Ethics, Education, and the Habit-Making Life

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ABSTRACT

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This study investigates the relevance of habits in education. Philosophers, from Aristotle to Montaigne to Rousseau to Dewey, positively and negatively portray habits. Philosophers of education have delineated habits worth developing and habits detrimental to the project of education. In the current era of high-stakes testing and accountability, there has been an increased interest in habits. Yet, the habits of interest in many educational settings today are often regimented and un-reflectively repetitive. Lists of habits that we can widely recommend and repeat across countless contexts are deemed useful because they are easily measurable and facilitate assessment, but they can lead to a practice of education that is inhumane and a profession of teaching that is marked by growing attrition.

A philosophically-grounded conception of habit has the potential to humanize learning. This study seeks to identify habits that are dynamic and responsive, those that can become the bases for lifelong learning. An account of dynamic habits and ways of modifying habits through experience and reflection has twofold implications for teachers. First, by reflecting on what they have learned and imagining new possible directions for their practice, teachers initiate the critical process of reconstructing habits, which allows them to improve their practice. Second, by cultivating dynamic habits, teachers are better equipped to model and actively teach thinking and reflection in the classroom with their students.

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DEDICATION

For Matt

It is extraordinary how much we lose our powers of direct observation, more than observation I mean our sensitiveness, our responsiveness, to the world of persons and objects and natural events about us because we fall into certain routines or because of our occupations we have certain ends more or less remote that control our thought and attention, and we become oblivious to a great deal of the human scene around us.[1]

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[1]Dewey, LW13, 366.

PROLOGUE

Let us imagine a beginning teacher. He has never had his own classroom and so must build a new pattern of practice. He can read books, he can refer to previous his experiences working with children, he can ask colleagues for advice, but ultimately he has to create new ways of thinking, acting, reflecting, and engaging with his students, habits that will serve him on a daily basis. He does not know exactly how he will move or where he will stand or what he will say as he teaches. He does not know how his students and his colleagues, the environment of the school, and his own feelings will affect and form his habits.

This beginning teacher has yet to develop the repertoire of experiences or practical wisdom that allows the day-to-day functions of the classroom to become intelligible to him.[2] In the process of adapting to the new conditions of the classroom, he observes, reflects, modifies, imagines, and enacts the habits that are the flexible frameworks guiding his classroom conduct. He watches his colleagues, some of whom have taught for over a decade, longing for the ease and agility with which they move through their day and with their students. This young man returns home each night thinking, playing and replaying in his mind the video of the day's events: What worked? What didn't? What could he do differently? A gap emerges between thought and action. He imagines the teacher he would like to be, yet the pattern of practice is not fully developed. While he

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[2]Many scholars of Dewey discuss the practical wisdom, or *phronēsis* in ancient Greek philosophy, needed by teachers to practice their art. In particular, Jim Garrison explores this topic in his book *Dewey and Eros: Wisdom and Desire in the Art of Teaching* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1997).

does not think of it in these terms necessarily, his time reflecting is the first step in developing a dynamic framework of habits to support his teaching.

Reflection is the gateway to choices and actions. The beginning teacher's time reflecting initiates a process of developing new habits where none had been before, and such a process impels the modification of existing habits. He remembers with a slight pang the look of surprise mixed with hurt when, in his enthusiasm, he inadvertently did not allow his students to finish their sentences. Noticing that he tended to cut off his students mid-sentence became the first step in considering a change, however small, in his teaching practice. Observation prompts reflection. Observation and reflection helps to identify habits to develop or modify. Observing and reflecting is a general disposition of being aware, or a habit of awareness.

Further, with respect to students, to effectively promote continuous and ever-deepening learning, the habits a teacher fosters in students cannot be merely rote, rigid methods of training, but must be fluid and formative and so, by definition, dynamic. Embedded in the notion of a dynamic habit is a positive conception of student and teacher growth. As I argue in the coming chapters, if we fail to understand dynamic habits and how they relate to education, students and teachers are at risk of relying without reflection on abstract concepts that lead to fixed practices, such as routine learning. Discussion of habits in the field of philosophy and education and with teachers enables teachers, especially new teachers, to engage in teaching habits of thinking and reflection with a clear sense of purpose and direction, making the process of learning habits of thinking more transparent and conducive to growth. Dynamic habits require time to develop, and, more importantly, they *can be* learned. While it is unrealistic to hope that we could arrive at teaching or learning with dynamic habits already in place, we can learn them in education programs and through practice. Time and openness to learning are two key factors for cultivating dynamic habits.

Overview of This Dissertation

This study is motivated by the belief that our current, commonly-held conception of habits is problematic and even threateningly thin. We tend to view habits as thoughtlessly repeated and unreflective. We think of them as something we can train ourselves to learn, and once learned, we believe we can rely on them to serve us, whether our aim is to win a marathon, make money, or lead a virtuous life. Such a conception of habits, however, is ethically and intellectually problematic. Such a conception is not only misplaced, it weakens us and prepares us for a life where we are threatened by stagnation, or worse, dogmatism and cultish instincts. To remedy this widespread and immediate threat, this study demands a return to the concept of habit in an effort to reconstruct the term for education. The study requires an understanding of *what* habits are, *what* habit-making looks like, and what makes a habit *dynamic*. Moreover, this study contends that understanding dynamic habit-making in education is essential for a more robust, humanized teaching and learning experience supporting life-long learning.

Contemporary policy changes have thwarted the cultivation of dynamic habits in schools. There has emerged a preference for unreflective habits: ones repeated with the aim of achieving a narrow goal. Books that capture the allure of easily repeated habits include; *The 5 Habits of Highly Motivational and Inspirational Teachers: The Every Class Habits that Every Teacher Needs to Adopt* by Andrew McKinnon;[3] *9 Habits of Highly Effective Teachers: A Practical Guide to Empowerment* by Jacquie Turnbull;[4]

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[3] Andrew McKinnon. *The 5 Habits of Highly Motivational and Inspirational Teachers: The Every Class Habits That Every Teacher Needs to Adopt*, 2014.

[4] Jacquie Turnbull, *9 Habits of Highly Effective Teachers: A Practical Guide to Empowerment* (London, New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2007).

and *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Behaviour Management* by Paul Dix.[5] I do not give a historical or political analysis of the current climate, as studies with this objective are easily accessible. Rather, I focus on conceptualizing dynamic habits of learning and living in education with the aim of developing strategies for understanding student learning, teacher education, and the development of such habits.

In the first chapter, Habit as a Foundation of Education, I examine the concept of habit generally in education in Deweyan terms. I lay out the way I use the concept habit and offer a literature view, broken down by the chapters of the dissertation. I conclude the chapter with a description of my methodology. Chapter II, Classical Conceptions of Habits and Contemporary Questions, examines the concept of habit in education through an Aristotelian lens. In this chapter I offer problematic contemporary examples of schools that have placed the concept of habit front and center in their curriculum. I ask, if we look back to Aristotle, can we find remedies to these examples of concerning implementations of habit-making in schools? Or, is Aristotle's conception of habit too instrumentalist and his notion of childhood too thin? I conclude that Aristotle ultimately does not offer us a satisfactory account for thinking about habit-making in schools. I contend Dewey offers a more promising, richer account and dedicate the remaining chapters to an analysis of this account. In Chapter III, Spontaneity and Intelligence: Foundations of Dynamic Habit I outline two central dimensions of habit, spontaneity, and intelligence that I see as central to what makes dynamic habits dynamic. This chapter offers a rigorous and in-depth analysis of Dewey's work. Chapter IV, Toward a New Conception of Teaching: Ethics and the Habit-Making Life, undertakes an analysis first, of the ethical dimensions of

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[5] Paul Dix*, The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Behaviour Management* (Pivotal Education, 2014).

dynamic habits, and second, of the ethical dimension in practice. The investigation draws on accounts of beginning and seasoned teachers adjusting to teaching in difficult conditions.

The final chapter, Implications of Dynamic Habits for Teacher Education, examines the influence the concept of dynamic habits can have for teacher education programs. Expanding upon the usefulness of a framework for understanding habits, I examine possible recommendations for teacher education programs. With the concept of dynamic in hand, when reading the plethora of teacher education manuals on habits of thinking in schools, teachers and teacher educators are able to think reflectively and creatively about their habit-making. I draw fully on the claims of the dissertation: that dynamic habits are intellectual, ethical, aesthetic, and interrelated, and that they constitute an interdependent educational project. Dewey asks: "[W]ho shall conduct education so that humanity may improve?"[6] The answer, as I see it, begins with thinking about teachers and teacher education. I engage in such a task by rearticulating the work of teachers through the lens of a critical study of habits in teaching and learning.

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[6] Dewey, MW9, 101.

Chapter I

HABITS AS A FOUNDATION OF EDUCATION

In our current educational context, marked by high-stakes testing and rigid teacher accountability, the humane aspects of education are threatened. What, John Dewey would ask, is education if not a most-human enterprise? In this dissertation, I argue that a robust understanding of habits can humanize education in fundamental ways that our current system has failed to take seriously. Specifically, humanizing education increases learning and enhances the teaching practice.

While our habits are often taken to be rigid and fixed tracks of thoughtless repetition, I argue that habits, the structural frameworks of our everyday lives, can also be consciously and creatively developed routes to enriching life's experiences. Habits are rooted in experience and experience informs new possibilities, enacted through the modification and renewal of our habits. Habits, as the framework of our lived experiences, are biological, physical, cultural, and linguistic, and they are ways of thinking, noticing, and being with others.

The central assertion of my dissertation is that dynamic habits should be considered essential to the aims of education. I argue that if we take habits for granted, namely as fixed and thoughtless, all other educational concepts atrophy and become less humane. The project of education, which necessarily rests on habits, is threatened when we rely on more simplistic notions of habits as opposed to robust conceptualizations recognizing habits as a most human characteristic.

The purpose of this first chapter is to lay out the objectives of the project, the methodologies, and the various components of the undertaking. I contextualize several key accounts of habit in philosophy of education, situate the term “habit” as I use it in Dewey’s pragmatic philosophy of education, and underscore why, in our current educational climate, a return to habit is of pressing importance. In this chapter, I elucidate the terminology and framework this dissertation relies on. For example, a dynamic habit, as I define it, necessarily encompasses ethical, aesthetic, and intellectual dimensions. I indicate what characterizes these dimensions and how, when operating in confluence with one another, there emerges a dynamic quality to habit. I say, too, why dynamism is necessarily defined by these three dimensions, and I conclude the first section with why the quality of dynamism is one and the same with learning. The second half of the chapter I offer a summary of previous dissertations on Dewey and habits and of two contemporary scholars on the topic of habit. The literature review is interwoven with the chapter summaries and the discussion. A description of the methodology used in this research and some closing remarks are provided at the end of this chapter.

Chapter II examines the classical influences of our modern day conception of habit by looking at Chapter III takes a deeper dive into the theoretical underpinnings of dynamic habit. In Chapter IV, I look at the particular level with the firm belief that understanding the particular is essential to comprehending education writ large. I discuss the classroom and the students and teachers who inhabit it. I undertake the inquiry well aware of the conditions that contemporary teachers face, conditions marked by difficulty and challenge. I take a special interest, as the Prologue indicates, in the teacher, especially, as the final chapter will demonstrate, beginning teachers. In the final chapter I look directly at teacher education programs and examine the implications dynamic habits have for the ways educators design such programs.

There are two core assumptions that I seek to elucidate in my discussion of dynamic habits. The first is that in order to teach dynamic habits of thinking and acting,

teachers must learn and enact such habits. As Dewey writes, the teacher is not "to stand off and look on."[7] Teachers' habits, and their effectiveness at teaching habits that promote learning and inquiry, are intertwined with how their students learn habits. Dewey continues, "The alternative to furnishing ready-made subject matter and listening to the accuracy with which it is reproduced is not quiescence, but participation, sharing, in an activity. In such shared activity, the teacher is a learner, and the learner is, without knowing it, a teacher."[8] The teacher and student are involved in the same learning process of developing dynamic habits. Teachers, engaged in the "shared activity" of learning, both model habit reconstruction and practice it. Habits, as they are learned in environments with others, develop through interaction. Habits are formed in transaction with the world and can be changed, dropped, or added as individuals change themselves or the environment.[9] As they are reconstructed intelligently, dynamic habits need not be more or less fixed for students or adults as the ensuing chapters show. Learning intelligent reflection and the aesthetic process of modifying and renewing habits are joint endeavors allowing for student and teacher growth both in the school environment and beyond. Embedded in the notion of a "dynamic habit" is a positive conception of student and teacher growth.

Dewey's emphasis on the "shared activity" of teaching and learning points to another core assumption this dissertation illustrates: that dynamic habits support an ethical life. Dewey writes to this point, "By dint of our lives built around interactions

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[7] John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (1916), in *John Dewey: The Middle Works, 1899-1924*, vol. 9, ed. Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2008) 168.

[8] Dewey, MW9, 168.

[9] Sarah M. Stitzlein, "Habits of Democracy: A Deweyan Approach to Citizenship Education in America Today," *Education and Culture* 30, no. 2 (2014): 64.

with others, education too is built on an ethical foundation."[10] To this point, I argue that because our life is marked by constant interactions with others, it is saturated with ethical considerations. Moreover, a life worth living is an ethical life. Since we necessarily live with others, questions of ethics are ubiquitous. Though ubiquitous, however, habits need not always come under ethical scrutiny; it would be useless to force a view of them as such.[11] The line between ethical and non-ethical habits is discernable only with context and examples.[12] Yet, the project of education rests on the belief that our ethical lives cannot be divorced from the way we habitually live our lives and the power we have to direct that living. Such power comes from an education that transmits knowledge and skills *and* sees such work as intertwined with ethical development.

The reader will notice that I often use the term "we" in my discussion. By "we," I mean "you (the reader) and I." When I include you in my examples, I take some general facts to be true about you—for example, that you do not relish merciless murder, you do not take depression to be a quality of a good life, you do not see conspicuous consumption as the highest moral good. This is not to say we must all be perfect saints, as Susan Wolf argues in her essay *Moral Saints*; in fact, part of developing a moral identity is making mistakes in the process.[13] Furthermore, as Montaigne would argue, part of the richness of our lives as mortals is our human experience and the *variety* of it. Directed by

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[10]Dewey, MW9, 369.

[11]I Dewey writes in *Human, Nature and Conduct*: "At any given time, certain habits must be taken for granted as a matter of course." (Dewey, MW14, 31).

[12]Dewey writes in *Human Nature and Conduct*: "To know when to leave acts without distinctive moral judgment and when to subject them to it is itself a large factor in morality." (Dewey, MW14, 32).

[13]Susan Wolf, "Moral Saints." *The Journal of Philosophy* 79, no. 8 (August 1, 1982): 419-439.

good judgment, learned and developed over a lifetime, and by reflectively modifying and renewing habits, we begin we put ourselves on the path of leading ethical lives.[14]

Significance of Dynamic Habits

The research presented here is a contribution to the growing scholarship in philosophy and education on teacher education and habits in education. Understanding habit-making is extremely important for: (1) ordinary life, (2) thinking, and (3) living ethically with others. Despite the importance of habits in education, there is a gap in the scholarship, leaving a particular need for a theory that develops Dewey's concept of habits as dynamic, intelligent, ethical, and aesthetic.

The concept of habit, as used in this dissertation, is an organizing unit of human life, a life always-in-the-making. The rich conception of habit offered in the following pages is one designed to humanize our educational, professional, and personal experiences, whether we are teachers, students, or of an entirely different profession. The emphasis on education underscores the fact that habits in education cannot be only rote, rigid methods of training, but must be formative, intellectual, and ethical, and so, as I will show, by definition dynamic. Our culture, based on a respect for human singularity and the freedom of ideas, requires that we allow for the uniqueness of the individual. More specifically, democracy, ideally, is composed of citizens who are able to engage in dialogue and think critically about a shared life. Yet, the accountability regime that currently governs public education, and the associated fixed habit regime prescribed for students do not support a view of people as unique individuals, as the following chapters elucidate. The questions I seek to answer are critical to the success of institutions in all facets of society.

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[14]The author acknowledge Rosalind Hursthouse who makes a similar point in the introduction of her book *On Virtue Ethics*. Oxford University Press, 2001.

The significance of this research resides, too, in the fact that Dewey is still an influential presence in education reform, yet movements like child-centered,[15] constructivist, and project-based learning cite him as a founding father, while ignoring either the more critical and rigorous aspects of his work[16] (notably in regard to habits of thinking) or the broader vision of his educational project (a quintessentially moral project). Again, with a misunderstanding of habits, students and teachers engage in learning without developing habits of thinking, the intellectual and ethical habits critical to the formative development of the student and teacher.

Habits in Philosophy and Education

In this section that follows, I discuss in detail the concept of habits in philosophy of education and the characteristics of habits in these accounts that I see as dynamic. The investigation begins tracing the concept of habits back to Montaigne. From there the section examines other educational philosophers who also see habit as a central educational concept.

Montaigne's Concept of Habits

Montaigne was arguably the first great thinker to explain why habits make us human. A great humanist, Montaigne believed both in the infinite variety of the human subject and also in the rich value of studying oneself, one's environment, and one's

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[15]Doris Santoro Gomez, "Women's Proper Place and Student-Centered Pedagogy." *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 27, no. 5 (June 27, 2007): 313-33.

[16]Avi Mintz makes a similar point about contemporary progressive educational movements in his essay, "The Happy and Suffering Student? Rousseau's Emile and the Path Not Taken in Progressive Educational Thought." Educational Theory 62, no. 3 (June 1, 2012): 249-65.

experiences to understand human nature.[17] He believed the physical body was part of the process, prefiguring pragmatists. He wrote: "I study myself more than any other subject […] That is my metaphysics; that is my physics."[18] He says elsewhere, "No description is more difficult than the describing of oneself and none, certainly more useful."[19] An avid essayist, Montaigne advocated the genre as a way of studying, reflecting, and recording the always-in-the-making self. He wrote down everything from his memories, to his observations, to his bowel movements and to his changing tastes in wine and radishes. He passed judgment on all his habits, calling himself "ill-formed"[20] but still "becoming."[21] He saw the cultivation of habits of observation, self-awareness, and judgment as an enabling force. Rather, for Montaigne habits are parts of ourselves, beautiful or ugly, where modification is possible with rigorous reflection and judgment. It is important to note that even these "good" habits of self-awareness do not linearly progress to a more perfect self. These habits, for Montaigne, merely allowed an individual to live and learn more richly and fully.

Montaigne's views importantly influenced two areas with which this dissertation concerns itself: teaching and ethics. Regarding the former, Montaigne maintains that "teachers, and ultimately, their students, should seek to be 'well-formed,' not merely, 'well-filled,'' as David Hansen puts it in his essay "Well-Formed, not Well-Filled:

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[17] Hansen writes that Montaigne held a "desire to understand what it meant to be a human in the first place." See "Well-Formed, Not Well-Filled: Montaigne and the Paths of Personhood." *Educational Theory* 52, no. 2 (2002): 127-54.

[18]Michel de Montaigne, *The Essays of Michel de Montaigne*. London: Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, c1991. CE, III: 13, 1217.

[19]Michel de Montaigne, *The Essays of Michel de Montaigne*, CE, II: 6, 424.

[20]Michel de Montaigne, *The Essays of Michel de Montaigne*, CE, I: 26, 163.

[21]Michel de Montaigne, *The Essays of Michel de Montaigne*, CE, III: 2, 907.

Montaigne and the Paths of Personhood."[22] Those who believe the aim of education is to create "parrots rather than persons"[23] are grossly misled. Rather, the person is not fixed, but is always forming. Montaigne writes of himself, "The brush strokes of my portrait do not go awry even though they do change and vary";[24] that is, even though we have a personality and self, our habits are ready for dynamic modification and renewal if we are ready and have learned to undergo such a task. This claim is central to my study because embedded in it is the notion of living as learning, the idea of the person *as* habits, the person *as always* becoming, as never fully-formed.

Secondly, Montaigne believed "moral learning is available in every path and byway of human endeavor and it can be embodied, in principle, in the life of anyone."[25] Hansen continues, "Montaigne's response to the unfathomability of the human is alternately one of joy, fear, compassion, impatience, bewilderment, and amazement."[26] What is important here is that Montaigne responds, ethically, emotionally, physically, and intelligently. He passes judgment, rather than passively receiving information; he thinks and acts on what he learns. This living and reflecting ethical self is one that for Montaigne is brought about in an education where the habits of living and learning are cultivated.

As noted above, this research takes a special interest in the teacher, seeking to understand habits in education by looking at the teacher, the teacher as a person. As such, the concept of person is no small part of the inquiry. Like Dewey, as will be shown, Montaigne believed that our concepts become hollow when separated from the person

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[22]Hansen, "Well-Formed, not Well-Filled: Montaigne and the Paths of Personhood," 130.

[23]Michel de Montaigne, *The Essays of Michel de Montaigne*, CE, I: 25, 154.

[24]Michel de Montaigne, *The Essays of Michel de Montaigne*, CE, III: 2, 9007.

[25]Hansen, "Well-Formed, not Well-Filled: Montaigne and the Paths of Personhood," 130.

[26]Hansen, "Well-Formed, not Well-Filled: Montaigne and the Paths of Personhood," 130.

and her concrete life. As Merleau-Ponty puts it, "every doctrine, when it is separated from what we do, threatens to be mendacious."[27] In short, as Hansen writes, "Montaigne underscores the power of habit, routine, and desire for comfort, but also highlights the dynamism of imagination, spontaneity, and variability."[28] Such a statement, and such a project in education, can only be understood through habits as lived and learning as a condition of daily life.

The Concept of Habits in Education

From here I turn to scholars who have continued to see that developing an ability to reflect on our habit-making lives is an educational project. William James writes, "Could the young but realize how soon they will become mere walking bundles of habits, they would give more heed to their conduct while in the plastic state."[29] Similarly, Fyodor Dostoevsky observes, "It seems, in fact, as though the second half of a man's life is made up of nothing but the habits he has accumulated during the first half,"[30] highlighting the critical role of good habits learned early in life. Both James and Dostoevsky underscore how easy it is for habits to become thoughtlessly ingrained in our behavior, our ways of thinking, and our understanding of the world.

Philosophers of education have emphasized the importance of learning habits in early childhood education *and* the importance of teachers who possess good habits of instruction. Moreover, as philosophers from Aristotle to Jean-Jacques Rousseau to Dewey emphasize, rather than imposing, training, or forcing, the teacher should seek to

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[27]Taken from Hansen, "Well-Formed, not Well-Filled: Montaigne and the Paths of Personhood," 138.

[28]Hansen, "Well-Formed, not Well-Filled: Montaigne and the Paths of Personhood," 138.

[29]William James, *The Principles of Psychology, Volume I*, (New York: H. Holt, 1890), 127.

[30]This quote is popularly attributed to Dostoevsky but no cite could be found.

cultivate and foster habits of knowing and learning in students. Rousseau wrote in *Emile, or On Education,* "The only habit useful to children is to subject themselves without difficulty to the necessity of things,"[31] by which he means children must learn from the environment, from pleasure and pain, so as to gain self-reliance and good judgment (the opposite is an education where children are coddled and trained in what they should think).[32] Dewey wrote, "Still more important is the fact that the human being acquires a habit of learning. He learns to learn."[33] Aristotle wrote, "Legislators make the citizens good by forming habits in them […and] it is by the same cause and by the same means that every excellence is both produced and destroyed […] for if this were not so, there would have been no need of a teacher."[34] All three philosophers came to believe that if we conceive of habits differently, then the role of habits in education would have to be different as well.

John Dewey, Habits, Growth, and Education

Habits come in multifarious forms: biological, linguistic, and social habits; active habits and habits lying latent; interdependent habits and habits of an isolated purview.[35]

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[31]Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile: Or, On Education* (New York: Basic Books, 1979), 160.

[32]Mintz writes, "Enduring suffering is the only valuable habit in Emile's childhood. Indeed, it is one of the great accomplishments of Emile's education that he bears the yoke of necessity from birth." See his article, "The Happy and Suffering Student? Rousseau's Emile and the Path Not Taken in Progressive Educational Thought*,"* 7. Rousseau distances himself from the view of education as rote training of habits, but a reading of *Emile* shows he believes the child should develop certain key habits. See Barbara Stengel and Andrea English, "Exploring Fear: Rousseau, Dewey, and Freire on Fear and Learning." *Educational Theory* 60, no. 5 (2010): 521-42.

[33]Dewey, MW9, 51.

[34]Aristotle, *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation* (Princeton, N.J. : Princeton University Press, 1984), *Nicomachean Ethics*,1103b, p. 2-15.

[35]According to the Oxford English Dictionary (OED), the original meaning of "habit" is manners of dress or clothing. From there the word developed to mean: "the characteristic mode of

Most of our habits, which we can loosely understand as repeated actions over time, are essential. They make our daily lives possible. The pragmatists paid special attention to the relationship between the mind, body, and environment in the formation of habits, whether at the individual level or the social and environmental levels. Charles Sanders Peirce was the first pragmatist to develop a theory of habits, which William James then expanded upon. James and Peirce described ways habits "free up" mental space for us to do other things, such as thinking. John Dewey draws on both Peirce and James in his own theory of habits. For Dewey, our intellect is deeply connected with our senses, and rather than learn a habit so that it becomes fixed, Dewey advocates sensitivity to new possibilities. For example, we can make it a habit to heat water and have oatmeal every morning for breakfast so that we "free up" time to think about more "lofty matters." Yet, Dewey would say we should always be sensitive to our habitual activity, perhaps noticing that on a given day our body does not feel like eating oatmeal, or that, on reflection, it is not particularly healthy to eat the exact same thing every day. That is all to say, our habits should never get away, scot-free, without sensitivity to contexts and feelings, judgment about the worth of the habit, and reflection about alternatives. [36] Dewey writes, "Habit

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growth and general external appearance of an animal or plant." Of habit referring to the growth of plants, the OED offers an example from Rousseau, who wrote: "[y]ou know them by their air, or habit, as Botanists usually call it." Habits developed to mean temperament or character: "a settled disposition or tendency to act in a certain way, esp. one acquired by frequent repetition of the same act until it becomes almost or quite involuntary; a settled practice, custom, usage; a customary way or manner of acting." The OED offers an example from Hobbes: "Habit is Motion made more easie and ready by Custome." For example, a nun's habit is an article of clothing so habitually used that it is referred to now as a habit. The modern-day definition of habits has myriad applications, from physical and mental habits to cultures and traditions. The OED definition illuminates habit's origin as both something that is characteristic of someone *and* as growth: A plant has a tendency to grow in certain ways and is affected in the process by the environment.

[36] W.R. Hildreth writes, "Our focus is both a function of what is present in the situation and what we have habitually learned to filter. For instance, we may not be aware of the sidewalk, even though it is an integral part of our experience of walking. It is only when we trip on a crack that the sidewalk becomes apparent." See "Reconstructing Dewey on Power," *Political Theory* 37, no. 6 (December 1, 2009): 789.

means special sensitiveness," and this "special sensitiveness" I equate with Dewey's sense of the aesthetic; I examine the relationship between the two in Chapter III.[37]

The pragmatists, Peirce, James, and Dewey, also emphasize that our habits are not "inherited" and they are not genetic. All habits are acquired or developed. Within the framework of habits, there are two kinds of habits. There are habits we develop through osmosis and imitation in our environment, culture, and context. There are also habits we develop, through observation, experimentation, and reflection. Habits we learn are the habits we develop intelligently. In an education, as Dewey would have it, we learn to think, and part of thinking is cultivating and critically modifying our habits, whether social customs or personal tendencies.

The Dynamism Habits

The definition of dynamic habits used in this dissertation derives from the work of John Dewey, namely, his books *Human Nature and Conduct*, *Experience and Nature*, and *How We Think*. In these works, he offers an account of habits of thinking, reflecting, and acting with others as necessarily adaptive and responsive. In Dewey's view, we *learn* to develop habits that are responsive to experience, where experience is not purely intellectual, but physical as well. He maintains that we must think of the structures of our life as dynamic, not static, where dynamic is "change in connected series of events […] initiation, direction or intent, and consequence of import."[38] He says again, explaining

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[37]John Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct* (1922), in *John Dewey: The Middle Works, 1899-1924*, vol. 14, ed. Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2008): 33.

[38]John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (1916), in *John Dewey: The Later Works, 1882-1953*, vol. 1, ed. Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2008): 85.

the word "dynamic," there is "growth. There is inception, development, fulfillment."[39] These elements of dynamic habit are realized in an environment marked by an individual's experience and interactions with others. In any environment, there is conflict and change, to which an individual responds dynamically. What that response could mean is at the heart of this dissertation.

"Habit" might seem a banal word, mundane, and perhaps even negative, but habits, in fact, are central to human life. Dewey notes in *Human Nature and Conduct* that the word "habit" might seem an unusual choice to focus on in discussion of philosophy, education, and human society, but he writes,

> We need a word to express that kind of human activity which is influenced by prior activity and in that sense acquired; which contains within itself a certain ordering or systematization of minor elements of action; which projective, dynamic in quality, ready for an overt manifestation […] Habit even in its ordinary usage comes nearer to denoting these facts than any other word. [40]

While we can think of habits as mechanical or thoughtlessly acquired, habits can also be always-forming and in-the-making. That is, we are not necessarily at the whim of the habits of culture and society. While cultural habits hold great force, we can also learn to *modify and reconstruct our habits*. Dewey writes that a habit is modified by "invention, ingenuity, resourcefulness."[41]

To expand upon Dewey's views about habits, when operating in a confluence, habits "bundle together" to become character or disposition.[42] They also bundle together to form rituals, culture, and custom; beliefs, attitudes, and activities we repeat across time

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[39]John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (1916), in *John Dewey: The Later Works, 1882-1953*, vol. 10, ed. Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2008): 166.

[40]Dewey, MW14, 40-41.

[41]Dewey, MW9, 350.

[42]Dewey, MW14, 30.

that start to define a group.[43] Widely held habits stagnate or degenerate if they are not available for reconstruction. Habits, whether part of a culture or an individual, can be made available for reconstruction, whether to modify an overall disposition or a generally held custom. Dynamic habits, at the individual or group level, are habits available for reconstruction. Such habits allow for the kind of responsive, reflective, and intelligent modification that is based in inquiry and allows for growth.

To the extent that habits constitute us as individuals and shape society, the habit-making life is foundational in all human experience. These statements represent the holistic and interdependent nature of Dewey's overall philosophy. The individual cannot be thought of apart from society, nor the society from the individual. The individual cannot be thought of apart from experience, experience from the environment, the environment from learning, learning from living. For Dewey, each term is replete with meaning and linkages to other concepts, and so while we may talk of one term, in this case "habit," we must see this term at all times operating in an interchange with the environment, the individual, the society, experience, learning, and living. For our purposes, habits are manifested in a society's history, culture, and language; they also become evident in the ways that individuals live their lives.

