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Foucault on Self and Education: Some Reflections and Conjectures

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ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to reconceive the salient relationships among self, moral education, and the reflection provocations of the French thinker Michel Foucault. It aims to provide a new perspective and philosophy of education on the current practice of moral education, particularly in the Philippines. In achieving this end, the paper discusses how moral education binds the self and its construction, and it forwards conjectures on how moral education may be directed better towards the advancement of the self. By drawing on the Foucauldian philosophical notions of care of the self that appeared in the latter works of the thinker Michel Foucault, this paper will argue that a moral education project can only be successful and truly live up to its promises of producing good human beings if it liberates and truly opens itself up to constant interrogation and reexamination. In the end, it is hoped that the paper will contribute towards crafting a more emancipating and truly effective moral education framework in the Philippines.

1. Introduction

Oh Man, on You I call, for You I search
in whom man's history find its body.
I approach you saying, not "Come"
But Simply "be."
Karol Wojtyla*, Easter Vigil,* 1966

In the book *Memory and Identity*, Pope John Paul II or Karol Wojtyla (2005), in his erstwhile reflection on man and history, recalls some verses that he wrote previously about the incarnate Word of God, "in whom alone history acquires its full meaning" (155). The first few lines were quoted in full at the outset of this paper. In this succinct excerpt, Pope John Paul II articulates that it is in God-man, the incarnate Word of God, that individual human persons find the fullness of their history, of the history of mankind. Man, with a small letter "m", referring to human persons in general, beseeches Man (capital letter M), God-man, not to come to him, but rather to be. Conceiving and trusting in what God is, referring to Him as Man, God-man, Wojtyla hopes that the incarnate Word assumes its identity, its whatness, to be what it is.

Without plummeting into a full analysis of the metaphysical and ontological implications of what the revered Pope said, one can at least infer that such mystery can only be indicative of the huge chasm that separates human persons in the world and the spiritual domain where human persons are looking forward of reaching. When Wojtyla admits to approaching the incarnate Word by asking Him to just "be," there is a profession of faith that the God-man is, regardless of any condition, what it is—ample and whole unto Itself. On the other hand, a human person in the world is not anything unless he fashions himself to become something.

That said, it is one of the most striking and moving ideas celebrated by the French thinker, historian of ideas, and philosopher Michel Foucault, following one of his favorite thinkers, Friedrich Nietzsche. Although Foucault was no existentialist, he viewed human existence as an opening of possibility for a human being fashioning oneself into what one wants to become. With human persons' existence and their being in the world come the challenge not just to lay static but to become something through concrete action. One cannot simply pause and wait. One must get onto the road and engage in the crisscrossing of ideas and actions. In a Heraclitan world of eternal flux, one cannot just stand and look disinterestedly. One must be present and embrace the process of becoming.

In 2015, at a conference held at the Australian Catholic University in Melbourne, Australia, sponsored by the *Philosophy of Education Society of Australasia*, one interesting paper presented dealt with student engagement and how universities, while on the surface, attempt to incorporate this in the curricula successfully, most frequently fail. The authors argued that students who join organizations, seek learning opportunities outside the universities, and empower themselves through dialogues with the universities do not show commitment to real social engagement. There are artificial engagements characterized by outward attempts at action and motivated by selfish desires, but real engagement is far from getting actualized. This is a dangerous trend, according to the authors. Their paper was eventually published. In it, Barnacle & Dall'Alba (2017) repeated what they presented during the conference: higher education is responsible for developing students' knowledge and skills and, more importantly, students 'complete being' that they become after attending universities. What this means is that knowledge and skills are insufficient to form a 'complete being' of a student such that we prepare them to become fully human beings equipped with all the necessary knowledge, skills, and, most importantly, character or virtues so that when they are in the world, they become humane and critical beings, not

just a well-made 'automatons' from a factory of skills and knowledge.

