Navigating the Harms of Epistemic Life: On the Need to Educate for Intellectual Courage

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Abstract

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The purpose of this dissertation is to examine the educational concerns that help or hinder the acquisition and practice of intellectual courage. Compared against some more narrow accounts of intellectual courage found in the philosophical literature, this examination broadens the concept of intellectual courage, and illuminates how a motivation for cultivating intellectual courage means being committed to the distinct motivations of other intellectual virtues. Furthermore, intellectual courage has an inseparable moral and epistemic dynamic. Thus an understanding of intellectual courage shows that the beliefs we hold—and the intellectual character we cultivate—directly impact the way life is led in a social environment, and in the classroom. Intellectual courage is the motivation to pursue knowledge despite possible risk, and the skills to navigate such threatening obstacles virtuously.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my brother Tommy. As one of my first teachers, his love and encouragement remains. Rest in peace.

loving wisdom

in
the beginning
there is wonder.
it dies as we grow, and grows as we truly live.
perfect.

— "socrates says!" —
with a hopeful darkness about, inspect
the roots: drawing near the heat
cures, yet the ascent
smarts.

eating happiness for power
we march.

the path that wanders, with only some fault but yours, pushes you on…
…the draft pulls;
seeing, being, farther, further:
we are blinded by the value of the cosmos.

traversing this *experience* unleashes meaning: befriending the radiance, we dance!

the call
is primordial but always
ours. creating, shaping, leading, we question, and this is the crisis:
do we give friendship; bread and word—in the name of virtue?

"the goal is the journey, and
the journey is the goal."

drawing forms
we feel,
and motion above. this circle,
fecund
for unflattening: become.

strangers are kin,
brothers are teachers,
and always
we
learn.

Preface

This project has its beginnings in my undergraduate philosophy courses. During this time, I was struck by the *study* of philosophy, and the *love* of wisdom itself. Socrates amazed and inspired me to begin my own journey of learning about the world. In other words, learning about the world was not my job, until I was introduced to Socrates. I realized that I needed to learn from his philosophical way of life, first and foremost. Put another way, before deciding what I should do for future employment—I thought to myself—I had better examine and respond to the question: how ought I to live now? Half way through an introductory course, I signed up to be a philosophy major.

I was also struck during this time by philosophy's *use* of critical thinking and logical analysis, and its *focus* on critical thinking and logical analysis. Learning *how to think*, and not just *what to think* was uplifting. I felt that everyone should take an introduction to logic course.

I saw a glimpse of a life's work for myself. I wanted to help put logical thinking into classrooms. I was inspired by the thought of having logic and critical thinking more present in the lives of school aged people. I saw no reason why logic couldn't be taught in middle school, if not before. Putting critical thinking courses in schools would, I thought, help people see the *ill*ogic of the world, so apparent to me in daily newspapers.

I went on to write an undergraduate thesis on why it's important (for us as humans) to think really hard about (our) beliefs.

For my masters degree thesis I examined the role of values in the search for truth, knowledge, understanding, and wisdom. During this time, I recognized that within the center of my project stood education. I was not simply examining epistemology—a branch of philosophy—but also education itself. I realized that Socrates's *philosophical* way of life is simultaneously an *educational* way of life.

Noticing that there was a lot of work in philosophy of education on critical thinking, curiosity, open mindedness, and intellectual humility, I chose to add to the conversation by writing this dissertation on the nature and value of intellectual courage.

Chapter One: Navigating the Harms of Epistemic Life

Introduction

Life is full of harm. To understand one's self and one's surroundings in the world requires navigating harmful situations in a virtuous way. Indeed, we (qua humans) often need to face danger, fear, and struggle head on. This—at the very least—entails getting out of bed in the morning, and into potentially uncomfortable situations. Furthermore, navigating harms and managing risks skillfully requires an understanding of motivations, skills, contexts, and environments. Educational practitioners, by the nature of their endeavor, necessarily navigate this precarity. The purpose of this dissertation is to examine the educational concerns that help or hinder the acquisition and practice of intellectual courage. The purpose of this chapter is to create a map of this study.

The phrase "intellectual courage" might sound odd, or even be taken as an oxymoron. The term "intellectual" might be read as *academic,* and "courage" thought of as *heroic*. However, intellectual courage is not something only practiced in academia, or by someone academically minded. The way courage will be illuminated below also suggests that it does not demand heroic deeds. Rather, courage is practiced in daily life by everyday people—in the act of learning and teaching.

This chapter begins (§1.1) with (i) sketching the motivation for the study, (ii) highlighting the central question to be pursued, (iii) presenting the thesis statement—along with (iv) illuminating some significant outcomes of the study. This is followed by (§1.2) some comments on the methodology, (§1.3) a literature review, and concludes with (§1.4) an outline of the following chapters.

1.1.1 Motivation

Let's briefly imagine Plato's allegory of the cave (*Republic*, 514-519): the journey of ascending—exiting the familiar cave, seeing the bright sun, learning about the complex, odd, and amazing world—and the expedition back into the darkness to help others. Not only is this unexpected pilgrimage filled with epistemic and moral dimensions (among others), but also this journey requires intellectual courage at nearly every step of the way. Indeed, navigating the world (and Plato's cave) entails facing potential harms, and a willingness to sacrifice; it is filled with challenges and the possibility of fear.

Fear can and often does lead people to not take up epistemic and moral pursuits (the *possibility* of fear and the *fear* of possibility are two of many ways). Moreover, educational endeavors can be stymied by fears of failure, fears of success, fears of speaking up, fears of listening, fears of struggling, etc., and the world is filled with potential harms and risks. People may be too worried about their reputation to ask meaningful questions; in such cases, they will not pursue a genuine line of inquiry out of misplaced concern for being perceived negatively. This can be extended to more chronic examples. Not attempting to apply to a certain college, or perhaps not even attempting to attend university at all, can be due to fear—and the potential of harm and risk.

To be sure, navigating risks, harms, threats, and fears is required in all parts of life, and doing so in a vicious way can lead people and communities away from fulfilling their full potential. Accordingly, this challenge is an individual, moral, social, political, and even aesthetic concern. So why focus on the epistemic dimension? In other words, why do I choose to focus on the "intellectual" side of the harms of life?

Speaking of an era of post-truth, and general complacency, former U.S. President Barack Obama states in an interview (Goldberg, 2020; The Atlantic): “If we do not have the capacity to distinguish what’s true from what’s false, then by definition the marketplace of ideas doesn’t work. And by definition our democracy doesn’t work. We are entering into an epistemological crisis.” Accordingly, if we (qua humans) are not concerned with creating the conditions for an awareness of the epistemological situation, then this crisis is likely to remain growing. In other words, to ameliorate this problem not only involves an awareness of knowledge, truth, reason, emotion, understanding, wisdom, virtue, but also an understanding of how the specific epistemic dimensions of life relate to the wider moral and political dimensions. In short, communities on a whole may have their democracies failing given their constituents not *understanding* the world virtuously—in its many social environments and varying contexts (Anderson, 2006; Dewey, 1916/2008; Dotson, 2014; Jackson, 2020; Kidd, 2018; Fricker, 2007; Medina, 2013)—and this can occur given a lack of motivation and skill for navigating the harms of epistemic life.

With that said, many educational practitioners in the present—and throughout history—implicitly appeal to the work of virtue epistemology. Moreover, the work happening in virtue epistemology, as I see it (and elaborated on throughout this dissertation), is crucial for excellent education in general; i.e., good teaching, good learning, effective and meaningful teacher education, social and environmental justice, etc. In short, cultivating intellectual virtues, such as intellectual courage and others, is paramount for teaching and learning simpliciter, and aiming to do so can help illuminate the critical and social dimensions of education.

Currently there are many potential relationships between educating for intellectual virtues and other educational concerns that are not clearly and systematically spelled out. Indeed, intellectual courage has not been given a full-length study in philosophy of education, nor has it been examined as critically as the extant and generative work on curiosity, open mindedness, and intellectual humility (Inan, 2013; Miščević, 2015, 2020; Taylor, 2014, 2016; Verducci, 2019, 2021; Welch, 2021; Whitcomb, Battaly, Baehr, Howard-Snyder, 2017, 2020; Yiğit, 2018). When courage is mentioned, the singular "hero picture" of it is often given emphasis, and little importance is attached to the educative environments and social experiences that either facilitate or hinder its acquisition and practice (Jackson, 2020; Kidd, 2018; Moneypenny, 2021; Stengel, 2018). Furthermore, intellectual courage is related to open-mindedness, intellectual humility, curiosity, tenacity, perseverance, temperance—viz., the cluster of virtues (and vices)—and other educational ideals in important ways (Baehr, 2011/2013/2019/2021; Battaly, 2006/2016/2022; Frierson, 2019; Sockett, 2012; Taylor, 2014, 2016; and Watson, 2016a/2016b/2018a/2018b/2019 /2020). This dissertation not only begins to sketch out a lacuna in the literature between philosophy of education and virtue epistemology, but this theoretical work is meant to have practical implications.

1.1.2 Central Question

This dissertation addresses the central question: *How can educational practitioners benefit from a better understanding of key motivations, skills, contexts, and environments that help or hinder the acquisition and practice of intellectual courage?* The term "educational practitioners" in this question is meant to include teachers, teacher educators, non-traditional teachers (such as those in non-formal—public or professional—settings), academic researchers in the wider fields, and students. Occasionally, the phrase *educational* (or *epistemic*) *agent* is used interchangeably with this term of art. Namely, the question regards education in broad terms, and does not solely locate education within schools alone.

The term “understand” in the research question is supposed to indicate a high threshold of intellectual or epistemic value, and the educational concerns such as “motivations, skills, contexts, and environments” are meant to be individuated—though related—in important ways. Further, “help or hinder” refers to the potential positive or negative values associated with such educational concerns. That is, some motivations, skills, contexts, and environments will be edifying and some might be corrupting. In this dissertation, educational concerns that strengthen or improve intellectual character are edifying, and those that damage or erode character are corrupting (Kidd, 2019 & 2020). Furthermore, it is important to illuminate not only the virtue of intellectual courage, but also the surrounding vices. The terms “acquisition and practice” are meant to show the importance of developing the character trait of the given virtue—i.e., the sustained likelihood of its use (Arthur et. al, 2017; Baehr, 2011; Ritchhart, 2002)—and not simply its one off exemplification.

Moreover, the word “better” in the research question indicates that my response will be normative in nature. It is an axiological question; it requires the study of values. It is also a specific call to continue the good work of intellectual virtue cultivation, vice mitigation, collective justice, and education in general. It is my hope that by asking this question more educational practitioners can better aim to cultivate intellectual courage in a nuanced and critical way.

1.1.3 Thesis

I will argue that intellectual courage is risking some good for the sake of epistemic goods, and that such an understanding has epistemic, ethical, and political significance. With this understanding, a dynamic connection between intellectual courage and the cluster of virtues, and its relationship to environments and contexts will be illuminated.

Not only will this study characterize the components of intellectual courage and its relationship with other educational concerns, but also I will argue that an understanding of intellectual courage is situated well to do this work (Cf., §2.2.2). Such an understanding offers meaningful ways to interpret the relationships of many traditional dualisms including epistemology and ethics, theory and practice, ends and means, and intrinsic and extrinsic value. In short, by holding a broad understanding of intellectual courage, a nuanced epistemic relationship with moral and political endeavors will be understood.

1.1.4 Significance

While highlighting the need to educate for intellectual courage, this study will illuminate (1) the dynamic relationship between the virtues and vices, (2) the relationship between what is often taken as two distinct dimensions of human life: moral and epistemic, and (3) the importance of context and environments in creating just individuals—and institutions. As a result of my study, educational practitioners will be supported in seeing their fundamental values, concerns, and practices as already aligned with the need to educate for intellectual courage. Consequently, the many goals of education—such as creating lifelong learners—will be given a clearer target in which to aim (Baehr, 2013), and consequently educational practitioners will be better situated to move closer to their many goals.

There are four targeted outcomes of this study:

Outcome 1: Educational practitioners will be better supported in making progress in intellectual virtue development, and vice amelioration; whether it be self-cultivation, teaching students, or teaching teachers.

Outcome 2: Educational practitioners will be better prepared to cultivate and make meaningful progress toward three general goals: academic, professional, and social/political. The hope is that people will be better prepared and motivated to live together in a more just and peaceful global society.

Outcome 3: This study will provide for philosophical theory—specifically that of philosophy of education and virtue epistemology—a more broad and more complete picture of what it means to educate for intellectual virtue in general, and intellectual courage specifically: a moral, epistemic, and political endeavor. It is an ongoing training of mind and heart—with the aim of learning to live together in a dynamic world.

Outcome 4: This study will add to the remoralization of the teaching profession. Teaching is often demoralized and swamped by technocratic and merely instrumental concerns, and this study will en*courage* educational practitioners to develop intellectually, and also more fully as whole persons in an intellectual, moral, and political way.

1.2 Methodology

In the following section, some comments on the methodology of my study will be given. Moving from general to more specific, this study uses the following methodology: (§1.2.1) Philosophical Analysis, (§1.2.2) Normative Inquiry, and (§1.2.3) Applied Epistemology.

1.2.1 Philosophical Analysis

At base, this is a work of philosophy. "Philosophy" is the ancient Greek word for *Love of Wisdom*: "*Philo*" meaning love and "*Sophia*" meaning wisdom. This study will hold that philosophy has four general dimensions (or branches) of study: metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, and aesthetics. Using these constructs, one can theorize about anything under the sun. However, these branches of philosophy are never really distinct, but rather they are a way of organizing a complex and dynamic conversation about a complex and dynamic world.

In *The Idea of a University* (1852/1996), John Henry Newman, writes "all knowledge forms one whole because its subject matter is one; for the universe is so intimately knit together, that we cannot separate off portion from portion, or operation from operation, except by mental abstraction" (45). If he is correct, then it is beneficial to show how intellectual courage is "knit together" with other educational values. In other words, the pursuit of wisdom, and the human educational pursuit in general, cannot be neatly cordoned off in practice. The messy intersections between the "disciplines" illustrates this point well.

With that said, philosophy cannot strictly be defined by its method. Further, philosophy—or the love of wisdom—cannot simply be defined by subject matter (Cf., North, 2021a). Indeed, philosophy's subject matter is *everything*—including *nothing*. Philosophy can be thought of as the parent discipline—having given birth to the methods and subject matter of the natural and social sciences.

The following is a list of varying ways of doing philosophy: analytic philosophy, continental philosophy, postmodern philosophy, poststructural philosophy, postcolonial philosophy, ideal philosophy, non-ideal philosophy, critical philosophy, practical philosophy, applied philosophy, African philosophy, Mexican philosophy, Indigenous philosophy, humanist philosophy, posthumanist philosophy, ordinary language philosophy, experimental philosophy, hermeneutic philosophy, written philosophy, oral philosophy, therapeutic philosophy, and philosophy for children (among others). Though the methods of these types of philosophy can be depicted as distinct, where there is perceived difference, there is also often similarity. The many methods of philosophy have a family relation in the way that the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein, in his (1953/2009) *Philosophical Investigations,* shows how elusive it is to try to define the concept "game" (#66, p. 36). There is not one simple way to define "game," and the same too can be said about philosophy. What all these types of philosophy share is a *love of wisdom*.

Furthermore, philosophical inquiries impact the way we (qua humans) live, because philosophical questions are fundamental and life-orienting. They are fundamental in that all humans (for the most part) necessarily engage with versions of these philosophical questions: *How should I live?; How should we live together?; Is there a God?; What should I learn about?; How do I know?; Who's to say? etc.* Philosophical questions are life-orientating, because how we answer or engage with such concerns necessarily impacts the way that individual and social life is led. Methods of philosophy are related to what Pierre Hadot (1987/1995) calls *philosophy as a way of life*, and to philosophy as *an art of living* (Cf., Hansen, 2011). The educational philosopher John Dewey (1916/2008) writes "Whenever philosophy has been taken seriously, it has always been assumed that it signified achieving a wisdom which would influence the conduct of life" (334). The love of wisdom is not simply the questions—it is also the embodiment and enactment of the pursuit by way of life. Accordingly, philosophy is a much broader pursuit than generally considered (see also, Gregory & Laverty, 2009).

Beyond the embodied love of wisdom, the hallmarks of philosophical or conceptual analysis found in textual conversation in the 21st Century, which will be present in this study, are the systematic use of logic, analogy, counter-examples, literary interpretation, and meta-analysis of varying studies and disciplines in general.

1.2.2 Normative Inquiry

Narrowing down in scope, ethics (or moral philosophy) is usually thought of as normative in nature. That is, normative inquiry regards, among other things, what should be the case, and not simply what is the case. Speaking of the nature of ethics, the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle

(c. 350 BC) writes: “The branch of philosophy we are dealing with at present is not purely theoretical like the others, because it is not in order to acquire knowledge that we are considering what virtue is, but to become good people—otherwise there would be no point in it” (*Nicomachean Ethics*, 1103b28-30). This study—and normative inquiry in general—is a calling to improve the world. Moreover, normative inquiry often attempts to challenge and systematically ameliorate methodological approaches to other normative inquiries (McPherson & Plunkett, 2020). Accordingly, not only will this study be a call to learn, teach, and live differently—thus working toward re-shaping our current contexts and social environments—but also it is a call to theorize differently; it is a call to reshape our methodology, and thus the way we live.

1.2.3 Applied Character Epistemology

This study is also situated at the intersection of philosophy of education and applied character epistemology. Epistemology is often thought of simply as the theory of knowledge. However, following the philosopher Linda Zagzebski (2008, 8), this study takes epistemology as the study of good or bad ways to cognitively grasp reality. The concern of epistemology is not simply knowledge, epistemic justification, or even truth, but rather it is open to a plethora of values. For instance, understanding, wisdom, motivation, and virtue. Character epistemology is epistemic evaluation that gives “intellectual virtue” and “intellectual vice” a primary consideration in its analysis. What was often thought of as *virtue* and *vice* epistemology is here characterized as “character epistemology.”[1]

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[1] Below I will occasionally refer to “virtue” or “vice epistemology” for convenience's sake, since it is typical in the literature to refer to them separately. Moreover, it is sometimes necessary to separate them in the ongoing conversation to show the genealogy of character epistemology, which more squarely begins with virtue epistemology. Though *vice epistemology* primarily focuses on vices, and *virtue epistemology* primarily on virtues, “virtue” epistemology (since Plato and Aristotle) has indeed always analyzed both virtue and vice. For more on this genealogy see §4.3. Accordingly, please read “virtue epistemology” and “vice epistemology” as *character*

Though many find the move toward virtue and epistemology to be critically important for education, some educational practitioners may be unaware of character epistemology as a field of theoretical and applied philosophy, and of its compelling value for educational purposes. Accordingly, such scholarship—which directly focuses on intellectual character—can easily be missed. Nevertheless, character epistemology has been inspiring to applied philosophy, social philosophy, feminist philosophy, philosophy of education, philosophy for children, character education, value theory, philosophy of mind, cognitive science, psychology, and political philosophy—among other domains of inquiry and practice. Ralph Waldo Emerson (c. 1841)—in his essay *Self-Reliance*—notes well, "Character teaches above our wills. [People] imagine that they communicate their virtue and vice only by overt actions, and do not see that virtue or vice emit a breath every moment" (1982, 184). If Emerson's words are compelling, then a close examination of intellectual courage will illuminate our tacit ways of being.

Randall Curren (2018) surveys the literature on virtue epistemology and education, and argues that the "value of virtue epistemology for education is primarily in clarifying and deepening educators' understanding of the kind of education they have independent reasons to provide" (471). That is, regardless of the internal debates within education and epistemology, intellectual virtue has figured prominently in the history of educational ideals. Curren writes, "virtue ethics and epistemology prompt educational questions that other approaches to moral theory and the theory of knowledge do not" (470). And goes on, "The value of virtue ethics and virtue epistemology for education is not their distinctive positions on what defines correctness in action or the nature of knowledge, but that they are not narrowly focused on correctness in action or the nature of knowledge" (471). This gives character epistemology a unique lens that is

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epistemology. In short, "character epistemology," so named, has a wide scope, and accurately describes the broad agendas of both vice and virtue epistemology.

theoretically and practically helpful for the cultivation of education within the classroom, and beyond. Nathan King (2021) writes, “Intellectual virtues are for everyday life” (5). They are not simply for the ivory tower philosopher, but rather for nurse practitioners, lawyers, detectives, chefs, plumbers, comic book artists, and so on.

Character epistemology is not simply a critique of traditional epistemology, but rather is a way of doing philosophy—namely, epistemology—in an applied manner. It applies epistemological theory to the activities of public concern; including educational practitioners, political figures, and scientists, among others (Cf., Coady & Chase, 2018). Again this broadens the scope of epistemological analysis to be more relevant to everyday life. Ben Kotzee (2018a) cites applied epistemology’s two main concerns:

> A social focus to do with education not only as a formal institution, but also as an *epistemic function* that will have to exist in any world of epistemic institutions, and an individual focus to do with improving young people's thinking and intellectual conduct in the round to help them become autonomous thinkers as adults (227).

It is important to add that not only “young people” need this ongoing edification, but also democratic citizens in general throughout all walks of life. Michel Croce and Duncan Pritchard (2022) add, “Educational theory is an obvious area of interest for social epistemology, not least because education clearly has some epistemic goals at its heart, and yet it is also naturally understood as an essentially social enterprise, one that all of us partake in some form” (583).[2] In short, applied character epistemology—and this dissertation—are meant to aid in this social service.

