ABSTRACT

Aretaic Exemplars: A Mixed-Methods Approach to Character Education

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Virtue education is often framed in the philosophy literature as consisting of a number of discrete tactics, such as virtue-labeling, exemplar exposure, and nudging, with little regard for the level of maturity of the learner. This is a problem because age, life experiences, and growth in emotional and intellectual maturity impact how we respond to moral instruction. Furthermore, in the current virtue education literature, we lack a coherent narrative for how to advance a learner from natural character to moral virtue, developing the learner's moral agency along the way. Ideally, virtue education tactics should build on one another over time. They should of course be age-appropriate, but they should also *actively mature* the learner, inviting her to rationally participate in her own habituation so that she becomes the sort of person who can choose well for herself. The goal of this project is to propose a developmental sequence for one particular avenue of moral education—learning about and being motivated to acquire virtues by way of aretaic exemplars.

In part, this is a moral emotions project on admiration. I examine admiration's elicitors and action-tendencies, as well as the ways in which our admiration can err, such

as by mistaking qualities like charisma and popularity for moral excellences. A key focus of this project is addressing the practical question of how we might mature admiration over the course of moral development, to move a learner from admiration to virtue. Briefly, my solution draws on the classical tradition, which moves a learner through various stages—grammar (virtue concepts), logic (discursive reasoning about moral motivations and reasons for action), and rhetoric (post-deliberative action). I address how this structure, accompanied by a number of imitative practices, offers a productive pedagogical sequence for how to move a learner from admiration to moral virtue.

Aretaic Exemplars: A Mixed-Methods Approach to Character Education

by

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DEDICATION

To David
my favorite exemplar

PREFACE

Project Introduction

In recent days, there has been a renewed interest in the role of admiration in moral education. My intention is to contribute to this conversation by assessing the epistemic and motivational roles exemplars can play over the course of moral development.

One way of viewing the role of aretaic exemplars is as the basis of an agent-based approach to ethics, as both Michael Slote and Linda Zagzebski defend. This is not a view I will defend. Instead, I will defend a flourishing account of virtue, rooted in the particular interests of the educational institution in question. In fact, throughout this dissertation, I address ways in which exemplars can fail to meet the standards of moral virtues and misdirect admirers, and I explain how exemplars are insufficient for learning what the virtues are. I argue instead that exemplars serve a critical role in forming our moral imaginations by demonstrating what a virtuous person might do in a given circumstance and motivating us to act likewise. Still, because Zagzebski is a leading philosophical voice with thoughtful contributions to the question of admiration's role in our moral formation, she remains an important interlocutor throughout my project. Other key interlocutors include Plato and Aristotle (classical philosophy), Jonathan Haidt, Sara Algoe, and Erica Carlson (cognitive science), and Robert Roberts, Julia Annas, Kristján Kristjánsson, and Alfred Archer (moral philosophy). The view I will defend is as follows: Admiration provides both epistemic guidance and motivational support for the

development of virtues, and it serves a critical role as part of a mixed-methods approach to character education.

This project has five sections: (1) Admiration, (2) Exemplars, (3) The Epistemic Role of Exemplars (two chapters), (4) The Motivational Role of Exemplars (two chapters), and (5) Character Education. Chapters One and Two lay the conceptual and empirical foundations for my project. Sections Three and Four assess the contributions exemplars can and cannot make in directing one toward growth in virtues. In Section Four, I defend my Graded Engagement Account—a preliminary account of the motivational support that exemplars provide, which adjusts as a learner matures. Section Five places the role of exemplars in the broader context of moral education, assessing the practical question of how we might mature admiration over the course of moral development, to move a learner from admiration to virtue. Briefly, my solution draws on the classical tradition, which moves a learner through various stages—grammar (virtue concepts), logic (discursive reasoning about moral motivations and reasons for action), and rhetoric (post-deliberative action). I address how this structure, accompanied by a number of imitative practices, offers a productive pedagogical sequence for how to move a learner from admiration to virtue. In what follows, I provide a lengthier introduction to each of these chapters, followed by a brief discussion of some of the difficulties of this undertaking and the potential novelty of my contributions in the literature.

Section One (Chapter One) – Admiration

Chapters One and Two lay the conceptual foundations for my project. In chapter one, I argue that admiration is a dispositional attitude (DA)—an appreciative perspective toward an excellent person that inclines us to emulate or to feel an admiring feeling. This

DA matures into an enduring collection of dispositions, so it can be re-described as a dispositional trait and is, therefore, a real property of a person's character.[1] I also describe how when admiration meets, or fails to meet, a given threshold, it can become a virtue or a vice. The second way I speak of admiration is as an emotion, which I call "the feeling of admiring" or simply "admiring." Admiring is an occurrent, concern-based construal of another as excellent in some way, characterized by an approving or pleasant sensation toward that person. I define admiration in these ways because admiration described as solely an emotion fails to capture the range of ways we interact with exemplary figures. I might appreciatively recognize and be inclined to learn from a role model, yet not feel anything toward her at the moment, if at all. Still, the DA disposes me to emulate her actions in situations when I encounter her or to reflect upon her good character.

In this chapter, I examine the role admiration can play in inclining us toward virtue and ask how it might be slowly matured and re-directed toward appropriate persons in children, who initially lack the intellectual maturity to question the objects of their admiration. I also investigate a number of impediments to admiration, such as competing moral emotions, and I examine ways in which admiration can misdirect us—such as when the drive to emulate competes with more important moral commitments.

An important disclaimer, and something that will become clear over the course of this project, is that I do not think admiration is a necessary condition for our benefitting from exemplars. We often learn by imitation apart from holding this DA, such as through basic mimetic impulses like social contagion and, more formally, through compulsory imitation exercises in school. Exemplars can also play a culture-setting role in our

[1] Christian Miller. "Virtue as a Trait," in *The Oxford Handbook of Virtue*, edited by Nancy E. Snow (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 10-25.

contexts, and they redefine social expectations for which actions are considered appropriate. Still, because admiration characterizes how we often feel toward exemplars and because it can serve as a helpful propaedeutic to encouraging our emulation of good actions, it is important to address.

Section Two (Chapter Two) – Aretaic Exemplars

In Chapter Two, I define "aretaic exemplar" and ask what kinds of people fill this role. I describe four kinds: heroes, sages, saints, and mundane exemplars, assessing their defining features and addressing what each kind distinctly teaches us about virtue. For example, we can learn about the intellectual virtues from sages and about courage from heroes. We are not restricted from learning other things from these exemplar types. For example, I might learn about intellectual courage or charity from a sage as well, since there is a concomitant requirement that exemplars also be morally good—not just wise detached from their goodness as a person, in the example of the sage. But a sage, in particular, is good at teaching us about intellectual virtues, and heroes, in particular, often teach us about courage. I also examine the category of "exemplar" as a whole, investigating an exemplar's typical self-understanding and evidence of moral virtues. I ask about the compresence of other qualities like popularity or likeability in exemplary people, which Erica Carlson and other psychologists have found we tend to describe our exemplars as possessing.

A substantial portion of this chapter is devoted to describing the consequences of different accounts of virtue for understanding what exemplarism is. I commit myself to a view of virtues as global traits with a strong motivational component and describe the pre-moral landscape in terms of Christian Miller's mixed-traits view. I examine the

possibility that an exemplar may lack a strong moral virtue (such as by acting consistently from suitable moral motivations) yet still play a constructive role in directing us to develop that virtue by their actions.

Section Three (Chapters Three and Four) – The Epistemic Role

In Chapters One and Two, I primarily draw lines in the sand and engage with the current literature to assert where I stand on who exemplars are and how we generally comport ourselves around them. In Chapters Three through Seven, I begin to make more unique contributions to this literature.

My goal in Section Three is to examine the epistemic role exemplars play in the formation of virtue. To do so, I first establish what knowledge is necessary, and what knowledge is perhaps not necessary but would be helpful, in the formation of virtue. Our relationship to exemplars changes as we intellectually mature, so I explain how exemplars make moral knowledge available to us at our various stages. I describe pre-deliberative, deliberative, and post-deliberative phases of our moral formation to establish baselines for what epistemic assistance would look like at various phases. The deliberative phase is important because, without a deliberative moment in which we choose an action for ourselves, we fail to take ownership for that action and future actions of its kind. The action may be natural, habituated, or imitative, but it is not a *hexis prohairetike*, an active disposition in accordance with free, deliberative choice.

In this chapter, I also address the form our moral knowledge must take. I enter the debate on Annas' articulacy requirement of moral virtue. I first take a position and then describe the consequences of my position for how we should structure a moral education.

Section Four (Chapters Five and Six) – The Motivational Role

In section four, I provide an overview of the literature on different motivational stories involving exemplars and ask whether imitation is the best motivational account of what happens when we admire someone. I assess what features amplify or diminish our motivational responses to exemplars. An example of a feature that increases our responses to exemplars is if we perceive a morally good action to be surprising or important.

I also address unfitting cases of admiration, in its connection to imitation. Zagzebski claims that we only admire acquired qualities because these qualities are open to us and therefore can be emulated, whereas natural excellences cannot. An example is that I might admire someone who works hard in school and achieves an advanced degree against situational odds, more so than I would admire someone who had the world handed to him on a silver platter through personal privileges, like great wealth and elite private schooling. In many cases, this intuition seems right. However, I also argue that there are numerous counterexamples to Zagzebski's claim. For example, we are fascinated by wunderkinds and prodigies in music and in sports, and it seems that what we experience here is admiration, not awe or some other prosocial emotion. We often do try to imitate those who greatly exceed us by nature, more so than we would for someone who worked very hard to progress to where they are. Obviously, because a prodigy's excellences are less 'open to us,' this is a less constructive posture to have toward him or her than toward someone who worked very hard. A potential reason why this is the case seems to be that the higher ceiling of excellence for the prodigy, or for the person with great natural gifts, draws our attention more than the moderate successes of the hard

worker. So there is a tradeoff between the extent to which the excellence is actually acquired and how excellent the excellence is. One might argue that a prodigy still needs to work hard to nurture a natural talent, so perhaps the acquired quality of excellence is still what we admire in the exemplary person, even if this person exceeds us primarily by natural providence. I address these questions in Chapter Six.

Third, I outline my own motivational story—the Graded Engagement Account. Developmental concerns feature prominently in this account, and it is inspired in part by Frans de Waal's account of empathy.[2] He presents a Russian doll model with emotional contagion at its core, followed by cognitive empathy, and finally attribution.[3] The advancement between stages is marked by an increasing ability to represent the actions and desires of another. Earlier in this chapter, I describe how mature mimesis can be described as the ability to perform representative imitation—becoming the middle term between the imitated person and one's own enaction of the same excellence. Representative imitation involves taking ownership for that action in one's unique context, rather than executing a copy-cat type of appropriative imitation. To express this pattern, I needed to sketch a model like de Waal's, which reflects maturation in similar representational terms. My account starts with (a) naïve imitation (which is a natural impulse) and precedes through (b) imitation with recognition of good-making features, (c) imitation with reasons-responsiveness, and (d) non-imitative virtuous actions, sketching a step-wise progression from *nature* to *acquired* character. I also mention the

[2] Frans de Waal, *Primates and Philosophers* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).

[3] Click this 'link' for an image of Frans de Waal's empathy model.

phase of education which corresponds to each stage, which I address in fuller detail in the final chapter.

Lastly, I raise concerns about imitation, such as learner vulnerability and the question of whether directing sustained attention at an exemplar actually impedes the development of our own virtue-appropriate motivations for action.

Section Five (Chapter Seven) – Exemplars and Education

In the final chapter, I take what have learned about the motivational and epistemic roles of aretaic exemplars and ask how we might construct a pedagogical sequence that takes these insights in mind. My solution draws on the classical tradition, which moves a learner through various stages—grammar (virtue concepts), logic (discursive reasoning about moral motivations and reasons for action), and rhetoric (post-deliberative action). I address how this structure, accompanied by a number of imitative practices, offers a productive pedagogical sequence for how to move a learner from admiration to virtue. Moreover, since moral reasoning is *actively matured* through this process, then learning from exemplars is not just a series of well-ordered, age-appropriate strategies, but strategies that intentionally advance a learner toward the end of character development.

An unanticipated outcome of this pedagogical sequence is practical guidance regarding one of the most persistent puzzles of moral formation—R.S. Peter's "paradox of moral education." The paradox is that habituation involves the extrinsic imposition of desires, attitudes, and actions in a learner, which undermines attempts to develop his or her own powers of critical reflection. As educators, we might wonder how a learner can be invited into the process of her own moral formation as an active participant over time, as the learner matures emotionally and intellectually. This is an important question

because, were this transition not to occur, moral virtues might be heteronomously imposed rather than 'up to us' in any real way. In this chapter, I demonstrate that the classical pedagogical sequence—and in particular the strategic pairing of imitation and discursive reasoning—models how to successfully transition a learner from habituation to *phronesis* development in order to both develop a learner's moral agency and foster virtue development. That is, there is no real paradox here at all.

Final Words – Novelties and Difficulties

The innovations of this project are three-fold: First, the Graded Engagement Account, my motivational story of admiration, is the first I have found of its kind. There are other accounts which speak in monolithic terms about the motivational role of admiration—being an emotion which elicits imitation, or an emotion which inclines us to value promotion. But I have yet to locate an account which looks at how admiration matures from a germ of an emotion or an impulse (the inclination to imitate as a type of unreflective social contagion) through the stages of imitation, and to post-imitative mature moral agency with greater ownership for our own actions. It is unhelpful to discuss the impact of exemplars purely in terms of the mature DA or emotion of admiration, since this does not characterize much of our character development. In fact, the times when we are most vulnerable to exemplars, we are also the most poorly positioned to benefit from them.

A second innovation of this project is my specific treatment of different accounts of virtues, related to the question of admiration and exemplarism. I ask how whether holding externalist accounts of virtue versus motivational accounts of virtues, versus accounts of virtues that include both motivation and success components might impact

how we conceive of exemplars and our imitation of them. Most of this treatment occurs in Chapter Two, where I define the qualities of exemplars. I revisit the same question in Chapters Three and Four, where I discuss what specifically we learn about virtues from aretaic exemplars.

Lastly, I innovate by providing a comprehensive sketch of virtue education involving exemplars. There is forgotten wisdom in the classical sequence, which was structured with the end goal of producing virtuous citizens. We have a map of a productive pedagogical sequence of mixed methods in virtue education. For example, stories are paired with physical training. Virtue concept-learning comes next, and strategies involving imitation are adjusted as a student grows. I make the case that we should not think of virtue formation strategies as stand-alone tools, but as part of a broader narrative of training, suitable to age and building on the work of the methods that preceded them. And through this, as I described above, I offer a foothold for educators to habituate reason, without compromising the agency of the learner.

The greatest difficulty of this project is that the wide lens required to sketch out a pedagogical sequence and to pursue questions of development comes at the cost of a more granular treatment at certain moments. This is particularly true in Chapters Three and Four (the epistemology chapters) and Chapters Five and Six (the motivational chapters). Together, these each constitute the largest sections of my dissertation, but to ask all of the right questions and address them sufficiently, I spend less time on particulars. An example is that I do not address whether and how moral knowledge impacts specific virtues differently (e.g. charity versus courage). Rather, I paint with a broad brush about the knowledge required for moral virtues as a general rule. Looking

forward, for my publishing intentions, this is a helpful route to take because I have a forest in place, and there are a number of trees I would like to revisit.

Second, this dissertation is a mixed-genre undertaking. Primarily, the substance of this project is analytic philosophy, in moral education. However, I also draw on empirical voices when warranted, and I write in virtue ethics and in classical philosophy. In part, my hand was forced in doing so. If I wanted to write accurately on questions of moral development, then I need to read about how development occurs. And if I wanted to know how we learn from exemplars, then I should make myself aware of whom we actually admire, not just whom I might assume we would admire. This pressed me to include more empirical voices, like Jonathan Haidt and Erica Carlson, who pursue these questions in their research. In doing so, I followed in the wake of some of my interlocutors, who also welcome empirical insights in their work, including Zagzebski, Kristjánsson, Miller, and Archer. Furthermore, I was writing in moral education toward the end of virtue formation, which warranted that I examine both historical and recent accounts of virtues—hence the virtue ethics. Moreover, I am not alone in drawing on the ancients for questions of virtue formation, since the tradition always returns to the *Nicomachean Ethics*—hence the classical philosophy. If I planned to read Aristotle, I also needed to examine the tradition of education that followed in his wake and attempted to answer the practical questions of virtue pedagogy that his writing left unanswered. That was what led me to classical education.

Where this leaves me is with a project in moral education, which invites insights from different arenas when they help to clarify, bolster, or challenge my assumptions. My

project is not novel in the moral education literature for straddling different disciplines. This is just a note to prepare my readers.

CHAPTER ONE

The Nature of Admiration

We do not need to be taught to admire others. Admiration is natural to us, and our admiration for others plays a role in shaping our character throughout our lives—in early childhood development, throughout adolescence, and into adulthood. However, we do not naturally admire all the right people or imitate the right qualities, and our admiration does not naturally contribute to a flourishing life without intervention and guidance. Admiration requires direction and education, and even then, it may err. In this chapter, I define what admiration is and what character work it can do. Then I raise questions about admiration's training and direction.

Chapter One is divided as follows: (A) I first provide the definitions of admiration that I will use for the rest of this project. (B) Next I describe admiration's role in character development. In this chapter, I evaluate how a person might move from first admiring an excellent other, to possessing virtue herself. As part of this discussion, I examine how admiration should be trained, in order to be productively employed toward to the end of virtue formation. This will involve both the training of an attitude and the maturing of an emotion.

Definitions

There are two ways in which I will speak of admiration moving forward: (1) The first is as a dispositional attitude that we have toward excellent people. It is a collection of dispositions toward excellent others, which includes the dispositions to imitate and to

feel an admiring feeling. I will also describe how this DA—insofar as it is an enduring collection of dispositions—can be re-described as a dispositional character trait. As such, it is a real property of a person's character.[1] This trait is metaphysically prior to the beliefs and desires that it disposes. Furthermore, when admiration meets, or fails to meet, a given threshold, this means the agent has a virtue or vice. (2) The second way I will speak of admiration is as an emotion, which I will call "the feeling of admiring," or simply "admiring." Admiring is an occurrent, concern-based construal of another as excellent in some way, characterized by an approving or pleasant sensation toward that person. While much of the character work of admiration is done by the dispositional attitude, the feeling of admiring can separately aid this process by inclining us to virtue through pleasure.[2] This is particularly important in the developmental period before we are morally mature enough to respond to reasons or to desire to emulate good deeds for their own sake. Furthermore, there is literature to support the idea that those exemplars for whom we have a stronger positive emotional response can make our disposition to imitate stronger.[3] If this is the case, then encouraging a learner's affective disposition of admiration ("admiring") may be productive toward virtue developmental ends.

There is one qualification I need to make about my definitions. There are many objects to which we commonly ascribe admiration. For example, someone might say that she admires a sunset or a stunning peacock. A person may also admire an excellent other with great skill, such as a talented baseball player. To make this project sufficiently

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[1] Christian Miller. "Virtue as a Trait," in *The Oxford Handbook of Virtue*, edited by Nancy E. Snow (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 10-25.

[2] On my account, the emotion of admiring develops prior to the DA. Moreover, it is an occurrent state that can occur independently of the DA.

[3] See my treatment of Hyemin Han's research findings in Chapter Six.

narrow, I will restrict my attention to admiration in the moral domain. I am interested in the question of our responses to aretaic exemplars—virtue role models—rather than to excellent others more broadly construed. Hereafter, when I speak of admiration, I will only be referring to the admiration of moral virtue, even though the other instances of using "admiration" are also appropriate uses of the term.

(1) Admiration – a Dispositional-Attitude

The landscape of emotions, attitudes, emotion-dispositions, and other intentional states is muddy because philosophers and psychologists define these terms in a range of ways. For example, emotions are said to involve judgments[4] or to be concern-based construals,[5] and sometimes they are defined only in functional terms, as action-elicitors.[6] Unless explicitly stipulated, it is not always clear how emotion-terms are being applied. In this chapter, I align myself with Robert Roberts' account of emotions as concern-based construals that are occurrent and have a characteristic phenomenal quality to them.[7]

Often in the philosophy literature, what are called "emotions" are actually emotion-dispositions,[8] since they dispose us to feel a certain way. In cases for which the occurrent disposition centrally characterizes the intentional state in question (such as by

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[4] Solomon, R. C. "Emotions, thoughts, and feelings: Emotions as engagements with the world." In *Thinking about feeling: Contemporary philosophers on emotions*, Edited by R. C. Solomon. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 76-90.

[5] R. Roberts. *Emotions: An essay in aid of moral psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

[6] Haidt, J. "The moral emotions." In *Handbook of affective sciences*. Edited by R. J. Davidson, K. R. Scherer, & H. H. Goldsmith. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 852-870.

[7] See Kristján Kristjánsson (2018) and Robert Roberts (1988, 2003, 2019).

[8] An emotion is an occurrent state. An emotion-disposition is the tendency to be in that occurrent state. Often, the philosophy literature just calls emotion-dispositions "emotions."

being a sole or primary disposition of that state), it may be appropriate to label the state in terms of the emotion as shorthand for the emotion-disposition, since it is obvious that when we characterize a person in terms of a certain emotion, we generally do not mean that she always or even usually has that emotion. Rather, in situations for which the emotion is relevant, she is disposed to experience that emotion, i.e. likely bears that occurrent quality. However, in other cases, an emotion term may not provide the best category description of what is being called an "emotion" or an "emotion-disposition." For example, it seems that Zagzebski's account of admiration as an "emotion" may be better characterized as a dispositional attitude, as I have done here, since the ways in which she describes admiration is not *centrally characterized* as being occurrent or as having a specific phenomenal quality to it. Rather, it is better described as a set of dispositions, one of which is an occurrent appreciative emotion. Zagzebski describes admiration as disposing us to a number of things. It sometimes results in feeling appreciation for an excellent other and sometimes results in a kind of comparative discontent (incorporating Aristotelian *zelos*, or benign envy, under the umbrella of admiration).[9] Zagzebski also permits that, in many cases, admiration is non-emotional altogether, but it can still incline (dispose) us toward imitative actions. These are competing occurrent states, and all are dispositional possibilities of admiration. Furthermore, insofar as our admiration inclines us to be receptive to an excellent person, such as by positioning us to critically reflect on the good-making features of that person, disposing us to notice and approve of others who are excellent, to self-evaluate, or to feel

[9] Linda Zagzebski, *Exemplarist Moral Theory*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 55. See also Kristján Kristjánsson "Emotions Targeting Moral Exemplarity: Making Sense of the Logical Geography of Admiration, Emulation, and Elevation." *Theory and Research in Education* 15, no. 1 (2017): 20-37, 25.

a range of other emotional responses—like gratitude, comparative discomfort, or awe—admiration may be morally productive for us, while failing to yield the occurrent emotional experience I have labeled as "admiring."

