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DISCIPLINE

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SCHOOL REGULATIONS

In 1980, the Education Department issued a booklet[1] consisting of regulations and recommendations to be implemented by teachers in state schools. One of the sections in this booklet dealt with the question of 'discipline'. The emphasis which discipline was given in Malta at the time in social and political quarters is well-known. After the 'failed' experiment in secondary education in the early and middle years of the 1970s, which led to what came to be universally regarded as a crisis in this sector, remedy was sought, mainly, in two directions; the setting up of the 'junior lyceums' to reverse the policy which had established the 'area' secondary schools in 1972 with their non-selective populist character, and the emphasis on more discipline within the schools in general to respond to the popular criticism levelled against the 'area' secondary schools at the time that that same non-selective populist character had resulted in anarchy and in the general deterioration of standards which comes from anarchy.

It is interesting to see what the author of the above-mentioned booklet had to say on discipline. The first thing its author does is to connect discipline with order. Order, he says, is the basis of discipline, and order comes from each knowing what s/he is to do

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1 *Regoli ghall-Iskejjel tal-Gvern*, Department of Education, (Valletta, Malta 1980).

and what is expected of him/her. The second connection he makes is between discipline and punishment, and this is followed by several practical recommendations about how punishment can be used positively, subject to the general assumption that 'good' must come from it. Finally, the author notes that the pupil's attitude towards punishment is strongly conditioned by sociological factors, by his/her social and family background, and concludes that:

> Love, sympathy, understanding, patience, motivation, making the pupil feel important as an individual, constitute a much better basis for upbringing than putting him/her aside, fear, rejection, scorn, and injustice, if the object is to cultivate discipline in the individual in all the aspects of his/her behaviour.

Some preliminary comments need to be made about these assumptions and recommendations on the question of discipline before the subject is treated in greater depth. The first regards the assumption that order exists for discipline, which is a rather strange way of seeing things because usually people view the matter the other way round: that discipline exists for order. The former way of looking at things makes discipline the desired end and order the necessary condition for its achievement. The latter sees order as the desired end with discipline being no more than the means, or tool to attain it. This apparent inversion of values may have been intentional. Whatever may have been the case, it certainly has its own logic because discipline may be regarded as an end in itself, apart from its contribution to order, and often is.

The author's second assumption is that punishment is an important way of obtaining and maintaining discipline. This is combined, however, with the further assumption that the primary way of achieving discipline should be by ensuring that pupils know what is demanded of them and what they are expected to do. And most people will find both these assumptions quite unproblematic also because, in fact, the notion of discipline is tied conceptually with obedience to rules of some kind.[2] The third is that the pupil's attitude towards discipline and punishment is

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[2] HIRST, P.H., and PETERS, R.S., *The Logic of Education*, (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1970), p.125.

strongly conditioned by his/her family and social background, and by his/her up-bringing. This is true, but I am not sure how one is meant to interpret it. It is clear that what teachers are being told is that certain forms of discipline may be effective with some children and ineffective with others and that much depends, in this respect, on the variables the author mentions, but it is unclear what teachers are supposed to make of this fact once they know it.

Taken as a whole, what the author of the booklet says about discipline is sensible but also very inadequate, and, I suspect, not very helpful for teachers. For one thing the author limits himself to making stark statements and recommendations without contextualizing them within a general philosophy of teaching, so that the general rationale behind them is unclear. It is thus impossible to evaluate their coherence with the general positive aims and objectives teachers are supposed to have and it is even more difficult to assess how they are supposed to contribute to them. Besides, they clearly require much explanation and justification, while further still, they raise several other questions that the author does not deal with and demand answers that the author, evidently, does not give.

