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Analysis of the Purpose of Education: Dynamic Fullness and *status virtutis*

Análisis acerca de la finalidad de la educación: plenitud dinámica y Status Virtutis

Análise sobre o propósito da educação: Plenitude dinâmica e status virtutis

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ABSTRACT

This study presents a comparative hermeneutical analysis regarding the purpose of education between Francisco Ruiz Sánchez and Tomás de Aquino. Indeed, a close relationship can be glimpsed in both of them in the categorizations they propose, namely: the status virtutis in Thomas Aquinas and the dynamic fullness in Francisco Ruiz Sánchez. From the analysis carried out, the issues in common and dissenting aspects are established. It is concluded that the idea of perfection is common to both Ruiz Sanchez and Thomas Aquinas. In both conceptions a state is expressed: in the interpretation of Millán Puelles a character of finality is assumed, while in that of Ruiz Sánchez a nuance that rescues the dynamic process towards fullness, proper of the "homo viator" is perceived. Francisco Ruiz Sánchez takes for his theorization the idea of the state of virtue proposed by Aquinas. However, he specifies the state of dynamicity of man and the ordering of the different dimensions of the human being from the interiority and conduct, where the following come into play: the interior order ad extra, that is, towards the outside; the formation and the interior order itself. This results in the formation of correct habits and acts, thus giving the concept of dynamic wholeness a certain originality.

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Conflict of interest:

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest. **Author**

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RESUMO

Este estudo apresenta uma análise hermenêutica comparativa sobre o fim da educação entre Francisco Ruiz Sánchez e Tomás de Aquino. Com efeito, em ambos uma relação estreita se percebe nas categorizações que propõem, a saber: status virtutis em Tomás de Aquino e plenitude dinâmica em Francisco Ruiz Sánchez. A partir da análise realizada, são estabelecidos os pontos em comum e os aspectos dissidentes. Conclui-se que a ideia de melhoria é comum tanto em Ruiz Sánchez quanto em Tomás de Aquino. Em ambas as concepções exprime-se um estado, embora na interpretação de Millán Puelles assumam um carácter de finalidade, enquanto em Ruiz Sánchez também, mas com um nuance que resgata o processo dinâmico de plenitude, típico do "homo viator". Francisco Ruiz Sánchez toma para a sua teorização a ideia do estado de virtude proposta por Aquinate, mas especifica o estado de dinamismo do homem e a ordenação das diferentes dimensões do ser humano a partir da interioridade e do comportamento, onde são colocadas: a ordem interna ad extra, ou seja, para o exterior, a formação e a própria ordem interna; resultando na formação de hábitos e atos corretos, conferindo ao conceito de plenitude dinâmica uma certa originalidade.

Introduction

Francisco Ruiz Sánchez (1929-1982) was a professor and researcher who was born and developed his work in Mendoza, Argentina. He made an analysis of various aspects in which he interprets man in relation to various educational considerations. His thinking can be understood as (...) a coherent foundation of the fullness of the human being as a pedagogical purpose (Di Marco, 2020, p. 3, my translation).

Due to the brief extension of this study, it is not possible to elaborate a finished analysis of the dynamic fullness that it thematizes, but at least to establish the most important aspects of it, from our hermeneutic interpretation, in order to compare and understand the configuring elements that it takes up and recreates from Aquinas, whose importance resides in the function of achieving a full life.

It is worth mentioning that this comparative work becomes original, since the writings of the Mendoza pedagogue are the subject of recent study. Some works give an account of his work from pedagogical (De Bona, 2005, 2007, 2011), epistemological (Di Marco, 2018), didactic (Di Marco et al., 2018) and philosophical perspectives (Di Marco et al., 2019; Di Marco, 2020), providing novel elements capable of relating his conception of education with the *status virtutis* of Tomás de Aquino.

In this sense, we present, first, the concept of dynamic fullness in Francisco Ruiz Sánchez; second, the relationship we interpret possess both concepts, that is, dynamic fullness and *status virtutis*; and third, some conclusions and discussions in this regard.

We start, as a hypothesis, from the assumption that the concept of dynamic fullness that Francisco Ruiz Sánchez thematizes in contemporaneity takes up in its substantiality aspects that were already present in the concept of *status virtutis* of the Aquinate, although, it is possible to observe and establish some differences on them.

The method to be used corresponds to the *documentary hermeneutics* of reading, analysis and critical interpretation of the different bibliographic sources of the educational works of Francisco Ruiz Sánchez and some interpreters of Tomás de Aquino. After developing an exploratory stage in which the published and unpublished works of the Mendoza author meet, we proceed to reflect critically and interpret the category that interests to investigate through an extensive bibliographic search, namely, the end of education in relation, later, to that proposed by the Aquinate.