In the Philippines, what kind of human beings do we expect to produce in the grand halls of universities? How do we expect to produce these individuals? In this paper, we intend to discuss the intimate relationship between moral education and the self. Employing Michel Foucault's insightful ideas on ethics, particularly his discourse on the care of the self, we argue that moral education should improve students' sense of self. In doing so, this variety of education achieves its rightful ends. Our aim is that this article and its conjectures hope to catalyze future moral education frameworks and instruction in the Philippines and beyond.

1.2 Framework of the Study

Among many contemporary minds, Michel Foucault allowed humanity to see "certain aspects of our experience *in profoundly new ways* for a whole generation of thinkers (Rabinow & Rose, 2003, viii). Many thinkers in the humanities and social sciences have looked back on Foucault for guidance in interrogating aspects of the world that are otherwise vague. This study will not depart from this tradition. Foucauldian intimations and framings of the self will be used to analyze current practices and givens in moral education. His intricate distinctions of concepts related to self will be brought into service by providing helpful suggestions for improving moral education in this country. After all, Foucault's interest in education seems obvious when he refers to it as central within the "great carceral continuum" (Foucault, 1979, 297). Hence, the question of how Foucauldian concepts such as self, care, discipline, knowledge, and discourse can liberate education from its prison becomes necessary.

Towards the end of Foucault's life, his intellectual interest partly shifted. From the problems of prison, sexuality, and technology of the self, he shifted his look to the problem of "the subject" or the self itself. Unlike psychological or sociological studies on the self, Foucault was more concerned with an "attempt to develop an analytic that could make visible the vectors that shape *our relation to ourselves*" (1979, xx). Foucault was interested in how the self is created, constituted, or crafted in these relationships with the self and other constraints. Throughout his studies on subjectivity and the ethics of the self, Foucault recognized, according to Bernauer, that "there is a truth in the subject, that the soul is the place where this truth resides, and that true discourses can be articulated concerning it" (Bernauer, 1992, 164). The 'self' forms the pinnacle of the discourses in the thinker's life. He knew it was fitting to round up the questions that he elevated into public discourse by ending it with a discourse on the care of the self and think about how "[t]he individual's relation to the self imitates both the baptismal turning from the old self to a new-found otherness, as well as the ceremony of public penance that was depicted as a form of martyrdom proclaiming the symbolic death of the old self" (165). In other words, for Foucault in *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, the care of oneself (*epimeleia heautou*) serves as the general framework, following Plato's *Alcibiades,* "as one of the forms, one of the consequences, as a sort of concrete, precise, and particular application of the general rule: You must attend to yourself, you must not forget yourself, you must take care of yourself" (Foucault 2005, 4-5). It is in this framework where one, according to Foucault, must understand the Delphic rule of 'know yourself' (*gnothi seauton*), central to Socrates' ethical thought and the "founding formula of the history of [western] philosophy" (Arnold Davidson 2005, xix).

Because of Foucault's ideas' sheer sharpness, it will be utilized as a main theoretical tool in this paper. The intersection between Foucauldian concepts (such as self, discourse, and 'practices of subjectivation') and moral

education is on the self. This will be the cornerstone of the analysis and argument. How can a Foucauldian counsel on caring for the self of utility to a more viable moral education? This is the main question that this paper will respond to. Foucault would not have been pleased to know that his ideas have been considered doctrines and are being used as anchors in analyzing aspects of contemporary life, like education, such as in this work. He would have been aghast at attempts at disciplining thoughts and making them neat and fit within the frames that he gave birth to. He would have wanted his ideas to serve as attempts at constant interrogations. In any case, and despite this, it would have been a disservice to his work and legacy not to employ them when appropriate.