In practice, teachers do not really need to be exhorted in booklets on the need for discipline. They know it very well themselves. The first piece of advice that new teachers are given everywhere is that without discipline one cannot teach, that discipline is indispensable for teaching. The commonsense wisdom behind this advice is borne out by the experience of generations of teachers, sometimes at their cost. Discipline is essential, it says, because discipline establishes order, and without order the class cannot be taught. In other words it regards discipline as a means, as a tool for successful teaching. And the new teacher who is advised about the necessity of discipline, is usually also advised to obtain it by establishing his/her authority over the class immediately. This advice, in fact, is paired with another popular maxim: that discipline requires the teacher's authority in the classroom. 'Authority' and 'control' are two other important words that come into play when discussing the question of 'discipline' and 'order'. Indeed, the concepts that these words bear are closely linked together. But is discipline the only means of establishing

and guaranteeing order? And does discipline depend only on the teacher's authority?

More fundamentally, is order always desirable, even granted that it guarantees the right conditions for teaching? Given that order is necessary for teaching, need it depend on the teacher's authority or could it be achieved otherwise? And if the teacher's authority is necessary, what kind of authority should it be? Should it depend on the teacher's power to punish or on something else instead? And if one decides that punishment should play only a subsidiary role in achieving and retaining discipline, to what extent should it be used, and what form of punishment is admissible?

These and other questions come fast to one's mind and require answers which the short section on discipline mentioned above does not provide and which I will take up in this essay. What needs to be kept in mind throughout is the kind of language the discussion of discipline invariably involves once it is dealt with in depth. Recommendations, like the ones we are considering, are meant to prescribe to or advise the people they are addressed to how they should behave, what they should do in different circumstances when they are involved in a particular kind of relationship with other people; they are meant to serve as a code of practice.[3] In our case the recommendations are for teachers and the code of practice is for teachers, while the relationship is with pupils in their classrooms. This means that there is another level at which they need to be considered - the level that takes into account the nature of the relationship itself. These considerations, in turn, give rise to questions other than that which is concerned solely with the teacher's need for order in the classroom. To be fair, there are, in the booklet, implicit assumptions built into the recommendations as to what this relationship should be based on, and what are the modes of behaviour that teachers are justified to adopt towards their pupils. There is the assumption, for instance, that teachers have a right to discipline pupils in order to obtain the conditions that will ensure their ability to teach. But does

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[3] As Wilson points out, discipline is most at home when closely connected with fairly clear-cut social roles and relations. *Vide* WILSON, J., *Philosophy and Practical Education*, (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1977).

this give them a blank cheque with regards to the kind of discipline they employ? There is also the assumption that teachers have a right to punish and that pupils have the duty to submit to that punishment, but is any punishment permissible as long as it works and achieves the co-operation that the teacher requires for effective control over the pupils? In both cases our answer is inclined to be no. Why? Because we recognize that the child is a person, and that being a person entitles him/her to a certain degree of consideration. Inevitably this recognition brings into play the subject of morality vis-à-vis the rights of the child. These rights, in turn, place serious moral restraints on the teacher's behaviour towards pupils. For instance a teacher may not treat his/her pupils in ways that do violence to their right to be treated as persons. In other words discipline cannot be viewed solely from the point of view of what is practical. There are also moral obligations to be considered. The question, at this level, is whether the form a particular mode of discipline takes is morally acceptable. If the mode of discipline is effective on the teacher's terms but morally objectionable, then it cannot be right for the teacher to employ it.

DISCIPLINE AND ORDER

Let us start probing the questions raised in the previous section by looking a little more closely at the question of order. We said in the introduction that teachers need discipline because they need order in the classroom, since without order they cannot teach, but we also pointed out that order may be desirable for other reasons also. There is, for instance, the mundane but important reason mentioned by Hargreaves that without discipline the teacher forfeits the respect and support of his/her colleagues.[4] In his book *The Rainbow*, D.H. Lawrence captures very vividly the plight of one of his characters, Ursula Brangwen, who has the ambition of becoming not just a teacher, but the best teacher ever. Ursula is very young and very idealistic, but she is quickly brought down to earth by reality when she finds herself actually in charge of a

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[4] HARGREAVES, D.H., *Interpersonal Relations and Education*, in *Cambridge Situations*, Students Revised Edition, (1985-86).

class in the village school. Her problem is symptomatic; she is at once demoralized by the appearance of the school and of the hall where she must teach, and by the general attitude of her colleagues towards their job. She rapidly loses control over her class (which her idealism has not taught her to control) which quickly becomes unteachable. As a consequence she quickly makes an enemy of the headmaster, and after a few weeks she has this conversation with another teacher, Mr Brunt, in the staff room:

"If I were you, Miss Brangwen," he said menacingly, "I should get a bit tighter hand over my class." Ursula shrank.