Dynamic habits alternate between sensitivity to immediate experience and an intelligent response, where the latter is characterized by intelligent habits of reflection, observation, and thinking. Primary experience, in a general sense, cannot be taught. It is the experience we have *sine qua non* and is characterized by a "minimum of incidental reflection," whereas secondary experience is the "systemic thinking" or "intentional

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[43]Garrison writes, "Dewey emphasized the social, historical, and political origin of habits. They are detachable neither from their social nor their physical habitats. 'Customs persist,' Dewey wrote, 'because individuals form their personal habits under conditions set by prior customs. An individual usually acquires the morality as he inherits the speech of his social group.'" See "Foucault, Dewey, and Self-creation," *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 30, no. 2 (January 1998): 125.

reflection" that can be taught and that shapes our ordinary life (e.g., how we make decisions), thinking (e.g., how we process new information), and our shared lives with others (e.g., how we deliberate about the effect of our actions on others).[44] Secondary experience is characterized by "the intervention of systemic thinking"[45] and is the content, in the context of schools, of learned habits. Moreover, while reflection, an element of secondary experience, by some people is thought of as reverie, Dewey shows that it can also be intentional, systematic, and essential for learning. Secondary and primary experience affect and inform one another. In fact, secondary experience is the *way* we make meaning of our primary experience; it is the way our experience "gains an enriched and expanded force."[46]

The *dynamism* of dynamic habits comes from the enriching interdependence of primary experience and secondary experience. The importance of this interdependence is not to be underestimated, as the following chapters of the dissertation illustrate. Let us take an example: addressing issues of social justice requires dialogue, setting aside preconceptions, intelligently experimenting with solutions, experiencing conflict—these all require thinking, reflection, *and* an openness to immediate experience and others.[47] For Dewey, "systematic thinking" like that found in "science and philosophy," allows us to draw meaning from experience where experience is not fixed but *diverse*.[48] Primary experience, then, as diverse, is the stuff of conflict, possibility, creativity, and new knowledge. Issues of social justice often arise when a blind eye is turned to the diversity

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[44]Dewey, LW1, 15.

[45]Dewey, LW1, 15.

[46]Dewey, LW1, 16.

[47]Stitzlein writes, "Achieving healthy democracy requires openness to different ideas--ideas that may change the way we think." See "Democratic Habits," 74.

[48]Dewey, LW1, 15.

of individuals' immediate experience and when individuals cling to entrenched problematic beliefs. Dynamic habits, as characterized by openness to primary experience paired with an intelligent, reflective approach, enable students and teachers to address issues of social justice.[49]

The Temporality of Habits

The dynamism of habits might suggest something always changing freely in the moment. Yet, our habits are uniquely historical, that is, the history of our habits informs how we reflect on them and reconstruct them. Philip W. Jackson, in *John Dewey and the Lessons of Art*, highlights a temporal element of habits in Dewey's writing: "In short, to call us creatures of habit," he writes, "simply means, for Dewey, that we are the repositories of our own experiential history of portions of that larger history that constitutes the culture in which we live. We each have a past to draw upon, one whose resources we selectivity bring to bear upon the present."[50] The temporal emphasizes that our experience and environment form our habits and offer "resources we selectively bring to bear upon the present."[51] Of modification, or reconstruction, Jackson writes, "The transaction between past and present moves in both directions. […] It does so by altering whatever of the past we bring to it, from the broadest of outlooks to the narrowest of

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[49]The fourth chapter on ethics presents a discussion of the example of social justice. For additional reading on the example offered here, see Sheppard, Larson, and Ashcraft, "Controversy, Citizenship, and Counterpublics: Developing Democratic Habits of Mind," *Ethics & Education* 6, no. 1 (March 2011): 69.

[50]See Philip W. Jackson, *John Dewey and the Lessons of Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998): 46.

[51]This reading of habits, as the past propelling us into the future, echoes Richard Bergman's account of habits as well. Bergman's work will be further reviewed in the following section. Bergman writes, "Habits are essentially backward-looking. As formed in prior experience, they are efficient predispositions to action in similar circumstances." See Roger Bergman, "John Dewey on Educating the Moral Self," *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 24, no. 1 (March 1, 2005): 48.

skills."[52] Habits are then, in a sense, in dialogue with past and present selves, each informing the present self in the direction and development of the self through the process of modification. In reconstructing present selves, we also influence future selves. Jackson writes, "The future is modified along with the present and the past."[53] Reconstruction, here, is the modification and renewal of our habits in light of the "past we bring" to our present experiences and in light of the "future" toward which we hope to move from our present place.

A conscious understanding of the modification process, as this dissertation examines, has a twofold implication for teachers: First, teachers may reflect on what past experience is brought to bear upon their habits and the process by which they modify and renew such habits; and second, how they teach this process of thinking (inclusive of reflection) to their students across various facets of their habit-making lives.

The Impact of Habits on Growth in Education

Growth, in Dewey's account, occurs in our environment through experience. Briefly, environment can be understood as our social, natural, and emotional surroundings in which we experience: "It is not experience which is experienced, but nature—stones, plants, animals, diseases, health, temperature, electricity, and so on."[54] Jackson writes of Dewey's theory:

> Human growth, for Dewey, is more than physical. It is also moral and intellectual. It is a form of development, an opening up or an unfolding of potentialities. It entails an increase in the organism's power to perceive differences and to engage effectively with its environment. It results in an expansion of meaning and value. Yet growth of a moral and intellectual kind does not occur automatically. It requires learning, which means the creation of new skills, attitudes, and abilities (all of them habits in Dewey's

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[52]Jackson, *John Dewey and the Lessons of Art*, 46.

[53]Jackson, *John Dewey and the Lessons of Art*, 46.

[54]Dewey, MW9, 12.

> terminology). This in turn calls for the reconstruction of prior modes of responding.[55]

Here Jackson emphasizes growth as multi-dimensional. He uses terms such as "increases" and "expansion" and expounds "potentialities" and capacities that are "moral and intellectual." These capacities enable individuals to engage and "perceive" in such a way that that productivity and understanding are enlarged. As he states it, habits play no small part in the process of growth.

Physical, moral, and intellectual growth are not isolated strands. Growth is "an increase in the organism's power to perceive differences and to engage effectively with its environment"; this "power" is an intellectual ability. The perception of differences, then, supports physical, moral, and intellectual habits working together to "engage effectively" in situations, a topic addressed in Chapter II. How do we get the intellectual capacity to perceive a situation correctly? We do not get this capacity "automatically." Education, or "learning to learn,"[56] gives us the ability to engage in "reconstruction," that is, we learn dynamic habits, enabling us to modify and renew habits in light of experience.

Overview of Previous Dissertations on Dewey's Concept of Habit

This section briefly cites other dissertations that investigate the concept of habit in John Dewey's work. I aim here to acknowledge the dissertations before me. As the literature review and chapter summaries in the sections to follow will show, Brent Lamons' dissertation is the I reference and that influenced me during the final stages of my own writing.

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[55]Jackson, *John Dewey and the Lessons of Art*, 47.

[56]Dewey, MW9, 51.

Brent Lamons's dissertation is the most recently published one addressing Dewey and habit.[57] In *Habit, Education, and the Democratic Way of Life: The Vital Role of Habit in John Dewey's Philosophy of Education*, Lamons summarizes dissertations before his on the same topic. Lamons's dissertation, examines education and habit. Of particular interest to him is plasticity and the flexibility of habit. Despite similarities, there remain significant differences between his investigation and this dissertation. In his introduction, Lamons states that he does not seek to inquire into the ethical dimensions of habit. He writes, "While, of course, Dewey's ethics are closely tied to habit, education, and a democratic way of life, it simply is too broad a topic to include within the scope of this dissertation."[58] In many ways, the research presented in this dissertation complements that of Lamons as it does not examine democracy in an extended way. Since for Dewey the very notion of democracy is an ethical matter, one cannot have a discussion of democracy without a firm understanding of ethics. Dewey sees the various components of his educational and political theory as inextricably interwoven (intellectual, sensual/aesthetic, ethical, biological). In short, I am deeply interested in the ethical dimensions of habit and examine this topic throughout my work.

Other dissertations on the topic of habit and education include John Thomas Kilbridge's *The Concept of Habit in the Philosophy of John Dewey*,[59] William Earl Brownson's *The Concept of Habit and the Dynamics of Growth*,[60] Xenia Valerie Zeldin's

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[57]Brent N. Lamons, *Habit, Education, and the Democratic Way of Life: The Vital Role of Habit in John Dewey's Philosophy of Education,* Ph.D., University of South Florida, 2012.

[58]Lamons, *Habit, Education, and the Democratic Way of Life*, 3.

[59]Kilbridge, *The Concept of Habit in the Philosophy of John Dewey,* Ph.D., The University of Chicago,1949.

[60] Brownson, *The Concept of Habit and the Dynamics of Growth,* Ph.D., Stanford University, 1971.

Habit as Central and Transactional in John Dewey's Philosophy of Education,[61] and Felix Junior Francisco's *The Concepts of Instinct, Habit, and Mind in the Educational Philosophies of William James and John Dewey*.[62]

Literature Review

The literature that follows is organized by chapter: Chapter I, Habit as a Foundation of Education, Chapter II, Classical Conceptions of Habits and Contemporary Questions, Chapter III, Spontaneity and Intelligence: Foundations of Dynamic Habit, Chapter IV, Toward a New Conception of Teaching: Ethics and the Habit-Making Life, Chapter V, Implications of Dynamic Habits for Teacher Education.

Habit as a Foundation of Education

Chapter I, Habit as a Foundation of Education, examines habits in terms of education, teaching, and the classroom. In addition to the philosophers and scholars already cited, I would like to highlight two more: David Hansen and Barbara Stengel.

Hansen, in *The Moral Heart of Teaching*, describes how habits constitute an important element in the life of the classroom and how a practice of reflecting on such habits allows a teacher to be more intentional about the habits she models for her students.[63] In his book, *The Call to Teach*, Hansen sees teaching as a moral activity that teachers feel called to do, not as an occupation of rote, habitual tasks in the colloquial,

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[61]Zeldin, *Habit as Central and Transactional in John Dewey's Philosophy of Education,* Ph.D., The University of Texas at Austin, 1988.

[62]Francisco, *The Concepts of Instinct, Habit, and Mind in the Educational Philosophies of William James and John Dewey,* Ph.D., University of Missouri,1957.

[63] Hansen. *Exploring the Moral Heart of Teaching: Toward a Teacher's Creed* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2001).

negative sense of "habit."[64] By educating teachers about teaching as a calling, they will be better prepared to reflect critically on their work, including its most ordinary, daily dimensions, in which I would include the play of habits. In his essay, "From Role to Person: The Moral Layerdness of Classroom Teaching," Hansen studies the habit of hand-raising in classrooms and the interlocked project of teaching knowledge and ethics, whether a conscious project or not, in a classroom. My study will extend this research by examining in a more detailed, comprehensive manner the relation between ethical growth and dynamic habits.

Stengel, in her essay "'Growing by Looking': From Moral Perception to Pedagogical Responsibility," similarly examines the habits teachers employ while teaching. She looks at the moral and pedagogical habits teachers use in narratives; she writes, "[W]e start with stories because it is impossible to get at the meaning of lived experience—at the confluence of thought, emotion, and action—without a suggestive telling."[65] Stengel introduces a concept she calls "habit failure," which is when circumstances force us to change what we habitually do. Stengel's interpretation has parallels with my own; where we diverge in emphasis is the point at which she describes habit failure, which I would accent as the moment for an imaginative and aesthetic process of modification and renewal of habit.

Classical Conceptions of Habits and Contemporary Questions

Chapter II covers Aristotle's conception of habits in education. Aristotle's philosophy remains pressing and important to discuss as educators continue to draw upon

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[64] Hansen. *The Call to Teach* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1995).

[65] Barbara Stengel, "'Growing by Looking': From Moral Perception to Pedagogical Responsibility," *The Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education* 112, no. 1 (2013): 119.

his ideas.[66] Amidst philosophers of education and scholars of Aristotle, there are still significant tensions in interpreting his viewpoints. Aristotle is often interpreted to believe that there is little opportunity, in fact none after adolescence, for an individual to change habits (whether moral or intellectual ones) formed in childhood.[67] Kristján Kristjánsson poses the issue as follows: "The underlying concern here is, obviously, how making young students into walking bundles of habit can avoid stultifying their psychological powers of critical reflection at a later stage."[68] However, in contrast with Howard Curzer and John Burnyeat, neo-Aristotelian scholars who see habituation in early education as a non-rational process, Kristjánsson and others, such as Nancy Sherman, claim that, in Kristjánsson's words, "for Aristotle, habituation requires from the very beginning the exercise of judgment and reason by the moral learner."[69] According to Kristjánsson, habituated reason comes from good upbringing. In early childhood, developing critical reasoning is one of the most important tasks of the educator. Although "Aristotle's account of [the moral education] process leaves many questions unanswered,"[70] the fact that education is fundamental for Aristotle is undeniable. With the right education, which Kristjánsson believes is the "fusion of habituation and intellectual training,"[71] a child becomes an agent with his own developed reasoning skills.

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[66]Talbot Brewer, *The Retrieval of Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Kristján Kristjánsson, "Habituated Reason Aristotle and the 'Paradox of Moral Education," *Theory and Research in Education* 4, no. 1 (March 1, 2006): 101-22.

[67]Nancy Sherman, *The Fabric of Character: Aristotle's Theory of Virtue* (Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1989); Kristjánsson, "Habituated Reason, Aristotle and the 'Paradox of Moral Education.'"

[68]Kristjánsson, "Habituated Reason, Aristotle," 102.

[69]Kristjánsson, "Habituated Reason, Aristotle," 109.

[70]Kristjánsson, "Habituated Reason, Aristotle," 106.

[71]Kristjánsson, "Habituated Reason, Aristotle," 114.

In her book, *Fabric of Character,* Sherman underscores the role of perceptual awareness in habit formation. I see perceptual awareness as a reflective practice. Reflection, as I elucidate in the dissertation itself, requires awareness. We could repeat the same habit for a lifetime, but it would only be a dynamic habit if we reflected on it. For example, we may come to believe that it is courageous to save someone in need, but such beliefs cannot be prescriptive. If we do not know how to swim, it may not be the best decision for us to jump into the water and save someone who is drowning. To make the right decision, we draw on intellectual habits we have learned and practiced. As demonstrated most fully in the next chapter, even the neo-Aristotelian re-reading of habit in education is not only distinct from Dewey's but is also problematic. Moreover, education for Dewey is a matter of living democratically and generatively, and consequently, Aristotle's conception of habit within his framework of education fundamentally falls short of the educational project I hope to put forth in this dissertation.

Spontaneity and Intelligence: Foundations of Dynamic Habit

Chapter III sets out to offer the most full and complete analysis of our dynamic habits. It emphasizes the intelligent, aesthetic, reflective, and imaginative dimensions of habit. I argue that we can cultivate an intelligent openness to immediate experience and a reflective capacity to make meaning and use of such experience. This openness to immediate experience is marked by adaptability that we most often associate with the young, but which is necessary for adults, especially teachers who are modeling and cultivating dynamic habits. Adaptability, or plasticity in Dewey's terms, means "power to modify actions on the basis of the results of prior experience."[72] Dewey goes on to write, "[W]ithout it, the acquisition of habits is impossible."[73] Intelligent habits are "marked by

[72]Dewey, MW9, 47.

[73]Dewey, MW9, 47.

plasticity or flexibility, an openness to new conditions that liberates the original impulse behind the habit to seek new forms of expression."[74] "Seeking new forms of expression" is in many ways an illustration of dynamic habits; if we imagine streams that change their courses, etching new channels in the land, we can imagine the analogous scenario in which people learn to develop new pathways through changing experiences.

In the case of the teacher, fostering dynamic habits means in part developing an environment and curriculum that fosters intelligent and reflective habit-making through social interaction. Teachers play a powerful role in constructing environments where students can practice dynamic habits. Yet, it is also worth noting that clearly not all habits are generative. While we can become stuck in our habits, the seed of individual agency is the possibility to grow and form new habits.[75] Such agency requires a degree of flexibility with one's habits.[76] While the development and modification of habits is not a speedy process, Dewey underscores the necessity of time and patience. [77] Dynamism, in short, is not an easy solution. Rather, it is a pedagogy that acknowledges the difficulty and time it takes to grow.

Toward a New Conception of Teaching: Ethics and the Habit-Making Life

The central claim of Chapter IV is that dynamic habits are necessary for learning and leading an ethical life. I note the difference between morality and ethics and my

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[74]Bergman, "John Dewey on Educating the Moral Self," 48.

[75]Lamons goes so far to write of "habit *as* growth […] both good and bad habits exist, as do destructive and constructive directions of growth." (*Habit, Education, and the Democratic Way of Life*, 23).

[76] Stitzlein writes that "habits should be flexible" and intelligently adaptive. Moreover, she sees the fact that habits can "be adapted for social future" as the most important aspect of habits. See Stitzlein, "Habits of Democracy," 69.

[77]Hursthouse writes that changes to our selves are difficult and cannot be done "overnight, as one might decide to break the habit of lifetime and cease to have coffee for breakfast." See *On Virtue Ethics*, 10.

preference for "ethics." Ethics is not an account of an ethical life satisfying the individual, but "an account of the self into which that life fits,"[78] in the words of Bernard Williams. My study endeavors to understand how the project of reflection and habit-making for the teacher and learner is a non-egotistical project of self-cultivation.

Using three examples, I set out to illustrate the ethics of the habit-making life of a teacher. I develop the Deweyan concept of the moral self. As Bergman puts it, the moral self is a self that breaks from "the inadequate ideals of self-denial, self-assertion, and altruism"[79] and "'out of the narrowness of its accustomed grooves into the spacious air of more generous behavior.'"[80] Hansen, in "Dewey's Book of the Moral Self," underscores Dewey's notion of the moral self is one who is not self-interested or instrumental, but rather has an interest in learning from "all the contacts of life."[81] The moral self, for Dewey, "fuses self, interest, growth, and the democratic prospect."[82] In this way, the moral self is a self with both an inward cultivation and an outward interest.

Though I emphasize the ethical, I do not argue for how much and in exactly what way ethics should be approached in schools. I argue more generally that learning and teaching dynamic habits is a habit to "rule them all."[83] Kestenbaum, in *The Grace and Severity of the Ideal*, uses the term "vigilance" to describe the kind of Deweyan habits we

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[78]Bernard Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985): 32.

[79]Bergman, "John Dewey on Educating the Moral Self," 44.

[80]Bergman, "John Dewey on Educating the Moral Self," 43.

[81]Dewey, MW9, 370.

[82]David Hansen, *John Dewey and Our Educational Prospect* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006): 180.

[83]Victor Kestenbaum writes, "Habits are the basis of constancy, but constancy requires vigilance, a sort of metaconstancy." See Kestenbaum, *The Grace and Severity of the Ideal* (Chicago, Ill.; London: University of Chicago Press, 2002): 36.

can cultivate to ensure that we do not get too comfortable or settled in our habits. I choose the term "dynamic habit" (as does, notably, Paul Ricoeur, a contemporary of Merleau-Ponty, in his book, *Freedom and Nature: The Involuntary and Voluntary*).[84] For Kestenbaum, the habit of "vigilance is the way we care for and tend our habits of mind."[85] Vigilance here is constant inspection to ensure that our habits, particularly our ethical habits, do not become an unthinking reflex. Kestenbaum continues, "We maintain vigilance over our habits of mind not simply because they may tend to draw the world too narrowly in their compass, but because their compass becomes too vast, too expansive."[86] As Dewey writes, "A narrow and moralistic view of morals is responsible for the failure to recognize that all the aims and values which are desirable in education are themselves moral."[87] A vigilant, dynamic habit ensures that we do not become overly fixed and prescriptive in our ethical educational aims.

Implications of Dynamic Habits for Teacher Education

Chapter V investigates what the conception of dynamic habit, as developed across the dissertation, means for teacher education. The aim of this final chapter is to identify areas for further research by clearly setting out where such future research might begin.

Teachers' habits and their beliefs about teaching come from a host of places and we know that the habits that teachers happen to acquire are not necessarily either the most fit for teaching or irrefutably the best. Despite this, it is difficult for teachers and teacher educators to open-mindedly reconstruct and modify beliefs about habits and

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[84]Paul Ricouer, *Freedom and Nature: The Voluntary and the Involuntary (*Northwestern University Press, 1966).

[85]Kestenbaum, *The Grace and Severity of the Ideal*, 91.

[86]Kestenbaum, *The Grace and Severity of the Ideal*, 91.

[87]Dewey, MW9, 370.

habits of teaching in light of experience and understanding.[88] Moreover, most teacher education programs view this history of habits as fixed.[89] Despite the difficulty of modifying old beliefs and adopting new ones, teachers can learn, and in turn teach, flexible, dynamic habits that allow for a critical awareness and active reconstruction of beliefs. Habits based in experience are educationally significant for the teacher *and* the student. Teachers develop dynamic habits to grow responsively as teachers. They also share the experience of learning new habits through interaction with students who also develop new habits.

Habits as Art

Before turning to the methodology and conclusion, I offer a summary of the aesthetics dimension of habit. The aesthetic dimension of habit is one I see ever-present in dynamic habit and as such I refer to it throughout all five chapters. Art theory and art education tend to eschew strict definitions of what art is and what art education looks like,[90] when, in fact, investigations into aesthetics by Dewey and others, significantly Heidegger and Gadamer,[91] reveal aesthetics as a way of thinking, knowing, and seeing. Throughout his work, Dewey sees habits as a creative act: The practice of modifying habits is continually renewed in light of present circumstances in an "active and alert

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[88] Dona M. Kagan, "Professional Growth among Preservice and Beginning Teachers," *Review of Educational Research*, Vol. 62, No. 2 (Summer, 1992): 129-169.

[89] Nelsen, Peter J. "Intelligent Dispositions: Dewey, Habits and Inquiry in Teacher Education." (2015). *Journal of Teacher Education*, p. 86.

[90]Craig Cunningham, "Review of *David Granger, John Dewey, Robert Pirsig, and the Art of Living: Revisioning Aesthetic Education*" *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 29, no. 4 (May 19, 2009): 395-40; Joseph Kupfer "Aesthetic Experience and Moral Education" *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 12, no. 3 (July 1, 1978): 13-22.

[91]Kestenbaum, *The Grace and Severity of the Ideal*.

commerce with the world."[92] In such a world, the individual is creatively renewing herself, and habit is one of the most salient feature of the renewal process. Habits are an "art" in that they must be "intelligently developed and flexibly responsible."[93] This art, as Granger puts it, gives us the "ability to interact meaningfully with our environment."[94] The meaningful, intelligent, aesthetic, and ethical dimensions of habit allow us to move beyond asking the question of a life worth living to imagining such a life.

The responsiveness of our habitual bodies, not just our habitual minds, to experience and novelty, is aesthetic. The aesthetic dimension of habits is a communication between body and mind, with *both* responsive to the environment. I define aesthetic sensitivity as observing something familiar in a new form. This could mean, for example, perceiving something wholly unfamiliar. Such an experience holds the potential to place the individual into a disruptive, existential space that I believe is conducive to a democratic life made up of diverse perspectives.[95] For Dewey, an aesthetic sensitivity to immediate experience grounds our thinking, choices, and actions.[96] Bodies in contexts are replete with ethical and cultural questions. Our selves

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[92]Dewey, LW10, 18.

[93]David Granger, "Towards an Embodied Poetics of the Self: Personal Renewal in Dewey and Cavell," Studies in Philosophy and Education 20, no. 2 (March 1, 2001): 109. See also Bergman, "John Dewey on Educating the Moral Self," 48-49. Bergman writes, "Habits in this sense, even when they do not belong to the artist proper, are arts." He continues, "Sensitivity, imagination, creativity, order, and harmony are the values that would guide our moral growth." Bergman's interpretation of Dewey emphasizes the centrality of an imaginative capacity for moral growth in the individual.

[94]David Granger, *John Dewey, Robert Pirsig, and the Art of Living* (New York : Palgrave Macmillan, 2006): 33.

[95]Rene Arcilla puts forth an argument of aesthetic experience that influences my view in his book *Mediumism: A Philosophical Reconstruction of Modernism for Existential Learning* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2011).

[96]As Dewey writes, "The great reward of exercising the power of thinking is there are no limits to the possibility of carrying over into the objects and events of life, meaning originally

are “embodied, spatial, temporal and culturally formed, and value-laden.”[97] In her essay, “Reconfiguring Gender,” Sharon Sullivan offers a woman’s tendency to smile in acknowledgment, even in unpleasant situations, as an example of a “culturally formed and value-laden” habit. Noticing and reflecting on this habit is the beginning of change. Understanding the habit, and the ability to modify and control it, is a kind of power that allows an individual to be free. “To acquire a new habit is a positive accomplishment—it is [...] for the body to learn a new comportment of itself, one that opens up the meaning of one's world and provides one with expanded powers in one's world in a new way.”[98] Therefore, while our habits can be unconscious, meaning we merely absorb them, we can learn to make them dynamic if we understand the ways our habits operate on our minds and bodies and take an active eye toward continuously reconstructing them in our environment with others. I believe the kind of “formation and transformation”[99] we see present in Sullivan’s discussion of embodied and gendered habits underscores the

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acquired by thoughtful examination, and hence no limit to the continual growth of meaning in human life.” See John Dewey, *Essays and How We Think* (1933), in *John Dewey: The Middle Works, 1899-1924*, vol. 8, ed. Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2008): 128.

[97]Granger explored related questions in his book *John Dewey, Robert Pirsig, and the Art of Living*, 108.

[98]Sharon Sullivan, “Reconfiguring Gender with John Dewey: Habit, Bodies, and Cultural Change.” *Hypatia* 15, no. 1 (January 1, 2000): 27.

[99]Sullivan, “Reconfiguring Gender,” 27.

significance of dynamic habits. Richard Shusterman,[100] Sarah M. Stitzlein,[101] and David Granger[102] work on embodied habits in schools.[103]

Methodology

The research presented here takes a philosophical approach toward the study of habits that will allow me to confront my assumptions as well as those present in the texts with which I engage. I adopt a Deweyan methodology of always questioning and seeing concepts and terms operating in a holistic way. That is, while I will separate concepts for heuristic purposes, I see the concepts intertwined at all times. Moreover, just as dynamic habits are not fixed, neither are the concepts. I offer but a snapshot to which we can return, that we can turn over, and that we can reconstruct with time, experience, and reflection.

My normative methodology takes inspiration from Christine Koorsgaard, who, in her book, *The Sources of Normativity*, investigates the following claims: that we can assume that normative values exist, that they can be validated, and that they are part of an ethical inquiry. In keeping with Korsgaard, I see normative ethics as the following: (1) those ethics whose claims we accept in our ordinary lives, (2) those ethics we justify as having meaning for ourselves in the context of our ethical problems, and (3) those ethics

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[100] Richard Shusterman, "Thinking through the Body, Educating for the Humanities: A Plea for Somaesthetics." *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 40, no. 1 (April 1, 2006): 1–21.

[101] Stitzlein, "Getting into the Habit: Using Historical Science to Understand Race in Contemporary Schools." *Race Ethnicity and Education* 12, no. 3 (2009): 401–16.

[102] See Granger, "Towards an Embodied Poetics of the Self: Personal Renewal in Dewey and Cavell."

[103]Embodiment is a move the progressive movement takes on that refutes the Cartesian mind-body dualism in its affirmation of our human nature to learn, intellectually, practically, and ethically, through sensations, pleasure, pain, and experience.

that play a role in our identity as ethical agents.[104] Like Korsgaard, I see the possibility of a unified understanding of normative ethics. Though Korsgaard falls closer to Kant's view than I do, experience is essential in both perspectives to the process by which an individual comes to see himself as an ethical agent. Being able to justify our actions to ourselves, even actions to which we have been habituated (e.g., through language and culture), requires reason, knowledge, self-reliance, and experience.

In addition, and this perhaps is the most crucial point, our normative beliefs are not static. Insofar as they are habitual ways of seeing the world, they must also be modified and renewed by the individual and in each generation (a point Dewey makes at the beginning of *Democracy and Education*). This view is part of my own methodology; that is, dynamic habits in teacher practice, and reflection as a method to support modification and renewal of habits, are normative claims that must be revisited in each generation.[105]

My discussion of dynamic habits is bound up with trying to live a just, humane, and moral life. As such, a dynamic habit has both intellectual and ethical dimensions. My discussion, however, is not prescriptive. I am talking about a particular *kind* of habit, and not particular habits themselves. I am saying, in the context of teachers and education, that dynamic habits are important to do good work, intellectually and ethically, with students.

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[104]Christine M. Korsgaard and Onora O'Neill, *The Sources of Normativity* (Cambridge University Press, 1996).

[105]Brewer in *The Retrieval of Ethics* maintains that part of the nature of philosophy is that each new generation, in different cultures, contexts, and times, takes on philosophy beginning from the same fundamental questions. For this reason, he argues that the project of philosophy requires a continual renewing of the investigation in the context of one's own time.

Concluding Thoughts

Dynamic habits are necessary for a shared life, and especially for the shared activity of education that prepares us for such a life. Yet, cultivating such habits in our accountability-driven era has been pushed to the side or even deemed detrimental to educational efforts. The picture I paint is one that is resistant to the classroom driven by high-stakes testing, where words are scripted, teachers operate in fear of saying the wrong word, and students are monitored. Conditions where the positive ethical dimensions of schooling are stripped away foster teacher burnout. In its final state, the significance of this inquiry is not just the experience of one teacher within one classroom of students, but how we initiate hundreds of thousands of teachers into the practice of teaching, a project that plays no small part in determining the type of society we wish to build.

Chapter II

ANCIENT CONCEPTIONS OF HABIT RENEWED: A DEWEYAN RESPONSE

My teacher gave me "the sense of staying *on the path rather than being* kept *on it."*[106]

*"Virtue of thought arises and grows mostly from teaching, and
hence needs experience and time."*[107]

Introduction

Recent attention on the importance of habits in education has revived age-old debates about habituation, a term I attribute to Aristotle, and character education. The enthusiasm for character education is "a powerful, if as yet somewhat philosophically undiscerning and under-developed, movement."[108] Specifically, habits in education have been problematically understood as *means* to the end of success, where success is narrowly determined and few achieve it. The renewed focus on character and habits has shown the need for more theoretical inquiry into these terms. Philosophy offers a methodology well suited to address this need by establishing a clear sense of the

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[106]Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, trans. Gregory Hays. (New York: Modern Library, 2003): p.9, Bk. I.15.

[107]Aristotle, *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation* (Princeton, N.J. : Princeton University Press, 1984), *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1103a15-19; see also1220a4-14.