To summarize my view, admiration is a dispositional attitude involving an appreciative perspective of another that can manifest itself in a number of ways, such as a tendency to imitate or to have positive emotions towards an excellent person or qualities of an excellent person, which may be expressed in occurrent episodes of thoughts or feelings. The distinction I am making between admiration and admiring is a categorical one, centrally characterized in terms of *dispositional* and *occurrent* states. Admiring is occurrent, and admiration is dispositional. The emotion term on its own fails to independently capture the range of ways in which we respond to excellent others, which is sometimes not helpfully characterized in terms of the occurrent state of admiring.

In what follows, I describe the dispositional attitude (DA) of admiration—explaining what sort of attitude it is and what it disposes us to do. I then argue that the DA can be re-described as a dispositional trait, with virtues and vices associated. I introduce some definitional issues surrounding traits that will impact my treatment of virtues in Chapter Two. Then I unpack the range of affections and actions that admiration disposes us to feel and to do, with special attention given to the "feeling of admiring."

If the waters are muddy around the nature of emotions, the waters are muddier still around the nature of attitudes. In the moral education literature, attitudes are defined in various and often imprecise ways, and are sometimes mentioned without definition. Attitudes are often suggested as explanations for personal differences in how we perceive objects in particular ways which may help or hinder our virtue growth. For example, if I

have a closed-minded attitude, I have a habitual stance of considering new information as threatening. If I have this attitude, I may struggle to develop the virtue of fairmindedness. But how this attitude develops, whether and how it impacts our emotions, and if attitudes are amenable to growth by the same strategies that work for virtue formation are all questions that go largely unanswered.

For both analytic philosophers and psychologists, attitudes are often treated as intentional states, which are "clusters of cognitive and affective states that together make up an evaluation of an object."[10] Examples include loving, liking, believing, fearing, and (that which is currently under investigation here) admiring. Analytic philosophers add the further question of whether there is propositional content involved.[11] To describe an attitude as an "intentional state" means it is about someone or something. This is in contrast to a mental state like a mood, which may have no object. In the case of admiration, my attitude is about a person whom I see as worthy of my attention and approval. These people are called exemplars, and I examine them in Chapter Two. Furthermore, I affixed the modifier "dispositional" to the attitude because admiration is, as I have said, a collection of dispositions occasioned by other peoples' excellences, such as the dispositions to imitate, to feel admiring, and to desire to be likewise excellent.

Regarding what I have called the further question of propositional content, and whether admiration bears it, this is a difficult question to answer. Some philosophers hold that all intentional attitudes are propositional in character, meaning that all intentional attitudes are expressible in the form of statements that are either true or false. An example

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[10] Jonathan Webber, "Character, Attitude, and Disposition." *European Journal of Philosophy* 23, no. 4 (2013), 1086-7.

[11] Ibid.

is that my admiration of a person might have the form of "Abraham Lincoln is honest" or "Michael Scott is funny." These statements are either true or false. I might be wrong about them, but either way, they bear this form. For some attitudes, it may be successfully argued that propositional content always captures a particular attitude, such as in the case of belief—since we generally "believe that *x*." (Although, this may be a bad example, since we may be able to place faith in a person, as a type of *de re* recognition of his or her worthiness of that faith, without this faith being expressible as a proposition.) But to argue, as some philosophers do, that *all* intentional attitudes are propositional is to put a severe constraint on possibilities for thinking. It certainly seems that there are non-propositional attitudes.[12] Two examples are holding the intentional attitudes of 'admiring Lincoln' and of 'fearing a loose dog.' In both cases, my attitudes are intentionally directed but non-propositional. I can be pressed to narrow the scope of my attitudes in both cases, such that I admire that 'Lincoln is honest' or fear that 'the loose dog will bite me when I run by.' Both the non-propositional and propositional cases are plausible instances of these attitudes.

For admiration, it seems clear that the DA is always intentional and sometimes propositional. Both the objectual cases (having admiration of a person) and the propositional cases (admiring *that*…[person *P* has quality *q*]) are plausible instances of the DA.

It may seem like I am just drawing lines in the sand here, but the conceptual taxonomy of admiration has practical implications for how we learn from exemplars. This is because we are interested in what we learn from exemplars (a knowledge

[12] A. Grzankowski. "Not All Attitudes are Propositional." *European Journal of Philosophy* 23, no. 3 (2015): 374-391.

question) and the form our knowledge must take in virtue acquisition. Language may or may not be part of this equation. Namely, it may be the case that (i) we need only have a limited conception of a virtue, constituting something like a *de re* or objectual recognition of an excellence, in order to acquire it. Or, it may be the case that we must be able to (ii) name the reasons for our seemingly virtuous actions (causal reasons). Or, we must be able to (iii) name something like a virtue concept. On either (ii) or (iii), having a propositional attitude toward an excellent person would consolidate virtue acquisition stages: That is, I could appreciate that '*P* is honest' or that '*P* is honest because she wants to do the right thing,' rather than admire *P* in a general sort of way and then have to separately arrive at *what* is excellent about her and *why* she acts in excellent ways. If providing a causal account of my actions or naming the relevant virtue concept are necessary conditions of virtue acquisition, then it is a developmental shortcut to have this information already present in my DA.

In Chapters Three and Four, I discuss knowledge requirements of virtue—what we should know, and what would be helpful to know, at various stages of virtue development. I ask about the form our moral knowledge should take, addressing the puzzle I just raised above (whether there are objectual, conceptual, or propositional requirements for virtue acquisition). I argue that all that is needed to acquire a moral virtue is an objectual recognition of something as good.[13] A virtuous action does not require that the agent provide a causal account of that action (which may just amount to a *post-hoc* justification of the action anyway)[14] or a conceptual articulation.

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[13] See page 158 and following for this argument.

[14] J. Haidt. "The Emotional Dog and its Rational Tail: A Social Intuitionist Approach to Moral Judgment." *Psychological Review* 108, no. 4 (2001): 814-34.

Still, setting aside the question of what a specific moral virtue requires (i.e. necessary conditions for the acquisition of a particular virtue, for which language may be beside the point), it is still the case that for the aims of character education, a propositional attitude offers more usable information toward the end of acquiring virtues than an objectual one does. I make this claim for two kinds of reasons—corporate and personal.

First, the goal of this dissertation as a whole is to address sequencing in character education, which typically occurs in a collective, institutional context. A school should have a particular vision of flourishing from which its set of virtues are derived. (e.g. We want to love God and neighbor. One quality that positions us to achieve that aim is humility. So, we want to develop humility.) When exemplars are employed toward the end of developing a particular virtue (e.g. humility), we present these admirable figures and supply students with a vocabulary for discussing the ways in which the person is or is not humble. This corporate activity—the articulation of, and discussion about, the virtue concept by the students together—sets the standards of action for that community. It becomes a trait that students are collectively accountable for. If the trait is not spoken about, this collective vision-sharing and mutual accountability are impeded. Students may arrive at these things themselves—recognizing something admirable in a person—but the community dimension of character development is facilitated by articulating propositional content (e.g. Lincoln is an exemplar of honesty) and discussion. Insofar as character education is shared by a community, virtue articulation is helpful. Even apart from institutions, virtue acquisition is not often described as a solitary activity. Most virtue ethicists agree that friendships among relative equals aid character development

considerably. And, if this is the case, refining and narrowing moral attitudes through language and sharing these attitudes with one another will be important.

The second kind of reason to exercise moral language regarding our admiration of exemplars is personal. Insofar as my admiration remains at the objectual level, I am poorly positioned to progress beyond admiration to moral virtue by taking ownership for a particular trait or to imitate that person in a targeted way. More importantly, when I admire at the objectual level, I am less equipped to guard against the objects of my admiration should that admiration be inappropriately directed. At the objectual level, I recognize someone as good and may be generally disposed to take behavioral cues from this person (sometimes the right cues, sometimes inappropriate ones.) But there is less defense against making errors of admiration because my attitudes are not made explicit to myself through speech. Language provides a type of success condition for my admiration. From an objectual attitude, I might fumble into the right admiration relationships and develop good traits as a result, but the odds that I can admire the right people in the right ways is higher if I am pressed to narrow my attitudes into propositional attitudes regarding those people, share these propositions with others, and receive feedback.

So, while we often do admire in an intentional, non-propositional way (particularly in youth but throughout life), it is beneficial when possible to both (a) encourage the development of more narrowly-directed DAs of admiration (which may take a propositional form, since we would be affirming an aspect of a person as good, which would be expressible as a true-false statement) and (b) use moral language to discuss our exemplars. Inviting language into the process of exemplar education, while not required for the acquisition of virtue, can offer a check on our assumptions about

what is good, bad, and worthy of repeating in someone we consider admirable, and it can facilitate character development in a collective context.

An unrelated note on the nature of the DA is that we are not aware of every instance of our admiration. Some attitudes are implicitly held, and these attitudes might conflict with explicitly held beliefs. A commonly cited example of this is the phenomenon measured by Implicit Attitude Tests regarding prejudice toward certain races.[15] A person might explicitly and conscientiously deny that she discriminates on the basis of skin color, yet she can be found to have an implicit bias. Likewise, I may have an unconscious stance of admiration toward someone, which I would not consciously endorse. An example is if I were to admire the quarterback of a rival team and not admit this even to myself. These unconscious attitudes may be either propositional or non-propositional in their structure.

Furthermore, sometimes we come to realize we have an attitude that we were not previously aware of, and it is surprising to us. Roberts and Spezio describe how, in the moral domain, learning about our admiration can reveal our cares to ourselves. For example, I might realize I admire a number of people who are preoccupied with justice. In realizing this, I discover that justice is important to me. If it is the case that I can discover my DAs, then, even if they take a propositional form, these propositions are not available for me to reflect on.

A final taxonomical note about admiration before I turn to the particulars of its dispositions, is that, insofar as the DA of admiration is an enduring collection of

[15] A.R. McConnell and J.M. Leibold. "Relations among the Implicit Association Test, Discriminatory Behavior, and Explicit Measures of Racial Attitudes." *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 37 (2001): 435–442.

dispositions (as I have defined it), it can be re-described as an evaluative[16] dispositional character trait.[17] Briefly, I am aligning myself with a dispositional view of character traits, which is the dominant account of traits in philosophy,[18] rather than with two competing accounts of traits in the psychology literature (the summary view[19] and the conditional view[20]). I do so because the dispositional view matches my intuitions about what traits are—metaphysically real properties of a person that play a causal role in actions and desires. For example, if I have the personality trait of shyness,[21] this means I have an enduring tendency to think and act in shy ways (e.g. to sit quietly in a group setting, to desire solitude, and to fret about small talk). My shyness plays a causal role in my thoughts and actions in situations for which shyness is relevant. This disposition is "distinct from the shy thoughts and actions, although it can give rise to both of them."[22] This captures the same categorical distinction I made earlier between the *dispositional*

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[16] Admiration is an "evaluative" trait in that the relevant dispositions collectively constitute an appreciative perspective on an excellent person or excellent qualities of persons. Sometimes we are appreciative of *P*, and sometimes we are appreciative that *P* has quality *q*.

[17] S.J. Sherman and R.H. Fazio. "Parallels Between Attitudes and Traits as Predictors of Behavior," *Journal of Personality* 51, no. 3 (1983): 308-345.

[18] C. Miller, "Virtue as a Trait," In *The Oxford Handbook of Virtue*, edited by N.E. Snow (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 9-10.

[19] The summary view of traits describes traits in terms of patterns of thoughts and actions relevant to a particular domain. One concern with this account is that summarizing our actions over a period of time fails to capture dispositions we may have, which were not relevant during the period summarized. (e.g. I would have acted bravely, but I had no occasion to do so.) On the summary view, I would not possess this trait. (C. Miller, "Virtue as a Trait," 10-11).

[20] The conditional view determines traits from counterfactuals. (e.g. In situations for which Linda could have been selfish with her time, money, or resources, she would be generous. Thus, the trait of generosity is ascribed to her.) But since on this account, traits are ascribed not on the basis of positive thoughts and actions, only counterfactual ones, this does not seem to match our folk understanding of what a trait is—which something dispositional. We tend to think that traits play a causal role in our actions. (C. Miller, "Virtue as a Trait," 11-12).

[21] This is purely hypothetical.

[22] C. Miller. *Character and Moral Psychology*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 5.

and the *occurrent*. Admiration is a dispositional character trait (alternatively described as a DA) that gives rise to occurrent states, one of which is the emotion of admiring, among other beliefs, desires, and attitudes appropriate to that trait. There are further questions to ask about how exactly character traits are metaphysically grounded in the interrelated mental dispositions I have described traits as consisting of. On a monist approach, traits are identical to these underlying dispositions. On a dualist approach, traits are not identical to, but are constituted by, those dispositions.[23] In either case, there is a necessary connection between the relevant dispositions and the trait. If the dispositions obtain, the trait does as well, and vice versa. And, in both cases, the pedagogical goal of cultivating a good character trait is to strengthen these dispositions. The mental state dispositions for admiration may include a general desire to morally improve, a desire to improve in one particular way (such as to become more patient when waiting for lunchtime) or multiple particular ways (such as to become more patient when waiting for lunchtime, more industrious after lunchtime, and more kind in general), an affinity for honesty, a recognition of the excellences of my mom or of multiple excellent people, and the belief that I can improve my character. I need to meet a modest threshold of these dispositions to qualify as having the trait of admiration, versus another trait or no trait at all.[24]

Thus far, I claimed that admiration is an evaluative dispositional character trait. This is a label worth ascribing because the presence or absence, and strength and weakness, of this trait offers a means of describing a person's reception of an excellent other. A learner with the property of admiration is one who is more disposed than those

[23] C. Miller. *Character and Moral Psychology*, 31-32. See also C. Miller, "The Mixed Trait Approach." Lecture. The Beacon Summer Seminar. Wake Forest University. June 22, 2018.

[24] C. Miller. *Character and Moral Psychology*, 38.

without it to feel admiring, to imitate excellent others, and etcetera. Admiration is a trait that it is helpful to have in place prior to the development of other traits, since it facilitates character growth in other areas. I should also point out that Aristotle proposes that there is a trait form of emulation, which involves striving for qualities that are seen as "appropriate attributes of the good."[25] So, it is not an unprecedented move to consider the involvement of a trait here.

A second question—both in the specific case of admiration and for my general treatment of moral virtues in the next chapter—is what qualifies a character trait as a virtue. Miller writes that a character trait qualifies as a moral virtue "provided that its underlying mental state dispositions are of that virtuous kind themselves."[26] These traits meet a given standard, which would "typically if not always include some form of virtuous motivation, virtuous thought, and virtuous action, at least in situations where the appropriate choice is easy to discern and the costs of acting virtuously are low for the person in question."[27]

One claim I make in Chapter Two is that moral virtues are character traits[28] with a strong motivational component. They are dispositional traits that meet a given standard of having the mental dispositions in place that incline a person to act the right ways, at the right times, over time, and in various situations, from the right motivations. For example,

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[25] Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics* 1388b4. As found in K. Kristjánsson. "Emotions Targeting Exemplarity," 23.

[26] C. Miller. *Character and Moral Psychology*, 38.

[27] C. Miller. *Character and Moral Psychology*, 141.

[28] The set of character traits is broader than the set of moral virtues. Non-moral character traits include epistemic and aesthetic character traits, among others (C. Miller. *Character and Moral Psychology*, 33, footnote 83).

a person with the virtue of honesty will not only be disposed to be honest when it comes to doing her homework, but in most situations for which the virtue applies. Furthermore, a virtuous person will have the beliefs and desires in place such that she can consistently act from the right motivations.[29]

For Aristotle, the high standard required for virtue is *exceedingly* high. Aristotle defines a virtue as a global *hexis* (active disposition) of the soul that is nearly without exception in yielding consistently good, rightly motivated actions. According to Christian Miller, there is very little empirical support for the idea that many, if any, of us qualify as meeting such a standard.[30] But it would also be inaccurate to say that most of us lack these trait dispositions altogether. Rather, most of us are predictably good in certain ways in accordance with a character trait, and not in others.

These observations lead us to ask two questions—(a) what to consider most of us in our mixed expressions of a trait, and (b) whether we ought to re-describe virtues away from Aristotle's picture toward something that matches both (i) a common intuition about virtue (that it is an attainable goal) and (ii) common language (we do wield virtue terms when speaking of fairly excellent people). (a) Regarding our mixed expressions of traits, Miller calls them just that—"mixed traits"—collections of interrelated mental dispositions that dispose us to act consistently and predictably for the good in certain situations, but not in others, and for the right reasons sometimes, but not all the time.[31]

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[29] This is a departure from externalist accounts like that of Julia Driver, which hold that virtues are just traits that consistently yield good consequences (regardless of the internal character of the agent).

[30] C. Miller, "The Mixed Trait Approach." Lecture. The Beacon Summer Seminar. Wake Forest University. June 22, 2018.

[31] An alternative model that also accounts for the mixed nature of our traits is the CAPS (Cognitive-Affective Processing System) Model, which is one of the dominant views among social psychologists (Mischel and Shoda, 1995). It breaks traits down into a series of cognitive-affective units,

For example, I may be consistent enough in my inclinations toward honesty that I am predictable (and this predictability is evidence that I have a trait in place). Still, if I am not reliably honest, it may be unhelpful to characterize me as having the 'trait of honesty' and certainly not the 'virtue of honesty.' This is why we call it a 'mixed honesty trait' instead. This mixed language permits us to better capture the varieties of moral performance—that some people are disposed to be honest in some ways that others are not, and that we are graded in the extent to which we exhibit a trait altogether. The trait system is scalar, so one can morally improve his or her trait toward the virtue by reinforcing the relevant dispositions.[32]

(b) That said, for those who meet a given standard for a trait (albeit not as high of a standard as Aristotle set), we say these people have a virtue. They can have a weak, moderate, or strong virtue. Those who are virtuous in a given respect, ideally, will be the ones who serve as our aretaic exemplars. And, while I just said that the mixed-trait-to-virtue model is scalar, it is also worth clarifying that Miller describes virtues as a *categorical* difference[33] from the mixed traits that precede them, so he places faith in where the lines are drawn between (i) strong mixed traits on one hand and (ii) weak virtues on the other. This categorical distinction seems to match the way we exercise virtue terms in common language. That is, if someone is generally disposed to be honest,

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relative to different situations. One virtue theorist who argues for the empirical adequacy of this account is Nancy Snow (2010, 38). Regardless of its empirical adequacy, I do not prefer this account, since it forfeits trait language altogether. This has a pedagogical cost. It is helpful to preserve the common-sense language of character traits, which learners can relate to and consider, without all of this technical jargon.

[32] An example for admiration is that we might help a learner to see her character gap to honesty by using an exemplar of honesty. In this case, cultivating a belief in a learner that she has room to grow in honesty may encourage her to take action to improve, such as by strengthening her disposition to imitate the exemplar.

[33] C. Miller. *Character and Moral Psychology*, 38.

seemingly from the right motivation and in an enduring way, without any notable counterexamples we can think of, we will likely attribute to her the virtue of honesty. She need not be perfectly honest (and may actually have a weak virtue), but we would still think of her in terms of the virtue. Again, Miller's standard is cast as one for which there is some combination of "virtuous motivation, virtuous thought, and virtuous action, at least in situations where the appropriate choice is easy to discern and the costs of acting virtuously are low for the person in question."[34]

Contra Miller, I am comfortable speaking of these categories as more seamless—considering both a 'strong mixed trait' and a 'weak virtue' not a difference of kind but of degree. It seems that both ascriptions have room for moral improvement (by strengthening key mental dispositions). The categorical switch to 'weak virtue' may carry a sense of finality that is unwarranted,[35] since the agent's trait is still "mixed," and she has room to improve. Furthermore, I suspect that determining whether a person meets the threshold for a given trait is an imperfect science. Following Aristotle, "We must not expect more precision than the subject-matter admits" (*NE*, I.3.1). It would be difficult to decide one collection of dispositions constitutes a weak virtue and the other a strong mixed trait, and I am not confident a standard of virtue can be stipulated which will not just devolve into a sorites paradox. To clarify, I intend to exercise the weak, medium, and strong virtues vocabulary that Miller does, but I think the threshold between mixed traits and weak virtue is more of a dotted line than a categorical difference.

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[34] C. Miller. *Character and Moral Psychology*, 141.

[35] For those selecting aretaic exemplars, to admire someone with a weak virtue would place the admirer in only a slightly better (less vulnerable to defects) position than to admire someone with a strong mixed trait.

A final note on admiration as a character trait is that I have yet to name any candidates for virtues and vices. Briefly, I think there is a single virtue of admiration, which I described in terms of meeting a (discretionary) standard of virtuous actions, motivations, and thoughts relevant to admiration. One who has the virtue of admiration consistently responds well to exemplars. Since admiration consists of many dispositions—all of which may be unrealized—there are likely several vices possible for this trait. One candidate is envy, which involves a recognition of the excellence of another, coupled with a desire that he or she not have this excellence. I describe envy later in this chapter, so I will not discuss it further here. A second candidate for a vice of admiration is fawning or brownnosing—something that captures tendencies for which the agent recognizes goodness in another and is not disposed to imitate or to self-reflect in order to improve, but instead is inclined to unproductively marvel or try to affiliate with the other person in a shameless way. A third potential vice candidate is something along the lines of a collection of dispositions pertaining to poor self-knowledge, since, if I am indisposed to recognize my own character inadequacies and to feel compelled to them, I will consistently respond to exemplars in ways that oppose the character potential of admiration. A final candidate is disdain. Linda Zagzebski proposes that disdain is the emotional contrary to admiration.[36] If there is a trait of disdain toward excellent others, then it has strong potential to be a vice of admiration. Furthermore, aside from the vices proper to the character trait of admiration (i.e. vices of admiration), our trait of admiration is also impeded by other defects of our persons. Examples are hubris and acedia. If I am proud, it is difficult to develop my admiration, and, if I am too internally

[36] Linda Zagzebski, *Exemplarist Moral Theory*, 31, 38–40.

busy or slothful, I will fail to do the character work required of me. I expand on the impacts of these vices in the next section.