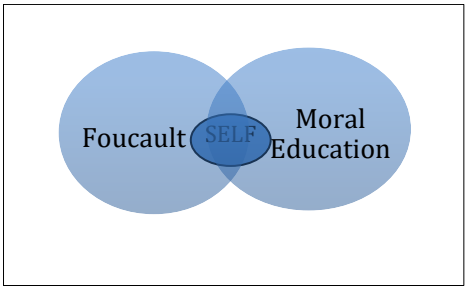

Figure 01. The Self as the locus of analysis of a Foucaldian Moral Education

2. Materials and Methods

This philosophical research paper is conceptual in nature. Philosophy, generally, delves into a clarification of concepts to arrive at the truth. This view assumes that the subject is involved in searching for and accessing the truth. Foucault describes philosophy as "the form of thought that asks what it is that enables the subject to have access to the truth and which attempts to determine the conditions and limits of the subject's access to the truth" (Foucault 2005, 15). Furthermore, philosophy does not conventionally employ traditional qualitative or quantitative methods utilized in sciences because "[p]hilosophy does not have a definitive research method. Its search for truth is anchored on a researcher's depth of reflection and rigor of critical thinking" (Maboloc, 2020). Hence, this paper will use textual analysis (particularly rhetorical criticism using the DAIE [describing, analyzing, interpreting, and evaluating method) and analytic philosophical analysis are its methods throughout the study to help establish how Foucault's insightful views of self and care for oneself provide a more viable moral education. Foucault's lectures at the College de France entitled *The Hermeneutics of the Subject* and his other lectures on the ethics of self will be used as primary texts for analysis. As Downing says, "[a] reading of the works of Michel Foucault (1926-86) does not so much equip us with new pieces of knowledge, or even teach us new and different ways of knowing. Rather, it invites us to share in a radical calling into question the ways in which knowledge itself operates" (2008, vii). The DepEd and CHED curricula pertinent to students' moral education and formation, like *Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao* (EsP), *Introduction to Philosophy of the Human Person,* and *Ethics,* will also be analyzed.

3. Results and Discussion

The Philippines has been in the process of revitalizing its education sector by introducing changes in both basic and higher education. Since 2013, at least two monumental policies have been promulgated to streamline the Philippine educational system with its counterparts in the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) region. On May 15, 2013, Republic Act No. 10533, or the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, was passed into law. It added two years of Senior High School into the old curriculum to broaden the range and goals available to high school students and to better prepare them for higher education (DepEd, 2019). The Commission on Higher Education

(CHED) wanted to streamline higher education with basic education; thus, CHED created the General Education (GE) curriculum framework for all higher education institutions in the Philippines by issuing CHED Memorandum Order No. 20 Series of 2013 that sets the framework and rationale of the revised GE framework (CHED, 2013).

3.1 Moral Education in the Philippines

The role of moral education in this curricular transformation is seen to be of primacy as it occupies a stable place among required subjects in basic education and higher education. Broadly construed, moral education is the systematic transmission of moral values considered worthy of being taught in schools. Moral Education has been given its strand by including the subject *Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao* (EsP) in basic education, *Philosophy of the Human Person* (Senior High School), and *Ethics* in higher education. Amidst learning goals and contents ultimately linked to economic priorities, giving space to the making of 'human' and what makes individuals ultimately a human person is considered in the design of educating young Filipinos in the 21st Century. The inclusion of moral cultivation or formation in the curricula is intrinsic to the nature of education. In *Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao* (ESP), the primary aim is to cultivate and develop the ethical aspect of the student's human personhood (DepEd 2016, 2). This basic education course is reinforced when a student enters Senior High School where a core subject, *An Introduction to the Human Person,* is required to be taken by all, which aims to "demonstrate a capacity for a critical and analytical reflection from the perspective of a holistic and profound vision of life" (DepEd 2016, 1). The moral or ethical aspect of a student's formation is seen in the topics it covers, such as the human person with another (intersubjectivity), human freedom, environment, and sociality. In higher education, the *Ethics* course is a continuation of the courses taught in basic education and senior high school. These are just among the courses where the moral education of students is cultivated.

What role is expected of moral education in the Philippines? Does it have an intrinsic role in the making of its citizens, or is it simply instrumental in the more pressing, concrete, market-driven aims of contemporary times?

