of all values would not be valuable then, but it is obvious that there is a conflict of values in the practical plane caused by the unavoidable presence of evil in the world. Only in a world where all people were good people and all their values were realized would the conflicts between them disappear.

Pure egoism is probably as rare as pure altruism. Generally these three types of motives are present in any interaction. It is a normal motivation for teachers to exchange fees for services (helping students), to develop their professional skills (learning to teach) and make their students learn something specific. Naturally, the weight assigned to each type of motive is different for each person. Some teachers will place more value in obtaining their fees while others will favour the learning of their students. And this is true for any professional because it is true for any action of any human being.

It should be stressed that when we fail to incorporate transcendent motives in the decision-making process, it will become increasingly difficult for us to do so. The spontaneous impulse will be less and less sensitive to this type of motives while we will find ourselves gradually further from the most valuable aspects of reality. "Assigning a hierarchy to values implies the

capacity to notice that there are different modes of reality and behavior, and that some have higher features than others" (López Quintás 1993, 444).

What does the decision maker obtain when carrying out "consistent" actions? Something of such calibre that acting differently would be irrational and dementia like. However, the "reward" must be experienced to know it and to feel it. "We are completely different when we are moral. We change inside out if we exercise our autonomy deciding to be moral, in other words, if we relate to others granting them consideration as valuable beings in themselves" (Sábada 1995, 47). We recognise ourselves as subjects and not objects. We recognise ourselves as persons, and this recognition cannot be achieved by competition, but by seeing in the other what exists within oneself, setting in motion the reciprocal appreciations and assessments.

The model proposed here does not entail a renunciation of value as such. There is a preference, since the action is going to contain the three interconnected order of values and none of them can be maximized. The rule to decide correctly would be "to always include the third party". Not surprisingly, the more attractive trait from the perspective of solving a concrete and immediate problem is not acceptable from the perspective of consistency (taking into account the consequences that our actions would have for others). We will then seek a plan of action that while consistent - implicitly in pursuit of positive learning for the receptor of the plan of action - , has a minimum of efficacy. "Our personal axiological hierarchy is a result of our preferences. This preference, even if it does not contribute value, contributes at least valuation and places the subject in a concrete position before the values, so it is true that "preference has a creative action" (Lavelle 1951, 506).

To implement these not inconsistent actions, it is necessary the exercise of will power to restrain the immediate impulse - spontaneous motivation - to act in the most desirable manner at a given point. The moral virtues play a key role in the implementation of the right action: rationality aided by will has to stop and think of an alternative that contains consistency a priori, and then the subject has to act, after having conquered the spontaneous impulse to act in a more desirable manner.

Since moral virtues are developed through practice, transcendent motives can be defined in two different manners:

1. Motives based in the action being good for the other address those properties of the action that will provoke those consequences in the subject's moral virtues: the action must be carried out because it is good for "the environment".
2. Motives based in the action developing moral virtues in the subject. Here transcendent motives are considered as those that improve the self-awareness of the decision maker, the development of his or her ability to take better decisions.

Moral virtues contemplate the overall goodness of the action and not only the efficacy it has for the other. The paradigm of properly done valuations - a necessary reference in all education in values - requires, always, the incorporation of the "consistency of the plan of action", or paraphrasing Saint Augustine of Hippo, "Tell me what you love and I will tell you who you

are."

## **7 *A priori* Valuation of Each of These Motives**

Prudence is the virtue that foresees and anticipates future contingent scenarios before they take place in order to avoid a plan of action that would cause, rather than solve, problems. The assessment or valuation of these three levels of reality or *a priori* motives cannot be done only by one mechanism that assesses the three scenarios together. We need "three skills or cognitive mechanisms," (Pérez López 1998, 205), since to qualify as motives they have to exist before the action.

We use memory - perceptual knowledge -to evaluate *a priori*, extrinsic motives. A concrete perception - a set comprising action and reaction - accompanied by its associated satisfaction, sets the mechanism in motion anticipating the reward. Memory is the channel we use to connect with past experiences, imprinted inside our selves. These satisfactions are not transferable or communicable. Perceptual knowledge sets in motion the mechanism of spontaneous motivation. Animals move in this manner, their memory is extensive and intensive: they feel, unlike a computer whose memory is solely extensive and therefore feels neither pleasure nor pain resulting in zero cost operations.