Focusing on different values as they are related to the epistemic dimensions of life opens up epistemological analysis to social and political concerns. Accordingly, this study will not be using what Patrick Frierson (2019, 218) calls the “Lone Ranger” version of epistemology.

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[2] For more information on the applied nature of character epistemology, see Baehr (2011, 199).

According to the methodology of this dissertation, the mind is not isolated or solipsistic, but rather social in its very nature. This study takes a commitment to naturalism and fallibilism seriously. Not only does applied epistemology not take into account “evil geniuses”—in the mode of early modern French philosopher René Descartes’ *Meditations on First Philosophy* (Cf. 1641/1998, p. 62), or other “brains in vats” modalities (Cf., DeRose, 2000)—as a live possibility, but also it is committed in holding that coming to cognitively grasp reality does not require certainty. This way of doing epistemology does not get tied down by the plethora of theoretical possibilities (however unlikely) that can sway epistemic judgment, and thus can focus on specific issues that have application for everyday life—such as schooling and education in general.[3] Indeed, I will often use the term “understanding” to signify that my focus of concern is on something more capacious than the traditional 20th Century epistemology's concern with epistemic justification, and its individual focus on whether *S* knows that *P*.

Though the concern of this dissertation is *intellectual* courage, I will sometimes drop the term "intellectual," or use "epistemic" interchangeably. Accordingly, please read “courage” or “epistemic courage” as *intellectual courage*, if not otherwise noted. Lastly, a limitation of the methodology found in this dissertation is its singular focus on the Western philosophical tradition. A similar study using the tradition of Confucius (or others) could have been equally, if not more, revealing. Indeed, more will need to be said about intellectual courage using other important philosophical traditions.

1.3 Literature Review

There is a long historical conversation that illuminates the need to educate for intellectual virtue in general, and intellectual courage specifically. In this section, the work of educational philosophers will serve to sketch out a view of intellectual courage. It begins (§1.3.1) by highlighting key ideas of virtue and courage as they are found in Plato and Aristotle. Then (§1.3.2) the work of 21st Century character epistemology will be highlighted, and lastly (§1.3.3) a working characterization of intellectual courage will be introduced.

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[3] This is not to say that traditional epistemology is irrelevant to education, or not worthwhile in its own way.

1.3.1. Plato and Aristotle

Plato not only begins the conversation about virtue (which is beyond the scope of this dissertation to review), but also specifically contributes to the philosophy on courage. In his dialogue, *Laches*, the concepts of courage and teaching are given center stage. Throughout the dialogue, courage is often defeasibly depicted as physical, militaristic, heroic, and male-centric. Nevertheless, in the dialogue, Socrates hopes to inquire into courageous matters that involve "illness and poverty and affairs of state" and he also wants to include "not only those who are brave in the face of pain and fear but also those who are clever at fighting desire and pleasure" (191D-E). That is, the idea of courage worth searching for involves contexts-dependence, and everyday affairs of the state—not simply in the context of the battlefield. Though the dialogue, unsurprisingly ends in aporia—saying nothing "concrete" about the nature of courage—Socrates ends by advising that they continue together and "*join in* searching for the best possible teacher" (*emphasis added*, 201A).[4] Thus, Plato shows the value of the social nature of educational pursuits. In short, learning is not simply good for the individual results it brings, but also for the ongoing social practice. Furthermore, we learn from Plato that courage is valuable in the pursuit of wisdom, learning, and teaching.

Aristotle

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[4] Throughout this dissertation, I will note when I have added an emphasis in a direct quote. If I have not noted an emphasis, then it was emphasized in the cited text.

Aristotle's treatment of virtue (or excellence, from Greek *arete*) is foundational for character epistemology, and this dissertation. His *Nicomachean Ethics* (c. 350 BC) argues that every human action is done for the sake of *eudaimonia*—namely, for the sake of living well. In his view, humans want happiness, wellbeing, or simply *eudaimonia* not for the sake of anything else, but for itself (it is an end-in-itself). Further, Aristotle argues that the human mind has two parts—the appetitive and the rational, and that humans are capable of acquiring and possessing two types of corresponding virtues with respect to each part of the mind: moral virtues and intellectual virtues. Acquiring and practicing virtues, it is argued, will help an individual achieve a flourishing life—*eudaimonia*. According to Aristotle, moral virtues belong to the appetitive part of the soul, and are actively acquired states such as justice, temperance, generosity, and courage.

Aristotle writes of courage:

> Hence whoever stands firm against the right things and fears the right things, for the right end, in the right way, at the right time, and is correspondingly confident, is the brave person; for the brave person's actions and feelings accord with what something is worth, and follow what reason prescribes (1115b17-19).[5]

Being courageous "for the right end, in the right way, at the right time" signals that correct motivation, correct skill, and correct judgment are vital in the process of becoming virtuous. Being brave and courageous, again, is meant to help humans live well. Aristotle argues that to acquire such states of moral virtue takes an active engagement; often learning from an exemplar, such as an already virtuous agent. Further, he says, "we should observe that these sorts of states naturally tend to be ruined by excess and deficiency…For if, for instance, someone avoids and is afraid of everything, standing firm against nothing, he becomes cowardly; if he is afraid of nothing at all and goes to face everything, he becomes rash" (1104a). Though there are many important dimensions of courage, which Aristotle begins to point out here, the nature and value of courage will be spelled out more clearly below (§1.3.3), and in greater detail throughout the dissertation. For now, in a commonsense manner, Aristotle's moral virtues attempt to map onto modern notions of what it is to be virtuous.

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[5] Taken from the Terence Irwin translation: Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics*. Second Edition. Hackett Publishing Company, Inc.

However, Aristotle also presents five intellectual virtues, which are less in line with what are usually thought of as virtues, and will need to be differentiated from contemporary usage. Aristotle's intellectual virtues are: art (*techne*), scientific knowledge (*episteme*), practical wisdom (*phronesis*), philosophical wisdom (*sophia*), and intuitive reason (*nous*); they are "states in which the soul grasps the truth in its affirmation or denials" (1139b16). Note that these virtues for Aristotle are also acquired states—he does not include natural faculties such as vision, memory, or hearing on his list of virtues.[6] Though there is much to be said about Aristotle's notion of intellectual virtue (and its connection with his moral virtues), pursuing such a matter is not necessary for the present discussion given the contemporary epistemological literature's deviation from Aristotle's conception of intellectual virtues.

In the parlance of contemporary character epistemology, "*nous*," "*techne*," and the like, do not play a substantive role in epistemological analysis—even though the moniker "intellectual virtue" is used as the main focus. However, this has not stopped the influence that Aristotle's *moral* virtues have had on modern virtue theory, including character *epistemology*. Indeed, contemporary character epistemology's focus on intellectual virtues is similar to Aristotle's focus on his moral virtues. For instance, curiosity and other contemporary intellectual virtues are usually thought of as being cultivated by exemplarism in the same way as Aristotle's conception of moral virtues. More will be said about intellectual virtues and character epistemology below.

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[6] I will not be discussing reliabilist intellectual virtues that take "cognitive faculties" as the paragon of intellectual virtues. For more on this distinction see Baehr, 2011.

1.3.2 Character Epistemology and Education

Before illuminating the specific intellectual virtue of courage, it will be helpful to highlight the connection between intellectual virtue and education.

Though the history of virtue theory goes back to Plato and Aristotle, it was not until Elizabeth Anscombe's (1958) "Modern Moral Philosophy" that the geography of modern moral philosophy and ethics harkened back to the wisdom of ancient philosophy to avoid some theoretical and practical misgivings of deontology and consequentialism. However, virtue epistemology did not have the same traction as virtue ethics until James Montmarquet (1986), and more influentially with Linda Zagzebski (1996).

Zagzebski defines virtue broadly as "a deep and enduring acquired excellence of a person, involving a characteristic motivation to produce a certain desired end and reliable success in bringing about that end" (1996, 137). That is, a person's internal psychology needs to be aligned with their external actions. It is important to note that this conception of virtue is meant to include both moral and intellectual virtue. Indeed, Zagzebski argues that "Intellectual virtues are best viewed as forms of moral virtue" (139). What sets intellectual virtues apart from moral virtues, in Zagzebski's view, is the motivational component; the motivational basis of all intellectual virtues is the motivation for "cognitive contact with reality" (167). In other words, intellectual virtue intentionally aims at epistemic value, while having external success at bringing about such cognitive contact with reality.

Jason Baehr (2011) derives his motivation from Aristotle and Zagzebski; he argues that:

> Intellectual virtues have an integrated, two-tier psychological structure. At a basic or fundamental level, all intellectual virtues involve…a positive orientation toward epistemic goods. This orientation is the principal psychological basis of personal intellectual worth and thus of intellectual virtues as I am conceiving of them. However, each intellectual virtue also has its own characteristic psychology. That is, each virtue involves certain attitudes, feelings, motives, beliefs, actions, and other psychological

> qualities that make it the virtue it is and on the basis of which it can be distinguished from other intellectual virtues (103).

What Baehr has in mind is that there are areas of inquiry in which one has to actively pursue in order to find the truth—for instance, philosophy, history, science, and detective-work (among many others) all require an active intellectual engagement. To cognitively grasp reality in these domains is demanding. It requires the motivation for knowledge and understanding—the motivational component—and also it requires self-scrutiny, consistency, reflection, carefulness, reasoning, judging, and the openness to be wrong, to name just a few criteria—namely, there is a skill component.

Baehr (2013) argues that intellectual character virtues should be an explicit educational aim. A generally accepted educational aim is creating lifelong learners, and explicitly educating for intellectual character virtues identifies "specific psychological qualities, abiding convictions, ingrained habits, [and] essential skills that distinguish the lifelong learner…" (p. 249). Not only does being a lifelong learner require a deep connection to learning, but also the connection is engendered by personal intellectual character traits (for example, curiosity, open-mindedness, intellectual humility, intellectual autonomy, attentiveness, carefulness, thoroughness, intellectual courage, and tenacity). Also, Baehr notes that these virtue concepts are normatively prescriptive and richly descriptive. Thin concepts are purely descriptive or purely evaluative, while thick concepts are both descriptive and evaluative (Cf. Kotzee, 2011; Siegel, 2008; Williams, 1985/2006). To say that someone has these virtues is to say something good about them, and illustrates what they would be likely to do in a given situation; it describes their person, while praising them.[7]

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[7] For more on admirable traits of character, see Zagzebski, 2018.

It is important to remember that character traits are different from cognitive faculties (eyesight, memory, IQ, etc.) and skills (such as numeracy, literacy, musical ability, etc.). Having cognitive faculties and knowing skills does not necessarily illuminate a person's moral or intellectual character. The value of this distinction begins with noticing that there are different types of cognitively grasping the world. Some types of grasping the world are verified immediately, while others require inquiry. That is, there are types of grasping the world such as seeing the tree across the street, or recognizing that someone just turned out the lights. This type of grasping the world simply involves having reliable cognitive faculties—it is immediately verified and accounted for by properly functioning cognitive faculties. Comparatively, there are types of grasping the world that take actively pursuing inquiry. For instance, literary theory, philosophy, science, and being a detective all require active intellectual engagement. To cognitively grasp reality in these domains is demanding. It requires searching, reasoning, judging, self-scrutiny, consistency, reflection, and the openness to be wrong, to name just a few criteria. This is related in a significant way to the personal character traits of the agent, and not just their cognitive faculties.

Kristján Kristjánsson (2013) argues that teaching character strengths in schools may even be more important than teaching science, because not all come to love science, or even have a need for understanding a given science, but all humans have a direct interest in virtues—such as honesty, justice, courage, curiosity, attentiveness, accuracy, etc. Despite this contentious view, these virtues are aimed for and cultivated even within pre-school, which shows the ubiquitous need for positive character development.

David Carr (2017) gives an educative account of how "virtue ethics—or ideas of general virtue ethical provenance—might help us to a clearer understanding of teacher professionalism in general or the professional ethics of teaching more especially" (648). He argues for the fundamental nature of virtue ethics to education. He writes, "teachers without some measure of virtuous character could hardly be considered good at their job" (651). Indeed, character is learned for better or for worse, whether it is consciously aimed at or not. Put another way, all teachers practice character education already, if only implicitly. Despite a focus on virtue ethics, Carr notes that epistemic (or intellectual) virtues (such as intellectual courage, open-mindedness, etc.) are a key ingredient of being a good teacher, and I would argue being a good educational practitioner in general.

James Arthur, Kristján Kristjánsson, Tom Harrison, Wouter Sanderse, and Daniel Wright (2017) take as a starting premise that education is a moral enterprise. Indeed, once this premise is accepted, then all schooling, even if it is not made explicit in instruction, should be treated as tacitly moral. Highlighting the moral purposes of education, these authors argue that character education should be an integral part of teacher education, and education in general. Indeed, in their view: "character virtues are the basis of individual and societal flourishing and that schools and teachers can and should play a fundamental role in developing these in their students" (1). Importantly, these authors conceive of such an endeavor not only in ethical terms, but also primarily with an Aristotelian conception of virtue ethics (Cf., Kristjánsson, 2015 & 2019). This is not to say that these authors do not take intellectual courage or contemporary virtue epistemology into account, but rather that the ethics and civics is often stressed over the epistemic.

Duncan Pritchard (2013) recognizes the practical and theoretical power of virtue epistemology. Pritchard has a wide understanding of intellectual virtue and virtue epistemology, where he means by virtue epistemology the epistemic and educational analysis "which puts the subject's intellectual virtues and cognitive faculties—her *cognitive agency*—center-stage" (237). On his account enhancing the cognitive abilities of students becomes central in both epistemological and educational terms, and he argues that knowledge is of less epistemic and educational value than that of understanding. It is also important to distinguish between mere cognitive success and cognitive achievement, where the latter is a result of agency, and the former need not be (viz., success could be by luck). Stronger cognitive success allows for a stronger grasp of reality, even in epistemically unfriendly environments (viz., our post-truth world). Accordingly, in his view, education should ultimately aim for strong cognitive achievement.

But what has been said about intellectual courage specifically?

1.3.3 Courage

In his (1952/2014) *The Courage to Be*, Paul Tillich illuminates the ontological and theological connection between courage and existing as a human in the world. He writes, "Courage is self-affirmation 'in-spite-of,' that is in spite of that which tends to prevent the self from affirming itself" (31). Tillich goes on to give a treatise on anxiety, despair, and transcendence, which is beyond the scope of this dissertation. However, I note this work as an in-depth study into courage itself, and not simply the intellectual dimension of it, as is found here.

In *The Courage to Teach*, Parker Palmer (1998/2017) writes, "the courage to teach is the courage to keep one's heart open in those very moments when the heart is asked to hold more than it is able so that teacher and students and subject can be woven into the fabric of community that learning, and living, require" (11-12). This work, though compassionate and motivating, illuminates the practice of teaching more than it does the nature of intellectual courage. That said, its encouragement into the practice of teaching is worthwhile in its own way.

Baehr's (2011) monograph devotes a chapter on an analysis of intellectual courage. He defines it as follows: "Intellectual courage is a disposition to persist in or with a state or course of action aimed at an epistemically good end despite the fact that doing so involves an apparent threat to one's own well-being" (177). The first aspect to mention is the difference between moral courage and intellectual courage, where the latter disposition is aimed at an epistemic good, such as truth, knowledge, understanding, learning, teaching, etc. In comparison, someone motivated to ameliorate the *injustice* of a practice, for instance Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK), is (more paradigmatically) morally courageous; while someone motivated by inquiry and the upholding of truth is intellectually courageous. However, this is not to say that MLK was not intellectually courageous, but simply that he is often thought of as a paragon of moral courage. Second, note that there needs to be an "apparent threat to one's own well-being;" the potential harm needs to be recognized by the agent or it could be an instance of ignorance or even vice. The fictional character from the British television comedy, Mr. Bean, is often portrayed in this way; his actions might seem brave to a bystander, but he is often simply aloof.

Eric Kraemer's (2018) "Intellectual Courage" is helpful in understanding the connection between intellectual and moral virtues. He argues that intellectual courage is not only "a critical if often over-looked aspect of what makes someone genuinely morally courageous," but also it plays a "prominent role." (264). Generally, moral courage is pictured as a person (S) coming to know something of importance (P) first, and then acting, in the face of a threat, to protect P. In such cases, one moves from a valuable epistemic state to courageous activity (viz., MLK). In contrast, intellectual courage has the opposite directionality: courageous activity to a valuable epistemic state. For instance, posing an important question in a crowded room can be fear inducing, but have valuable results. Furthermore, Kraemer notes a couple of important dimensions of intellectual courage worth noting here. First, while instances of intellectual courage may result in belief formation or reformation, it need not. Second, intellectual courage must involve activity on part of the agent or group in question; one cannot be said to possess or practice intellectual courage if the act and motivation was simply a flip of a switch, so to speak.

Nathan King (2021) devotes a chapter on intellectual courage. He characterizes this target virtue as being motivated to “persist despite threats” for the sake of knowledge (183). However, his focus on knowledge, rather than the more capacious epistemic state of understanding, may be the culprit for his overemphasis on the physical and heroic side of courage. Indeed, King’s paragon example of intellectual courage is John Paul Stapp who, in the early 20th Century, risked his own physical safety for the sake of scientific inquiry into fighter jet safety (178). Such an example reinforces a limited view of courage that highlights the heroic rather than the everyday dimensions of courage, and focuses on overcoming physical danger, rather than other types of risks that pose obstacles to learning and teaching. Indeed, the need to navigate fears, risks, and threats, involves more than just putting one’s body on the line, so to speak.

Baehr (2021) argues that:

> The ubiquity of fear in the context of thinking and learning points to the pervasive importance of intellectual courage. This virtue does not entail an absence of fear; it does not imply fearlessness. Rather, intellectual courage involves an ability to manage and regulate fear, to prevent fear from driving one’s intellectual activity (47).

In this passage, Baehr helpfully notes that intellectual courage does not entail the absence of fear. He goes on, “while an intellectually courageous student might feel fearful about speaking up in class or volunteering to do a problem on the board, the student will not allow this fear to dictate behavior” (Ibid.). Here, Baehr adds to the idea that courage is an everyday occurrence. Courage is not simply the *fearlessness* of Superman, or other fictitious or real life heroes.

Why is it important that a picture of intellectual courage be more capacious than the simple hero-view of it? First, if what is said throughout this dissertation is compelling, then intellectual courage is the everyday ability and motivation to navigate harm virtuously in the act of learning and teaching—and everyday life is full of harm. If true, then non-heroes practice intellectual courage. Thus, the hero-view of courage is simply incomplete. But potentially more importantly, by thinking of courage only in heroic terms, everyday people are less likely to recognize their own daily efforts of practicing intellectual courage. The necessity and value of intellectual courage remains unappreciated, and thus people are less likely to navigate the harms of epistemic life.

This review of the literature surrounding intellectual courage is meant to help the reader find some purchase to move forward from. In sum, it is important to see that intellectual courage intersects with the history of philosophy, contemporary epistemology, and everyday life. Other domains of scholarship and concern—and their relationship with intellectual courage—will be showcased in the following chapters.

1.4 Outline

The chapters ahead seek to further understand the role of intellectual courage in educational endeavors.

Chapter Two will explore two educational concerns as they relate to intellectual courage. The specific question to be explored is: What are the *motivations* and *skills* that help or hinder the acquisition and practice of intellectual courage? An account of the reliability and validity of intellectual courage will be offered by way of exploring the relationship between educating for intellectual courage and another educational ideal: the skill of critical thinking. The upshot and significance of this chapter is twofold. First, intellectual courage is dynamically related to the cluster of virtues, and to the skills and motivations of modern educational concerns. In other words, practicing intellectual courage can have often overlooked benefits for the epistemic agent. Second, intellectual courage does well to illuminate the necessary relationship between the epistemic and moral dimensions of life.

Chapter Three will ask: What are the *contexts* and *environments* that help or hinder the acquisition and practice of intellectual courage? It will defend the need to educate for intellectual courage in relation to social environments, ameliorating vice, and mitigating oppression. The upshot and significance of this chapter is that although context and environment matter greatly to the edification and corruption of character, educating for intellectual courage should be given explicit attention given its normative moral and political qualities.

Chapter Four will be a change of pace. Throughout the chapter there will be three case studies from which lessons will be drawn. These case studies will be taken from Philip Jackson's (1990) *Life in Classrooms*, David Hansen's (2021) *Reimagining the Call to Teach*, and Julie Diamond's (2011) *Kindergarten*. The chapter will showcase how intellectual virtue education—specifically that of courage—fits into some pedagogy of practice. In other words, practicing intellectual courage can often have overlooked benefits for the classroom. Lastly, the remoralization of the teaching profession will be explicitly buttressed against the engineering (or instrumentalist) view of education.

Chapter Five will conclude this dissertation. It will recap each of the preceding chapters, synthesize the motivation and significance of the study, respond to limitations, and offer new research ideas. I hope to have shown that being human demands navigating the harms of epistemic life, and thus there is a need to educate for intellectual courage.

Chapter Two: Motivations and Skills of Intellectual Courage

Introduction

Intellectual courage is the motivation to pursue knowledge despite possible risk, and the skills to navigate such threatening obstacles virtuously.