In the Philippines, in the past, a constant subject area called *GMRC* (Good Manners and Right Conduct) in elementary and *Values Education* in High School were staples in the curricula. Values are those that people as a collective put a premium on. Thus, a certain group may value a particular societal norm that does not, strictly speaking, qualify as a virtue. Virtues are dispositions of character that enable persons to use their freedom in morally responsible ways. Values Education teachers were seen as saints or know-it-alls when they were also just humans. Examination answers were either this or that. Moreover, teachers' values were touted as the exemplars and should also be the students' values. In Foucault's own words, teachers are "technicians of behavior" or "engineers of conduct" (Foucault, 1979, 294). As technicians, Foucault views teachers as responsible for passing on the knowledge they have acquired to students, that "they are capable of teaching it to others" (Foucault 2008, 24). In such a role, the teachers as technicians are "obliged, in a way, to tell the knowledge he possesses and the truth he knows, because this knowledge and truth are linked to a whole weight of tradition" (ibid). Concerning teaching values to students, it is important to note what Foucault said in the passage cited about the relationship between knowledge and truth. The story above obviously shows that when one is pontificating and imposing beliefs dogmatically, it does not exemplify the proper teaching skills.

In college, normative ethics was taught. Principles from sages were provided, and the ability to utilize them in the finest prose possible determines who was best in class. Mastering Aristotle, Kant, Mill, and other ethicists was thought to make one a better person. It would take a few more life experiences to make students reconsider that the ability to use moral principles in justifying one's actions does not make a virtuous person.

Going through the new syllabi and course guides of *ESP*, *Philosophy of the Human Person*, and *Ethics*, provided by DepEd and CHED, gave us little hope. The mistake of the contemporary world and moral education is its failure to transform moral education into character-building. Character-building requires synchronicity between thinking and acting. It is not a matter of theorizing that one can say one has built a character for oneself. While in the *ESP* of basic education, the fundamental conceptual frameworks are the philosophy of personalism and virtue ethics, which we think are essential in the character-building formation of students, the following courses, such as *Introduction to the Philosophy of the Human Person* and *Ethics* that aim to reinforce and enhance such formation deviate from such frameworks. In the case of teaching an *Ethics* course, mere instruction in morality is insufficient to nurture the virtues. It might even backfire in some cases when the presentation is heavily exhortative, and the students' will is compelled.

What, then, is the way out? Does Foucault have something to remind us about doing this right?

A good moral education addresses human beings' cognitive and affective dimensions. Virtue education should produce genuine "*tao* (human person)" capable of legislating her destiny and seeking out truths in the endless process of engagement with others. Foucault reminds us constantly that truth can only be attained by relentless participation in the endless zigzag of everyday life (Taylor, 2011). Truth should not be understood here as simply an epistemic concept concerning knowing, an object waiting to be grasped or discovered. Rather, for Foucault, access to truth is linked to one's "aesthetics of existence," which, in turn, is conditioned by individual freedom or the "exercise of self-mastery" (Foucault 1985, 78). Our experience of everyday life reveals to us the complexity of accessing and achieving the truth. Talking about *aphrodisia* during the ancient period, Foucault understood truth as a product of power seen in three conditions historically visible in the life of the ancient Greeks, namely structural, instrumental, and ontological conditions (Foucault 1985, 89). Truth, then, is related to the self and the self's capacity to reorient itself through itself. As Taylor explains, "Foucault shows that early Christian practices of the self, like their ancient and Hellenistic counterparts, entail a process of 'conversion'" (174). By conversion, Foucault meant a change from one's old self to a new one. To obtain the right to access the truth about oneself and the world, the subject must 'be changed, transformed, shifted, and become, to some extent and up to a certain point, other than himself" (ibid). When education has turned into a monolith of an institution, we must rebel or in Foucault's terms, "resist" the power that molds it. When virtue education has made us prisoners of jails, just like "the enslavement of the self by oneself" (Foucault 1985, 79), we were made to construct ourselves, we must break away from our self-made shackles. We use the tools used to create the same shackles to undo the shackles, start recreating a new world, and rediscover who we are.