We use rationality - abstract knowledge- to evaluate *a priori* intrinsic motives. Rationality is the archive where we file information about the value of things. This process takes effort: thinking, inferring and making predictions based on the available data is costly. Thinking means utilizing, making and applying all this data to feed the process and arrive to a decision regarding the problem at hand. Here is where the will intervenes, and it is at this level where we speak of rational motivation.

However, we may have a very "refined" weighing process to evaluate *a priori* only one dimension: efficacy. In this manner we use reason instrumentally, treating others solely "in function of our interests", as "a means to", but not as a value in and of themselves. This corruption of prudence has a degenerating effect on us as persons and eventually disables us from making the same plans we were able to make before, since the others, noticing our *modus operandi*, will not want to interact with us. We see how rationality articulates two intentions: the explicit, or what we seek with a specific plan of action, and the implicit, the degree in which we more or less care about the impacts of our actions on others. Rationality contributes the aim and the sense of the action and that is why it is such an important element in the development of moral values. Ignorance, when insurmountable, does not harm the subject morally, since he or she is using appropriately the available, albeit incomplete, data. The thinking process is done honestly before implementing the action, and therefore ignorance is not a corrupting factor.

What real value are we assigning the "other" receiving the impact of our action? The development of evaluative knowledge allows us to value the other as another self. It allows us to discover personal realities, that is, the

inner states of other person. This knowledge, however, calls for a prerequisite.

It is important to note that the individual level of awareness (or capacity for awareness) of the personal realities - incorporating them in the decision-making process - is precisely the same capacity individuals have of feeling deep affective satisfaction. We tend to think that satisfaction of human needs depends solely in what takes place outside the person. This is true - and only partly so - for material needs. The satisfaction of affective needs depends mostly of some thing that is inside the person: the state of his or her evaluative knowledge. Even when surrounded by others that truly love them, their deep affective needs will be unsatisfied in the absence of this type of knowledge, because they will be incapable of discovering, and consequently of feeling the affection they feel for them.

For this knowledge to be present two conditions have to be met: 1) the presence of another person(s) that feels true concern for us, and 2) to know in an experiential (rather than theoretical) manner their true inner state.

It is a matter of designing plans of action where it is assumed - intended - that we can trust the other. This entails a cost, an effort and the risk of not arriving to the decision desired by the other. We need to take this risk because avoiding these types of decisions precludes the discovery of the personal realities in an experiential manner, and therefore of feeling their value. To know experientially the inner states of the other - the non-perceptual realities - we need to experiment, to design experiences to that effect.

The cogitative faculty, different from the animal estimative faculty, intervenes in this knowledge, however, if the decision maker systematically judges others and their actions in functions of his or her own desires, the human cogitative faculty is reduced to the animal estimative faculty. The subject is then dehumanized and animalized.

"This habit, in the psychosomatic nature of man, can originate a stable dysfunction and even an organic injury (since the cogitative faculty, unlike the spiritual intelligence, has an organ, even though neurologists have yet to locate it and perhaps they never will). Here we have one origin for a reactive psychopathology that can escalate to extreme forms of dementia, and that in any case produces a grievous fracture of the personality and a painful psychological existence" (Cardona 1987, 127).

It is important to stress again the distinction between needs that are satisfied by external factors - their satisfaction depends on the external -, and the desires or internal needs which satisfaction depends on the inner state, a self-generated state that is produced by the manner in which a person uses rationality and will.

Prudence can direct or lead the cogitative faculty. This faculty addresses everything real that is concrete in its temporal dimension from the perspective of value.

"The link between reason and the cogitative faculty allows us to understand that the practical reason has a practical apprehension, because if reason draws from the apprehensive powers as needed (ex necessitate), when it apprehends from the cogitative faculty it takes physical realities as goods. This practical apprehension is the basic act over which reason will act to be

able to move on to deliberation, to practical judgement and to dominion. All acts that underlie the corresponding habits that culminate in prudence" (Sellés 1999, 183).