In this chapter, the above characterization of intellectual courage will be illuminated, and pictured broadly. Compared against some more narrow accounts of intellectual courage and intellectual virtue in general, the ultimate aim is to show how such a view of intellectual courage can have educational benefits.

This chapter will ask the following question: What are key *motivations* and *skills* that help in the cultivation of intellectual courage? My aim is not to give a theory of motivations or skills as such, but rather to give a useful account of how these notions relate to intellectual courage. To examine this, there will be two main sections. In the first section (§2.1), key motivations surrounding intellectual courage will be examined. I will argue that having a motivation for cultivating intellectual courage means being committed to the distinct motivations of other intellectual virtues, and vice versa.

The second half of this chapter (§2.2), will ask: how is intellectual courage related to the skill of critical thinking? This examination will help broaden the concept of intellectual courage, and illuminate how the disposition to act intellectually courageous has an inseparable moral and epistemic dynamic. Put another way, by looking at the skills of intellectual courage, we find that being committed to the epistemic side of intellectual courage means being committed to its moral dimension.

Let us begin with illuminating the motivating forces behind intellectual courage.

2.1 Understanding Key Motivations of Intellectual Courage

In the following, it is argued that having a motivation for cultivating intellectual courage means being committed to the distinct motivations of other intellectual virtues, and vice versa.

First (§2.1.1), two of the main motivations surrounding intellectual courage are illuminated: (i) the motivation for epistemic value, and (ii) the motivation for safety. I end the section (§2.1.2) by showing how intellectual courage is related to the cluster of intellectual virtues.

Before beginning it is important to note that *motivation*, in the way that I intend to use the word, is not synonymous with desire; indeed, a motivation is consciously more present than a desire. For example, water is physiologically desired for humans daily, but rarely in 21st Century developed countries is it a motivating factor in one's desires, goals, and actions (albeit, perhaps it should be). Likewise, Aristotle says that "By nature, all [people] desire to know" (*Metaphysics*, 980a).[8] He does not say that all humans are *motivated* by knowledge (or epistemic value). Rather he illuminates the necessity of knowledge to human life. Likewise, both water and knowledge are needed by humans to live, and though we may have a tacit desire for both water and knowledge, we may indeed be unmotivated toward these as ends. Accordingly, throughout this dissertation, a motivation is an explicit, rather than tacit, desire.

2.1.1 Thirst for Knowledge and the Demands of Safety

A necessary component of intellectual courage (and other intellectual virtues) is the *intrinsic* motivation for epistemic value, or what has been characterized above (Cf., §1.3.2) as cognitive contact with reality. It is important to note that motivation has to come from within, to be considered as intrinsic. Conversely, if someone is motivated to learn X, because (and only because) X is on a test, then the motivation is extrinsic. In such a case, the motivation to learn does not come from within, but from without. The motivation for learning, in this case, is instrumental for satisfying the demands of the test.

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[8] Aristotle (2004), *The Metaphysics*. Trans. Hugh Lawson-Tancred. Penguin Books.

Moreover, if someone is not intrinsically motivated by epistemic value, then their actions cannot be *intellectually* courageous qua virtue. They may be morally courageous, battlefield courageous, or otherwise courageous, but not intellectually courageous. Conversely, the *intellectually* virtuous person is necessarily motivated by epistemic value. This motivating inner force moves the person, and can play out in numerous ways. For example, aspiring to learn to read, learn geology, or learn chess (among other things) can be instances of being motivated by epistemic value. It is important to note that motivation comes in degrees. One can be highly motivated to unmotivated.

The intrinsic motivation for knowledge is an important part of learning to become intellectually virtuous. This means that at one point, someone that is virtuous, was not. That is, the newcomer to virtuous actions may not be intrinsically motivated for knowledge. They might fail the test for virtue, so to speak, but because they are on the road to a more positive intellectual character, their actions leading toward excellence are valuable nevertheless. Thus, it is not always beneficial in this discussion to speak about *virtuous* agents, but rather focus on the acquisition of excellent thinking dispositions (Cf., Ritchhart, 2004).

Furthermore, it is important to realize that being intrinsically motivated by epistemic value is not simply about coming to know the world for oneself, but it can also be about transmitting epistemic value to others (see Chapter Three and Four below). Thus, a teacher or writer or a friend could be intellectually courageous if they are motivated by epistemic value in their deeds, guide the epistemic endeavors of others, and risk being harmed—which we will turn to next.

Accepting Risk

The world can be a dangerous place. Being in danger entails the possibility of suffering harm or injury to a degree. As humans, we have grown to be motivated to protect ourselves from harm. That is, we are naturally motivated in an intrinsic manner for safety. For example, we often feel the need to remain in our comfort zones. This often takes form in the need to secure our conceptions of ourselves, and the things we care about. Thus, another motivation related to intellectual courage is the need to feel and be safe. However, other motivations can come in conflict with our motivation for safety. For instance, our motivation for knowledge and understanding often requires moving through the precarious world. It entails, among other things, putting oneself out there. For example, take a moment to imagine the precariousness of scientific trips into the Amazon rainforest, or other hazardous environments. That is, owning the motivation for epistemic value and attempting to attain epistemic value entails moving through the precarious world, and opens up the very real possibility of harm. In short, coming to know the world involves risking being harmed.

Being aware of potential harm can be scary, especially when one knows that they have to put themself on the line (so to speak). A quintessential picture of what it means to allow the motivation for safety to rule the motivation for other goods, epistemic or otherwise, is the myth of an ostrich with their head in the sand. In this image, the ostrich is not "putting themselves out there." Their comfort zone is narrow, and they are not actively risking being harmed; they are attempting to mitigate harm at all cost. Namely, the ostrich is not pushing the boundaries of their comfort zone, and is acting cowardly.

More will be said about vices of courage, and the epistemology and veracity of fear, in Chapter Three, but it is important to note here that by remaining "hidden" in the sand, the ostrich may indeed be in greater harm. That is, the opportune thing to do may indeed be to move forward. However, in this image, the ostrich is totally unaware of what is needed. If the ostrich takes their head out of the sand, then it is possible that even this slight action, accompanied by the motivation to navigate the potential harm, is moving in the direction of courage, and potentially out of actual danger, or at least toward a potentially more flourishing life.

This points to the nature and value of courage. In short, to pursue epistemic value (or other goods), one often needs to sacrifice another value, or another motivation. In the case of intellectual courage, the sacrificing motivation is safety.[9] To flourish in the world, and not simply to persist, means getting outside and risking the motivation for safety.

Take the words of the 19th Century American ex-slave Frederick Douglass as an example of an aspiration for an educational pursuit that entails risk. In his writing, Douglass shows his motivation to learn about the world by recounting his means of learning to read. He writes:

> The plan which I adopted, and the one by which I was most successful, was that of making friends of all the little white boys whom I met in the street. As many of these as I could, I converted into teachers. With their kindly aid, obtained at different times and in different places, I finally succeeded in learning to read. When I was sent on errands, I always took my book with me, and by going on part of my errand quickly, I found time to get a lesson before my return. I used also to carry bread with me, enough of which was always in the house, and to which I was always welcome; for I was much better off in this regard than many of the poor white children in our neighborhood. This bread I used to bestow upon the hungry little urchins, who, in return, would give me that more valuable bread of knowledge (34).

Being a slave, during a time when laws forbid teaching literacy to slaves (or even freed black people) Douglass was willing to risk life and limb on learning to read. His willingness to risk being harmed to obtain the value of reading is a stark illustration of intellectual courage. He sacrificed the good of safety for the sake of epistemic value. It is important to point out that

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[9] It is important to note a distinction between the motivation for safety, as it is here characterized, and the notion of "epistemic safety" found in contemporary epistemological literature. In this literature, safety is a property of true belief that is correlated with the modal component of luck, and does not refer to the protection of body and mind. For more on the safety principle and luck see Pritchard, 2009.

Douglas was not rash; he did not brazenly flaunt harm, but risked nonetheless. This example is meant to show the large contours of intellectual courage, but we should also ask: What else is at risk in other educational endeavors?

Putting one's body on the line is not the only type of risk that courage is needed to navigate. One might need intellectual courage to navigate going to college. Jennifer Morton (2019) gives a detailed account of the ethical costs of upward mobility. Though her focus is not character education, Morton's analysis of a striver's life—that is, someone born into a systematically unjust situation, which requires unequal educational, political, and economic hardships—illuminates the risks needed to navigate for upward mobility. She writes, "When we tell students to value and prioritize their education, we are in effect telling them to choose education over other competing goods" (37). These ethical trade-offs could indeed harm students depending on the situation. Not only do such students face high stakes monetary risks (Cf., Wozniak, 2017), but also they often sacrifice not being able to see or care for their family. Accordingly, time, energy, finances, family, and life in general can be some of the ethical trade-offs that one can risk by way of their courageous activity.

2.1.2 Intellectual Courage and the Cluster of Virtues

In this section, we will take a look at intellectual courage in relation to other intellectual virtues. I will not be trying to make a strict taxonomy, or create a standard by which these virtues should always be judged, but rather I relate them in a broad way to be helpful to educational practitioners. I argue that aiming to educate for intellectual courage will in effect help cultivate other intellectual virtues. The *cluster of virtues* here signifies the dynamic relationship between (1) curiosity, (2) open mindedness, (3) intellectual humility, (4) intellectual autonomy, (5) attentiveness, (6) carefulness, (7) thoroughness, (8) tenacity, and (9) intellectual courage. There are indeed other virtues that could be included into the cluster of virtues—such as epistemic justice, generosity, perseverance, grit, dependability, etc.—but for the purpose of this chapter, keep these nine virtues in mind, given that they are the leading examples of intellectual virtue found in the literature (Cf., Baehr, 2021: 34-48).

Curiosity and Courage

Curiosity is well studied in the philosophy and education literature (Inan, 2013; Miščević, 2015, 2020; Watson, 2018a; Yiğit, 2018). To be curious is not to be overly fixated on a subject, and it is not to be dull. If an educational practitioner is curious about ants then, among other things, they read magazines, ask questions, and want to learn more. Thus they are not dull or uninterested. Further, they do not want to count every ant on the hill day after day—indeed they only want to do this activity if the situation calls for it, for they are not overly fixated with their curiosity. Put simply, they hit the mean. Importantly, they also are motivated to ask questions not for the sake of, say, popularity or money, but for the sake of grasping the world better.

Yet curiosity is not always on the common list of virtues—see for example, André Comte-Sponville's (2002) list of great virtues, and you will not find curiosity cataloged. Indeed, as the old adage says, "Curiosity killed the cat." But what is the meaning of this old adage? To make sense of it we have to assume that the cat was *too* "curious." In this imagined case the cat presumably had too much thirst for knowledge and understanding. Accordingly, we might not want to call such an "overly curious" disposition *curiosity*, if curiosity is always a virtue. Instead, we can say that the cat had one of the vices surrounding curiosity. The surplus of the disposition is being fixated. That is, proper curiosity necessarily navigates harmful environments well, which entails not being overly fixated, if the situation does not call for it. Otherwise the disposition would not be an excellence of mind. Accordingly, the adage would be better stated as, "Fixation killed the cat."

Socrates says that the love of wisdom "begins in wonder" (*Theaetetus*, 155c-d). Accordingly, one might ask: how is curiosity related to wonder? Nenad Miščević (2015) argues that "wonder is more like a prelude to curiosity" (159). For Miščević, curiosity is the excellence, and wonder is the basic desire for knowledge. Indeed, Miščević (2015, 2020) argues that curiosity is the basic epistemic virtue. In his view, curiosity motivates, organizes, and deploys all other intellectual virtues. Put this way, curiosity is an overarching intellectual virtue; it is always present when other intellectual virtues are practiced. Though I will not attempt to systematically dispute Miščević's claims here, there's reason to think of intellectual courage as also holding a similar role, and for explicitly valuing the cluster of virtues on a whole, as we will see below.

It is worth noting that curiosity and wonder can be thought of in the opposite manner as Miščević. That is, one might argue that wonder is more central than curiosity. If curiosity begins and stops with genuine inquiries, then curiosity is more phasic, and wonder could be thought of as never ceasing. Thought of in this way, wonder organizes and deploys other intellectual virtues.

Lani Watson's (2018a) work on curiosity and inquisitiveness illuminates the importance of considering the cluster on a whole. She argues for a distinction between curiosity and inquisitiveness, which illuminates the importance and relationality of inquisitiveness. In her view, inquisitiveness is characterized by the active skill of asking questions, and curiosity need not be characterized as such. That is, one can be curious in their own mind, but self-silencing. Indeed, they may be too scared to ask probing questions. Putting this excellence of mind in these terms illuminates the relationship between intellectual courage and inquisitiveness. Indeed, Watson argues elsewhere (2018b) that good questioning, or inquisitiveness, is a valuable tool for character education, because it stimulates intellectually virtuous inquiry, and helps cultivate virtue in general. With educating for inquisitiveness in the classroom in mind, Watson writes: “It is precisely by asking a good question, then, that the student encounters an opportunity to exercise *intellectual courage*. In scenarios like this, good questioning is itself a form of intellectual courage” (366, *emphasis added*). Meaningful questions can be difficult to ask—they are probing, and open oneself up to the risk of being harmed. They often show vulnerability in the questioner, and invite vulnerability in the person questioned. In this sense, to be brave is to show vulnerability (for more on vulnerability see Chapter Three—§3.1.3). Thus intellectual courage can be needed equally for answering a good question, as it is for asking. Indeed, courageous questions—i.e., virtuous questions—dig deep. Digging deep takes tenacity, thoroughness, and other intellectual virtues.

Humility and Courage

Socrates is wise in the mind of the Oracle at Delphi (Cf. Plato’s *Apology*, 21a-d) because, Socrates believes, he knows that he does not know. Socrates possesses and practices intellectual humility. Furthermore, in Plato’s *Symposium* it is said that “you won't want what you don’t think you need” (204a). If this is true, then how does one practice wonder or curiosity if they do not recognize that they lack the full grasp of reality to begin with. Dennis Whitcomb, Heather Battaly, Jason Baehr, and Daniel Howard-Snyder (2017) argue that intellectual humility is the “proper attentiveness to, and owning of, one’s intellectual limitations” (520). That is, Socrates owns his epistemic limitations; he searches for cognitive mistakes, gaps in knowledge, and the virtues and vices of his own character, and that of others.

It is important to wonder whether owning intellectual limitations open oneself up to possible risk? In the case of Socrates, he is often thought of as aloof by those that do not recognize his love of wisdom. Indeed, he is intellectually courageous in his willingness to own his intellectual limitations in front of anyone. In a similar way to asking a good question in a classroom, owning one's mistakes and showcasing one's desires for knowledge and understanding is itself a form of intellectual courage.

Indeed, one might feign a "smart" question in an attempt to be viewed as intelligent, but if they are not sincere in their inquiry—namely, if they are not owning their intellectual limitation—then the question is likely not virtuous. Put another way, the feigned question is not an excellence of the mind that promotes flourishing, for oneself—or for others. If we are motivated for knowledge and understanding, then we need to let our guard down—at the same time feel safe—and own our limitations by moving forward despite them. Put another way, to be intellectually humble one needs to be intellectually courageous, genuinely curious, and open-minded.

Open-Mindedness and Courage

Rebecca Taylor (2016) illuminates the value of open-mindedness, and its necessary connection to humility and courage. In her view, an open-minded agent is someone who is (i) motivated to pursue knowledge and understanding, and (ii) motivated to "give due regard to available evidence and argument when forming new beliefs and understandings and when maintaining or revising already established beliefs and understandings" (609). But also, in Taylor's view, to have the capacity to follow through with the motivations "across diverse circumstances" the person has to be (iii) intellectually humble, (iv) courageous, and (v) diligent. That is, the educational practitioner has to own their epistemic limitations in order to be motivated to give due regard to ongoing available evidence. This not only risks being harmed (viz., open mindedness takes courage), but also the agent must not be lazy (namely, open-mindedness takes diligence). Moreover, given that the agent also has to be motivated for knowledge and understanding, we can deduce that the disposition to be curious is also present.

Accordingly, an example of intellectual courage is open minded inquiry into cherished and deeply held beliefs, such as religious beliefs, political beliefs, and so on. Indeed, coming to know that the world is a larger place, and that people think and do things differently could be threatening to one’s point of view. For example, a deeply held religious belief could be threatened by coming to know a foreign exchange student, whose family practices another religion, and thus has different beliefs. Being open to learning about their practices and beliefs requires navigating possible risks for the sake of understanding. Put another way, open mindedness and courage are intricately related.

Open mindedness and intellectual courage need not always be about foundational beliefs, such as deeply held religious beliefs. For instance, take someone in a high school ceramics class who feels threatened by their assignment. Their task is to make a butter dish for their family's counter. However, because this particular person’s family does not keep butter on the counter, but rather keeps it in the fridge, their conception of their family’s private life is threatened. Accordingly, the student does not want to participate in the assignment, because doing so risks harming their perspective of their family.

How does overcoming such challenges benefit educational practitioners? In response, navigating these challenges well could allow the participant to view the world differently, and aid in reforming their overall intellectual character. That is, they may become more curious, intellectually humble, intellectually courageous, and so on. Their comfort zones may begin to virtuously expand.

Other Intellectual Virtues and Courage

Autonomy is also related to courage. One of the reasons for becoming autonomous is to become an agent; a participant, and not simply a spectator; to think for oneself. However, thinking for yourself can be scary. Accordingly, taking responsibility for one's beliefs requires navigating harm. Indeed, to act otherwise is to shirk responsibility; it is to act rash or cowardly. Again, autonomy is itself a form of intellectual courage. One cannot outsource intellectual courage—it has to be done by a singular person. This is not to say that it has to be done alone, or that autonomy and courage are solipsistic (for more on the surrounding vices of autonomy, courage, and other virtues see Chapter Three—§3.1).

What I call the *dynamism* of the virtues illuminates some of the broad relationships between the cluster of virtues. That is, courage can be needed to foster humility, open-mindedness, and curiosity (amongst other virtues)—and humility can be needed to foster curiosity, and open-mindedness (amongst others), and so on. Baehr calls this the "deep interrelatedness of intellectual virtues" (2011, 21 fn. 6.). However, Baehr (2011) only lists courage—in his table of corresponding "groups of intellectual virtues"—under "endurance" (21). This is in need of revision, if courage is thought of broadly—as argued here. Indeed, intellectual courage should be depicted as necessary for proper focus, consistent evaluation, initial epistemic motivation, intellectual wholeness or integrity, and mental flexibility.

This section has argued that we (qua educational practitioners) should not judge one intellectual virtue without considering how it relates to others. Indeed, character traits should be considered in degrees, and in relation. I have argued that having an epistemic motivation for cultivating intellectual courage means being committed to other intellectual virtues. However, I have not argued that intellectual courage is synonymous with other virtues, or that it supersedes other virtues. Furthermore, this thesis does not suggest that when we aim to cultivate intellectual virtue that we should aim for the whole cluster of virtues at the same time. Rather, if the cultivation of one intellectual virtue is tied to the cultivation of them all, then teaching for one, helps to tacitly bring out the others.

In this section, we have outlined the key motivations surrounding intellectual courage, and argued for the importance of the cluster of virtues. I have argued that having a motivation for cultivating intellectual courage means being committed to the distinct motivations of other intellectual virtues, and vice versa. We will turn to the excellent skill of critical thinking next.

2.2 Understanding the Skills of Intellectual Courage

In the remainder of this chapter, we will ask: What are the key *skills* that help the cultivation of intellectual courage? By showcasing and moderating a debate regarding the proper aims of education between intellectual virtue and critical thinking (§2.2.1), the skills of intellectual courage will be illuminated. I will argue that intellectual courage is apt to highlight the connection between the moral and epistemic dimensions of life (§2.2.2), and I will begin to show how such a view of intellectual courage is ripe with educational value.

2.2.1 Intellectual Virtue and Critical Thinking

One can ask: what is more educationally profitable: educating for intellectually virtuous thinkers or critical thinkers? Against a full forced intellectual virtue curriculum, Harvey Siegel (2016) writes:

> I support educational efforts aimed at fostering the intellectual virtues, including in particular those dispositions, habits of mind, and character traits constitutive of the "critical spirit,"…but that is only part of our proper educational task if we are concerned to help students become intellectually virtuous critical thinkers (95).

That is, Siegel does not think that only educating for intellectual virtues is a full and proper aim of education. According to Siegel, teaching for critical thinking is more beneficial. In his view, an ideally educated person is a critical thinker, and a critical thinker must possess two things: *reason assessment* and *critical spirit*.

The reason assessment component of a critical thinker involves, in Siegel's view, "the skills and abilities required to evaluate reasons well, i.e., in ways that properly reflect appropriate epistemological criteria concerning the probative force of proffered reasons and evidence" (96). Namely, to be considered as a critical thinker, a person needs to be able to weigh reasons and evidence according to a logic that proves profitable. That is, the thinker needs to learn the appropriate skills and abilities to think rationally.

On the other hand, the critical spirit component involves fundamentally "*caring* about reasons and their quality, reasoning, and living a life in which they play a fundamental role" (Siegel, 2016: 96). This component makes it likely that someone with the critical assessment component will be competent in carrying out such assessments in their daily actions. Without the critical spirit, someone endowed with the logical wizardry of a computer would not necessarily engage the world accordingly, if they were not motivated to do so. Similarly, someone with a critical spirit that does not have critical assessment will be lacking. They will take the time to weigh reasons and evidence, but will fail to do it correctly because they do not know the logic (so to speak). Siegel writes: "One can judge open-mindedly but irrationally; attend to important details but misevaluate their evidential significance; ask thoughtful but irrelevant questions; etc." (101). Put another way, the mere ability to think critically—or the mere motivation to try—is not enough. What is needed, in Siegel's view, is both critical assessment and critical spirit.