The character means an impression. The moral character is an impression stamped upon the self, cultivated in how the "self" maneuvers itself into and around the world. Character, however, cannot be a given. We choose to be who we want to be and how we

want to be. Freedom is a precondition of choice itself. Without freedom, the self, and as a consequence, character cannot be created. "In general, Foucault describes ethics as the kind of relation an individual has with him or herself. The essential condition for the practice of ethics is freedom, the ability to choose one action, not another. Foucault specifies that 'ethics is the considered form that freedom takes when it is informed by reflection" (O'Farrell, 2002, 114). Without the capacity to reflect, genuine care of the self is impossible.

Having said this, an effective moral education, one hoped the change in the curriculum includes, is one where pedagogy is anchored on freedom. Constant attempts to make education better and more effective is something that Foucault would have supported. For instance, in *Discipline and Punish,* Foucault talks about the process of making the human body docile through various impositions of discipline mechanisms such as well-defined and rigid rules and strict observance of norms in a particular setting like a school (in this case, Foucault cited St. Jean-Baptiste de La Salle), where "meticulousness of the regulations, the fussiness of the inspections, the supervision of smallest fragment of life and of the body will soon provide…a laicized content, an economic or technical rationality…" (Foucault 1995, 140) effectively monitors students' academic progress. To be sure, Foucault described a particular practice of discipline during the 19th century. However, it is worth noting here that Foucault alludes to discipline as a mechanism that may or may not bring about effective or better education. But when most people are hopeless, Foucault reminds us that there is hope and that we should never say die. This hope is possible because of one's self-mastery, which allows one to fashion oneself in ways one lives creatively. Further, we have a vision that motivates these endless alterations in education. We have to look closely and run after that target. We cannot afford to feel trapped. Otherwise, we have to break free and snap out of it. In Foucault's view, most of the 'traps' we have in life are socially constructed such that these 'traps' are an invention and a product of power relations (Foucault 1995).

Current practice in teaching ethics should be halted (or reexamined or altered), and a different way of doing it should be implemented effectively. For one, the role of reason in human conduct has been overestimated for the longest time. A student who can write a beautiful essay about justice may be awarded the Best in Values Education. In truth, only the future will judge how effective values education has been in transforming this student. Conversely, the roles of imagination and the will have yet to be underestimated. We were made to believe that if we knew how to go about a particular situation in life, we would be able to act accordingly. Psychologists and moral philosophers have long falsified this. Aristotle, early on, and probably Foucault now, tells us that we can all be visionaries and imagine how we want things to be. The old way of doing values education needs to be revised. We cannot be trapped in the old ways, whether concocted by us, passed on by the old, or imposed by institutions. We move forward. We sometimes fail. We stand up. We learn.

Ethics cannot be taught as a how-to manual for successful living. At some point, individuals may be drawn towards these books in colorful covers on most bookstore stands, often included in the bestsellers list—of self-help books. When some people thought that life could be lived with a how-to manual that guarantees success, how could they not be lured by these life gurus? Routine introduction of virtues themselves, steps at living a good life, and all those contents of self-help books should be halted. Such education only mechanizes the mind, stirring it into the illusion that life is rote. However, it is not. Education should transform minds and

convert hearts. This is the only way to go about a genuine moral education.

3.2 Mastery of the Self

Any genuine change in the macrocosmic scale is bound to fail unless the actors, from the ground, are amenable to change themselves. In effect, any reform in moral education should start with the self.