The concept of dynamic fullness in Francisco Ruiz Sánchez

Every action shows an end that moves and guides it: the act "in order for it to produce a certain effect, it must be determined to something certain, which has reason for its end" (*S. Teol.* I-II, q.1, a.2, my translation). Maritain (2008 [1943]) pointed out that a first error in educational matters is the forgetfulness of the ends; indeed, education is an art that belongs to the sphere of Ethics and practical intelligence and there is no art without end: If the means are desired and cultivated by virtue of their own perfection, not only as means that cease to guide towards the end, then art loses its practical sense (p. 19, my translation).

In Ruiz Sánchez the first end of education, as the supreme guiding intention, is *dynamic fullness*, which, in turn, implies other ends. They are the stable order, the perfect habits and the development of powers, the right acts and the opening to supernatural life, from a Christian pedagogical perspective.

Dynamic fullness consists of a *state*, that is, a constant disposition that implies having in itself all the conditions to conduct life correctly, that is, effectively in all the lines of conduct in order to the perfect goods that fulfill the human being. Therefore, it is alluded to fullness, but in its dynamic *character*. It differs from another plenitude, the *definitive plenitude*. The latter is defined by Professor Mendoza as a still fullness of those who reached their last end "so that they no longer need to seek, move, restless themselves and, therefore, their dynamism ceases; such would be the fullness of the man who has reached God" (Ruiz Sánchez, 1978a, pp. 309-311, my translation).

In the author's texts, the word *plenitude* appears for the first time in the journalistic article *Migajas antropológicas* (Anthropological crumbs) (1958), referring to exceptional men¹. More repeatedly, the concept

1. Possibly, we do not know, from the analysis of the qualities of these men some elements of inspiration have emerged to determine the end of education.

appears in *El fracaso de la educación moderna* (The Failure of Modern Education) (1959) in which the signs that have prevented the attainment of "fullness" are described, outlined here as transcendence and the ultimate end of man. Also, *Bien común político y educación* (Political Common Good and Education) (1960a) refers to fullness in relation to the perfection of the natural movement of man. *Homo plenus* (1960b) marks an important milestone in this itinerary of the concept, although part of the grey analysis of contemporary man, some vestiges of man "with a vocation of fullness" are seen. That is, he who is master of his acts, director of his life and who, in some way, spreads: "the authentic man, sees the image he reflects grow in others". It is, ultimately, the one who awakens the passionate love for the Self, it is the substantive man. Also, in *Perfectibilidad y educabilidad* (Perfectibility and educability) (1962) he refers to the need for man to reach fullness.

A first approach opposes the term "fullness" to "the initial destitution of man and to the deficiencies in the human that (...) he can keep all or part of his whole life" (Ruiz Sánchez, 1978a, p. 309, my translation)².

In an etymological approach, plenitude comes from the Latin *plenitudo*, whose word is made up of *plenus* (Which means complete, full; indicates magnitude) and *tudo* (abstract suffix of quality).

In the essential order, it is the fullness of acquired aptitudes that allow man to conduct himself freely and rightly – in all the lines of conduct corresponding to his concrete dimensions – towards the individual and common goods that perfect his nature (Ruiz Sánchez, 1978a, p. 311)³. This state implies "real possibility of perfection, being in power to..." (Ruiz Sánchez, 1978a, p. 312, my translation).

Dynamic fullness presupposes other dimensions, which are subordinate ends of this ultimate end of education: 1) The stable order (total, subordinate, mediate end), 2) perfective habits (partial ends) and 3) correct acts (immediate ends). Each of these ends demands a coherent relationship with the one who subordinates them.

Because dynamic fullness constitutes the starting point, that is, the end towards which one tends and the point of arrival, the result (by which man is preached "educated"), this dynamic end implies a recurrent logic throughout the course of the human life of the learner as "homo viator".

The Stable Order

As the total end of education subordinated to dynamic fullness is the *stable order*, which implies, in turn, three aspects:

- 1) The internal order "ad extra"
- 2) Training
- 3) Internal Order

The internal order "ad extra", also called by the author ordering from the interiority – or projection – adequate, perfective, multidirectional, "ad extra" (1973b, 1978a), refers to "an intentional but lived ordering, of the person, with respect to what is beyond him; with what enters into a cognitive relationship, affective (including the will) and potentially, in a relationship of conduct" (Ruiz, 1973b, p. 14, my translation).

This relationship and religation of man with individual and common things, institutions, people, etc., "does not always occur adequately" (Ruiz, 1978a, p. 315), and assumes that:

(...) we know, we are moved, we project a series of acts or "doing" a thing. That living relationship has to be inwardly perfect, adequate (...) to be transformed later into perfective external behavior.

(...) it demands or supposes the education of intelligence (speculative and practical; in the order of action and doing), the education of affectivity in its various aspects, including the will, etc. (Ruiz, 1973b, p. 15, my translation).