However, before responding to this challenge to the priority of intellectual virtue education, it is helpful to add to the force of the critique, by way of showcasing a slight variation. Ben Kotzee, J. Adam Carter, and Harvey Siegel (2021) also argue that the intellectual virtue approach to education should be viewed as secondary to the critical thinking approach. In short, with limited time and resources teachers should favor teaching for critical thinking, because the intellectual virtue approach does not have the pedagogical resources to teach good thinking in its totality. Whereas critical thinking can be taught through direct instruction, teaching for the possession of intellectual virtue cannot. Kotzee et al. argue that the intellectual virtue approach to education only has exemplarism as a pedagogical tool, and thus educational practitioners cannot *directly* teach virtue. This raises questions about the nature of teaching and learning; harkening back to Plato's *Meno* (70a), and to the question—*can virtue be taught?* Kotzee et al. argue that it cannot be. Furthermore, they argue that to encompass the critical thinking approach within the intellectual virtue approach allows (i) for the critical thinking approach to have primacy and (ii) for the intellectual virtue approach to be teachable, which again they maintain is impossible (for a similar argument see Tanesini, 2016).

Are these charges against teaching for intellectual virtue compelling? Can an educational practitioner be intellectually virtuous and fail to be a critical or reasoned thinker? Or can one be a critical thinker by virtue of being intellectually virtuous? If these charges against educating for intellectual virtue are compelling, then where does this leave the need to educate for intellectual courage? Does an intellectually courageous agent necessarily critically assess their environment? If intellectual virtue education cannot respond in a compelling way, then this critique of virtue education is indeed a challenge to the argument in my study. Responding to this critique is the topic of the next section.

Skills of Intellectual Courage

Against Siegel's (2016) view that educating for intellectual virtue is less suitable as an ideal for education than the critical thinking approach, Jason Baehr (2019) defends the intellectual virtue approach to education. Contrary to Siegel, Baehr holds that fostering intellectual virtue is no less ambitious, or theoretically and practically problematic, than educating for critical thinking in the manner that Siegel proposes. Baehr highlights that what Siegel argues against are instances of possessing "aspects" of a given virtue, but not the virtue to a high degree. If one is disposed to think open-mindedly, but they are not the paragon of virtue, then they will fail to think open-mindedly in all circumstances, and in all places. However, the same criticism will hold against someone who possesses aspects of critical thinking, but lacks in other aspects of reason assessment.

In Baehr's view, the skill component of intellectual virtue ensures that the possessor is disposed to manifest good judgment—namely, correct epistemic judgments—in such domains, if the possession of the disposition to think virtuously is possessed to a large degree. However, it does not guard against being incorrect. Indeed, part of the methodology that this dissertation is committed to is fallibilism. Thus, in the curiosity example above (§2.1.2), the educational practitioner hits the mean; they know when not to count all of the ants, and when it is the right time to count all the ants (e.g., when their research question, and grant money, motivates such an inquiry), but they are not infallible. Put another way, intellectual virtues contain elements of practical wisdom (phronesis). Accordingly, there is a rational element to the skill component that comes from ongoing experience, but more experience is always needed. Accordingly, we need not critique the value of intellectual virtue education because intellectual virtues do not guarantee epistemic accuracy in all judgments. Indeed, nothing—worthy of the name of education—could.

Siegel also does not give enough credit to the necessity of the cluster of virtues, and thus an understanding of the dynamism of virtues can help here. The intellectual character virtues of attentiveness and carefulness help the educational practitioner be present and mindful of pitfalls and errors. This involves paying attention to not only the context and environment, but also the probative force of reasons. More so, the character virtue of intellectual humility helps educational practitioners to own their mistakes and epistemic limitations. Thus, the educational practitioner who cultivates intellectual humility will learn, by way of owning their limitations, how and why not to ask irrelevant questions, nor be quick to evaluate once, and only once. Thus each virtue is only a virtue if presented at the right time in the right context (for more on context, see Chapter Three), and to do this requires a reasoned assessment of those actions.

In the virtue approach, the *process* of inquiry and learning is the main consideration, rather than just argumentation (for a similar social picture of reasoning, see also Laden, 2012; Paul, 2000). This is important for education, because, in Hugh Sockett's words, the "classroom is one in which truth is searched for, not just delivered" (2012, xiii). Inquiry is not simply about "crunching information," as if one was a computer, so to speak. Thus, the intellectual virtue approach is more capacious, and accurate to the true aims of education, than the critical thinking approach.

2.2.2 Intellectual Courage: the Moral and Epistemic Life

In this section, I argue that intellectual courage illuminates the connection between the moral and epistemic dimensions of life, and that such a view of intellectual courage richly informs the experience of becoming educated.

Moral and Epistemic Life

What Siegel (2016) fails to take into account, Baehr (2019) argues, is the *moral dimension* of the "critical spirit" component of critical thinking approach. In a similar fashion as we find Siegel and others arguing against the virtue approach, one might turn the question around and ask: is the motivation element of the critical spirit teachable in a different way than intellectual virtue? In short, why is teaching the critical spirit so different?

As teachers, we not only want our students to have the ability to think critically or virtuously, but also we want them to be disposed to do so. Kotzee (2016) writes the following:

> An important point to note about the standard tests of critical thinking is that they test for critical thinking skill or performance in a specific context--the "prompted situation" of the classroom… The great question is whether this critical thinking ability will also transfer to students' lives outside the classroom (153).

Put another way, tests do not assess the disposition to think critically, but only the ability. Though we will return to assessment in Chapter Five, let's call this dilemma the *Problem of Assessment* for ethical education. In short, the problem of assessment is that moral undertakings such as the intellectual virtues approach or the critical spirit cannot be systematically assessed, because they cannot be taught directly.

The scope of the intellectual virtue approach is broader than the critical thinking approach, and thus the latter addresses only one dimension of human life. Richard Paul (2000) also argues that critical thinking, moral integrity, and citizenship are integrally connected in their relationship to intellectual virtues. Paul highlights that curricula in schools are often so compartmentalized that the affective and moral dimensions of education can be viewed as separate and independent from cognitive development. In other words, moral education is often conceptually segregated from epistemic education.

Meanwhile, Ryan Bevan (2009) also argues that the critical thinking approach to education fosters an instrumentalist mindset, which demoralizes education. Demoralization is the effect of treating education only as an instrument for a desired end, while not recognizing its intrinsic value. When education is demoralized, and tests and standards are given priority, then educational practitioners find it harder to tap into the moral fabric of education (for arguments about the demoralization of education see Arthur et al, 2017; Jackson, 1986; Hansen, 2001; Santoro, 2018). What is needed, in Bevan's view, is an expansion of rationality to include the normative components of virtue epistemology. If this were to happen, the process of inquiry would be given its rightful place in educational discourse. In Bevan's view, a strict critical thinking approach to education is a "perpetuation of the legacy of Cartesian dualism" (171), which is an orientation toward education that is pervasive; it severs other value systems, and bolsters its own axiology as primary.

The Broad View of Intellectual Courage

Teaching for critical thinking and for intellectual courage is not a zero sum game. Indeed, intellectual character is taught for better or for worse, whether a teacher is explicit in their methods or not. Both critical thinking and intellectual virtues approaches to education recognize that the possession of knowledge is not the sufficient aim of education. Knowing a bunch of things, one can still be arrogant, rash, etc. Nevertheless, knowing skills (math, science, etc.) is also not sufficient. Contexts change rapidly (as we'll see in the next chapter), and the valuable skills of today might easily change in the future. Referring to students, King (2021) writes, "What graduates need, in addition to knowledge and skills, are the virtues that will help them put their knowledge and skills to good use—for their own good, for the good of others, and out of reverence for truth itself" (12). Though critical thinking skills are beneficial across disciplines—for example, the nurse needs it as much as the politician—good character is also needed.

Otherwise, the educational practitioner may not use their critical thinking skills outside of the classroom, or they might use it for bad means.

Teaching for intellectual virtues—such as courage—gives a basis for integrating the often segregated cognitive and affective lives of educational practitioners the world over. Indeed, by looking at the skills of intellectual courage, we find that being committed to the epistemic side of intellectual courage means being committed to its moral dimension. Intellectual virtues illuminate the practical and theoretical marriage between the moral and the epistemic realms of life. This marriage cannot be metaphysically divorced, and needs to be celebrated. Put another way, the moral and epistemic fabric of human life cannot be pulled apart, and this should be reflected in the way that education is practiced (for a related commemoration of the often belied intrinsic value of education, see Laverty, 2015).

Conclusion

In his *The American Scholar*, Ralph Waldo Emerson (c. 1837) writes, "[higher education] can only highly serve us, when they aim not to drill, but to create; when they gather from far every ray of various genius to their hospitable halls, and, by the concentrated fires, set the hearts of their youth on flame" (91). I interpret, "every ray of various genius" to mean learning not to judge something negatively simply because it cannot be measured. Indeed, things such as love and friendship cannot be measured or calibrated, and yet their importance to life and education are invaluable. This may indeed be the way that education can create "concentrated fires." That is, aiming to drill and test does not set one's heart "on flame." Rather encouraging students to care about their relationship with education despite some risks is the way to "highly serve."

Indeed courage relates to wholeheartedness. In Dewey's words (*The Later Works*, Vol. 8),

> *Whole-heartedness*. When anyone is thoroughly interested in some object and cause, [they throw themself] into it; [they do] so, as we say, "heartly," or with a whole heart. The importance of this attitude or disposition is generally recognized in practical and moral affairs. But it is equally important in intellectual development (1933/2008, 137).

Put differently, we (qua humans) are not simply unidimensional, but multidimensional. Our bodies and minds are necessarily whole. Thus, we should not dichotomize and conceptually segregate the human body, nor educational aims.

The mention of "heart" in the Emerson and Dewey quotes speaks to the center of my dissertation. The Latin root meaning of—*cor*—found in "courage" is *heart*. The heart connects the mind and body; theory and practice; ends and means; instrumental and intrinsic value. To be educated, one has to navigate the harms of life, which come in many forms. The courage of the educated life, is the heart of the educated life. It means moving forward, and affirming risk.

This chapter asked the following question: What are key motivations and skills that help in the cultivation of intellectual courage? It has argued that being motivated to cultivate intellectual courage is inherently weaved together with cultivating the cluster of intellectual virtues. This chapter has also examined how the motivations and skills involved in educating for critical thinking and intellectual courage are related in a robust and educationally beneficial way. In Chapter Four, we will ask: How can teachers understand their work in this robust picture, which fundamentally involves educating for intellectual courage? In the next chapter, we will ask: What are key contexts and environments that hinder the acquisition and practice of intellectual courage?

Chapter Three: Contexts and Environments of Intellectual Courage

Introduction

In the previous chapter we talked about virtue, and cultivating intellectual courage; in this chapter we will focus on corruption, and the vices surrounding intellectual courage. Though we will continue to talk about key motivations and skills surrounding our targeted virtue, our main focus will be to investigate how contexts and environments negatively influence intellectual courage, and what could be done about it. The question to be explored is: What are key *contexts* and *environments* that *hinder* the acquisition and practice of intellectual courage?

I will argue that an understanding of intellectual courage is helpful in illuminating the important connection between epistemic and political life. Namely, it shows that the beliefs we hold—and the intellectual character we cultivate—directly impact the way life is led in a social environment. Character development (i.e., virtue cultivation and vice mitigation) is tacitly, if not explicitly, practiced in a structural and political manner. Unfortunately, there are many contexts and environments that corrupt intellectual character. Accordingly, the social cultivation of intellectual courage is often negatively impacted, and its vices bolstered. This in turn has an effect on the ongoing creation of a shared social environment, and a spiraling effect on the corruption of intellectual character. Put another way, the nature and value of intellectual character—specifically that of intellectual courage—has an intricate relationship with social activity, which demands a close examination.

By examining intellectual courage in relation to ameliorating vice in different contexts, and mitigating oppression in social environments, this chapter will continue to illuminate how educational practitioners can benefit from a better understanding of intellectual courage. In the first section (§3.1) the vices surrounding intellectual courage (viz., cowardice and rashness) will be illuminated, and the shifting contexts surrounding the acquisition and practice of courage will be discussed. In the final half of this chapter (§3.2), I will examine key environments such as echo chambers, hostile and epistemically polluted environments, and the political sphere of polarization. These arenas systematically corrupt virtue and bolster vice, and I argue that a broad understanding of intellectual courage that incorporates structural change can help mitigate vice and corruption.

3.1 Understanding the Vices and Contexts of Courage

In the next sections, I will address the following question: What are the key contexts surrounding an understanding of intellectual courage? Indeed, courage can often mean different things in different contexts, and this deserves examination. Toward this examination, the vices surrounding intellectual courage will first be illuminated (§3.1.1). Then, I will argue (§3.1.2) that when these vices take root, a cluster of other vices can often set in. This section ends (§3.1.3) by illuminating the shifting contexts surrounding the acquisition and practice of intellectual courage.

3.1.1 Cowardice and Rashness

While speaking about the motivation for safety in the previous chapter (cf. §2.1.1), a caricature of an ostrich was imagined. In this subsection more substance regarding the nature and value of cowardice will be fleshed out. However, before moving forward, a note about the common use of the word ‘coward’ is warranted.

In this dissertation, I use the concept ‘coward’ broadly to refer to the deficiency of the disposition to navigate harm for the sake of knowledge. Importantly, the word is meant to be aligned with the methodology of character education—which assumes fluidity of characterological dispositions, and a growth-mindset (Dweck, 2006). However, I flag a warning of the use of the concept, because the word ‘coward’ is potentially too thick of a descriptive word. That is, there can be a negative connotation culturally built into the word that is often used as a put-down—with an intention to "keep down," so to speak. The common use of referring to someone as a "coward" can have a "set in stone" nature to it. Moreover, the word "coward" is often derogatory, meant to hurt, and may place undue blame on the agent that is not symmetric with other characterological references. For instance, when one is called rash, easily fixated, gullible, or even closed minded (among other vices), the blame is not simply on the agent but on their surroundings, their parents, their beliefs, and environments. Whereas the word 'coward' can be used to cut to the very center of someone in a way that ignores outside stimulus. In other words, "the coward" (in the derogatory use of the word) is often not let off the hook, which assumes a fixed-mindset.

However, the deep wound to one's sense of self that can come from the putdown of "coward" is a good example of the deep characterological nature of courage, and its surrounding virtues and vices. Acting cowardly can illuminate the heart—the very make up—of an agent's being. Moreover, the idea of cowardice is easily connected to the common heroization and masculinized view of courage, which is argued against below. With that said, the depths and breadth of our character impacts that way we relate to the world, and how we learn about it.

Cowardice

Intellectual cowardice is the deficiency of the trait of risking being harmed for the sake of knowledge. It is the disposition to over-protect one's self in the face of harm, and thus educational endeavors, tasks, or activities are never given any kind of leading role in one's motivations and actions. When someone acts intellectually cowardly they are motivated toward safety to a fault. They do not engage with opposing viewpoints, and may refuse to acknowledge information that may challenge their deeply held beliefs. Whereas Fredrick Douglass risks life and limb to learn to read, the intellectual coward may not read out loud in front of anyone out of fear of sounding stupid. The intellectual coward might not ask a genuine question at work, which could cause something important to go unnoticed, and they tend not to affect public policy. They choose to hide themselves from any chances of learning about the world, which includes learning about oneself, and teaching what they in fact do know.

Furthermore, when we do not feel safe, we can lose command of ourselves and resort to over protecting ourselves from harm. When this occurs, our goals can switch from learning to protecting. From growing, and changing—to conserving. That is, we are more likely to keep barriers up when feeling unsafe (even if it is safe). In short, autonomy can be threatened by not navigating harm virtuously. Moreover, the tendency to over protect ourselves can lead to procrastination, perfectionism, and to over comparing oneself to others.

Take for example the character Cypher in the (1999) movie *The Matrix*. He chooses to live in the computer-generated world—despite knowing of the real world outside. He's tired of risking being harmed, and the energy needed to live such a human life. His motto is "ignorance is bliss," and he just wants to hide away. However, our world is such that we cannot simply hide away from the challenges of life. Instead, hiding away will eventually bring its own set of obstacles (as it does for Cypher).

The harm of acting viciously—in this case cowardly—is numerous. As noted with the ostrich, there can be physical harm that comes with having the disposition of cowardice. That is, not learning about the environment because of fear can be an instance of looking away from actual danger. However, looking away from something potentially dangerous does not mean that it disappears. For example, not engaging with climate change due to fear can be an instance of intellectual cowardice (Cf., Alvey, 2020; Kawall, 2018; Stafford, 2010).

However, the most straightforward type of harm that comes from cowardice is epistemic harm. Educational practitioners are unlikely to grow when they are motivated to behave out of intellectual cowardice. Cowardly epistemic agents use their energy to conserve what they believe they have; they tend not to ask meaningful questions—nor do they endeavor in inquiry or research—and they do not explore ways of growing or sharing their actual understanding and expertise.

Rashness

The same cultural connotation problem that plagues cowardice does not necessarily hold true for the term rashness. Namely, rashness is not commonly used as a derogatory reference to someone's character. That is, one might think that the rash person at least has something—namely, they are confident, if merely overconfident. Despite their overconfidence, the rash person is not despised as much as the coward, even if in some instances they inflict more harm.

Epistemic or intellectual rashness is the excess of the trait of risking being harmed for the sake of knowledge. When someone is intellectually rash they are unmotivated toward safety to a fault. They are foolhardy. The intellectually rash agent engages with opposing viewpoints, but can be too readily accepting of information, and their beliefs may change abruptly, and extensively. They are liable to jump to conclusions, and make decisions too early. They voice stark judgments hastily, and can impact the beliefs of others.

Online communication is a sphere that has many examples of intellectual rashness. With a facade of safety, the online chat room or comment section is riddled with rash comments. Examples of jumping to informal fallacies, attacking others, and trolling are countless. These hypercritical interactions do not only harm the educational endeavors of others, but the very structure of online communication can impact the development of democracy (Cf., Burbules, 2016).

The harms of acting viciously are numerous. There can be physical harms of acting intellectual rash. For instance, one can rush into an educational endeavor such that they care little about physical safety. Not following the safety protocol of being a volcanologist, or a wartime journalist, comes to mind. Furthermore, not only does intellectual rashness overly risk harm to oneself, but also to others. For example if someone was too eager to learn by risking and harming others, then their epistemic actions would be rash as well. Knowledge from Nazi experiments could be thought of here (Cf., Caplan, 2021). To say the least, the Nazi does not follow the safety protocol that should be in place for the protection and well-being of others.

Furthermore, there can be mental harms that come from intellectual rashness. One can lose their sense of self. This might happen from taking psychedelic drugs to learn about the possibilities of one's mind, or by taking Descartes (1641/1998) *Meditations* too seriously.

Furthermore, the harm from rashness can also be epistemic. For example, when someone charges into an experiment rashly—too eager to learn, and risking harm unduly, then they might sabotage the experiment. The agent does not act carefully enough, and thus their would-be knowledge is harmed. Their physical safety goes unharmed, but the research suffers given the disposition of being reckless. In this sense, intellectual rashness could be thought of as an epistemic injustice done to one's self that has bystander effects.

3.1.2 Cluster of Vices

In Chapter Two, it was argued that we should not judge one virtue wholesale, or singularly. Rather, considering the cluster of virtues on a whole was shown to be important. Here the converse is shown to be equally important—the cluster of vices needs to be considered on a whole. Indeed, many of the vices are heavily related to other vices, and a good understanding of the cluster is needed to understand courage, and its vices. From here on out, the ‘cluster of dispositions’ will refer to the cluster of both virtues and vices. Accordingly, let's examine some dispositions.

A close term to cowardice is timidity. Kraemer (2015) characterizes “epistemic timidity” as the deficiency vice of intellectual courage, and holds that it is “being too scared to meet the epistemic challenges one faces in a particular situation” (25). Accordingly, the epistemic or intellectual timid person may be too fearful of harming their reputation to endeavor to learn given the possible risks. Timidity here is closely related to intellectual cowardice, and should be treated as such.

It is important to point out that the intellectually cowardly agent does not necessarily need to feel fear to manifest cowardice. Just like the courageous person does not need to overcome fear in every instance, the coward does not need to feel fear in every instance of educational endeavors. Indeed, the coward may come across as somewhat fearless by not putting themselves in situations where fear would be induced. Such a person is an example of an epistemic recluse, if you will. The epistemic recluse hides out from inquiry and from attaining information, truth, knowledge, etc. They have determined to live this way long ago, and have been tucked away in their comfort zone. Accordingly, fear is not a necessary condition of acts of intellectual cowardice. The coward may simply avoid situations that might bring out fear, and thus they avoid the fear altogether. Nevertheless, presumably most intellectual cowards feel fear.