What does it mean to examine the self? McGushin (2007) reminds us that "Everyone at some point, has heard that seemingly ubiquitous advice: *just be yourself.* Keep it real, be true to yourself, be your own person, find yourself, express yourself, be confident in yourself, have self-esteem, follow your own path, and so on. On the other hand, this guidance seems completely natural: are we not all trying our best to be ourselves? Yet, on the other hand, the directive, *be yourself,* sometimes sounds hollow: after all, who else could I possibly be but myself?" (127). What task is demanded from the self when asked to know itself? Is the Socratic mantra of knowing the self what is needed here? Foucault suggests that we should see the self that acts upon and the self that is acted upon. This sort of suggestion from Foucault is just one of the three modes of objectification "which transform human beings into subjects" (Foucault 1982, 777). This mode of objectivizing the subject is called the 'dividing practices' of the self. It means "The subject is either divided inside himself or from others" (777-778). It can be seen in Foucault's discussion of the examination of conscience as practiced by the Hellenistic philosophers and then carried over and modified during the early Christian period by the monks in a kind of self-examination that is self-emptying or detachment. Foucault explains that this practice "seems that the subject divides itself into two and organizes a judicial scene, where it plays both roles at once. Seneca is like an accused confessing his crime to the judge, and the judge is Seneca himself" (Foucault 2016, 30). But then Foucault thinks that the judicial character of self-examination as a technique or practice of *parrhesia* is only superficial because a closer look at the practice reveals that "it is a question of something different from the court, or from judicial procedure" (Foucault 2001, 148). The whole relational process of these two selves taking care of each other is what he meant by the care of the self. "Resolutely facing this paradoxical task of being ourselves is what Michel Foucault calls the "care of the self. He defines our "'subjectivity' as what we make of ourselves when we devote ourselves to taking care of ourselves" (128).

Foucault recommends that the self looks down upon itself that has been normalized and made to think that the disciplinary measures of the society did not change it, when in fact, it did. The care of the self requires that the self that acts upon the self, the one that is acted upon, critically examines itself and distances itself from the self being gazed at to see how it has gone, to improve it, and to determine its future path. Such a practice is called truth-telling, which involves a process of communing with oneself: *parrhesia* or the Socratic practice of truth-telling. *Parrhesia* is a specific ethical practice different from other truth-telling in that its objective is unique—"to incite each person to occupy himself with himself" (Davidson, 2003). Compared to other practices of *parrhesia,* like public and personal relationships, the disclosure of the truth about oneself characterizes the self-examination technique (Foucault 2001, 143). The difference is found in the techniques, where the *parrhesiastic game,* as Greeks conceived of it, "was constituted by the fact that someone was courageous enough to tell the truth to *other people*" (ibid). However, self-examination is a parrhesiastic game that "consists in being courageous enough to disclose the truth about *oneself*" (ibid). To whom does one disclose the truth about oneself? Foucault says to oneself as well. Such a confession to oneself of one's faults leads to a therapeutic practice of self-correction and

improvement that does not require another person or a small group or community to inform one of one's faults and other things. The problem that Foucault finds in self-examination or confession is not to tell the truth about what one sees in another but "to confront the truth about yourself," which requires *askesis* or practical training or exercise (ibid). Foucault cited Seneca's practice of writing about day-to-day events, including everything he remembers in his daily activities. Self-examination or confession, unlike the Christian view of it, does not discriminate stories or accounts to write on. That is why Foucault said that self-examination is not like a judicial practice but more of an administrative work of the self to itself. The main task is to record all possible events, big and small, without leaving behind anything, even the insignificant ones (149).

"Foucault's account of subjectivity gives a whole new meaning to these words and helps us understand why the task they prescribe is so urgent but yet so difficult, ultimately endless. Being oneself is a matter of strenuously *trying* and determined artfulness, because the self is a continuous becoming, not a fixed being" (141). For Foucault, the task of the self is to look at itself truthfully, allowing one to fully grasp what and who one is in relation to one's seeing of oneself. It allows one to willingly embrace the difficult task of losing oneself to give birth to the new self, a self that does not have a fixed future to hold on to and is liberated from the shackles of the known and given. When one is ready to heed Foucault's advice, one is ready to be a more virtuous, morally enlightened individual.