The development of this evaluative knowledge - the knowledge that is reached when the decision maker is guided by rational motivation based on transcendent motives- is essential for human happiness, because we cannot be happy merely by thinking about it, but with life. Happiness is experiential and this includes feeling. Evaluative knowledge allows us to arrive to the point of "feeling" the value of the other as a person that loves us and that we are capable of loving.

"That is why it can be said that motivation based on transcendent motives is the motivation that tries to orient human action towards our own personal improvement at the deepest plane of our individual self: our capacity to feel others as people, our capacity to establish deep affective relationships with other human beings" (Pérez López 1993, 61).

## **8 An Educational Proposal Based on the Case Method**

The case method is a tool utilized in active pedagogy. It analyzes real situations by means of a systematic dialogue between teacher and students (Llano, 1996; Pérez Serrano, 1994). The student assumes a protagonist role and takes a decision after evaluating the situation posed. The role of the teacher - implemented through the mechanism of ongoing dialogue with the student- is to offer a sounding board to contrast the reasoning on which a specific decision is based, to find out why one alternative was chosen over another, and to investigate the process in such a manner as to reveal the chain of thinking that led to the judgement of the situation studied as the case.

In that lies the educational value of the Case Method compared to other educational methods. Its structure allows it to work on the thought process that has led the student to a specific plan of action, and allows the teacher to enlighten the student on the consequences that an incomplete plan of action would have in the long term. The criteria utilized during the course of the thought process engaged to chose a plan of action has to be explicit:

1. I like it and I want to do it: achievement of satisfaction (efficacy).
2. I know how to do it and I can do it: achievement of learning (efficiency).
3. I value it, I consider it, and the impact the plan of action has on the other matters to me: achievement of sense (consistency)

Decisions are always prudential and relative to a specific decision maker, that has reached a given degree of virtue. It should be noted that the option chosen by the student has to be on par with the student's developing capacity. If this is not the case, the student has to retrace the deciding steps and generate another decision that carries less sacrifice from the perspective of spontaneous motivation. The correct, or right plan of action of one person may not be the correct plan of action for a different person,

because it does not have the necessary acquired virtue. That is why there are not optimal decisions as such, since no one has perfect skills of rationality and virtue. There are no "recipes for action" that can be substituted for prudent thought. There are right decisions because they are complete as far as the criteria utilized and the consistency of the plan of action has not been purposefully left out of the process. The decision arrived at in such a manner is correct for the decision makers that possess that level of acquired virtue.

The Case Method is also a motivational instrument for the student. The term "motivation" refers to the force that drives conduct. It is the inner impulse that gives the strength necessary to achieve the ends or set goals. There is a clear difference between the impulse to act (motivation) and the ends (motives) pursued by such action. When the cases presented in the course of teaching are close to the life of the student, the sense of the learning process can be easily grasped when it is connected to its usefulness as a decision making tool. In this case motivation is high and student involvement becomes personal (intrinsic motive) in that the student wants to learn what is being taught, rather than academic, in the sense of obtaining a passing grade (extrinsic motive).

The necessary condition for the student to develop rationality is the consciously perceived existence of a connection, between what the teacher tries to teach and the solving of vital problems affecting the student. Rationality - the skill of knowing how to pursue a thought process - is a habit that can only be developed by solving real problems to one's satisfaction, and accompanied by the impulse to engage in actions that increase this degree of satisfaction achieved.

The sufficient condition for the development of the correct rationality is met when the three categories, or types of outcomes - efficacy, efficiency and consistency- irreducible and different from each other and, that occur when we apply a specific plan of action, are taken into account.

## **9 A Specific Educational Experience**

This method for teaching how to think has been applied successfully and has been documented (López-Jurado, 2001). During this study, two groups of students (in the age range of 16 - 17) studying Ethics by two different methodologies were compared. Group A (27 students) studied the subject utilizing the Case Method. Group B (28 students) utilized the more traditional method of critical analysis of movies, documentaries, newspaper articles, etc., in three different settings.