"Would you?" she asked sweetly, yet in terror. "Aren't I strict enough?"

"Because," he repeated, taking no notice of her, "they'll get you down if you don't tackle them pretty quick. They'll pull you down and worry you till Harby gets you shifted - that's how it'll be. You won't be here another six weeks... if you don't tackle 'em quick."

"Oh, but," Ursula said, resentfully, ruefully. The terror was deep in her.

"Harby'll not help you. This is what he'll do - he'll let you go on, getting worse and worse, till either you clear out or he clears you out. It doesn't matter to me, except that you'll leave a class behind you as I hope I shan't have to cope with."

Miss Harby comes in soon after. She is the headmaster's daughter.

"Oh you have to keep order if you want to teach," said Miss Harby, hard, superior, trite.

"If you want to be let to live, you have," said Mr Brunt.

"Well, if you can't keep order, what good are you?" said Miss Harby.

"An' you've got to do it by yourself," his voice rose like the bitter cry of the prophets. "You'll get no help from anyone."

Ursula's colleagues are not particularly nice or helpful people, nor are they typical of the profession. Experienced teachers are usually more ready to help novices with advice and support. But they speak some stark and important truths. One is that the teacher who does not control his\her class quickly becomes a

nuisance and a menace in the eyes of the headteacher, who feels, and is, responsible for the overall order in the school, and of the other teachers who may either have to take over or 'inherit' the class; this is the point that Hargreaves makes. Another is that if the teacher does not control the class, the pupils will, as Mr Brunt says, "pull him/her down" and they will make life impossible for him/her. Brunt puts it very dramatically, with emphasis: a teacher must control the class and keep order, he tells Ursula, if s/he wants 'to be let to live'. And D.H. Lawrence shows how right he is as he describes Ursula's situation becoming progressively worse until she cannot even walk in the streets of the village without being molested by her pupils. Another truth is that 'you've got to do it by yourself...you'll get no help from anyone.' Even if the headmaster were co-operative rather than hostile towards Ursula, he could only have helped her up to a certain extent. There is another maxim taken from the collective wisdom of the profession: if the teacher cannot keep discipline nobody can keep it for him/her, and the more s/he seeks and comes to depend on the help of others the worse his/her situation becomes in this respect. In the light of these facts it is not surprising that Hargreaves advises the new teacher to 'start tough', and not to be taken in by a different kind of advice, which he calls 'pernicious nonsense', which says that disciplinary problems can be overcome if the teacher makes lessons 'interesting'.[5]

We shall come back to this matter in a moment, but before we do, we must continue with our answer to the question: why are control and order important? The answer we have considered so far is a pragmatic and practical one: without order and control, without discipline, therefore, teaching is impossible, and the teacher's experience is made existentially unbearable. But there are other less tangible answers - answers that may appear more abstract to the practicing teacher, who may be more interested in his\her own survival in the job, but that are important from the viewpoint of society in general and of the children themselves. Discipline is regarded by most people as being an indispensable element in a good upbringing; for the child's 'character formation',

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5 HARGREAVES, D.H., op. cit.

or moral training, and for training for good citizenship. In the case of the former, self-discipline is considered to be a desirable quality in an individual, because discipline brings order into people's lives, and order, in turn, has its benefits; it enables people to be systematic, to live a more rational life, with clear plans, objectives, principles and ambitions, on the personal level. On the social level it permits harmonious and stable relationships with others. In short a sense of order in one's affairs and the ability to apply oneself systematically to a given task is considered to be a personal good. Docking has pointed out that it 'is sometimes seen as a necessary process in enabling the young to develop an adjusted personality,' and the kind of discipline it involves is obtained primarily through different kinds of training, of the will, of the intellect, and of the emotions.[6] This is partly the sense, referred to earlier, of speaking about discipline as an end in itself, and the ideal here is for the child to begin under the discipline of others but to learn self-discipline gradually, so that discipline becomes not so much a matter of external control as one of self-regulation.