To summarize, admiration is a DA, which can be re-described as a dispositional character trait. There is also a virtue of admiration, and there are potentially numerous vices of admiration, such as envy and disdain. In what follows, I describe further features of the DA, before focusing on the emotion of admiring in particular. These features include the following: Admiration (i) is elicited by appearances, (ii) can be updated and redirected with new information, albeit sometimes with difficulty, (iii) inclines us to represent the world as being in a certain way, (iv) and disposes us to certain actions, thoughts, and emotions.

(i) Appearances. Dispositional attitudes are elicited by *phantasia* (appearances).[37] I admire people whom I consider excellent. The importance of this for our purposes is that I can admire someone who seems worthy of my approval, when in fact he or she is not. For example, a person may be acting charitably towards those in need but be acting from the wrong motivation—such as for a vainglorious desire for recognition. If this is the case (and it will often be the case that I am wrong about the motivation for an observed action, since I rarely have full insight into another person's moral motivations) it will appear to me that this person is morally excellent. This is sufficient to elicit my admiration. Insofar as I am admiring what appears to be virtue, this could be beneficial to me. In admiring the person who is charitable for vainglorious reasons, my attention is drawn to what charity looks like in a given situation, and even though I am admiring that person on mistaken grounds, my admiration disposes me to be charitable myself. Of

[37] K. Kristjánsson. *Virtuous Emotions*. p. 7

course, sustained admiration of someone who does not have a genuinely good character can make me vulnerable to learning bad actions or to emulating the wrong motivations in the future. I address this and other vulnerability concerns at the end of this chapter and in Chapter Six.

(ii.) Updating. Later, if I learn of the charitable person's perverse motivation for giving, this new information can help me to amend the objects of my admiration, so that I can cease to admire him or her and instead admire someone else, or else admire this person in a less naïve way. The fact that my dispositional attitudes can be modified and redirected with new information in this way is important. Ideally, I will admire people who are genuinely virtuous because admiration makes us vulnerable in a certain way. That is, we are more inclined to imitate and defer to the behaviors and thoughts of those people we admire. If instead, we were unable to update the objects of our admiring, then admiration would be uneducable. Admiration would be more mixed in its success at prompting moral development.

I have two points to make about this updating—first a comment and then a disclaimer. First, the idea that we should train our attitudes and dispositions, rather than to suppress or overcome them, is an Aristotelian notion. For Aristotle, emotional training is central to moral education. In the case of admiring a vainglorious giver in the example I provided above, my goal is not to suppress my admiration in general when I realize it has gone awry, but to refine the attitude, such as by redirecting my admiration toward people who are morally excellent. Admiration can contribute to a flourishing life; we just need to harness it toward the right end—moral improvement.

The second point about DA updating is a disclaimer that it is not always easy to do so. This is for two reasons: (A) First, admiration is a somewhat recalcitrant attitude. (B) Second, in the period of time when we are most shaped by the people we admire (childhood), we are the least well-positioned to question the objects of our admiration.

(A) First, admiration can be recalcitrant, or resistant to updating. For example, there is a phenomenon of doubling down in our admiration of a person when we learn they have behaved poorly, rather than changing our mind about that person. An example of this is how Americans sometimes develop an unwavering commitment to a seedy political candidate. In the face of mounting evidence that a candidate is not a virtuous person, we might continue to admire and support him—sometimes with greater gusto in the face of opposition—because we have emotionally invested in him.

That is, admiration can be sustained by intellectual commitments or by emotions that impede our reasons-responsiveness,[38] or it can be focused on the wrong reasons that redirect our attitudes in unproductive ways. In the case of the political candidate, our membership to a political party is an example of a commitment that can impede reason from influencing our admiration. This is a type of error that likely occurs at the level of the dispositional attitude—a perspectival error disposing us to "see" the candidate incorrectly, potentially because other attitudes (like fidelity to the party or personal stubbornness) have taken precedence. The candidate in that case becomes symbolic of so much more than just his or her own personal qualities that we fail to engage the bad

[38] Reasons-responsiveness is the ability to recognize salient reasons and translate them into action. In the case of moral admiration, these reasons include considerations for why we should and why we should not have an approving stance toward someone. An example of such a reason to withdraw our admiration is a moral misbehavior, like cheating, in the person we admire. If we are reasons-responsive, this should temper or dissuade our admiration of that person.

qualities of his or her person. Or, perhaps we are so biased in our commitments that we fail to see these bad qualities as problematic. We may continue to admire the candidate because he or she, in his or her role, embodies the commitments we hold dear. In this case, if the politician were to do something terrible, we may even double down in our support and admiration because we are, under another description, defending our own values that he or she represents in that role.

Another example of an intellectual impediment to the reasons-responsiveness of admiration is the case of taking a principled stance on a given issue. An example is this: Suppose I am a person for whom pro-life issues are of great concern. I may admire a person who is outspoken in the pro-life movement. This person might be terrible in nearly every other respect—crass, rude, and malicious. Still, I continue to admire this person because of my principled commitment to pro-life concerns. I might be inclined to approvingly perceive and imitate this person in ways that extend beyond pro-life advocacy—such as in manner of dress or comportment. To clarify, it may be productive for me to admire this person in that singular respect, and to be otherwise cautious around his or her bad qualities. But it seems that in many cases, we tend to admire not just the single good quality but the person as a whole. We might fail to notice, or we may downplay, the person's bad qualities because of a principled commitment to that single, personally meaningful quality (such as courageous pro-life advocacy) that he or she does have.

This unwillingness to engage bad qualities when we admire someone is part of a broader pattern: In cases of mixed character, such as in the pro-life person I described above, what often (though not always) happens is that we struggle to develop a qualified

attitude of admiration, and we either admire or reject the person entirely.[39] An example of this is how many people respond when someone they admire does something bad that they are forced to reckon with. What often results is moral outrage, akin to a paradigm shift toward the person, rather than a modified or mitigated stance toward them.[40] In the particular case of admiring a crass, malicious pro-life advocate, our admiration should be a qualified or a narrowly-directed admiration of the person's excellence, with recognition also of the exemplar's negative qualities. Instead, we might be inclined to admire the person entirely until we are confronted with too many, or too glaring of, challenges to this admiration. Our reasons-responsiveness is impeded because we seem to prefer a naïve narrative of goodness or badness, rather than something in between.

Competing emotions can also impede the reasons-responsiveness of admiration. An example of such an emotion is empathy. For example, suppose I admire a talented singer. When I find out that she is a drug-user, rather than ceasing to admire her on these grounds, I might share in her grief and feel more closely connected to her because of her vulnerability. I may even develop a deeper admiration of her because she becomes more relatable to me in having this frailty exposed.[41] In fact, this is a tactic that Socrates employs for pedagogical purposes in the *Symposium*. He self-discloses at certain times,

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[39] C.B. Miller. *Moral Character: An Empirical Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 3, 9.

[40] I treat these cases more directly in chapter two—Exemplars. What I have in mind is someone like Martin Luther King, Jr. We can admire his fortitude, grace, and tenacity and all he did to further civil rights. He also plagiarized and was unfaithful to his wife. Acknowledging these infelicities of his character does not undercut the ways in which he was also admirable and excellent. However, it seems many people are either outraged by the bad things he did, or else fail to acknowledge them at all—perhaps seeing them as threatening to his legacy. In both cases, our admiration is not responding to reasons. We tend to admire bad qualities as good, in addition to those good qualities, or else fail to admire good qualities because the bad qualities prevent us from appreciating them.

[41] Hyemin Han has research on this phenomenon—that relatable exemplars amplify our responses to them, making us more inclined to imitate. I address this phenomenon in Chapter Six.

showing himself to be vulnerable.[42] Because he does so, his interlocutors seem to admire him all the more. An example of this is when Socrates tells Aristodemus that he is nervous about the crowds and is worried about his messy appearance for the party at Agathon's house. This unexpected vulnerability leads Aristodemus to empathize and exclaim, "I'll do whatever you say" (174b).[43] This can be a dangerous sentiment. Of course, self-disclosure on the part of a self-aware exemplar is sometimes a productive thing for an exemplar to do because empathy can increase a learner's sense of connection. But, as I demonstrated, empathy can also decrease the learner's reasons-responsiveness and unhelpfully attach the learner to the exemplar.

A second example of this phenomenon—of empathy impeding the reasons-responsiveness of admiration—is offered by Paul Cantor regarding Shakespeare's tragedies. Cantor describes how, in tragedy, the characters are ennobled to us through their suffering. We pity them, and because of this, we admire them all the more, even though their actions are tragic. For example, we admire and emulate the love of Romeo and Juliet despite its reckless imprudence. In the case of tragedies, our admiration is clouded from taking seriously the characters' flaws because their vulnerability has made them beautiful to us. This is an interesting phenomenon and one I address more fully in Chapter Six. It is both the case that knowing the exemplar more deeply including certain flaws (i) makes us more eager to learn from and imitate that person[44] and (ii) this makes us less likely to ask questions about whether our admiration is appropriate.

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[42] Anne-Marie Schultz, Forthcoming Book Project.

[43] Ibid.

[44] A. Wilson. "Admiration and the Development of Moral Virtue." In *The Moral Psychology of Admiration*, Edited by A. Grahle and A. Archer (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2019), 201-215.

(B) A second difficulty for emotional updating is this: Children are most influenced by exemplars because their reasoning is immature, and they lack life experience. This means they are unlikely to have well-established habits that provide resistance to the imitation of the person they admire, and they are not well-positioned to question the objects of their admiring. Furthermore, even if children were intellectually equipped to question an exemplar, they would not have the power to select new ones because their caregivers and authority figures are chosen for them. This is a difficult problem to solve—that in many cases, our first exemplars are not ideal exemplars. Once formal schooling begins, part of the task of caretakers and moral educators is to provide exposure to competing exemplars—ones who demonstrate excellences, to counter the exposure to negative exemplars at home.

In Chapter Six, I describe a Graded Engagement Account—my motivational story involving learning from exemplars. I describe how our imitative tendencies mature from (1) a naïve instinct, through various stages: (2) imitation with recognition of good-making features, (3) imitation with reasons-responsiveness, and (4) non-imitative virtuous actions. There, I provide practical guidance for how to mature a learner through the stages of imitation, advancing a learner from the call-and-response type of imitation that characterizes much of early childhood, toward performing good actions herself. I explain how educators can make corrections for situations like I have just described—where a learner's early exposure is not ideal, and an educator needs to equip a learner with the tools to evaluate her exemplars.

Thus far in my evaluation of admiration, I have described the nature of the attitude, its objects, and training. The final two features I will examine are the

dispositional features of admiration. In the event that we perceive or reflect upon an exemplar, admiration disposes us to (iii) represent or construe the world as being in a certain way, (iv) and have certain actions and feelings.

(iii.) Construal. Earlier in this chapter, I labeled the DA of admiration an *evaluative* character trait, since its unifying 'character' is an appreciative perspective on a seemingly excellent person, or on the qualities or actions of that person. Stated differently, admiration disposes us to have occurrent approving construals of exemplars. Construals involve elements of "perception, imagination, and thought."[45] They are episodic, occurring when we are actively perceiving or thinking about a person we admire, and—while they may incline us to make judgments, as perceptions in general do. Construals also reveal a characteristic care or concern.[46] In the case of moral admiration, we are disposed to construe someone as having qualities that are morally good, and these good qualities are a concern of ours. We are morally interested.

It is this representative character of admiration (its dispositions to have these approving construals) that led Linda Zagzebski to develop her Exemplarist Moral Theory—a direct reference account of virtue by which we know what the virtues are because of our admiration. On Zagzebski's account, we can examine the different people we admire, and by comparing the excellences of one person with those of another, we can isolate individual virtues. For example, person *A* has quality *x* and quality *y*. Person *B* only has quality *x*. Thus, *x* and *y* must be two distinct excellences. I do not share Zagzebski's commitment to this direct reference theory because I do not think moral

[45] R. Roberts 2003 as found in K. Kristjánsson (2018) *Virtuous Emotions*. p. 6.

[46] Kristjánsson, K. *Virtuous Emotions*. p. 6.; Roberts, 2003; Brady, 2013, p. 62

concepts are anchored foundationally in exemplars, but I share the intuition that admiration helps us to notice the good-making qualities of a person.[47]

(iv.) Dispositions. That admiration is a dispositional attitude means that it is an appreciative perspective that disposes us to act and feel in particular ways. There are three broad types of dispositions common to admiration: (a) actions, (b) thoughts, and (c) affects.

(a) Actions. In my years as a middle school teacher, I usually knew which students belonged to which parents as soon as the parents entered my classroom on Back to School Night. I could tell because of the way the parents carried themselves, as well as their patterns of speech and sociability, among other things. I point this out to demonstrate that we are disposed to become like the people we pay attention to. A parent-child relationship is an obvious instance of this. While there are shared genes, proximity in general, and other factors involved beyond admiration in the parent-child case, it is uncontroversial that we pattern ourselves off of those we hold in high regard. A better example, since it eliminates confounding variables like shared genes and imitation unrelated to admiration, is that my older sister teaches horseback-riding lessons at a local farm as a hobby. She is greatly admired by a group of young girls around the farm, who dress like her, mimic her equine habits, and tend to follow her around, acting as she does. Their admiration, however warranted, inclines them to act as my sister does.

We are disposed to imitate the people we admire. Roberts and Spezio describe admiration as involving a "a felt invitation to inquire or participate further."[48] In the

[47] On page 51, I provide my own account.

[48] R. Roberts and M. Spezio. "Admiring Moral Exemplars," 10.

moral domain, this invitation to "participate further" involves our imitation of the exemplar's good actions. Some of these actions are (a) appropriative imitation—wherein we adopt the same actions entirely—while others are (b) representative. In representative imitation, a learner becomes the 'middle term' in her imitation—representing a quality in her own context. I unpack these two types of imitation in greater detail in Chapter Five.

There is a dictum in classical education that applies equally well to the moral domain: "Imitation precedes art." The idea is that we learn from copying the masters. First, we imitate their actions, and in doing so, we form the right habits and become capable of acting freely and competently ourselves. For the purpose of moral formation, imitation is a helpful action because it offers direct practice of an excellence after observing it. Aristotle writes, "Men become builders by building and lyreplayers by playing the lyre; so too we become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts."[49] Particular practice is how we acquire virtue, so on the occasions when admiration elicits imitation, this is helpful toward the end of character formation.

Furthermore, imitation can serve as an important test for whether we truly hold an attitude. I described earlier how patterns in our admiration can reveal our cares or concerns to us. If I realize I admire a good number of industrious workers, I might come to recognize that I value effort and industriousness. These qualities are important to me. One possibility for how admiration can go awry is that we might self-deceive about these cares, by hiding behind our admiration. For example, I might take myself to admire Martin Luther King, Jr., and on account of this admiration, I take solace in the fact that I

[49] Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics* 1103a

am not a racist. In fact, I might hold any number of racist attitudes. If I do not imitate Martin Luther King, Jr., or if I am not compelled to act because of my admiration, there is no testing ground for it. Kierkegaard criticizes what he calls "mere admiration." He writes, "An imitator is or strives to be what he admires, and an admirer keeps himself personally detached [and] does not discover that what is admired involves a claim upon him to be or at least to strive to be what is admired."[50] If we see someone as morally excellent, this should compel us to action. If it does not, we might wonder whether we genuinely admire a person.

Imitation is not the only action that admiration disposes us to perform. For example, sometimes we are moved to praise the exemplar to others.[51] This can be helpful because it socially reinforces virtue by giving the exemplar a bigger platform. Alternatively, our admiration might dispose us to do another good act, different from the one I admired. This is sometimes a more appropriate response than imitation. An example is that if a woman generously buys a hungry child an ice cream cone, the best response for me would not be to buy that same child another ice cream cone. Rather I could be kind to my siblings or hospitable to neighbors, taking advantage of the opportunities before me to be excellent in different ways. Alternatively, I might admire an exemplar for whom I am not in the same situation, but the same virtue might apply. For example, I may admire a courageous fireman for running into a burning building. I should not also run into a burning building, since I am ill-equipped to do so. Instead, I

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[50] Soren Kierkegaard, *Practice in Christianity*. Translated by H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 241.

[51] I. Schindler, J. Paech, and F. Löwenbrück. "Linking Admiration and Adoration to Self-Expansion: Different Ways to Enhance One's Potential." *Cognition and Emotion* 29, no. 2 (2015): 292-310.

should be courageous in my own context, like speaking up when I disagree with an argument. The application of the excellence in my own context requires practical wisdom on my part. In Chapter Seven, I address strategies for maturing our practical wisdom, in the context of our imitation of excellent qualities.

Admiration might also dispose us to "elevation"—when another person's good action "elevates" you so that you want to do good deeds, too. The difference here from imitation is that the moral motivation to do good deeds is not indexed to the other person. Rather, acting from elevation means you are motivated by, for lack of a better description, goodness itself. Kristjánsson describes having felt this following a generous action of his father. He writes, "[M]y most profound emotion was thus directed at the ideal of moral goodness rather than at my father as a person. Moreover, I felt motivated to strive for such goodness myself because of the attractiveness of the relevant ideal rather than its attractiveness through the mediation of my father." Kristjánsson describes elevation as a separate emotion, but I can see the DA of admiration as disposing us to this type of occurrent experience as well. In our admiration, we might be struck by an appreciative perception of goodness itself, rather than for people who are good. Since elevation is distinguished from admiration primarily on motivational grounds, I take up the question of how to divide admiration and elevation, and the situations in which elevation is a more relevant emotion, in Chapter Four.

(b) Thoughts. If I hold a DA of admiration, I will be disposed to have certain occurrent thoughts. An obvious example is that I may be disposed to think through the other person's excellences. I might also think about my own defects, relative to the other person's excellences. My DA may incline me to think about how the excellent person

became excellent. Ideally, my DA will dispose me to have this thought, but someone may need to point this out—the fact that moral virtues are acquired and are open to us. If I think about the process my exemplar underwent to become excellent in a given way, it will set me up well for acquiring that virtue myself. An additional example of an occurrent thought my DA might dispose me to have regards what an exemplar would do in my situation. This last thought is one Aristotle tried to encourage, in prescribing that we take cues from the *phronimos* to discern what we should do in a particular circumstance.

(c) Affects. Admiration disposes us to feel in certain ways, the most obvious of which is the feeling of admiring, which I will address shortly. As a reminder, while I may be disposed to these occurrent episodes upon seeing or thinking about the people I admire, emotional experiences are not necessary to the DA of admiration. An example is that I might admire a colleague and be drawn to imitate his good actions, but not experience any lifting feeling or warmth toward that person. In fact, this mostly describes my admiration of Abraham Lincoln. I feel compelled to be more honest when I think about him, but not usually because of any pleasant feelings. My motivation is better explained by a type of recognition: Lincoln meets a standard of honesty that I see as commendable. However, I admit that I did feel a lifting, motivating delight recently upon visiting the Mary Todd Lincoln home in Lexington and hearing about his character.

Other than being *un*feeling or feeling admiring, we may think admiration can dispose us to feel uncomfortable by someone's excellence. There is a debate in the literature as to whether a negative emotional valence belongs to admiration or should be

treated separately as emulation or envy.[52] For Zagzebski, a negative emotional valence will sometimes characterize admiration. This is because, in recognizing the excellence of another, we also see we do not meet the same standard. This personal deficiency can be agitating, and it presses us to correct the character gap between us. To this point, Robert Adams helpfully observes that admiration values the present good and "does not presuppose the absence or futurity of its object."[53] In contrast, envy does presuppose a lack, or future lack, of an object. Adams writes that admiration does not act from a lack, or even from the possibility of attainment, but from the recognition of a desirable good.

If Adams' observations are correct—and I believe that they are—the negative emotional valence belongs to envy, rather than to admiration. This is because the source of our discontent is that we perceive a personal lack. However, while I certainly agree with Adams, I also agree with Zagzebski that we do often feel discontent as a consequence of our admiration. It seems, then, that our admiration often 'turns a corner,' from admiration to envy. The people we genuinely admire expose flaws, and this can occasion a sense of personal deficiency rather than an appreciation of the good. Accordingly, I think there is a way of understanding admiration as making us more susceptible to envy than we would be if we were less attentive to the excellences of others. We might even say that the DA of admiration disposes us to (in the sense of making more likely), not just virtuous ends but also envy. This is just a caution to be on

[52] Kristjánsson, K. "Emotions Targeting Moral Exemplarity: Making Sense of the Logical Geography of Admiration, Emulation, and Elevation." *Theory and Research in Education* 2017, Vol. 15(1) 20–37. p. 24.

[53] R.M. Adams. *Finite and Infinite Goods: A Framework for Ethics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 134.

guard that the social comparison of admiration can turn from being morally constructive to being destructive of character.

On this basis, a pedagogical puzzle is whether we can instruct learners to recognize a lack in themselves, while acting from the recognition of the good. Truly, it is important that we notice we do not have those excellent qualities. For example, if I only notice the excellences of Lincoln, without truthfully evaluating my own character, I am not well-positioned to improve because I will miss the "character gap" that exists between us. In "How Admiring Moral Exemplars Can Ruin Your Life," Alfred Archer writes about how admiration can set one up for "a distinctive kind of moral error"—one may not realize the ways in which he or she is not an exemplar.[54] That is, by holding an exemplar in mind, we begin to think of ourselves in terms of the excellences the exemplar possesses, but we do not actually have these excellences ourselves. Therefore, admiration seems to require that an agent have an adequate self-understanding in order to be motivated to improve.[55] Otherwise, what can result is a type of self-glorification, which is just as problematic as the vice we just set out to avoid—envy. With this in mind, self-reflection should be a tactic that accompanies the use of exemplars in moral education. Name the excellence the person embodies, and ask whether you have that, too. Then practice acting for the good, rather than from your lack.

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[54] Alfred Archer, Bart Engelen, and Alan Thomas, "How Admiring Moral Exemplars Can Ruin Your Life: The Case of Conrad's 'Lord Jim.'" In *The Moral Psychology of Admiration*. Edited by Alfred Archer and Andre Grahle (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2019), 233-248.

[55] Ibid.

(2) The Feeling of Admiring

In certain cases when we are actively perceiving or reflecting upon an exemplar, the dispositional attitude of admiration disposes us to feel admiring. I defined the feeling of admiring as an occurrent, concern-based construal of another as excellent in some way, characterized by an approving or pleasant sensation toward that person. Unsurprisingly, since the DA of admiration shares a name with this disposition, the representative content is largely the same as admiration: We appreciatively perceive the moral excellence of another, and are drawn to participate. What differs principally in the emotion from the DA is that (i) admiring is occurrent—happening only on the occasions in which we are presently perceiving or thinking about an exemplar, and (ii) admiring is centrally characterized by a felt experiential quality. And, while the DA disposes us to have this emotion, we can also experience this emotion without the DA (or trait) in place.