3.3. Suggestions Rather than Prescriptions

Foucault never prescribes. He simply presents scenarios that are of great concern to him and others. Following Nietzsche, Foucault critically describes those phenomena which, for him, are "still virgin territory" and of no interest to many yet provide important lessons to everyone. In an interview, Foucault explains that his work "since *Historie de la folie* is that of problematization, though it must be said that I never isolated this notion sufficiently. But one always finds what is essential after the event; the most general things are those that appear last" (Foucault 1990, 257). Hence, Foucault's statements should always be taken as suggestions on how to go about the modern world in the prism of one's understanding and care of the self. What suggestions does he probably have in our attempt to revitalize moral education?

To educate the heart is to educate the person.

We do not teach values and virtues. We empower people, our students, to think for themselves and to determine the virtues for themselves. Part of educating the heart is knowing what matters to us. Allowing people to explore uncharted ideas and concepts and providing them with an arena where they can engage in their colloquy can bring out the best benefits for them. Teach students not what values are. Teach them to look for their own values. Teach not students to memorize ideas; teach them to question such ideas. Teach not students how to obey and accept thoughts; teach them to argue and think for themselves. In the words of Foucault (1988), we should always be wary of elements of "governmentality" in schools: exams, notions of disciplinarity, and other tools that aim to transform students into useful, docile, and practical students.

Likewise, a fully functioning virtue education program is open to exposing students to real-life scenarios. It is one that is receptive to exposure activities that may either benefit or harm the students. Such a program allows students to dip their feet into the world and parade before their eyes all possibilities as they sail through life. After all, experience is the best teacher. How can abstractions be taught without activities that render these abstractions alive?

Drew Leder (2009), in the book *Teaching Philosophy,* introduces the notion of experiential learning: teaching by exposing students to out-of-classroom learning experiences intended to enrich these learners' understanding of usually distant, abstruse concepts. He admits that teaching and, afterward, learning students may be achieved by connecting concepts with real-life situations. He gives as an example like teachers providing "experiential examples in class" to facilitate better learning and better understanding of lessons by students. Rather than just providing examples in class that attempt to imitate actual experiences, teachers could "design experiences for our students that provoke further philosophical reflection" (95).

Leder (2009) relates how he employs this strategy in teaching *Asian Philosophy*. By allowing students to visit institutions such as a home for people with AIDS, he allows his students to grapple with the intricacies of topics in his course, such as "personal identity, self-body relationship, karma, death and reincarnation, suffering and techniques for mastering and transcending it, compassion, interdependency, the caste system..." among others. Through exposing students to circumstances that provide them with deeper insights into life in general, they are able to appropriate concepts better in their own lives and their general understanding of the world (Caslib, 2014). Students are encouraged to look within and possibly engage in ethical work by getting into real-life examples. "Ethical work, says Foucault, is the work one performs in the attempt to transform oneself into an ethical subject of one's own behavior, the means by which we change ourselves in order to be become ethical subjects" (Olssem, 1999, 139).

Another reminder from Foucault: let us be bold and refresh. We must dare to think critically and differently. In internet browsers, whether Safari, Google Chrome, or Mozilla, we call that little button that we click every time the browser stops or hangs the refresh button. In life, the refresh button is perennially available to us. Most of the time, we do not dare click it for fear of the unknown. We silently grieve our condition, our misery, for fear that the unknown promises not a bright alternative but a dimmer road ahead. This mentality has to stop. Foucault tells us we can always start all over again. It is a consequence of our ability to examine anything given in front of us carefully. It is our "ontological attitude, a philosophical mode of being and a way of life." In other words, it asks us to engage as existing beings with everything we do since we submit ourselves to constant change and ways of living. The world is constantly changing. Norms are changing partly because we constantly subject them to interrogations and challenges. Institutions themselves are prone to change. We have to teach students how to swim with the tide and how to click the refresh button if necessary. Talking about *metanoia* in Foucault, Taylor (2011) says, "In ancient and Hellenistic contexts, conversion takes the form of a 'turning' within the self: a kind of self-reflective taking stock of oneself through which one gains (a different) perspective. By contrast, early Christian conversion, *metanoia,* entails not a turning off but instead a break within the self; it is less a process and more an 'upheaval,' a single, sudden transition from one form of existence to another" (175). To teach virtue is to teach students to be ready to engage in this transition at any time. That is the only way we will survive.