Man is in relation to the different objects, since the power is ordered to the act, so for example the intelligence is oriented to know the truth and the will to the good; but these powers are not determined to the type of object that is the request of "truth" and "good". Consequently, order is necessary since man has a multiplicity of tendencies or objects that cannot all be satisfied or perfective; even trends can be contradictory. In this sense, "the unity of nature

². The boldness placed by the author in the original has been deleted in the quotation.

³. The boldness placed by the author in the original has been deleted in the quotation.

demands unity of lines of conduct in each human dimension (...) it is necessary to reduce some tendencies and subordinate others" (Ruiz, 1973a, p. 60, my translation)⁴.

Therefore, each of these ends that make up the stable order try to make man live orderly in the relations with other men, with their property, with the groups to which it belongs: family, profession, etc. More specifically:

we speak of "ordering", that is, of an intelligent regulation that establishes an order in each dimension; but an intentional order, prior to the order of conduct, which plenifies; that perfect; perfective interior ordination referring to the conjugal relationship, to paternal, amical, patriotic, religious, professional, possession or use of things, etc. relations (Ruiz, 1978a, p. 317, my translation).

We emphasize the concept of "intelligent regulation". Consistent with all his proposal, the author observes that man is born with this perfective tendency, but "decayed" in some way, so he needs permanent regulation; hence also the dynamic state of fullness.

The anthropological aspects that stand out from Ruiz Sánchez's proposal are the religation, the plurality of tendencies and the multiplicity of dimensions; which, in turn, have to do with oneself and with "the other": "What is usually called 'social education' is partially included in this purpose" (Ruiz, 1978a, p. 319, my translation).

For this internal order "ad extra" it is required that man be formed (Ruiz, 1972b, pp. 70-71).

From this first aspect of the total end of education – the stable order – a series of proposals emerge that are evidenced by the present. Indeed, recognizing that man *ab initio* is not orderly (who does not have that intelligent regulation) leads to distrust, for example, those naturalistic positions that demand a total and, in a certain way, submissive adaptation to the inclinations of the child.

From this order education acquires a directional meaning, as proposed by the Aquinate (in reference to the conduct of the offspring in the Commentary on Book IV of the *Sentencias*) when it is asked if marriage is natural or not⁵. Thus, the *conduction* opposes the idea of a spontaneous deployment, the notion of naturally predetermined development that does not need the assistance of a factor extrinsic to the prole. In terms of Millán Puelles (1963): "To speak of driving is precisely to refer to a process to which an address is printed, of which it is susceptible" (p. 33, my translation).

Man can establish an order considered by reason, by virtue of his practical intelligence and will. For "the order of voluntary actions belongs to the consideration of moral philosophy (...) it is proper to moral philosophy to consider human operations insofar as they are ordered among themselves and with respect to the end"⁶ (Book I, Lesson I, 2). In this sense, Tomás raises the need for the assistance of the political community.

The second component of the stable order is formation. Contrary to some social representations about this concept, Ruiz Sánchez relates it with a practical wisdom, with a *know how to live well* (1973a, 1973b, 1978a) in the perfective sense, that is, in the line of fullness of the subject. Generally speaking, the formation alludes to "an aptitude of the spirit in its cognitive aspects, but insofar as these explain ways of being and acting that respond to the demands of human perfection in all its concrete dimensions" (Ruiz Sánchez, 1978a, p. 320, my translation).

This practical wisdom -wisdom of life (Ruiz, 1978a)- implies six fundamental aspects in the thinking of the Mendoza professor, namely: 1) adequate mentality; 2) docility or active disposition of spiritual openness; 3) capacity for objective critical judgment; 4) understanding of the meaning of one's own life in each relational dimension and with respect to its totality; 5) capacity for upright prescription; 6) true, upright, and certain moral conscience.

That is, prudence is presented explicitly within the framework of the immediate tradition of his Aristotelian-Thomistic thought, although recreated from an original approach of the aforementioned integral aspects. As noted, prudence resides in the intellect (*S. Teol.* I-II, q. 41, a.1), specifically in the practical understanding

4. The italics placed by the author in the original have been deleted in the quotation.

5. "Otherwise it is called natural that to which nature inclines, although free will be required for its execution, as virtuous acts are called natural; and thus marriage is natural, for natural reason inclines to it in two ways. Firstly, as regards its main purpose, which is the good of the offspring; and it is that nature does not tend only to the generation, but also to its conduct and promotion to the perfect state of man as man, which is the state of virtue" (Commentary on the *sentencias*, Book VI, d.26, q.1, a.1 in c).

6. Insofar as the subject of Moral Philosophy is human activity ordered at last (Tomás de Aquino, Commentary on *Ethics at Nicomachus*, Book I, Lesson I, 3).

(S. Teol. I-II, q. 41, a.2) as a right reason in acting (Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics). For this reason, he knows the universals of action, but also the particular objects on which he will develop action (S. Teol. I-II, q. 41, a.3).