Earlier in this chapter, I explained why "emotion" and "emotion-disposition" are insufficient descriptors for admiration's dispositional potential as a whole. But I still maintained that there is an emotion of admiring. This emotion plays a large role in inclining us toward excellent people early in life in particular, and it is first observable in the primacy of admiring-like affective impulses in early childhood that elicit imitation. Young children have a natural affinity for their caregivers, and they often respond through imitation—such as by mimicking gesticulations, vocalizations, and facial expressions. Their emotional connection to their caregivers also facilitates the development of emotional competence—emotional self-control, such as learning when certain emotional expressions are appropriate, as children model their own emotional responses after those of their caretakers. The nurturing of these naïve emotions in the

early stages of emotional development form the prosocial baselines of character.[56] The following is an example: If I am taught how to regulate my anger and to control my tantrums, I am better positioned to act justly later in life because I can manage my immediate impulses. If my parents model emotional self-regulation, and provide me with the tools to understand and manage my emotions, then I am not indisposed to develop a good character later. Virtues require a certain level of emotional regulation.

To clarify, I do not believe the immature emotion of admiring is a complete explanation for a young child's natural affinity for and imitation of caregivers. Rather I think these prosocial impulses are emotional precursors to admiring, and to other other-praising emotions like gratitude and adoration. As we mature, these impulses[57] develop into distinct, mature emotions, by means of self-regulation through increased conceptual ability, rational development, and language and cognitive skills.[58] Once our admiring sufficiently matures, it becomes something "physiologically more subtle or unpredictable and whose objects can only be identified in fairly complex conceptual and narrative terms."[59] This seems a convincing developmental story—to say these natural impulses and early affective tendencies develop into an emotion, which is characteristically occurrent. Still, because of a separate recognition that the emotion of admiring does not

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[56] D. Narvaez. "Baselines of Virtue." In *Developing the Virtues Integrating Perspectives.* Edited by J. Annas, D. Narvaez, & N.E. Snow (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 14-29.

[57] Roberts calls these "primitive emotions," rather than moral precursors in "Justice as an Emotion Disposition" (2010). He provides an example of a child's impulse to resent instances of inequality as an antecedent to justice.

[58] R.A. Thompson, "Emotion Regulation and Emotional Development." *Educational Psychology Review*. 3, no. 4 (1991): 269-307.

[59] Roberts, R.C. *Emotions: An Aid in Moral Psychology* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 37.

characterize all or even most mature experiences of admiration, I am confident there is a dispositional attitude as well.

I described earlier how, as we age and acquire more moral experiences, we become more circumspect and resistant to imitating the people we admire because we have momentum around our own habits of action that make it more difficult to change course. We are also less naïve and trusting in general, which can make us question exemplars, rather than take pleasure in their excellences. Although this may seem counterintuitive, I think the development of admiring can be partially explained as an increase in resistance to its objects. This is a pattern that continues from the initial natural impulse for affinity and imitation. At the start, young children are largely non-resistant imitators of caregivers. As the emotion of admiring develops, we can become more circumspect admirers—more guarded about whom we admire (in helpful and unhelpful ways) and less likely to imitate as a result of our admiration. This circumspection develops at the level of the DA as well. In fact, the mixed dispositional character of the DA (which includes the inclinations to think and reflect on our exemplars, in addition to disposing affects and actions) reflects greater developmental maturity.

With all of this in mind, my proposal is that this developmental story should be reflected in how we educate the emotion and attitude. With children, the pedagogical goals for admiring are to help them to develop some resistance or circumspection toward the people they admire, to imitate the right qualities rather than to imitate everything. Otherwise, based on their stage of emotional development and lack of resistance, we are just teaching learners how to—in Kristjánsson's words—"unreflectively conform to a

charismatic leader."[60] We may be training students to blindly imitate anyone they find admirable, without equipping them to critically reflect on what qualities they should emulate. Conversely, with teenagers and adults, the pedagogical goals would involve both helping them to recognize morally excellent people around them and encouraging them to act on their admiring—to imitate those good qualities. This is just a general pattern, and there is much variation based on individual attitudes and patterns. I treat the specifics of this process in Chapters Six and Seven.

Character Development

While much of the character work of admiration is done by the dispositional attitude, the feeling of admiring aids this process by inclining us to virtue through pleasure. This is particularly important in the time period before we are morally mature enough to respond to reasons or to desire to emulate good deeds for their own sake. In what follows, I describe, using an example, the work of character development done by both the DA and the feeling.

Suppose I have an attitude of admiration for Abraham Lincoln. This appreciative stance toward him can do epistemic work in an admirer on its own, apart from any dispositions to feel or to act. That is, if I construe Lincoln as having a virtue that he expresses in a certain way in a given situation, I am learning about what it means to be virtuous in that respect. Because of this—even if I do not bring his excellences to bear on myself or see his virtues as achievable for me—my stance toward him will play a valuable role in my moral formation because I will acquire knowledge of the virtues.

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[60] Kristjánsson, K. "Emulation and the Use of Role Models in Moral Education." *Journal of Moral Education* 35, no 1 (2006): 37-49.

However, I suspect that most bearers of the dispositional attitude of admiration also have a concomitant belief that "moral excellence is desirable."

I believe this is true for two reasons. First, the DA of admiration has a nested assumption that moral excellence is praiseworthy, and this is true for both the objectual and propositional forms of the attitude. That is, when I admire, my stance is not neutral with respect to the qualities a person has. Even in its most basic intentional forms, my DA carries an appreciative perspective on someone. The further step—in thinking that what I appreciate is also desirable for me—is a short step for most people. Second, as I have described, my DA of admiration disposes me to feel admiring—not always but often. When I feel admiring, I generally experience a pleasant or appreciative sensation toward the excellent person. So, I am in a situation for which (i) I have a stance of approbation toward a person in recognition of an excellence, and (ii) I am inclined to feel a pleasant sensation toward that person. The good quality is received with a positive emotional valence. So, when I admire, goodness and pleasure are brought together such that I come to see moral excellence as a pleasurable thing. Moreover, according to Hallvard Fossheim and later Linda Zagzebski, there is pleasure in the act of imitation as well. By nature, we like to imitate.[61] All things considered, my DA toward Abraham Lincoln should be easily linked to the pleasures of both admiring and imitating him.

This is a way in which the feeling of admiring does great service to the moral work of admiration. The feeling of admiring serves as a propaedeutic to virtue, by inclining us to virtue through pleasure perhaps before we are morally mature enough to respond to reasons or to choose good deeds for the motivation appropriate to that

[61] L. Zagzebski, *Exemplarist Moral Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 134.

action.[62] If we experience the good act as pleasant—even if it is an occurrent, short-lived sensation—this plays a motivational role in drawing us to appreciate and imitate virtues ourselves. And on this basis, we can habituate good actions because they are pleasant, even before we are sufficiently intellectually developed to choose well.

I should make a disclaimer about the desirability of virtue. While I just explained how the (a) goodness of a person and (b) the desirability of goodness are easily linked, it is just not the case that everyone who admires an excellent person is morally interested in a sincere way—having a practical desire to improve themselves. There are many reasons for this. Here are two examples: (i) One reason why we might have an attitude of admiration but not desire virtue for ourselves is because acting on our admiration can be in competition with our vices or other normative failures. I described these as personal defects that impede the virtue of admiration in the preceding section. For example, it seems that the ability to morally benefit from exemplars requires we meet a certain threshold of humility so that we are teachable and can learn from others without feeling either threatened or in despair about ourselves. We need to be able to recognize the good in another person and move productively in the direction of virtue. Another example of a vice that would impede our moral teachability is *acedia*—busyness or sloth, or "resistance to the demands of love."[63] In the case of acedia, I might recognize the good in another person but resist the work it takes to become that way myself.

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[62] A worry here is that, since we might naturally experience pleasure in all imitation (regardless of whether the person is good or bad), pleasure will also be linked to the performance of bad actions. I address this puzzle in Chapter Five and discuss possibilities for resolving this concern.

[63] R.K. DeYoung. *Glittering Vices* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2009), 79.

This is a significant puzzle—that moral development can be impeded by our preexisting bad qualities or vices. The reason exemplars are important is that they can direct us in the way of virtue, but we need to be sufficiently virtuous (humble, charitable, fair-minded, etc.) in order to benefit from them. This problem seems to underscore the importance of educating for virtue early in life, before learners have settled habits of pride, sloth, or etcetera. In the final chapters of this project I raise this in related worries, with strategy suggestions.

A second reason why a DA of admiration might not result in my desire to acquire that same virtue is that I may not realize that I can be excellent like Abraham Lincoln is—that the excellence is 'open to me.' For this reason, moral educators should emphasize the acquired nature of virtues, that we can become better in the same respect that an exemplar models.[64] This is important because, if my admiration is to spur me toward moral improvement in the given respect, I also need to understand the exemplar's excellence is developed, not natural, and is therefore open to me. Nietzsche observes how, in many situations, we are inclined to think of an excellent person as "very remote from us, as a *miraculum*."[65] That is, we do not always consider the development an exemplar underwent to become excellent, and we do not see the excellent person as relatable to us. Instead, we consider the exemplar special or beyond us. If my attitude toward the exemplar is such that I see her as excellent and different from me in that

[64] A fuller discussion of the acquired, 'open to us' nature of virtues is in Chapter Five, with a treatment of some of the debates about whether virtues really are completely 'up to us.'

[65] Nietzsche, F. *Human, All Too Human*. Transl. by R.J. Hollingdale (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 86.

respect, without the additional idea that I could become excellent as well, then this will not be a motivating attitude.

In this chapter, I examined the nature of the dispositional attitude of admiration and the feeling of admiring. I suggested ways in which each contributes to our moral development and identified several pedagogical puzzles of virtue. In the following chapter, I examine the objects of our admiration—aretaic exemplars.

CHAPTER TWO

Aretaic Exemplars

In this chapter, I examine the objects of our moral admiration—the people we are inclined to appreciably perceive and imitate. I first define "aretaic exemplar" and ask what kinds of people fill this role. Next, I inquire about their virtues, apparent virtues, or lack of virtues, and examine whether exemplars often understand themselves to serve this role. Lastly, I inquire about the possibility of negative exemplars serving a positive role in virtue formation. A vicious or immoral person might demonstrate what we should not do or be. We would not hold a dispositional attitude of admiration toward these people, but in our recognition of these people as vicious, they might deepen our understanding of virtue and vice and motivate us in the way of virtue.

One caution for this chapter is that my interest in aretaic exemplars does not constitute what Michael Slote calls an agent-based approach to ethics. Slote proposes a virtue ethics that "treats the moral or ethical status of acts as entirely derivative from independent and fundamental aretaic (as opposed to deontic) ethical characterizations of motives, character traits, or individuals."[1] On my view, normativity is not derived from exemplars but from an independent account of flourishing, and since I am interested in the particular question of virtue education in schools, I provide a collective, institutional sketch of flourishing.[2] In fact, throughout this chapter, I address ways in which exemplars

[1] Slote, M. *Motives from Morals* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 5.

[2] My account of flourishing relative to the educational institution is on page 51.

can fail to meet the standards of moral virtues and misdirect admirers, and I explain how exemplars are insufficient for learning what the virtues are. I argue instead that exemplars serve a critical role in forming our moral imaginations by demonstrating what a virtuous person might do in a given circumstance and motivating us to act likewise. Because the next two chapters specifically address the epistemic and motivational roles exemplars can play in our moral formation, my focus for this chapter is primarily on the qualities of exemplars themselves, apart from specific questions of charting their effects on us.

Definitions

An aretaic exemplar is one who models virtue. Some aretaic exemplars are widely influential. Others are not. Some have a steady presence in an admirer's life, while others have a temporary impact. An exemplar can be a hero, a saint, a sage, or someone who does not qualify as any of these, such as a coach or a parent. I call this final category "mundane exemplars." Some people who serve the role of aretaic exemplar are not as morally virtuous as we might expect, whereas others are nearly irreproachable in their actions on a consistent basis.

Aretaic exemplars serve a role in demonstrating and encouraging our growth in virtues through their own moral excellences. Robert Roberts and Michael Spezio define them in this way: "*E* is an exemplar of *Q* for *R* by way of *M*."[3] *E* is the exemplary person or set of persons serving the role of exemplar. This might be a single person, like my soccer coach, or a set of people, like the elders in my church. *R* (recipient) is the person for whom the exemplar exemplifies something. As Roberts and Spezio point out, "the

[3] Robert Roberts and Michael Spezio. "Admiring moral exemplars: Sketch of an ethical sub-discipline" As found in *Self, Motivation, and Virtue: Innovative Interdisciplinary Research*, edited by Nancy Snow and Darcia Narvaez, 85-108 (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019), 87.

concept of exemplarity is a fundamentally relational concept (being a relationship between an exemplar and a recipient)."[4] Stated differently, a person can be extraordinarily good without being an exemplar if no one happens to notice. There needs to be a person (or persons) for whom the exemplar exemplifies something. An implication of this relational quality of exemplarity—which I expand on later in this chapter—is that exemplarity is based on what is *perceived* by *R*, the recipient. It may be the case that *E* is not an objectively good person, but insofar as *R* perceives *E* as exemplary, then he or she serves this role. In part, this disjunction between (a) what is perceived as good and (b) what is actually good is unavoidable because we do not typically have access to another person's true motivations for actions. For example, a person may act consistently honestly in order to sustain her pride. This motivation undercuts the goodness of the action, but we may never know that this is her motivation. In this case, the person can serve as an *E* for some good quality that *E* does not actually possess. Regardless, a large part of training in admiration is fine-tuning the objects of our admiration to admire the right qualities as good so that our perspectives and perceptions of apparently good deeds more consistently track genuinely good ones.

In the definition Roberts and Spezio provide, *Q* is the quality or qualities *E* exemplifies to *R*. These qualities can be specific—such as particular virtues or vices, like honesty or generosity, or honesty *and* generosity—or they can be characterized as a kind of broad or general goodness.[5] In Chapter One, I described this broad/general distinction

[4] Ibid.

[5] Robert Roberts and Michael Spezio. "Admiring moral exemplars: Sketch of an ethical sub-discipline," 85.

coarsely in terms of the objectual and propositional.[6] An example is that I admire my Uncle Bobby and have a dispositional attitude of admiration toward him, but not really for any particular reason. He is generally a good person who usually does the right thing, and I would not often be misdirected if I took cues for action from him. I am not sure I can name anything more specific about his good character beyond a general sense of approval I have toward him, though I might be able to come up with something more specific if pressed to do so. In the later chapters of this dissertation, I write about how admiration often matures by becoming narrower and more targeted on the particular qualities that are admirable. This narrowing is a good thing because it permits our imitation to be more targeted and actionable than it would be if we looked upon someone and perceived only a nondescript or inarticulable sense of goodness. Still, it is often the case that we do admire in this general, non-targeted way, such that the claim that *E* is virtuous is just an imprecise, colloquial way of saying that we consider him or her fairly morally respectable such that he or she serves as a reasonable index of good actions. In these cases, *Q* is a broad set of good, or somewhat good, qualities.

A final note on *Q* is that, to limit the scope of this project, I am only concerned with aretaic exemplars, not exemplars more generally. There are many other goods and excellences (*Q*s) beyond moral virtues that an *E* might exemplify, such as ball-handling skills on the basketball court or a stylish manner of dress. The only *Q*s I will evaluate are moral excellences or virtues. I should also clarify that while Roberts and Spezio designate *Q* as qualities, there are many difference conceptions of what a virtuous quality is (i.e. the

[6] I should clarify that it is possible to have a narrowly focused admiration of someone's quality or action, and it may still only be a relational or *de re* type of attitude that I hold. But often narrowly-focused attitudes are propositional.

normative basis for its goodness, whether motivation is involved, whether there are 'success components,' etc. included in the evaluation of the act). I introduce a selection of these competing accounts in the following section. 'Quality' can mean a number of different things, depending on the account of virtues undertaken.

Lastly, *M* is the mode by which *E* exemplifies a *Q*. By mode, Roberts and Spezio mean the "moral effect" the exemplar has, which they describe in two ways—both in terms of (i) features of *E*, and (ii) felt impact of *E* on the part of *R*.[7] (i) Features of *E* are descriptions of how the exemplar exemplifies good qualities. These include context of *Q* descriptions, such as that 'Molly exemplifies perseverance through her running.' In this case, running would be Molly's mode of exemplification of *Q*. She might exemplify *Q* through her schoolwork instead. Furthermore, mode includes non-moral qualities of Molly's person, such as her charisma or likeability, and these qualities may increase or decrease the moral effect she can have. Roberts and Spezio also describe mode in general terms regarding how an *E* can impact an *R* or *R*s. They write about how some *E*s are leaders who "[impart] to a community a pervading spirit or ethos that envelops other members of the community," building up the community by increasing solidarity or fostering other positive changes.[8] Other *E*s, through personal defect, sow discord or cause other harm to their *R*s. (ii) M can also mean the felt impact of *E* on the part of *R*, or how one is affected by an exemplar. The most obvious mode is emotional—including the occurrent feeling of admiring. Roberts and Spezio include further possibilities, like whether *R* perceives her relationship with *E* to be affectionate or personal (i.e. from the

[7] Robert Roberts and Michael Spezio. "Admiring moral exemplars: Sketch of an ethical sub-discipline," 8.

[8] Ibid. 9.

perspective of *R*), which may amplify or diminish the impact *E* has on her. Again, since admiration is elicited by *phantasia*, or perceived excellences, and because we can be mistaken about who is genuinely admirable, sometimes the impact that *E* has on *R* is unfitting or unwarranted based on the sort of character *E* really has. Furthermore, sometimes the mode of *E*'s approach—for example, if an *E* were a Machiavellian leader, intentionally wielding power to take advantage of his people in sneaky ways—his mode would be an impediment to our rightly-directed admiration.

In what follows, I (1) define what I mean by virtues (the *Q*s of Roberts and Spezio's formula), (2) evaluate different types of aretaic exemplars, and (3) elaborate on what it means to model or exemplify the virtues.

(1) Moral Virtue

In the previous section, I described how aretaic exemplars serve a role in demonstrating and encouraging our growth in virtues through their own moral excellences. This does not mean they are morally exemplary in every way, or even in most ways.[9] An exemplar might model one virtue in particular, but not others. For instance, it is rare to find someone who is both meek in the hall and ferocious in battle,[10] exemplifying both fortitude and gentleness. Another example is that Beowulf is not someone with whom I would like to have tea or would allow to babysit my children, yet he is capable of protecting the Danes at great cost to himself. He has an asymmetry of character, demonstrating a particular virtue, while lacking others. While Beowulf is an extreme example of virtue asymmetry, it is not uncommon for our exemplars to be

[9] L. Zagzebski, *Exemplarist Moral Theory*, 1-2.

[10] C.S. Lewis, "The Necessity of Chivalry," *Time and Tide*, 1940.

flawed in obvious ways. Another example is Henry Clay—the Great Compromiser. He was a masterful diplomat and practically wise, but he was also extremely sensitive and could be vindictive toward those who offered (even constructive) criticisms of his work. We often learn about virtues from people who are lacking in certain ways because, realistically, most of us are. In this section, I first define what I mean by moral virtues, then explain how this definition impacts my treatment of exemplars. Briefly, so as not to bury the lede, my positive account of virtues is one for which virtues are enduring dispositional traits that incorporate practical reason and appropriate motivations. My approach to virtues is broadly Aristotelian with two major departures from his account, and I explain these in the following section. These departures regard the rarity of virtue[11] and a clarification regarding the nature of *hexis* that seems different from Aristotle's intent.[12] Furthermore, regarding character traits in general, and how to describe where most of us stand in relation to virtue, I align myself with Christian Miller's mixed-traits view.[13]

(1.a) Contemporary Accounts of Virtue. By way of background, there are a number of competing accounts of virtue currently being defended in the philosophy

[11] For Aristotle, there is only mature moral virtue, which is exceedingly rare, and then non-virtue. On the account I align myself with, there is a more modest standard of virtue, and there are gradations of the trait—weak virtue, moderate virtue, and strong virtue.

[12] Aristotle describes a single *hexis*, or active disposition, per given virtue. Contra Aristotle, in defining a virtue as a dispositional trait, I mean to name several dispositions (*hexes*) for thoughts, actions, desires, and other intentional states in the domain of that trait. On Miller's account, there is a unification question (i.e. whether each disposition really belongs to the virtue named, or why the dispositions are being grouped as they are), and this question is not asked of Aristotelian *hexis* because of the way it is described—as a singular disposition.

[13] Christian Miller, "The Mixed Trait Model of Character Traits and the Moral Domains of Resource Distribution and Stealing" In *Character: New Directions from Philosophy, Psychology, and Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 164-191.

literature. Some of the accounts are distinguishable in terms of the normative system they underserve. While virtue theory is traditionally advanced in competition with other normative ethical views (like deontology and consequentialism), virtues can also be incorporated into a consequentialist position (as Julia Driver proposes) or into deontology (as Kant does).[14] For Driver, virtues are just character traits that consistently produce good consequences, regardless of the internal condition of the agent. In fact, sometimes having what would be considered an appropriate internal condition for becoming virtuous can impede the development of virtues. For example, there are often intellectual requirements stipulated for virtue attainment, one of which is typically adequate self-assessment, at least in the domain of that particular virtue. But Driver argues that, for modesty, it is better that an agent inaccurately self-assesses (by regularly underestimating her accomplishments) than value herself appropriately.[15] In the case of modesty, Driver argues, proper self-knowledge not only does not help, but actually impedes, virtue development. From a series of examples like these, Driver builds a case against accounts that place weight on achieving a specific internal character of the agent (such as by having an appropriate motivation), and instead argues that we should look at the consequences arising from the internal state the agent has. Conversely, for Kant, virtue is "the moral strength of a man's will in fulfilling his duty."[16] Virtue is a kind of duty-driven resolve. This definition could not be more different from Driver's proposal, but, interestingly, it is probably the case that some exemplars selected by Kant would also be

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[14] Nancy Snow, *Virtue as Social Intelligence: An Empirically Grounded Theory* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2010), 2.

[15] J. Driver, "Modesty and Ignorance." *Ethics* 109, no. 4 (1999): 827-834.

[16] Kant. *Metaphysics of Morals* 6.390.

selected by Driver, were it the case that a duty-driven motivation yielded consistently good consequences. In general, it seems that there is more consensus about who qualifies as exemplary than what a virtue actually is.