The evaluation criteria of practical rationality was to find out to what extent the students learn to realize that there are third parties that are recipients of their actions; that is, they learn to tame in themselves the impulse to engage in the plan of action more desirable to them, and stop to think on a more convenient alternative within a given circumstance. The criteria reside in recognizing the transcendent motives apart from the extrinsic motives.

Three categories were utilized to analyze the students' answers to the three

situations posed:

T: transcendent motives

E: extrinsic motives

I: intermediate category encompassing the different levels of positioning of the students in the answers.

Space considerations prevent showing the full investigation. Only the main points and the results of the first situation "party at home" will be included.

The question posed was: "Is there a difference in the process of learning practical rationality when it is taught by two different methodologies? The variables are:

- a. Dependent -or practical rationality criteria measured by establishing the difference between transcendent and extrinsic motives using three different instruments (cases).
- b. Independent - or the method utilized to learn practical rationality. Both the Case Method and the traditional method were applied in this instance

When the study was conducted by the same teacher (the one applying the Case Method), no statistically significant differences were detected between both programs, however, there was a trend to show transcendent results associated to this method.

Table 1. Same teacher taught both methodologies

| Results A versus B1 (same teacher) |          |             |           |
|------------------------------------|----------|-------------|-----------|
| STUDENTS A                         | Case nº1 | STUDENTS B1 | Case nº 1 |
| 1                                  | T        | 1           | I         |
| 2                                  | T        | 2           | T         |
| 3                                  | T        | 3           | T         |
| 4                                  | T        | 4           | T         |
| 5                                  | T        | 5           | T         |
| 6                                  | T        | 6           | T         |
| 7                                  | T        | 7           | T         |
| 8                                  | T        | 8           | T         |
| 9                                  | T        | 9           | T         |
| 10                                 |          | 10          | E         |
| 11                                 | T        | 11          | I         |
| 12                                 | T        | 12          | T         |
| 13                                 | T        | 13          | T         |
| 14                                 | T        | 14          |           |
| 15                                 | T        | 15          | T         |
| 16                                 | T        | 16          | T         |
| 17                                 | T        | 17          | T         |
| 18                                 | T        | 18          | T         |
| 19                                 | T        | 19          | I         |
| 20                                 | I        | 20          | T         |
| 21                                 | I        | 21          | T         |
| 22                                 | T        | 22          | T         |
| 23                                 | T        | 23          | T         |
| 24                                 | T        | 24          | T         |
| 25                                 | T        | 25          | E         |
| 26                                 | T        | 26          | T         |
| 27                                 | T        | 27          |           |
|                                    |          | 28          |           |

### Contingency Table

|       |                    | CAS E1             |              |             | Total  |        |
|-------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------|-------------|--------|--------|
|       |                    | Extrinsic          | Intermediate | Trascendent |        |        |
| Group | A                  | Quantity           | 0            | 2           | 24     | 26     |
|       |                    | Expected frequency | 1,0          | 2,5         | 22,4   | 26,0   |
|       |                    | % of Group         | ,0%          | 7,7%        | 92,3%  | 100,0% |
|       | B1                 | Quantity           | 2            | 3           | 20     | 25     |
|       |                    | Expected frequency | 1,0          | 2,5         | 21,6   | 25,0   |
|       |                    | % of Group         | 8,0%         | 12,0%       | 80,0%  | 100,0% |
| Total | Quantity           | 2                  | 5            | 44          | 51     |        |
|       | Expected frequency | 2,0                | 5,0          | 44,0        | 51,0   |        |
|       | % of Group         | 3,9%               | 9,8%         | 86,3%       | 100,0% |        |

### chi-square tests

|                           | Valor              | gl | Sig. asint. (bilateral) |
|---------------------------|--------------------|----|-------------------------|
| Pearson chi-square        | 2,545 <sup>a</sup> | 2  | ,280                    |
| Reason for verisimilitude | 3,318              | 2  | ,190                    |
| N valid cases             | 51                 |    |                         |

4 check boxes (66,7%) have a expected frequency lower than 5. Min expected frequency is 98