[108]Kristján Kristjánsson, "Habituated Reason Aristotle and the 'Paradox of Moral Education," *Theory and Research in Education* 4, no. 1 (March 1, 2006): 101.

foundational concept, habit, upon which we are able to build more complex concepts, like character and virtue. I offer two illustrations of the instrumental use of habits and adopting the terms “egotistical view” and “community view” to distinguish between two problematic scenarios. I turn to an analysis of re-interpretations of Aristotelian theories that seem most capable of addressing my critique. The chapter ends with an analysis of Dewey, whose critiques of Aristotle have not been successfully addressed even by the recent neo-Aristotelian accounts. Through this analysis I conclude that Dewey’s emphasis on the self as constituted by habits is a sound basis for our educational endeavors.

The Problem: The Power of Habit

While attention to habits, as currently defined, appears to be a positive development in current discussions about education, the enthusiasm behind harnessing the “power of habit”[109] in schools to ensure a narrow view of academic, personal, and professional success is problematically egotistical, or untethered from community interest. Egoism represents a narrow focus on the individual as opposed to an expansive understanding of the individual in a community where the success of one is interwoven with the success of the other. As this description of “community” shows, just because an individual is in a group does not mean egoism is not at play; how the individual operates in the group is what is in question. In the egotistical view, which is captured in psychologist and educational researcher Angela Duckworth’s work, pre-set character traits like “grit” and “optimism”[110] can be taught to ensure the academic, professional,

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[109] Charles Duhigg, *The Power of Habit: Why We Do What We Do in Life and Business* (New York: Random House, 2012).

[110] Angela L. Duckworth, “The Significance of Self-Control.” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 108, no. 7 (February 15, 2011): 2639-40.

and personal success of the student. In such a view, the habits of grit and optimism are taught and graded in character report cards,[111] just as students' academic performance is.[112]

An improvement to the egotistical view of habits is the community view, as captured in Scott Seider's book *Character Compass: How Powerful School Culture Can Point Students Toward Success*. Seider critiques Duckworth's research, pointing out how "the latest iteration of character education seeks to foster in students the qualities possessed by entrepreneurs and politicians," thereby emphasizing a character education for, as he suggests, personal gain.[113] In a similar vein, Jeffrey Aaron Snyder says of the character report cards designed by the Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP) charter schools and by Duckworth that: "Bernie Madoff's character point average, for instance, would be stellar. He was, by most accounts, an extremely hard working, charming, wildly optimistic man."[114] Snyder illustrates how the egotistical view of education, as I term it, is geared toward mastering pre-determined habits as means to personal and academic success. In short, for Seider and Snyder, the egotistical model is not a viable educational model for school communities. The purpose of education is not merely the egotistical aim of one individual's flourishing independent of a community.[115]

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[111]See KIPP NYC's "Character and Corresponding Codes of Behavior" developed in collaboration with Duckworth: http://www.kipp.org/our-approach/strengths-and-behaviors.

[112]For more on the character report card, see Paul Tough, *How Children Succeed: Grit, Curiosity, and the Hidden Power of Character* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012).

[113] Scott Seider, *Character Compass: How Powerful School Culture Can Point Students Toward Success* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press, 2012): 3.

[114] Aaron Jeffrey Snyder, "Teaching Kids 'Grit' is All the Rage. Here's What's Wrong With It." *New Republic*. (May 6, 2014,). URL: http://www.newrepublic.com/article/117615/problem-grit-kipp-and-character-based-education

[115]The idea of education as aimed at flourishing in this sense is a view supported by John Dewey in MW9, LW1; Aristotle 1984; Broadie 2005; Sherman 1989; Curren 2010.

Seider seeks to remedy the problem of habits as instrumental means to ends for, specifically what he terms personal gain and what I have termed the egotistical view. Seider proposes what I call a community model. He argues that community must play a leading role in character-education programs and that schools must embrace the charge that they are part of students' moral development. In his view, the community creates the environment in which students and teachers intentionally cultivate and develop ethical and intellectual habits.

Seider's book is the result of a two-year study during which he and a team of researchers worked with Boston Prep, Roxbury Prep, and Pacific Rim, three charter schools in the Boston area. His central premises are that the community is a necessary component of a successful character-education program and that character education must necessarily encompass moral development. He writes, "All three schools aspire to have a positive effect upon their students' moral performance and civic character development, but there are also clear differences across the three schools in the particular character strengths they have chosen to emphasize throughout their curriculum, pedagogy, and practice."[116] That is, though the schools all believe in direct character instruction in which the school leaders, curriculum, and teachers play an explicit role in moral character formation, they approach the task in slightly different ways. Despite the differences, the schools all had meetings discussing character and community, all gave awards for students with exemplary "virtue" (as we will see below), and all assessed students on their levels of virtue, a positive in Seider's view. Seider concludes by observing that of the three schools, Boston Prep students showed the greatest levels of integrity and empathy, as measured by surveys that the students took at the beginning and

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[116] Seider, *Character Compass*, 41.

end of their academic year.[117] Seider attributes the success of Boston Prep over the other two schools to its dual emphasis on "performance character [...] such as integrity and respect"[118] and academics. That is, the school viewed intellectual and moral development as equally important.

Ultimately, the community view's portrayal of habits is just as fixed and instrumental as the egotistical view's characterization of habits. The five virtues receive superficial treatment, and success becomes equated with a set number of virtues and outcomes individuals attain. Taken to the extreme, behind the façade of character education and community is a culture that still retains the egotistical aims of success for its own sake without the reflective, intelligent, and ethical practices. Since a community is necessarily a fluid and adapting group, curriculum and success cannot be based on rigidly fixed concepts.

To illustrate these points, I turn to additional examples and explain further various dimensions of the school culture. The school decided on a deliberate moral and intellectual program built on five key character traits, or virtues: courage, compassion, integrity, perseverance, and respect. All incoming students first learn about the virtues during at-home visits.[119] They continue their learning during a week-long orientation specifically dedicated to the virtues. Every week, a student who exemplifies one of the five key virtues receives a W.E.B. Du Bois award. Du Bois, the first African American to attend Harvard University, is seen as exemplifying "scholarship [and] integrity,"[120] and the powerful force character plays in achieving one's dreams. Students also attend ethics

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[117]These surveys used a five-point Likert scale. Seider and his team used a multi-level regression model to compare and integrate across the three schools.

[118]Seider, *Character Compass*, 52.

[119]Seider, *Character Compass*, 53.

[120]Seider, *Character Compass*, 54.

classes throughout the year; each unit is dedicated to understanding a key virtue through philosophy, and classes build a more nuanced understanding about the virtues as students advance.[121]

Despite its success and strong culture of community, Boston Prep has its setbacks. Half the senior class in 2011 did not sign the Honor Code because of a clause stipulating that if students see someone acting immorally and do not say something, they are as culpable as the perpetrator of the unethical act. In essence, students felt that it could not be determined in all cases what should fall under this rule, and believed that the clause could in some instances go against their own sense of what is right. The honor code forced students to contend with two conflicting aims (e.g., friendship and an obligation to the school) but did not equip them with ways of reflecting on and deliberating with one another about the conflict. Despite the disagreement between the students and the school, the community discussed the dispute openly together. The open dialogue is an example of a strong point where the community overcame the limitations of the five virtues and was able to discuss conflict openly and ethically.

Boston Prep's sense of community, along with its common ethical language, is for Seider the greatest success of the school's program. Some teachers, however, worry that the students hear the language of virtue so much that they "tune out" and "the language of the virtue replaces genuine reflection rather than enhancing it."[122] Others feel the language of the five virtues is a little forced. In one of the examples Seider offers, students learn about friendship from Aristotle's *Ethics*. The teacher guides the reading of the text and leads discussion about how Aristotle's view of friendship as a virtue can directly inform students' understanding of Boston Prep's five virtues. In another example, teachers praise the virtuous activity of students. One teacher shares in the

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[121]Seider, *Character Compass*, 56.

[122]Seider, *Character Compass*, 69.

community meeting: "'Over the break we reorganized the library, and I'd like to recognize the students who came in to school to help me out with virtue commendations for their compassion.' She reads off the names of five students, as the student body snaps its approval."[123]

The virtue commendation illustrates why direct instruction of character can feel "a little forced," as one teacher expressed it. The worry that the moral program may feel forced is continuous with the worry that such direct instruction of character, inclusive of awards and classes on each virtue, replaces "genuine reflection." Current neo-Aristotelian philosophers have some trouble with the idea as well. Philosopher of education Kristján Kristjánsson writes that "direct habituation, where the relevant virtues are made to seep into student's personalities like dye into wool," has not been effective, and he worries that contemporary character education programs often draw on ancient notions of character in problematic ways.[124]

Aristotle's Conception of Habit in Education

The conception of habit in both the community view and the egotistical view has strong affinities to the conception of habit associated with Aristotle,[125] particularly from a traditional reading of Aristotle's *Ethics*. Traditional readings of Aristotle interpret him to have a linear, fixed view of virtue and the habit-making life. For Aristotle, as many

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[123]Seider, *Character Compass*, 21.

[124]Kristján Kristjánsson, "Habituated Reason: Aristotle and the 'Paradox of Moral Education.'" *Theory and Research in Education* 4, no. 1 (March 1, 2006): 101.

[125]In support of the claim that the egotistical view of habit has affinities to Aristotle, Bernard Williams says Aristotle's individual is "disquietingly concerned with himself" (Williams 1985, p. 35). Similarly, Stanley Cavell underscores how many "have found [Aristotle's] theory to be an ethics of selfishness, not a morality at all" (Cavell 2004, p. 357). References found paired in Nicholas O. Pagan's "Configuring the Moral Self: Aristotle and Dewey," *Foundations of Science* 13, no. 3–4 (June 19, 2008): 239–50.

readers of him would have it, habits are a *means* to achieving the virtuous life, where the highest achievement in such a life is contemplation.

Aristotle's philosophical ideas remain pressing and important to discuss, as his ideas continue to be invoked, especially in education.[126] Despite the number of authors investigating moral education in Aristotle, there are still significant tensions in interpreting his viewpoints. Kristjánsson poses the issue as follows: "The underlying concern here is obviously, how making young students into walking bundles of habit can avoid stultifying their psychological powers of critical reflection at a later stage."[127] In recent years, however, there has emerged a group of neo-Aristotelian scholars who have sought to breathe life into Aristotle's ethical philosophy, inclusive of his concept of habits.[128] Despite all their admirable and momentous work, there are still unasked questions that I believe make it wise to turn to Dewey for answers. First, in fairness, we must understand their views. Painted in broad brushstrokes, I ask for the reader's patience as we engage with several scholars who re-conceive the role that habits play in the life of a person in Aristotle's philosophy. Nancy Sherman, Sarah Broadie, Randall Curren, and Kristjánsson have compellingly shown what Aristotle's philosophy could mean for us today. There are re-readings I do not engage, including McDowell, Alistair McIntyre,

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[126]Brewer, *Retrieval of Ethics*; Kristjánsson, "Habituated Reason."

[127]Kristjánsson, "Habituated Reason," 102.

[128]The views vary quite widely on a few points. For example, Sherman writes, "Contrary to the popular interpretation according to which ethical habituation is non-rational, I argue that it includes early on the engagement of cognitive capacities. Thus, habituation is not mindless drill, but a cognitive shaping of desires through perception, belief and intention." See Nancy Sherman , *The Fabric of Character: Aristotle's Theory of Virtue* (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1989): 7. For Curzer, however, "Aristotle's habituation is simply a matter of mechanical, mindless inhibition" (Kristjánsson, "Habituated Reason," 108). And Burnyeat believes the habituation process begins nonrational, but as the child grows older, it becomes rational habituation as well (Kristjánsson, "Habituated Reason").

Miles Burnyeat, Rosalind Hursthouse, Martha Nussbaum, and others, simply because I find these authors less applicable to my topic of habits, learning, and living.

I use primarily Sherman's *Fabric of Character*, especially in the latter half of this chapter, and I also draw on Curren's numerous writings on Aristotle and education and Broadie's *Ethics with Aristotle*. Throughout the chapter, I refer to the work of Kristjánsson. Though some say these re-readings are so re-imagined that they are now distinctively their own works of philosophy, any reader of their scholarship will see they are in a close and deeply attentive conversation with key passages from Aristotle to underscore how habits cannot be rigid and thoughtless if the individual is to achieve the kind of rich life Aristotle imagined. Again, we can recall that the rigid view of habits, treating them as fixed and repetitive, is the view that the egotistical and community views ultimately adopt. Whether their own ideas or Aristotle's, it seems to me that this group of neo-Aristotelians offers a unique and important illumination of habit. Nevertheless, these neo-Aristotelian philosophers do not go far enough in understanding the rich role of habits in our lives, and particularly the generative potential it holds for education. I say why at the end of this chapter, but, in brief, the limitations could be due in part to ultimate limitations of Aristotle's theory. For example, Aristotle fundamentally does not offer a conception of dialogue in the education of children. Moreover, children are not expected to reflect on their habits until they are late teenagers.[129] For Aristotle, habits are passed on in a more static way and there is not a sense of renewal of habits, especially at a young age. Aristotle, ultimately, does not offer a rigorous view of "dynamic habits" in education.

I conclude that while the new account of habit-making these neo-Aristotelian thinkers have put forth is rich and promising, questions about the implications for education are unanswered or even unasked. I argue that, in the end, John Dewey offers a

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[129]Nel Noddings, *Philosophy and Education*, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2012): 12.

richer account that better serves the project of education, particularly with regard to impulse, the relationship between mind and body, spontaneity, and the aesthetic dimensions of habits.

Neo-Aristotelian Conceptions of Habit: Sherman, Broadie, and Curren

In Book One of *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle discusses the role of habits in the life of excellence, virtue, and happiness.[130] If we are to be excellent lyre players, or excellent men, Aristotle asserts, we must conform to excellence: "for to excellence belongs activity in accordance with excellence."[131] The question is then how to achieve excellence. The answer begins, it seems, with habits. Yet, it is not a simple matter of doing the same right thing repeatedly. It is a matter of desiring that which is excellent and learning when to do that which is excellent. To achieve excellence, we must want the good and happiness for its own sake.[132] The nuance of being excellent is not to be underestimated; being truly virtuous is being aware of the difficulty of being so.

The ability of an individual to find pleasure in that which is excellent is a function of his nature. For Aristotle, the difference between a man of excellence and one who is depraved is that the depraved man is always in conflict with himself; he is always trying to strike deals with himself to fan the flames of his pleasures. The excellent man, however, finds pleasure in that which is good and excellent. If a man is to take pleasure in something that is good, it must be part of his nature to do so: "The lover of what is

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[130]Aristotle speaks of habits in terms of *excellence of virtues* and in terms of *excellence of intelligence*, so I will adopt his terms as he uses them.

[131]Aristotle, 1098b, 31-32.

[132]Aristotle writes, "therefore we call complete without qualification that which is always desirable in itself and never for the sake of something else" (Aristotle, 1097a 33-35). For example, our reasons for wanting to be excellent cannot be that others would regard us with high esteem leading us to achieve fame and wealth.

noble finds pleasant the things that are by nature pleasant."[133] Excellent actions are part of the good man's nature. Here we can see Aristotle saying that the person who has a habit of doing what is good, whether it is the morally or intelligently best thing to do—such as, in our contemporary context, offering a helping hand to someone who has fallen or brushing one's teeth every day—simply *does* these things. In other words, he does the things that are excellent. Furthermore, not only does he do them, he wants to do them. The "lover of what is noble" is the person who desires to be good and so becomes good by making a habit of being so.

The question remains of how one conforms one's nature to excellence. The answer, following Aristotle, is that we become habituated to it in childhood. We must teach the young, according to Aristotle, to take pleasure in the habits of the noble for the sake of the good. The man who does not find excellent action pleasant is not noble.[134]

Origins of Habits: Nature, Habituation, and Teaching

What exactly is the origin of a good person, and how specifically are the qualities of goodness cultivated, taught, or developed? For Aristotle, our good habits have a tripartite origin in nature (i.e., traits with which one is born), habituation (training in doing the right things), and teaching."[135]

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[133]Aristotle, 1099a, 6-14.

[134]If not God-sent, Aristotle asserts, "happiness is acquired by learning or by habituation or by some other sort of training," that is, being a noble person is not haphazard, but the result of intentional teaching. (Aristotle, 1099b, 10.)

[135]See Randall Curren, "Aristotle's Educational Politics and the Aristotelian Renaissance in Philosophy of Education." *Oxford Review of Education* 36, no. 5 (October 2010): 546.

Nature

Aristotle writes that, "We are adapted by nature to receive [habits], and are made perfect by habit."[136] The habits the child "receives" and by which he or she is "made perfect" are the ones that allow the child to desire the good and draw on knowledge to inform action. Yet, how does this transformation come about? During childhood, habits can be received by a readied nature. Beyond natural tendencies and predispositions found in the child's nature, then, the modification of a child's nature happens with an excellent teacher in childhood and through learning good habits.

It is still not clear, though, how our nature becomes adapted to excellent habits in education in a way that is "natural" in Aristotle's view.[137] Aristotle's example of a stone in Book 1 of *Ethics* captures, for Broadie, some of the confusion about how we educate in accordance with a child's nature.[138] In the example, Aristotle says a stone can never be habituated to fall up, just as a person can never develop habits contrary to his nature. Aristotle's stone example might suggest that blind repetition leads to virtue, but Broadie suggests that the passage should not be read this way since moral situations are unique and call for tailored action. She writes, "[It] may only mean that it makes sense to try again with a recalcitrant human being, but not with a stone. We need not take the passage to say (what would be illogical as well as unrealistic) that because sheer repetition cannot train a stone, therefore similar sheer repetition does train a human being to virtue."[139]

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[136]Aristotle, 1103a, 24-25.

[137]Sarah Broadie, *Ethics with Aristotle* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991): 108.

[138]Aristotle's example of the stone: "For instance the stone which by nature moves downwards cannot be habituated to move upwards, not even if one tries to train it by throwing it up ten thousand times; nor can fire be habituated to move downwards, nor can anything else that by nature behaves in one way be trained to behave in another. Neither by nature, then, nor contrary to nature do the virtues arise in us; rather we are adapted by nature to receive them, and are made perfect by habit."

[139]Broadie, *Ethics with Aristotle*, 108.

Broadie concludes that "sheer" or thoughtless repetition is not a logical way to understand intellectual and ethical development.[140]

The opposite of blind repetition is intelligent action based on observation. Even if one were to repeat the same action, one would observe and reflect before doing so. Broadie offers an example: to learn the virtue of justice, she says, the "practice should cover all sorts of cases, in which the just action is sometimes a giving, sometimes a withholding, sometimes treating people alike, sometimes differently and so on."[141] Here there is an emphasis on a certain kind of habitual way of knowing and of acting, where the action might be to reflect or observe before acting. For example, one might learn to draw on wisdom, courage, and temperance in times of conflict before acting.

The example about habits of justice illustrates the adaptive nature of habits. Thus, Aristotle posits that, "We are adapted by nature to receive [habits], and are made perfect by habit."[142] When he says that we "receive" habits and are "made perfect" by habits, Aristotle is arguing that if habits are developed through repetition, then a habit "engenders concrete experience of very general things"—that is, in our habitual ways of acting we come to know the world. By nature we create patterns and ways of being, and these patterns give us insight into our world. Our habits are not fixed. Rather, "being an agent, trying, succeeding through trying, concentrating against distractions, looking for what is relevant"[143] requires us to adapt, observe, reflect, modify, and renew habits. It seems fair to say, then, that the habits that engender virtues are not fixed even though the virtues themselves are.

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[140]Sherman moreover believes that a non-rational view or mindless view of habitation is nonsensical (nor is it the way Aristotle presents it for that matter [Sherman, *Fabric of Character,* 7]).

[141]Broadie, *Ethics with Aristotle*, 108.

[142]Aristotle, 1103a, 24-25.

[143]Broadie, *Ethics with Aristotle*, 109.

Habituation

Aristotle has "remarkably little to tell us" about his concept of habituation.[144] Despite this reticence, Kristjánsson, Curren, Broadie, and Sherman agree that habituation is not blind rote training, for such an activity cannot inherently be moral, and practically speaking the same action, following Aristotle as well, cannot be universalized as good. Broadie and Sherman argue that habituation, or as I will refer to as habit-making when understood not as training but as formative learning, enable us to be intelligent moral agents. For them, habits are "not autopilot, where we take for granted that we know (without special monitoring) what to do to get to the destination; rather, the moral habit is one by which it can be taken for granted that whatever we are going to do, it will be what we find appropriate."[145] In this way, the habit-making life is characterized by "being an agent," and being an agent means "trying, succeeding through trying, concentrating against distractions, looking for what is relevant."[146] This form of human agency is difficult work. Understanding our motivations and noticing the surrounding context are the foundation of acting virtuously, and how we feel about our actions plays no small part in our virtuous activity.[147] When there is a difficult situation that calls us to put to practice our habit of noticing and concentrating in the face of distraction, we have to "rise to an occasion." We have to exert ourselves, as Sherman describes in "Stoic Warriors" (2005), using the example of soldiers who are at war and are called on repeatedly to "rise to an occasion" and draw on habits to inform action. Habits here give us the possibility, the furrows of practiced behavior, to rise to the occasion. Implicit in this statement is that the occasion to which we rise is not always the same. Thus, habits must be dynamic.

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[144]John Dunne, "Virtue, Phronesis, and Learning." *Virtue Ethics and Moral Education* (London: Routledge, 1999): 58.

[145]Broadie, *Ethics with Aristotle*, 109.

[146]Broadie, *Ethics with Aristotle*, 109.

[147]Broadie, *Ethics with Aristotle*; Sherman, *Fabric of Character*.

Dynamic habits are a result of an agent who relies on knowledge, perception, and judgment to do the good thing in each unique situation.

Teaching

So far we have looked at two of three origins of excellence: first, nature, and second, habituation. With the analysis thus far, we have a general sense of what might characterize habits, but we have not yet examined how a child learns or a teacher teaches such habits. It is worth noting that Aristotle did not see family and parents as entirely reliable when it comes to habituating students to the habits of a virtuous life. As such, an excellent teacher was viewed by Aristotle as extremely important for ensuring a good upbringing. I turn now to teaching.

The practice of teaching draws on the two prior origins: nature and habit. For Aristotle, an unproductive view of education is one in which students are forcefully impelled to act a certain way. Recall that Aristotle said the excellent man desires that which is good.[148] He does not do what is good out of fear of punishment, for example. Therefore, in a good education, the teacher must habituate the student to that which is good. How does this happen?[149] Broadie offers four core categories of teaching and education for Aristotle:[150] (1) Students do not have virtue a priori: virtue, whether habit or reason-based, is clearly not found in nature since we need to be educated for it. (2) Education is intentional: in an education, according to Aristotle, virtues are not picked

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[148]As Curren further points out, we cannot force and individual to act a certain way. He writes, "the conduct in question must be shaped in all its details towards what is desirable" that is, moral perception and knowledge is not enough to guide thinking and acting, directing energies towards what is good is essential too. See Curren, "Aristotle's Educational Politics," 547.

[149]There is contention among scholars (Kristjánsson, "Habituated Reason") about to whether reason is pre-habituated, that is, whether we can reason about things as a child before we learn the habits of thinking, or whether we cannot. Broadie and Sherman believe there is pre-habituated reason, but habits of thinking can be understood as sharpening that reasoning.

[150]Broadie, *Ethics with Aristotle*, 74.

up “haphazardly” through experience in the same way that we pick up words serendipitously when immersed in a language.[151] It is worth noting that this emphasis on intentionality stands in clear contrast to the view of Dewey, who advocates indirect learning, as we will see at the end of the chapter. (3) Education leads to growth: “Acquiring a virtue [or, for that matter, a skill or a theoretical mastery] is not an alteration, but a perfecting or completing of our natures.”[152] Here, Aristotle and Dewey are more aligned, both seeing the process of education as one that sets the student on the track of growth for more growth. (4) A sign that education has worked is that students become independent, as Broadie writes, “[E]ven if it is not precisely the aim of teaching to produce new teachers, a pupil’s attaining the point where he in turn can teach the same things is the sign that his own teacher succeeded.”[153] This is a more nuanced point of Broadie’s, but one that makes sense. If student have truly understood a concept, they will show this by explaining it to others.

For Broadie, when we learn intellectual and ethical habits supporting growth, it is not an aimless process. Learning habits of thinking and learning content knowledge require intentional, conscious, and reflective instruction. The fourth point, regarding independence, underscores the student’s self-reliance as a chief aim of education. Educated students should be able to go out in the world, make rational and ethical choices, and explain their reasoning or the considerations for their choices.

Virtue is a key concept in the third and fourth points. For the purposes of this investigation, we can understand virtue as the confluence of ethical and intellectual habits that are positively manifested in an individual’s character. The interdependency of ethical and intellectual habits is a critical point for understanding virtue; “no moral virtue is a

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[151]Broadie, *Ethics with Aristotle*, 74.

[152]Broadie, *Ethics with Aristotle*, 74.

[153]Broadie, *Ethics with Aristotle*, p. 74.

true virtue unless it is guided by good judgment,"[154] that is, we cannot be morally good without intelligence. Though Aristotle writes that we learn intellectual excellence from teachers through instruction and we learn moral excellence from habits,[155] an "overlooked aspect of Aristotle's conception of moral development is that the moral virtues are both a necessary step towards, and only completed by, the acquisition of the intellectual virtue of practical wisdom or good judgment."[156] A curriculum exclusively comprising moral education lessons would be misdirected. Content knowledge, critical thinking, and intellectual habits are essential to moral behavior. Aristotle writes, "It is not possible to be fully good without having practical wisdom, nor practically wise without having excellence of character."[157] The interdependence of ethical and intellectual capacities is known as the unity of virtue thesis in Aristotle's work.[158] Following this thesis, ethical habits and intellectual habits are interdependent; there is a "unity [between] practical rationality and moral soundness."[159]

The unity of virtues thesis, which represents the confluence of ethical and intellectual habits, enables us to ask the question: How does the teacher teach the ethical and intellectual dimensions of habits? Curren is explicit on this point. He writes that to do so

> …requires supervision to ensure that the learner does the right thing, and *coaching* that leads her through progressive mastery of various nuances of what she is doing, calling her attention to aspects of it she will not have *perceived* nor had any language to describe. Supervision and coaching enable

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[154]Curren, "Aristotle's Educational Politics," 547.

[155]Aristotle, 1103a, 16.

[156]Curren, "Aristotle's Educational Politics," 547.

[157]Aristotle, 11445, 31-2.

[158]Broadie, *Ethics with Aristotle*; Curren "Aristotle's Educational Politics."

[159]Broadie, *Ethics with Aristotle*, 8.

> learners to *progress* and become *self-directed* in their practice and habits."[160] [Emphasis in original.]

Curren's emphases make it clear that he aims to point out the multi-faceted and complex work of the teacher. The word "coaching" underscores that the teacher is not aiming to make the students helpless and dependent, the result of blind habituation and rote memorization of information. Rather, the teacher guides the student to think about facts, draw on knowledge and experience, and apply the learned information to a diversity of situations. Such a process facilitates the development of a "self-directed" learner.

The self-directed practice of observing, drawing on knowledge, reflecting, and acting are intellectual and ethical habits that teachers can teach. A teacher's charge, then, is to help students learn how to think, or specifically, to foster the habits of thinking in order to support growth, or as Aristotle might say it, excellence. Growth here is generative, learning to learn more. Implied in such a philosophical stance vis-à-vis teaching and learning is the assertion that we cannot be generative alone, but necessarily require robust teaching and learning relationships in order to grow. Community plays a central role for Aristotle, hence his strong emphasis on the political-ethical life, which is quintessentially an excellent and virtuous life that is shared and carried out in interaction with others.

Teaching students how to think does not mean training them simply "to give the right answers or construct the desired product."[161] If that were the case, students would be unable to adapt to real-world circumstances and would be unable to develop shared understanding with others about changing circumstances. In contrast with such a narrowly constricted view of education, a student in the philosophically-grounded view of an excellent and virtuous life learns to "understand the reasons why the moves are

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[160]Curren, "Aristotle's Educational Politics," 547.

[161]Broadie, *Ethics with Aristotle*, 73.

correct, […] to apply any principles he learns to new kinds of case[s and], [and to] know how to explain these things, giving reasons."[162] The student's ability to "understand the reasons why" and to "apply any principles he learns to new kinds of cases" requires a teacher who is a guide, to cultivate habits of thinking with others, reflecting, dialoguing, and drawing inferences based on prior knowledge. Teaching, in this domain of deeper understanding about the aims of education, is the "name which Aristotle gives to the process that develops virtues of intellect."[163]

I have offered part one of a philosophical argument, but many questions remain. Are there certain pre-determined "right" habits we could enumerate, organize, and teach to students? How exactly does the teacher cultivate observation? How does the teacher cultivate an environment in which such virtues and habits can flourish? It is clear that habits play a central role in education, that ethical and intellectual habits must be interrelated, and that ideally a student can teach what he has learned to others—yet much remains to be understood. At the end of this chapter, I turn to Dewey, who provides helpful amendments to the conception of the teacher laid out by Aristotle and Broadie. First, though, it will prove useful to look more closely at the work of Sherman, who offers another reading of Aristotle that sheds light on the types of habits most valuable to develop in education.

Sherman: Perception, Habits, and Education

In *Fabric of Character*, Sherman argues that while the role of reason is easily gleaned from the *Ethics*, the importance of emotion has traditionally been overlooked.

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[162]Broadie, *Ethics with Aristotle*, 73.

[163]Broadie, *Ethics with Aristotle*, 73.

Our hearts must be invested in ethical action, not just our intellect.[164] Accordingly, "[…] to act for the right reasons, as the person of practical wisdom does, is to act from the sort of wisdom that itself includes the vision and sensitivity of emotion."[165] Our emotions, then, are part of the intellect, where the intellect is part of the ability to act ethically. Our ability to discern, draw on knowledge, and to make sense of our observations, for example, all require emotion.

Sherman's work investigates the concept of character. Character, for Sherman, is a useful concept for understanding how habits hold together within an individual and interact with the outside environment. To understand character, following Sherman, perception and emotion must be emphasized alongside rational intelligence and judgment. All capacities interact as the individual modifies and renews aims and habits in light of an uncertain and changing future. A person's character is a product of his or her ethical action—action that requires experience, wisdom, self-knowledge, moral perception, and judgment. Furthermore, revising and reconstructing in light of moral perception is an intellectual and ethical project. Revision and reconstruction is, critically, a matter of modifying and renewing habits. As demonstrated in the section above, blind repetition is impractical when circumstances require that individuals discern a situation in which they have the potential to act ethically. Ethical action begins with "a perception of the circumstances and a recognition of its morally salient features."[166]

Sherman's work is expansive, but there are two points relating to my inquiry that I would like to highlight. The first is that the child cannot be forced to desire something; the child cannot be compelled to be virtuous. The second is that to understand habits, we must discern the role of perception in our habit-making lives. To the first point, Sherman

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[164]Sherman, *Fabric of Character*, 2.