Within virtue ethical accounts, there is also a diversity of viewpoints regarding how normativity is derived. There are several Platonic-type accounts that argue in various ways about virtue's connection to a subject-independent standard of goodness. Timothy Chappell argues that virtue consists in an agent's being (relatively) unimpeded from contemplating the Form of the Good, and virtues also include the non-egoistic qualities that develop as a consequence of turning attention away from ourselves to contemplate the Good.[17] Robert Adams argues that God is the source of goodness, and good character amounts to resembling God. For Adams, virtues are those qualities that are the most God-like, to the extent that we can resemble God.[18]

Another option for deriving normativity is an agent-based approach, which is the approach defended most notably by Michael Slote and Linda Zagzebski. Because I am engaging Zagzebski's project on exemplars so closely, I have already asserted that I wish to distance myself from her agent-based account of virtues. For Zagzebski and for Slote, a good action is that which the *phonimos* would characteristically perform, from the motivations the *phronimos* would characteristically have, and from the dispositions the *phronimos* would characteristically hold. We know who the *phronimos* is because our

[17] T. Chappell. *Knowing What to Do: Imagination, Virtue, and Platonism in Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 300.

[18] R.M. Adams. *Finite and Infinite Goods* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 36.

admiration (with some reflection)[19] picks these people out for us. To clarify, exemplars can provide an important source of epistemic guidance and motivational support in a virtue ethical theory, without deriving virtues from the exemplar's excellences. Aristotle is an example of doing so. He suggests we look to exemplars for moral guidance, and he presents an independent account of virtuous actions. Kristjánsson explains it this way:

> [I]t is quite clear that Aristotle's ultimate moral foundation is his theory about 'happiness' as the ultimate good of human beings, for the sake of which they do all other things. And when he discusses moral conflicts, he does not simply tell us to watch how the *phronimos* does things and follow him blindly; rather he offers specific moral arguments as guidance…The *phronimos* knows what is morally good, because he understands the intrinsic value of the virtues, not merely because he has been initiated (and can help initiate others) into a specific moral practice.[20]

Aristotle has an account of the virtues independent of exemplars. Virtues are those qualities that enable us to fulfill our end well, and this end is *eudaimonia*, or flourishing in accordance with reason. The role of the *phronimos* is to serve as a heuristic for figuring out how to be virtuous in a given circumstance. A virtuous person can teach us a lot about the virtues and can even reveal to us virtues we were not previously aware of, and exemplars are invaluable in modeling how to navigate different situations excellently. But he or she is not also the source of these virtues, or the foundational basis for determining the boundaries of these virtues.

Like Aristotle, and contra Zagzebski, I have a separate account of normativity, and this is because my intuitions about how we regard exemplars in their relation to

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[19] In Chapter Five, I challenge Zagzebski's confidence in reflective admiration as an adequate means to identify virtues, in part because children, who are most impacted by exemplars, are largely incapable of the kind of reflection needed to assess the objects of their admiration.

[20] Kristján Kristjánsson, "Emulation and the use of role models in moral education," *Journal of Moral Education* 35, no. 1 (2006): 37-49.

moral knowledge conflicts with an agent-based approach. When we admire someone, we admire them under the aspect of good—that is, as being a good instance of some quality. Sometimes it can take a bit of reflection to recognize what quality it is, particularly when we are young and morally inarticulate. But, in my interactions with a person who is exemplary in honesty, there is some independent account of honesty at play, to which the exemplar is accountable. If I later notice this exemplar tells a white lie, this will inform my understanding of the *person*'s lack of virtue, rather than the *virtue*'s lack of consistency. The independent standard of virtue has primacy as a grounding relation for the behavior, rather the person's expression of the virtue.

Like Aristotle, my normative account is also *eudaimonistic*, which is a common view. Virtues are those qualities that permit agents to flourish. But the range of possibilities for what constitutes flourishing varies widely. Sarah Broadie writes that "classifying a theory as '*eudaimonist*' makes a formal claim, leaving open the theory's substantial specification of *eudaimonia*."[21] For hedonists, *eudaimonia* consists in pleasure, and for contemporary natural scientists, it might consist in adaptive potential, including lifespan and procreation. For Christians, *eudaimonia* may consist in living in accordance with God's will for one's life or having knowledge of God. *Eudaimonia* can be entirely egoistic in its character or incorporate the collective flourishing of others. It can also be evaluated on a life-death scale or include the afterlife, for those who believe in one. And *eudaimonia* can be cast in vocational terms. For example, an Olympian's flourishing will look different than a chef's flourishing.[22] It is a nearly impossible task to

[21] S. Broadie. "Eudaimonism." *Oxford Classical Dictionary*. Web.

[22] Kristján Kristjánsson, *Flourishing as the Aim of Education* (London: Routledge, 2020), 9.

create wide consensus about what flourishing entails in a pluralistic society, and this is a problem because a different set of virtues follows from the account of *eudaimonia* undertaken.

One common tactic taken to create consensus among *eudaimonistic* accounts is to suggest that we probe "recent empirical findings about what makes people flourish or flounder," as Kristján Kristjánsson writes in *Aristotelian Character Education*.[23] If we can objectively identify makes us flourish, we can ask which virtues follow from that. But Christian Miller points out that empirical findings are not themselves value-neutral. "The findings themselves require background normative assumptions to interpret them…[such as whether] helping other people is good or whether positive affect contributes to a good life."[24]

Since my project here regards virtue development in the educational context, my account of flourishing is local and place-based, in schools. So, I need not perform the difficult task of establishing a unique account of what *eudaimonia* entails in general terms, outside of an institution.[25] Rather, I will suggest that schools craft their mission statements in such a way that they propose an account of flourishing for the student body. Most schools write these statements. However, the statements are often vague and unthoughtful, then are set aside in the actual process of educating. There is often no real

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[23] Kristján Kristjánsson, *Aristotelian Character Education*, 102.

[24] C. Miller. "On Kristjánsson on Aristotelian Character Education." *Journal of Moral Education* 45, no. 4 (2016): 490-501.

[25] To clarify, this does not make me a conventionalist. I am personally committed to a Thomist account of *eudaimonism*. I am just bracketing the broader question because I needn't answer it to structure a virtue curriculum in local schools. Furthermore, in not answering the broader question of what is good *simpliciter*, I am maintaining an account of virtue pedagogy compatible with different communities' accounts of flourishing. This is an asset of my account.

implementation plan for how to shape learners in accordance with a school's mission statement, such that, if students are formed in a certain way throughout their educations, this formation is accidental to their time at school, rather than managed in accordance with the mission statement. Ideally, a strong mission statement will include goals of citizenship, community, and character—a type of vision-casting for the kinds of students and student culture the school hopes to develop. It will include theological commitments (if there are any) and what it hopes students will be able to do. (e.g. Our school aims to develop students who can reason well among those with whom they disagree. Our school aims to cultivate active devotional lives in our students and intends to teach them how to honor God with their work.) These mission statements will be informed by a number of different sources—consensus and community reasoning about what would constitute flourishing for its graduates, evaluations of other school communities and the sorts of students they produce, and discussions of local values, such as theological and civic commitments. It may seem strange that an account of flourishing would draw on community reasoning in this way, but this is how Aristotle proceeded, too. He considered different candidates for the good life that other people had proposed (wealth, power, etc.) and arrived at something more robust. This is the sort of messy vision-casting school founders should do together. Then, there should be an action plan implemented (ideally in accordance with the stages I lay out in Chapter Seven) to inculcate traits toward these ends.

One effective way to encourage students and teachers to take seriously the institutional standards of flourishing is to establish an honor code that supports these standards. An honor code can remind students of the character vision of the institution

and reinforce virtues in practical ways that impact the daily lives of students and teachers. For example, students might sign their names on the tops of their quizzes in collective agreement not to cheat. If the code is "strongly embedded in the student culture" and not mere "window dressing," it can be effective in deterring actions like cheating behavior.[26] By enforcing an honor code, students are reinforced for performing good actions and are held accountable for performing bad actions like cheating, lying, and otherwise departing from institutional norms. The literature is mixed as to whether students from honor code institutions are better positioned for virtues post-graduation (such as whether they cheat less in the workforce), so I cannot speak with empirical confidence about character development long-term using this strategy. But it ultimately cannot hurt the cause of character education to structure a school such that good habits are reinforced and students are mutually accountable to one another, in accordance with an institutional vision of flourishing.

There are several difficulties about what I have just proposed regarding mission statements. One is that creating a thick, value-laden mission statement is often easier to do in a setting for which students can opt in or opt out of the school, like private, magnet, or charter schools. That way, a certain account of flourishing will not be forced on families that do not agree with the way human ends are being portrayed. Second, a school may not realize how thick the mission statement should be. An example is a Christian school where I used to teach that was founded prior to a time when a certain culture war became exceedingly heated in local churches. The school was founded with a fairly

[26] D. McCabe, L. Treviño, and K. Butterfield. "Cheating in Academic Institutions: A Decade of Research." *Ethics and Behavior* 11 (2001): 219-232, 224. As found in C. Miller. "Honesty, Cheating, and Character in College." *The Journal of College and Character*. Special Issue on Moral Character. (2013): 213-222.

unspecific mission statement pertaining to Christian devotion, since the founders and inaugural families were in consensus about the sort of school they wanted. But, a few years down the road, with a larger student body and less cultural consensus overall, the school struggled with how to take a stance on the issue. The school was pressed to become more lenient regarding the issue, so as not to intrude upon the liberties of its existing students. If the founders had possessed the foresight to anticipate the culture war in a growing student body, they may have made the mission statement narrower or more explicit regarding the issue, for good or for ill.

These sorts of institutional struggles are not always avoidable by shifting the language around in the school's mission statement. Mission statements will always involve families making certain compromises regarding private convictions so as not to exclude too many people from the school. This may actually be a good thing, for three reasons. First, to learn among those with whom you disagree about some things can be a pedagogically valuable experience. Consensus can lead students to become complacent reasoners. It does not permit practice in either extending charity to those with whom you disagree or provide an occasion to cultivate fair-minded reasoning. Clearly, too much disagreement is not helpful, especially early in a learner's formation. This is because, if there is not enough held in common among learners, it can become a practical challenge to build community among them. It can also be disorienting for students to repeatedly engage in disputations regarding beliefs, particularly early in their lives when they lack the intellectual resources to adequately participate in these conversations. But, some disagreement, particularly when raised in the later stages of learning, presses learners to engage with the reasons for particular positions, and this is valuable.

Second, virtues are such that certain sensitive issues can be bracketed in classroom conversations. For instance, I can teach a student a great deal about justice without taking a stance on a particular social issue in that domain. An example is a teacher whose church background disallows women from serving as priests. The teacher need not raise this issue in teaching about justice, or, if she does, it can be framed in such a way that a range of positions is presented, and learners are encouraged to speak to their parents and pastors about where they stand on the issue. This strategy (presenting a range of positions on an issue, without also paternally advising the students) will need to be adjusted based on the age and maturity levels of the students. It may be inappropriate altogether to raise sensitive issues around younger students, but older high school students can be presented with a range of views and the reasons behind them, and have fruitful conversations about them. As a reminder, virtues are not just inculcated against the will of students. Students need to actively participate in virtue acquisition, increasingly so as they mature. Thus, having the space to deliberate about what thoughts and actions virtues include and exclude is an important (albeit sometimes delicate) part of the educational process.

A final thought about bracketing, or selectively including and excluding, sensitive issues in virtue education is this: In general, the expectation should be that character work starts at home, continues at school, and is finished at home. In some cases, it is not an ideal scenario to rely on the initiative of parents, since many will not follow through. However, even if sensitive issues of character development are bracketed at times for parents to follow up, and parents fail to do so, a great deal of moral learning can still

occur in the classroom to equip students to engage these issues for themselves, much more so than if moral development were just skipped entirely to avoid conflict.

The third reason why some amount of institutional disagreement is tolerable is that, practically, there seems to be no better option. The alternative to compromising in certain ways is the Benedict option[27]—withdrawing from school culture entirely. This will not appeal to many people, both because it is a serious undertaking for caretakers to take on the task of educating for themselves and because there are benefits to learning in a collective context. If having a fine-tuned consensus regarding what flourishing involves is given priority (or if the school options available do not reflect anything close to resembling a family's values), parents have the option to keep a learner home. But if the collective dimension of character formation is important on balance, the learner will need to be prepared at home to handle departures from what the family perceives as an appropriate end.

So my prescription for virtue education is this: (1) Take seriously the task of mission statement construction in accordance with a community vision of flourishing. (2) Figure out which character traits follow from this mission statement. (3) Develop an implementation plan to cultivate these traits. There is more license to develop thick, value-laden accounts of flourishing in private institutions, but even public school mission statements can be refined to have more meaningful content and execution. Having a plan

[27] The Benedict option is a strategy popularized by Rod Dreher, ostensibly as a reflection of Benedict of Nursia's self-removal from society and creation of monastic communities as a type of protection against a hostile culture. Those who advocate the Benedict option believe that it is no longer feasible to be a faithful Christian in our Western cultural context. Instead, they suggest Christians remove themselves from culture and create their own.

in place is better than what we often have now—vague mission statements with no substantial connection between mission and curriculum.

Thus far in my treatment of virtues, I have discussed the ways in which virtues are connected to different normative systems and how we know which acts are good ones. I described possibilities for a *eudaimonist* account of virtues, and I explained how to construct an institutional *telos* in a school—a thick mission statement—from which virtues can be derived and included in the curriculum. This is a process rife with difficulties, but it is also an indispensable process if virtue education is going to be part of the curriculum. In what follows, I describe what virtues consist in.

Earlier in this section, I alluded to the place (or lack of place) of motivation in Julia Driver's account. Driver's position is an uncommon view. While there are many competing accounts of what a moral virtue consists of, most accounts include appropriate motivation as a necessary condition of virtue. The inclusion of motivation reflects a common intuition about what a virtue is. Most of us, upon discovering that a seemingly generous person consistently acts this way out of a narcissistic hero complex, would consider this unsuitable motivation a disqualifier for the virtue, however consistent the "generous" actions are. Likewise, I may refrain from stealing when the opportunity presents itself, not because I am an honest person but because of my ennui or laziness. Most people would agree that I ought not be labeled as honest, since my internal character does not appropriately support the virtue.

Two examples of motivational accounts are as follows. First, Nancy Snow considers virtue a form of social intelligence distinguished from other kinds of social intelligence by its strong motivational component—being motivated for the well-being of

others.[28] Another example is that, while the virtues as skills or skill-like literature has received criticism by Zagzebski and others for lacking motivation, a component they deem critical for virtue,[29] Matt Stichter and Julia Annas argue that skills typically do have a motivational profile. A person developing a skill has the drive to aspire.[30] They argue that, likewise, a suitable motivation is a feature of moral virtues.

For Aristotle, a suitable motivation is described in two ways—an action's being done for its own sake or for the sake of kalon (the noble).[31] Actions done for their own sake bear this quality of nobility, or moral fineness.[32] Moreover, performing an action "for its own sake" is descriptive of how we act in a post-deliberative state, enjoying the action for itself in accordance with nobility, whereas, if I were actively choosing an action, I would be consciously motivated by the noble.[33] Still, whether and how kalon adequately characterizes our moral motivations,[34] and what exactly "fineness" or "nobility" consists in, are debates in the literature.

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[28] N. Snow. *Virtues as Social Intelligence: An Empirically Grounded Theory* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 86-87.

[29] L. Zagzebski, *Virtues of the Mind* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 115.

[30] M. Stichter. "Virtue as a Skill." *The Oxford Handbook of Virtue*, edited by N.E. Snow (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 69.

[31] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1115b12, 1116b3, 1117b9; 1117b17, 1122b6.

[32] C. Korsgaard. "From Duty and For the Sake of the Noble: Kant and Aristotle on Morally Good Action." *Kant on Emotion and Value* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 33-68.

[33] See Chapter Three, where I describe three different phases of moral development.

[34] For example, there is a way of characterizing an action as "for the noble" which sounds almost like acting from duty. (e.g. I am honest from and in accordance with nobility.) Indeed, this seems to be how Kant appropriates *kalon* for his own ethics (although his use of the word may just be a rhetorical flourish, like his use of sublimity, and not actually be descriptive of moral duty). Conversely, Aristotle describes nobility as a kind of moral quality that is descriptive of good actions. We act in *recognition* of actions as bearing this quality, and subsequently desire them. The action that is *kalon* appeals to the virtuous person.

In Chapter One, I introduced my positive account of virtues, for which I named appropriate moral motivations as a constitutive feature. Following Christian Miller, I argued that virtues are enduring global[35] dispositional character traits that meet a given standard, which would "typically if not always include some form of virtuous motivation, virtuous thought, and virtuous action, at least in situations where the appropriate choice is easy to discern[36] and the costs of acting virtuously are low for the person in question."[37] Furthermore, virtues come in degrees. One can be more or less virtuous, while still meeting the standard of having one. My main departure from Miller's account is with regard to this point. I argued that strong mixed traits and weak virtues are not a difference in kind but degree. Still, it is useful to stipulate virtues from non-virtues, however hazy the distinctions, and I will do so throughout this project.

One question I have not addressed specifically is the nature of motivations on this account. Namely, is there a single motivation, like the well-being of others, or some sort of common moral quality descriptive of appropriate motivations (be it *kalon* or something else)? On my account, there are many motivations suitable for a virtuous action,

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[35] A "global" character trait is one for which we consistently act well in nearly every aspect of life. An example is being honest when I pay my taxes, tell stories, log students' grades, when my husband asks me if his tie matches his jacket, and etcetera. "Global" is contrasted with "local." A "local" trait is one that is narrowly expressed or limited by context. e.g. I am only honest when I pay my taxes.

[36] An example of a situation in which the appropriate choice was not easy to discern was in the Milgram shock experiment. The subjects struggled with whether they were obligated to keep obeying the experimenter, or whether they should help the other participant. Another example is Oedipus. He was unable to see his own situation clearly enough to respond in accordance with good character. An example of a situation in which the costs of acting virtuously are high for the person in question include being held at gunpoint or being otherwise coerced into doing the wrong thing, such as when standing up for what is right would come at great cost to one's reputation.

[37] C. Miller. *Character and Moral Psychology*, 141.

depending on the virtue in question and the particular circumstances.[38] For example, I might be honest on a quiz out of solidarity with my classmates, a sense of loyalty to my professor, a sense of fairness, or a desire to represent my actual best in my work. And I might donate to a local charity because I believe in the inherent dignity of all people, because I want to steward my own resources well, or because I take pleasure in serving others in whatever way I can. All of these are examples of appropriate virtue-supporting motivations for action. In Chapter Three, I discuss deliberation regarding moral motivations, and the place of reason in the acquisition of virtues.

I have two further notes about motivation. First, while these reasons may be explicitly entertained early in virtue development, later in development we are more likely to act from well-ordered emotions—desiring the right things, at the right times, and in the right ways—rather than from reasons. In Chapter Five, I address Zagzebski's claim that the right emotions qualify as sufficient motivations for virtue. I argue that this is true, insofar as these emotions were at some point ordered by reasons. Otherwise, someone might happen to have a natural disgust response to a lack of fairness (as children and bonobos often do), and this would be a sufficient qualifier for the virtue. The acquired character of moral virtue asks more of a motivation than that it happens to accord with good reasons by habit or nature. Second, and also in Chapter Five, I address the fact that acting in *imitation* of exemplars is also an insufficient motivation for virtue. This is a developmental stage prior to possession of a mature virtue. We still need to take ownership for the action ourselves.

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[38] Christian Miller defends a pluralistic theory of motivations, too, arguing that egoistic motives are incompatible with honesty but that a number of possible motivations support the virtue. See C. Miller. "Motivation and the Virtue of Honesty: Some Conceptual Requirements and Empirical Results." *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*. Special Issue on Character (2020): 1-17.

(1-b) A Hexis of the Soul, Concerning Choice. In this section, I address two final features of dispositional moral traits relevant to the questions of moral development I am asking in this project. The first is how my account is positioned relative to Aristotle's account of virtuous dispositions. The second is the importance of *phronesis* in virtue development.

First, Aristotle calls virtue *hexis prohairetike*—an active disposition in accordance with free, deliberative choice.[39] As I have described it, so far my account is consistent with this definition. First, I emphasized that having a virtue means being disposed to think and act in the right ways in situations for which that virtue is relevant. For example, that a virtue is a *hexis* (dispositional) does not mean that I am always acting courageously but that I would be disposed to be courageous in most situations for which the virtue applies. Second, I emphasized that acquiring a virtue involves taking ownership for an action, not just copying an action, or acting in a given way because of my nature or habituation, or because I am manipulated into doing so.

Aristotle describes how we have deliberative moments (*prohairesis*) when we freely recognize the right choice, or choose to act in accordance with a virtue, to enforce our habits or to change course and forge new habits. For example, I might have a personal reckoning when I decide that being honest is better than being dishonest, even though dishonesty is an available option to me. This is a decisive moment in my moral life because a *prohairetic* choice is one which is my own, rather than one I have inherited or been heteronomously formed to make. After choosing, I can develop momentum around that choice such that it becomes easier or more automatic to do, and I can act from

[39] For a fuller treatment of *prohairesis*, see Chapter Three.

well-formed emotions, rather than from reasons. This is a fairly tidy story—with pre-deliberative, deliberative, and post-deliberative stages of virtue development. But on the account of virtues I have just proposed, the stages are a bit more muddled than Aristotle describes because we are not forming a single active disposition (*hexis*) but several context-sensitive dispositions (*hexes*) pertaining to the same character trait. This means our moral development will include many of these little *prohairetic* decision points and will involve updates to our desires and motivations throughout the process of developing a virtue as well. The consequence of this theoretical point for moral learning by way of exemplars is that the active deliberative work of aretaic formation is ongoing. This means that pointed discussions about moral reasons for actions will benefit a learner throughout his life, not just when she reaches a stage of rational development such that she is capable of choosing for herself, but throughout adulthood as well. I unpack this more in Chapters Three through Six.

Second, *phronesis* (practical wisdom) is of central importance in the acquisition of moral virtues. This is because what temperance, charity, and honesty require of us varies in relation to the context in which they appear. For example, there is no script or hard rules to follow—such as to always eat quantity *e* to be temperate—since *e* might be celery or chocolate cake, eaten after great physical exertion or after sitting on the couch. Temperance looks different in each case. Context-sensitivity is part of virtue acquisition, so *phronesis* is beneficial. *Phronesis* is also integral to managing reliability concerns for virtue. Zagzebski describes how we do not just need the right motivation for virtue but also "reliable success in bringing about that end."[40] The intuition is that, if a person

[40] L. Zagzebski. *Virtues of the Mind* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008), 443.

strongly desired to be generous, but failed in most of her attempts to be so successfully, we would struggle to call her generous. However, if she were practically wise, as well as rightly motivated, she would be more reliable, or better able to secure the end in question.