It is in this sense also, that discipline is linked with education. Different philosophers have argued that the former is necessary for the latter, in the sense that it is indispensable for the cultivation of the intellectual qualities that characterize the educated person.[7] But society, in turn, has its own clear interest in discipline and order. People are clearly interested in having fellow citizens who are self-disciplined, orderly and who have the qualities of character and outlook that this implies, because the quality of their own lives depends on it. Besides, order is considered to be a social good, and society demands from schools that they play their share in instilling in children respect for it.[8] This means that discipline also comes to perform a socializing

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6 DOCKING, J.W., *Control and Discipline in Schools*, (Harper and Row, London 1980).

7 This is especially the case with the notion of the educated person, proposed by R.S. Peters and subsequently taken up by others, with its emphasis on the cognitive.

8 This fact was specially emphasized by Durkheim who explicitly defined education itself as the internalizing of society's norms.

function apart from its role in character formation and in training intellectual and, one must not forget, physical or technical skills.

But, to return to the connection of discipline with order; is order a good in itself, something to be obtained no matter what or how? Clearly not, because order may be obtained and kept through methods that are morally objectionable, and moral considerations should win over everything else. Order may merely be the result of terror, for instance, or of rigid regimentation and punishment. Hargreaves, in fact, while advising new teachers to be tough with pupils also warns them not to confuse toughness with authoritarianism and to view discipline as a tool that must be morally acceptable. He also advises toughness at the beginning only, while the situation is still fluid and the teacher is still establishing control over the classroom. Once stability is achieved and the teacher is confident that s/he can dictate terms in the class, the toughness says Hargreaves, can be slowly dissolved and abandoned for a different basis of discipline which is personal.[9] It is interesting to go back to Lawrence's story for a moment, before we continue with this line of discussion, to see what eventually happened to Ursula Brangwen. As was said earlier, things got even worse for her after her conversation in the staff-room; the children's behaviour grew worse, and her misery increased proportionately until things came to a head when the children started to molest her outside the school also, and one day, after she had tried keeping them in as a punishment, she was struck by a stone in the street. Meanwhile the headmaster's attitude grew more and more antagonistic, and she knew that she could not continue in that way. The options before her, as she saw them, were either to quit the job (and admit defeat) or to do something really drastic to win back control over the class. Being a proud woman with a point to make against her sceptical family, she opted for the latter, and her solution was to half beat one of her pupils, the arch trouble maker in the class, Williams, to death and to continue handing out furious and vicious beatings to all who got in her way afterwards until the class was 'tamed'. This was ultimately how she acquired the order she needed, but it was not an order based on the mutual love and respect which she had

[9] HARGREAVES, D.H., op. cit.

idealized before she began teaching, it was an order based on the fear of violence, her violence.

THE VALUE OF ORDER

The story seems to bear out Hargreaves's point, order lost is hard to regain, sometimes impossible except through drastic action which may work but which is morally (and possibly legally, too) unacceptable. But the point I want to make is that it is possible that the order in the classroom that one may so much admire may have been achieved through the teacher's violence. As Herbart points out one needs to guard against a different kind of moral danger that may underlie order:

> A well-disciplined school may be the worst possible institution for the development of character, since it may leave no opportunities for the practice of such actions as are initiated by the pupils' own motives nor afford occasion for the exercise of self-discovery and the discipline of self-mastery.[10]