[165]Sherman, *Fabric of Character*, 3.

[166]Sherman, *Fabric of Character*, 5.

argues that a "mechanical theory of habituation ultimately makes mysterious the transition between childhood and moral maturity."[167] To counter this mystery, she believes we must see habituation as "reflective and critical."[168] Specifically, she believes a child's inclinations must be motivated and made comfortable to that which is good and virtuous by encountering, becoming familiar with, and practicing the habits of the good and virtuous.

To the second point, perception is a moral and intellectual activity that allows the individual to make ethical and rational decisions. Sherman writes, "Character is expressed in what one sees as much as what one does."[169] Since the wise man is virtuous and the virtuous man wise, as Aristotle holds to be true, then the vicious man cannot morally perceive the nature of situations arising in his life that would require him to modify and renew his habits.[170] It is not so much that he is unwilling to revise his ends and habits, but that he is unable and so cannot discern what elements of the situation require him to revise his ways and in what way to do so.

Perception is necessary to act in a just way, but *perceiving* that we acted justly does not necessarily mean that we actually did so. This can be a bit confusing, but the point here is this: assuming we are trying to be a just person (i.e., we are not acting justly because we want wealth, happiness, fame), then there is a further step. If we are to act justly in a particular situation, that situation must also require such an action. If we act on

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[167]Sherman, *Fabric of Character*, 158.

[168]Sherman, *Fabric of Character*, 160.

[169]Sherman, *Fabric of Character*, 3-4.

[170]Good character, phronesis, self-knowledge and good judgment allow us to revise our ends to the appropriate good. A man with a bad character lacks "the ability to revise his ends, and in a way is unable to" (*Fabric of Character*,112). Bad Character or vice "has destroyed the ability to *see* the proper goals of action, thus […] more significantly, one's access to them through perception and reason" is destroyed by vice (*Fabric of Character*, 112).

autopilot and have insufficiently observed the situation such that our just action is unjust, then we have acted unjustly. I will offer an illustration to show what I mean: Take the familiar story of a virtuous man who sees a person drowning and determines immediately that the right course of action is to save the person. He then draws on his intellect to quickly determine a path down to the bank where he can safely pull the person out of the water. Lastly, he draws on his physical strength and ability to swim. According to Aristotle, we cannot be morally good without practical wisdom, which involves the power to perceive and know how to act (an intellectual and, in this case, physical capacity) in moral situations. If the man does not know how to swim, it would be a moral failing on his part to jump in to save a drowning person. He would run the risk of further harming the already harmed person and ourselves.[171]

A final important point in Sherman's analysis is that the virtuous path is not fixed, preset, and obvious. Rather, habits are revised in light of perception and experience. The ability to revise habits in light of shifting aims requires "a mindfulness, typically, of the diversity of factors that impinge on a choice."[172] In the face of a "diversity of factors"— personal obligations, professional responsibilities— the individual observes, reflects, shifts, modifies, and renews aims. To draw on Sherman's metaphor of fabric and character, the vision of the good life an individual holds is a multi-colored patchwork quilt. Each piece of fabric is something different: the desire to be a good parent, an excellent engineer, a responsible citizen. These aims necessarily come in conflict with each other, so we must develop strategies to navigate the conflict.

Sherman and I depart in our analysis on the topic of education. The most successful account of the teacher that Sherman provides, in my view, comes to us in the form of her

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[171]Shusterman uses this example as well in "Enhanced Cognition, Ethics, and Some Problems of Self-Knowledge." *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 25, no. 1 (2011).

[172]Sherman, *Fabric of Character*, 78.

idea of “cognitive shaping.” She writes that character “includes early on the engagement of cognitive capacities. Thus habituation is not mindless drill, but a cognitive shaping of desire through perception, belief and intentions.”[173] The “cognitive shaping” as modifying and renewal of habits and the nature, i.e., education, of the “early on […] engagement of cognitive capacities” gives us the foundation for an account of the teacher as a guide and model, engaged in formation and coaching. The image of the teacher as engaged in cognitive shaping presents a challenge: how to cultivate perception. This is both inner perception (self-knowledge) and outer perception of others and our environment. Failure to notice something that should be addressed (the dark circles around a friend’s eyes, the old woman’s body sagging under the weight of her grocery bags) and failure to correctly interpret (ask your friend what has kept him awake, help the old woman with her bags) can be a moral failing. Noticing *is* an ethical task.

Nevertheless, such an account insufficiently addresses the embodied aspects of such experiences, the role of senses, impulses and experiences, and it relies too heavily on an intellectualized “shaping” of one’s behavior. Though Sherman uses the word “embodied,” she and other neo-Aristotelians do not go into any depth about what this word means and how embodied experience relates to intellectual and ethical action.

In the end, Sherman’s analysis of education is limited. To the first point I made above, for Aristotle, and for Sherman, habit is essentially no more than a means to the end of becoming more virtuous. For Aristotle and Sherman, we habituate students so that they might be virtuous. The exact habits and methods may be slightly different between Sherman and Aristotle, but the end is the same. It seems that habits are not viewed as part of our physical life and part of who we are. Dewey, in separating himself from Aristotle on this point, re-imagines the essence of habits in human lives. For Dewey (and Montaigne, as we saw in the Introduction), our habits are more than mere means. Dewey

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[173]Sherman, *Fabric of Character*, 7.

writes, "Who can reckon up the loss of moral power that arises from the constant impression that nothing is worth doing in itself, but only as a preparation for something else […]?"[174] Certainly, habits *can be* means, but in their richest and most humane sense, habits are more than means. If we *are* to some extent the sum total of our habits, habits cannot be means. Perceptions of our self and experiences change, as do our habits. These changes are not reflective only of changing ends. The next chapter, discussing habit, impulse and spontaneity, further develops this point.

To the second point, that is the thin description of embodied habits, there is no discussion in Sherman's work of habits beyond the person, such as cultural habits that would shape, in this case, the environment of the classroom. The kind of reflection and problem solving that teachers and students engage in while teaching and learning, and the ways in which educational environments are organized and structured, are not addressed in Sherman's account. The exact nature of such an education, especially the role of the teacher, remains unclear despite Sherman's efforts to address the question at the end of her book. Sherman speaks of the "shaping of desire through perception, belief and intention," yet how does the teacher go about cultivating a habit of introspection, self-examination and reflection? What are the habits of noticing the teacher teaches? How do teachers engage students in such a project?

Habits: The Different Views of Dewey and Aristotle

The questions and concerns I raise have not gone un-noted by Aristotelians. Analysis of character education has continued and Aristotle's influence on it has been recast as we saw with Sieder's examples in *Character Compass*.[175] Kristjánsson, a key

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[174]Dewey, MW4, 278.

[175]Though I do not offer extensive empirical research, it is worth noting that Noddings does cite research that shows that children who go through character education programs are not

figure in the debate, argues for a more favorable re-reading of Aristotle and more sensible implementations of his ideas. He argues that a developed notion of Aristotelian friendship, specifically one that emphasizes an "account of how character friends reciprocally construct each other's selfhoods through sustained, dialectical engagement,"[176] could prove foundational for a successful character education program. He writes, "There is great power in teaching students moral education through friendship."[177] Such a program would draw on role modeling, music, literature, and dialogue. Invoking Sherman, Kristjánsson also argues that, given Aristotle's goals for the flourishing of the individual and the community, we wrongly interpret Aristotle's writing if we see him arguing for merely self-cultivation in an effort to move along a fixed highway to heaven (or for him human flourishing expressed in contemplation).

Nicholas O. Pagan, in his essay, *Configuring the Moral Self: Aristotle and Dewey,* similarly turns to Aristotle on friendship as the heart of his ethical theory. He argues that on the topic of friendship, Aristotle could be viewed as a pragmatist prefiguring Dewey. While Aristotle's view is that contemplation is the highest good, Pagan argues that this is more of a god-like ideal and that in practice humans are "political [animals] tending by nature to live together with others."[178] Since humans by nature hold a shared life, Aristotle's dialectical account of friendship is at the heart of ethical life. The idea of the self and other as interdependent is also found in the pragmatist tradition, where, for Dewey, the moral self is defined by an interest in others and in an interest in oneself.

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necessarily "more" moral. They tend to be better behaved when and if surrounded by authority (Noddings, 2011, 168).

[176]Kristjánsson, "On the Old Saw That Dialogue Is a Socratic But Not an Aristotelian Method of Moral Education," 333.

[177]Kristjánsson, "On the Old Saw That Dialogue Is a Socratic But Not an Aristotelian Method of Moral Education," 333.

[178] Nicholas O. Pagan, "Configuring the Moral Self: Aristotle and Dewey," 148.

The idea of friendship that Kristjánsson and Pagan underscore as central to Aristotle is fraught with its own troubles, since for Aristotle role models are only found within one's own culture (there is no outward-looking eye to other cultures or communication between cultures). For children, the process of looking to role models in their own culture goes in one direction, whereas for Dewey the process is marked by communication and renewal.[179] Moreover, while Pagan terms Aristotle an early pragmatist, one might just as well be tempted to say that Dewey is an Aristotelian on the topic of habit. While Aristotle's discussion of habit influenced all those who came after him, from Montaigne to Rousseau to Dewey, Dewey's account of habit is distinctively his own. I do not see calling Dewey a neo-Aristotelian on the topic of habit quite accurate or even necessary.[180] Moreover, Dewey criticizes Aristotle and what he takes to be the latter's overt and heavy-handed view of habituation in education.[181] For though Pagan says that it is on the topic of ethics that Aristotle and Dewey are most closely aligned, he writes, "People become courageous, for example, by imitating courageous people," summarizing a traditional and more rigid view of how we learn habits that ignores thinking, reflection, and deliberation.[182]

There are, undeniably, affinities between Dewey and Aristotle. One of Aristotle's greatest strengths is that he places his moral theory in the everyday lived lives of human beings. Dewey takes up this thesis in our modern times, I argue, more robustly. He emphasizes the role that the body, senses, and impulses play in habit formation and the

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[179]Noddings, *Philosophy and Education*, 153.

[180]Matthew P. Pamental, "Dewey, Situationism, and Moral Education." *Educational Theory* 60, no. 2 (2010): 147–66.

[181]Dewey writes, "Instead of being latent intellectual powers, requiring only exercises for their perfecting, [habits] are tendencies to respond in certain ways to change in the environment so as to bring about other changes." Dewey, MW9, 26.

[182]Pagan, "Configuring the Moral Self: Aristotle and Dewey," 242.

interdependence of ethics and habit in everyday lived experience. The larger project of education and the role habits play requires further analysis in a pragmatist framework.

Conclusion

Let us return to Boston Prep and the class discussions about ethics based upon five core virtues.[183] In these classes the students read texts with their teachers and engage in discussion about how, in one case, Aristotle's view of friendship can teach students and help them better understand friendship in their lives. In another case, students learn the doctrine of the mean in Aristotle's *Ethics*.[184] Some of the classes Seider highlights engage in a community of inquiry and critical reflection around ethical problems (he offers the example of students deliberating about a case in which a homeless man steals a wallet to feed his two children). All lessons, though, must come back to the five core virtues. This rigidity results in a narrow interpretation of classical texts in terms of the five virtues, excluding critical reflection and the ability to develop an imaginative vocabulary to reflect on, think about, and address ethical dilemmas.[185]

In the egotistical model, students are taught to adapt to a single, competitive environment and to a single mode of interacting with others where individuals either win or lose. Dewey writes that the "egoistic desire to get ahead—to get ahead of others—is

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[183]Seider, *Character Compass*, 56.

[184]Seider, *Character Compass*, 59.

[185]Noddings observes that empirical research has shown that this inability to question, reflect, and deliberate about moral dilemmas is one of the drawbacks of character education. Taken to an extreme, she notes that the virtues can even be drawn upon for perverse purposes, as we see with the leaders of Nazi Germany who had excellent character educations, but ultimately learned to be virtuous for evil ends. This topic will be further discussed in the conclusion of this dissertation (Noddings, *Philosophy and Education*).

already only too strong a motive."[186] The community view at first seems to remedy this with its belief that the environment, culture, and community are central for developing good habits. However, in the community view as I present it, students achieve success by being virtuous and virtue remains problematically inflexible. Students are rewarded for virtue, where virtue has strict parameters. Thus, when supporting the values of a community and the shared benefit of the group, the school relies on fixed views of ethical habits, falling into the same trouble as the egotistical view.

I take up a Deweyan account of ethics. I argue our moral compasses can only serve us if we learn to reflect, deliberate, and engage in dialogue with others. Dewey's concept of the moral self, which I examine in Chapter IV, illustrates how in time of conflict we observe, think critically, and act, having thought as completely and intelligently as the situation allows. Dewey's moral self rests on dynamic habits with ethical and intellectual dimensions. Such a self is enabled to respond and adapt dynamically to changing conditions. Furthermore, such a self relies on habits ensuring critical reflection rather than thoughtless obedience to moral codes.

Once dynamic habits grounded in critical reflection come into view, we begin to understand why the virtue commendations and the method of learning about friendship through readings of Aristotle at Boston Prep fall flat for the teachers and why they feel it is a little forced. To see the two aims of ethical and intellectual as separate in education is an untenable premise for cultivating the moral life. Robert Boostrum writes,

> Dewey argues that "the school must itself be a community life in all which that implies," and part of what that implies is that we keep in mind that the "moral and the social quality of conduct are, in the last analysis, identical with each other." The moral is not something to be added to the other elements and demands of schooling, not another course or program in the

[186]Dewey, MW4, 278.

> curriculum. Education—"Discipline, culture, social efficiency, personal refinement, improvement of character"—is moral life."[187]

There are important limitations to the view that morals can only be learned if explicitly taught through "direct moral instruction."[188] Educators who look at "school programmes, the school courses of study, and do not find any place set apart for instruction in ethics or the 'moral teaching' [and] assert that the schools are doing nothing, or next to nothing, for character-training" are wrong in their criticism, writes Dewey.[189] These educators have failed to understand how children learn ethics. They treat morals as something separate, drawn upon at certain times in certain situations. The forced, fixed view of virtues fails to recognize the confluence of considerations confronting the individual when making ethical decisions.

Morals exist by dint of shared, social life. A true project of morals in school would infuse all the work of teaching and learning together. Students and teachers need a different framework, a different philosophy of habits for teaching and learning in recognition of this dynamic reality of shared experience that is the basis for teaching and learnng. Seider believes students and teachers need "a common language around the virtues [to] promote the development of students' moral character."[190] Dewey asserts that most students need "not so much isolated moral lessons about the importance of truthfulness and honesty, or the beneficent results that follow from a particular act of patriotism."[191] Rather, Dewey argues, that students need "the formation of habits of

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[187]Robert Boostrum, "The Peculiar Status of Democracy and Education." *Journal of Curriculum Studies* (2014): 11.

[188]Dewey, MW4, 269.

[189]Dewey, MW4, 269.

[190]Seider, *Character Compass*, 65.

[191]Dewey, MW4, 284.

social imagination and conception."[192] Taking up Dewey's thesis, the following chapters discuss the kind of teaching that is, in its fullest sense, a *practice*. It is not a drill; it is not a choreographed rehearsal. It is a practice—an artful one at that—requiring, as Dewey says, the imaginative ability to modify and renew one's habits. Through my analysis, I aim to illuminate a richer theory of habit *for education*. Such a theory of habit is vitally necessary to humanize the project of education.

[192]Dewey, MW4, 284.

Chapter III

SPONTANEITY AND INTELLIGENCE: FOUNDATIONS OF DYNAMIC HABITS

This chapter explores richly and deeply dynamic habits. While *habits* implies thoughtless repetition, *dynamic habits* emphasizes *intelligence* and *freedom*. The chapter begins with a discussion of habit in education with the aim of contextualizing my inquiry. It discusses habits as arts and the role of primary experience before turning to secondary experience, reflection, intelligence, freedom, and deliberation in our habit-making lives. Part of this project is collapsing the dualism between habits as arts and habits as intelligent in education. The chapter concludes by returning to the question of habits in education in order to foreground the investigation of Chapter IV into teachers and the habit-making life.

This chapter elucidates freedom as an intelligent balance between habit and spontaneity, where spontaneity encompasses a Deweyan definition of sense and impulse and is the basis for a fuller expression of self. Dynamic habits are modified and renewed through observation, reflection, and deliberation. They are useful, not only for adapting to a new environment, but also for adapting to new situations, people, contexts, and conditions. Dynamic habits are aesthetic and creative; our senses and body are part of the development of dynamic habits. Here I underscore the intelligent and aesthetic interplay between habit and spontaneity by turning to the concept *reflection*; the next chapter addresses the ethical dimensions of dynamic habits.

The Role of Habits in Education: A Deweyan Perspective

Developing dynamic habits as a process of continual modification and renewal is one and the same with learning. In school, students learn habits of learning that are processes of acquiring, understanding, problem solving, and analyzing diverse content—processes that serve us well the rest of our lives. These habits allow an individual to "learn to learn."[193] Learning the "process of registration, conservation and use of what is conserved," learning "[m]odes of thought, of observation and reflection," and learning "habits of judging and reasoning" allow our "habits and dispositions to carry us into new fields,"[194] whether one is a student or a teacher. In fact, in order to learn, we "have to be always learning and re-learning." That is, there is no final state, when we *complete* learning. In this way, the teacher and student are on equal planes: always learning. Dewey writes, in *Democracy and Education,* old academics who have ceased to inquire and learn are uneducated. In order to remain educated, we learn to draw on habits of "judging and reasoning" in order to spontaneously and productively learn from immediate experience (or primary experience, as the next section examines).[195]

In *Democracy and Education*, Dewey defines education as "that reconstruction or reorganization of experience which adds to the meaning of experience, and which increases [one's] ability to direct the course of subsequent experience."[196] One part of the "reconstruction or reorganization of experience" is the process of reflecting on one's experience and organizing it into takeaways, to put it crudely. These takeaways inform and direct "subsequent experience," ending up being the way we make *meaning* of our experience to inform future experience. Learning experiences are characterized by

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[193]Dewey, MW9, 51.

[194]Dewey, MW9, 51.

[195]Dewey, MW9, 54.

[196]Dewey, MW9, 74.

"interaction"[197] as opposed to passivity, and by "continuity"[198] rather than randomness. In this way, one experience builds off the next. As examined in Chapter I, secondary experience, such as reflection and systemic thinking, is the way we engage in our experience and store, connect, and make use of it in the future to grow.

What is growth? Addressing this question helps us determine what students and teachers are developing a dynamic habit *for*. Beyond survival, why are dynamic habits essential for education? Growth for Dewey is synonymous with enriching experience; it is the process whereby the individual's capacity is enlarged through experiences. Certain habits are conducive to growth, and we can learn them through "habituation." This habituation is a "general and persistent balance" of "active capacities to readjust activity to meet new conditions."[199] Dewey continues, "Active habits involve thought, invention, and initiative in applying capacities to new aims. They are opposed to routine which marks an arrest of growth. Since growth is the characteristic of life, education is all one with growing; it has no end beyond itself."[200] Dewey here sees "active habits" as those that reap the benefits of experience, making the meaning of the experience available for future experience. Specifically, active habits, which are similar to dynamic habits, allow the individual to "readjust activity to meet new conditions," identify "new aims," and apply developing "capacities" to new initiatives. Growth, then, is simply continuously cultivating active habits to maximize the richness of immediate experience. As Sidney Hook writes, "The growth, consequently, which Dewey identifies with genuine and desirable education is a shorthand expression for the direction of change in a

[197]Dewey, MW9, 44.

[198]Dewey, MW9, 39.

[199]Dewey, MW 9, 57-58.

[200]Dewey, MW 9, 57-58.

great variety of growths—intellectual, emotional, and moral."[201] That is, growth does not occur in one domain. Rather, by developing habits that allow us to be sensitive to immediate experience, we grow in manifold ways.

In the classroom, the teacher sets up the conditions to ensure student growth. Students "learn to learn" not by direct instruction, but by environment, or conditions the teacher has paid special attention to and even arranged. The "specially selected environment" of the school can be arranged to foster the development of habits and skills students need to grow.[202] That is, instead of direct transmission, the habits and skills supporting growth are both brought about by conditions and the result of student and teacher interactions—"Growth is not something done to them; it is something they do,"[203] Dewey writes of students. Growth is natural for students: they are curious, malleable, and inclined to learn more, they seek explanations, and they seek to act more fluidly in their environment. Recalling the discussion of plasticity in Chapter I, we can see how retaining some of that malleability in order to continue to grow in experience is part of the project of education. Malleability, or plasticity, allows children and adults to remain responsive to new information. In turn, this allows them to address problems and make use of possibilities in creative and intelligent ways.

An education aimed at growth is one that is "not breeding improved bees" but "constructing lives,"[204] where improved bees are bred to be workers, competitively performing tasks better and better. Unfortunately, standardized tests and rote educational training often seek to breed improved bees rather than form people. To construct lives we

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[201] Sidney Hook. "John Dewey--Philosopher of Growth." *The Journal of Philosophy* 56, no. 26 (December 17, 1959): 1014.

[202]Dewey, MW9, 43.

[203]Dewey, MW9, 51.

[204]Dewey, MW14, 144.

must, in Dewey's view, teach individuals to grow. Individuals do not leave the educational process formed, but rather poised for a life of learning. Nel Noddings writes that Dewey "assumed that the aim of education is to enable individuals to continue their education—or that the object and reward of learning is continued capacity for growth."[205] As such, there are skills and habits that educators can instill that give students that capacity for growth. To use the example offered in the Prologue, a beginning teacher may aim to cultivate his students' ability to express themselves and to show consideration toward their peers, and so he models good listening and patience. Ideally, this kind of practice is one students continue in life beyond school.

Though the general aim in education is growth, education is also a composite of many shifting aims or ends-in-view, as Dewey calls them in *Democracy and Education*. That is, developing an awareness of others and developing the habit of patience is an aim that must be re-evaluated as situations and conditions change. Aims, which are cultural, societal, and individually developed, come into conflict by dint of the diversity of life and require deliberation and critical inquiry.[206] Turning back to the concept of dynamic habits, dynamic habits are intelligent, responsive, and reflective and so cannot rely on fixed aims but rather on the continuous reconstruction of aims. Moreover, habits must be dynamic to satisfy the aim of education, where the overarching aim is growth, but the various ends-in-views, or unique and shifting goals of education, are revised and renewed in light of shifting conditions and people. These terms—education, growth, aims—are important for understanding dynamic habits and, further, inform the practice of teachers by offering a bridge between theory and practice. We cannot merely nod our heads and

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[205]Nel Noddings, *Happiness and Education (*New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003): 83.

[206]Dewey, MW9, Chapter 8.

say certain terms hold educational value; clarifying the habits behind such values is part of understanding how they may be enacted.

Now I briefly consider the implications of the discussion thus far on the practice of teaching. This dissertation's Conclusion examines case studies in detail, but here we can assert that engaged teachers' practicing and modeling habits of observation, inquiry, reflection, and deliberation is a significant part of producing such results in students.[207] That is, learning and teaching habits of thinking is educationally significant for the teacher *and* student. Teachers develop dynamic habits to responsively grow as teachers, *and* they facilitate the learning of new habits with their students. The safety of relying on rote learning followed by assessing accuracy is tempting for teachers, especially when faced with many and oftentimes new challenges, as the next chapter examines.[208] Dewey is adamant, however, that teachers engage in the reflective task of reconstructing habits to grow in their practice. Teachers, he maintains, "intently and intensely experiment."[209]

Such experimentation can be difficult for adults, even when they are free from aggravating challenges because habits, as we get older, become more fixed.[210] Young students, on the other hand, have a "life of impulsive activity," and they are "vivid, flexible, experimenting, curious."[211] Teachers, too, can cultivate this vivid and curious outlook, and doing so supports the development of dynamic habits. The vivid and curious outlook is a kind of cultivated spontaneity to the possibility and challenges of the classroom; it is one and the same with an artful sensitiveness to classroom and students, as the next section shows.

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[207]See David Hansen as well, "The Moral Importance of the Teacher's Style," 397-421.

[208]Dewey, MW9,168.

[209]Dewey, MW14, 51.

[210]Dewey, MW14, 71.

[211]Dewey, MW14, 71.

Understanding why Dewey terms habits "art"[212] will help explain the uniquely humanizing nature of habits in education, the art of teaching and learning, and qualities of dynamic habits. That is, the artfulness of habits will help us understand how we can construct lives and not breed bees. Moreover, habits as arts affirm why retaining the flexibility of a child's habits is important for adults in education. After the section on habits as arts, I turn to intelligence and then reflection. This progression is intentional, as it is a move from primary to secondary experience.

Habits as Arts: Spontaneity and Impulse

In the introductory chapter of this study, I distinguished between primary and secondary experience, and indicated that primary experience can be either pre-reflective and non-reflective. Non-reflective habits operate automatically (e.g., tying your shoes, breathing). An instinct or impulse generates pre-reflective primary experience . Secondary experience is engaged the moment we begin to reflect: when the intellectual element enters into our experiences. In this section, I analyze primary experience; in the remainder of this chapter, secondary experience—intelligence, deliberation, and reflection—though at all times I have in mind primary experience.

Aesthetics is always, at some level, a part of primary experience. We can understand aesthetics as a kind of sensitiveness to immediate experience, e.g., when we sense a problem is wrong or when we sense something is possible. The intellectual, or secondary, experience comes after immediate experience with reflection: when we begin to problem solve after having sensed there is a problem. When reflection follows aesthetic experience, we allow for the creation of new routes and new kinds of

[212]Dewey, MW14, 16.

understanding.[213] Aesthetic experiences in education is essential for students and teachers as they engage their mind *and* body.

In *Art as Experience*, Dewey lays out a theory, unsurprisingly, of art *as* experience. This thesis is carefully built up in his book. For Dewey, art is not to be something merely prized and coddled in a museum or theater or to be viewed by the wealthy in periods of weekend leisure. It is part of the fiber of human existence. Nevertheless, as we can see, art has been separated from everyday life.[214] Art has been fractured from the community—the place that creates the very conditions that allow for art to come to be.[215] David Granger, in *John Dewey, Robert Pirsig, and the Art of Living: Revisioning Aesthetic Education,* calls this rupture between community and art "a tacit endorsement of the intellectual dispositions of a class-based society."[216] Here Granger is describing Dewey's thesis that intellectualized communities create divisions, between mind and body, between work and leisure, between classes, and that are destructive to society in that they create false dualisms between experience and knowledge, body and mind, and art and life. These dualisms are corrosive and stagnate growth because they separate in all cases immediate experience from the cognitive secondary experience. In *Experience and Nature*, Dewey writes, "It is literally impossible to exclude that context of non-cognitive but experienced subject-matter which gives what is *known* its import."[217] That is, without

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[213]I would like to acknowledge David Granger here and the value of our conversations on this topic.

[214]For more on this, see David Granger, *John Dewey, Robert Pirsig, and the Art of Living: Revisioning Aesthetic Education,* 110.

[215]For more on this thesis, see Joseph Kupfer's article, "Aesthetic Experience and Moral Education."

[216]Granger, *John Dewey, Robert Pirsig,* 110.

[217]Dewey, LW1, 30.

a sensitiveness to "crude experience," our purported knowledge is but empty shells, our habits but meaningless motions.

In *Human Nature and Conduct*, Dewey goes so far as to characterize habits themselves as arts. "Habits are arts"[218] means our habits are responsive to the aesthetics of experience. Taken here, as I stated above, "responsive" means an intelligent awareness, and "aesthetics" means a sensitiveness to the primacy of experience. When Dewey writes "art," we can take him to again mean art *as* experience quite literally. It is easy to forget, but it must be stressed, that art is not elitist. Art is as practical as breathing, as taken here. It is as relevant for the factory worker as for the global leader. To the extent that we believe, as Dewey does and as I do, that growth is a realizable aim for every human being, art is part of that process. Art applied to habits means in the midst of the "doing and undergoing"[219] of our everyday lives, we are aesthetically attuned to experience, sensitive and responsive, artfully adapting and re-adapting our habits.

Because of its centrality to how we live our lives, art is an indispensable (and too often dispensed) part of education. Art as experience is unique in the way it impacts us; it challenges us to attend the world in different ways.[220] It disrupts our habits, our outlooks, and our beliefs. Art casts light on the everyday, making it unfamiliar and new. Granger puts it poetically: "In making the ordinary appear extra-ordinary, the arts make us aware of the limitations" of our habit-making life.[221] The *value* of art is not in the object itself, but in the experience it generates. Dewey reminds us that just because we have become habituated to seeing art as objects does not mean it has to be so: this commonsensical

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[218]Dewey, MW14, 16.

[219]Dewey, LW10, 51, 53, 54, 59, 69, 166, 218, 269.

[220]Granger, *John Dewey, Robert Pirsig,* 106.

[221]Granger, *John Dewey, Robert Pirsig,* 4.

notion is unfounded.[222] Rather, we must become attentive to the art that marks our everyday lives. As an example, we can look back to *Democracy and Education*, where Dewey characterizes communication as a form of art. Dialogue, in exposing us to the views and experiences of others, forces us to contend with difference (e.g., when we truly develop a habit of listening and reflecting on what is being said, we have to reconstruct our beliefs in response). Through the art of dialogue, we become aware of assumptions that have led us astray or habits of thinking that have shut us off from understanding others.

Amelie Rorty illustrates another example in her essay, "The Ethics of Reading: A Traveler's Guide." She shows how an awareness of our habits of reading can lead to better reading habits. If we habitually approach a text in a certain way, she encourages us to question that way. Much like a walker at a fork in the road, Rorty asks, have you tried the other route? She encourages an openness to multiple possible readings and asks us to develop a reflective awareness of our reading habits, to construct better habits—and these in the end are not just habits for reading: "The difficult art of balancing fairness with self-protection, attentive respect with severity of judgment, seriousness with playfulness is the essence of an enlightened ethical life. It is a condition for a just and decent society. Learning to read well is on the way to learning to live well."[223] With our agency in the development of our habits, we keep a conscious eye to the person we seek to become. This is reflective awareness coupled with a conscious aim and requires an artful sensitiveness to experience and intelligent reflection on such experiences.

These two examples, the artful habits of communication and the artful habits of reading, show how certain habits allow us to be open to experience, open to seeing things

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[222] See Granger, *John Dewey, Robert Pirsig*, 105.