It seems clear that there are some situations for which a reliability constraint might obscure the presence of a virtue, such as in the case of Oedipus, who was in a difficult situation that, frankly, was difficult to navigate. He was unreliable in his character, but any other person in his circumstance, however virtuous, likely would have been, too. Still, in general, including a reliability condition for moral virtue captures the consistency and successful practice of virtue. Practical wisdom regarding a given virtue makes the agent more reliable, or likely to achieve virtuous ends in the way Zagzebski describes. In Chapter Three, I expand on the role of *phronesis* in virtue development and describe how exemplars can provide epistemic guidance relevant to our development of practical wisdom.

(2) Different Types of Aretaic Exemplars

In this section, I examine different kinds of aretaic exemplars—those who serve a role in demonstrating and motivating moral development in us. Three of these kinds are (a) heroes, (b) saints, and (c) sages. I draw on Linda Zagzebski's great work on exemplars for definitions here, with a few revisions. I call the fourth category of exemplars (d) mundane exemplars, which includes everyone else who serves this role in our lives.

In (e), I introduce new research, directed by Erika Carlson, a psychologist at the University of Toronto, about the qualities of aretaic exemplars. On the basis of a combination of self-reporting, other-reporting, and in-lab behavior, Carlson identifies

moral exemplars and examines them on several loci, including likeability and respect, emotional well-being, self-control, and whether they act from reasons or from intuitions. I ask about the coincidence of high likeability and virtue, and I examine potential repercussions of using popularity as a social heuristic for identifying virtue. My intuition is that *some* exemplars should be difficult people rather than likeable if they are to motivate the right actions because the firm scruples of certain exemplary people are not always crowd-pleasers. A second, uncontroversial intuition is that many popular people are not very virtuous. On this basis, the coincidence of popularity and exemplarity is a bit puzzling, if not worrisome. In this section, I also examine Carlson's finding that moral exemplars seem to act from intuitions, rather than from reasons, and ask whether and how this supports or challenges the virtue model I proposed.

(2.a.) Heroes. If I were to coarsely divide the three traditional categories of exemplars in terms of classical motivations for action, they would be as follows: (a) Heroes are marked by *thumos*, the honor-loving part of the soul. Heroes typically possess virtues such as fortitude and fidelity and are shame-avoidant. For Aquinas, a hero acts from the irascible appetite, or appetite for the arduous good. (b) Saints are marked by the appetitive part of the soul, since they are known for their love and piety. Aquinas calls this the concupiscible appetite, or affection for the good. (c) Sages are marked by reason, since they possess the intellectual virtues and model either *sophia* or *phronesis*, or both.

I say these categories are coarsely divided because it is only rhetorically useful to speak of one apart from the others in order to clarify their objects. In reality, reason superintends the appetites, and the appetites orient reason. For example, the concupiscible appetite is perfected by reason in subordination to its proper object, God. Likewise,

thumos, when it is not serving its role as "reason's auxiliary,"[41] can make a person act like a tyrant, or some type of beast. Still, in general, (a) a hero will be motivated by honor, (b) saints will be known by their loves, and (c) sages will be marked by reason.

Linda Zagzebksi defines a hero as a person who "takes great risk to achieve a moral end, often the end of helping others in distress."[42] My own definition includes these heroes but also those who rise to a great challenge, regardless of whether they come to someone's aid. For example, in Joseph Campbell's *The Hero's Journey*, he writes about the monomyth—the hero with a thousand faces. Heroes go on great journeys and pass through a number of trials. In many cases, they are not embarking on their journey in order to help people. They might go on a coming-of-age type of adventure, for which it is still natural to call this person a hero and to learn from him or her as he or she overcomes these trials.

Certain athletic masters also qualify as heroes, and they are certainly not helping others in distress. For example, free-solo climber Alex Honnold ascended Yosemite's El Capitan rock face in September of 2018. Free soloists do not use ropes. Honnold became an instant hero to many and was featured in a film documenting his feat. The climb did not help anyone, least of all Honnold. He imperiled his own life for curiosity's sake, and the stunt was an imprudent use of his talents. While I personally do not consider Alex Honnold a hero, many people do. They draw on his courage when they conquer their own metaphorical rock faces.

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[41] Rachana Kamtekar, *Plato's Moral Psychology: Intellectualism, the Divided Soul, and the Desire for Good*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 169.

[42] L Zagzebski, *Exemplarist Moral Theory*, 1.

On the occasion of evaluating Honnold, an important question is whether we should admire people who are structurally heroic but oriented toward the wrong ends—like fame, absurdity (in Honnold's case, by his own admission), or the approval of others. Virtues are teleological, oriented by their ends, as I described regarding different accounts of flourishing. To have a virtue, a person needs to act for the right motivations. An example is that we might not consider a person generous if he or she is giving gifts in order to win favors or to reap rewards in the afterlife. It seems many athletes have structural virtues, or virtues divorced from their proper *telos*. For example, in the classical tradition, athletes are said to be oriented toward glory.[43] In today's culture, athletes are often set up as heroes, and many people do admire them. While it would be fruitful for children to emulate an athlete's discipline and certain qualities that they have (perseverance, determination), we likely do not also want children to be glory-seeking. So, there is a question of whether we should consider athletes appropriate exemplars.

My answer is that it depends. Not all athletes are driven by glory or shame-avoidance. Some have, if not virtues, at least strong mixed traits of fortitude, perseverance, practical wisdom, and patience, among other admirable character traits. This is because these qualities are constructive towards the end of performance goals. For example, perseverance may be a good quality for humans in general, but having that quality is also conducive to performing well in the athletic arena so it is reinforced by the structure of the competition. Furthermore, insofar as an athlete demonstrates or motivates us in the development of virtues, then he or she is playing the role of aretaic exemplar. Athletes in particular can be helpful exemplars for demonstrating a critical aspect of

[43] Diogenes Laertius. "Protagoras." *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*.

virtues—that they are developed by practice. The process of development an athlete undergoes is available to us in our imagination of what it means to be an athlete. We know they train, and this can encourage us to approach our own character development in the same way, particularly if these two worlds (virtue-development and athletic skills-development) are explicitly bridged in some way by coaches or educators. I can see how exposure to an athlete early in our lives would make us more receptive to notions of moral "training" and to a practice-based approach to character. In fact, this appears to be one of the reasons Plato and Aristotle prescribed gymnastics at the start of an education—forming a learner into a rhythm of daily disciplines so he was prepared to be a student.

As I stated earlier, classical global virtues like Aristotle describes, or moral irreproachability, are too high of requirements for our aretaic exemplars. Sometimes people who serve the role of exemplar for us have weak or moderate virtues, so they meet a certain standard of being disposed to act and think in the right ways. Still, they may fail to act in accordance with a virtue in certain situations, or they may be disposed to perform a good action but from an unsuitable motivation. Often in observing a person, it is not clear what their motivations and goals are anyway, so if the motivation is the wrong one, we may not know. For this reason, it seems that, in the same way that we can learn about generosity from the person who is being generous in order to reap future rewards, we can learn about perseverance from the athlete who is doing so in order to see himself on television. But with this concession come concerns. In Chapter Five, I assess Zagzebski's claim that part of what we emulate in a seemingly virtuous person is what we perceive as the person's motivation for that good action. That is, our imitation is generally not just superficial copycatting; we also imitate the perceived reasons for the

action. If this is true about our emulation (and I argue in Chapter Five that it is true in many cases), then it is important for parents and coaches to start conversations about why we develop certain habits or qualities. Educators should explicitly address appropriate motivations for actions. In the athletic context, the specific worry is that an athletic hero might make personal glory look appealing. Because of exposure to an athletic hero, personal glory might be seen as a fitting goal for an admirer over and above higher goals (like the pursuit of God's glory or the love of others), and the admirer will emulate this motivation. This is a valid concern, but it is not a concern that differs from concerns we should have for any other exemplar. We should always ask whether the direction the exemplar is facing is the direction we also want to move in.

I have two final notes about heroes, relevant to their role in our virtue formation. The first is that heroism comes in many forms. There is a range of ways in which virtues relevant to heroism (such as bravery and fidelity) are expressed in different contexts, and there are many different kinds of heroes. An example of a hero I supplied earlier is Beowulf, who comes to the aid of King Hrothgar and the Danes, even though doing so comes at a great cost to himself. Another example is Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a German theologian whose staunch opposition to the Nazis landed him in prison and ultimately the gallows. What bravery required in each situation was different, and bravery will require something different from us in our own contexts. Virtues are situation-dependent, in that they demand different things from us depending on the context, so having exposure to a range of exemplars on the same virtue can shape our imaginations for how to enact a virtue ourselves.

My final note is an observation Schindler, Windrich, and Menninghaus make about heroes—that they can be "sources of personal and collective meaning that make people want to stand united behind a common cause."[44] An example of this is the legendary leader of Camelot, King Arthur, whose memory is a part of the cultural identity of the English. Throughout the centuries, there have been many political disagreements in England, but there is a common regard and sense of loyalty to the England Arthur represents. In the United States, there is a similar regard for the leadership of George Washington and the sense of legitimacy his leadership gave the presidential office. While King Arthur is a mythical hero and Washington a historical one, in both cases, they are sources of collective meaning, as Schindler, Windrich, and Menninghaus describe.

Interestingly, the fact that heroes sometimes serve as symbolic figures, representing a "common cause" or serving as a figurehead of "personal and collective meaning," can be problematic if their significance or meaning makes us elevate them to loftier heights than they actually warrant. In chapter one, I addressed ways in which the reasons-responsiveness of our admiration can be impeded by commitments to a common cause that is embodied in a person. An example is a political candidate whom you admire, not so much because of his praiseworthy qualities, but because of all he represents to you. This seems to be very much part of the "Trump phenomenon"—that, somehow, the President is a figurehead who represents an ostensibly "great" America of the past ("make America great again")—such that people readily excuse his misbehaviors for what he represents. In such cases, the fact that an exemplar is tethered to a deeper

[44] Schindler, I., Zink, V., Windrich, J., & Menninghaus, W. "Admiration and Adoration: Their Different Ways of Showing and Shaping Who We Are." *Cognition and Emotion*. 27, no. 1 (2013): 85-118, 103.

level of personal and collective meaning can make us less circumspect and more vulnerable to a person who might not deserve our appreciative perceptions and imitation. If Schindler *et al* are right, then this worry is one particularly relevant to heroes.

(2.b.) Saints. A saint is one who is "both morally and spiritually exemplary."[45] There are two preliminaries to my account of saints: First, there are other faith traditions aside from Christianity that name saints or saint-like figures. In Islam, a *wali* is a helper or a friend of God. In the Hindu faith, a *rishi* is a saint-like person with divine knowledge. Buddhists also have exemplars who have achieved nirvana, and they are treated as saints of the faith. Among the variations of saints, what is exemplary about them differs. *Rishis*, for example, are called saints but seem more like sages because of their great knowledge. In this chapter, for the sake of clarity and to avoid making claims that misrepresent other traditions, I focus exclusively on Christian saints. Second, by "saint," I mean something narrower than the set of Christian believers. On one hand, everyone who is a Christian believer is a saint because they are the beloved of Christ.[46] For Aquinas, this means that they are infused with the theological virtues—faith, hope, and love—and they have a friendship with God, through Christ. But while all Christians should be Christ-like or be moving in that direction, not all saints are morally exemplary.

By saint, I mean to designate two groups of people: First, I mean to include the set of Christian saints who have been named by the Catholic and Orthodox churches. Examples of these include Mary, the mother of Jesus, Thomas Aquinas, Francis of Assisi,

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[45] L. Zagzebski, *Exemplarist Moral Theory*, 1, 23-24.

[46] Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 2 Corinthians 1:1; Colossians 1:26; Ephesians 6:18; Romans 8:27

and Mother Theresa. Second, I mean to designate Christians who are spiritual exemplars, like Jenny, the 80-year-old woman in my church who knows all of our names, prays constantly, and has a generosity of spirit I have never encountered in any other person. The first set of saints I included is a group of people the church has named and drawn attention to as spiritual exemplars. The second set of saints I named are *de facto* spiritual exemplars. It is just the case that exemplary Christians among us, like Jenny, model love of God and love of others well. We look to them for guidance on how to live a life of faith. A second clarification is that, while Zagzebski says a saint is both morally and spiritually exemplary, we usually do not refer to saints as people who are (a) spiritually exemplary with (b) the addition of some non-specific moral excellence, like bravery. As I said earlier in terms of soul types, saints are known for their loves—generally love of God and of others. Their saintly excellence is their love. They might have an additional excellence beside their love, like bravery, as martyrs certainly do. But their motivation for action is their love for God and people, and this characterizes them primarily.

I would be remiss not to address a final feature of moral saints argued by Susan Wolf. She writes that they are "dull-witted, humorless, and bland"—too preoccupied with doing good to be interesting or think about anything else.[47] My initial response is that Wolf seems to understand sainthood in a limited, Kantian, duty-bound sense, where goodness is at odds with pleasure. Many of the examples of people we call saints—St. Francis of Assisi and St. Augustine of Hippo—are not joyless and solely preoccupied

[47] Susan Wolf, "Moral Saints." *The Journal of Philosophy*, 79, no. 8 (1982), 422.

with moralizing or obeying purity rules. Rather, in St. Francis' case, he found "perfect joy" in serving Christ.[48]

That said, while categorical "humorlessness" is not the right description of saints, I do think Wolf is recognizing something important about Christianity, albeit in an incomplete way. Jesus was called the "man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief,"[49] and saints are supposed to be Christ-like. Furthermore, it is clear that at least martyrs among saints have sacrificed their own flourishing (in worldly terms) for the sake of the cross. It would be easy to look at the Christian faith from the outside and to characterize it as sober and serious, since there is available evidence to support this claim. Disciples are called to "deny [themselves] and take up the cross"[50] and to "work out their own salvation with fear and trembling."[51] At the very least, one might argue that these directives seem un-humorous.

That said, Wolf's recognition about humorlessness in the Christian saint is incomplete in that the sorrow of the Gospel is not the end of the story. "Glorious and inexpressible joy" is.[52] Furthermore, the self-denial of Matthew 16 is not ultimately self-effacing; it is followed by renewed purpose and vocation, and a richer life than we had previously. So, yes, there is sadness, but there is also deep joy. On balance, the Christian

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[48] Bishop K. Rhoades, "The Joy of Saint Francis." *Saint Francis' Little Assisi*. 2015. Web <https://www.francislittleassisi.com/the-joy-of-saint-francis>

[49] Isaiah 53:3.

[50] Matthew 16:24-26.

[51] Philippians 2:12.

[52] 1 Peter 1:8.

story seems to provide a more solid ground for levity, purpose, and joy than other systems of belief because a saint is secure in the perfect love of Christ.

Moreover, on Kierkegaard's view, humor is a "fundamental part of the Christian life,"[53] and "Christianity is the most humorous view of life in world-history."[54] His assessment is based (a) first in observations he makes of human nature more generally—that we see and appreciate many instances of trivial and non-trivial incongruities. (b) Second, in the religious case, this assessment is connected to irony, or to the fundamental contradictions of existence. Stephen Evans writes:

> The humorist in Kierkegaard's special sense has learned to smile at the whole of life, because she has learned to smile at herself. She can see the incongruity between her ideals and her actions, the contrast between the eternal love she was created for and the feeble temporal actions through which she attempts to create and express that love. It should now be plain why humor in this deep, profound sense is so close to the religious life. The heart of the religious life is this very perception of the permanent discrepancy between ideal and actuality.[55]

For Kierkegaard, the very fact that a Christian sees these contradictions of existence clearly makes her well-positioned to appreciate humor. Her humor is refined by her knowledge of eternal love, contrasted with her own feeble actions. She can see this incongruity with clear eyes. A similar sentiment is expressed by Walker Percy regarding story-telling. He writes that an audience enjoys truth more than lies. Regarding novels, Percy writes, "Bad books always lie. They lie most of all about the human condition so that one never recognizes oneself, the deepest part of oneself, in a bad book."[56] The same

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[53] C. Stephen Evans, "Kierkegaard's View of Humor: Must Christians Always be Solemn?" Faith and Philosophy 4, no. 2 (1987): 176-186, 176.

[54] Ibid. 181.

[55] Ibid. 182.

[56] Walker Percy, *Signposts in a Strange Land* (New York: Picador, 1991). 364.

is true for good jokes. If someone is perceptive enough to see the world clearly—if she develops a clear vision because of her faith—then her humor is more honest, and she can "smile at herself."[57] There is both a certain freedom for levity in this—not taking herself too seriously—and a higher likelihood that she can make a good, honest joke.

A final consideration is that we should expect a person's humor to change through the process of sanctification, as the rest of him or her does. Consider David Brooks. American political commentator Ezra Klein recently remarked that Brooks became less funny when he converted to Christianity. According to Klein, this is because Brooks no longer participates in a certain type of satire. He used to stand above people in judgment, and now he stands below them, from a position of humility. This seems right. Again, I do not agree with Wolf's strong statement about saintly humorlessness, but certain kinds of humor are excluded because jokes should not be at odds with charity. For example, as a Christian, I should not make jokes that belittle my peers, or consider jokes that do this funny. My correction to Wolf's humorlessness critique, then, is not an agreement that saints are not funny—particularly in light of Kierkegaard's observation—but an acknowledgement that humor changes to become less malicious. Furthermore, perhaps part of the reason we do not find Brooks or other saints funny is because we are imperfect receivers of humor. For example, our culture seems to really enjoy unapologetic vulgarities, like standup comedians with crass, demeaning jokes. This does not make the authors of these jokes funny, as an objective human excellence. There is a question of audience reception that we should be asking. Maybe we and Wolf are poorly positioned

[57] Ibid. 182.

to arbitrate excellence in wittiness, and perhaps Brooks' humor has manifested in other ways we have not considered.

And lastly, I do admire saints—as have many others throughout the history of the church—so I am a counterexample to Wolf's claim about the unlikeability of saints.

(2.c.) Sages. A sage is a "wise person, whose admirable features include both moral and intellectual excellences, and sometimes spiritual excellences."[58] In my introduction, I characterized sages as virtuous in ways beyond their intellect, since it does not make sense to speak of someone as intellectually exemplary if she also has perverse appetites or ignoble ends. This would likely mean this person is not actually a sage because she lacks both (a) wisdom about what is truly valuable and (b) the practical wisdom to manage her affairs well. Still, while having *phronesis* and *sophia* are insufficient conditions for being considered a sage, sages are distinctive among exemplars for their intellectual virtues.

The concept of "sage" is a bit antiquated in our society today, where google has seemingly replaced our intellectual authorities and wisdom is a forgotten currency. It is rare that the term is actively applied, but people do speak of mentors, teachers, or masters, which capture the type of person intended for this category. Regardless, intellectual exemplars are critical for learning about the intellectual virtues, and the intellectual virtues are critical for our development of the moral virtues.

Aristotle divides the intellectual exemplars into two types—(a) the *phronimos* and (b) the *sophos*. (a) The *phronimos* is practically wise and deliberates well. He combines right thinking with action, and he is the one we are supposed to look to for guidance on

[58] L. Zagzebski, *Exemplarist Moral Theory*, 1.

how to be virtuous in a given situation.[59] The *phronimos* is described as a citizen and is characterized primarily by political activity. (b) The *sophos* is wise. He can evaluate the value of those ends, which he does as his central occupation. The *sophos* contemplates, and he seems to be devoted to pure theory. When Aristotle writes about *phronesis*, he is reasoning about constitutive goods—how to secure a certain end. When he writes of *sophia*, he is reasoning about intrinsic goods, or the values of those ends. Ideally, an intellectual exemplar will have both *phronesis* and *sophia*. Aristotle aside, it seems a *phronimos* will also need to know the values of ends in order to choose well for himself and for his city. But Aristotle seems to think the co-instantiation of these intellectual virtues is either rare or problematic. I say this because there is a tension between the earlier books of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, in which Aristotle discusses the pragmatic and the political, emphasizing the importance of *phronesis*, and Book X, where Aristotle talks about the contemplative life of wisdom, which he calls godlike, and is decidedly apolitical and impractical. Either *phronesis* and *sophia* have different objects, which are at odds, so that you mostly find wisdom in the imprudent person, or vice versa. Or, there is a living tension in the human life between these two virtues such that we struggle to attain either in full. On certain readings of Aristotle, *sophia* seems to be a greater virtue than *phronesis*, and it is more difficult for us to attain. This is because Aristotle says it is the most godlike, and we are not gods. As for *phronesis*, the moral virtues depend on this intellectual virtue in order to choose well. (There is no such dependence relation for *sophia*.) If a person is not practically wise with respect to a given virtue, then he or she cannot be morally exemplary in that respect.

[59] Ibid.

Setting Aristotle aside, I do not accept the idea of an unbridgeable chasm between two exemplar types characterized by *phronesis* and *sophia*. This is because *phronesis* also requires that we value the right ends since it is ordered toward virtues. The *phronimos* is a conduit by which we learn of good actions. Otherwise, the quality in question would be cunningness—craftiness, or a means-ends coordination that is indifferent to the value of ends—rather than *phronesis*. However, I can conceive of an exemplar being stronger in one trait than the other, so I think maintaining two types of exemplars is still worthwhile. An example is Socrates, who performs deeds like thinking in silence on a neighbor's porch while on his way to Agathon's house. Another example is a professor I know at Baylor University with great wisdom. Listening to him speak is always clarifying, and he has great theoretical knowledge. But sometimes he will call home and ask his wife, "Where am I supposed to be?" And she answers, "Home." He lacks some of the life managerial skills of a *phronimos*, and he would make a terrible politician. Furthermore, I think that if he cared more for pragmatic things, this might come at the cost of his deep intellectual work.

Additionally, I do not share Aristotle's 'pure theory, disconnected thinker' caricature of a *sophos*. First, we are all active and thus need *phronesis*. Even Socrates is thrust into the political realm throughout his life. Second, if a person is wise as to what is truly of value, then these values should transform his or her cares and impact how this person interacts as a citizen. I do not think *sophia* can be neatly decoupled from *phronesis* in the human life.