In the current analysis of Bicocca (2011), which he elaborates from Millán Puelles, the end of education is explained in the light of the formation of specifically human powers. It is a formulation with different nuances from that made by our author, although in *Acerca de la educabilidad* (About educability) (1972a) Ruiz Sánchez refers to training from the educational purpose from the potential perspective of man. In this sense, the training in Millán Puelles (1963) could encompass aspects of the total and partial purposes of education (stable organization and updating of the powers).

Likewise, the concept of training resignified by Ruiz Sánchez is closely related to the concept of *Bildung*, typical of the German tradition, which Antonio Millán Puelles links with his proposal.

In this direction, for Millán Puelles (1974) formation is *conformation*: "formation is nothing more than to give shape to what, in a certain sense, is report or a new form to what has already been formed" (Bicocca, 2011, p. 151)⁷. Consequently, for the author the terms training and education show a certain similarity (Bicocca, 2011, p. 153), while, for Francisco Ruiz Sánchez, training is one of the purposes of education that is subordinated to dynamic fullness. Thus, education for the latter acquires greater extension and includes other elements, as has been shown.

The third aspect, the internal order, supposes: "1) that the subject can pre-order himself from his interiority or project himself perfectly towards goods; and 2) to acquire a wisdom of life – formation – that makes possible and fruitful that projection 'ad extra'." (Ruiz Sánchez, 1978a, p. 336, my translation). Hence the prior ordering of the interiority for the perfective projection is justified.

As an end of education, it also includes several dimensions in the order of intention: *inner freedom, possession of self* and, finally, the ordering of interpotential inner dynamism or *deliberate structuring of inner unity*; these dimensions are closely linked to each other in reality and are, therefore, difficult to demarcate them in the analysis (Ruiz, 1978a, p. 337). Inner freedom:

...allows us to choose to act or not to act at a certain time (freedom of exercise). It also allows us to act in one direction or another, to choose an act between two or more possible depending on an end (freedom of specification) (Ruiz Sánchez, 1978a, p. 338)⁸.

Note the Thomistic scheme in these distinctions. It is, then, the psychic freedom that allows us to choose between action or omission and between one act or another. A teachable dimension as far as nature is concerned, but as we have already seen, it does not ensure its perfective inclination. In the words of the author (1978a): "our actions do not always come from a freely choosing will, guided by a clear, objective intelligence, which fulfills its deliberative fusion and prescription of the proper act" (p. 340, my translation)⁹.

For its part, moral freedom operates in non-obligatory matters; the example is categorical:

If I have a moral obligation to feed and educate my children, I am not morally free to stop. If I "free" myself from that bondage, from that moral obligation, my paternal human dimension is imperfectified and, with it, my condition as a man that includes that dimension (...). This is the case with obligations – ties or moral ties – with my wife, with my friends, with my students, with the Fatherland, with God. If I do not comply with them, being psychically free (...) I am imperfect in the corresponding dimension (...). If I fulfill them – I do not free myself morally, but I am psychically free – I perfect myself in each dimension of corresponding conduct in each line of obligations (1973b, p. 27)¹⁰.

This moral freedom constrained by moral obligation insofar as it is also fallible demands its exercise in search of perfective goods, even in an adverse environment that conditions.

Self-possession is indispensable for the attainment of psychic freedom. Thanks to her the man, subtracting from the various forms of mass manipulation (e.g. the media) can be *owner of himself*: "may be the spirit, lord of one's own interiority, who collects the invitation of things, judges them

7. The italics placed by the author in the original have been deleted in the quotation.

8. The bold placed by the author in the original has been deleted in the quotation.

9. The bold placed by the author in the original has been deleted in the quotation.

10. The highlight by the author in the original has been deleted in the quotation.

straightly and desires them dominating –*dominus*– over the multiplicity of inclinations" (Ruiz, 1978a, pp. 344-345)¹¹.

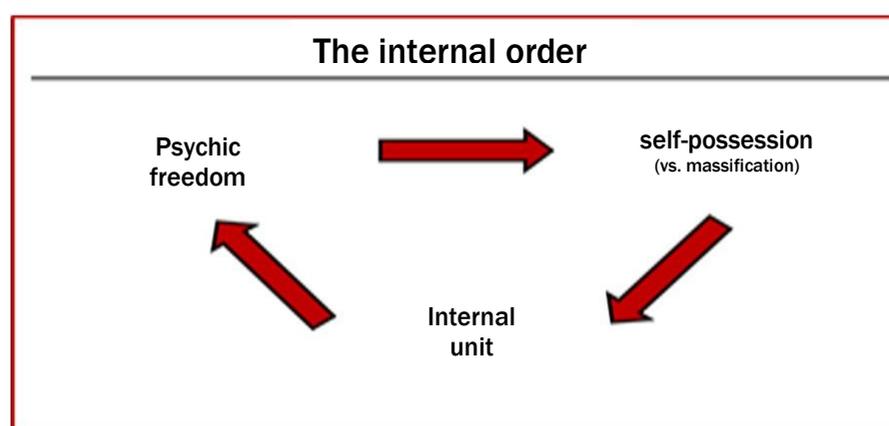
Both dimensions – possession of self and inner freedom – are intimately related in the teleology of the Mendoza professor:

The possession of oneself is a necessary presupposition of inner freedom as much as it is of it, because as man psychically liberates he can take over himself and, as he takes over himself, he frees himself (Ruiz, 1973b, p. 29).