The danger Herbart warns against is not that of anarchy, nor that of doing violence to children in the effort to prevent it from happening, or retrieving the situation if it does. Violence to children can happen physically, by beating them, or psychologically, by humiliating them or by putting them under tremendous mental pressure through a regime of fear or constant anxiety which some people also call discipline. His point is that what people may regard approvingly as a well-disciplined school may, in actual fact, be perpetrating different and less evident sorts of harm against children by suffocating crucial stages of their development as persons and as learners. Herbart's point is that the emphasis on discipline in the school may simply result in teachers discouraging or even stifling every kind of initiative on the children's part in case it disturbs order. If this happens, then the damage done is enormous; if children are deprived from taking initiatives of their own their creativity shrivels and eventually dies, they fail to learn and master the skills of self-initiated learning (planning, selecting, organizing, evaluating outcomes, and so on) that are so crucial for them later, and they fail to develop

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[10] RUSK, D., *Doctrines of the Great Educators*, (Macmillan, London 1967), p.255.

any confidence in themselves and in their own possibilities as learners and as persons. They also fail to discover themselves, Herbart continues, and to acquire the discipline of self-mastery referred to earlier. Self-discovery, as psychologists have pointed out and philosophers have argued, is only partly a matter of introspection, it is gained mainly by interaction with others and in the course of individual and joint exploration and adventure. Meanwhile the opportunity to develop self-mastery cannot exist in the absence of ample opportunities to exercise free choice and initiative.

This argument assumes, of course, that the power to take initiative and exercise creativity, as well as the ability to grow in self-knowledge and self-mastery, are valuable qualities which children need not only to be trained in, but socialized into as well,so that they will not only be capable of exercising them, but will also value them as qualities to be given space in socio-political life. In other words it assumes a certain political morality. The child in the school who is denied space to develop personal initiatives and who is discouraged from taking them, becomes a citizen who fears freedom, who fears personal power, who fears having responsibility thrust on him/her, who is inclined rather to be passive with regards to nearly everything personal or public, and wholly dependent on others, authorities mainly. To borrow Freire's oft-quoted expression, taking away all the initiative from the learner so that s/he can do nothing which is not directed and controlled, or at least approved of, by the teacher, is a way of 'domesticating' him/her, of rendering him/her politically and socially powerless.[11] This may well be the interest and intention of those who control schooling, of regimes in authoritarian states, but it cannot be the aim of any school in a democratic society. Authoritarian schools cannot be the appropriate training ground for the future citizens of democracies. If schools must use discipline then that discipline must be conformable with the aims of socializing a democratic citizenry not with domesticating tame subjects. It must coexist and be complementary with the development of the qualities that Hebart lists. In short, in the order of priority, it must be the mode of discipline that adjusts to

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[11] FREIRE, P., *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, (Penguin, Harmondsworth 1970).

the requirements of democratic training and socialization just as it must adjust to moral restraints, not the other way around.

Is it possible to have order in the school and classroom which is democratic, and what kind of discipline would it encourage? To begin with, notwithstanding what we have said so far on the subject by way of warning, only radicals with anarchic tendencies would deny the value of order of some kind in a social setting as is the classroom. And even these would not so much deny the value of order as such, as the value of an externally imposed order, as are the state in politics and the school or teacher in education; their defence being usually of a 'natural' order. Dewey, for instance, and others of the progressive, 'child-centred', school of thought, do not deny that order or control is necessary in school and classroom. The important question, he insists, is what kind of order, and what kind of control.[12] Of course, mention of 'child-centred' education takes us back to Hargreaves who observes that it is 'pernicious nonsense' to suppose that disciplinary problems may be overcome by making learning interesting,because it is evidently this kind of thinking which he had in mind when he made his observation. What is it, therefore, that Dewey meant?

EXTRINSIC AND INTRINSIC CONTROL

Dewey distinguished two forms of control: extrinsic, a form of control coming from the outside; and intrinsic, a form of control coming from the inside. Explaining the meaning of 'extrinsic control' is easy. The kind of control that exists in the classroom when the teacher lays down the law and the children have to adhere to it is a good example. It is a form of control that comes from obedience to an authority that lies outside oneself, in this case the teacher. Extrinsic control may be autocratic, but it need not be. The fact that it is extrinsic does not necessarily mean that it is also autocratic. The teacher, as Hargreaves argues, can be 'tough' without being autocratic, his/her control, he says, can actually be quite liberal.[13] Hargreaves, in fact, as we said earlier,

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[12] DEWEY, J., *Democracy and Education,* (Macmillan, New York 1916).