[223]Rorty, "The Ethics of Reading: A Traveler's Guide."

anew, freshly, and poised for growth.[224] When we reject the aesthetics of immediate experience, our habits become blinders to *what is really happening*. Dewey writes, "Art throws off the covers that hide the expressiveness of experienced things: it quickens us from the slackness of routine" and allows us to experience life more fully, richly, delightfully.[225] Philip Jackson writes, much to the same point, that arts "expand our horizons."[226] Moreover, Dewey writes quite strongly that "any derogation" of the primacy of sensed and immediate experience, "whether practical or theoretical [derogation], is at once effect and cause of a narrowed and dulled life experience."[227] In short, our knowledge quickly loses its experiential mooring, and connectedness, if we separate it from our immediate experience understood through the aesthetic lens characterized here.[228]

A way to keep in check the security of the theoretical and embrace the uncertainty of immediate experience is spontaneity. Being spontaneous is an ability. It requires a cultivated sense of openness and a sensitiveness to immediate experience. Spontaneity as cultivated may sound like a paradox, yet it is the ability to draw intelligently on impulses and sense material.[229] Whereas children may be naturally spontaneous, as we move into

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[224]Granger, "Towards an Embodied Poetics of the Self: Personal Renewal in Dewey and Cavell," 109.

[225]Dewey, LW10, 110.

[226]Jackson, *Lessons of Art*, 33.

[227]Dewey, LW10, 23.

[228]Art as "ordinary experience protects us" from losing sight of what is of value and of our knowledge. (Dewey, LW1, 26).

[229]This thesis is very different from Aristotle's virtuous life, which Kristjánsson describes as having the "aim of managing our emotional life with intelligence" ("Habituated Reason Aristotle and the 'Paradox of Moral Education,'" 2). For Dewey, we cultivate an openness to spontaneity that allows us to break from fix forms. Relying on fixed forms is a mark of the over intellectualization of our time, which, as described earlier, problematically ignores the pre-reflective and non-reflective elements of understanding. We reflect, as Dewey sees it, on our

adulthood, remaining so requires practice. Briefly, I will offer accounts of impulse and of sense material respectively.

Impulses here comprise one type of primary experience; they are "primitive, yet loose, undirected, initial."[230] Since impulses are "gut reactions," they often surprise us in the way they deviate from our normal behavior. Impulses are "the pivots upon which the re-organization of activities turn."[231] Impulses, the result of chance, can afford "imagination and invention."[232] A self who is attuned to sense material is spontaneous. For Dewey, sense material includes "the sensory, the sensational, the sensitive, the sensible, and the sentimental, along with the sensuous. It includes almost everything from bare physical and emotional shock to sense itself." Sense material *is* "the meaning of things present in immediate experience."[233] Our senses are how we "participate directly in the on-goings of the world" about us.[234]

An individual who embraces spontaneity is attuned to qualitative elements of experience—he senses problems and potential. The spontaneous self, sensitive to the sense material of immediate experience, draws on intelligence and organizes her impulses in an effort to solve a problem in view. These last two ideas highlight the role that secondary experience plays—intelligence activities like problem solving and organizing—in making immediate experience enriching. In the remainder of the chapter,

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primary experiences as the source of meaning and understanding, and such experiences inform our habits, problems to be solved, and possibility. For Aristotle, who may be open to experience, but still seeks to fit experience into fixed forms, relying on the intellectual over the aesthetic.

[230]Dewey, MW14, 91.

[231]Dewey, MW14, 68.

[232]Dewey, LW10, 23. Dewey continues, the "unity of sense and impulse, of brain and eye and ear," allows humankind to "saturate" life with "the conscious meanings derived from communication and deliberate expression."

[233]Dewey, LW10, 22.

[234]Dewey, LW10, 22.

I address secondary experience. For heuristic purposes, this previous section focused on immediate experience, spontaneity, and sense material. These elements of primary experience are intimately intertwined with secondary experience, characterized by intelligent decision-making, actions, and reflections, as the rest of the chapter elucidates.

The Intellectual Dimension of Dynamic Habits

To be of value for learning and living, habits must be "intelligently developed and flexibly responsible."[235] Intelligence here is not a matter of genes; it is part of being human, alive, and perceiving the world. It is a "shorthand designation for great and ever-growing methods of observation, experimentation, and reflective reasoning."[236] If we draw on our intelligence and cultivate spontaneity, we find new routes in our primary experience, allowing us to live and learn richly and fully. In our "primary experience there are always potentialities which are not explicit" to which we must be open.[237] Our secondary experience allows us to make use of and grow from immediate experience. Dewey writes, "Knowledge has a function and office in bettering and enriching the subject-matters of crude experience,"[238] that is, our intelligence tells us *what to make of* our primary experience.

Let us take the example of our impulses, which, according to Dewey, are best when drawn upon intelligently. This means they are not acted upon immediately. Though impulses "are the agencies of deviation, for giving new directions to old habits and

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[235]Dewey, MW14, 91.

[236]Dewey, MW12, 258.

[237]Dewey, MW12, 258.

[238]Dewey, LW1, 30.

changing their quality,"[239] they do not always take us in directions we ultimately decide are good, and so we curb them. Dewey writes that while "all conduct springs ultimately and radically out of native instincts and impulses,"[240] one of the offices of education is helping us learn to make use of our impulses intelligently. Specifically, impulse is best when "reflection upon the way in which to use impulse to renew disposition and reorganize habit" is turned to first.[241] Reflection, discussed more fully at the end of this chapter, is a kind of intelligent response. Reflecting on our impulses ensures that we do not become whim to them in reckless, haphazard, and disconnected ways. In terms of education, teachers come to know the impulses of students at each age of development "in order to know what to appeal to and what to build on."[242] Denying the role of impulses in education, as Dewey maintains in *Human Nature and Conduct*, is one of the greatest mistakes of education.

More generally, intelligence helps us call into our awareness habits we can modify or renew in changing contexts. Dewey writes that habit "does not make allowance for change of conditions," and so intelligence is a critical part of adapting.[243] Habit, apart from intelligence, "often leads astray, or comes between a person and the successful performance of his task."[244] Thus, observing, reflecting, and experimenting, for example, are habits in of themselves that allow individuals to make use of their experiences to inform future conduct. For example, when there is construction blocking our way, we have to devise another route to arrive at our bus stop. If we attempt to go the same way,

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[239]Dewey, MW14, 68.

[240]Dewey, MW4, 47.

[241]Dewey, MW14, 118.

[242]Dewey, MW4, 47.

[243]Dewey, MW9, 350.

[244]Dewey, MW9, 350.

thoughtlessly, we fail: "Habits deprived of thought and thought which is futile are two sides of the same fact."[245] Intelligence, as characterized by experimenting, requires observing, reflecting, modifying, and developing new habits and altering old ones in light of changing circumstances.[246]

Intelligence is important because we tend to grow comfortable with habits that work well and so stop thinking about them. Yet, "no matter how good" the habit is, environments change slightly or drastically, requiring nuanced or significant modifications.[247] Dewey offers the example of leaving out buckets of water.[248] If you leave water outside in buckets and you have a mosquito problem, it is intelligent for you to question this habit of leaving water out. Intelligence is characterized by experimenting: once having settled on the aim of eliminating the mosquitoes from your front porch, you try bringing the buckets inside and note the disappearance of mosquitoes. You take action and subsequently stop leaving water out. In the example of the mosquitoes, you respond to the environment. If the environment changes again (there was an upcoming drought and you need to collect water), your actions would again change. Your habits interact with knowledge (in this case of the upcoming drought) and intelligence (you will need water in the times ahead).

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[245]Dewey, MW14, 50.

[246]Dewey, MW14, 42.

[247]Phrase pulled from full quote: "Hence the work of intelligence in observing consequences and in revising and readjusting habits, even the best of good habits, can never be forgone" (Dewey, MW14, 39). A perfect, infallible, fixed habit is rare "in a changing world [where] old habits must perforce need modification, no matter how good they have been" (Dewey, MW14, 42).

[248]Dewey, MW9, 109.

Dynamic Habits as Sources of Freedom

Intelligence and impulse are two sides of the coin of freedom, where freedom, as defined here, is the ability to intelligently and artfully engage in the process of reconstructing habits in a necessarily uncertain world. Rebecca Aldrich and Malcolm Cutchin say it well in their article: Dewey "defined freedom as a person's power to act within the conduits outlined by his or her habits."[249] Freedom, then, is an individual's ability to reflect critically on his habits and modify them. Reconstructing and modifying habits, we can recall, require a close balance between intelligence and immediate experience.[250] The idea of freedom as the continuous reconstruction of habits recalls Montaigne and his description of himself as always forming. Dewey says freedom is an "enjoyment of the 'fruits of association' that occurs with the secure release and fulfillment of personal potentialities which takes place only in rich manifold association with others."[251] Also recall Montaigne and his always-learning, always-becoming approach to both himself and the varied and diverse experiences of those around him. For both Dewey and Montaigne, it is fair to say, freedom is quite simply an ability to grow.

It might seem that developing habits allows us to be free in that once we have learned a habit, we are free to do other things. William James takes up this view in his book, *Principles of Psychology*:

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[249]Aldrich and Cutchin, "Dewey's Concepts of Embodiment, Growth, and Occupation: Extended Bases for a Transactional Perspective," 16.

[250]William Earl Brownson, in *John Dewey's Concept of Habit and the Dynamics of Growth*, makes a similar claim. He writes, "Dewey uses 'habit' as distinguished from impulse and intelligence, the three of which function within a dynamic triad." Brownson goes onto argue that habit for Dewey is primarily meant to function "as an integrative concept, serving to provide a viable conception of the unity of human behavior as well as to tie Dewey's theory of human behavior to the 'experiential' and transaction ontology" he sees as central to Dewey's project. (47)

[251]Dewey, LW2, 330.

> For this we must make automatic and habitual, as early as possible, as many useful actions as we can, and guard against the growing into ways that are likely to be disadvantageous to us, as we should guard against the plague. The more of the details of our daily life we can hand over to the effortless custody of automatism, the more our higher powers of mind will be set free for their own proper work.[252]

James here offers a seemingly commonsensical view of habits: once we have trained our self and an activity becomes habitual, we can spend our time thinking about other things. It seems, though, that we have to disagree with James here, for, in fact, we cannot guard ourselves in this way. We cannot stave off the reality that we must constantly adapt, and even the best of habits, like walking, must be re-learned or modified in new situations, like when wearing high-heeled shoes or walking through flooded walkways. As Victor Kestenbaum notes, "It was Dewey, not James, who saw that habit is not merely conservative but also intentional: it creates and sustains meaning on a pre-reflective, pre-objective level of experience."[253] In Dewey's view, our language, culture, professional practices, and personal relations fluctuate, requiring us to adapt. And so while we develop many habits that carry us through out daily lives, in education we must teach "as early as possible" the capacity to think reflectively and intelligently (i.e., secondary habits) on our habits and modify and renew them as needed (i.e., dynamic habit). *This* is freedom. In this way, we guard against individual close-mindedness and societal stagnation "as we should guard against the plague."

It is true, though, that once a habit, or a route, has been formed, the habit allows for a certain kind of freedom. To return to the example from the prologue, the teacher does not have to bite his tongue when he calls on students and waits for them to answer. A habit only remains freeing, though, if it can be reconstructed. Developing a habit of patience with one's students so as not to interrupt them when they are answering a

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[252]James, *Principles of Psychology*, 126-127.

[253]Kestenbaum, *The Grace and Severity of the Ideal*, 3.

question can be example of a "dynamic route" we can form. Yet, though it may sound like an indisputably "good" habit, it must remain available to call into question again. There are times when the teacher may give orders, make demands, interrupt, and ask no one to speak, such as in the case of an emergency or for some other circumstantial reason.

Bad habits, setting aside habits deemed morally problematic, are habits we thoughtlessly and rigidly adhere to. Dewey writes, "Routine habits are unthinking habits; 'bad' habits are habits so severed from reason that they are opposed to the conclusions of conscious deliberation and decision."[254] For example, if we come to believe we cannot do something well, like math, we may allow ourselves to become so habituated to this view of ourselves that we recoil from everyday arithmetic, like calculating a tip. We become fixed in our thinking. Dewey writes, "The phrase may mean powers so well established that their possessor always has them as resources when needed. But the phrase is also used to mean ruts, routine ways, with loss of freshness, open-mindedness, and originality."[255] That is, while we can cultivate certain practices, like listening, which, when firmly established, are productive, these practices are ones we developed thoughtfully and intentionally and are ones that remain available for reconstruction when circumstances demand.

Let us turn to another example. Someone who has taken on learning a complex task, like playing an instrument, knows it is challenging.[256] Time and practice are required to re-direct old tracks to allow for the new activity (e.g., how he uses his fingers on the instrument). Even when a choice is made to learn the instrument, the choice is not made in a vacuum. The notes that are played depend on the individual's experience, the environment, aims, and his growing facility with the activity. Practice and time are the

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[254]Dewey, MW9, 54.

[255]Dewey, MW9, 54.

[256]There are, of course, easier tasks to learn, for example, how to vacuum the floor.

process of forming new routes. A musician after years training has learned the math and artistry of music. He has deeply ingrained habits that are physical and mental, but he also ideally has the ability to freshly imagine ways of performing and playing. His habits of hearing and noticing, for example, allow him to spontaneously and intelligently incorporate impulse in such a way that it informs activity.

The interplay between habit and spontaneity is an illustration of the characterization of habits as arts. Dewey writes, "Habit as a vital art depends upon the animation of habit by impulse, only this inspiriting stands between habit and stagnation."[257] By this, Dewey means that the ability to draw on impulse ensures that our habits do not become fixed forms, stagnating. The musician, then, is always balancing between immediate experience and his rational reflection, understandings, and choices. While playing, the musician can rely on habits and be simultaneously present, spontaneous, as he "directs technique" [258] in the process of creating of music. Even a musician who plays the same beautiful piece of music every night is perceptive to the circumstance, the environment, and variations in texture and sound as he is performing. That is, the musician is minutely modifying and renewing habits in the process of playing. On the one hand, he is divested of the worry of figuring out how to play the instrument. On the other hand, his very habit is dynamic and responsive, allowing him to perform and pioneer new routes: "The intelligent or artistic habit is the desirable thing, and the routine the undesirable thing."[259] The habit is dynamic, or "flexible, sensitive,"[260] which means even good, repeated habits must be available to change.

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[257]Dewey, MW14, 119.

[258]Dewey, MW14, 119.

[259]Dewey, MW14, 52.

[260]Dewey, MW14, 52.

The musician's habits allow for a freedom to perform. He calls his habits into awareness as he reconstructs them: an interplay of spontaneity and intelligence. We can imagine the musician as almost in dialogue with his habits. The idea of a dialogue points to an important distinction about the self and habits. In some essential way, habits are part of *who we are*. However, even though Dewey writes that habit "has a hold on us because we are habit," we have to agree that this is too simplistic of a formulation.[261] Habits become *part* of who I am as I take them up and practice them, but they are not *the totality of who* I am. There are elements of the conscious, existential self that *is not habit,* though, of course, such a self informs the formation of habits. So while habits of choice do define the self, the self is much too complex to be reduced. Because our self is complex, one of reverie and memory, and transfiguring moments that influence a lifetime, we are able to imagine freely beyond the confines of our currently held habits. In terms of the musician, beyond habits, there is the person who is aware, full of fear, hope, memories, and dreams. We can recall Montaigne, who said there is much we can understand about ourselves, and there is much we cannot: music is a great testament to the ineffability of the human soul.

Just as we are not merely our habits, our habits, apart from us, are not *thinking*. Dewey writes that habit "does not, of itself, know, for it does not of itself stop to think, observe or remember."[262] The *person* thinks, observes, and reflects. Our world is marked by flux, and so "flexible, sensitive" habits, or dynamic habits, are not ideals, but necessary. Whether we are musicians responding to an environment, an individual seeking to get rid of a mosquito problem, or a teacher returning each day to his students, our reflections allow us to grow in diverse, varied experience.

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[261]Dewey, MW14, 24.

[262]Dewey, MW14, 177.

Along with immediate experience and intelligence, there is a third critical component of dynamic habits: reflection. Aldrich and Cutchin write, "The need to reflect upon the functional coordination of habits arises in response to the inherently uncertain world."[263] The thinking, observing, *and reflection* comprise the catalyst for the reconstruction of habits. An uncertain world coupled with reflection is what makes growth possible. The role of reflection, and as part of it deliberation, is the final topic for this chapter.

Dynamic Habits and the Central Role of Reflection

Dewey notes that there is a desire by educators, theorists, and administrators to create a comprehensive list of skills students must be taught; we can easily look around us to see that this desire is still strong today. While there is no all-encompassing list, as Dewey maintains in *How We Think*, we can say some general practices are always worth developing. Dewey writes, "While we cannot learn or be taught to think, we do have to learn *how* to think well, especially *how* to acquire the general habit of reflecting."[264] One of the most useful strategies in learning how to think, as Dewey points out, is reflecting. In order to teach reflection and habits of thinking to students, teachers must understand the link between thinking and experience. Moreover, by developing habits of reflection as part of thinking, students are encouraged to make meaning of their *own* experiences.

Understanding thinking and reflection is a nuanced business. Thinking and reflection are quite specific. The *way* we think and what and how we reflect vary depending on whether we are a second grade student, a mathematician, or a cook.[265] The

[263]Aldrich and Cutchin, "Dewey's Concepts of Embodiment, Growth, and Occupation," 16.

[264]Dewey, LW8, 140.

[265]Dewey, LW8, 150.

way we set goals and our methods for observing, modifying, and renewing vary, too, depending on the task at hand. Dewey writes, "It is desirable that the teacher should rid herself of the notion that 'thinking' is a single, unalterable faculty [rather…] he should recognize that it is a term denoting the various ways in which things acquire significance for the individual; and that individuals differ." [266] Dewey concludes, "Thinking is specific."[267] Thinking ranges from reverie to systemic thinking, thoughtlessness to imagination. Moreover, we cannot be prescriptive in exactly how a person should think. Rather, as I argue here, we can examine the kinds of habits that support thinking.

Reflection is a type of thinking. Moreover, the "general habit of reflecting" is central to thinking "well,"[268] as Dewey puts it. I define reflection as the act of thinking about one's experiences in such a way that those experiences can inform future decisions, desires, thinking, and acting. As we saw with the example of the mosquitoes earlier and the example of the teacher seeking to learn the habit of patience in the Prologue, reflection is often the beginning of the modification and renewal of our intellectual and ethical habits. Not all our habits begin to change with reflection—habits can also be changed by immediate pressing necessity, impulse, or unconsciously—but reflection is an important way to change habits. For example, the teacher, having deemed his habit of interrupting harmful, can begin the process of cultivating a habit of patience and a habit of awareness. Through reflection, we identify the habits worth judging. The teacher may realize that his students have imitated his behavior and interrupt each other frequently while speaking. He may decide the culture of the classroom should be otherwise. So whereas the teacher may not have been aware of the habit of interrupting to begin with,

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[266]Dewey, LW8, 148.

[267]Dewey, LW8, 148.

[268]Dewey, LW8, 148.

once he is, he is able to judge it through reflection and undergo the process of modifying it. A teacher's time reflecting initiates the process of modifying and reconstructing habits.

There are a number of considerations when it comes to reflection. First, reflection is meaning-making. "What avail is it to win prescribed amounts of information about geography and history," Dewey writes, "if in the process the individual loses his own soul: loses his appreciation of things worthwhile, of the values to which these things are relative; if he loses desire to apply what he has learned and, above all, loses the ability to extract meaning from his future experiences as they occur? "[269] Reflection is essentially, then, the "ability to extract meaning" from experience and make it valuable by applying it to something at hand or some future situation. Reflecting allows us to judge the "value" of things that are "worthwhile." Reflection allows us, in essence, to learn. To learn, we must take the time to reflect. And reflection takes time. It is much easier to jump to conclusions, but reflection demands that we engage in the "act of hunting, inquiring."[270] By relying on fixed answers, we succumb to "mental sloth, torpor, impatience to get something settled."[271] Thus, reflective inquiry is the mark of intelligence and requires a "willing[ness] to endure suspense and to undergo the trouble of searching."[272]

There is another consideration too: Reflection can be delightful, leisurely, and noncommittal. Reflection, however, cannot take the place of decisive action; "men who devote themselves to thinking are likely to be unusually unthinking in some respects."[273] Rather, thinking and reflecting is one informant to choice-making and action-taking, where not making a choice or taking action is a choice and action in and of itself.

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[269]Dewey, LW13, 30.

[270]Dewey, LW8, 16.

[271]Dewey, LW8, 16.

[272]Dewey, LW8, 16.

[273]Dewey, MW14, 138.

Somewhere between the two extremes of not reflecting at all and reflecting too much falls the proper place of reflection.

Though reflection is undoubtedly important in schools, it has been difficult for educators to understand exactly how to introduce and sustain reflective practices. Carol Rodgers, a teacher educator, writes in her article, "Defining Reflection: Another Look at John Dewey and Reflective Thinking,"[274] "If a teacher wants to think reflectively about or inquire into her practice, what does she do first? How does she know if she is getting better at doing it? To what should she aspire?"[275] Rodgers stresses in her piece that clear terms allow teachers to more intentionally practice reflection. Understanding reflection, as Rogers also points out, allows researchers to assess the effects of reflection on teaching and learning. She writes, "An inherent risk in an imprecise picture of reflection is that, in an age where measurable, observable learning takes priority, it is easily dismissed precisely because no one knows what to look for, or worse, it is reduced to a checklist of behaviors." Rogers highlights the importance of understanding reflection as a thick term that is precise but not simple, clear but not formulaic.

I agree with Rogers, though, as I discuss in the Conclusion, I believe beyond clear terms, that an environment that supports such reflection and models both what reflection looks like and what acting on the fruits of one's reflections looks like is an important part of learning to reflect, critically and dynamically. The environment could be one that allows for time to reflect. Such models could be peers, seasoned teachers, and could be teacher accounts, and narratives, like the Rorty piece referenced above, that prod readers into reflection.

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[274] Carol Rodgers, "Defining Reflection: Another Look at John Dewey and Reflective Thinking," *Teachers College Record* v. 104 no. 4, 2002, p. 842-866. URL: http://www.tcrecord.org.

[275]Rodgers, Carol. "Defining Reflection," URL: http://www.tcrecord.org.

The Effect of Attitudes on Habits

Reflection, as I stated above, is the act of thinking about one's experiences in such a way that those experiences can inform future decisions. Generally speaking, we can understand reflection as the way we make meaning of our experiences. The way we reflect is related to our attitude as we reflect, that is, one way of reflecting on our actions with an eye toward others is to cultivate certain attitudes. We can be closed or open in our attitude, all-knowing or humble. We can think the worst of others or, sometimes just as problematically, the best of others. The habitual way we tend to look at the world in our reflections becomes an attitude that influences the conclusions or the direction our reflecting takes. For Dewey, whole-heartedness, directness, open-mindedness, and responsibility open the individual up to being enriched by reflection and experience.[276] Dewey describes attitudes or "personal disposition[s]" as critical to "better" thinking.[277] Cultivating attitudes is both learned and a practice and requires understanding the value of the outlook rationally. That is, we cannot be taught to mechanically develop a habit of, for example, open-mindedness.[278] Rather, through dialogue and experience with others, we come to see its value and in turn value our cultivation of the attitude.

The attitudes Dewey describes are both ethical and intellectual in their orientation. These attitudes are also aesthetic in their orientation. Above we mentioned the attitude of open-mindedness. We can recall the early discussion in this chapter of aesthetics as a sensitiveness to immediate experience and spontaneity as a cultivated openness to impulse and experience. Another way of thinking of this open-mindedness, spontaneity, and sensitiveness is Dewey's term "cultivated naiveté." Dewey advocates for cultivated

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[276] Dewey, LW8, 113.

[277] Dewey, LW8, 113.

[278] Dewey writes of open-mindedness: "Open-mindedness means retention of the childlike attitude; closed-mindedness means premature intellectual old age." Dewey, MW9, 183.

naiveté as an attitude his readers should take toward his work; it is an ability to "divest ourselves of the intellectual habits we take on and wear when we assimilate the culture of our own time and place."[279] It is the process of inspecting those habits "critically to see what they are made of and what wearing them does to us."[280] Cultivated naiveté, like spontaneity, is a kind of sensitiveness *and* reflectiveness to immediate experiences. Reflectiveness, an element of secondary experience, includes the difficult work of divestment and critical inspection. We are divesting specifically "the intellectual habits we take on and wear." Though reflection is the moment the cognitive element enters, we must recall Dewey's words: "When intellectual experience and its material are taken to be primary, the cord that binds experience and nature is cut."[281] Cultivated naiveté helps position us in our reflection and thinking to *value* the import of immediate experience.

The concept of cultivated naiveté, as Dewey articulates it, is very helpful for understanding dynamic habits. Cultivated naiveté is a habit of understanding where our habits come from and, as Dewey says, what they do to us. Developing a habit of standing back and looking at the habits that compose our environment, our culture, and our customs is a monumental task. It is difficult because habits constitute our environment in the sense that culture is the composition of habits carried on from one generation to the next. In a fixed authoritarian society, there is no encouragement to reconstruct habits and culture. Ways of doing things and ways of thinking are rigidly passed down.[282] Habits are acquired through training; *there are no* dynamic habits in place to allow for the cultivated naiveté that is the catalyst for change and growth, conflict, and resolution.

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[279]Dewey, LW1, 31.

[280]Dewey, LW1, 41.

[281]Dewey, LW1, 30.

[282]In conversation, David Granger points out how "debilitating choice (freedom) can be for people whose habits were formed by relative rigidity in the environment (e.g., the culture of school reform)."

Becoming "aware" of our habits is an important first step in developing dynamic habits. Dewey writes that though "all of us have many habits of whose import we are quite unaware, since they were formed without our knowing what we were about," we need to "become aware of what [habits] accomplish, and pass judgment upon the worth of the results"[283] so that we can take an active role in forming and reconstructing our habits. We "pass judgment upon the worth of the result" on habits that have been called to our attention.

Dynamic habits are habits that are constructed and reconstructed, for example, in light of conflict and interactions with others. These types of habits are quite clearly the backbone of a democratic society, but also essential in education.[284] Learning how to think critically about, as Dewey said, "culture of our own time and place" is essential for being initiated into a shared life in education followed by such a life in a democracy, which is, as Dewey said, "a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience."[285] Thinking critically may illuminate issues of social justice and hidden curriculums, but having developed habits of inquiry, reflection, problem solving, and, as the next chapter shows, a moral self, individuals and societies, teachers and students can begin to truly live a democratic life. Schools, as cornerstones of the very idea of democracy in the ideal sense, are the locus of teaching and learning the habits supporting a rich democratic life based in dialogue and growth. Reflection that arises as an established custom "is capable of exercising the most revolutionary influence upon other customs."[286]

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[283]Dewey, MW9, 34-35.

[284]There is a good amount written on the habits of democratic society. For more on this see Stitzlein's "Habits of Democracy: A Deweyan Approach to Citizenship Education in America Today."

[285]Dewey, MW9, 94.

[286]Dewey, MW14, 57.

Deliberation and Dynamic Habits

There is another important dimension of reflection: deliberation. Deliberation is a kind of reflection, though the two terms are distinct. In reflection, the family of activities—observation, awareness, and perception—are all very important. In deliberation, the activity of imagination is critical. Imagining the various possibilities for how one might act is a kind of deliberation. That is, before acting, we can imagine in our head the effects of various decisions and weigh which ones offer up the best outcome. Excess of choice, according to Dewey, leads to deliberation, especially when the individual wants what is incompatible or problematic. Deliberation is an "experiment" in possible courses of action. Dewey continues, "It is an experiment in making various combinations of selected elements of habits and impulses, to see what the resultant action would be if it were entered upon."[287] In this way, we can see that deliberating is a creative and practical process that benefits from reflection, informs actions, and molds impulses into habits.

Imagination, or "dramatic rehearsal,"[288] as part of deliberation, "pictures an objective consequence of action which supplies an adequate stimulus and released definitive action."[289] Dramatic rehearsal is the imaginative process of envisioning that which is not. While imagination is freeing and enabling in the sense we can move out of the ruts of habituated activity and stale beliefs, it also comes with increased responsibility as we have to choose between more possible values and learn to reflect on them in each

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[287]Dewey, MW14, 134.

[288]Dewey, MW14, 133.

[289]Dewey, MW14, 135.

given situation.[290] Part of making sure those additional choices are promising ones requires that our imagined choices are imagined *well*. For Dewey, imagining well means drawing on the known world, past experiences, and present knowledge to construct a reasonable plan for future action. Dewey stipulates that responsibly imagining is closely related to what we observe and know; this gives our imaginings some foothold, both to assess the quality of what we have imagined and to bring the idea into fruition.

Most importantly, our imagination is a form of inquiry and deliberation; it "enables the search for ideas that can possibly reconstruct the situation."[291] In terms of our habits, imagination allows us to "search" for new ways of seeing and acting in our habit-making life with others. Reflection on our habits opens routes for us to inquire, imagine, and consider alternate choices and possibilities more deeply. Garrison notes the ways imaginative inquiry creates ways to modify the "routine" of our daily lives. Indeed the modification of the "routine" is a repeating "creative cycle" in light of experiences, increased knowledge, and shifting aims. [292]

Imagination, interestingly, is less aesthetic, as I defined aesthetic earlier in this chapter, and more intellectual, as it is a form of reflection, inquiry, and deliberation. As Garrison writes, "Imagination, for Dewey, explores alternative possibilities for action within a selected context of ongoing activity. Imagination enables the search for ideas that can possibly reconstruct the situation."[293] Imagination, then, is a cognitive element that funds deliberation; it allows us to draw on what we know and design values and possible solutions that may not, as of yet, be present.

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[290]Jim Garrison makes a similar point in *Dewey and Eros*: "Moreover, without imagination [there] cannot be moral. Morality means the capacity to choose as well as to assume responsibility for those values chosen" (Garrison 134).

[291]Garrison, *Dewey and Eros*, 96.

[292]Garrison, *Dewey and Eros*, 100.

[293]Garrison, *Dewey and Eros*, 96.

Aldrich and Cutchin note in their article that the act of deliberating is an important habit in and of itself. They write, "Humans must engage in a process of inquiry about their habits using 'dramatic rehearsal' in the imagination, testing and eventually selecting possible solutions [… the] response to problematic situations is itself a habit generated via associated living and is key to the survival of human beings."[294] Deliberation as a habit, then, is of particular importance given our state of "associated living." We can recall from Chapter I that our lives are marked by ethical considerations by dint of the fact that we live share lives. Deliberation paired with imagination allows us to create new routes when habitual ways of acting fail us or we are faced with conflict. Deliberation, in turn, is important for ethics. In preparing for the next chapter, I wish to stress that deliberation allows for new values and ways of acting and so is freeing from habituated forms of life. Garrison writes, "If reflective deliberation leads to the formation of better habits, then the result is moral growth."[295] In a shared life, which by definition is moral, such reconstruction and modification are, as Garrison says, moral.