Finally, the deliberate structuring of the inner unity¹² culminates the process of *inner unification* in pursuit of fullness; it must also bring together the usual serenity, good spirits and stability.

In short, this "inner order (...) condition and at the same time effect of the psychological-moral freedom, allows the subject an action projected to the natural and social world and to the Absolute" (Vázquez, 2012, p. 163, my translation). It involves the symbiosis of the three elements (psychic freedom, self-possession and inner unity) that are plotted below (Figure 1):

Figure 1. Recurrence and implication of the ends of the internal order as the end of education. Adaptation of Francisco Ruiz Sánchez (1973a, 1973b, 1978a).



To the aspects that distinguishes our author we add the *good humor*. Victor Frankl (1990 [1946]) relates that the sense of humor was one of the "weapons" they used in the concentration camp: even in its mildest forms, it could help them achieve the "necessary distancing" to overcome, even for a short time, any situation. In such extreme conditions, seeing life in a humorous light is "a kind of trick" that is learned by mastering the art of living (Frankl, 1990 [1946]).

Perfective Operating Habits as Partial Ends of Education and Enablers of the Internal Order

The internal order is at the service of the projection of individual and common goods and is concretized in *correct acts*, made possible by "habits". The *perfective habits*, as an update of the powers, constitute the partial ends of education or intermediate ends of education (Ruiz, 1973a, 1973b, 1978a).

In human dynamism intervene different powers or faculties that must operate perfectly in relation to the object and the subject for the fullness of man¹³. Although the vegetative and sensory faculties operate, in the genesis of the habit intervene -above all- the indeterminate, the intelligence and the will; for they have been determined to truth and good, but not to "such" or "such" truth or good. Then, they suppose "the update in the sense of having acquired the capacity that was not initially possessed" (Ruiz Sánchez, 1978a, p. 352, my translation).

This updated capacity, in the manner of a second nature, forms a perfective stable aptitude that allows man to act with some ease (Ruiz Sánchez, 1973a):

11. The bold placed by the author in the original has been deleted in the quotation.

12. He also calls it "ordering of interpotential internal dynamism" (Ruiz Sánchez, 1978a, p. 345).

13. "Moral virtues are elective habits: election is, in effect, an act of appetitive order" (Rodríguez Luño, 1983, p. 220, my translation).

- In all the lines of conduct corresponding to the various dimensions (paternal, conjugal, patriotic, etc.).
- In all the faculties and powers indeterminate with respect to their concrete act and of the "servant" powers insofar as they are also affected by this indeterminacy.

This exhaustive set of virtues ensures the inner unity (Ruiz Sánchez, 1978a) and facilitates the perfective work by the intelligence that knows the ends and the means to order itself towards the goods or values (also known) that perfect the human dynamism plus the force of the will to project itself towards these goods and to order the appetites and affective movements. From there it becomes evident:

The error of those who emphasize only the development of powers (pedagogical psychologism) or that of many educational policy plans that make technical education the fundamental or priority, forgetting man, "self-conductor of his life"; and forgetting the hierarchy of the objective goods that perfect it and towards whose search it must be oriented, after an education that enables it to do so (Ruiz, 1973b, p. 34, my translation).

Even today some pedagogical approaches only deal with education in skills, delinking the capacity from its perfective object.

As will be pointed out, Ruiz Sánchez does not elaborate a "treatise" on the education of virtues; but postulates them in general terms within the purposes of education: "The plenifying actualization of each power and the acquisition of each habit is an end of education, but an end referred to an aspect or part of the subject" (Ruiz Sánchez, 1978a, p. 356)¹⁴.

In short, on the subject of habits it shows a considerable generality in that it only refers to the updating of all the powers, without giving greater clues to the educator. In any case, from its approach, the parameters of an integral education could be established.

Right Acts as an Immediate End of Education

The last end of education in Francisco Ruiz Sánchez refers to the *right acts*, an end that supposes all those already analyzed and that responds to its immediate end (Ruiz Sánchez, 1978a). It is about every power of man causing perfect acts – or, in other words, perfective – facilitated by virtues. Examples of this abound in the author's writings.

This includes the execution of correct acts of each power and of the whole subject and, on the other, its implementation in the different orders; among them, as a member of each of the societies of which it is a part (1978a, 1973b). The classical concept of *good life* is not understood only in individuality, but in the framework of *polis*. In short, the right acts are thus the consequence of the internal order and *ad extra* together with the updating of the powers by the exercise of the virtues.