Alessandra Tanesine (2021) thinks of “intellectual timidity as the vice that is characteristic of those who are extremely risk averse in intellectual inquiry” (130). However, in her view, timid dispositions are motivated not by avoiding risking harm for the sake of knowledge, but simply by fear of social exclusion. Thus the timid person, in her view, has the tendency to avoid being noticed, and to self-silence—as a self defense mechanism. Moreover, in Tanesine's words, "the individual who initially bites her tongue ends up honestly believing that she has nothing to say" (131). Similarly, when one has a pessimistic or fatalistic attitude toward their relationship with knowledge and the pursuit of understanding, then in Tanesine words, "Their approach to matters intellectual is likely to turn into a self-fulfilling prophecy since lack of practice will facilitate the atrophy of their intellectual skills" (2, 2021). By not participating, one is liable to arrest their development.

The vice of servility is closely related to timidity, in Tanesine's sense of the word, but instead of self-silencing out of fear of social exclusion, the servile agent tends to have negative attitudes toward their understanding due to social comparisons (Cf., Tanesine, 2018). The servile educational practitioner is one that can suffer from imposter syndrome (Cf., Church, 2020). In Tanesine's words, the servile epistemic agent can believe they are "more stupid, less refined, slower witted, less able to learn" (2018, 28). Accordingly, they hold themselves in low regard, and are eager to please. These negative character traits can result in negative self-esteem, and even social oppression.

Intellectual arrogance is a cousin of intellectual rashness and closed-mindedness, but is usually thought of as a deficiency of intellectual humility. Taylor (2016) gives an example of a 21st Century white southerner whose ancestors were Confederate soldiers (612). This particular educational agent goes off to college and hears about contradictory histories that undermine his beliefs. Nevertheless, "his intellectual arrogance, or underestimation of his own fallibility, prevents him from being motivated to give due regard to relevant information about Southern history; it prevents him from being open-minded" (612). Taylor argues that both intellectual courage and intellectual diligence—where diligence is the mean between intellectual laziness and intellectual relentlessness—are necessary for successful exercise of open mindedness.

3.1.3 Vulnerability View of Courage

Having just canvassed the interrelatedness of the vices surrounding intellectual courage, we will now turn to a discussion regarding context. I will argue that when we take the cluster of vices into mind, and leave the hero view of courage behind, then we can notice the important context that *vulnerability* provides to an integral understanding of courage. Vulnerability is not simply a vice to be mitigated, but a virtue to be cultivated.

Liz Jackson (2020) notes well that “calls to courage can lead to questionable, risky choices, to oneself and others” (161). That is, empirical research suggests that a call to courage can in effect cause rashness (ibid.). This is related to the cultural connotation problem of cowardice, mentioned above. Calling someone a “coward” can cause the person to act more viciously—either more cowardly, or rashly—jumping to one extreme or the other. There is a peculiar relationship with the notions surrounding courage, such that it brings forth moral questions of self worth, the value of life, and how we should live. In the words of Amelia Oksenberg Rorty (1988):

> Courage can be dangerous. If it is defined in traditional ways, as a set of dispositions to overcome fear, to oppose obstacles, to perform difficult or dangerous actions, its claim to be a virtue is questionable. If we retain courage as a virtue, we need to reform it by restructuring its cognitive positions and traits, to assure that it is not only locally but globally beneficial. We need to make sure that the habits of courageous thought and action do not threaten other prized goods, all things considered (299).

Thus we can ask: what are these other prized goods that should be considered with regard to a beneficial understanding of courage? In response, if this dissertation is compelling, then it should be clear by now that for a beneficial understanding of intellectual courage—epistemic value, moral value, social justice, and political value (Cf., §3.2. below) should be included in the "all things considered."

We (qua educational practitioners) should move beyond the heroic-image of courage. This heroic-view of courage is related to what Jason Scorza (2008, 118) calls the "deadly beauty of courage." As noted, calls to courage can be enticing, and draw attention away from what really matters. Imagine someone that sees the hero—the quintessential but potentially theoretically and practically troubling "paragon of virtue"—and attempts to emulate them. Depictions of heroes can easily normalize unwanted behavior, and thus emulation can perpetuate a negative stereotype. Alternatively, imagine someone that sees the hero, and tells themself that they could never live up to such a standard. They do not identify with the hero, and tell themself that "*that* is not me." Thus, the epistemic agent is never motivated to virtuously navigate harm, because they do not relate to the would-be paragon. Accordingly, without guidance on how to move forward, this educational practitioner is left to stagnate. In short, the heroization view of courage is in need of reconstruction.[10]

Toward further illuminating the deadly beauty of courage, we can provoke what I argue is an unhelpful view of courage. This is the tendency to view perseverance, courage, and related terms as isolated from each other, and segregated from moral endeavors (Cf., Baehr, 2011; Battaly, 2017; Curren, 2018). Indeed, one might think that the courageous activity of a Nazi will make the Nazi more dangerous of an individual. And similarly, one might think that cheating on an exam can be an instance of intellectual courage. For instance, looking over someone's shoulder to see an answer during a test could be challenging, and scary—it could demand "courage" one might think—and it could also provide accurate information. Thus, it should be considered as an intellectual excellence, one might think. To be sure, the successful cheater comes to “grasp the world” accurately; they have correct information in their head, which corresponds to how the world actually is. As a consequence, one might ask: can courage be a vice, and in what context should we examine such “courageous” activity?

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[10] For a similar social critique of "grit education" see Battaly, 2017; Jackson, 2020; Kristjánsson, 2013; Monypenny, 2021; Peterson, 2020; Stitzlein, 2018; Stokas, 2015.

Toward responding to such a query, Battaly (2017) points out that it is not intellectually virtuous to persevere counting the blades of grass in a field if doing so “costs” a lot of energy and time, with little to no pay off. This is an instance of an epistemic fanatic (686). That is, even if such an epistemic endeavor is motivated by a love of epistemic goods, it can still be an intellectual vice dependent on the context. In Battaly’s view, perseverance—similar to courage—does not need to be an *excellence* of the mind, because people can persevere in things like cheating on a test, plagiarism, dogmatism, denying the Holocaust, etc. Battaly contends that intellectual perseverance is not always a virtue. This would suggest that the same would hold for intellectual courage, and thus the courageous Nazi is made worse by their courage. Put another way, their Nazi actions would be made more harsh and cruel given their courage.

However, in my view, the Nazi is not made worse by their courage, but rather by their cowardice and rashness. Similar to the ‘fixation of the cat” example in the previous chapter (Cf., §2.1.1), cheating, and other related activities, cannot be instances of intellectual courage (qua thinking excellence), because the motivation is not understanding. Rather, in the case of the cheater, the goal is to successfully “get away” with something already known to be sneaky. Furthermore, even if it took great lengths and intellect to cheat, the act cannot be *intellectually* perseverant or courageous, but rather perseverant or courageous in another way. Indeed, the pursuit of cheating is not the pursuit of knowledge and understanding. Conversely, the goal of cheating is not meaning making, but rather it is epistemic appropriation. Put another way, the successful cheater is not grasping the answers in the right way, and the person that goes to great lengths at earnestly denying the Holocaust is still not accurately grasping the world.

Intellectual courage, on the other hand, is meant to support academic integrity (Cf., Brant et al, 2022, p. 9). For example, taking a bad grade on an exam, rather than cheating, is what *intellectual* courage should demand. The epistemic payoff from navigating the harm of the bad grade should be noted. That is, the agent will either grow from their mistake (namely, their bad grade), or at least their character will not suffer by relying on cheating, and arresting development in the future. Indeed, intellectual growth requires (among other things) intellectual humility, an openness to being wrong, and the tenacity to understand for oneself. All of which cheating negates.

Giving up the Hero View of Courage

Barbara Stengel (2018) argues that heroic forms of courage that focus on individual acts do harm to the practice of education. In this manner, Stengel offers a pragmatist analysis of courage that highlights the social nature of practicing courage, and is grounded in a democratic worldview. On this view, courage is “less dramatic and the danger [that courage confronts] is chronic rather than acute” (214). Jackson (2020) also surveys vulnerability, courage, and grit, and argues that despite the common views that (i) vulnerability is bad, (ii) courage is good and militaristic, and (iii) grit is needed (wholesale) in schools, there are indeed reasons to think otherwise.

Rather than viewing vulnerability as a character weakness, Jackson (2020) argues that vulnerability is not simply something to be fixed, but is rather an uncommonly recognized character strength that can help with “knowledge generation in communities” (151). Under this view, “vulnerability” is akin to intellectual humility—owning one’s epistemic limits (Whitcomb et al., 2017). When we recognize that everyone is vulnerable, then it is possible to care for others as we care for ourselves. In Jackson's words, "Vulnerability enables learning… If one's beliefs or perspectives are 'invulnerable', they cannot change, learn, or grow" (152). Furthermore, vulnerability is closely akin to intellectual courage. Indeed, intellectual courage could be thought of as owning one's vulnerability. When we recognize that we are vulnerable, and risk being harmed for the sake of knowledge and understanding, then we are practicing intellectual courage.

One might think that the courageous hero is never vulnerable, or ultimately hurt. Thus, following the lead of their hero, the educational practitioner may never let themselves be vulnerable. Accordingly, their own growth, and the growth of their community (see §3.2. below) are neglected. However, under the vulnerability view of courage educational practitioners can more easily recognize that growth demands being vulnerable to harm, and virtuously navigating risk. For example, staying closer to home for college to care for a family member is an important endeavor that requires risking being harmed, and thus it is an example of intellectual courage (Cf., Morton, 2019). When this is recognized, practicing intellectual courage and appreciating vulnerability is more easily achievable, and thus the epistemic and moral rewards of such endeavors are also more easily realized.

Indeed, courage does not mean that one is fearless (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1115b 16-20), or incapable of being harmed. It means moving forward despite those fears. This moves away from the hero view of courage, or perhaps what could be thought of as the typical paragon view of courage. Courage means opening up, and becoming vulnerable. Indeed, Superman—the fictitious hero—is most admirable when depicted as vulnerable, and manages to overcome challenges despite risking being harmed. Similarly, Superman's alter ego, Clark Kent, is a normal person that has many day-to-day vulnerabilities, and his navigation of those vulnerabilities are often admired. Accordingly, a better understanding of courage entails recognizing and owning one's limitations, and vulnerabilities.

Regardless of the typical hero view of courage, there is one common realm that is often thought of as needing courage, which is physically removed from the battlefield—romantic relationships.[11] That is, it is common to think that one needs courage to advance a romantic interest—open up to them, or even to consider the idea of a romantic partner. Indeed, pursuing romance can expose one to the possibility of harm. Thus, the need to wisely navigate risk in the pursuit of love is a striking example of the role of vulnerability in courage (more on the relationship between love, wisdom, and courage will be discussed in Chapter Five).

Jackson (2020) also writes "courage can be seen from a political view, not as a quality of a person fighting the world or serving as an Army officer fighting bad guys, but as an orientation toward social justice and democratic intellectual engagement within society" (162). Thus it is important to have an understanding of the vices and contexts surrounding the cultivation of intellectual courage, and to adopt the broader vulnerability view of courage. Furthermore, seeing the connection between vulnerability and caring for others is an important step in the argument of this dissertation. In other words, the need to educate for intellectual courage, comes from the necessity of navigating the harms of living together in a vulnerable world. Next, we will examine how environments influence the corruption of virtue.

3.2 Understanding Key Environments of Intellectual Courage

Having just argued that the vulnerability view of intellectual courage should be adopted, this section highlights the social nature of intellectual courage. I will show how the systematic cultivation and corruption surrounding intellectual courage plays out in social environments.

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[11] Though this realm is also not entirely unimpacted by the hero view of courage—Cf. Pat Benetar's (1983) hit song *Love is a Battlefield*.

Accordingly, I will argue that the education of intellectual courage is political, and that an understanding of intellectual courage should be explicitly cognizant of the social environment that courage, and the surrounding virtues and vices, play out in. To begin, I will examine key environments that systematically corrupt virtue and bolster vice (§3.2.1), and further argue that the vulnerability view of intellectual courage—and the political awareness that is entailed by it—can help mitigate vice and corruption (§3.2.2).

3.2.1. Epistemic Corruption

A critique of character education comes from social and vice epistemology, and argues that treating character on the individual level is like playing educational "whack-a-mole" (Kidd, 2020: 80). That is, by focusing solely on the individual, character education is not treating the source of the problem. Indeed, a recent focus on vice has taken emphasis away from thinking simply about virtue. Battaly (2022) argues that some students are already well on their way to developing intellectual vices, and accordingly the standard approach to intellectual character education needs new strategies that focus on vice mitigation. In her view, the vicious student needs not follow the lead of the exemplar, but rather needs to do other practices that the exemplar would not do. For example, they might list the times that they have lied within a day into a journal (something the virtuous need not do), or move to the other end of the vicious extreme to begin their journey to the virtuous mean (143). Furthermore, she argues that vice mitigation, and virtue cultivation, is in trouble if a wider understanding of the social arena is not taken into account.

Likewise, Ian James Kidd (2018) writes "a situation may generate harms for, and thus demand courage from, some people and not others" (246). Kidd illuminates the connection between courage and equality. That is, some populations, such as vulnerable groups, will need to act more courageously than others to combat social and epistemic oppression. In other words, some groups face greater harm. Accordingly, "reflection on epistemic courage must be sensitive to social positionality" (248). Similarly, as already mentioned (Cf., §2.1.1)—Morton (2019) highlights some of the ethical costs of upward mobility. Appreciating her view through the lens of the vulnerability view of intellectual courage intersects the discussion on upward mobility to the endeavor to educate for the cluster of virtues. In short, upward mobility requires intellectual courage.

Alice Monypenny (2021) cautions against teaching a standard list of intellectual virtues—including the traditional heroic-view of courage. Though her aim is on character-focused "resilience" education—as notably introduced and buttressed in the mainstream by Duckworth et al. (2007) and Carol Dweck (2008), Monypenny's view can be applied to character education in general. She argues that when resilience education (i.e., character education) does not focus on structural oppression, then it does not account for the dynamic contextualism at play in virtue and vice formation and cultivation.

Jackson (2020) also highlights that the need to cultivate vulnerability and humility can be exploited. She argues that some minority groups may feel "a greater emotional and cognitive burden in defending their views" (154), and privileged people may have an easier time practicing intellectual courage, for they are less vulnerable to begin with. She goes on, "Educators can therefore reframe vulnerability not as deficiency, but as a courageous approach to difference and uncomfortable knowledge: as a virtue of people, as they collaborate in communities to develop and maintain open, broadly inclusive and beneficial, reflective spaces" (156). Put another way, our educative endeavors—and our understanding of intellectual courage—should include a contextualized vision of how virtue and vice play out in our structured society. Thinking of intellectual courage in this way incorporates structural change into the very concept of courage by highlighting its relation and commitment to vulnerability, context, and social positionality.

Johnson (2020) argues that at least one of the predominant corrupting social environments of the 21st Century is in the classroom. Specifically, she points to “teaching for the test” as a corrupting force. Such an orientation toward education neglects higher-order thinking skills, the development of intellectual virtues, and discourages phronesis in general. Similarly, Watson (2020) argues that constantly putting students in the role of answerer neglects their important role as questioner. To the student in such an environment, school-learning is memorization, information transference, teacher testimony, etc. In some cases, amongst other epistemically corrupting ways, this might promote “playing it safe,” where playing it safe is intellectual cowardice. Johnson writes, “Teaching in a narrow rote, test-based way gives students the impression that epistemic work is a matter of regurgitating the teacher-/test-sanctioned answer” (2020, 234). The educational agenda of the 21st Century could be thought of as characterized by some form of cowardice (Cf., Biesta, 2015). That is, educational policy is too concerned with teaching and learning safely; teaching only skills that could be tested (for more on the demoralization of teaching see Chapter Four—§4.3).

Tanesine (2018) illuminates the social nature of servility and timidity. Following the works of W.E.B. Du Bois, Paulo Freire, and others, Tanesine highlights that prejudice and oppression (such as colonialism) can create environments that corrupt epistemic character. She argues that the vices of servility and timidity should be understood as mismeasures of one’s intellectual worth, abilities, and potentialities that are defective “because they comprise evaluations that are driven by goals unrelated to accuracy…these appraisals are biased because they are driven by the need to feel good about oneself” (26). Servility trades off dignity, self-respect, and self-esteem for social acceptance, and is a survival strategy (30). In her view, timidity is a coping mechanism as well, but the aim is not social acceptance, but rather social avoidance. Indeed, these vices cause obstacles to a more grounded self-knowledge, to future aspirations, to knowledge dissemination, to the acquisition of knowledge in general, and to other intellectually virtuous development. Tanesine notes well that "vices do not develop in a social vacuum…we should be well advised to study the social structures that foster their formation" (36). Again, the structure of our shared communities influences the way the cluster of dispositions are cultivated, or fail to be cultivated.

Accordingly, the health of democracy is tied to education, and the health of education is tied to democracy. Put simply, we cannot thrive in one domain, without doing well in the other. Indeed, there is a co-dependent relationship between democracy and education. Thus as a public, we must continue to critically ask: *What is education?*; and *What is democracy?*[12] Another hard and continually present question is: *How do we (qua humans) move forward given our complex circumstances?* An understanding of intellectual courage can help here.

3.2.2 Building Networks of Trust: Intellectual Courage and Political Life

In the following, I will briefly argue that civic cultivation in the classroom and beyond requires intellectual courage, and not simply openness, curiosity, and humility. In general, our dilemma is one of echo chambers, polarization, hostile environments, post-truth, fake news, alienation, and democratic erosion. Though each concept deserves its own book length monograph, here I show how intellectual courage, and the cluster of character dispositions, are impacted by our present social environment—and how, in turn, intellectual courage can impact the social environment. The epistemology of inclusion, equity, diversity, engagement, and civic life importantly requires this often neglected character trait; especially for marginalized viewpoints to be part of the conversation (Kidd, 2018; Jackson, 2020; Monypenny, 2021).

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[12] For more on the social environment and nature of public education see Abowitz, 2008—and Curren, 2000.

As stated in Chapter One, we are in an *epistemological crisis* (Obama via Goldberg, 2020). Sigal Ben-Porath (2023) puts this crisis in the following way, “Polarization continuously erodes trust and, at the same time, feeds truth decay by creating insulated communities where only one set of narratives or perspectives can thrive” (16). This environment is indeed an unfortunate quagmire, because with the ability and the trust needed to understand the world eroding, vicious feedback loops and echo chambers are commonplace. In other words, if we (qua humans) are not committed to creating the conditions for a *shared* epistemological endeavor that critically investigates the world and our place within it, then this epistemological crisis is likely to remain growing, and democracy and education will continue backsliding.[13]

Ben-Porath writes, “Recognizing the core tenets of democracy, and especially the necessity of acknowledging the equal standing of all members, and developing the ability to converse across differences, is a process that takes trust, time, and care” (23). However, conversing across differences can be scary, and doing so risks being harmed. Furthermore, polarized groups are unlikely to practice curiosity, open-mindedness, and humility enough to critically evaluate the pros and cons of other perspectives, without also working on their intellectual courage.

The question then becomes, *how do we get people to practice intellectual courage, and how do we get people to care?* This is also a thematic question at the beginning of Plato’s *Republic*. In the following scene, Glaucon and Socrates are heading back to Athens when they are stopped by Polemarchus:

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[13] For an article about ameliorating polarization by way of open mindedness, critical thinking, and art education see Verducci, 2019.

> Polemarchus said: It looks to me, Socrates, as if you two are starting off for Athens.
> It looks the way it is, then, I said.
> Do you see how many we are? he said.
> I do.
> Well, you must either prove stronger than we are, or you will have to stay here.
> Isn't there another alternative, namely, that we persuade you to let us go?
> But could you persuade us, if we won't listen?
> Certainly not, Glaucon said. (327c-328a)

Put differently, Plato asks us to consider the role of dialogue, that is speech, in a just republic. In a well-structured constitution we have to *listen* to *reason* and *care*. However, inclusion in the decision of whether Socrates and Glaucon should stay and be part of the conversation was not on the table. If what Polemarchus says is true, and more than a simple jest, then Socrates and Glaucon are not part of a "free inquiry" about whether to stay and discuss philosophy. Such a stance on the pursuit of wisdom reminds me of the words of Thrasymachus, later in the *Republic* (338c1-2): "justice is nothing other than the advantage of the stronger." Indeed, there seems to be wrong-doing here, because a discussion of the matter is closed; it was never opened, and such an encounter exudes rashness, on the part of Polemarchus. Indeed, rashness is the willingness to overly risk harm for the sake of knowledge and understanding. In the case of Polemarchus, he was willing to overly risk the harm of others.

Furthermore, if truth cannot be an arbiter, in our post-truth social environment, then the normative role of epistemological analysis or the critical method in general is needed to pick up the slack. This points to the importance of critical thinking, or more accurately to the continuous and shared pursuit of critical inquiry and the critical method. One key component of the critical method is the principle of charity. This principle requires interpreting an interlocutor's statements in the most rational way possible; that is, considering the best and fairest possible interpretation. Put simply, charity requires being generous and civil to the other side. It requires not being intellectually rash, but it also requires critical scrutiny—namely, not being intellectually timid. If true, then a moral element is built into the epistemic aim of inquiry (Cf., Chapter Two), and the pursuit of inquiry—done well—requires the enactment of justice.

Furthermore, privileged individuals can temper their potential for rashness by recognizing their own vulnerabilities in context with less privileged individuals. A sense of trust that comes with a shared educational endeavor can ameliorate polarization in and out of the classroom. Trust and a sense of safety are important for any type of educational discussion, and is potentially absent from the scene from the *Republic* above. Safe spaces and tailoring the classroom to be less fearful and challenging may seem like a way to create epistemic snowflakes, but it is arguable that we need safe spaces to reflect on dark areas, and to ensure equal treatment (cf. Callan, 2016; Vogler, 2018).