[13] HARGREAVES, D.H., op. cit.

advocates a progressive shifting of the teacher's power, from its original basis in toughness. By changing the basis of legitimation, he says, the teacher passes from the 'formal' basis of authority which characterizes the first stage of his/her relationship with the pupils to a more 'personal' authority; from obedience based on fear and prudence to a relationship of deep trust and mutual concern. At the same time, Hargreaves insists, teachers should also consider other factors in choosing the techniques they employ for discipline. For one thing, he argues, the value of a particular technique should not be assessed in a vacuum but in terms of its overall effect on the relationship between the teacher and the pupil, and on the relationships between the pupils themselves. For another, disciplinary techniques must be assessed on the basis of the effects they are likely to have on the pupils' future attitudes towards the school, towards learning in general, towards authority and towards life itself. It is important to note that Hargreaves refers to 'techniques' of discipline because he means to build discipline into the general style of teaching:

> Even to discuss discipline as distinct from the other basic features of classroom behaviour which we call instruction is a dangerous split.[14]

And what Hargreaves evidently has in mind is the other alternative form of keeping control, that which is compatible with the 'extrinsic' model, that is, through punishment.

'Intrinsic' control refers, in one sense of the expression, to the self-discipline discussed earlier. But it carries another meaning which is a little bit more difficult to describe. For Dewey, it is the sense in which control becomes:

> ...not personal but intellectual. It is not 'moral' in the sense that a person is moved by direct personal appeal from others, important as is this method at critical junctures. It consists in the habits of understanding, which are set up in using objects in correspondence with others, whether by way of cooperation and assistance or rivalry and competition.[15]

In other words it is a form of control that is 'social', internal to the life of the group and derived from the mode of living which it

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14 HARGREAVES, D.H., op. cit.

15 DEWEY, J., op. cit., p.33.

involves. Dewey likens it elsewhere to the form of internal regulation people subject themselves to when they are engaged in playing some game.[16] All games, he tells us, involve rules, and obedience to the rules orders the conduct of the players. The players themselves know that without rules and without their readiness to observe them the game they are engaged in would quickly degenerate into chaos, there would be no game. If the rules are changed substantially there is a different game, but, in any case, it would still need rules to be called a game. What keeps the players interested in adhering to the rules is normally their commitment to the game itself, the fact that they value it; because they find it fun, or interesting, or challenging, or, if they do not like the game as such but are forced to participate, because they feel constrained to co-operate with others. The point is that in this situation it is not an external authority that controls the behaviour of the players but the rules and the ethos of the game itself. True, some games need a referee also to impose discipline on the players, but the referee is not, strictly speaking, an external authority either; s\he embodies and interprets (where this is called for) the rules according to the spirit of the game. The authority of the referee is not a personal authority, s\he does not have the power to break the rules, or make new ones, or even amend them, and the spirit of the game always determines the limits of their interpretation.

Dewey clearly agrees with Hargreaves that control over the class should be inseparable from the mode of teaching, but the two evidently differ immensely on how they understand teaching. Hargreaves argues that ultimately discipline should be achieved personally through the teacher's style of instruction, while Dewey, who was contrary to the idea that learning should be based on instruction and favoured instead more participative and discovery-based methods of learning that involve the individual and collective initiative of the learners rather than the teacher's initiative, would have control achieved through the learners' own intelligent participation in the 'game' of learning and in the process of socializing with others. It is probably, as I said before,

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[16] DEWEY, J., 'Experience and Education', in Cahn, S.M., *Philosophical Foundations of Education*, (Harper and Row, New York 1970) p.241.