Next, we address the relationship between the concept of dynamic fullness interpreted in the different works of Francisco Ruiz Sánchez with that of the state of virtue of the Aquinate.

Relation of Dynamic Fullness to the Status Virtutis of Tomás de Aquino

Although several authors have tried to analyze the end of education in Tomás de Aquino (Castro Videla, 2010, 2011; Echeverría, 2018; Martínez García, 1996, 2002, 2014; Millán Puelles, 1958, 1963; Mozo Seoane, 2006; Peñacoba Arribas, 2013; among many more), most of them refer to the interpretation elaborated by Millán Puelles (1963).

As we have mentioned before, we propose here an original study comparing the proposal of the Aquinate with that of Francisco Ruiz Sánchez.

As has been seen, dynamic fullness is the ultimate goal of education that the Mendoza teacher thematizes, to which different ends are subordinated, either as a total end (the stable order), mediate (the perfective habits) or immediate (the correct or right acts). Now, the conceptualization of this fullness, as the same author explains,

¹⁴. The bold placed by the author in the original has been deleted in the quotation.

takes its bases from Tomás' *status virtutis*, hence the relationship we propose. In explicit terms Ruiz Sánchez expresses (1972b):

We place as the ultimate goal of education something else: the fullness of human life as human. What St. Tomás called *status virtutis*; that is, the non-initial aptitude, the conquered aptitude, achieved; that aptitude of intelligence, of will, of inner order that allows man to execute well each act of his as an individual. In such a way that each act is an approximation to the individual good, to the family common good, to the political common good (p. 70)¹⁵.

In *Fundamentos y fines de la educación* (Fundamentals and Ends of Education) (1978a) Ruiz Sánchez explicitly expresses about the dynamic fullness "that we made equivalent to the 'virtutis status' [*status virtutis*] of St. Tomás" (p. 23). Thus, he declares:

From the examination we have made of philosophical, theological and pedagogical authors and approaches, the closest notion – perhaps equivalent – to that of "dynamic fullness", as we conceive it, is that of "virtutis status" or of "perfection of man as man", of St. Tomás de Aquino (Ruiz Sánchez, 1978a, p. 312, my translation).

He also refers to this "quasi" equivalence in other works, such as *Introduction to the anthropological foundations of education* (1978b, p. 40 and p. 54) *The contamination of education* (1979, p. 266) and in *Tentative outline for a structuring of the fundamental thematic of Pedagogy* (1973a, p. 52) when identifying the dynamic fullness with the fully virtuous life.

With regard to the definition of the Aquinate, it should be noted that Tomás dealt with the pedagogical problem in three places: (1) in the XI of the *Quaestiones disputatae de veritate*, entitled *De Magistro*, composed of four articles, (2) in article I of question 117 of the first part of the *Summa Theologica*, and 3) in *Commentary on judgments* (Book IV, d.26, q.1, a.1). However, according to Martínez García (2002), it is usually considered that the explanation of the concept appears in the last text:

Otherwise it is called natural that to which nature inclines, although free will be required for its execution, as virtuous acts are called natural; and thus marriage is natural, for natural reason inclines to it in two ways. Firstly, as regards its main purpose, which is the good of the offspring; and it is that nature does not tend only to the generation, but also to its *conduct and promotion to the perfect state of man as man, which is the state of virtue* (Commentary on the *Sentencias*, Book VI, d.26, q.1, a.1 in c). Therefore, according to the Philosopher, three things are given by parents: being, food and education. However, the child cannot be raised and educated by the parents without having determined parents to be; something that would not happen if there were no commitment of the man with respect to a certain woman, which is what marriage does (*Commentary on the judgments*, Book VI, d.26, q.1, a.1 in c)¹⁶.

For Millán Puelles (1963) Tomás did not take care to distinguish explicitly the various meanings in which the voice is taken *educatio*, since its use is elastic and flexible. *Educare* and, therefore, *educatio*, are voices that primarily signify the action and effect of *feed* and *nourish*. Tomás frequently employs these terms in his physical meaning and others, with a wide extension. A good Spanish translation of the term *educatio* is "upbringing", if it is not limited to the purely material plane (food, physical care in general) – usual sense – nor to spiritual care. Strictly speaking, parenting covers both planes.

By offspring is meant the fruit of the generation, not man simply, but in the condition of *son*, who somehow remains "subject" to his father, in relation to dependence from which the educational request is constituted. The offspring are the subject of education: "son and father are, respectively, the born learner and educator (...)" any other kind of education, not established on those same terms, is only in an analogous sense and by vicarious and supplementary mode" (Millán Puelles, 1963, pp. 34-35).