Moreover, we cannot deal with giants and confront them head-on. As the biblical story goes, David knew that Goliath was the most-feared warrior, strongest, and most formidable. He could not win a battle against Goliath alone if he played by the latter's game. He went by his own style, with his own weapon, and as the story now goes, killed the mammoth. I think this is the metallic core of the story of David and Goliath. We cannot deal

with gargantuan challenges. We break them down. We celebrate small, isolated victories. We connect the dots. From there, we effect change.

Another lesson is that we have to be ourselves. Foucault focused so much on the care of the self because he knew that was where it all started. We have to look into who we really are and stand beside it. Amidst the tide we are forced to swim into, it is imperative to stick with who we are and refashion it if necessary. "Although the self is constituted by practices, it is always possible to make something out of what it has been made into, once it learns how to pull the strings" (Olssen, 1999, 139). So much of contemporary life goes unchallenged. Do we still know who we are and what our 'selves' represent and stand for? Are we content? Are we willing to die for a brand-new self?

Furthermore, as we think about the world and reality, do we allow ourselves to be plastered, literally frozen, because of the dizzying confusion around us? Do we just go by the huge wave because we are afraid of stepping aside, of fashioning ourselves regardless of what some would say? Have we really come to that point when we abandon any attempt at critical discourse because staying within our comfort zones is easier? Ethical action, for Foucault, according to Olssen (1999), "…demands *stylization* which is an aesthetics of existence. In this sense, ethical self-creation of one's life as a work of art extends Nietzsche's concept that life has value as an aesthetic achievement and that one must give style to one's life by integrating the diffuse nature of oneself into a coherent whole. The question of style was crucial in ancient experience: stylization of one's relationship to oneself, style of conduct, and stylization of one's relationship to others" (143). Foucault calls for each of us to find our own style or, if there's none, to craft it.

In addition, are we willing to honestly look within ourselves and be honest in spotting contradictions in our own lives? Are we willing to engage in that "exercise of self upon the self by which one attempts to develop and transform oneself, and to attain a certain mode of being" (Foucault, 1997, 282). Are we willing to admit the innate contradiction of believing in democracy and pushing for one who doesn't seem to believe in it? Are we willing to continue calling ourselves Christians when we do not even follow the teachings of Christ?

Finally, are we willing to get out into the world, present ourselves and our biases and positions, and face the possibility of resistance? For Foucault, a hidden self has been "concealed, alienated, or imprisoned in and by mechanism of repression" (Foucault, 1997, 282). Are we willing to talk, listen, sit, and deliberate together? Is my position bendable and welcoming of contrary or alternative ways of looking at the world? Is consensus something we are willing to build with my fellow subjects?

4. Conclusion and Recommendation

Moral education is indelibly connected with how students are made to see their own selves and start from there. Michel Foucault's focus on the care of the self, on the rechanneling of one's gaze into one's own self provides a very good framework upon which suggestions on how to improve the pedagogy and framing of moral education in this country may be initiated and done. The questions that Foucault inspired are worth exploring and answering by policymakers and curriculum experts.

Indeed, there is a need to foster values education, and a radical intervention in this regard is necessary to prepare reasonably the best curriculum for the students. Values education must be inculcated as a source of making good citizens. The practice of value in everyday life would help transform the self and eventually make a better society. As a struggling educator, that may be where it all

starts for us, from that little jolt. If we are not amenable to it, we cannot possibly introduce it to our students. And the world will stay the same. What a horror.

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