Dewey's progressive approach that Hargreaves considers 'pernicious nonsense', but is it pernicious nonsense? Hargreaves would undoubtedly regard it in this way because it appears too optimistic about the motives and dispositions of children, and there is some justification for his scepticism. But couldn't his own blanket recommendation to 'start tough' be regarded, in turn, as over-pessimistic? To go back to Ursula Brangwen, Hargreaves would probably argue that the fault of her predicament was hers because she didn't start off tough, as he recommends, and because she had false romantic notions about the natural goodness of children. The advice not to have any such notions is obviously sound, as any experienced teacher will vouch. But need toughness be the alternative to romanticism?

Perhaps it does, but the cause of Ursula's own inability to control her class lay as much in her lack of ability to translate her progressive intentions into pedagogical practices as in her inability to get a grip on her class. Perhaps the answer is to start tough then change gradually not to a discipline based on personal authority, as Hargreaves recommends, but to a more democratic form of control more in line with Dewey's model?! Whichever may be best, or safest, from the teacher's point of view, in the sense of obtaining control over the pupils and the respect and collaboration of one's colleagues, as Hargreaves defines it, there is always the other point from which it must be considered (apart from the moral, naturally), and that is the political. The two contrasting manners of looking at control and authority in the classroom can be presented as two contrasting political styles. It must be remembered that Dewey's specific pedagogical intention was to train democratic citizens, and the form of control that he proposes obviously corresponds with this intention. Does this mean that Hargreaves's ideas about discipline are incompatible with democratic training? Not necessarily. The answer to this question is that these ideas are in fact compatible with a view of democracy which is different from that of Dewey.

> In view of what we have said about Dewey's notion of control, it would seem quite accurate to interpret Dewey as holding the exercise of the teacher's authority (if any) in the classroom, to be somewhat like that of a referee in a game; not as the basis of order, but as its ultimate safeguard. However in his own specific statements he prefers to regard the teacher's role rather as one of participation, sharing, in an activity.

> In such shared activity, the teacher is a learner, and the learner is, without knowing it, a teacher - and upon the whole, the less consciousness there is, on either side, of either giving or receiving instruction, the better.[17]

And this goes completely against the tradition that views the matter the other way round. Many philosophers of education have, throughout the years, argued that being 'in authority' is an indispensable part of what it means to be a teacher.[18] Some have gone further, and have sought to strengthen this argument by contending that pupils actually desire the teacher's authority.[19] Others have maintained that the teacher has the right to be in authority, which means that the pupils have the duty to submit to that authority.[20] And many would sympathize with these contentions provided that the teacher's authority is exercised in a manner that is reasonable, consistent, and fair. It does not seem to me, in fact, that Dewey has in mind to consistently rule out the teacher's authority. Rather he holds it as being a final resort, in the case of conflict in the classroom, where pupils are outright hostile or disruptive, or where they refuse to cooperate with the internal rules that guarantee order. At the same time the point that the pupils actually desire the teacher's authority, assuming it is true, is not necessarily a persuasive one. They could desire this authority for the wrong reason: they may, for instance, not want to be involved in the responsibility or the effort that collective self-regulation requires.

DISCIPLINE AND PUNISHMENT

The contemporary reader who analyses D.H. Lawrence's description of Ursula Brangwen's treatment of Williams: the

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[17] HARGREAVES, D.H., op. cit., p.160.

[18] DEARDEN, R.F., 'Instruction and Learning by Discovery' in Peters, R.S., *The Concept of Education,* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1967).

[19] CARROLL, J., 'Authority and the Teacher', *Journal of Philosophy of Education,* (vol. 13, 1979).