Feeding the offspring and dedicating all the care it requires (Millán Puelles, 1963) implies completing *perficere* the work of simple procreation, which by itself leaves the human being in destitution. Thus the word *educatio* (which in a first sense is equated to food or nutrition) comes to mean the activity by which the improvement of the spiritual faculties of man is promoted and favored. Taken together from the Tomasian texts, the term *educatio* is also presented as synonymous with the voices *nutritio*, *instruction* and *discipline* (although it refers simultaneously to education and instruction, this reference is based on a grammatical reason). In this regard, it can be concluded that "in the text of the commentary to the *Sentences* therefore speaks of the upbringing of the body –*educatio*– as of the education of the soul –*instructio*–" (Martínez García, 2002, p. 145)

15. The bold placed by the author in the original has been deleted in the quotation.

16. The emphasis on italics is ours.

17. Emphasis added to the author.

Millán Puelles (1963) analyzes the other components of the definition of the Aquinate. Thus, the *driving* and *promotion* are conceived as a certain prolongation of the spawn, in the form of a complement of this which, however, is not yet a definitive enrichment or perfection of the offspring. In this sense, education is like a *second generation* – not properly a generation, since this has the end of the being of the begotten – because the conduction and promotion refer to a state that supposes the being. Therefore, "to educate is to the state of perfection of the offspring as to beget is to the being of this" (Millán Puelles, 1963, p. 32). That is, the term of one – the being – is the starting point of another – the leadership and promotion. "That educating is, in a certain sense, an extension of the begetting means only that not by begotten does the offspring already have what it should have" (Millán, 1963, p. 32).

Thus, the *conduction* opposes the idea of a spontaneous deployment, the notion of naturally predetermined development that does not need the assistance of a factor extrinsic to the prole:

To speak of conduction is precisely to refer to a process to which a direction is printed, of which it is susceptible, but which it would not have at all, or at least in a convenient way, if the being to which it affects were abandoned to its own natural forces (Millán Puelles, 1963, p. 33, my translation).

Indispensable process for the subject of education in his condition as a child, that is, in the early stages of his movement towards fullness (Ruiz, *The child and the meaning of human life*, s/f, p. 2).

The *promotion* adds to driving, the nuance of a certain ascent or elevation of the offspring. To lead is only to give a direction to a movement, unlike to the promotion that implies an upward direction, as established by the attraction of an end, which represents for the moved a perfection of its being.

The second part of the definition contemplates the *end*: the perfect state of man as man, that is, *the state of virtue*. Every process is defined by its term or end and educating as conduct and promotion is formally a process, although the main analogue of the concept of education is its achievement or result.

This end (also in our author, Francisco Ruiz Sánchez) constitutes a *state*. Between the pre-educational state, if you will, and the already educated one there is a difference from the imperfect to the perfect.

While both the first and second states are states of *man*, what education achieves is that the subject reaches the *perfect state that as a man suits him*.

How does this perfect state of man manifest itself as a man? To this, it would be necessary to answer that through the *status virtutis* that Ruiz Sánchez defines as a process and result because, for the Mendoza author, it implies a dynamic state that is a point of departure and arrival, as we saw. Millán Puelles (1963) states: "the possession of the virtues (the *status virtutis*) is the perfect state of the human operative powers and, therefore, the perfect state of man as man, end of education" (p. 37)¹⁸.

The conduction and promotion of the offspring, expresses a development that – because it is not naturally determined – requires for its fulfillment a previous teleological intention on the part of the agent that freely directs, guides and guides the educational action, explicit intention in the parents (first educational agents) in the definition of Tomás.

Both Ruiz Sánchez and Millán Puelles (1963) propose the state of virtue as a universal end of education: "It is an essential purpose of education and, consequently, something independent of all references to the concrete historical forms of the evolution of culture and of the resources and instruments of each epoch" (Millán Puelles, 1963, p. 54, my translation)¹⁹.

Virtue is perfection acquired (not innate) from a potency, intellectual in that it perfects understanding and morality in that it perfects appetite. However, according to Martínez García (2002), prudence stands out in this state of virtue.

The Aquinate affirms – following Augustine – that: "virtue is the art of living well [which] is essentially suited to prudence, and, by participation, to the other virtues, insofar as directed by prudence" (*S. Teol.* I-II, q.58, a.2, ad1). Whereas, the state of virtue, as the end of education, corresponds properly "to the state of prudence" (Martínez García, 2002, p. 350)²⁰.

18. Italics added by the author.

19. The italics placed by the author in the original have been deleted in the quotation.

20. The italics placed by the author in the original have been deleted in the quotation.

Francisco Ruiz Sánchez also links one of the aims of education (the second component of the stable order: formation) with prudence, which makes man morally free, because it gives him authentic lordship of his actions. In fact: "To the extent that 'formation' coincides with prudence, it necessarily presupposes the righteousness of will and, consequently, the attainment of other ends of education (...)" (Ruiz Sánchez, 1978a, p. 320, my translation)²¹. The principal act of prudence is the empire for action over what has previously been the subject of counsel and judgment (*S. Teol.* II-II, q.47, a.9); hence our author refers to the "intelligent regulation" regarding the projection *ad extra*.