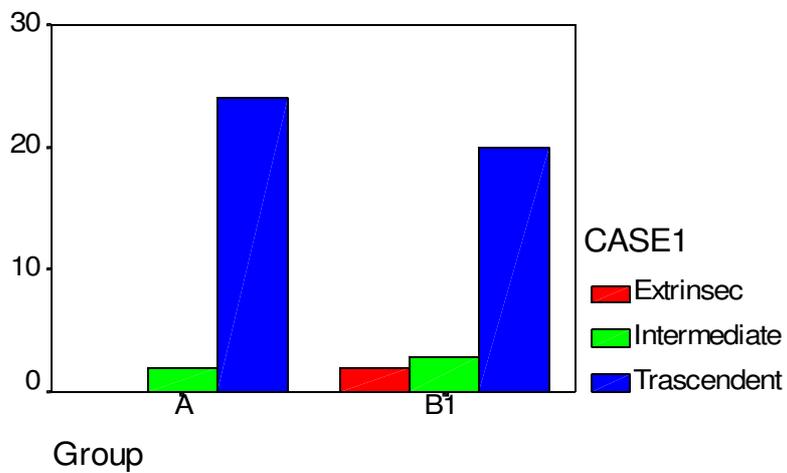
### Direccional measurements

|                         |                  | Value | Typical As.,<br>error <sup>a</sup> | aprox T <sup>b</sup> | aprox Sig.     |
|-------------------------|------------------|-------|------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| Lambda                  | Symmetrical      | ,094  | ,076                               | 1,148                | ,251           |
|                         | Group dependent  | ,120  | ,099                               | 1,148                | ,251           |
|                         | Case dependent   | ,000  | ,000                               | , <sup>c</sup>       | , <sup>c</sup> |
| Uncertainty coefficient | Symmetrical      | ,055  | ,037                               | 1,389                | ,190           |
|                         | Group dependent  | ,047  | ,034                               | 1,389                | ,190           |
|                         | Case dependent 1 | ,067  | ,041                               | 1,389                | ,190           |

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis

b. Using typical asymptotic error based on the null hypothesis.

c. Calculation cannot be done because asymptotic error equals zero



When the study was conducted by different teachers, acute significant statistical differences emerged in the practical aspect. The difference in outcome shows that the students in Group A are capable to consider transcendent motives and incorporate them explicitly in their plan of action, unlike the students that have not received that type of instruction.

Table 2. Different teachers taught the different methodologies

| Results A versus B2 (with different teachers) |          |             |          |
|---|----------|-------------|----------|
| STUDENTS A                                    | Case n°1 | STUDENTS B2 | Case n°1 |
| 1   | T        | 1           | E        |
| 2   | T        | 2           | E        |
| 3   | T        | 3           | E        |
| 4   | T        | 4           | T        |
| 5   | T        | 5           | E        |
| 6   | T        | 6           | E        |
| 7   | T        | 7           | I        |
| 8   | T        | 8           | E        |
| 9   | T        | 9           | E        |
| 10  |          | 10          | I        |
| 11  | T        | 11          | E        |
| 12  | T        | 12          | I        |
| 13  | T        | 13          | I        |
| 14  | T        | 14          | E        |
| 15  | T        | 15          | E        |
| 16  | T        | 16          | E        |
| 17  | T        | 17          | E        |
| 18  | T        | 18          | E        |
| 19  | T        | 19          | I        |
| 20  | I        | 20          | E        |
| 21  | I        | 21          | E        |
| 22  | T        | 22          | E        |
| 23  | T        | 23          | E        |
| 24  | T        | 24          | E        |
| 25  | T        |             |          |
| 26  | T        |             |          |
| 27  | T        |             |          |