[20] TELFER, E., et al., *Education and Personal Relationships,* (Methuen, London 1974).

physical pain, the humiliation, and the ultimate subjugation which she inflicted on him, will wince at such treatment. Ursula's object was clearly to punish him for her own suffering and humiliation at his hands and at the hands of the class, and to convey a message which would serve as a deterrent for himself and for his companions which she was determined to reinforce afterwards until her authority and control became absolute. Apart from one's objection to the savagery of the punishment itself, one would also want to object to punishment where the teacher's motive is retribution. Indeed, philosophers have argued that the only moral justification for punishment is that it serves to deter pupils from undesirable behaviour.[21] Punishment can, of course, serve other purposes: it can serve a corrective or reformative function, for instance, and some philosophers have held that it can also 'educate'.[22] The important thing to remember, from our point of view, is that punishment and discipline are two different things, or rather, that punishment is **one** means of obtaining or retaining discipline, not **the** means. Otherwise discipline may exist (and in its ideal form as 'self-discipline' does exist) without the need to punish. Moreover, as a consideration of the different motives mentioned above indicates, the scope of punishment need not be to ensure discipline. However, in the sense in which punishment is tied with discipline its value is evidently deterrent.

It is important to understand this in order to place 'punishment' in its proper perspective. A deterrent normally functions as a permanent possibility which can always become actual but which acquires its value, mainly, from its potential threat rather than its use. Indeed, a deterrent is usually considered as a last resort when everything else fails, not something to be used lightly all the time, because if it becomes commonplace it loses its deterrent effect and becomes no more than a form of retribution. This is obviously true where punishment is meant as a deterrent.

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21 HIRST, P.H., and PETERS, R.S., *The Logic of Education*, op. cit.

22 This is true if 'education' is either regarded as equivalent to socialization (in the sense of getting others to conform), or understood, in the broadest sense, to include any kind of learning that modifies behaviour.

Another factor that enters into consideration where punishment is concerned is that of 'proportionality' which should balance that of deterrence, otherwise one is faced with the temptation to over-punish in order to augment the deterrent effect of the punishment. When this happens punishment becomes unjust both as a matter of fact and in the eyes of the person enduring the punishment. And from this point of view it is crucially important to heed the warning that punishment can alienate pupils from the teacher, the school, even learning itself. In this case order may be won for the teacher but at a cost which is clearly unacceptable because it goes against the whole scope of the teacher's relationship with the pupil that is, the latter's education. Otherwise, what the author of the booklet *Regoli ghall-Iskejjel tal-Gvern* says on the matter, is perfectly true: that what will deter one individual may not deter another, and that a particular form of punishment loses its value if it fails to deter and may even have a contrary effect to that desired.

CONCLUSION

It seems to me that it is dangerous and mistaken to discuss or consider the subject of discipline apart from other things, as a phenomenon that can be understood in isolation from anything else. This is the temptation where it is regarded solely as a tool for the teacher to obtain control over the class and no more. In this case discipline is calibered simply for its technical effectiveness as a tool and nothing else. But, as this essay has shown, effectiveness is not the only criterion to be considered when one judges a mode of discipline, nor is it the ultimate one. Considerations of effectiveness must give way where they conflict with those of morality, both personal and political, and with that of education as a positive force for personal and collective development. Discipline cannot be won or retained at the expense of any of these considerations. Indeed it should be exercised in a manner complementary to them and supportive of them. Discipline should be a vehicle for character formation, for effective democratic citizenship, and for the more effective exercise of personal autonomy which is only rendered possible by the possession of skills of different kinds that require intellectual, emotional, and moral discipline. The mention of autonomy as an

educational aim evidently points towards the acquisition of self-discipline, which is one of its manifestations. It sets a target for schools to move gradually from a style of discipline based on the external authority of the teacher (a discipline necessary with the younger pupils) to a different style grounded in the pupil's own maturity on which the assumption of autonomy is based. But, ultimately, whether discipline is viewed simply as a deterrent force relying heavily on the teacher's right to punish, or in a more humane way, as based on the teacher's authority and the reciprocal care that teacher and pupil feel for one another, or as grounded in a democratic form of life in which the teacher is, at best, *primus inter pares*, or first among equals, depends on the teaching philosophy that schools, teachers, and ultimately, in a centralized system like ours, the educational system, adopts. This is why it may, in the last resort, be idle to list a number of recommendations for the teachers about discipline in general.