Critiques of Dewey's View of Growth

Before I conclude, I would like to acknowledge critics of Dewey's term "growth" by summarizing criticisms and clarifying my own position. At the beginning of this chapter, I pre-supposed a general idea of dynamic habits as generative and foundational to education and growth. I carry this idea throughout the rest of the dissertation. Growth, as enriching, is an intellectual, moral, emotional, and imaginative process; habits are the flexible routes enriching life experience. Nevertheless, Dewey gestures to growth more widely beyond mere habits. Despite the positive and powerful rendering of growth

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[294]Aldrich and Cutchin, "Dewey's Concepts of Embodiment, Growth, and Occupation: Extended Bases for a Transactional Perspective," 16-17.

[295]Garrison, *Dewey and Eros*, 130.

Dewey offers, there are tension and unanswered questions in his concept, especially when applied more broadly to encompass human life. Dewey, who sees growth as the "only aim of education," is also seen to equivocate as to its meaning, and this has led to an active debate among contemporary philosophers of education.[296] Dewey is seen as too hopeful and positive in his view of growth[297] and too general to the point where there has been a "reactionary turn to moral absolutism" by his critics.[298] And while Kestenbaum[299] sees Dewey's positive conception of growth as an illustration of Dewey's romantic idealism, others find the hopefulness problematic (Rorty, Burbules, Arcilla) or at least in need of clarification (Saito). Burbules and Arcilla see a concerning omission of the tragic nature of education and life in the concept growth, whereas Burbules's claims that "every success is a failure" comes problematically close to the popular saying: "What doesn't hurt you makes you stronger," Rene Arcilla's view is more simply that tragedy leads us to act in ways "beyond the reach of pragmatist forms of justification."[300] Richard Rorty, adopting different language, argues that we would be better off with more critical realism (somewhere between pessimism and utopianism). Arcilla, Burbules, and Rorty can all be seen as advocating for more tragedy and realism in Dewey's account.

Saito, in response to these concerns, offers an account of growth using Stanley Cavell's concept of Emersonian Perfectionism. She argues that Dewey's term "growth has an Emersonian "sense of the attained and unattained perfection [that] accommodates

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[296]The author thanks Megan Laverty for raising this point and for initial discussions on the topic.

[297]Naoko Saito, "Education's Hope: Transcending the Tragic with Emerson, Dewey, and Cavell." *Philosophy of Education Archive* (2003): 182.

[298]Saito, "Education's Hope," 182.

[299]Kestenbaum, *The Grace and Severity of the Ideal*, 2002.

[300]For further reading, see Saito's illustration of the debate in "Education's Hope," 183.

loss, limitation, or failure—as much as gain, possibility and success—[and that is] an integral parts of the human condition."[301] Nevertheless, despite Saito's affinity for Cavell's account, Cavell himself views Dewey's project of growth as too methodological, even scientific, to fully appreciate "a circumstance of spiritual disorder."[302] To this Kestenbaum responds: Invoking the Greek term *paideia* and, using Dewey's statement that "every case of consciousness is dramatic," he argues that Dewey embraces both pragmatism and transcendentalism, turbulence and hope, in his account of growth. The truth of this view, Kestenbaum maintains, can be seen both in Dewey's inward reflections and outward views.

I choose to embrace Dewey's view of growth as neither romantically idealistic or scientific and instrumental, but rather situated in observation and imagination, between ends-in-views and realism. As such, Dewey's view of growth is useful for articulating the enriching possibility of the habit-making life. When it comes to habits, despite the positive notion of growth, "there is no denying it: loss is a part of the natural rhythm of expansive growth."[303] Moreover, growth is not "cumulative," and so it is not a "paradox" to say that loss is part of growth.[304] We bring things with us, skills and experiences, and we let other things recede, challenges and troubles. It is not a linear progression. Rather, as our lives continue on, we inevitably experience more and understand more. We become attuned and adaptive to the changing conditions of our environment as a result of increased awareness, experience, and understanding.

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[301]Saito, "Education's Hope," 185.

[302]Victor Kestenbaum, "Dewey, *Paideia*, and Turbulence," 13.

[303]Garrison, *Dewey and Eros*, 47.

[304]Garrison, *Dewey and Eros*, 48.

Conclusion

In seeking to understand dynamic habits, it is important that we do not turn to create a rigid prescriptive list. While teachers may aim to improve their practice and the learning of their students, the answer is not to create goals we thoughtlessly repeat (e.g., every morning I will start my class with fifteen minutes of reflective writing). The risk is, as Dewey writes, that "an educational enterprise [might] end merely in substituting one rigidity for another." Rather than turn to a new set of rigid tracks purportedly aimed at success, we can continue to cultivate "flexibly responsive"[305] routes formed intelligently and reflectively. The reflective, intelligently responsive, and aesthetic dimensions of dynamic habits are pillars of an education where individuals learn to think and share a life with others. As pillars of education, the analysis and inquiry into dynamic habits provide theoretical underpinnings to new pedagogical practices for teachers to teach, practice, and learn dynamic habits in their classroom. What precisely such a classroom would look like is not the question. As Dewey writes, "It is not necessary for adults to have a formulated definite ideal of some better state."[306] We cannot be bogged down in ideals, but rather must look to examples and initiate the practice. The next two chapters offer such examples.

In this chapter, I drew on Dewey's work on secondary experience and reflection to understand the term *dynamic habits*. I believe the term clarifies how secondary habits are useful in education. If teachers are to teach dynamic habits and students are to learn such habits, a clear understanding of habits is needed. If researchers are to research and design programs to teach dynamic habits, a nuanced understanding of the adaptive nature of such habits is necessary. Without such knowledge, our work is not only haphazard but could even have detrimental effects. With a clarified understanding of primary and

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[305]Dewey, MW14, 91.

[306]Dewey, MW14, 91.

secondary experience, a pedagogical project to learn and teach habits differently can begin.

Chapter IV

TOWARD A NEW CONCEPTION OF TEACHING: ETHICS AND THE HABIT-MAKING LIFE

In this chapter, I offer an analysis of the place of dynamic habits in becoming a teacher and sustaining oneself in the practice.[307] Administrators and policymakers, due to concerning attrition rates of K-12 teachers, have increased the emphasis on teacher accountability. Recent teacher accountability schemes emphasize fixed habits: e.g., ten habits of successful classroom management and six habits to grade efficiently that emphasize un-reflective routines that are easily measurable and facilitate assessment. Mechanisms such as increased teacher assessment and high-stakes testing teaching methods all rely on a "one-track" approach, where the belief is that the same methods and habits can be replicated across countless teachers and students to achieve the same outcome. As statistics and testimonies show, a one-track approach fails. Moreover, as a result of the failure, society and individuals become disillusioned with the way education is provided and with student outcomes. Fixed approaches are unable to contend with shifting realities and do not reflect an understanding of human life. Human life is diverse and, as such, demands intelligent and ethical observation and analysis.

I contend that a way to move away from the combination of cynicism and oversimplification that marks educational reform is to offer a different view of habits and

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[307]Echoes Chris Higgins in "Teaching and the Good Life: A Critique of the Ascetic Ideal in Education." *Educational Theory* 53, no. 2 (June 1, 2003).

its role in teaching in the form of an account of dynamic habits. We have come to understand dynamic habits as flexible frameworks supporting ends-in-views, in Dewey's terms.[308] Habits of reflection, observation, thinking, and deliberation begin the modification and renewal process of habits that is a flexible and imaginative process. So while our habits are often thought of as rigid and fixed tracks of thoughtless repetition, I argue that habits, the structural frameworks of our everyday lives, can also be routes that enrich life's experiences.

Cultivating dynamic habits can constitute a reliable way for teachers to enact in practice their philosophies of education. This dissertation's focus on habits is based on the recognition that a great part of teaching is routine and determined by culture and tradition (or mandates and standards), even amidst the variability of students, classrooms, and teachers. As such, there are many habits teachers take for granted, and necessarily so, but there are times when a teacher's habits are called into question, they are no longer quite right, or in a new context they no longer serve a purpose or meet the outcome a teacher has imagined. Minor shifts are ideally always underway as teachers notice, think, and reflect. In such situations, teachers enact new and modified habits. As we saw with the example in the Prologue, a beginning teacher, under the pressure of time, may constantly interrupt students in order to move the lesson forward. He may, in turn, notice the lowered morale and levels of engagement. As a response, after reflecting on the situation, he may seek to develop a habit of patience and a habit of modeling answers to questions. More gravely, as I examine in this chapter, a teacher may realize that their very conception of what it means to be a teacher is unattainable in the current condition. Lastly, more positively as I examine, an African American teacher working with

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[308]For more on ends-in-view and habits see W.R. Hildreth, "Reconstructing Dewey on Power," *Political Theory* 37 no. 6 (2009): 789 and Jeffrey Dennis Turner, "Moral Inquiry, The Virtues, and Pluralism: McIntyre's Deweyan and Wittgenstinein Roots," *University of South Carolina UMI Dissertations Publishing*, (2006): 115.

predominantly White colleagues can seek to continuously reconstruct habits of teaching and being with her students in ways that are culturally her own and pedagogically powerful.[309]

Teacher Attrition Rates Today: Conversations and Accounts

Today many beginning teachers are leaving the profession after one or two years. In 2003, up to 25 percent of beginning teachers left teaching before their third year, and almost 40 percent left the profession within the first five years of teaching.[310] Numerous studies have sought to address why so many teachers leave so quickly. When pushed to the brink, when material resources are exhausted or never materialize, and when a sense of purpose is buried and irretrievable, the question "How should I teach?" also becomes a question of "How should I live?" The answer teachers find at times to "how to live" too often is: "not teaching."[311]

There is an active dialogue in the field of philosophy of education about the disturbingly high attrition rates of teachers. Doris Santoro distinguishes teacher burnout from demoralization, where both terms result in teachers leaving the profession, and the latter occurs when the moral fulfillment a teacher sought is no longer accessible given

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[309] Richard H. Milner and Anita Woolfolk Hoy. "A Case Study of an African American Teacher's Self-Efficacy, Stereotype Threat, and Persistence." *Teaching and Teacher Education* 19, no. 2 (February 2003): 263–76.

[310]See Thomas M. Smith and Richard M. Ingersoll, "What Are the Effects of Induction and Mentoring on Beginning Teacher Turnover?" *American Educational Research Journal* 41, no. 3 (2004): 681-714; Mei-Lin Chang's, "An Appraisal Perspective of Teacher Burnout: Examining the Emotional Work of Teachers," *Education Psychology Review* 21, n, 3 (2009): 193-218.

[311] Sarah M. Stitzlein and Carrie Nolan, "Meaningful Hope for Teachers in Times of High Anxiety and Low Morale," 2011: 2.

drastically changing conditions.[312] Burnout need not suggest a negative judgment of the teacher (an undertone Santoro believes is present). Like demoralization, burnout is stepping away in the face of discouraging conditions. It is a sense of lost hope.[313] Both terms normatively describe a fact: a teacher's resources (material and psychological) are depleted due to an unsupportive context. In a similar vein, Jim Garrison worries that too many new teachers leave feeling forsaken, even cynical, after realizing their hopes to "do good" were in vain. He argues that when teachers feel their "sacrifice by not caring for themselves" was unrewarded, it is dangerous. It is as problematic, he continues, as allowing "narrow fixed selves to control and manipulate them," that is, it is as problematic as being closed off and rigid in the face of changing conditions. In both cases, Garrison continues, teachers "will not grow. Eventually they will either burn out or, worse still, rust in place."[314] The conclusion drawn by others and myself is that there needs to be another way of thinking about sacrificing and self-cultivation.[315] The conversation between these various scholars is noteworthy in light of the pressures on teachers today.

Alyssa Hadley Dunn and Samantha B. Durrance, the former a teacher educator and the latter her former preservice student/now teacher, seek to understand the reality "of being a new teacher in the era of accountability" and the reality of "a teacher educator

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[312] Doris A. Santoro, "Good Teaching in Difficult Times: Demoralization in the Pursuit of Good Work," *American Journal of Education*118, no. 1 (2011): 1-23.

[313] Sarah M. Stitzlein and Carrie Nolan. "Meaningful Hope for Teachers in Times of High Anxiety and Low Morale," 2011.

[314] Jim Garrison, *Dewey and Eros: Wisdom and Desire in the Art of Teaching*, 47.

[315] Christopher Day, *Teachers Matter : Connecting Work, Lives and Effectiveness*. McGraw-Hill Education, 2007; Higgins, "Teaching and the Good Life;" Doris A. Santoro, "Good Teaching in Difficult Times: Demoralization in the Pursuit of Good Work." *American Journal of Education* 118, no. 1 (November 2011): 1–23.

tasked with preparing new teachers for this challenging climate."[316] Both are beginners to their respective role; both leave disillusioned. The article they wrote about their experiences as teachers presents the parting words of Samantha, the preservice teacher, who decides to leave teaching after one year:

> I'm quitting teaching after this year….I've had enough thinking I can change the world by being a caring, passionate, dedicated teacher. I have given all of myself to this for too short a time to already be so drained. Fighting against the myriad forces that drag our students down is just too much for me.

Samantha's resignation, public and passionate, is echoed in other resignations cited throughout the article. The phrase "teaching left me" is a motif. In Samantha's statement, we hear the disillusionment of a teacher who had been hopeful to learn and live in the profession of teaching. What reliable way can we, philosophers of education, offer beginning teachers to make inroads into their practice? Both in the short term so that they may adapt to conditions in order to enact in practice their philosophy of education and in the long term so they begin to change the system and conditions in which they work.

As part of this inquiry, I problematize the notion that the teacher is meant to directly (and perhaps selflessly) develop the student. Drawing on Dewey's concept of the moral self, I argue that dynamic habits seesaw between self-cultivation and care for oneself and outward consideration for those around us. Further, dynamic habits allow for regeneration, that is, even in times of hardship, dynamic habits can create tracks into new ways of teaching and learning that support humanizing ethical and intellectual educational aims even when conditions do not. My conception of philosophy of education takes on strong normative claims: society must support the work of teachers and their agency to do the work of teaching, given how much is at stake in education.

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[316] Alyssa Hadley Dunn and Samantha B. Durrance, "Preparing [or Prepared] to Leave?: A Professor-Student Dialogue about the Realities of Urban Teaching," *Teachers College Record* (August 2014). URL: http://www.tcrecord.org/content.asp?contentid=17645.

These normative claims are foundational to my philosophy of education and inform my discussion of dynamic habits.

Ethical Dimension of Dynamic Habits

Victor Kestenbaum, in his book, *The Grace and Severity of the Ideal*, writes, "The bare repetition of identically the same act does not consist with morality."[317] If not bare repetition, what value can ethical habits have in the classroom? Habits that are ethical rely on revision. We observe and assess when an ethical question is a stake; noticing that an ethical question requires awareness. This is not to say all our thinking and actions involve pressing moral questions. Dewey writes, to this point, that all our actions, even the mundane ones, need not come "under moral scrutiny."[318] To know when to subject acts to moral scrutiny "is itself a large factor in morality."[319] We learn to identify when ethical questions *are* at stake. On the other hand, ethical questions and activities are present in the classroom by dint of the social, shared aspect of the classroom space. Dewey writes, "It is not an ethical 'ought' that conduct *should* be social. It *is* social, whether good or bad."[320] That is, both in the classroom and outside the classroom, our lives are social, and so ethical.

The reader will note my use of "ethics" and "morals." Bernard Williams, in his book, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy,* characterizes ethics as the process of

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[317]Victor Kestenbaum, *The Grace and Severity of the Ideal* (Chicago, Ill.; London: University of Chicago Press, 2002): 31.

[318]Dewey, MW14, 32.

[319]Dewey, MW14, 32.

[320]Dewey, MW14, 17.

deliberation and study of the Socratic question, "How should I live my life?"[321] He notes the emphasis on the formation of the self through cultivation in the word *ethics*.[322] Though the two terms are often used interchangeably, we can understand morals as more prescriptive and ethics as rooted inquiry and reflection.[323]

Williams's view of ethics complements Dewey's. Dewey sees self-cultivation as a non-egotistical way of understanding ethics, where egoism is the cultivation of interests irrespective of others.[324] Self-cultivation, as taken here, is done in light of the interest of others and the events outside oneself. Self-cultivation, moreover, is set-up against selflessness, where actions are done irrespective of the needs of oneself. Ethics for both Williams and Dewey is not an account of an ethical life satisfying the individual, but "an account of the self into which that life fits."[325] That is, ethics demands of us deliberation and reflection because we are not, if we are to act ethically, forcefully plowing our way through the world without regard for others. The reason we do not push our way blindly forward is our lives are marked by flux, and so our values and actions demand revision.

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[321]Williams, who begins his book with Socrates's question, "How should I live?," speaks, by way of example, of the kinds of considerations the individual may have to deliberate about in the course of answering that question. We take in a host of considerations, personal, professional, etc., and "at the end of all that, there is the question, 'What should I do, all things considered?'" (*Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*, 6).

[322]Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*, 6.

[323]Higgins also uses the word "moral professionalism" in "Teaching and the Good Life: A Critique of the Ascetic Ideal in Education," where moral holds undertones of prescriptive rule following.

[324]Of Plato and Aristotle, Williams writes, "Their outlook is formally egoistic, in the sense that they suppose that they have to show to each person that he has good reason to live ethically; and the reason has to appeal to that person in terms of something about himself, how and what he will be if he is a person with that sort of character. But their outlook is not egoistic in the sense that they try to show that the ethical life serves some set of individual satisfactions which is well defined before ethical considerations appear" (*Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*, 32).

[325]Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*, 32.

We each, then, weigh ethical considerations. Ethical considerations, in Williams's lexicon, are the specific understandings we bring to ethical decisions that are unique to us. These considerations are the substance of our ethical reflections and deliberations. It is important to note too that though our ethical lives are unique, demanding that each individual weigh the ethical considerations arising in her life, we can still make general normative claims about our necessarily shared life. These normative claims— e.g., it is good to see habituation as part of educational growth, it is good to have a habit of reflection—are useful for philosophical investigations into ethics. If I write, for example, of disengaged students or of stressed teachers, there are already strong normative views present in our educational discourse that these are negative states for teachers and students. So while David Hume in *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739) criticizes the blurred line between descriptive statements and normative statements (statements that are characterized by saying something *is* a certain way as opposed to saying it *ought* to be a certain way), sometimes normativity is smuggled in under the guise of description, depending on the choice of words. Williams and others, like Christine Koorsgaard, as we saw in Chapter I, argue that being explicit about our normative views is necessary for ethical investigations. If we say students are disengaged, a descriptive statement, we simultaneously think they should not be so. This is because we see disengaged students as the opposite of what we hope to see in classrooms. In education we believe students *should* be engaged.[326] Exposing ethical views and examining them are an important part of ethical investigations. Having said this, knowing when to give descriptive accounts is important as well; I do both in my analysis.

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[326]The author thanks P. Comstock for his help with this description and his useful reference to David Hume.

The Teacher's Habit-Making Life

Is the cultivation of habits an egotistical project whereby the teacher narrowly tries to improve herself, personally and professionally? Or is cultivating habits a sacrificing attempt on the part of the teacher *for* students, parents, and society? Neither of these two motivations is enriching or satisfying; the motive is neither egotistical nor self-sacrificing. Yet, these two motivations are pervasive in teaching and negatively influence not just a teacher's practice of teaching, but a teacher's practice of living as well. As I, and others, see it, the teacher's habit-making life is both teaching as craft and living as art, where "craft" invoke the Aristotelian term *techne* and "living" the philosophical notion of the art of living.[327] And where a teacher may not explicitly ask the question, "How should one live one's life?" the teacher may ask "How should I teach?" or "What is the best decision for me to make?" Questions of this sort, when asked in terms of what is right or best, are part, philosophically speaking, of the question "How should one live one's life?" In whatever way these questions are articulated or dismissed, the questions arise because our lives, marked by change, are full of diverse ethical considerations.

Williams characterizes ethics as the process of deliberation and study of the Socratic question, "How should I live my life?" He notes that the word *morality*, in its modern usage, has developed a "peculiar […] notion of obligation" and represents narrower ideas of the good falling under the broader term *ethics*. He emphasizes the formation of the self through cultivation in the word *ethics* and distinguishes between the self-interested question, "How should I live?" and the question inclusive of the other, "How should we or one live?" The distinction is that the second question encompasses the experiences of others. "How should one live one's life," then, is not an egotistical question, but an ethical one: the interwoven nature of "I" and "other" creates a feedback

[327]See, for example, Higgins, "Teaching and the Good Life" and David Hansen, "Exploring the Moral Heart of Teaching: Toward a Teacher's Creed."

loop between one's self, others, and one's experiences. "How should one live one's life?" becomes, then, a "general question about what to do, because it asks how to live, and it is also in a sense a timeless question, since it invites me to think about my life from no particular point in it. These two facts make it a relevant question."[328] As our experiences are unique, there is no possibility of an all-encompassing theory mapping the road of the good life, but we can think reflectively, invoking "one," about the courses of human lives more generally.[329] Since we live a shared life with others, we learn to find a balance between acting in the interest of others and acting in our own self-interest.

The work of teachers is often called a "service for the public good," and if they are practicing many years, they are called "veteran teachers," recalling the image of a soldier. Nevertheless, they need not view themselves as martyrs.[330] Teachers cultivate personal and professional selves while also teaching and developing their students. In the process of modifying and renewing habits, in light of possibility and hostility, teachers can call on two interests, their own and those of their students, as they deliberate about future actions, reflect, and make choices. Recognizing habits as dynamic, not absolutes, allows them to experiment intelligently and ethically as they seek to find ways to sustain themselves in their profession. A teacher's ability to modify and renew habits is a practice for teaching *and* for life.

The Role of Habits in the Development of the Moral Self

The classroom is a semi-protected environment, permeable to outside influences, e.g., parents, society, and school administrators. The self, experiences, and others make

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[328]Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*, 19.

[329]For further discussion, see Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*.

[330]Both Garrison and Higgins argue against self-sacrifice in their previously mentioned book and article, respectively.

up three realms of the moral self in the social context of the classroom. Dewey argues that these three realms have been fractioned off and compartmentalized as separate in theory and furthermore argues that any moral theory separating these three realms fails. As he sees it, the individual embodies ethical practices, that is, the mind and body are not severed, and as such, bodily experiences and sensations are part of the ethical feedback loop that informs our ethical deliberations and actions. "Habit reaches […] down into the very structure of the self,"[331] he says, indicating that our habits are formed in our environment and our experience but are also part of who we desire to be and the aims we design for our selves.

We tend to fall into "accustomed grooves" of behavior that are familiar and comforting (and necessary many times) routines of our lives.[332] Culturally, ways of perceiving our selves become tracks, ways of acting and thinking we habitually rely on, whether for the purpose of seeing oneself as giving to others or seeing oneself as gathering from others depending on, in the case of the teacher, perceived cultural expectations and school culture. Dewey's moral self is a self that breaks from wrongly imposed societal norms (in this case, the selfless teacher) into enriched interactions with others. The moral self is one balancing between reflection (self) and interaction (other/object/environment) and one who is not self-interested or instrumental, but rather has an interest in learning from the rich variety of experience, or in Dewey's words, from "all the contacts of life."[333] Self-cultivation and outward interest, as Dewey makes clear, is the ethical foundation of the shared life and, particularly in his view, of education and

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[331]Dewey, LW7, 172.

[332]For further discussion of "accustomed grooves," see Richard Bergman, "John Dewey on Educating the Moral Self," *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, 24 no.1 (2005): 44-3.

[333]Dewey, MW9, 370. And Hansen elucidates this idea in detail in "Dewey's Book of the Moral Self," *John Dewey and Our Educational Prospect* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006).

democracy. Moreover, these habits, to remain intelligent and ethical, must be flexible and responsive, that is, dynamic.

The practice of inward cultivation fused with outward interest is a practice for teaching. It requires an openness to the lessons of experience, and in this case, an awareness of the particular: the particular self (teacher) and other (student). Cultivating such habits is not easy, in fact, the task I describe may increase the challenge of teaching. There are two points to consider. The first is that, as I mentioned in Chapter I, the majority of our habits are not called into question during the course of our everyday lives. Based on a study, the average teacher makes an "interactive decision" every minute while teaching.[334] It would be preposterous to assume any teacher could call into awareness, reflect on, and deliberate about each and every habit in addition to this. The teacher would be like a "centipede who by trying to think of the movement of each leg in relation to all the others was rendered unable to travel. At any given time,"[335] Dewey continues, "certain habits must be taken for granted as a matter of course."[336] Rather, when confronted with dilemmas and challenges, teachers are tasked with deliberation. In such a context, dynamic habits allow for their productive reconstruction. Dynamic habits are characterized by awareness, reflection, deliberation, and observation manifested in continual reconstruction of habits. Samantha, the teacher discussed at the beginning of this chapter, writes, "While self-care was mentioned as a necessity in my teacher education program and a few basic suggestions were given, the particulars of how to balance the responsibilities of being a teacher and how to leave work at work were never

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[334]Garrison, *Dewey and Eros*, 30. Interactive here means a decision requiring deliberation.

[335]Dewey, MW14, 40.

[336]Dewey, MW14, 40.

really covered."[337] Here "how to leave work at work" is living, and Samantha writes to her former teacher in an email that she needed tangible tips to guide, construct, and reconstruct her framework of teaching and living. She is asking to learn to intentionally weigh and consider possibilities in light of their own interests *and* the needs of others.

The Role of Habits in Regeneration

It is not just the conflict between good and evil that requires us to wrestle with moral problems, Deweyan philosopher Sidney Hook writes, but the "distinctively ethical question: 'what shall I do'" when two seemingly equally good values are in conflict. Hook continues, it is only

> when the good is opposed to the good, the right to the right, and the good to the right, that the perplexities and agonies of moral choice develop. To solve these conflicts we must apply all the resources of human intelligence in exploring the causes and consequences of the options open to us.[338]

Morally fraught situations are dilemmas requiring ethical judgment and deliberation, at times when both options are negative. When confronted with the "distinctively ethical question: 'what shall I do,'" [339] we turn to habits of thinking, reflecting, and observing that allow us to wrestle, when the time calls, with "the perplexities and agonies of moral choice" along with the mundane decisions of our everyday lives.[340]

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[337] Dunn and Durrance, "Preparing [or Prepared] to Leave?" URL: http://www.tcrecord.org/content.asp?contentid=17645.

[338]Hook, Sidney, Foreword, Gouinlock, James. The Moral Writings of John Dewey. (Prometheus Books, 1994).

[339]Hook, Foreword, Gouinlock, *The Moral Writings of John Dewey*.

[340]Cf. Simone de Beauvoir's *Ethics of Ambiguity (*New York: Philosophical Library, 1949).

Thus far, I have offered an account in support of habits that are dynamic and flexibly responsive to the interest of self and other with the belief that such an account offers a way for teachers to conceive of enacting their philosophy of teaching in practice. The argument has included a discussion of on-the-ground, continuous reconstruction, such as developing a habit of awareness. Everyday modifications, as compared with responses to specific, unusual, more dramatic events, call on us to rearrange and reimagine more of our habits. David Granger calls this process "self-remaking."[341] More dramatic events "reach to pivotal facets of our sense of self-hood, the larger life" in which we live and operate.[342] These questions address "problems with an explicitly moral dimension."[343] While self-remaking emphasizes responses to dramatic events, even everyday reconstructions lead to transformations that also involve a "remaking" of the self. Regardless of the scale of habit changes, we tend to resist activity that requires self-remaking because it is uncertain and can be uprooting. Though uncomfortable, drastic changes in our lives may demand that we re-fashion our routes of being.

When setbacks abound, teachers ask questions about living and, in this case, about teaching, when there are no ready answers. The example Samantha shares: "I felt like the work was never done and I could never get ahead, which left me constantly tired and stressed [….] The limitations imposed on me by the curriculum expectations of the district and state often made me feel powerless to do what I thought was truly best for my students' learning and development." She felt that, though useful, the preservice teaching assignments "could not fully prepare me for single handedly running a classroom August

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[341]Concepts "self-making" and "self-remaking" quoted from David Granger's article "Towards an Embodied Poetics of the Self: Personal Renewal in Dewey and Cavell," *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 20 no. 2 (2001) for more on the concept of remaking.

[342]Granger, "Towards an Embodied Poetics of the Self," 110.

[343]Granger, "Towards an Embodied Poetics of the Self," 110.

to May."[344] These statements tell of the reality of learning to live, not just work, in new and unfamiliar conditions, with a demanding schedule that requires constant focus and attention. That is, in order to dynamically learn to work in new conditions (in this case teach), we must learn how to live in the new conditions, too. I do not believe living and working can be separated.

Dynamic habits support a teacher faced with the challenge of beginning to teach, of self-making and self-remaking. Dynamic habits offer routes of thinking to help individuals imagine their future selves. This is not to say that the institution itself was not at fault—it was. Here, I point to answering the question: How can teachers continue even when all circumstances seem against them? So while there is a pressing need for larger systemic changes in public education today, the reality is that Samantha showed up ready to teach and in need of strategies to intelligently adapt and flexibly respond to conditions, even when conditions were hostile. Though no one desires to be in a hostile situation, perhaps they find themselves there because of a driving sense of purpose, whether it is helping people in destitution or students in an accountability-driven school. Perhaps they find themselves there by surprise—they thought the school was organized differently or did not choose where they were placed. In either case, once there, they need strategies to make their way.

Whether the conditions are as unwelcoming as they were for Samantha, or more hospitable, beginning to teach requires a reconstruction of one's habits. Reconstruction is the activity of self-making and self-remaking. It is a reconstruction because, as we will see in the next chapter, the Conclusion, even beginning teachers come to the teaching profession with a host of habits, attitudes, and assumptions about the practice of

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[344]Dunn and Durrance, "Preparing [or Prepared] to Leave?" URL: http://www.tcrecord.org/content.asp?contentid=17645.

teaching.[345] The reconstruction of these habits occurs through conflict, learning in dialogue, and interaction with students and the environment. Conflict here is not necessarily aggressive; it is merely the meeting of differences. We can understand conflict as the introduction of a problem that is a catalyst for critique, where critique is inquiry paired with observation.[346] The meeting of differences (attitudes, modes of practice, and beliefs) occurs as environments alter and as individuals begin to communicate. Conflict, though challenging, is a prerequisite for learning; it occurs when we are forced to critically take stock, and change in light of new understanding. Conflict requires we leave behind "the old, the habitual self…as if it were *the* self; as if new conditions and new demands were something foreign and hostile."[347] Whether new conditions are foreign and hostile or not (for sometimes they are as we have just seen), teaching *and* life demand a "growing, enlarging, liberated self … [who] goes forth to meet new demands and occasions, and readapts and remakes itself in the process."[348] These points underscore the need for growth even in the face of "new demands" and the role of imagining new possibilities.[349]

What does going forth to meet new demands look like? As we saw in the last chapter, reflection is an intellectual practice of developing awareness to inform activity. As we are coming to see in this chapter, reflection is also an ethical practice. The Prologue discussed the teacher who modified his habit of interrupting his students by

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[345]Cf. Willard Wallers, *The Sociology of Teaching*. (New York: Russell & Russell, 1961).