### Contingency Table

|       |                    |                    | CASEI      |              |             | Total  |
|-------|--------------------|--------------------|------------|--------------|-------------|--------|
|       |                    |                    | Extrinssec | Intermediate | Trascendent |        |
| Group | A                  | Count              | 0          | 2            | 24          | 26     |
|       |                    | Expected frequency | 9,4        | 3,6          | 13,0        | 26,0   |
|       |                    | % of group         | ,0%        | 7,7%         | 92,3%       | 100,0% |
|       | B2                 | Count              | 18         | 5            | 1           | 24     |
|       |                    | Expected frequency | 8,6        | 3,4          | 12,0        | 24,0   |
|       |                    | % of group         | 75,0%      | 20,8%        | 4,2%        | 100,0% |
| Total | Count              | 18                 | 7          | 25           | 50          |        |
|       | Expected frequency | 18,0               | 7,0        | 25,0         | 50,0        |        |
|       | % of group         | 36,0%              | 14,0%      | 50,0%        | 100,0%      |        |

### Chi-square Tests

|                         | Value               | df | Sig. asint. (bilateral) |
|-------------------------|---------------------|----|-------------------------|
| Pearson chi-square      | 40,430 <sup>a</sup> | 2  | ,000                    |
| Reason of verosimilitud | 52,462              | 2  | ,000                    |
| N° of valid cases       | 50                  |    |                         |

2 check boxes(33,3%) have a expected frequency lower than 5.

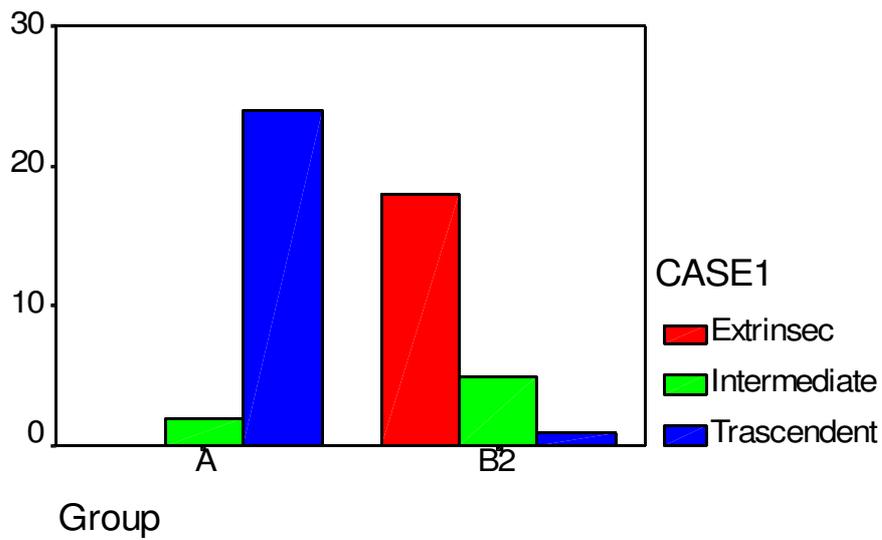
The lowest expected frequency I 3.36

### Direccional Measures

|                         |                 | Value | Typ Asymp Error <sup>a</sup> | aprox T <sup>b</sup> | aprox Sig. |
|-------------------------|-----------------|-------|------------------------------|----------------------|------------|
| Lambda                  | Symmetrical     | ,776  | ,078                         | 5,315                | ,000       |
|                         | Group Dependent | ,875  | ,074                         | 5,221                | ,000       |
|                         | Case dependent  | ,680  | ,099                         | 4,676                | ,000       |
| Uncertainty coefficient | Symmetrical     | ,624  | ,092                         | 7,378                | ,000       |
|                         | Group Dependent | ,758  | ,103                         | 7,378                | ,000       |
|                         | Case dependent  | ,530  | ,085                         | 7,378                | ,000       |

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Utilizing the typical asymptotic error based on the null hypothesis.



In the case presented here, as well as in other cases part of the investigation, the higher number of extrinsic and intermediate responses versus the transcendent responses, shows that transcendent values are learned when there is a specific action that reveals them, and when they are not present, the students tend towards the more desirable plan without thinking that there are, perhaps, other alternative more convenient to all involved; or simply act following their first impulse, because, even though they have heard interesting things during the course, they do not know how to apply them to real life, in the here and now.