Jose Medina (2012) writes, "the process of learning is emotionally charged; and one of the emotions required for the acquisition of knowledge is *courage*…Epistemic agents are courageous agents, for knowledge is elusive and we never know where our pursuit of knowledge might take us: perhaps to places we didn't want to go" (230). Again, open mindedness requires intellectual courage. Medina goes on, "But if everyone needs epistemic courage, there is a special kind of courage that the pursuit of knowledge requires for epistemically marginalized subjects, that is, for those subjects who have been excluded from the epistemic practices involved in the production and consumption of knowledge" (231). For instance, there has been an epistemic prohibition against women for thousands of years, which persists today. Accordingly, the inclusion of women into the conversation (amongst many other marginalized identities) requires greater epistemic (i.e. intellectual) courage for specific identities. For marginalized educational practitioners intellectual courage is needed to navigate their larger sense of harm. However, intellectual courage is also needed for the more privileged educational practitioner. Namely, courage is needed to question one's positionality and privilege. One might need to commit themselves to listening, more than talking, and sacrificing a previous conception of themselves, their family, and their community—for the sake of understanding.

Hugh Socket (2012) writes, "Courage is the classic example of commitment, precisely because it is developed and exercised against the grain, against fear and danger" (137). To mitigate some of the corrupting forces of schooling and social politics that have been mentioned in this section, a commitment to an understanding of intellectual courage is needed. The goal is not simply an epistemological revolution, where the sole epistemic endeavor is for accurate information. Rather, the goal is a commitment to social participation, interaction, and engagement. The goal is to not have to meet the rashness of Thrasymachus and Polemarchus in the streets, or beyond. Rather, it is to cultivate the courage of Socrates and Glaucon, who seem to hit the mean between rashness and timidity. If this is compelling, then the search for truth is not the only goal of epistemology and education. The aim of education is ethical, epistemic, and political (to say nothing about the ontological and aesthetic dimensions of education)—and intellectual courage plays a key role in each of these areas.

Engaging with others openly and vulnerably—namely courageously—is civically formative, and epistemically valuable. It's civically formative in that all parties involved get an equal share in the practice of what it takes to live critically and compassionately together, and it is epistemically valuable for all parties involved, because it edifies intellectual, moral, and civic character. Thus the vulnerability view of intellectual courage is not simply instrumental to a flourishing democracy, but is intrinsic to the structure of a shared, more peaceful, global culture.

Conclusion

Martha Nussbaum (2013, 322) thinks of fear as a barrier to compassion, and writes,

> Even in the most reliable cases, where fear is “reasonable” concerning a narrow circle of concern, fear is all too often excessively narrow. Because of tendencies to intense self-focusing that derive from its biological origins, fear often hijacks thought powerfully, making it difficult to think about anything else but oneself and one's immediate circle, so long as intense anxiety lasts. In consequence, a public culture that wants to encourage extended compassion needs to think as well about limiting and properly directing fear, for once it gets going, the good of others is all too likely to fade into the background.

When faced with fear it is natural to draw a circle of protection around oneself, and to not be open to learning or exploring. Moreover, with misinformation, disinformation, polarization, echo chambers, and fear mongering it is also easy to be in a state of “intense anxiety.” Our intellectual characters are shaped in these environments. If we want to ameliorate the situation we need to learn to navigate fear well. This chapter was meant to encourage compassion by showing the social importance of the need to educate for intellectual courage.

I argued that an understanding of intellectual courage is helpful in illuminating the important connection between epistemic and political life. An understanding of intellectual courage shows that the beliefs we hold—and the intellectual character we cultivate—directly impact the way life is led in a social environment. The vices surrounding intellectual courage were also illustrated, and the shifting contexts surrounding the acquisition and practice of courage was discussed.

One might ask: if educating for intellectual courage is meant to help one learn better, then how does learning well require the good of others? In other words, why should one be intellectually courageous? In response, as I hope should be clear by now, learning well requires the good of others, because the good of all are knit together. This is aligned with the broad view of intellectual courage found in Chapter Two, and the vulnerability view found here in Chapter Three. The next chapter will isolate this question by examining the role of intellectual courage in the classroom.

Chapter Four: Intellectual Courage in the Classroom

Introduction

Thus far, a *theoretical* understanding of intellectual courage has been built. Intellectual courage is the motivation to pursue knowledge despite possible risk, and the skills to navigate such threatening obstacles virtuously. With this understanding, a cluster of related dispositions has been reviewed, and it has been argued that intellectual character development—specifically that of intellectual courage—is moral (Cf., Chapter Two) and political (Cf., Chapter Three).

This chapter will be a slight change of emphasis. Here, I will focus on a *practical* understanding of intellectual courage, and on life within the classroom. It will be argued that intellectual courage cultivation, and the mitigation of its respective vices, play key roles in many of the ideal and non-ideal concerns of both students, teachers, and school administrators.

There will be three general case studies regarding the classroom specifically (and education more broadly) from which lessons will be drawn. These general case studies will be taken from works of three educational practitioners who have spent a great deal of time in classrooms.[14] Specifically, these general case studies will be interpretations of moments from (listed here in chronological order) Philip Jackson's (1990/1968) *Life in Classrooms*, Julie Diamond's (2011) *Kindergarten*, and David Hansen's (2021a) *Reimagining the Call to Teach.* But first, brief introductions into their respective works are needed.

Writing and researching in the 1960s (and beyond), Jackson is a pioneer of social research in classrooms. Having spent many hours within classrooms, he has attended to many details, from the mundane to the extraordinary. Referring to his own research, Jackson begins in the preface of his (1990/1968) monograph by writing that the "goal is simply to arouse the reader's interest and possibly to *awaken* [their] concern over aspects of school life that seem to be receiving less attention than they deserve" (xxi, *emphasis added*). Similarly, this chapter is attempting to pay attention to a dimension of the classroom that can often go under the radar. In other words, to practice and cultivate intellectual courage well in the classroom takes being "awake" to the motivations, skills, contexts, and environments that help or hinder its acquisition and practice. Jackson's work will help us understand these dynamics.

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[14] Though these classrooms are primarily regarding the context of the United States, the school systems of Canada and the UK are presumably similar. Thus, more research is needed here to include other systems.

With almost three decades of primary school teaching experience, Diamond's words are a wealth of knowledge. In her (2011) *Kindergarten* she clearly describes a year in the life of a seasoned kindergarten teacher. Most readers might personally relate that kindergarten (i.e., the year of school) is an archetypal time for all that attend. It is a coming to understand what school is. There are obvious academic dimensions—reciting the ABCs, the learning of numbers, shapes, colors, etc., but there is also fun to be had—all the while being trained to stand still in line, and the like. Her words highlighted below, and her description of this quintessential year of school, show that the conceptual theories reviewed in the previous chapters are alive and present in classrooms the world over, and even before the "first grade."

Hansen's (2021a) monograph is a generative and encompassing view of a muddy and essential practice. Here, drawing on decades of research into the moral heart of teaching, Hansen develops what he calls his "Person Project" (cf. Hansen, 2021a, 2021b, 2018). This research took 16 public school teachers from all grades, and asked them to join him in inquiry into the following question (2021a, 52): *What is it to be and to become a person through education and what does it means to be and to become a person in the role of teacher*? A large part of the "Person Project" was 74 days of field-based inquiry into the teacher's classrooms, with the goal "to be with" their practice of teaching, and to bear witness to teaching. Along with illuminating why “Teaching is one of humanity’s most beautiful and important callings” (xiii), Hansen’s work illuminates the need for intellectual courage development in teachers, and why school administrators and policy makers should attune themselves to the moral dimensions of teaching. In other words, Hansen’s work shows that being a teacher—worthy of the name—involves the continuous process of navigating challenging obstacles and risks, and the heart and mind needed to do so.

These three works were selected given the range of samples—from kindergarten to 12th grade, and for their range of perspectives. All three authors, though preoccupied on different agendas, thus structuring their respective works differently, are all focused on examining the fundamental nature and value of education—within school. Though Jackson (1990/1968), Diamond (2011), and Hansen (2021a) do not ever mention the concept of *intellectual courage* explicitly, their words help illuminate the acquisition and practice of this important character trait.

This chapter will showcase how character education—specifically that of intellectual courage—already fits into some pedagogy of practice. Along with illustrating what intellectual courage and its cultivation is in everyday classrooms, the remoralization of the teaching profession will be explicitly buttressed. With that said, let us begin again (§4.1) by illuminating the always conjoint epistemic, moral, and political nature of the classroom, before illustrating (§4.2) the nature and value of intellectual courage in the classroom, and ending the chapter by (§4.3) highlighting the risks within the classroom of the instrumentalist outlook.

4.1 On the Normativity of Classrooms

In the following section, I argue that classrooms are epistemic and ethical (§4.1.1), and further that classrooms are political (§4.1.2). This will help show the dynamic nature of intellectual courage in the classroom.

4.1.1 On the Epistemic and Ethical Nature of Classrooms

Jackson (1990/1968) notes well the reality of being in school, and writes,

> [A]side from sleeping, and perhaps playing, there is no other activity that occupies as much of the child's time as that involved in attending school…we would have to attend a one-hour service every Sunday for 150 years before the inside of a church became as familiar to us as the inside of a school is to a twelve-year-old (5).

Accordingly, it is important to notice the normative nature of being in school, because school is formative—for better or for worse. Jackson writes, "during these formative years [the student] develops adaptive strategies that will stay with [them] throughout the balance of [their] education and beyond" (xxi). In other words, our character traits are formed within school. Thus, it is wise to understand the nature, value, and implicit pedagogy of intellectual courage in the classroom, and be purposeful in our methods so as to cultivate this important virtue.

Throughout her (2011) monograph, Diamond repeatedly alludes that the job of the teacher is epistemic. She states, "I see the work of *knowing* the children we teach as the teacher's central task" (Diamond, 1). She goes on, "I have grown more and more to see teaching as the job of *understanding* children's thinking" (67, *emphasis added*). And, "We have to know the children if we want to know the meanings *to them* of their involvements" (191). Lastly, "The *knowing* of children is what I learn to do differently each year, as a result of thinking about *these* children and their actions" (204). Here, Diamond's words highlight that the job of being a teacher in the classroom is epistemic in nature. The teacher is inherently an epistemic agent through and through. Teachers are tasked with the job of getting to *know* students, and they are tasked with the job of getting the students *to know*.[15]

This "knowing" does not simply refer to a propositional set of accurate information about one's students, but also it refers to witnessing their emotions, motivations, and development of character traits, among other aspects. Accordingly, teachers are also in the business of edification—an intellectual and moral pursuit (to say nothing here of the aesthetic and ontological dimensions). Diamond also documents the dynamic nature of education well; she writes, "You can look at these aspects, describe them separately—but they occur mixed together" (83).[16] This is reminiscent of Newman's words (Cf., Chapter One—§1.2.1): "all knowledge forms one whole because its subject matter is one; for the universe is so intimately knit together…" (1852/1996: 45). Accordingly, the classroom teacher has many jobs. If this is compelling, then the job of the teacher is epistemic, but revolves around—or hinges within—a moral fabric.

Hansen (2021a) echoes this sentiment explicitly, and writes, "Teaching is being with fellow humans in their dynamic interaction with subject matter, with each other, and with their own minds" (118). He goes on, "teachers can be said to be engaged in moral education every minute of the school day" (135). That is, even though the educational practitioner might not be explicitly teaching ethics or moral education, the teacher is nevertheless always in the business of edification (or corruption; Cf., Chapter Three).

Speaking of the first day of school for her five or six year olds, Diamond writes, "My big goal that first day: to make sure they want to come back" (20). That is, Diamond wants her kindergarteners to develop a positive relationship with school. Teaching involves creating the conditions for further education. This reinforces the fact that the classroom is not simply a place to learn facts, and the teacher's job is not simply to give information. Cultivating this positive relationship with the classroom is meant to fuse with a love of education in general.

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[15] Furthermore, as it will be argued below (§4.3.2), teachers are also tasked with the continuous job of *knowing* themselves.

[16] This is also Dewey's point about the dynamic nature of education: "Interest in learning from all the contacts of life is the essential moral interest" (MW, 9. 370).

In Hansen's "Person Project," when asked about the connection between life and teaching, one teacher responded: "to separate, to say that one can be separate from the other is naive at best, and maybe even detrimental to your practice at worst" (2021a, 98). That is, you teach what you are, and we are all dynamically complex in ethical and epistemic ways. Put another way, character, and not just content, is either "taught or caught," so to speak. As Hansen writes, it "is the person in the role, not the role itself, who teaches, or who fails to as the case may be" (70). The same teacher previously mentioned goes on to report to Hansen the following, "I think that might be why I love teaching so much, is that it just *is* life" (98). If the classroom is treated as separate, then it will likely be treated as separate by students; this is to conceptually sever "school life" from life outside the classroom. The goal, rather, is to have students and teachers "sense that their classroom is *part of the world*, rather than strangely apart from it" (34). And in Diamond's words "Making the *border* between home and school more porous" (217). A broad understanding of intellectual courage is meant to knit these dimensions together, or more accurately—is meant to illuminate the fabric that is already there. Such an understanding shows that learning and living are one, and requires the ongoing practice of risking being harmed; it is a practice that does not stop once we leave the classroom.

Speaking about the nature of praise and blame in the classroom, Jackson writes, "many of the rewards and punishments that sound as if they are being dispensed on the basis of academic success and failure are really more closely related to the mastery of the hidden curriculum" (34).

The hidden curriculum here refers to the overall ethos of the school, and the many unstated school dynamics that reflexively nudge students in particular directions. That is, the student is not simply assessed for not getting the right answer, but for not trying—a lack of motivation; or for unfairly cheating—a moral concern. Thus even though the motivation for learning is not being tested for, it is still being "measured" in a hidden way. Namely, the praise or blame that can occur in the classroom is not simply epistemic in nature, but dynamic. Put another way, educational judgements in the classroom naturally evoke ethics, politics, and epistemic dimensions.

Also, the development of learning in general, especially character development, does not happen at a "uniform pace" (Diamond, 51). Even though we cannot expect to always see it or measure it as if it were physical, we can be sure that formation will occur; again, for better or for worse. Speaking of the dynamic nature of being a teacher, Diamond writes, "Just as children are not set, stable elements, neither are we. We manage things better or worse on different days, at different times" (145). And further, "Our knowledge is necessarily partial and in flux…my teaching is by definition never a finished thing" (204). Teachers, along with other educational practitioners, are themselves dynamic. The dynamic nature of the classroom here is referring not only to the many dimensions of life and school, but also pointedly at the necessity of the dimension of time. Related, Hansen writes, "Teaching features a complex, ever-dynamic constellation of fundamental commitments and actions that give the practice its enduring identity and meaning" (119). Accordingly, one reason that it is important for teachers (and other educational practitioners) to self-reflect on their own progress in character development is that the dynamics are ever changing.

One might object that thinking about cultivating intellectual courage in the classroom is less useful than critically thinking about such issues as social justice, climate change, human rights, etc. However, without thinking of a priority of place, intellectual courage nevertheless runs through all of these issues. Diamond's words speak to this point. She writes of teaching, "This role has a moral dimension: we hope that through our attention to individual children and the social environment, and their identification with us, children will develop values of concern, and attentiveness, toward themselves and others" (32-33). The hope is that character education is civic education, and thus a better understanding of intellectual courage, and more practice being intellectually courageous, will help promote attention and care to all important educational issues. Let us look more closely at the social environment next.

4.1.2 On the Politics of Classrooms

Here, the use of the term *politics* is capacious. It refers (in Greek) to the *polis*—or "city"—the ongoing creation of a shared social environment. Diamond makes clear that through the culture and environment of the classroom—the *polis*—"children come to see themselves as individually powerful *and* connected to others" (2). Nevertheless, Diamond writes of school that "the classroom is both real *and* invented" (3), and the same too could be said about culture and society. Put differently, we (as a collective) are ideally and practically working toward making our shared social environment what we want. Accordingly, what I mean by "the politics of the classroom" is the making of a culture.

The teaching of character traits such as courage, and other related educational issues, are mixed up within this social environment. The teacher is crafter of the classroom environment, but the culture (or rituals) of the class also impacts the classroom. Diamond writes,

> By and large, routines are imposed by the teacher and by the environment that the teacher creates; rituals are generated by the children as they respond to this new physical and

> social environment…Through routines, the environment shapes the children's behavior; through the rituals they in turn enact, children shape their environment. (17)

Put another way, the city shapes the people, and the people shape the city. Hansen also notes that "Educational influence comes through the medium of the environment" (2021a, 34), and speaking of her kindergarteners, Diamond writes, "At the end of the year, they had created an environment that reflected not only what they had learned but whom they had become" (61). Accordingly, the teacher not only teaches who or what they are, but also the environment has educational influence, which can have positive or negative effects. Thus it is important for teachers to make opportunities (i.e., routines) for students to practice intellectual courage.

Foreshadowing the work of some of the vice and critical character epistemologists (highlighted in Chapter Three: Battaly, 2022; Johnson, 2020; Kidd, 2018; Monypenny, 2021; Tanesini, 2018, 2021), Jackson (1986) writes of the dynamic political nature of the classroom: "Personal qualities that are beneficial in one setting may be detrimental in another" (36). These qualities may help students to "flourish" in the context of the particular school system, but once outside this environment it may indeed be a corruption to their life. Speaking of the compulsory nature of schooling in the U.S., Jackson writes, "Yet the school child, like the incarcerated adult, is, in a sense, a prisoner. [They] too must come to grips with the inevitability of [their] experience" (9), and goes on—"The fact of compulsory attendance likely does much to reduce outbursts of protests and complaints. When the bonds are sufficiently secure, resistance becomes futile. If school is inevitable, better relax and accept it" (61).[17] Jackson's words are meant to illuminate the corruptive potential of the school environment.

Jackson (1986) notes well that learning to live within the institution of schooling may cultivate resignation and subjugation for some, rather than a love of learning. If true, then conformity to a school system is a possible barrier to intellectual courage. For example, Jackson writes about a common tendency in the classroom—that one "learns to tolerate petty frustrations and accept the plans and policies of higher authorities, even when their rationale is unexplained and their meaning unclear" (36). In short, schooling may indeed develop character traits such as the vices of timidity and cowardice (Cf., Battaly, 2022; Johnson, 2020; Kidd, 2018; Monypenny, 2021; Tanesini, 2018, 2021). Accordingly, it is important for educational practitioners to understand the dynamic and structural nature of the classroom, including the need for intellectual courage.

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[17] For an in depth look into the compulsory nature of schooling see Greenwalt, 2016.

4.2 Intellectual Courage in the Classroom

In this section, I show what *learning* intellectual courage in the classroom looks like (§4.2.1), and what *teaching* intellectual courage in the classroom looks like (§4.2.2). Later (§4.3), I will return to the role of *cultivating* intellectual courage *in* teachers more specifically.

4.2.1 Learning Intellectual Courage in the Classroom

Jackson notes well that "A school is a complex institution, and students are complex creatures" (55). He also writes that "Classrooms, by and large, are relatively quiet places and it is part of the teacher's job to keep them that way" (105). One may wonder then: why do educational practitioners, especially students at the K-12 stage, need to cultivate courage in the classroom? As should be clear by now (Cf., Chapter Two), intellectual courage is not only integrally connected to the other virtues (which in many cases are already treated as explicit educational desiderata), but also intellectual courage is important in its own right. Indeed, if the previous chapters are compelling, then an understanding of the educational concerns that affect the conditions of intellectual courage can benefit educational practitioners by helping them achieve their preexisting educational goals. Overcoming fear in the classroom is one such need for students (and teachers).

Students often struggle with feelings of fear, risk, and even struggle. Thus fear deserves to be given explicit treatment. Speaking of a child who was fearful of having their parent leave the classroom after the morning drop off, Diamond writes, “One fall, John had trouble separating from his mother. Every morning, there were not simply tears, but clinging sobs, and his mother and I had to pry him loose so she could leave” (177). This scene is not widely abnormal. Fear can be associated with school in complex ways. In John’s case, as Diamond finds out, he had recently had his grandfather pass away in his own living room, and was likely grieving with a sense of loss. The point here is that students deal with intense feelings that need to be navigated for growth in the classroom to be optimal. When children recognize that they are vulnerable but do not know how to navigate the situation, they are likely not to hit the mean. That is, they are likely to act cowardly, or even rash.

In another vignette, Diamond brings dead fish into her New York City classroom for her kindergarteners to dissect. She writes,

> Touching the eye, in particular, fascinated and disgusted them. They learned anatomy viscerally: they saw the semicircle at the back of the eye and apprehended firsthand the way eyes are set into sockets and, as a consequence, the way the eye socket protects the eye. They felt for themselves how principles of motion explain the overlapping of the fish’s scales, so the water would flow smoothly over the fish’s body as it swims forward (102-103).

Presenting this opportunity to the students was not only fun for them, but also it spurred the occasion to practice intellectual courage. Diamond points out that some of her students would not touch the dead fish. A deficiency of intellectual courage may have been the cause here. One might ask: what is at risk for the learner that needs to be overcome? However, it is first important to point out that the student may not have even thought that they were risking anything.