[346]See Sarah M. Stitzlein ""Habits of Democracy," 74 where she notes critique is inquiry, and inquiry is observation, fact gathering, and discussion.

[347]Dewey, LW7, 307.

[348]Dewey, LW7, 307.

[349]I loosely define growth as further enriching life experiences. For more on growth and the good life, see Garrison, *The Aesthetics of Ethical Virtues and the Ethical Virtues of Aesthetics*, 237.

developing a habit of awareness. Through reflection, he began the process of self-making, modifying initial assumptions he had of teaching. He became dynamic in his conception of himself in the role of teaching. In this chapter so far, we have looked at a beginning teacher's reflection on her first year of work. To see what dynamic habits might look like in practice, beyond the first year or two of a teacher's career, let us turn to an example of a seasoned teacher. In "A Case Study of an African American Teacher's Self-Efficacy, Stereotype Threat, and Persistence," authors H. Richard Milner and Anita Woolfolk Hoy study the teaching practice of an African American woman in a predominantly all-White school.[350] Of 126 faculty members, Dr. Wilson was the only African American woman and the only African American teaching a core academic subject. At the time of the study, she had taught for eleven years in the district, twenty-five years overall, and she held a Ph.D. In interviews, Dr. Wilson articulated a deep commitment to academic excellence and to humanizing teaching by getting to know her students and, in turn, allowing them to know her.

Over the course of the study, the researchers engaged with Dr. Wilson about a number of issues. The teacher shared that she is constantly inquiring and reflecting on her practice, her students and their families, her colleagues, and her environment. Moreover, she seeks to nurture the same habits of reflective awareness in her students, and, to the extent possible, her colleagues. One of the core educational aims Dr. Wilson takes on for herself is to "demystify our changing negative stereotypes about African Americans."[351] She does not see it as an aim with fixed requirements. Rather she is perceptive to moments when she can humanize the experience of teaching and learning and dynamically engage her class and her colleagues in reflection, inquiry, and reconstruction

[350]Milner and Hoy "A case study of an African American Teacher's Self-Efficacy," 263-76.

[351]Milner and Hoy, "A Case Study of an African American Teacher's Self-Efficacy," 268.

of close-minded habits that oftentimes dictate engagement with others. In one case, the researchers observed Dr. Wilson as she shared a personal story about quilt-making growing up. The story was inspired by an Alice Walker book on the same topic she was reading with her students in class. The family story was not planned for the lesson; she opened up and gave what the researchers called a "soliloquy" on her experience with her grandmother when she was young. Her moment of personal openness was met with openness from the students, as the researchers report it, and Dr. Wilson shared later that she hoped to teach her students to see and to be sensitive to difference as opposed to a habit of being closed off to it.

Dr. Wilson offers another example where a student is upset by the many Spanish-speaking immigrants moving to his neighborhood. The student wants the immigrants to leave. Dr. Wilson offers that the immigrants "are doing things that we don't want to do" and engages him in conversations about the history of immigrants in the United States.[352] To the researchers she continues, "His family, his grandparents, great-grandparents came from different countries. And they don't see that; that's all important to me because I think that sensitivity" is important.[353] We can recall the discussion in the previous chapter of a kind of aesthetic sensitiveness to immediate experience coupled with intelligent observation, reflection, and deliberation. In Dr. Wilson's narrative, we can see how the practice of being sensitive to others requires the cultivation of habits with ethical dimensions, such as listening, reflection, and inquiry.[354] Such habits enable individuals to

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[352] Stitzelin writes in "Democratic Habits:" "Teachers can prove debate activities and encounters with controversial social issues to provoke students to engage critique, all the while guiding their skills of cultural analysis through supporting a spirit of criticality that asks tough questions to reveal how power works in social situations and how it privileges some people and not others." (Stitzelin, "Democratic Habits, 76.)

[353] Milner and Hoy, "A case study of an African American Teacher's Self-Efficacy," 270.

[354] "As part of living and engaging deliberative democracy, students develop civic virtues like honesty, toleration, and respect." (Stitzelin, "Deliberative Democracy in Teacher Education,"

understand the experience of others, and it requires an openness to interacting with others and knowing them through such interactions.

Dr. Wilson shows how habits of awareness can be taught and practiced: Individuals learn to make it a habit to take time to notice and consider previously held assumptions in a new light. If new information arises and an action becomes morally wrong, they can return to reflection. Intelligent reflection and ethical reflection are one in the same; Garrison writes, "Intelligence critically and creatively considers the standard principles and rules of conduct dictated by customary morality."[355] In this case, Dr. Wilson creatively reconsiders the ways she engages with her students and with her colleagues. She seeks to construct and reconstruct relationships and practices in an effort to humanize such relations. Dr. Wilson, I would argue, engages in ethical reflection by drawing on her creative and intellectual ability to further understand the situation at hand, whether it is a confused student or a distant colleague. She reports to the researchers that one of the most important moments for her was when a student in her school was hurt in a fight and then hospitalized. The child's father called her and said it would mean more than anything to his son if he could speak to her. Dr. Wilson, who was on a trip, returned that day to see the hurt student. The recognition, and sense of real connection and commitment between student *and* family and teacher, is an example of one of the golden nugget moments of a teaching career. These elements of Dr. Wilson's practice all point to shifting circumstances in a less-than-ideal environment. Dr. Wilson is responsive, and molding her environment and directing her words and actions in ways that are not toward fixed ends, but rather in ways that are attuned to the particularities of the situation, her student's beliefs about immigrants, the content of a story that matches her own experience, the call of a father to help his hurt son. No one could predict these events

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5). Though Dr. Wilson does not define it this way, we can see Dr. Wilson as teaching democratic virtues, or habits in Dewey's lexicon. (Stitzlein notes Dewey sees virtue as too narrow of a word).

[355]Garrison, *Dewey and Eros: Wisdom and Desire in the Art of Teaching*, 230.

would occur. I highlight Dr. Wilson here because the way she responds is an enactment the kind of dynamic habits this dissertation elucidates.

This last story was a highpoint, though there were many difficult moments when Dr. Wilson had to re-imagine how she might do or say something in the face of hostility as well as stay true to her own beliefs. Harder moments were marked by isolation and "invalidating stereotypes," which she met by continually striving to cultivate respect and self-reflection.[356] In such difficult instances, Dr. Wilson is in the process of reconstructing social and individual habits. This reconstruction is a kind of self-making and self-remaking, as we saw earlier. The reconstruction process has also been characterized as a process of self-creation. Garrison, in his article "Foucault, Dewey, and Self-Creation," terms this reconstructing process "self-creation."[357] He writes, "Critical reflection leads to self-awareness and, sometimes, self-creation."[358] The project of self-creation, then, emerges from self-criticism and social-criticism through social interaction. We can understand Garrison's term "self-creation" in terms of Granger's distinction between self-marking and self-remaking and in terms of Dewey and my term, reconstruction. Through critical reflection of our environment, we can become aware in such a way that we are enabled to find routes and possibilities to change the environment and ourselves by reconstructing our practices and ends, as we observed with Dr. Wilson. If we become aware of our environment, and critically reflective on it, "especially the social conditions that condition our habits of conduct, we can then re-create ourselves by reconstructing our environment." [359] We do this by altering our conduct to change the

[356]Milner and Hoy, "A case study of an African American Teacher's Self-Efficacy," 267.

[357]Garrison, "Foucault, Dewey, and Self-Creation," 126.

[358]Garrison, "Foucault, Dewey, and Self-Creation," 125. Note he makes this comment underscoring that Mead talks more about self-creation than Dewey.

[359]Garrison, "Foucault, Dewey, and Self-Creation," 126.

situation, as Dr. Wilson did by telling stories of her life growing up to provide experiences to her students of those with different backgrounds.

Changing conditions is a form of social critique that is at the heart of democracy.[360] That is, Dr. Wilson is not changing the conditions and environment of her classroom and school because she feels it would be better just for these students. Rather, she believes the conditions for learning and living in a democracy are "not how they should be."[361] Such conditions, furthermore, are "not morally acceptable." She in turn responds "by calling what *is* out of existence and calling what *ought to be* into existence."[362] This calling out requires imagining a new "ought to be." She believes all students *ought to live* at minimum with sympathetic knowledge of the diversity of "others" and, more ideally, participate in multicultural learning communities, marked by free dialogue and open-mindedness.[363]

Dr. Wilson, in an effort to teach her students to be more sensitive and to think more critically, is constantly re-imagining how she might do or present something. Sometimes she acts spontaneously, as when she went to see her student in the hospital, and sometimes she acts with more prolonged and continuous reflection, as with her regular conversations with her students' parents. In either case, she senses a lack of exposure to African Americans and more widely a lack of sensitivity to others as problematic.
Dr. Wilson believes her students should understand difference, be sensitive to conflict,

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[360] Stitzlein writes in "Democratic Habits:" "critique is inquiry, and inquiry is observation, fact gathering, and discussion." 76.

[361]To be clear, I make normative claims. I believe this is essential since certain descriptions, like disengaged students or cynical teachers, trigger normative responses, that is, in this case, both are *not as they should* be.

[362]Garrison, *Dewey and Eros*, 135.

[363]As Stitzlein writes, instead of a narrow view of shared living, we cultivate habits that support "citizenship as shared fate" which entails a "desire to work in best interest of group." ("Democratic Habits," 70).

and be aware of diversity in a personal and immediate way. Perhaps, after deliberating about this view, she turns to dialogue. In the course of the researcher's interviews with her, Dr. Wilson is not only continuously reflecting but also in constant dialogue with her students. Introducing dialogue in the classroom requires a shift of habits to meet the next context. In this way, Dr. Wilson looks inward to her values and outward to the interests of her students; she enacts, piecemeal, changes involving re-fashioning the routes, the framework of habits, of her teaching and the classroom context. Crucially, she feels a sense of freedom to do so.

In the end, Dr. Wilson reports that it was her "moral license to do what she believed is right"[364] that sustained her during hard times. Her effort to develop an awareness of African American people and culture in her school, and, more generally, of difference and diversity, was an aim that kept her reflecting and reconstructing her teaching practice, even when she felt most isolated or put down by her colleagues.[365] Dr. Wilson's stories provides a sense of dynamic habits in action, and while not exact, they illustrate how an individual *imaginatively* brings into practice new ways of acting, teaching, and living.

Points of Tension: Possible Critique of the Ethical Dimensions of Habit-Making

There are a few important points to make in anticipation of possible critiques of the account of teaching and habit-making I have offered thus far. First I will turn to a

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[364]Milner and Hoy, "Habits of Democracy: A Deweyan Approach to Citizenship Education in America Today," 268.

[365] Stitlzein writes, "Dewey promoted community-based learning where knowledge comes about through working together to solve social problems. This process often entails self-reflection and changing one's own habits to meet the demands of living communally." ("Deliberative Democracy in Teacher Education," 5)

possible reaction to the example of Dr. Wilson and the beginning teacher Samantha just offered. Following this I will address a possible response to the concept of habits.

The Impact of Society on Habits

In his article, "Dewey, Democracy, and Democratic Experimentalism," Charles Sabel levels important critiques against Dewey that he would undoubtedly find present in my account of teaching and habit-making above.[366] Sabel says he is puzzled that Dewey did not "pose the question of how to design institutions that reduce the chance of organizational habits congealing into limiting routines, or that can detect and dis-entrench routines that have become obstructive."[367] In addition, he adds that he is troubled by the absence in the "discussion of the design of democracy itself, of institutions of public choice serving the ideal of democracy as enabling individual flourishing, and adapted to the circumstances of the day."[368] My dissertation has obviously not set out to address the macro dimensions of habits as custom, political entities, and institutions. I have positioned myself to address the micro: the individual teacher, classroom, and student. Having said that, it is important to acknowledge that across his writings Dewey underscores his belief that the individual and the society are fused together. So why does he not address the design of institutions? Why do I not say exactly how a school should be designed to foster dynamic habits in teachers? It seems that it is possible for institutions to be modeled on a person with dynamic habits. An institution's environmental structuring can mirror my discussion of dynamic habits in an individual person. We can understand this as an isomorphism between individual and person where the one reflects the other neither is rigid, but rather both are responsive and dynamic.

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[366]Charles Sabel, "Dewey, Democracy, and Democratic Experimentalism." *Contemporary Pragmatism* 9, no. 2 (December 2012): 35-55.

[367]Sabel, "Dewey, Democracy, and Democratic Experimentalism," 35-55.

[368]Sabel, "Dewey, Democracy, and Democratic Experimentalism," 35-55.

Underlying Sabel's observation is another important critique. One might ask of the example of Dr. Wilson: How does the teacher who works in an institution that has organized habits into fixed routines find a sense of purpose to reconstruct habits? Dr. Wilson's practice touches on the importance of purpose. She shows that engagement with others, reflection, and sensitivity to aesthetic or experience, for all people of all walks of life, are inroads to finding a sense of purpose.

The Impact of Rules on Habits

My discussion of the ethical dimensions of dynamic habits is a response to those who, as Williams phrases it, are "in the business of making rules."[369] I do not want to dismiss rules, though, just as I would not want to dismiss accountability or assessment outright. Clearly rules, assessment, and accountability all have their place when fashioned in just and responsive ways. Rules like "do not hit others" have obvious benefits: we are habituated to the rule not to hit others except in extreme instances of self-defense, and ideally we believe such instances would not take place in a school. With rules of any kind, in the end, we remain intelligently critical and ethically reflective.

Though there are, then, ethical rules we may consistently follow that become habitual, Dewey argues that our habits are more than such rules. Whereas Kant views habits as merely pre-rational, or inessential, and in contrast to our ability to reason about our ethical choices, Dewey re-conceptualizes habit as both having a history and as being part of an individual's creative life. [370] That is, Dewey sees habits, rooted in experience, as a generative force.[371] Michael Oakeshott, in a similar vein, views the move to equate

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[369]Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*, 62.

[370]For Kant, habit is repetition and thus as a moral device can offer nothing more than 'pathological satisfaction' (Dewey, Psychology, 1887; Kestenbaum, 30).

[371]Kestenbaum, *The Grace and Severity of the Ideal*, 30.

rule following with habit as problematic. The idea of rules (or as Oakeshott phrases it, the pursuit of one shared end), as a blind habitual process, "is an error." He continues,

> To call an activity "rational" on account of its end having been specifically determined in advance and in respect of its achieving that end to the exclusion of all others [is false], because there is no way of determining an end for activity in advance of the activity itself; and if there were, the spring of activity would still remain in knowing how to act in pursuit of that end and not in the mere fact of having formulated an end to pursue.[372]

Oakeshott's point nicely details why, by dint of our multifarious and unpredictable experiences, our habit-making lives develop in a wide range of directions, even when we share similar aims and ideals. That is, the process of applying rules to one's life is a creative ethical endeavor. Robert Boostrum, in "The Nature and Function of Classroom Rules," articulates a view of rule making in teaching, where rules "are structures of meaning we use to make sense of the world around us" and "a teacher's rules express a way of seeing the world."[373] This is, then, rules as a way of embodying our habit-making lives. Rules are a kind of ethical knowledge, built on habits of observation, reflection, and ethical and intellectual habits, that allows individuals to navigate the more subtle and troubling problems of life.

In their conception of rules, individuals are greatly influenced by the society, culture, and customs in which they grow up. Even though our customs as passed down to us are not necessarily moral, we often take them to be because they feel commonsensical.[374] Dewey writes, "Customs persist because individuals form their personal habits under conditions set by prior customs. An individual usually acquires the

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[372]Kestenbaum, *The Grace and Severity of the Ideal,* 30 citing Oakeshott, "Rational Conduct," 110-111.

[373]Boostrum, "The Nature and Function of Classroom Rules," *Curriculum Inquiry* Vol. 21, No. 2 (Summer, 1991): 194.

[374]Cf. Garrison, *Dewey and Eros*, 140.

morality as he inherits the speech of his social group."[375] Though individuals do have agency, it is important to underscore the *difficulty* of modifying and renewing habits. To free our selves from the grip of custom requires awareness and reflection and developing intelligent and reflective habits, such as awareness. This is a difficult project. As my analysis of Dewey's conception of thinking underscores in the last chapter, it is much easier to comfortably assimilate to the general culture. Yet, though easier, such a view is a dark cloud.

The threat of providing an education comprised by comfortable assimilation is real. If we are trained to merely follow rules rather than think and critically reconstruct them, our moral lives suffer or even become horrifically perverse, as Hannah Arendt underscores in *Eichmann in Jerusalem.* Arendt writes about the trials of Eichmann, one of the leaders in charge of transportation to the concentration camps in Nazi Germany. In Nazi Germany, the culture of moral values became inverted and Nazi leaders felt moral guilt when they did not kill. The backwards moral code was in part due to anti-Semitism, but was also, as she uncovers with Eichmann, due to the danger of thoughtless routine, especially when the routine involved killing what became millions of people. She develops a thesis of the "banality of evil" and analyzes the horrific destruction that resulted in part from an almost literal thoughtlessness. In her work, Arendt emphasizes that we must think critically about our actions from our own perspectives. We must be creative in how we imagine how we might act. She writes:

> The criterion of right and wrong, the answer to the question, what ought I to do? depends in the last analysis neither on habits or customs, which I share with those around me, nor on a command of either divine or human origin, but on what I decide with regard to myself. In other words, I cannot do certain things, because having done them I shall no longer be able to live with myself.[376]

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[375]Dewey, MW14, 44.

[376]Hannah Arendt. *Responsibility and Judgment* (New York: Schocken Books, 2003): 97.

An oppressive society is oppressive no matter how creative and resilient the individual is. Yet, the power of individuals to change is not to be underestimated, especially when they learned to stand back from their culture and custom. Arendt advocates an education where individuals learn to make ethical judgments and to weigh ethical considerations to inform their action. She does not see Eichmann as a lunatic, but rather as a sobering reminder of the consequences of not learning to think for oneself, a malaise she sees continuing to infiltrate today's world. She takes seriously the project of reconstructing habits, individually and culturally, and thinking seriously about the conditions informing habits. The individual's voice and actions can change an environment and a community.

Dewey, like Arendt, says there can be no single moral theory. He says we must teach reflection and critical thinking. Noddings notes that Dewey places a tremendous amount of value on the "freedom of choice and thinking."[377] Dewey insists on "critical thinking in the analysis of consequences and the consideration of alternatives."[378] Part of this freedom of choice and critical thinking requires imagination. Arendt stresses Eichmann's lack of imagination and the perils of such a figure. Similarly, Dewey asserts that most students need "not so much isolated moral lessons about the importance of truthfulness and honesty, or the beneficent results that follow from a particular act of patriotism."[379] Rather, students need "the formation of habits of social imagination and conception."[380] "Imagination is the chief instrument of the good," Dewey asserts; it enables individuals to envision other ways of acting not thought of before.[381] Williams writes, "Radical forms of freedom may be found in the fact that we cannot be forced by

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[377]Noddings, *Philosophy and Education.*

[378]Noddings, *Philosophy and Education*, 175.

[379]Dewey, MW4, 284.

[380]Dewey, MW4, 284.

[381]Dewey, LW10, 350.

the world to accept one set of values rather than another."[382] In a similar vein, Garrison writes, "Creating value alternatives instead of just evaluating already existing ones introduces expanded possibilities for free moral choice."[383] The imagination, we come to see here, supports the designing of possibilities that is, as Dewey emphasizes, entrenched in experience. As we saw above, Dr. Wilson engaged in imagining and deliberating about new possibilities where no ready ones were present.

Dynamic habits allow for stability, but are also a creative adaptive force. Habits of reflection, awareness, imagination, and deliberation are stakes in the mountain we can tie ropes to, adjust, remove, and add into the rock to aid us in our journey. It is not just any habit we turn to; it is dynamic habits, habits of mind that are, as Dewey stresses, deeply intertwined with habits of the body and culture. Ethically, the constant inquiry, self-reflection, and imaginative construction of new values are essential for not only a life well lived but a life well shared.

The Impact of Tragedy on Habits

When we ask the question "how should one live one's life?" Dewey would answer, with an eye towards growth.[384] Despite the positive notion of growth "there is no denying it: loss is a part of the natural rhythm of expansive growth."[385] As Garrison notes, no amount of skill, observation, care for herself or for her students, can eliminate hardship for Samantha. We push ourselves to the brink, working relentlessly, sacrificing needs of

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[382]Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*, 128.

[383]Garrison, *Dewey and Eros*, 135.

[384]Garrison writes, "growth […]Dewey's answer to the ultimate existential question, "what is the meaning of life," is simple; the meaning of life is to make more meaning and value in order to grow" (Garrison, 2004, 237).

[385]Garrison, 1991, 48. And It is worth noting here, as Garrison does that growth is not "cumulative" and so it is not a "paradox" to say that loss is part of growth. We bring things with us, skills and experiences, and we let other things go. It is not a linear progression.

sleep, to reach the next plateau, recognition, a promotion, financial stability, and yet, even so, our efforts fail us in unexpected ways. Other times, an unforeseeable event drastically changes what we hoped for or thought possible and, thus, tragedy plays havoc with our habits.

Saito offers an admirable response to critics who say there is a missing sense of the tragic in pragmatist philosophers like Dewey. Nevertheless, to articulate her response, Saito turns to Cavell, a critic of Dewey who doubts the possibility of the tragic in pragmatist philosophy. It seems to articulate the tragic in Dewey we do not have to go beyond Dewey himself. For him, tragedy is part of life, a biological and all-too-human reality. Dewey believes that from tragedy comes renewal and growth, and while the tragedy itself is as painfully ineffable, the very notion of being human, alive, thinking, and reflecting is that we continue to grow and "push forward to new ends."

Mistakenly, critics see this "pushing forward" as forgetting, as a lack of respect of the power of tragedy. For Dewey, however, we may mourn during periods of inactivity and during period of active growth, but the two, mourning and growing, are not incommensurable. Dewey, who lost children and faced great sorrow in his life, knew tragedy. He knew how to mourn his loss and still grow, communicate, and respond to the needs of those around him. We cannot make normative claims about the kind of change tragedy has on us, for tragedy comes in many forms and scales, but that it changes our habits, our way of engaging in life, and our interactions with others is indisputable. Growth after tragedy is not easy. In Dewey's sense of the word, it is an art, meaning in this context a sensitivity to immediate, felt experience. This bodily sensitiveness to the wounds of time past is paired with our reflective mind to create growth, where change —or growth—is neither slow nor fast, upwards nor downwards, divine nor mundane.

Conclusion

In conclusion, let us return to the example of the first-year teacher Samantha. Samantha's decision to leave teaching is not offered here as a failure. If there is a failure, it is the failure to create conditions supporting teaching. The teacher feels depleted as a result of inhospitable conditions and unsupportive contexts. Samantha responded by sacrificing all her resources for her students and felt she had nothing left to give; she says it was "too much for me." Teacher accountability and mandated teaching practices consume a teacher's resources. The very philosophy of teaching *and* of living is shaken to its core when conditions are antithetical to the project of teaching and a philosophy of teaching cannot rise to the occasion to meet trying times.

If we ask the question more generally, "What draws us to the practice of teaching and what sustains us there in the face of difficulty?"[386] we can dismiss responses that view teaching as selfless and the view of teaching as a service of developing a *techn,* or skill, the latter view does not build a life of teaching that is for the student *and for the teacher*.[387] Part of the response we formulate will necessarily involve a sense of purpose, and such a purpose is sustained by a certain understanding of dynamic habits. For someone vying for a solution, developing and teaching a pre-determined list of good habits may seem like the golden ticket. However, there is no "luck free strategy for living the good life," as Williams puts it.[388] I do not offer here a list of prescriptive habits, but rather espouse dynamic habits as an important part of an adequate philosophy of teaching. Just as our practical lives do not follow clear-cut routes, neither do our ethical lives. Our modes of perception inform our habit-making lives and, like our ethics, do not come rigidly bestowed upon us, but are activated and clarified through lived experience

[386]Higgins, "Teaching and the Good Life," 153.

[387]Higgins, "Teaching and the Good Life," 140.

[388]Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*, 5.

in the hustle and bustle of human activity. With careful observation, we see ourselves as porous; our experiences inform how we cultivate our self and how we act with others.

In dire educational times, we search for new inroads to *possibility*, even at the small level of a single classroom. Samantha's and Alyssa's accounts highlight the need for a concept of dynamic habits in the face of changing circumstances. Dynamic habits offer a conception for teachers to work with. Dynamic habits are enriching routes that allow teachers to imagine ways to act on their values. These routes, or frameworks of activity, can be modified and renewed in light of interest—interest in others and self. A clarified conception of dynamic habit is significant because it allows philosophers of education and teacher educators to conceive of a practice to meet the task of preparing teachers to modify and renew, imagine and re-imagine, teaching in light of changing conditions. Teaching is both philosophical and practical. Habits offer a practical, partially visible, place to start. Insofar as dynamic habits are not fixed, they are nuanced, recognizing the complexity of teaching. Habits are not an all-encompassing approach, but rather one dimension of the project of initiating new teachers into education.

Chapter V

CONCLUSION: IMPLICATION OF DYNAMIC HABITS FOR TEACHER EDUCATION

This dissertation has provided an account of dynamic habits in education. The emphasis has been on debunking common misconceptions about habits, particularly their instrumental value, and stressing the interplay between the aesthetic, intellectual, and ethical dimensions of habits. The view here, in the particular context of education, is that while our society tends to focus on ideals of education, habits are "on-the-ground" and rooted in our experiences. Dynamic habits, reconstructed in light of observation and interaction with others, offer a way of moving towards tangible goals as opposed to lofty hopes. This is not to say that our hopes cannot guide our habit-making lives, but hope bereft of tangibility has trouble bearing fruit, especially as we have seen in the context of education.

I have taken a special interest in understanding what dynamic habits might mean for teachers, especially in terms of realizing tangible goals, or ends-in-view. A familiar story of our time is the bright-eyed recruit who is fed ideals about changing the world and leaves the classroom a short while later dismayed and overwhelmed. Such early departures reinforce an ingrained view of hopelessness within the schools and communities the recruits entered. Thus, a more sound approach to inspiring and guiding new teachers to the field of education is needed. Two central implications of dynamic habits for teacher education might apply. First, by engaging in reflection and imagining new possible directions for their practice, teachers initiate the critical process of

reconstructing habits, which enables them to become more effective. Second, by cultivating dynamic habits, teachers are able to model and teach thinking and reflection in the classroom with students, crucial skills for students to acquire.

This final chapter continues the discussion of dynamic habits through the frame of understanding the role that such habits play for beginning teachers and within teacher education programs. I focus on the beginning teacher and teacher education programs because of the importance of educating teachers to see themselves as having the capacity to change so that they will in turn see their students as having that capacity. I outline key components of a teacher education program and key factors such a program would encourage teachers to reflect on during their first years of teaching and beyond. As part of this discussion, I draw on research in the fields of teacher education and psychology, especially specific studies on beginning teachers. I conclude turning to a topic overviewed in Chapter I, habits as arts. I conclude here as I see it as a rich area for possible research emerging from this dissertation. At end of this chapter, I note other areas of possible research emerging from this dissertation as well.

The Usefulness of Dynamic Habits for Beginning Teacher

How can teacher educators teach and model dynamic habits, and how can beginning teachers in turn learn, teach and model such habits? These are pressing questions. Faced with burnout,[389] demoralization,[390] and high attrition rates, teachers must confront questions of learning and of living. Beginning teachers are in a unique place because of their lack of extensive teaching experience. David Granger points to what is at stake. "A beginning teacher," he writes, "learns how to deal with a variety of

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[389]Higgins, "Teaching and the Good Life;" Garrison, *Dewey and Eros.*

[390]Santoro, "Good Teaching in Difficult Times."

classroom contingencies by developing various patterns of response. These response patterns must however lead to the formation of habits admitting at least some degree of flexibility if she is not to become what Dewey in *Art as Experience* calls 'a wooden and perfunctory pedagogue.'"[391] The habits that a teacher develops and fosters in her students cannot be only rote, rigid methods of training, but must be formative, intellectual, and ethical, and so, by definition, dynamic. In the face of challenge and changes, teachers can engage in the reflective task of reconstructing habits. Beginning teachers avoid becoming "wooden pedagogues"[392] by developing more dynamic habits that serve teaching and learning. These dynamic habits are not taught directly, as the dissertation has discussed, but rather indirectly. Indeed, they are learned through experience, the environment, and reflection; and through interaction, such as dialogue and shared activity. We can take Dewey's words to heart: "We cannot change habit directly: that notion is magic. But we can change it indirectly by modifying conditions, by an intelligent selecting and weighing of the objects which engage attention and which influence the fulfillment of desires."[393] We learn by being open to experience and reconstructing our habits in the process. Here I take learning in its fullest sense. Learning is holistic and based in experience—it is not merely a matter of training.

Habits based in experience are educationally significant for the teacher *and* the student. Teachers develop dynamic habits to grow responsively in their practice. Further, they share the experience of learning new habits through interaction with students, who then also develop new habits. Chapter I discussed Dewey's assertion: "In such shared activity, the teacher is a learner, and the learner is, without knowing it, a teacher."[394]

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[391]Dewey, LW10, 267; Granger, *John Dewey, Robert Pirsig, and the Art of Living*, 335.

[392]Dewey, LW10, 267; Granger, *John Dewey, Robert Pirsig, and the Art of Living*, 335.

[393]Dewey, MW14, 19.

[394]Dewey MW9, 168.

Dewey underscores that the way teachers learn and teach is intertwined with student learning. That is, through interaction, the student teaches much like the teacher does. This reciprocal learning is an intellectual, ethical, and aesthetic matter of bodies in a shared space, learning in a common and changing environment. I discuss below, as I noted above, more fully the aesthetic dimensions of this student-teacher learning. It is, as I will argue, our sensitivity to immediate experience, as well as our imaginative and physical awareness, that allows for the greatest promise of growth.

If we take seriously the idea of dynamic habits in education, it is essential that we address teacher education. Teachers' habits and their beliefs about teaching come from a host of places: their culture, environment, parents, and education, and their own favorite and least favorite teachers, to name just some of the countless influences. What is clear is that the habits that teachers happen to acquire are not necessarily either the most fit for teaching or irrefutably the best, and yet it is difficult for them to let go of unhelpful habits and beliefs. The research of educational psychologists Dona M. Kagan and Peter J. Nelsen underscores that teachers can learn and, in turn, teach flexible, dynamic habits that allow for a critical awareness and active reconstruction of beliefs despite the difficulty of modifying old beliefs and adopting new ones. This ability, as demonstrated throughout this dissertation, is central for student learning as well. Moreover, teachers' ability to reflect on their habits critically and constructively allows them to make judgments about the worth of their habits. This in turn allows them to assess the impact of their habits and work on the process of modifying and reconstructing habits through intelligent planning and persistent reflection.