On the other hand, that the program is imparted by the same or by different teachers is not an indifferent circumstance. It becomes obvious that a teacher that has not incorporated to his/her life the transcendent motives in question, cannot teach practical rationality by means of the Case Method, since the inconsistency between what is said and what is done prevents the students from learning what the instructor is trying to teach without having prior personal experience of it. It is not possible to help students along the thought process incorporating transcendent motives to pose alternatives of action if the teacher does not materialize them in his/her teaching.

The following three reasons support selecting the Case Method for teaching the virtue of prudence:

1. The very nature of the method makes the student face a specific decision-making process.
2. The motivation that inspires, given the case is well selected (close to their life experience, personal interest)
3. The fact that it demands a total consistency on the part of the teacher with the teaching subject.

We can say that practical rationality is learned by direct intervention via a program where the decision-taking criteria are explicit and complete, and the teacher imparting this knowledge identifies with the tenets of the method being taught.

## **10 Conclusions**

The point where knowledge and action intersect constitutes one of the central points of the problems faced by epistemology. This meeting point that has served as starting point for the natural sciences to produce varied practical technological knowledge presents for the social science an obstacle to produce applied knowledge. The option that the Case Method offers for the development of moral values via the process that allows the decisor to arrive to, and take the appropriate decision, since it incorporates both the theory and the practice, overcomes this inbuilt difficulty of the discipline.

The purpose of education is to produce competent professionals and people able to live in society, to build society through the exercise of free actions. Not only the actual functioning of educational institutions, but the very survival of our society depends on the operational existence of true

ethical values.

Ethics is a science that pointed out, thousands of years ago, that the de facto value a human being assigns to another is not a matter of "what" is being "valued" - it is always a human being - but of "who" is doing the "valuing" and of the level of development this person has reached in the appreciation of what is valuable. There is a process by which we learn to value reality without being deluded by superficial appearances

It is essential to determine *which type of capabilities* we intend to develop through the educational process. If we develop only operational capacities, we are considering Moral Education as a "moral product" that is transmitted to a third party via the granting of an "Ethics credit", for instance. The formation of virtues will then be relegated to whatever can be obtained through disciplinary rules, extra-curricular activities, and of course, the exemplariness as role models of the educators themselves. This is all very well and it is important and necessary, but it is not enough.

If we also want to develop *valuative capacities* together with the operational capacities, because we are teaching our students to do complete valuations of reality, we are entering in the deliberative process necessary to exercise prudence, helping then to foster a moral education. I say foster because it is a goal that is only reached if the recipient of this education so desires. In this manner we are endeavoring to provide an education that will enable them to be *competent* and *virtuous* professionals.

Our proposal teaches how we can acquire the virtue of solidarity - *by valuing the other "I" of whose wellbeing I am responsible in the measure that I can influence it*- necessary to lend cohesiveness to a social life and engagement in a harmonious manner. Selfishness corrodes social life: the entrepreneur that seeks economic benefit solely; the politician that is only after power; the scientists in search of glory and popularity, etc. We need to learn how to make individual decision compatible with those social objectives that are of interest to the whole of society, whether this society is the family unit, the company, etc.

This goal demands that human organizations are subject to the laws ruling human behavior in the same manner that physical laws cannot be ignored when building a particular machine or device. If the designer ignores one particular physical law the machine will not work. Something similar takes place in the workings of human organizations and the natural laws that rule human behavior. In order to survive, any organization has to address and satisfy, at least, some of the motives that drive people to cooperate with the organization, since they belong to the organization in the measure that they have motives that drive them to do so. And no organization can survive without people.

We humans are much more flexible than material objects, but we also operate within a set of limited possibilities of action, outside of which lies destruction when the action undertaken goes against the laws of our own nature.

There cannot be professional excellence devoid of moral virtues. This error can only occur when the profession or professional skills have been reduced to mere technical knowledge, stripping them of its more essential dimension: how to use that knowledge to solve human problems.

For communication to become the true binding element of societal dynamics such as reaching agreements after controversies, the starting point seems to lie in each person finding the development of their own rationality and will power. In other words, the development of their moral values. The foundations that make society possible.

### **Notes**

(1) The open-ended question "What have you learned in this class?" was also posed to the students. The answers showed that students had extended and generalized what they had learned to their personal lives.

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