However, a list of potential risks can be mentioned: perhaps the fear of impacting their reputation amongst their peers, the cleanliness of their clothes, the sliminess itself, the blood, the smell, the concept of death in general, etc. It is also important to point out that this general fear in the classroom can be associated with the practice of learning or the fear of school (i.e., they might not want to return to the classroom).

Though Diamond does not mention it, it is imaginable that some of her students could have equally acted rashly. That is, they could have rushed into the dissection hurriedly; they could have been carried away with themselves, and not attentive to the situation. Being too excited, perhaps shoving or yelling, could have disrupted the learning situation for all in attendance. This “disorderly” conduct is related to temperance—i.e., self-control or discipline—but is integrally connected to intellectual courage. The desire to have *too much* fun could be the culprit for such a rash kindergartener.

However, this is not to say that fun was not involved for all of the children involved; it is easily imaginable that the “cowardly” kids could have been exhilarated or excited. Yet the opportunity to successfully practice intellectual courage was not navigated by these students. Accordingly, these students did not experience the pay off; they did not “apprehend firsthand” the feeling of the unidirectionality of the scales, etc. For better or for worse, these kindergarteners are beginning to practice, and are on their way to becoming more intellectually courageous. That is, being presented with such an opportunity continued the development of the disposition of intellectual courage for all of Diamond’s students, even if it was not navigated “successfully.” This is a type of classroom opportunity that can make children into intellectually courageous humans.

As Aristotle notes (Cf., Chapter One—§1.3.1), developing courage takes time. Diamond writes, “The luxury of time is not, in fact, a luxury. It’s not only a practical need but a necessity required by the ultimate purposes of education” (14). Throughout the school year, her kindergartners are given ample time to do art, and to practice intellectual courage. She writes, “A critical component of artwork, as I understand it, is an acceptance of the unknowability of the end product” (47). As has been argued, intellectual humility—owning one’s epistemic limitations—takes courage (Cf., Taylor, 2016; Whitcomb et al, 2017, 2020). Accordingly, practicing art in the classroom is one way Diamond cultivates intellectual courage, and the cluster of virtues, in her students. Speaking of fostering art in the classroom, Diamond writes, “It establishes their (relative) freedom to define their work for themselves. As they do this, they gain confidence in themselves as capable committed makers of objects" (47). Making art gives students an opportunity to practice intellectual courage by encouraging them to navigate risk in a relatively safe environment. Making art also illuminates the important relationship between courage and autonomy—i.e., doing something by oneself.

In another of Diamond’s vignettes, she sets upon teaching her kindergarteners about caterpillars, chrysalises, and butterflies. For this particular lesson, each student received and cared for a live caterpillar. They studied it by journaling, drawing, making collages and viscerally noticing its growth throughout the weeks. They observed the caterpillars as they turned into chrysalises, and finally into butterflies. They witnessed the change and growth of the creatures, and even the death of some. They witnessed the new environment being traversed by their butterflies, and finally they painstakingly let them go into the garden.

The timing of Diamond’s butterfly project was key; it took place at the end of the year, and again it persisted through many weeks. The metaphor of growing, changing, and moving through and into a new world is natural and stark with such images. Indeed, first-hand experience of the transformation of caterpillars can itself be transformative. This is especially so as these kindergarteners are leaving school for the summer, and heading into first grade; no longer the youngest kids of their school. This shows an example through witnessing nature, and by identifying with their caterpillar, that life requires moving through time and space, and inherently involves risk, navigating potential harm, and courage. It is the hope that the beauty of the world is worth the risk, and the growth.

Hansen's research also teaches us about the practice of intellectual courage in the classroom. Speaking of an eighth grade Social Studies class watching a video about Jim Crow laws and the KKK, one teacher documents that, "As one of these images flashed across the screen, a few students giggled. Instantly one of them called me over. 'I just laughed,' he said, 'but what I saw wasn't funny. Why did I do that?'" (2021a, 109). Such awareness of one's knee jerk reactions takes heart and a keen mind. Put another way, it takes humility, open-mindedness, wonder, discipline, attention, carefulness (i.e., accuracy to be sure, but also *care*-fullness), thoroughness (going deep), autonomy, tenacity (embracing challenge)—and courage.

Though the above students are practicing, and in many cases learning, intellectual courage in the classroom, their teachers also play key roles. Let's turn to this next.

4.2.2 Teaching Intellectual Courage in the Classroom

If what I have argued thus far is compelling, then part of the teacher's role in the classroom is to support development in intellectual courage. Accordingly, this section, rather than strictly focusing on the student, will inquire into the role of teaching intellectual courage in the classroom. Though intellectual courage is often implicitly taught, it is implicitly taught for better or for worse.

Diamond notes that teachers often feel vulnerable at the beginning of the year. Speaking of returning to school after the summer break, Diamond writes "*I have to change back, from having what I see as my own life, to being a teacher*" (7). Not only does this show the vocational (i.e., calling) nature of being a teacher,[18] as will be highlighted below, but also it begins to show the intellectual courage needed for this dynamic role. Diamond goes on,

> *I have to make space, I have to not be my summer self—active, occupied with my own interests. Emptying myself, in a way.* Being a blank slate is work; it takes effort…Traditional education pictures children as the slates, teachers doing the writing. If *we're* receptive—to children, to what they bring to school—the relationship is reversed. We're the slates, they do the writing." (12)

Again this takes work; what she calls a "mental readiness" (12). Not *knowing* the students before they arrive in the classroom for the first time magnifies a teacher's epistemic limitations, and navigating this risky situation can take courage.

Going further, Diamond writes about teachers in general, "We love knowing, we love telling. We go into teaching in order to teach, and in a deep way we believe that teaching *is* telling. We focus on what we know and what children *don't* know" (68). She, again, makes the point that this should be reversed—we (as teachers) should focus on what students know, and what we do not. For example, Diamond writes the following about trying to understand a child with a language barrier: "Yet if I focused only on his deficit, was aware only of what he *couldn't* do, I couldn't teach him. To be fair, and to be helpful, I had to *observe* his talk and his listening, describe it without judging it" (110). That is, to get better at teaching—this particular student, and in general—she had to own *her* limitations, and not simply look at the limitations of her students. Diamond remarks, "As teachers work to form relationships, to figure out what went

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[18] Following Hansen, "vocational" here refers to the socially valuable aspect of some "teacher's" lives—that is the call to teach; not simply the professional or technical aspect of the job.

wrong on any given afternoon, what we let ourselves know depends on what we can tolerate knowing about ourselves" (158). Honest self-reflection takes intellectual courage.

It is important to point out that Diamond (in the above quote) is also making the point that teaching is not simply "telling" students information. This not only refers to the type of teaching that can occur in the classroom, but also *how* character is often edified or corrupted. Diamond writes,"When teachers talk in this stiff and programmed way, students tune out" (125). Speaking of elementary school culture in the United States during the 1950s, Diamond writes, "Classrooms were *not* for talk. You got in trouble for talking 'too much.' You got in trouble for 'answering back.' …You could and should answer the teacher's questions—raising your hand, waving it…You had to know the answer. There always was an answer" (88). This not only illegitimates open-ended questions (seen as not having answers), but also this manner of teaching mistreats what the culture of questions should be about (Cf., Johnson, 2020; Watson, 2016b, 2018a, 2018b, 2019, 2020).

In this atmosphere of teacher questions and student answers, students might begin to wonder, without ever asking it explicitly—yet with a cynical demeanor: *what's the purpose of knowing the answers to the teacher's questions*, or *what's the purpose of schooling*? Indeed, a teacher may begin to ask themselves these questions in the same defeatist attitude. Diamond has a few things to teach us here. She writes, "if children are *always* corrected, if discussion is always used to instruct, children will keep what they really think to themselves" (91). And "The language that teachers use in classrooms also transmits attitudes" (130), and lastly, "We teach through our selves: through the *tone* in which we ask our questions, through our genuine interest in and responsiveness to the children as individuals" (198). Without using the technical jargon of virtue epistemology, Diamond here showcases the value and methodology of cultivating character.

Jackson also has something to show here. He writes, “it is not only *what* the practitioner says that is revealing. [Their] way of saying it and even the things [they leave] unsaid often contain clues to the nature of [their] experience” (115). Hansen too has something to say about the need for teachers to cultivate a pedagogy based around attitude and language; he writes, “But if recitation is *all* that happens in a classroom—posing questions with preset answers—it raises the issue of whether we’re talking about educating persons or merely socializing them” (2021a, 37). That is, to model good questioning, the question needs to be genuine from the teacher’s perspective to count as legitimate (Cf., Johnson, 2020; Watson, 2016b, 2018a, 2018b, 2019, 2020). If this is compelling, then to teach intellectual courage well in the classroom requires an explicit desire to practice and model this important character trait with students, and an explicit desire to grow.

Not only do the examples drawn for these educational practitioners highlight the need for intellectual courage in the classroom, but also they underscore the dynamic nature of the classroom in revealing ways. However, there is always more work to be done—including remoralizing education.

4.3 Remoralizing Teaching

In the following section, I show how the epistemic threat of educational standardization in the classroom affects the role of being a teacher (§4.3.1), and further show how teachers can navigate this threat (§4.3.2).

4.3.1 Educational Standardization as an Epistemic Threat

Educational practitioners are discouraged to practice moral (even character) education within the classroom. Rather, as Diamond notes, “Everything is sacrificed in pursuit of scores” (154). However, the sacrifice is in the wrong location. Diamond goes on, “Teachers constantly have to suppress children’s energy, which is seen as an impediment to their plans rather than as a resource, something vital to educational purposes” (155). Put another way, the threat of needing to attain a certain score on standardized tests allows for other educational aims to be overlooked, if not forgotten.

In the face of not utilizing the vital educational purposes of the student, one teacher reports to Hansen that “The personal struggle [in teaching] is often the struggle of how to keep going. The work is grueling. The work is unending” (97). And further “When it comes to being an educator, this, the lack of concrete fruit, is the hardest for me to accept…there’s no such thing as an end result” (100).[19] That is, teachers often describe themselves as feeling burnt out, but as Doris Santoro (2021) argues, it is more accurate to say that they are demoralized. In spite of hard work, and in the face of bureaucracy and standardized testing, teachers are hard pressed to enact the values that got them into teaching. One teacher reports to Hansen, with their students in mind, “Often they seem to feel that my courses, like most other courses, make their day worse, a drag” (2021a, 107). Hearing such comments can cause teachers to lose heart in their profession. Demoralization is one of the many risks of teaching in the classroom, especially in today's bureaucratic and instrumentalist atmosphere. The term “instrumental” is used here to indicate a singular focus on the extrinsic value of education, as contrasted with the intrinsic value.

Jackson (1990/1968) writes about a strict instrumental view of education.

> [T]he engineering point of view—comprise the standards by which one might judge a piece of machinery or the plans for achieving a military objective…In the best of all

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[19] This is reminiscent of the never-ending process of philosophy, and the courage to persist in the pursuit of wisdom.

> possible worlds, according to this view, jobs should be done as cheaply and as quickly as possible, with a minimum amount of wasted motion. (164)

Thus considerations such as testing, assessment, and money are often given priority in a strict instrumentalist view of education, and other values are forgotten—if not jettisoned. In Jackson's view, this is the "transformation of teaching from an art to a science" (165). Jackson goes on to argue that the "major weakness of the engineering point of view as a way of looking at the teaching process is that it begins with an oversimplified image of what goes on in elementary school classrooms" (165).[20] That is, there is a tendency to bifurcate and conceptually segregate the dynamic nature of education—thus believing that what happens in a classroom is only epistemic growth.

The engineering point of view is rampant scientism, and persists today. In Hansen's words, "scientism—the ideology that anything not demonstrated empirically by science is a chimera or 'merely subjective'" (2021a, 30). Measurements of "success" are thus the gold standard of the engineering or instrumentalist point of view. With the growth of standardized testing, teachers often feel the need to hide the moral dimension of their work. Not only is aiming for moral edification often seen as taking away from the chance of higher test scores, but also it is perceived as unnecessarily risky.

Diamond also warns that, "For new teachers, guides and lists of goals may lessen the feeling of confusion that is a part of planning. But the danger is that these will take the place of our actually seeing and hearing the children in front of us" (80). It is a common practice of new teachers to adhere to teaching "by-the-book," and thus be susceptible to the engineering or instrumentalist point of view. If what she says is true, then new teachers are at risk of not being able to self-cultivate intellectual courage. This makes sense—given that new teachers have not established themselves in the profession. They are as a group most at risk of losing their jobs; they are more vulnerable than senior teachers. In Jackson's view, "a teacher is no teacher at all if [they are] merely a piece of an institution" (155). Thus, it is important for teachers—especially new teachers—to be able to practice intellectual courage.

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[20] This is similar to Baerh's (2019) response to Seigel (2016); cf. Chapter Two—§2.2.2.

In response to the challenge from the engineering point of view, Hansen writes, "Some teachers, upon entering the practice, quickly discover that strictly occupational or functional language is inadequate for describing why they teach" (6). Similarly, Jackson notes that, "At present teachers in particular lack an effective set of descriptive terms for talking about what they do," and when "teachers and researchers begin to talk the same language, as it were, the possible benefits that each may derive from listening to the other will be greatly increased" (176). Accordingly, the language of philosophy, ethics, and that of character development can help teaching to be more whole. Providing a language of intellectual character strengths, and that of cultivating intellectual courage—as this dissertation is endeavoring—is meant to help remoralize the good work of teaching.

In short, it takes courage to navigate the risks of the engineering or instrumentalist point of view, and subsequently it takes courage to teach courage.

4.3.2 Navigating Risks and Cultivating Intellectual Courage in Teachers

Diamond's work is an example of how a description of a teacher's daily work can help one notice the more dynamic picture. However, to have an open dialogue about teaching requires intellectual courage, intellectual humility, and other virtues, because the stories that need to be told could be painful. There is an element of risk involved in opening oneself up to viewing the way that one teaches. Diamond writes, "Self-knowledge may be uncomfortable, and gaining it may entail doubt and unpleasant truths" (145). Furthermore, while talking about one's teaching to others or being observed teaching, the teacher may not want to come across negatively in the eyes of others. However, navigating this risk brings rewards. Diamond writes, "by telling these stories in professional settings, teachers can come to see children differently; the work of describing transforms our understanding of them. Then, our stories are not just things that happened to us; they are critical sources of information about our work with children" (187). That is, we can use Diamond's words, as well as our own, to become better teachers.

Hansen (2021a) also highlights the need to bring such encounters to the center of school life. Indeed, this is one of the main points of Hansen's "Person Project," and his notions of "bearing witness" and "the call to teach." By bringing teachers together to inquire into the moral heart of teaching, Hansen focuses on the human dimension of teaching, and not simply the bureaucratic. Nevertheless, "Part of this task is learning to criticize and push one another" (Hansen 2021a, 130). Again, courage is needed here. With the Person Project in mind, one teacher reports to Hansen that "participating in the group was entailing a paradigm shift within me that I initially experienced as discomfort. I was inhabiting a space with other educators in a way that I had never done before" (2021a, 83). This took courage; it risked his former self. His former teacher-self was on the line, yet navigating the discomfort, under Hansen's guidance, resulted in excitement, and reward. Hansen writes, "The sense of vocation presumes on the part of the individual person a hopeful, outward-looking sentiment, a feeling of wanting to engage the world in some substantive way" (7). Having educational practitioners bear witness to teaching, and critically examine their own practice, requires courage from teachers, administrators, and policy makers.

To further navigate the engineering point of view, Hansen also stresses that part of the moral heart of teaching is teaching with a purpose, rather than just as another functionary.

Perhaps not so coincidentally, this fuses well with the nature of intellectual courage, which entails having a motivation for knowledge and understanding. Hansen writes, “Purpose in teaching implies creativity rather than mimicry in heeding role functions, an engagement which draws on the individual teacher’s aesthetic, moral, and intellectual capacities, as well as rationales for doing the work” (16). That is, purposeful teaching requires the courage to act autonomously, and creatively.

A teacher reports to Hansen the following (2021a: 103): “Take away all this [bureaucratic] claptrap of being a teacher, the hierarchy, whatever it is. You are just another human being in that room with other humans. What are you doing with that?” With the hope of getting a glimpse into the fundamentals of teaching, such a question is meant to bring one back to the foundations of being with other people—full stop. Speaking of a student's death, one teacher asks (Hansen 2021a, 99): “What do we wish they had had the chance to experience more of in their lives? Which are the moments that we teachers wish we’d made more of with them?” And referring to the courage to speak meaningfully with openness, another teacher reports to Hansen, “When the students get that they’re just supposed to really say what is on their mind, really explore it, it’s amazing what happens” (Hansen 2021a, 103). Hansen’s conversations with teachers show us that rather than simply speaking *at* students, meaningful conversations in classrooms, and about classrooms, are risky—and require sitting with vulnerability.

Given that meaningful conversations are not scripted, we cannot predict where meaningful conversations will end up. In a sense, such a meaningful conversation is out of any one person’s control, even the teacher’s control. But also it should be stressed that such a conversation is not necessarily “out of control” where that phrase refers to chaos. Rather, the tempo, movement, and power of the conversation is directed by all the people (in Greek—the *demos*). This is opposed to the engineering view of the classroom, and it importantly stresses the democratic nature of the classroom over the bureaucratic. The question then becomes: How to support teachers in cultivating this outlook, which many enact already?

Diamond writes, “If the *classroom* is to be a setting in which children’s language will be lively and robust—a central goal, I believe—teachers must find a variety of occasions for talk that [educational practitioners] see as purposeful” (88). This is one reason why teachers must *know* their students' motivations, skills, and contexts. Philosophical discussions about education, including intellectual courage such as this one, can be such an occasion. Despite setting forth on a path away from the engineering point of view, Diamond writes of herself, “The truth is that I remain uneasy with the invisibility of change; I’m not tolerant of the unknown. It’s hard for me to be *between*, waiting for the class to gain purpose and momentum” (140). This shows that moving away from the mainstream is not without inner turmoil. Like the self-reflective response from the eighth grader in their Social Studies class who found themselves laughing impolitely (Cf., §4.2.1), Diamond’s willingness to grow shows: thoroughness, accuracy, carefulness, tenacity, humility, courage, etc.

One might object: why should educators be forced to think about intellectual character development in the face of all their other responsibilities. Indeed, Jackson notes this objection well and writes, “Faced with twenty or thirty restless students [the teacher] has enough to do without worrying about whether [their] behavior is in accord with the pronouncements of the theorists or the admonishments of the curriculum planners” (166). To be sure, it is hard to add another thing to the agenda of becoming a good teacher. In short, why should the educational practitioner care about intellectual courage?

Hansen's words are helpful here. He writes, "What the language of calling and ethical practice provides, when conjoined with the idea of bearing witness, is a fresh way of looking at what [teachers] are *already* doing…it would be from the ground up rather than imposed" (2021a, 29). Similarly, the work of intellectual courage in the classroom for teachers is something they in fact already do—for better or for worse. If teachers see their continued work with their own education and edification as "exercises for ethical self-cultivation," then philosophy and the pedagogy of intellectual courage, along with self-reflection and bearing witness to teaching, are a few ways to continuously work on the self in the role of being a teacher. For, if indeed, as the saying goes, "we teach who we are," then we better continue to work on ourselves.

Conclusion

In his *The Courage to Teach*, Parker Palmer (1998/2017) writes:

> Many of us became teachers for reasons of the heart, animated by a passion for some subject and for helping people learn. But many of us lose heart as the years of teaching go by. How can we take heart in teaching once more so that we can, as good teachers always do, give heart to our students? (17)

It takes courage to begin the process of becoming a classroom teacher, or any teacher for that matter. Indeed, we (qua teachers) risk ourselves by wanting to help others, and sometimes we risk too much. A helpful way forward is charting a path that navigates the risks and rewards virtuously. We need to be sure that our work edifies, and ameliorates corruption. We need to speak "to and from" the heart—and not simply "from and to" the standards. Indeed, practicing intellectual courage in the classroom may entail questioning the standards.

Following the work of three well-seasoned educational practitioners, this chapter has attempted to respond to the following question: Why should students and teachers practice intellectual courage? Responding to the question, we have found that the classroom is moral, epistemic, and political in nature. This chapter has been meant to support educational practitioners in seeing that their own fundamental values, concerns, and practices are already aligned with the need to educate for intellectual courage. Also, we have found that the practice of intellectual courage is intrinsically and instrumentally valuable. Practicing intellectual courage can help mitigate corruption, and it is also constitutive of growing as an educational practitioner in general. That is, the education of intellectual courage happens for better or for worse regardless of anyone's motivation, but when one is motivated to grow—the challenging work of self-reflection and navigating risk can be inherently worthwhile. Teaching is challenging, but the risks are worth the rewards. In the final chapter, the need to educate for intellectual courage will be further examined, and this study will be concluded.

Chapter Five: On the Need to Educate for Intellectual Courage

Introduction

Having just showcased the significance of a broad understanding of intellectual courage in and around the classroom, we have now come to the concluding chapter of this dissertation. The following begins by reviewing the main reason for the study, and assessing the significance of the examination as a whole (§5.1). Next (§5.2), possible limitations of the dissertation will be raised, and responded to. In the final section (§5.3), I will offer some advice for teaching intellectual courage, and illuminate possible research agendas that can grow from this investigation.