A final note is that Zagzebski says a sage has both intellectual and moral excellences. The moral condition is important because this excludes people like sophists,

who reason well but toward the wrong ends. Furthermore, it seems that there are some virtues (fairmindedness, justice, patience, charity, and etc.) that are necessary in order to be well-positioned to reason well. For example, the strawman fallacy is a flaw of reasoning that is mostly a problem of moral virtue, rather than intellectual virtue. The thinker is unjustly representing the interlocutor's position in order to knock it down more easily or to humiliate the interlocutor. Therefore, if a thinker wants to be a good reasoner, he or she has to both become an excellent thinker and a certain type of person—one willing to listen well and to engage fairly.

Unfortunately, people do often choose those who use their reason to humiliate other people or make others seem like fools to serve as their intellectual exemplars. An example is the new species of political satirists—John Oliver and Stephen Colbert. These are not appropriate sages. They might hold the right positions at times and be good thinkers, but the way they engage with others is not charitable and they would not facilitate improvements in our character.

(2.d.) Mundane Exemplars. Mundane exemplars are my catch-all category for aretaic exemplars who do not qualify as any of the first three categories of exemplars. What I mostly have in mind are the people we encounter on a regular basis, such as parents, teachers, coaches, exemplary peers, and local public officials, who play a role in forming our characters by modeling virtues (or strong mixed traits) themselves.

For heroes, saints, and sages, we often recognize them as such, and our learning from them is focused and explicit. For example, "just as Odysseus would never quit his journey, I should also persevere." But with mundane exemplars, this does not usually seem to be the case. We might not realize the ways in which we are influenced by people

we encounter every day or even understand them as exemplars. Furthermore, in the case of parents and teachers, these are not people we have any power in selecting. Our earliest influences are caregivers and teachers, who both model good (and bad) actions and also equip us (or fail to equip us) with our moral vocabularies, making explicit the principles of a good life through their own habits of attention and the things they talk about.[60] So, they are not just exemplars, but also the foundational influences in our moral lives who inform the sorts of exemplars we select in the future.

In the case of caretakers in our earliest years, it is not often our admiration that picks them out as a point of moral focus, disposing us to imitate. Rather, we imitate them because we are social learners, and they are key parts of our social contexts. However, admiration often develops toward them because of our proximity to them. In chapter one, I wrote about certain emotions that can impede the reasons-responsiveness of our admiration, and one is *storge*—familial affection. First, our love for a family member can impede our ability to see and appreciate their moral flaws. (As a general rule, this seems to be the pattern until we are teenagers; then we have a difficult time appreciating their good qualities.) Second, insofar as we feel something like admiring—or hold an immature attitude of admiration toward our caregivers—we will be largely reasons-unresponsive because children are too young to adequately respond to reasons. Childhood is a vulnerable time in that our admiration is largely non-resistant, and we are more inclined to imitate whatever is before us. In the case of a child's love for her parents, it is difficult to have the epistemic vantage to question the parents' actions as problematic. So,

[60] J. Rawls. *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press, 1999), 407-8.

the parent-child relationship is a case in which a mundane exemplar can have a tremendous impact in shaping character in good and bad ways.

On these grounds, one might ask whether early caretakers should count as exemplars, since they are not chosen by us, and we rarely reflect on their place in our moral formation.[61] Stated differently, the question is whether we should distinguish between the active work of forming moral virtues (which is something we choose to do) from the moral formation that just happens to us and we have little to say about. My response is two-fold: First, while we do not choose our parents, it is common for children to name their parents as their role models or heroes later on, once they are equipped with that vocabulary. Parents serve other roles in a child's life that are more essential (or at least more immediately related to survival)—such as feeding, clothing, and protecting—but many children also develop an appreciative perspective toward their parents, accompanied by a disposition to imitate. So, it would be inaccurate to say parents do not also serve the role of aretaic exemplar for their children.

Second, the question of our moral agency is a difficult one to answer firmly throughout the process of development, since our ability to choose for ourselves changes over time. It is unclear when exactly we begin the active work of forming our moral virtues on our own initiative, or even begin to actively participate in the processes of our moral habituation. Likely where we draw these lines varies among different children. This makes the question of personal choice in exemplar selection a difficult one. In the final chapter of my dissertation, I address these questions. Briefly, I argue that we do not often choose our early exemplars because of an inability to meaningfully do so. As we

[61] Thank you, Dr. Evans, for raising this good question.

mature, we should become increasingly better positioned to evaluate our exemplars, to choose exemplars for ourselves, and to take ownership for actions beyond imitation of those exemplars. So, yes, caretakers do serve an early role as aretaic exemplars in childhood, but as we mature and develop greater agency in our lives, we should come to play a greater role in selecting our own moral influences and reasoning about their actions.

(2.e.) Likeability and Other Qualities. In this section, I introduce new research, directed by Erika Carlson, a psychologist at the University of Toronto, about the qualities of aretaic exemplars. On the basis of a combination of self-reporting, other-reporting, and in-lab behavior, Carlson identifies moral exemplars and examines them on several loci, such as likeability and respect, emotional well-being, self-control, and whether they act from reason or intuition. In this section, (i) I first evaluate the project itself, placing it in conversation with my own, then examine three of Carlson's findings ((ii) popularity, (iii) intuitions, and (iv) purity) and ask how these findings impact our understanding of the role exemplars can play in our moral development.

(i.) The Project. Erika Carlson works in the Self-Knowledge and Interpersonal Perception (SKIP) laboratory in Ontario, where her recent projects have examined barriers to self-knowledge, social reputation, and moral self-knowledge. In her moral exemplars project, she applied her background in moral self- and social-understanding to evaluate a subset of people whom others describe as morally exceptional—who also perform up to this standard on moral tasks in the lab—to see what additional qualities seem to come along with moral exemplarity, and to see how exemplars self-describe. On

every measure, the moral exemplars (MEs) were compared against the control group of non-exemplars, which they called "average Joes."

Carlson's team define MEs as "people who consistently and frequently engage in moral acts in everyday life"—a group they operationally defined as the top 15-20 percent of moral performers from a sample about one thousand people.[62] There are a number of questions to ask of a project like this, the first being what Carlson's team defines as a "moral act." In my own psychology laboratory work at Morehead State University, when subjects are asked to describe morally good and morally bad actions, their imaginations for what might constitute "good" and "bad" actions is markedly poor. Often, they can name bad acts—disobeying a parent, stealing, etc.—which are framed in terms of transgressions, but they have a harder time naming good acts. When they do, these acts are framed as non-transgressive moments, such as not-disobeying or not-stealing. They generally do not name positive qualities, like patience, temperance, or kindness, without being primed ahead of time with these words. Our subjects lack a robust virtue and vice vocabulary beyond "good" and "bad." My concern, then, in looking at Carlson's study is how "moral acts" was introduced to participants.

Carlson's study was smartly constructed to answer this worry, since virtuous tendencies were named for the subjects, so they did not have to produce them themselves. Moreover, the set of tendencies her team selected seem fairly comprehensive, including fairness, loyalty, courage, and others. Since all exemplars were evaluated in all of these respects, with the top 15-20 percent of moral performers selected as exemplary, these

[62] E. Carlson, "Who are moral exemplars and what are they like?" Lecture. *The Beacon Project*. July 2018. Graylyn. Winston Salem, North Carolina.

exemplars would have to be generalists of moral virtues and could not have the virtue asymmetry issues I described with Beowulf and others.

Carlson's team structured her search for exemplars in this way: First, she issued a pre-sampling survey to nearly a thousand people, asking them questions about their virtuous tendencies in various situations. Because self-report is notoriously misleading, participants also had to provide the names of up to six informants who knew them quite well and in different social contexts. These informants described the potential exemplars' behaviors, various times per day for up to a week. Participants who performed in the top of the sample according to their self- and informant-reports were invited to perform a variety of in-lab assessments and experiments, as compared to a control group.

I have a number of concerns about how this project is structured. First, a self-report exemplarity measure seems troubling, even with the inclusion of informants and in-lab testing. If a person is morally excellent compared to others, she is likely also more morally sensitive by comparison and will hold herself to a higher standard than others would hold her to. This means she is less likely to self-report as exemplary. Indeed, Carlson observes that in interviews, the exemplars seem to hold themselves to a higher standard than others do, so their self-reporting of their own moral attributes might be lower than another person would report them to be. Since only those participants who self-reported as sufficiently exemplary were chosen for the second part of the experiment—i.e. the informant reports—it is possible that a number of participants may have been wrongfully excluded from the initial set. If, instead, the order of the experiment were switched so that informants were the first to report an exemplar—rather than having an exemplar self-report through a survey—then more genuine exemplars

would be passed through to the second round. Still, I do not think self-report should be done away with entirely, since this is the only measure that gives us access to moral motivations, other than what can be inferred by observation.

A second question is whether it is fair to divide groups into two discrete categories—MEs and Average Joes—when moral goodness seems to be a scalar concept. Perhaps, on Miller's account, those who qualified as exemplars passed a threshold of having strong mixed traits for a number of virtues. A final question is whether, in identifying a person as an ME in the questionnaires about the selected exemplars, informants may be positively skewed in how they subsequently represent the person's other qualities, too. This is a concern Carlson raises. An example is that if someone is considered morally exceptional, I might also label this person as smart, likeable, and popular. We begin to think of that person in an elevated way, whether or not these qualities are accurate.

These are my concerns, but, overall, Carlson's experimental design is very good. Assuming these findings adequately represent the people we often regard as MEs or select through our admiration, these are the relevant takeaways.

(ii.) Popularity. The first of Carlson's findings worth examining is the social reception of exemplars. She reports that moral exemplars are liked more and are more popular (a kind of liking, with status), and they receive higher respect scores.

On one hand, I am unsurprised to find high likeability scores for exemplars because an appreciative perspective of a person captures a type of liking.[63] However, I

[63] In Chapter Six, I examine this claim further—that admiration captures a type of liking—in reference to Alfred Archer's Value Promotion View of admiration. He argues that admiration's central motivation is to affirm what the exemplar stands for. I agree in most cases, but I name a few counterexamples.

have a few questions. First, I wonder whether categorizing a subject as an "exemplar" informed the way people answered that question, which I described as a "positive skewing" concern in the introduction to Carlson's project. Insofar as this person is good or morally important, it follows that the observer should like him or her as well. The reality may be that we feel compelled to align ourselves with that person, while not actually liking them much at all. I have a friend whom I consider an exemplar, and when she comes over, there is not a sense that, "Ah, yes, the party can start now. She has arrived." Rather, we are called to a higher standard, which I appreciate, but it can be unenjoyable in certain ways. Second, it is not clear to me that we should like all moral exemplars or consider them popular, since chances are that they do challenge us in particular ways that call us to account. Certainly this is the picture we get from Christian Scripture. We honor the prophets after they are dead but persecute them when they are alive.

It is also worth considering whether, if popularity and moral exemplarity covary, this might cause problems for us. It seems obvious that we do conflate these two qualities, perhaps not intentionally, but we do. We use popularity as a social heuristic for identifying good people. We might confuse popularity with substance and look to these people for life guidance because of an *ad populum* fallacy, wrongfully deferring to what the masses think about a person. And, in making this error, our exemplars can be a hindrance to our moral development. To be clear, I think we should cultivate positive reception of exemplars, encouraging that social attention be brought to exemplars, but we should not do the reverse—use likeability or popularity as a guide for who is good. The people we and others naturally like are not necessarily good. This also seems to point to

another potential issue with Carlson's design layout. Social recognition does not always (or even usually) neatly track morally good qualities, so the informant reports may be misleading. But to concede that we cannot recognize the virtues of others at all is to give up on measurement entirely.

A final thought is that there may be a likeability constraint on the people we hold as exemplars. In my earlier discussion of saints, I proposed the possibility of there being saintly individuals whom we should emulate, but we fail to emulate them because they are disagreeable in some way (e.g. a skin condition or a squeaky voice). These qualities may prevent us from admiring them, even though admiring them would be morally productive for us. Of course, this is not always the case. Notable counterexamples are Socrates and Jesus, who were both described as ugly. Perhaps goodness makes them more likeable, or there is something magnetic about a person who is good, as Murdoch describes. This would make the person appear more likeable despite otherwise disagreeable traits and features.

Still, in general, we seem to admire people who are more likeable and charismatic, even though these are non-moral features of the person. Or, perhaps those who are more agreeable to us tend to be more effective exemplars, with a broader reach. A likeability constraint for exemplars would explain Carlson's data for the covariance of popularity and likeability.

(iii.) Purity. One puzzle from Carlson's findings is why none of the exemplars in her experiment described themselves, or were labeled in terms of, moral purity or piety, even though these were available descriptions. I have a number of competing hypotheses for why this is the case, but none of them seem preferable to any of the others. First,

maybe there was some aspect of her project that excluded the category of saints from exemplars, such as that people did not consider saints in their initial exemplar reports. For example, saints would likely not self-define as saints and may have been excluded from the project on these terms. Self-reporting is, as I already described, is at odds with most cases of moral exemplarity. A counterexample to this is that Aristotle writes that the magnanimous man "considers himself worthy of great things and *is* worthy of them." So, at least the most extreme form of Aristotelian virtue (magnanimity) is not at odds with self-reporting as excellent. But self-reporting seems especially at odds with Christian humility, for which we understand our righteousness to be as filthy rags.[64] A second hypothesis is that maybe the sample was more liberally-minded than conservative. Jonathan Haidt describes how liberal values include harm/care, fairness/reciprocity, and ingroup/loyalty, and conservative values include these, plus authority/respect and purity/sanctity.[65] The fact that piety and purity were not included would be explained by a pool of participants who were more liberally-minded. It would also be explained if Carlson's team was more liberally-minded and biased the experiment in some way.

(3) The Fallibility of Exemplars

When I say that exemplars are fallible, I mean that "no pure exemplar exists."[66] Obvious counterexamples are that Christians will make an exception for Jesus, and the Catholics and Orthodox Christians for the Virgin Mary also. Otherwise, no one else lives a life wholly above reproach. Even those who are committed to having a good character

[64] Isaiah 64:6.

[65] J. Haidt, *The Righteous Mind* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2013).

[66] L. Zagzebski, *Exemplarist Moral Theory*, 154.

slip up periodically. Therefore, if we look to exemplars alone to teach us what is good, we are apt to be misdirected at certain times. Often, an exemplar's moral errors cause us to question the goodness of the exemplar. However, the exemplar's errors can also lead to confusion about the nature of certain virtues. For example, imagine you know someone who exemplifies honesty. Perhaps this exemplar is extraordinarily honest in nearly every respect but tends to fudge his personal records at track meets. He says he ran a sub-4:10 mile when, in fact, you know he ran a 4:15. You might incorrectly conclude that honesty does not apply in these situations, rather than concluding that he is imperfectly honest.

As I explained earlier, on the account of virtues that I align myself with, most people have mixed characters, rather than classical virtues and vices. Perhaps some of our exemplars have mature virtues (maybe up to fifteen-twenty percent of the population on the basis of Carlson's data), but many of our exemplars will fall in the mixed traits camp, hopefully closer to virtue than vice. As I stated earlier, of the four categories of exemplars, heroes are least likely to be virtuous in a well-rounded way. For example, Beowulf is not someone I would expect to be charitable or gentle. He is not someone I would seek out for a civilized conversation over tea. And this imbalance is not unique to heroes. A sage may fail to live charitably at certain times, and we might also anticipate a saint would be excellent in many ways but lack a sage's wisdom. In any case, it seems clear that we encounter heroes and other exemplars who are imperfectly good, or good only in a limited respect. In order to morally benefit from these people, it helps to be equipped with a moral vocabulary to evaluate his or her mixed traits, virtues, or vices, and to be able to isolate what traits specifically are imitable or not. A familiarity with

virtue concepts—while not a necessary condition for virtue development[67]—provides us with an independent standard for understanding what it means to be excellent in a particular way. An example is, if I know what compassion is and what it might require of me, it will be easier to evaluate an exemplar for the given trait, with more circumspection and a more focused examination of that trait. Otherwise, it can be difficult to distill a virtue from a group of imperfect instances of that virtue, enacted in fallible people, particularly if we cannot even name with that quality is.

Another critical note on the fallibility of exemplars is that sometimes fallibility is a productive feature in an exemplar. Flaws can make an exemplar relatable to us, and hence he or she seems more imitable. Furthermore, when an exemplar is perceived to be relatable, the good deeds themselves seem not as difficult or are perceived to be easier for us to sustain.

Regarding characters in the theatre, Pietro dei Conti di Calepio and Lessing argued that "the exhibition of outstanding virtue in a theatre play was more likely to demoralize and discourage the spectators, as the depicted admirable heroes were too far removed from the audience's ordinary level of experience."[68] Instead, they encouraged playwrights to construct characters with moral weaknesses so they would be relatable to us. There is research to support this idea for exemplars beyond the theatre.[69] In "Attainable and Relevant Moral Exemplars Are More Effective than Extraordinary Exemplars in Promoting Voluntary Service Engagement" a research team led by Hyemin

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[67] See Chapter Three for a fuller explanation of virtue articulation, which is a current debate.

[68] I. Schindler, "Admiration and Adoration." *Cognition and Emotion*, 27, no. 1 (2013): 103.

[69] B. Engelen, A. Thomas, A. Archer, and N. van de Ven. "Exemplars and Nudges: Combining Two Strategies for Moral Education." *Journal of Moral Education*. 47, no. 3 (2018), 346-365.

Han found this to be the case. They measured moral motivations for voluntary service activity engagement of college-aged students who were presented with exemplars of varying degrees of relatability. Hyemin's team found that attainable exemplars promote moral motivations more so than exemplars who are perceived to be too far off or morally perfect. Furthermore, participants presented with attainable exemplars were less likely to perceive their volunteer work as too demanding, so they were able to sustain it long-term.[70]

We seem to prefer reading about reasonably good people with flaws, rather than hagiographies revealing no fault. We are more drawn to imitate people we can relate to. Otherwise, we might feel *awe* rather than admiring, and not feel moved to act likewise. Or we might not find the characters interesting enough to be compelling to us.

Of course, this is a somewhat tenuous balance: We want our exemplars to be flawed enough to be relatable to us, but we also do not want learners to imitate vices or the wrong motives. Our exemplars need to be good people, who are not so good that we struggle to see them as relevant to our own lives and moral characters.

(4) The Limitations of Observation

As observers, we are limited in our ability to learn about the virtues from exemplars. To some extent, this limitation is within our control—at the level of the DA of admiration, as I described in Chapter One. We can work to develop an attitude of receptivity toward those who are morally good. We can also become more circumspect in directing our attention toward the right people and the right qualities within those people,

[70] H. Han, C. Jeong, W. Damon, and G.L. Cohen, "Attainable and Relevant Moral Exemplars Are More Effective than Extraordinary Exemplars in Promoting Voluntary Service Engagement" *Frontiers in Psychology* (2017), 7.

responding appropriately with imitation or good acts of our own. We can train ourselves to be more attentive to moral excellences.

But, on another level, we are limited as observers of virtues because virtues are not wholly observable. We might have a range of morally exceptional people before us and watch their actions, but still be in the dark about both (a) their motivations and (b) the internal work they underwent to become excellent in a given way. Because of this, it is important to have direct instruction about what a good character is and what virtues require of us, in addition to our exposure to exemplars. What I have in mind are discussions that explicitly name and define what the virtues and vices are so that we can begin to understand our actions in these terms, and to consider appropriate motivations for actions and ends for human life. I explain this more in the final chapter.

The Possibility of Negative Exemplars

In this section, I examine the possibility of learning from negative exemplars (NEs)—people who exemplify vices or primarily bad mixed traits. My question is whether exposure to these people can encourage our development of virtues. I argue that they can play this role. I also argue that this can be problematic if executed poorly.

First, I should clarify that an NE would not impact us through the normal channels of admiration. Rather, we should feel something like resentment, pity, or disgust toward the NE's misbehaviors so we are motivated to be different. Ideally, we would also have access to a positive exemplar who would demonstrate for the learner how to be different from the NE. Additionally, if we had a positive exemplar and an NE, the NE might serve as an additional catalyst to follow the actions of the positive exemplar, providing a visual reminder of what *not* imitating the exemplar might amount to. An

example is this: When I lived in Waco, I had a number of graduate school colleagues and professors who served as outstanding exemplars, who motivated me to work on my writing and, specifically, on my dissertation. I also had an NE. He lived across the street from me and, after nine years, had yet to finish his dissertation. I could look out the window at any hour of the day and see him mowing the lawn or fixing the gutters, and he served as a cautionary tale or a strong impetus for me to sit back down at my computer and return to work. This motivation complemented the positive motivation supplied by my positive exemplars—my productive colleagues.

The use of an NE can be somewhat risky because it is not always the case that a bad person is punished or faces shame for his or her misdeeds. For example, Theodoric's Ostrogoths, the corrupt men who were in power over Boethius, had him imprisoned. Over the course of their respective lives, the corrupt men were the ones who had authority and social capital. Looking on, it would be easy to mistakenly feel pity for Boethius and admiration for those who were doing well by the standards of the time period. In cases like these, for which the NE may not face social repercussions for his or her negative actions, we might be incentivized to imitate bad actions. This is a type of social reinforcement of depravity. Another example of this is that many people enjoy looking on at the greed and acedia of wealthy celebrities like the Kardashians, who also have tremendous social reinforcement for their vices. Hopefully, most of us still learn about vices (or strong negative mixed traits) from these people and aim to avoid them ourselves. But it would be helpful if caretakers and educators spoke openly about vices to dissuade vulnerable learners from imitating these people, despite broader cultural reinforcement.

There is a range of ways in which negative exemplarity can be applied. One example of using an NE for character development is in the *Poetics*. Aristotle rewrites the myth of Oedipus so that Oedipus is perfectly noble in every way but fails in a single respect: He is not sufficiently careful regarding the omen. When we read the myth, we come away with minimal exposure to bad qualities because Oedipus is otherwise admirable, but we learn piety or caution from his own misstep. So, this is an example of how to minimize damage from exposure to a bad action. We are motivated by pity for Oedipus to examine ourselves.

More often, NEs are worse people than Aristotle's Oedipus. We can look at villains in fairytales and superhero stories and see that these are people we do not want to be like. Until recently, many of these characters in movies and media were depicted as wholly unlikeable and not especially relatable to us, like the stepmother in *Cinderella*, the White Witch in Narnia, or the evil queen in *Snow White*. It is obvious that they are bad, and we cheer for the good person to come out on top. However, most of these villains are so un-human I am not sure we can relate to them at all. And, if we cannot relate to them, some of the motivational force of the NE is lost.