In order to understand how we might go about teaching habits in a teacher education program, we must understand a bit more the habits of beginning teachers. Obviously, their habits have a history. Whereas a child begins an education program characterized by plasticity and malleability (compared with adults), adults begin a teacher education program with their habits already formed. Most teacher education programs

view their participants' habits as fixed.[395] Moreover, most programs are not designed to teach critical inquiry or the practice of reconstructing habits. I argue that while teachers do arrive formed and with a history, they are able to intentionally cultivate the qualities of dynamic habits through dialogue and experiences with others. Moreover, if their teacher education programs view them as fixed, teachers in turn learn to view their students as fixed entities, a destructive view for the most-human project of education.

Let us begin with the first point: teachers do not arrive to teaching as a blank slate; neither do they go into teacher education programs as such. Rather, habits have been formed in their own educational experience, from their own teachers, from their families, from culture, and from their own beliefs about what it means to be a good teacher. Moreover, their beliefs about what constitutes good teaching includes reflections on what they liked, did not like, and were neutral about with regard to their own teachers.[396] Though there is a history, the possibility for teachers to learn to reconstruct their previously held habits is great. Therefore, while more than anything else, as the study by Dona Kagan described below shows, beginning teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and habits as teachers are formed by their own experience as students, there is a possibility to learn to be self-aware of such beliefs.

Kagan, in "Professional Growth among Preservice and Beginning Teachers,"[397] provides empirical evidence for the kind of growth possible in a teacher education program. Her research examines forty studies of school teachers, looking specifically at teachers' attitudes and beliefs as they come into teaching and how they influence teacher and student growth, particularly when their attitudes changed. One study that Kagan

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[395]Nelsen, "Intelligent Dispositions: Dewey, Habits and Inquiry in Teacher Education," 91.

[396]The author thanks David Granger for his comments and conversations on this topic.

[397]Dona M. Kagan, "Professional Growth among Preservice and Beginning Teachers," *Review of Educational Research*, Vol. 62, No. 2 (Summer, 1992): 129-169.

reviewed found that for all the elementary school teachers the idea of what comprised good teaching came from "one or two models and were inflexible across classroom contexts."[398] In fact, all forty studies found that all teachers came in with entrenched views about what constitutes good teaching and, more often than not, they remained unchanged even after a teacher completed a teacher training program: "[C]andidates tend to use the information provided in course work to confirm rather than to confront and correct their preexisting beliefs."[399] More importantly, all the studies also found that the ability to reconstruct attitudes, beliefs, and habits is essential if "professional growth" is to occur.[400] Kagan's work illustrates a claim Dewey makes: Teachers can go in two directions: the safety of relying on "furnishing ready-made subjects" followed by "listening to the accuracy"[401] by which the student reproduces the material *or* engages in participatory learning experiences with students.

In another case Kagan cites, six preservice elementary teachers were able to reconstruct their beliefs about teaching through shared "non-traditional" activities with children, such as peer editing and writing. Kagan writes, "[B]y studying and observing how children learned to write, the novices were able to step back from their prior beliefs, acknowledge where they were inaccurate or incomplete, and reconstruct them."[402] The emphasis on interaction with others is an essential component of reconstructing habits. It was found too that beginning teachers often assumed that their students learned in the way they themselves had learned and, only with interaction and experience, found this

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[398]Kagan, "Professional Growth among Preservice and Beginning Teachers," 133.

[399]Kagan, "Professional Growth among Preservice and Beginning Teachers," 154.

[400]Kagan, "Professional Growth among Preservice and Beginning Teachers," 142.

[401]Dewey, MW9, 168.

[402]"Novice" is the technical term Kagan employs to refer to beginning teachers. ("Professional Growth among Preservice and Beginning Teachers," 141).

was not the case.[403] In this way, interaction and learning from students is one of the most important ways teachers can engage in the process of reconstructing their habits and beliefs; "[I]t is a novice's growing knowledge of pupils that must be used to challenge, mitigate, and reconstruct prior beliefs and images."[404] Developing, then, a disposition to be open to thinking critically about one's habits and pedagogical attitudes is an essential part of the teacher education process. Some individuals may have already developed such a disposition, others may come to develop it in teacher education programs, possibly by observing and interacting with mentors who challenge their pedagogical beliefs, and others may model it with their own teachers who critically evaluate habits. Intentionally teaching openness is critical, for just as teachers may face difficulty in reconstructing their own beliefs, so may students, but it is important that we do not come to view ourselves as teachers, nor our students, as fixed. That is, we believe in growth for our students and ourselves because we have experienced it.

We can conclude, as Kagan does, that teacher education programs need changes. Along with introducing more systematic participant interaction with students, she suggests that program leaders facilitate and model reflection, inquiry, and dialogue. Doing so would help bridge the divide between theory and practice, an important program feature in light of the criticism from many teachers who believe their teacher education classes were too abstract.[405] Furthermore, teacher education programs can foster continued reflection and advocate mediums, or daily practices, for reflection, such as through journal writing. In the face of feeling unprepared, teachers fell back on what they knew or had experienced as students even if it was contrary to what they had come

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[403]Kagan, "Professional Growth among Preservice and Beginning Teachers," 145.

[404]Kagan, "Professional Growth among Preservice and Beginning Teachers," 142.

[405]Kagan, "Professional Growth among Preservice and Beginning Teachers," 144.

to believe were good teaching practices.[406] Continued reflection is important for changing a teachers's practice and attitudes because it promotes awareness. An important instigator of reflection is conflict or "cognitive dissonance." Kagan notes, "[I]n the absence of cognitive dissonance, learning among novices remained shallow and imitative."[407] When beginning teachers were placed with colleagues and mentors that, through engagement in teaching, demanded they integrate new knowledge with preexisting beliefs, the most professional growth occurred.

A key takeaway from this study is the importance of participatory learning with colleagues, teachers, and students who are diverse in their outlooks. One of the greatest impetuses for reconstructing and renewing habits is simply interacting with students (simple in the sense it does not require technology or studying). Interaction with students leads teachers to think about the origins of their habits and, in turn, to reconstruct them. In addition, teachers' experiences observing model teachers aids them in setting ends-in-view. What can be said, as addressed in the next section, is that certain characteristics *and* attention to certain elements support teachers in the process of re-imagining their practice, especially when they feel their preexisting ideas challenged. These characteristics include an openness, or cultivated naiveté as discussed in Chapter III, and an intelligent, reflective, and imaginative approach to their habits. They include both an awareness of the environment and a sense of freedom to construct learning environments. Teachers who develop an awareness of their habits and surroundings can turn around and cultivate an environment in which dynamic habits flourish for their students, whether it is in spite of or because of their school conditions.

Above I emphasize a teacher's ability to develop dispositions of openness towards others as well as an openness to the process of reconstructing habits. While some teachers

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[406]Kagan, "Professional Growth among Preservice and Beginning Teachers," 145.

[407]Kagan, "Professional Growth among Preservice and Beginning Teachers," 146.

come into teaching naturally disposed to reconstructing their habits, some do not. Nevertheless, not only is it possible to teach teachers to be open to reconstructing their habits, it is of the utmost importance to do so. If our concepts are misguided or misplaced, our educational endeavors suffer. The view that habits are fixed ruts and dispositions leads to education programs that essentially greet would-be teachers and students by locking them into a hierarchy of skill level and achievement-potential right as they cross the threshold of the institution. Yet, as Dewey shows, and as this dissertation reasserts, habits change, formed by the environment and ourselves. Moreover, we can develop (i.e., learn and practice) certain habits that allow us to grow in diverse and changing environments. These habits must form the backbone of a teacher education program.

In "Intelligent Dispositions: Dewey, Habits and Inquiry in Teacher Education," Peter Nelsen offers a brief but powerful example of the corrosive effects of being rigid about the habits and abilities of students and teachers. He cites a teacher with two sections of students: one section comprised of lower track students; the other, honors students. He writes that the teacher may, as many do, "have internalized the intellectual habits associated with meritocratic beliefs about academic success and failure."[408] Thus, her inability to see the two groups as different but equal in their status as learners could be a result of her "intellectual inflexibility."[409] The teacher, in giving primacy to the intellectual, has developed blinders to immediate experience. This blindness is corrosive to dynamic habits. A teacher trained with dynamic habits would recognize her own attitudes towards the students, and through interactions with them, buckle down to reconstruct her approach. Moreover, having borne witness to the difficulty of reconstructing her own habits during her teacher education program, she would be able to

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[408]Nelsen, "Intelligent Dispositions," 91.

[409]Nelsen, "Intelligent Dispositions," 91.

see the same potential in her students to grow. That is, in truly viewing herself as a learner, she would be able to relate and view her students, whether honors or low track, as such and view their potential for growth. In so doing, the teacher would practice and teach habits of inquiry, critical thinking, and reflection. She would model the cultivated naiveté discussed in Chapter III where students and teachers alike divest themselves of their habitual views and hold them out to think critically about such views with an eye to reconstructing them.

This section on beginning teachers has re-articulated views presented in previous chapters: (a) habits become refined as they are confronted with problems, and (b) inquiry and reflection are forms of criticism that pave the way for the reconstruction of habits. Therefore, basing a teacher education program on such views of habits is essential. To underscore what is at stake, Nelsen maintains:

> If one believes that dispositions are stable character traits, then a program will place much greater effort on its candidate selection process, seeking to insure that certain types of students are denied entry rather than placing greater emphasis on curriculum and experience that may affect the development of dispositions.[410]

He is careful to point out that while we can shape learning environments to encourage the development of intelligent habits, habits also permeate our culture and beliefs about education. These preexisting beliefs may positively or negatively influence a constructed learning environment, but in ways outside of any single person's control. Though there is no surefire way (and indeed there need not be) to develop habits, insofar as habits can allow teachers to grow professionally in their practice and insofar as cultivating habits is a central office of education, it is beneficial to accurately understand habits as flexible and to foster them as such.

A teacher education program, then, seeking to cultivate dynamic habits would organize itself around the following concerns: (1) the environment, (2) teacher as learner,

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[410]Nelsen, "Intelligent Dispositions," 86.

(3) conflict, and (4) reflection. Reflection is an overarching component that encompasses the previous categories. Reflection includes awareness, self-knowledge, and inquiry. Conflict here arises from exposure and interaction with others, whether students, colleagues, or teachers, who challenge formed beliefs, attitudes, and habits. In a teacher education program teaching teachers to view conflict as a positive and a catalyst for growth is essential. Conflict, in so far as it challenges our beliefs, asks us to modify and renew them, a process that allows teachers to strengthen their purpose and their practice.

I address teacher as student throughout the dissertation. Put briefly, the more a teacher can come to see herself as a learner, the more she can relate to her students as such, in turn deepening her understanding of her practice. The environment, like reflection, is also an overarching theme encompassing all the others. We can see reflection as inward and the environment as outward. Kagan writes that the environment effects many elements of the teaching practice and that it includes, "the nature of pupils, principal's beliefs, parental attitudes, availability of materials, communication between school and university personnel, attitudes of teachers in a school, and the personal relationship that develops between a novice and his or her cooperating teacher."[411] She adds that the beginning teacher "must negotiate many social and political—as well as pedagogical—dilemmas."[412] We can see this list not as exhaustive, but as indicative of the immeasurable but important role the environment has for teaching. Part of teacher education, in fact, is helping beginning teachers understand the very notion of environment. They learn, for example, what and how they can construct the classroom and environment and how to be careful not to let potentially important things in their classrooms recede into "background." They become actively aware and learn to see the environment as ripe for potential in light of their educational aims.

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[411] Kagan, "Professional Growth among Preservice and Beginning Teachers," 150.

[412] Kagan, "Professional Growth among Preservice and Beginning Teachers," 150.

The Concept of Habits in Psychology

I write in the tradition of philosophy of education, but I see my work on habits complementing similar and important work being done in other fields. In psychology, attitudes about reflection have received renewed interest and led to the creation of new terms related to the concept. Such terms include "mindset," first introduced into English vocabulary in 1909,[413] and "metacognition," introduced in 1972.[414] Contemporary studies include those by Carol Dweck on mindsets, Angela Duckworth on grit, and Howard Gardner and Harvard University's Project Zero on visible thinking.[415]

As shown above, an awareness of others and an individual's own changing beliefs is crucial to growth. Kagan writes, "An increase in metacognition [allows] novices [to] become aware of what they know and believe about pupils and classrooms and how their knowledge and beliefs are changing."[416] While Dewey does not use the word metacognition, his distinction in *Experience and Nature* between primary and secondary experience has similarities to metacognition.[417] Metacognition, or the act of thinking about one's own thinking, was first introduced as a new concept in education the 1970s by John Flavell, a developmental psychologist. He defined metacognition as "one's knowledge concerning one's own cognitive processes and products or anything related to

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[413]"mindset, n.". OED Online, March 2014, Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/252842?redirectedFrom=mindset (accessed April 04, 2014).

[414]"metacognition, n.". OED Online, March 2014, Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/245252?redirectedFrom=metacognition.

[415] Carol S. Dweck, *Self-Theories: Their Role in Motivation, Personality, and Development (*Philadelphia, PA: Psychology Press, 1999); Angela L. Duckworth, "The Significance of Self-Control." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 108, no. 7 (February 15, 2011): 2639–40; Howard Gardner, *Intelligence Reframed : Multiple Intelligences for the 21st Century* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1999).

[416]Kagan, "Professional Growth among Preservice and Beginning Teachers," 156.

[417]Dewey, LW1, 16.

them [...and] to the active monitoring and consequent regulation and orchestration of these processes in relation to the cognitive objects or data on which they bear."[418] In analogous ways, Dewey writes that secondary experience is the return to primary experience in such a way "that the meaning, the significant content of what is experienced gains an enriched and expanded force because of the path or method by which it was reached."[419]

Dawn Ellen, in her dissertation "Exploring Metacognition: A Description of Levels of Metacognition and their Relation to Moral Judgment," notes that Dewey in many ways was the first to write about what cognitive psychologists call metacognition.[420] Ellen writes, "Although metacognition is a relatively new field, self-reflection or "knowing thy self" has been the guiding principal to philosophy in general and philosophical anthropology in particular. Dewey's work, given his own background in psychology, can be considered a forerunner of metacognition as an interactive model linking thought and action."[421] In her view, Dewey's book, *How We Think*, and his discussion of "reflective thinking," is similar to the current accounts of metacognition in the way Dewey emphasizes reflective thinking as a precursor to and informing action.

Dawn's thesis that Dewey may have been the first to illustrate and define metacognition can be seen across his various works. In *Human Nature and Conduct*, Dewey writes that over time "a person teaches himself to think of the results of acting in this way or that before he acts," or, said, another way, learns to think about his

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[418]John H. Flavell, "Metacognition and Cognitive Monitoring: A New Area of Cognitive-Developmental Inquiry." *American Psychologist* 34, no. 10 (1979): 906-11.

[419]Dewey, LW1, 16.

[420]Ellen Dawn Schrader, *Exploring metacognition: A description of levels of metacognition and their relation to moral judgment*, Harvard University, PhD, 1988.

[421]Ellen, *Exploring Metacognition*, 9-10.

thinking.[422] To return again to the example touched on in the Prologue, the beginning teacher who realizes his habit of interrupting students is having a negative effect draws on the self-taught ability to recognize the impact of ones actions. He learns “to influence [his] own conduct,” or *think about* his habits of thinking and acting, by weighing or reflecting on actions he habitually does with an eye to how he can do them differently.[423]

How does a teacher go about developing an awareness of his habits of thinking and in turn teach this “metacognitive” habit to his students? Let us turn to a self-study by a teacher who sought to experiment with ways of teaching habits of thinking and learning in the classroom. Daric Desautel explores the interplay between teacher metacognition and student metacognition.[424] Desautel was disappointed that as a beginning teacher he was not more aware of the pressing work of developing metacognitive practices in *students*, particularly, as he shares, “because I had an ongoing example of the fruitful benefits of explicitly self-reflective practices all around me during my initial year as a teacher.”[425] He shares further, “During our teacher preparation, I, along with many of my first-year colleagues, benefited from these practices, which our instructors identified as self-reflective or metacognitive.”[426] These practices “actively involve learners in the learning process by asking them to consider and assess their own thinking.”[427] Despite

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[422]Dewey, MW14, 85.

[423]Dewey, MW14, 85.

[424]Daric Desautel, “Becoming a Thinking Thinker: Metacognition, Self-Reflection, and Classroom Practice.” *Teachers College Record* 111, no. 8 (2009): 1997-2020. URL: http://www.tcrecord.org/library.

[425]Desautel, “Becoming a Thinking Thinker,” URL: http://www.tcrecord.org/library.

[426]Desautel, “Becoming a Thinking Thinker, ” URL: http://www.tcrecord.org/library.

[427]Desautel, “Becoming a Thinking Thinker, ” URL: http://www.tcrecord.org/library.

learning the practices to support his own development as a teacher, he was not taught the importance and relevance of these practices for his students.

As Desautel states, his work is "an attempt to recreate the same robustly self-reflective, self-directed learning in my own classroom that I experienced with my colleagues during those first years as teachers-in-training."[428] His article, an account of his work with his students, offers implications for other beginning and seasoned teachers alike. His metacognitive activities included "weekly goal setting, oral language prompts and practice, post-task written self-reflections, and oral conversations."[429] His goal-setting activity and his role as a teacher were both characterized by a "co-investigative"[430] spirit and were particularly compelling and successful experiences in his view. The "co-investigative spirit," especially, allowed both student and teacher to learn from reflecting on shared experiences in the classroom, echoing Dewey's view of the importance of shared activity for learning in schools. Desautel importantly highlights many of the core elements of a teacher education program discussed above in relation to Kagan and Nelsen's research. Desautel is also an example of how reflecting on his experiences, his practice, and his students' learning gave him a sense of purpose. Moreover, in reflecting on the benefit that reflection brought to his own teaching and learning, he was able to see the value it would have for his students as well. In short, a teacher's ability to think, reflect, and dialogue about teaching with his colleagues builds the patterns of practice that allows him to teach and do the same with his students. As Desautel underscores, the project is not only important for himself, but for his students as well.

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[428]Desautel, "Becoming a Thinking Thinker, " URL: http://www.tcrecord.org/library.

[429]Desautel, "Becoming a Thinking Thinker, " URL: http://www.tcrecord.org/library.

[430]Desautel, "Becoming a Thinking Thinker, " URL: http://www.tcrecord.org/library.

Beginning teachers, like students, are developing patterns of practice they had not developed before. Consequently, dynamic habits have twofold implications for teachers. First, teachers initiate the critical process of reconstructing habits that allow them to become better teachers. They do this by reflecting on their practice, the work of their students, and by imagining new possible directions for their practice. Desautel shows a concern about the thinking of his students and a concern for developing an intentional program to go about learning good habits of thinking. Moreover, his program is not prescriptive. Rather, he teaches flexible ways of responding, adapting, and analyzing thinking. Desautel exemplifies how, by cultivating a dynamic habit, teachers are better equipped to model thinking and reflection to their students.

Desautel illuminates important elements of metacognition and learning. As we can see with Desautel, his work and account in many ways exemplifies flexible habits and interactive teacher/ student experiences Kagan and Nelsen cite as important for beginning teachers. That is, though we may code our qualitative and theoretical research differently, it is important to be able to recognize overlap and similarity along with the obvious differences.

Habits as Arts: The Project of Poetic Renewal

At the end of Kagan's paper she makes an interesting and important statement "[T]eaching is not a traditional occupation—not in the clean, technical sense of that term. Classroom teaching appears to be a peculiar form of self-expression in which the artist, subject, and the medium are one."[431] The idea of teacher-as-artist suggests that the classroom is the medium, where the environment can be arranged and designed to construct a range of learning experience. The idea also stresses the role of continuous

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[431]Kagan, "Professional Growth among Preservice and Beginning Teachers," 164.

reflection in the process of habit-making, where teaching is an always-in-the-making process with people always-becoming. Lastly, the idea connotes the student as subject where, in the particular art of teaching, the subject is of the upmost participatory kind. The kind of art, moreover, that Kagan points to is not the art in a museum in gilded frames, it is the art of everyday experience. It is art lived and, as Kagan notes, the artist, subject, and the medium, though distinct, are also a whole. Art, in this sense, as something always forming, is a uniquely suited metaphor for understanding the practice of teaching. Art as a practice, marked by engaging in play, poetry, literature, role play, and more, is a germane description of teachers and students who re-imagine and reconstruct habits in their learning experiences.

In the Prologue, we saw that a teacher, having deemed his habit of interrupting harmful, can begin the process of cultivating habits of patience and of awareness. For example, the teacher may come to realize that the students imitate his behavior and interrupt each other. He may decide that the culture of the classroom should be otherwise. When the teacher changes his habit of inadvertently cutting off a student in his eagerness to move the discussion forward, he must consciously pause when he calls on a student, bringing his focus to his urge to correct, expand on, or redirect the debate. He must, as a way to model listening, consciously hold his tongue, as it were, playing out the modification of his habit he had reflected on, repeating this effort of patience while his students are talking. The art of listening is part of the art of communication. As the Prologue example illustrates, a perquisite of artfulness is not art objects. Art is, in Dewey's words, sensitivity to immediate experience. It is a "means of keeping alive the sense of purposes that outrun evidence and of meanings that transcend indurated habit.[432] In Chapter III, I characterize Dewey's term *art* as habits that are dynamically responsive to experience and are imaginative in light of interest of self and other.

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[432]Dewey, LW10, 350-351.

Above I have explored the intelligent and ethical dimensions of this example, alluding to the aesthetic dimensions as well. Here I give a fuller account of the voice-finding and voice-giving the Prologue example illustrates. This is a timely topic given both the lack of art classes in schools and also because the aesthetic dimension of habits, while central to my dissertation, is perhaps the least valued and enacted in education today. Character education enthusiasts value the ethical benefits of habit-forming, psychologists today the intellectual benefits, but few see these two projects fused together as a necessarily aesthetic project. Voice-finding and voice-giving, as in the way the teacher finds his voice and allows his students to find theirs, illustrates a kind of freedom, not only to adapt, but re-imagine, not only one's habits, but also a culture or institution. Working with the concept of dynamic habit, I ask, what insights can we glean that are of use for the beginning teacher who is in the process of learning habits of teaching for the first time?

Here, I emphasize the voice-finding and voice-giving that occurs during teaching and learning by turning to an excerpt from my journal in my first year of teaching kindergarten. I draw on this because it usefully illustrates many of the themes found in this dissertation. I wrote:

> *Students often questioned how something was described. Or, in the absence of a familiarity with a long tradition of poetry, would find their own descriptions. These self-made descriptions of their lived world often struck me as incredibly accurate. As I came to see it, this accuracy, this looking and commenting, was the building of their own poetic voice. One girl, for example, picked up a conch shell in the classroom and put it to her ear one day, listened intently, and began to laugh uncontrollably. I stared at her incredulously. "What is so funny, Laurel?" I asked her*[433]*. I couldn't understand her the first few times, but finally I understood "It sounds like a toilet flushing." "What?" And all the other children ran over, grabbed the shell, and one after the other, put it to their, ear, and began laughing. I began to try to talk over them, trying to correct their mistake: "no it is the ocean, it is Neptune, the god of the water…" all the associations that I had been told,*

[433] All names have been replaced to protect the privacy of the individual.

> *but instead took the shell and put it to my ear and started laughing. It struck me that this was living and learning through comparison, which teaches us to learning through metaphor, which allows us to understand all the complexities of adult life.*

The scene took place in the second half of the year in a kindergarten classroom. I had been asked to design and teach a month-long poetry unit with the students. I am teaching the students new expressions and also asking them to describe objects in detail. Some of the work we did as a whole group, reading and discussing poems. Other times, I divided the students up and they worked together or alone to describe the subtlety and nuance of objects. Students experimented with words.

In my example of the seashell, we see a student, through association, name a sound. The accuracy of her naming leads others to adopt the name too. The students can refer to the sound as named by the child and can also introduce other names for the sounds, depending on the lesson and the kind of classroom culture the teacher is seeking to form. The teacher, in this situation, models the use of language, speaking correctly and using cultural expressions, but she also allows for a kind of creative renewal of language. The beginning teacher finds ways to initiate her students into a dominant cultural narrative while also allowing students to retain their imaginative expressiveness, keen observation skills, and their desire to link their selves with the classroom community.

Voice-finding and voice-giving is a dynamic expression of habits, in this case habits of language. The poetic activity of playfully naming and describing involves imagining new expressions and, in doing so, breaking free of ways we habitually talk about our experiences. Imagination, we can recall, is intrinsically connected with inquiry. Imagination and inquiry create possibility through the formation of new experiences, meanings, and values. This possibility, when acted upon, is what I take to be freedom. Moreover, through artful voice-finding and voice-giving, we experience a kind of

renewal. Renewal here is founded in a “sense of the possibilities opening before us” and in turn an awareness of “constrictions that hem us in and of the burdens that oppress.”[434]

Voice-finding and voice-giving can be understood as an artful process. More specifically, the dynamic play with habits of language is a poetic process in its very reliance on language and renewal. Naoko Saito in *Education’s Hope* says that because there is a seed of renewal found in the poet’s voice, the poet finding her voice is “the ‘foundation’ of hope.” Saito writes, “the classroom must become the forum for the finding of voices mutually, through awakening and remembrance.”[435] In the classroom, we are both awakened to the sound of the conch shell as named by the student and we share the memory of the name. Saito continues, invoking Dewey, that the poets “serve as critics of culture. The poets emancipate us from the ‘prison’ of our thoughts, produce the moments of ‘metamorphosis,’ which break new ground.”[436] Finding our poet’s voice is not an activity for the select few, Saito maintains, but a project of living and learning at the heart of democracy as a social ideal.

Laurel’s propensity to explore and name objects and experiences in unique ways is a trait of children, especially of her age. She is able to create new uses for words almost inadvertently. Whether the word becomes part of the experimental experience of the classroom is in great part in the hands of the teacher. Laurel did not say what she thought she should (indeed she had no preconceived notion of what the sound should be called). Rather she intensely listened to the sound. The fact that her reference was at first embarrassing, but nevertheless accurate, points to the unexpected, unglamorous metaphors of our lives. Even the ugly, the dissonant—the embarrassing—can be artful and have meaning. The teacher, in the classroom, can ask students to attend to the world,

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[434]Dewey, LW10, 349.

[435]Saito, *Education’s Hope*, 188.

[436]Saito, *Education’s Hope*, 188.

and think responsibly about the habits transmitted to them by culture and imaginatively when no ready habit presents itself. She can ask the students to look, and look again, describing what they have seen and in so doing, calling on their poetic voices.

Art makes us see again; it freshens experience. Seeing with fresh eyes allows us to cast away stagnate habits that feel comfortable and commonsensical but are routine, perhaps even dangerously so as we say in the last chapter with the example offered by Hannah Arendt. Fixed habits are tracks that often work only to “reinforce” the way we typically view the world.[437] Art, however, (and again here we mean sensitivity), can “crack the shell of mundaneness that we are prone to build around everyday objects.”[438] Learning to be open to art requires developing dynamic habits that allow for art’s freshness to reawaken our sensibilities. It is in fact a non-linear sway between art and dynamic habits that keeps our activities and beliefs fresh. Poetic renewal both allows us to construct new habits, new values, build out beyond what we know and have experienced, and it also allows us to critique existing values. Dewey writes, “poetry is a criticism of life”[439] in that it allows us to develop new views and possibilities. In critiquing the values of others, poetry defines and constructs new values.[440] Through this critique we create “possibilities of freedom. It is a way of standing in critical relation with others so as to foster mutual growth.”[441]

We see countless teachers do this in our accountability-driven era when they carve out space for alternate forms of assessment. For the teacher, the freedom to creatively

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[437]Granger, *John Dewey, Robert Pirsig, and the Art of Living,* 105.

[438]Granger, *John Dewey, Robert Pirsig, and the Art of Living,* 106.

[439]Dewey, LW10, 349.

[440]Garrison takes an interesting position on freedom as the direct product of criticism. He writes, “[…] criticism involves a new creation of value.”

[441]Garrison, *Dewey and Eros*, 134.

critique and break free from conventional norms of assessing, is essential. Garrison writes, "without an expansive imagination—one willing to go beyond conventional limits—teachers cannot be free, nor can they free their students."[442] An essential part of education, then, is poetic renewal, in so far as it is developing a sense of self, of agency, an ability *to have* ideas, and cultivating voice-giving and having.[443]

Conclusion

A more rigorous pursuit into curriculum and practices supporting dynamic habits would take researchers into the field of philosophical anthropology, a field examining the phenomenological dimensions of the human person. A future study covering this scholarly field would complement the work of this dissertation. Additionally, though the section above investigates habits as arts, an additional study dedicated to art and its importance for dynamic habits for teachers would complement this dissertation, particularly if the emphasis were on how habits as arts relates to habits as intellectual and habits as ethical. Lastly, a full-fleshed description of the four core elements of a teacher education program would be important, and needed, research stemming from this dissertation. The four core elements I outlined were: (1) the environment, (2) teacher as learner, (3) conflict, and (4) reflection. Another study will need to expand on and outline a complete curriculum for teachers. For my purposes, I choose to expand on reflection. Given the emphasis on awareness of habits I have developed throughout this dissertation, this seems a fitting choice, but the other elements are equally important and merit the attention of future research.

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[442]Garrison, *Dewey and Eros*, 134.

[443]See Higgins "Instrumentalism and the Clichés of Aesthetes Education; A Deweyan Corrective" (2008) for more discussion the value of at in education through a Deweyan lens.

Movements to develop critical thinking (intellectual habits), character (ethical habits), and creativity (aesthetic habits) are not separate strands of thinking, siloed apart in the curriculum. Such an approach is destructive to the overall process of developing habits of thinking. If we agree an education is based on teaching students to think, we must understand how teachers, key forces in a student's education, form intellectual, aesthetic, and ethical habits of thinking. Resting on this belief is the conception that an account of dynamic habits humanizes teaching, learning, and living. If we adopt a notion of habit that is static, our other concepts, moral, intellectual, practical and aesthetic suffer.

In schools today, the fixed habits of success and culture of efficiency ensure people who are fixed in their views and efficient, but perhaps not people who are artful and intelligent—traits essential for living and learning in a shared life. The cultivation of artful dynamic habits in our accountability-driven era has been pushed to the side or even deemed detrimental to educational efforts. The picture I have painted is one that is in opposition to the high-stakes driven classroom, where words are scripted and teachers operate in fear of saying the wrong word and students are monitored for their language use. Conditions where the artful and dynamic dimensions of schooling are stripped away leads to teacher burnout. The picture I paint is also one opposed to lofty and abstract ideals that are not grounded in experience and our daily practice as teachers and learners. By learning and teaching dynamic habits and poetic renewal through art, we learn to call into question assumptions and rules, customs and habitual ways of thinking. By calling our habits and attitudes into awareness, we begin the process of reimagining and re-fashioning.

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