5.1 Review

In the following section, I begin by reassessing the motivation and question of the study (§5.1.1). I then review the chapters to see whether the goals and outcomes—set at the beginning of the dissertation—were met, and to think about what this means for the field of philosophy of education, and beyond (§5.1.2).

5.1.1 Motivation and Question

Character epistemology and character education, though time honored traditions in many ways, are two relatively new and unique approaches to thinking about the theory of knowledge and the practice of education (Arthur et. al, 2016; Baehr, 2021; Curren, 2018, Ritchhart, 2002; Zagzebski, 1996). In many ways, giving character a leading role in one's analysis of epistemology and education is beneficial—both theoretically and practically. Doing so marries a focus on reliability and outcomes—an *instrumental* focus—to the *intrinsic* concerns of human motivations and practices. Highlighting the role of character and the cluster of dispositions opens up the epistemological discussion to concepts such as understanding, value, flourishing, and wisdom (Zagzebski [1996] makes this point well). But also it expands the discussion to things such as emotion, community, oppression, inclusion, equity, diversity, and politics (Jackson, 2020; Kidd, 2019; Medina, 2013; Monypenny, 2021). Moreover, a focus on the individual virtues—such as open mindedness, curiosity, and humility—has led to many valuable contributions (Miščević, 2015, 2020; Taylor, 2016; Verducci, 2019, 2021; Welch, 2021; Whitcomb et al, 2017, 2020; among many others).

However, until now, the disposition of intellectual courage has not been given a full-length study in philosophy of education, or in character epistemology. This lacuna was enough to spark an initial investigation. As reviewed throughout the preceding chapters, courage is often found in the literature as problematically emphasizing the singular "hero picture," and as problematically deemphasizing its fundamental relationship with other moral and epistemic dispositions. Furthermore, it was found that little importance is often attached to the educative environments and social experiences that either facilitate or hinder the acquisition and practice of this targeted virtue.

Accordingly, the purpose of this dissertation has been to address the question: *How can educational practitioners benefit from a better understanding of key motivations, skills, contexts, and environments that help or hinder the acquisition and practice of intellectual courage?* My goal has been to understand intellectual courage, and to evaluate its proper role in education. Moreover, this question pertains to educational practitioners broadly in all fields and walks of life. Indeed, throughout my investigation, I have found that navigating risks, harms, threats, and fears are required in all parts of life, and doing so in a vicious way can lead people and communities away from fulfilling their full potential.

Furthermore, one does not need to look far in the 21st Century to find the propagation of misinformation, disinformation, ignorance, epistemic and civic polarization, unprompted competition, and the unneeded initiation of fear. These concerns cause major problems in our modern democracy, and educational systems. Accordingly, a greater epistemological awareness of our present predicament is critically needed in the public, private, and academic spheres. This dissertation has been motivated by these concerns.

Accordingly, this examination has not only begun to sketch out a lacuna in the literature between philosophy of education and character epistemology, but also the hope is that this theoretical work has practical implications (for more on the practice of teaching for intellectual courage, see below—§5.3).

5.1.2 Outcomes and Significance

Chapter One set the stage by presenting a review of the main literature. This was meant to help educational practitioners to begin to see the relationship between learning about the world, and the risks involved with such a human life. Indeed, the whole of the study has been to serve learners, teachers, and researchers by illuminating how intellectual courage is formed (or misformed), and how it impacts one's way of life.

By examining intellectual courage, we have come to an understanding of the dynamic relationship between the virtues and vices. In Chapters Two and Three, by examining some of the motivations, skills, contexts, and environments that surround intellectual courage, I was able to highlight the cluster of dispositions. These include the cluster of virtues, such as curiosity, open mindedness, intellectual humility, intellectual autonomy, tenacity, thoroughness, carefulness, and attentiveness. And the cluster of vices: fixation and dullness; gullibility and closed mindedness; servility and arrogance; rashness and cowardice; etc. I argued that these dispositions are more tightly knit together than occasionally thought. This is significant because when aiming to cultivate one virtue, or ameliorate one vice, it is important that we (qua educational practitioners) recognize the (tacit if not explicit) influence of all of the rest.

Not only did this study characterize the components of intellectual courage, and its relationship with the cluster of dispositions, but also the intricate relationship between epistemic, moral, and political endeavors has been highlighted. Indeed, intellectual courage is well suited to illuminate how this axiological tapestry is knit together. This study has provided for philosophical theory, specifically that of philosophy of education and virtue epistemology, a more broad picture of what it means to educate for intellectual courage. It is an ongoing training of mind and heart—with the aim of learning to live together in a dynamic world.

With a better understanding of intellectual courage, educational practitioners will be better supported in making progress in intellectual virtue development, and vice amelioration. Furthermore, educational practitioners will be better prepared to cultivate and make meaningful progress toward three general goals: academic, professional, and social/political. In other words, character—the routine ways we think about ourselves, each other, and the world—necessarily impacts one’s relationship with their path through schooling (or education in general), their chosen profession, and society at large. In short, the hope is that people will be better prepared and motivated to live together in a more just and peaceful global society.

Having reviewed some key educational concerns surrounding intellectual courage, Chapter Four set out to support educational practitioners in seeing that their own fundamental values, concerns, and practices are already aligned with the need to educate for intellectual courage. For instance, if one is teaching art or science, then they can benefit from a clear understanding of intellectual courage, because art and science (along with the other disciplines) require this targeted virtue. This study was meant to add to the remoralization of the teaching profession, which is often demoralized and swamped by technocratic and merely instrumental concerns. Put differently, this dissertation was meant to en*courage* educational practitioners to develop intellectually, and also more fully as whole persons in an intellectual, moral, and political way. In short, a better understanding of intellectual courage can allow for a clearer view of the long-standing tradition of teaching.

5.2 Possible Limitations

In the following section (§5.2.1), I raise some possible limitations of the dissertation, and respond to them.

5.2.1 Limitations and Responses

While reading this dissertation, one might object about the way that intellectual courage is described. Specifically, one might say that the way courage is depicted makes it sound as if everything takes courage. If true, then the need for courage—either tempering rashness or stoking cowardice—is omnipresent. That is, courage—or the lack of courage—is in all places all the time. If this is true, then saying that there is a need to educate for intellectual courage is too all-encompassing, and demanding.

In response, I certainly do not think that educational practitioners need to attend to the cultivation of intellectual courage all the time, or that educating for it is an all-powerful tool. Indeed, this dissertation holds that when educating for intellectual courage educational practitioners need to be tactful, critical, open minded, be at ease, and have humility—among many other important educational values. Thus, although teaching for intellectual courage can be demanding, it is no more demanding than teaching for other important educational concerns or values. In short, teaching in general is difficult, but necessary.

However, if the need to educate for intellectual courage is everywhere, one might say, then theorizing about intellectual courage in this manner is meaningless—it is similar to describing that air is everywhere. If this is true, then an understanding of intellectual courage cannot be an adequate measure of what to do in any given situation. For instance, one might think that it takes courage to talk about race in a classroom. Indeed, doing so takes managing risk in many classrooms, and especially in some states (Taylor et. al, 2023). However, one might argue conversely that speaking out against race-talk in the classroom may also take courage. That is, both sides of the "critical race debate" may want to appeal to the will of the "courageous" teacher. Thus—what should be said about the teacher who does not want race talk in the classroom, and actively voices their opinion? Are they being intellectually courageous?

In response, such an educational practitioner may be putting themself at risk, and may look like they are behaving bravely in front of a crowd—however, by the mere fact that they are motivated by shutting down meaningful discussions in the classroom, their actions are more similar to the rashness of Polemarchus and Thrasymachus (Cf., §3.2.2) than the intellectually courageous acts of Fredrick Douglass (Cf., §2.1.1). Indeed, the aim of shutting down the conversation is to close the dialogue, and does not seem to be motivated by a search for truth, understanding, and wisdom. Rather, such a position potentially assumes correctness at all costs. Further, such rash actions could easily be spurred by feelings of fear, and vulnerability. Accordingly, more can and should be said here about the role of intellectual courage in having these difficult conversations (see §5.3.2 below, for extending the work on intellectual courage).

Moving on, one might worry that educating for intellectual courage in the classroom can violate the norms of good education. That is, teaching courage in the classroom might seem to some as paternalistic, dogmatic, or indoctrination. One might say, public school is no place for morals.

In response, if what has been illustrated in this dissertation is compelling, then educating for intellectual courage helps promote autonomy, open mindedness, humility, etc. Thus, teaching for intellectual courage should not be thought of as dogmatic, paternalistic, or indoctrination, because the cluster of virtues work against the close mindedness, the arrogance, and the epistemic dependence of paternalism, dogmatism, and indoctrination (Cf., Byerly, 2021; Taylor, 2016). Moreover, all teaching, worthy of the name, already encompasses these normatively beneficial values within the practice of teaching (Cf., Dewey, 1916/1983; Frank, 2019; Hansen, 1995, 1998, 2001, 2011, 2021a, 2021b). The thought here is not that teaching for intellectual courage is a new idea, rather this dissertation has been meant to remind us (qua educational practitioner) to be awakened to a glimpse of what is already there.

Another limitation of my study, one might say, is that its main focus is only on intellectual courage—which is too small of a focus. The average student does not need to be educated for intellectual courage in order to meet the goals of the upcoming standardized test. In response, teaching for intellectual courage is only a small part of educating for a flourishing life and society; again, there is much more to pay attention to and enact than simply intellectual courage. The hope is that this examination is a helpful addition to the ongoing conversation. More so, by focusing on intellectual courage and its relationship within the cluster of dispositions, I have tried to situate it amongst other important educational concerns, and to add to the remoralization of the practice of teaching.

As mentioned in Chapter Two (§2.2.2.), the *Problem of Assessment* for ethical education asks: how are we (qua educational practitioners) supposed to measure courage? Indeed, whether virtue could be measured is a valuable question (Cf., Arthur et. al, 2017; Battaly, 2016; Byerly, 2019; Kotzee, 2016). Indeed, if we care about cultivating the intellectual character strengths of educational practitioners, then we should pay close attention to their virtue development, or lack thereof. But can things such as motivation be measured?

As Baehr (2021) notes, we should approach assessment with a "spirit of intellectual humility" (184)—we should own our limitations. However, we can assess in a number of ways. First, we can have our students self-assess their character strength and weakness. For instance, teachers can assign an intellectual character biography, where students describe their virtues and vices, and their origins. Though such assignments will have self biases present and are not fully reliable, they can be taken for what they are worth. A teacher can presumably see, by way of a student's writing, if one is intellectually careful, thorough, tenacious, and if they take intellectual risks, etc. Arthur et. al (2017) suggests assessing virtue literacy. This would help create a knowledge base for educational practitioners to start from, before they even explicitly practice cultivating virtue. Similarly, the teacher can assess the intellectual character skills of students. They can note if students ask meaningful questions, if they take risks, if they are open to other ideas, or to the idea of being mistaken. Teachers can then "triangulate" these assessments with an honest but friendly assessment of character from a family member or close friend (Arthur et. al, 2017). Lastly, they then can adapt their teaching, and formative assessment, for individual students. If this is compelling, then assessing intellectual character throughout a semester, or beyond, can positively influence character development, when coupled with a specific characterological aim and pedagogy.

Someone might object that I have not drawn satisfactorily enough on the extant empirical research that pertains to intellectual courage. Specifically, I have in mind here the literature referred to as the situationist challenge (Cf., Fairweather & Alfano, 2017). The critique of character education from the situationist comes from noticing that certain social psychological experiments appear to show that environmental variables explain behavior better than appealing to character traits. For example, one might think they are courageous, but given a small tweak in an experiment, such a person will not behave courageously in certain situations. Thus, the situationist argues that empirical results of social psychology falsify claims regarding character. In other words, easily malleable situations should be given more importance than character, because the predictive power of social psychology corresponds to the malleable situation, whereas character does not.

In response, regardless of the veracity of the empirical results, it would still be important to try to educate for important intellectual character traits such as curiosity, open-mindedness, intellectual humility, intellectual courage etc., because it is arguable that many more people would fail the social psychological experiments if we stopped caring about intellectual virtue. In other words, an understanding of intellectual courage is still valuable for educational practitioners, despite the empirical results. Indeed, it's hard to imagine a world where no one cares about cultivating intellectual virtue, but if there was such a world then arguably it would be pretty grim. Moreover, Heidi Grasswick (2017) argues that feminist virtue epistemology has been attuned to context, environment, location, and to the influence of social situations on knowledge generation for many years. Indeed, this dissertation is committed to fallibilism, thus more experience, and learning opportunities are always welcomed.

Such empirical work should then not be ignored, because it does have bearing on the subsequent education of character. Indeed, such empirical results can inform the education of intellectual courage by illuminating it at work. Baehr (2017) sums up this last point:

> Knowing the influence that certain social factors can exert on the intellectual activity of my students, for instance, I might create frequent opportunities for them to confront some of their intellectual fears in a "safe" environment. And in other respects I might work to create a classroom culture in which things like intellectual risk-taking are valued as much as or more than things like speed and accuracy (213).

Creating activities that value risk-taking, such as Diamond's (2011) use of making art in her kindergarten classroom, can be informed by empirical evidence about risk-taking. Accordingly, more attention to the extant empirical research that pertains to intellectual courage is welcomed.

In a different way, someone might object: if there's a unity of the virtues (i.e., possessing one virtue entails possessing all virtues), then how do we explain the epistemic fanatic who only cares about acquiring large quantities of true belief? That is, how is the character of the epistemic fanatic unified? The fanatic seems to possess, one might think, only a single virtue (at best)—curiosity. A few things should be said in response. First, I did not argue for a unity of the virtues in this dissertation, but simply referred to the cluster of virtues. This dissertation is not committed to the unity of the virtues—a metaphysical claim. Rather, it suggests that the virtues are closely related such that an understanding of one entails knowing a bit about the others. Second, my methodology section (Cf., Chapter One—§1.2.3) holds that such thought experiments as Descartes' evil genius will not be given full consideration, because such methodologies do not take fallibilism seriously, and are too easy to get tied down by a plethora of theoretical possibilities. The dispositional makeup of the epistemic fanatic, though potentially nomologically impossible, should in practice (and in my methodological theory) not have an isolated character. That is, their mindset should still be dynamic. Accordingly, similar techniques used to broaden the character of any student should presumably work for the fanatic. That is, appealing to their curiosity can lead them to act courageously, and thus open mindedly, which is related to being intellectually humble, and thus the fanatic (in theory and practice) will have the ability to grow. To assume otherwise appeals to a fixed mindset.

Lastly, fanaticism, or other extreme examples, should be examined on a case by case basis. Again, an understanding of intellectual courage is not meant to solve all the problems of education. However, I am committed to the claim that the character of educational practitioners of all walks of life can be improved. Someone might say to themselves that they cannot work on their own courage, because they are too scared of change, or of trying something new. If this dissertation has been compelling, then presumably educational practitioners from all walks of life could practice their disposition to be intellectually courageous whenever and wherever they might find themselves. One does not need to meet a threshold to be able to practice intellectual courage; courage comes in degrees. Thus, it is possible that minimally courageous acts can have beneficial rewards. Thus, acts of micro-courage may help with such things as procrastination, or even petrifying perfectionism.

5.3 Charting a Way Forward

In this final section, I will highlight how to move forward from here. First (§5.3.1), I will offer some advice for teaching intellectual courage. Lastly (§5.3.2), I will illuminate possible future work and research agendas that could grow from this study.

5.3.1 Teaching for Intellectual Courage

As we saw Julie Diamond (2011) do in her kindergarten class (Cf., Chapter Four), we can model and create environments to help cultivate intellectual courage. To explicitly teach intellectual courage, teachers will need an understanding of the intellectual virtues, and their vices. This includes the language, principles, and postures of teaching for intellectual virtue (Baehr, 2021), and setting explicit aims.

Arthur et. al (2017) mentions a plethora of types of classes in which they have specifically taught using a character education approach. These include courses on Citizen

Education, Computer Science, Design and Technology, English and English Literature, Geography, History, Mathematics, Science, Religious Education, and even Physical Education. It is worth noting that these courses were based on the education of moral character, and not simply intellectual character. Accordingly the course on Physical Education was able to focus on virtues such as fairness and respect.

Teaching character through curriculum subjects can be accomplished in various ways. However, there are at least three main ways that teachers could use to cultivate a student's intellectual character (Cf., Arthur et. al, 2017; Baehr, 2013, 2021). The first way is direct instruction regarding the knowledge of virtue. The teacher would specifically name intellectual virtues, such as intellectual courage or curiosity, differentiate them from cognitive faculties such as an IQ or a good memory, and illustrate why the virtues are good. The second way is exposure to intellectually virtuous exemplars, so that students get a chance to reason about virtue. The teacher would herself be an exemplar, and/or the students would develop a relationship with the literature of exemplars (e.g. they could read Plato, and Socrates would be the exemplar). The students would then think critically about what makes the virtues valuable. The third way is for the teacher to create opportunities to practice intellectual virtues, and cultivate environments to practice them in. Add to this the assessment techniques reviewed above (§5.2.1), and the hope is that character development can be cultivated.

Furthermore, I suggest that a course specifically on intellectual character development in teacher education could be generative, and beneficial. In such a course, student teachers would learn about the nature and value of intellectual virtues, learn about their own intellectual character, and develop ways to teach for the cultivation of virtue. Teachers would be encouraged to think of creating their goals, lesson plans, and assessment in relevant characterological terms

(Baehr, 2021). Not only will taking a specific semester length course on teaching for intellectual virtues be beneficial for achieving intellectual virtue development in students, but also such a course would go toward remoralizing the teaching profession. The hope would be that the language of character development would (i) be welcomed by policy and administration, and (ii) be engendered in such a way that carries into the profession of teaching, and into the hearts and minds of students.

5.3.2 Future Work

Potential future work regarding the pedagogy of character education and a Deweyan approach to teacher education is worthwhile. John Dewey's (1964) "The Relation of Theory to Practice in Education" is a seminal work in teacher education. The aim of a good teacher education, under this conception, is to solidify or fuse theory and practice, and to create life-long students of education. This meshes well with the intellectual virtues approach to teacher education. Toward promoting this model, Dewey writes,

> [All students, including student-teachers] have an inner and an outer attention. The inner attention is the giving of the mind without reserve or qualification to the subject in hand. It is the first-hand and personal play of mental powers. As such, it is a fundamental condition of mental growth. To be able to keep track of this mental play, to recognize the signs of its presence of absence, to know how it is initiated and maintained, how to test it by results attained, and to test *apparent* results by it, is the supreme mark and criterion of a teacher (318-319).

This illustrates that the attention of the student-teacher (and educational practitioners in general) should not strictly be on the external conditions of classroom management, but rather on the continuous interactions between her and her students internal phenomena (viz., their theoretical background and previous experience) and external conditions (i.e., the practical work at hand). "Testing apparent results" would be coupled with, again, a need to focus on assessing intellectual character. The intellectual virtues approach to teacher education is ripe for navigating this

Deweyan approach, because of its similar emphasis one (i) the play of inner and outer attention that growth demands, and (ii) the ongoing training of thought required by becoming a teacher (see also, Kotzee, 2018b.)

Moving on, if philosophy for children (P4C) has practical effects, especially for those children underserved and marginalized (Cf., Gasparatou, 2016; Reed-Sandoval & Sykes, 2016), then what is the role of intellectual courage in P4C? Indeed, it is my hypothesis that character development (i.e., the cultivation of virtue and amelioration of vice)—especially that of intellectual courage—can spur educational growth using P4C methods. If this is true, then advancement in intellectual courage may play a large role for underserved and marginalized (i.e., vulnerable) children, whether educating for intellectual courage is tacit or explicit. Thus, more examination is needed here.

With greater standardization, education is attempting to mitigate risk, and things that demand risk such as art and creativity, are being freed from schools. Gert Biesta (2015, 1) writes, "if we take the risk out of education, there is a real chance that we take out education all together." Increasingly we see art and the humanities being swept to the side, and out of the school. Thus, more needs to be said about art, education, risk, and courage.

Lastly, though much has been said about open mindedness and indoctrination (Cf., Taylor, 2014 & 2016), little has been said about the relationship between intellectual courage and indoctrination. For many, indoctrination can be a scary and difficult subject (Cf., North, 2021b), which an understanding of courage is ripe to illuminate. Examining this issue could be coupled with a context-sensitive examination of marginalized communities such as indigenous youth.

Conclusion

> *The tax which will be paid for the purpose of education is not more than the thousandth part of what will be paid to kings, priests, and nobles who will rise up among us if we leave the people in ignorance.*[21]
>
> -Thomas Jefferson

In this closing remark, Thomas Jefferson evokes the idea that public education, worthy of the name, is worth the monetary cost, because it cultivates within—the ability and motivation to continue education in the name of liberty and civility. In short, we cannot expect to be uneducated and free. Specifically, it takes courage to not only stand up to tyrants, but also it takes intellectual courage (among other virtues) to not, in turn, become them. In short, we need public education so that there are checks and balances. In order to create this separation of powers, people need to cultivate and practice intellectual courage.

Being a human demands navigating the harms of epistemic life, and thus there is a need to educate for intellectual courage. In this dissertation, I have aimed to illuminate the epistemic, moral, and political tapestry that is education—that is living a human life. I hope to have shown how the excellences of mind demand moving through the world, and risking harm for the right reason, in the right way, and at the right time. I hope to have shown that the cost of such a life is worth the rewards.

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[21] Taken from: https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-10-02-0162.

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