From this analysis carried out in both definitions, we can observe common aspects and nuances that give it its particularity at the end of education in each of the authors analyzed.

Consequently, the dynamic fullness evidences the same purpose and meaning as the *status virtutis*:

The objective of education is not, formally, that man acts well, but that he is qualified to do so (...). The end of education is, in this way, a means to human operational perfection. And the educator, leading man to the acquisition of virtue, does not intend anything else but that he succeeds in possessing the instruments that effectively enable him to such perfection (Millán Puelles, 1963, pp. 74-75)²².

Other contemporary authors emphasize the idea of fullness (Peñacoba Arribas, 2012) – from the interpretation of Millán Puelles – as the result of the education of freedom. This author argues: "Man, every man, walks, by vocation, towards fullness. And he does it because he is an unfinished being that only gets closer to that end that we call fullness if it is perfected through its free decisions" (Peñacoba Arribas, 2012, p. 422, my translation). In other words, "To the extent that his work adheres to the being that he is and complements it, we could say, man walks towards fullness and self-realization" (Peñacoba, 2012, p. 429, my translation).

Now, it is necessary to emphasize that, although the authors find the similarities referred to with respect to the end of education, Ruiz Sánchez offers a more detailed analysis of the purposes that make up the *status virtutis* or dynamic fullness²³.

Conclusions

As analyzed, we have been able to notice the similarities and differences of both conceptions about the end of education in Ruiz Sánchez and Tomás de Aquino. It is concluded that the idea of improvement is common in both Ruiz Sánchez and Tomás de Aquino. In both conceptions a state is expressed, although in the interpretation of Millán Puelles (1963) it assumes a character of purpose, while, in Ruiz Sánchez too, but with a nuance that rescues the dynamic process towards fullness, which in short, translates into good operational habits (virtues), fruit of personal order.

Going one step further towards a possible discussion and problematization, from a current interpretation of the end of education in the Mendoza teacher, in the opinion of De Bona (2011) he dismisses the sense of human historicity, which claims the existential aspect of educational purposes. Hence, he wonders about the meaning of life and warns:

Ballesteros [1994] following Frankl's thinking says that the end of education is, at all times and places, the same. On the other hand, the forms and means that must realize that good, that is, the objective good that gives meaning to the educational process, depend in an inescapable way on the situation of each particular culture (p. 179).

On the other hand, De Bona (2011) – based on MacIntyre (in Borradori, 1996) – defines the plural concept of virtue according to three meanings:

First of all, virtues represent qualities of mind and character, to which is linked the success of a series of typically human activities such as art, science and agriculture. Second, without the virtues, the individual is prevented from achieving an "orderly" life. And thirdly, only thanks to these models of moral excellence are they accepted to collaborate in the ultimate good: the construction of the public good (p. 201).

As we already pointed out with Francisco Ruiz Sánchez, the supposed ordering in the state of virtue not only concerns the interiority (or, in other words, the individual sphere of the subject) but also the social dimension of man who is ordered to the good of the *polis*, or better, to the common good of the society of which the subject is a part. In short, it covers both the enrichment of the person and in all its relational lines (Ruiz Sánchez, 1978a).

21. The bold placed by the author in the original has been deleted in the quotation.

22. The bold placed by the author in the original has been deleted in the quotation.

23. Also other authors (De Bona, 2011; Andrioli, 1978) highlight the link between dynamic fullness and the state of virtue.

Synthesizing, Ruiz Sánchez proposes dynamic fullness as the ultimate goal of education which, in turn, includes other ends: 1) *the stable order* (total, subordinate, mediate end that includes: the interior order "ad extra", formation as wisdom of life and the inner order with its aspects, psychic freedom, possession of oneself and inner unity), 2) the *perfective habits* (partial ends) and 3) the *right acts* (immediate end). Each of these ends is in a coherent relationship with the one to which it is subordinated; thus, dynamic fullness is the ultimate end, but to it is ordered the stable order, and to this, the perfective habits, which are followed by good acts.

Although he does not develop the virtues, he lists them according to each case according to the purposes of education, emphasizing the actualization of the operational powers of man in relation to perfective objects in all his lines of conduct, he emphasizes the operation of prudence in the conformation of dynamic fullness, specifically in its link with the stable order.

His proposal of the ultimate goal of education is based on the Aristotelian-Thomistic platform, in particular on the *status virtutis* of Tomás de Aquino, whose adaptation and exhaustive deployment in its components represents an original contribution of the Mendoza professor, although in his postulates he does not depart from the interpretations of other authors (e.g. Millán Puelles, 1963).

In the discussion we have introduced De Bona (2011) who states that in this deployment is evidenced the lack of historical concreteness of the ends in relation to the culture in which they are put into practice. We believe that from here other studies could be projected, such as the realization of these ends in a certain regional culture, or in the same educational institution present in its institutional ideology or school project.

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