Recently, it seems that there has been a turn in western media to make villains more tortured, misunderstood, or psychologically-damaged. An example is the 2008 Batman movie, *The Dark Knight*. The Joker is psychologically wounded, and viewers feel ambiguous toward him—both disgust and pity. Another example is *Breaking Bad*. The protagonist is a struggling chemistry teacher with cancer who commits criminal actions because they seem like the only choices available to him. In these cases, the villains are made sympathetic or beautiful, in a way. A final example is Kylo Ren in the

new *Star Wars* films. It is difficult to cheer against him when he is so obviously lonely and broken. This new trend in media toward our villains can be both good and bad. Sometimes the films seem to obviate moral responsibility entirely: The NEs are all just broken people, whose wounds make them act out in certain ways, but we all are just doing the best we can. Their choices are deemphasized in order to highlight their circumstances. This can be a problem pedagogically, because it discourages an audience from developing an internal locus of control or from cultivating personal agency for their choices. It is also troubling that these films make bad people seem both sympathetic and beautiful to us because we do not want to create a connection between beauty and vice. The likeable characters should ideally be the noble ones, to create social momentum behind being good. However, if done well, a troubled, less one-dimensional villain can have the opposite effect on us. It can lead us to self-reflect on our own character, make us more empathetic to others, and consider how our own personal frailties make us vulnerable to developing a bad character.

Overall, I am convinced that developing a morally rich media with relatable characters outweighs the dangers of doing so, but conversations need to be had about where the moral lines are to be drawn and what makes each character praiseworthy and blameworthy. I do not see many people having these conversations, which is a missed opportunity. This could potentially be a great avenue for public philosophy.

A final note about the use of negative exemplars in character education is that it may not be as effective a tactic as exposure to positive exemplars. In a 2014 article "Can Classic Moral Stories Promote Honesty in Children?", researchers primed 3-7-year-olds with classic moral stories to see if they would be dissuaded from lying. "Pinocchio" and

"The Boy Who Cried Wolf" did not impact the children's lying behaviors, but "George Washington and the Cherry Tree" did. The takeaway was that subjects were more likely to learn from a positive role model with a positive outcome than to be deterred from a negative model with a negative outcome, at least with respect to honesty. So, it may be more fruitful to focus on providing a range of moral exemplars than negative exemplars.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I examined the objects of our moral admiration—the people we are disposed to appreciably perceive and imitate. I first defined aretaic exemplar, providing an account of virtue to support my project. Then I explored four types of exemplars and related characteristics, such as likeability and moral decision-making. In the coming chapters, I will focus on the epistemic and motivational roles that these people can play in our moral development, roles particular to the four different types of exemplars I examined.

CHAPTER THREE

Knowledge and Virtue: The Epistemic Role of Aretaic Exemplars, Part One

The question of virtue and its relationship to knowledge is notoriously difficult.[1] Briefly, an overview of this inquiry in Plato and in Aristotle goes like this: In Plato, we have the question of whether virtue is a type of knowledge and is, therefore, teachable.[2] Socrates says it is, but there is reason to believe Plato sees emotional habituation as foundational to the process of virtue education, perhaps more so than the development of reason.[3] Certainly the order of education he provides in the *Laws* and of the education of the guardians in the *Republic* reflect an emphasis on habituation—though this may be because proper habituation positions us to receive good reasons better. In the *Meno*, Socrates asks whether we can knowingly choose what is bad for us.[4] He says we cannot. When we choose poorly, we are mistaken about what our good is.

For Plato, aretaic exemplars enter the puzzle when Socrates inquires as to why, if virtue is teachable, the great leaders of ancient Greece have terrible children. This is a difficult question even if virtue is not a type of knowledge because seemingly everything

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[1] For a full treatment of this question, see Myles Burnyeat, "Aristotle on Learning to Be Good," in *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics*, Edited by Amelie Rorty, 69-92 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980). My contributions here serve only as brief background material to introduce the epistemic role of exemplars.

[2] Plato. *Meno* 70a and *Protagoras*.

[3] Compare Protagoras' order of education in *Protagoras* to Plato's in the *Republic* and the *Laws*. Plato's starts with poetry and gymnastics and is more bodily than Protagoras.' Protagoras starts with logic and has students "sitting on a bench" to learn from exemplars, rather than imitating them.

[4] See also Plato's *Apology*.

is in place to incline these children toward developing good characters—an inherited natural character that is amenable to good character, wealth and privilege, and exemplars with good habits and reasons for action placed before them. Still, they are bad and unremarkable people.

A further complication of evaluating Plato for the relationship between reason and moral virtues is the mixed messages we receive from the dramatic action of the texts: Socrates is a person who professes no knowledge—of moral reasons or of anything else, and most of his inquiries end in *aporia*. Still, his students treat him as an exemplar and imitate him as though he is a master, as they would with other teachers.[5] Socrates is even tried before Athens because of the knowledge he imparts. If virtue is knowledge, then why does Socrates claim he has none, and why does Athens treat him like he does? And for our purposes, what are readers supposed to learn from Socrates' self-professions of lacking knowledge and status as an exemplar?

For Aristotle, virtues are habituated in accordance with reason, yet he calls virtue not a type of knowledge but an active disposition, or a *hexis*. However, Aristotle also speaks of reason as being integral to the process of virtue acquisition through voluntary choices—for the right reasons, at the right times, in the right ways, such that the person of practical wisdom would do. Whether we need a concept of a virtue in order to acquire that virtue, and whether we should be able to name good reasons for action, are matters of continued debate. Furthermore, for Aristotle, we can willingly choose the bad action and are responsible for our actions, good and bad.[6] So—to press Socrates' question on

[5] This is especially true in the *Symposium*.

[6] However, he suggests we extend grace to people like Oedipus, who was responsible for his actions (*Poetics*) but was in a difficult position (*Politics*).

knowing and choosing—mere knowledge of good and bad in a circumstance is insufficient for choosing the good action.

In order to answer the question of the epistemic role of exemplars, I first need to stipulate my position on the relationship between virtues and reason. As usual, my position is broadly Aristotelian: I maintain that virtue is not itself knowledge, but it is formed in accordance with reason. And there are certain pieces of information, such as various features of our situations and certain social cues, that are helpful to know in order to form a virtue. Reason enters the process in principally three forms—*phronesis*, *sophia*, and *prohairesis*. I describe each in this chapter. I also take up the question of the form our moral reasoning should take in order that a seemingly virtuous trait qualify as virtuous.

A final note is that, in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle *first* asks the question of how a virtue comes to be, before answering the question of what a virtue is. This seems to indicate that how virtue develops offers important insight into what a virtue is. Because of this, my emphasis for this chapter will continue to be on the developmental questions of knowledge and virtue, as it has been in the preceding chapters.

Chapter Outline

My goal in this chapter is to examine the epistemic role exemplars play in the formation of virtues. To do so, I describe what we learn from aretaic exemplars in general, before introducing individual variation in what we learn from heroes, saints, sages, and mundane exemplars. I examine how the epistemic role of exemplars contributes to our moral development, and ask whether they are sufficient as sources of information about the virtues.

My thesis is as follows: In addition to their role in motivating virtue, aretaic exemplars also teach us a number of things about virtues which lay the foundation for moral development. They demonstrate how to be morally good in concrete, particular ways, show us what is valuable, teach us which moral norms are salient in a particular circumstance, and reveal our own lack of virtues by comparison to themselves. Still, aretaic exemplars are insufficient as sources of moral knowledge and will at times misdirect us in our development.

One note about this and the following epistemology chapter is that I cover a lot of ground. Because I do so, at times this reads more as an exploratory treatment of the relevant questions, rather than a granular investment in particulars. I intend these two epistemology chapters to be a springboard for further discussion.

Learning from Exemplars

The epistemic role, or intellectual support, moral exemplars provide can be classified into three types—(1) practical knowledge support, (2) theoretical wisdom support, and (3) deliberative reasoning support. The first type pertains to concrete knowledge, or what we should know practically to act virtuously in any given situation. The second type pertains to motivating the choice-worthiness of virtues, such as by demonstrating the value of certain goods or ends, through their own actions and desires. The third type pertains to an exemplar's assistance in demonstrating reasons or providing motivations to act in one way, rather than another. All three types of support can come from the same exemplar. (4) Subsequently, I address individual variation in what we learn from different kinds of exemplars—saints, sages, heroes, and mundane exemplars.

(1) Phronesis – Practical Wisdom Support

In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle writes that when considering a virtuous action, we should act "such that the man of practical wisdom would observe."[7] The idea is that we learn about virtues in the context of others, particularly from those who exceed us in *phronesis*, those who are characterized by their ability to choose well. When we are not sure how to act or how to be excellent in a particular scenario, we can look to the *phronimos* for guidance.

The practical epistemic support that exemplars provide is crucial for virtue-development for a number of reasons. First, many virtues are conceptually thin, in that they invite both practical and theoretical clarification. For example, it is not clear, in speaking of temperance, which desires should be managed and when. Depending on whom you ask for an account of temperance, and what their overall goal in life is, the answers will vary. Temperance for a Benedictine monk, who practices feast days and fasting days, and typically errs on the side of restraint, is different from the temperance Ben Franklin describes. Franklin defines temperance plainly as "not eating or drinking to dullness," a principle which has no exceptions for religious reasons.[8] Notably, Franklin also excludes sexual self-governance from his account of the temperance of desires. He includes this instead under an account of chastity—a virtue he defines in terms of managing one's indiscretions to minimize political consequences. Aristotle does not name a separate virtue here, and Benedictine monks rely on a much more rigorous account of what it means to be chaste before God. When we speak of virtues, then, it does

[7] Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics* 1107a1-2.

[8] Benjamin Franklin *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*, Edited by C.W. Eliot (London: J. Parsons, 1909), 82.

not necessarily follow from the concept what actions are permitted or excluded. Exposure to an exemplar who is exceptional in a given respect, can provide content to the virtue concept. Then, as we mature, we can start asking the hard questions of what we believe and value and how our particular understanding of this virtue stands in relation to our beliefs. I describe this more in the sections on *sophia* and *prohairesis*.

Second, in youth, we are inexperienced in virtues and in life more generally, so looking to an exemplar for guidance is a helpful heuristic for choosing well before we have ample experience in a variety of circumstances to do what is appropriate in that situation. For example, I may want to be a respectful person. There may be a set of actions I should do to be respectful in a courtroom (sit quietly, face forward, listen well). These are not the same actions I should do if I would like to be respectful on the soccer field (pass the ball to a stronger player, defer to the team captain, avoid slide-tackling and taunting the opposing team). In both cases of respect, I defer to someone worthy of my regard, but the set of actions picked out by the virtue of respect are different because the demands and conventions of the particular situations vary. Without guidance from someone modeling how to be virtuous in one situation, rather than another, I may be ill-equipped to act well, particularly before I am old enough to have accumulated a diverse set of experiences, or to have rationally reflected on each situation with the virtue in mind.

An example of practical wisdom support is that I may want to be a generous person but not always know how to do so. A practically wise, generous person can demonstrate for me when and how much to tip in a restaurant, or the best ways to help a homeless person on a city street. I might not realize the virtue of generosity applies to

these situations, and how to proceed if it does. Because occasions for virtue may not be obvious to me, an exemplar can make me aware of the responsibility I have to act in these situations, training my vision to see those in need. Furthermore, in the tipping situation, apart from my exposure to an exemplar, even knowing that I ought to tip, and having the desire to do so, I may not know what tipping amount is stingy, what is appropriate, and what amount is too lavish as to be supererogatory or a poor financial decision. Since tipping amounts vary widely based on situation, long-term exposure to a generous person, or to a series of generous people, will be helpful to me in refining my intuitions about whether and how much to tip if I want to be generous. My imagination can fill in the gaps in new situations for which I have not directly observed an exemplar. Although, in this example, a guidebook would also be of help to clarify social norms of tipping so I could calculate how to be generous relative to the expected sum.

(1.a.) Practical Wisdom for Different Accounts of Virtue. As I described in chapter two, my account of virtues is broadly Aristotelian. Briefly, on my account, mature moral virtues are global traits[9] that consist in dispositions to act well at the right times, in the right ways, and for the right reasons, much of the time. Most people have neither the classical virtues, nor the classical vices, but mixed traits—stable tendencies to be excellent in certain ways, but not in others, relative to a particular virtue.[10] Furthermore, it is likely that many of our exemplars have weak or moderate virtues. We

[9] If I have a local virtue, or a virtue as a local trait, I only exemplify that trait at specific times, or in specific ways. For example, I might have integrity on tests and quizzes but not in relationships or sporting activities. If I have a global virtue, or a virtue as a global trait, I exemplify that trait in all situations in which the trait applies. For example, I will be disposed to act honestly in all areas of my life.

[10] See Christian Miller, 2013.

often make compromises in selecting our exemplars because of who is available to us. When I introduced my account of virtues in Chapter Two, I noted that I would flag particular sections for which the specific account of virtues assumed would impact what I said about moral development. I am flagging this section because the epistemic work done by exemplars will look different based on the account of virtues held.

For example, if motivation is not something that ultimately matters in our acquisition of a virtue (such as on a virtue-consequentialist view or on any other account that excludes appropriate motivation as a necessary feature of a good action), then it is less important for me to be provided insight into why an exemplar consistently acts as she does. Furthermore, if a person were to consistently imitate someone else's good actions, yielding good results, this would suffice for having a good character. It may not actually matter whether a learner proceeds through the stages I describe later in this section regarding a deliberative phase of virtue development and moving beyond imitation to develop virtues for oneself, insofar as imitation elicits consistently good actions.

Additionally, if having an appropriate motivation for good actions does not ultimately matter, then it may be developmentally productive to learn about (what motivational accounts would consider) bad reasons for actions. Perverse incentives for good actions (like monetary compensation or attention) can be employed toward the end of virtue development. An example is that, I may become more consistent in my "virtuous" actions upon learning that performing action a will result in increased social capital. On a virtue consequentialist view, learning about the potential for increasing social capital would be a helpful thing.

In Chapters One and Two, I aligned myself with an account of virtues as global traits. I also noted how there is some conceptual overlap between different accounts of virtue, namely skills and social intelligence. Still, conceiving of virtues in these terms impacts how we view the process of virtue education and the epistemic role that exemplars can play. In what follows, I briefly treat these three accounts—(i) virtue as social intelligence, (ii) virtue as skill, and (iii) virtue as global traits.

(i) Virtues as Social Intelligence. In general, modeling is an important way we learn how to act—conventionally, in terms of manners and comportment in society (e.g. which fork to use for the salad course and whether to raise our hands when we have questions) and morally (e.g. whether and how to share our resources and how to express gratitude). In the early, pre-rational stages of moral habituation, we learn how to be virtuous in much the same way that we learn how to tie our shoes or to behave well in a classroom—by watching others and doing these things ourselves. Moral learning is concrete. We learn how to act by watching others navigate the world.

Early moral learning from exemplars can be understood as part of a broader pattern of social learning, since our ability to act virtuously depends in part on having adequate social understanding. In fact, Nancy Snow defends an account of moral virtue as being a special kind of social intelligence on these grounds.[11] She writes that moral virtues are a type of social intelligence, for which motivational components play such a central role that, "were the motivations to be removed or replaced, the cognitive elements would change also."[12] The defensibility of such an account is rooted in the importance of

[11] Nancy E. Snow, *Virtue as Social Intelligence: An Empirically Grounded Theory* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2010).

[12] Ibid, 15.

social intelligence in virtue—knowledge, skills, and sensitivity to the salient features of a situation. Whether or not such an account provides the best description of virtues, it is undisputed that social learning is a large part of virtue education. Furthermore, the social intelligence view of virtues is helpful in that it examines our actions within their context, so it draws attention to the features of the situation we are in. As I said in my earlier example, a person cannot be respectful in a courtroom if he or she does not know what the conventions of the courtroom are. So, a large part of virtue learning is becoming familiar with social expectations for action in a particular context, and then refining our actions to be excellent in that respect. An aretaic exemplar can demonstrate what being excellent in a given respect, in a particular context, involves.

(ii.) Virtues as Skills or Skill-Like. Aside from the cultivation of social intelligence, this practical epistemic support can also be described as a type of skills-modeling and development, by analogy to how we develop other types of *techne*. Aristotle speaks this way early in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, and Julia Annas and Matt Stichter argue for virtues as skill-like on this basis.[13] They make this argument on the basis of analogy—that the moral knowledge of the virtuous person is analogous to the practical knowledge of the expert in a skill.[14] For example, consider how we learn to ride bicycles. Generally, a parent or older sibling demonstrates how to ride by modeling bike-riding themselves. Then they invite the child to ride along, with some assistance and verbal cues along the way. Bike-riding is a skill acquired mostly through modeling and

[13] See Annas 1995; Stichter 2007; see also Aristotle when he is talking about constitutive goods early in *Nicomachean Ethics*.

[14] Matthew Stichter, "The Skill of Virtue," *Philosophy in the Contemporary World* 14, 2 (2007): 39-49.

practice. Likewise, because virtues are learned actions, it can helpful to observe a virtuous action and to practice it, rather than (or in addition to) reading about or being told about a virtue concept. Regardless of whether 'virtues as skills' is the best description of virtues, it is uncontested that we need to practice the virtues in order to acquire them.

Interestingly, if virtues are skills (or skill-like), their development will be much more active than it would be on the virtues as social intelligence picture. I say this because we often grow in social intelligence by people-watching, and not always by participating. In fact, sometimes when we are participating, we are too preoccupied with our own actions to fully see what another person is showing us. That does not mean no action is involved in the social intelligence picture, just that it will play a lesser role than for the skills picture.

If virtues are skills or skill-like, we can acquire them in much the same way that we learn other types of techne, such as by playing an instrument or working with clay. We will watch a person with an eye toward gleaning principles of action and applying tools, then spend a great deal of time practicing these actions ourselves. In both virtue pictures, an aretaic exemplar will model the right action, and we will learn through observation. But the amount that we practice, versus how much we learn through observation may vary based on the account of virtues maintained.

A second difference is that the types of moral precursors (or natural character) that well-position a person to develop virtues on a skills picture versus on a social intelligence picture will be different. On the social intelligence model, prosocial emotions and a non-combative, cooperative natural temperament would be helpful toward the end

of virtue formation. Because this is the case, we might ask whether severe forms of natural introversion, shyness, or autism-spectrum disorders will impede, or just make more difficult, the formation of virtue, since the person will, in general, struggle more with sociability. On this picture, the most fitting exemplars may be those who have higher social competency in a particular domain. If this is the case, this picture may, perhaps wrongfully, exclude socially awkward saints and others who might be extraordinarily good people who violate social norms. Interestingly, this social intelligence virtue model provides a plausible explanation of the concurrence of moral exemplarity and popularity scores, which Erika Carlson's data showed, and I examined in Chapter Two. Greater social intelligence will be a third variable, which inclines us to both (a) popularity and (b) moral virtues.

In any case, these are important questions for the social intelligence model, which are less central on other accounts of virtues. On the skills model, moral precursors that well-position a person to develop virtues will likely depend on the virtue skill in question. For example, a non-impulsive natural character will lend well for a person's practice of patience. It will be easier to develop the skill of patience if a person does not repeatedly get in his or her own way with a fiery, impulsive personality. A second example is that, for the local skill of courage in physical contexts like battle, physical strength might better position a person to develop this skill. This is because if a person is naturally strong enough to protect herself, then there will be no qualifications on her ability to act courageously other than the appropriateness of that action.

A virtue exemplar on this picture will, as Julia Annas explains, have a practical, articulable knowledge of how to act excellently in a particular situation, as would any

expert with respect to other types of *techne*. If articulacy is a feature of virtues as skills, as Annas argues, then on this account, moral language acquisition will be important to the process of virtue development, alongside the strengthening of dispositional tendencies to act in accordance with a given virtue. I enter this debate in Chapter Four.

(iii.) Virtues as Global Traits. This final account is my own. The epistemic assistance offered by exemplars is, again, centrally a type of virtue modeling that benefits us by showing us how to navigate different situations in the world and to act excellently in various circumstances. The developmental differences for this account of virtue are three-fold: First, if virtues are global traits, this means these traits hold consistently and across situations (e.g. not being honest only when I pay my taxes, but being honest nearly always). For this reason, it seems that long-term exposure to an exemplar on a given trait—or long-term exposure to a number of exemplars on the same trait—will be important. This is because global traits require that we have a well-developed imagination for how to enact the virtue in a number of ways, and not just in particular circumstances. This prolonged exposure will be more helpful than on a skills view, for which the goal would be to extract principles of action and apply them ourselves. Second, since these global traits consist of a series of well-ordered dispositions to act well, there should be increased focus on the habituation of good actions, so that we can act easily in accordance with virtue. On this account, the early influence of exemplars will be helpful because a great deal of our habituation happens before we are mature enough to choose well for ourselves.

A final point of emphasis particular to this account of virtues is that it seems we would benefit from exercises like character studies and character imitation exercises, as

we would in an acting or a literature class. It might be helpful to 'put on' a global trait the way we would while pretending to be someone else. This is an insight initially raised by Plato, which he articulated as a concern about imitation in general. He worried that poets and actors would become depraved by representing people with bad characters. If this is a valid concern, then the reverse should work as a constructive character-formation strategy, using virtuous people. If virtues are traits, then we can act like we have them as a type of practice.

In her 2014 Gifford lectures, Zagzebski describes this suggestion as a type of "wishful picturing." We can imagine ourselves as someone excellent, seeing out from his or her desires and loves.[15] Zagzebski describes this as similar to the Stanislavski Method—Constantin Stanislavski's prescription for actors to take on emotions by putting themselves in the place of the characters. The actors see out from those emotions, and they are experienced by the actors. In the same way, we as moral learners can 'put on' a trait, or see out from certain desires, with less cognitive resistance than we would have if we were told to practice something for ourselves. Entering into fiction by way of enjoying a story or participating in that story by acting are great ways to habituate global traits in a comprehensive way and to be exposed to the practical considerations of good actions over a variety of circumstances we may never have the opportunity to experience otherwise. The key is that we should be acting as, or following along, with the storylines of genuinely good people so our moral imaginations are not formed in accordance with vices.

[15] See Linda Zagzebski's fourth Gifford Lecture, in 2014.

(1.b.) Practical Wisdom and Moral Virtue. A caution about the *phronetic* guidance of exemplars is that, while *phronesis* is a necessary condition for having a particular moral virtue, it is not always the case that a person who is practically wise is also morally good. A clarification about Aristotle's *phronimos* is that he is speaking from a 'unity of the virtues' framework, for which a person with practical wisdom would have the moral virtues as well. So, if a person has practical wisdom, this person would also be an exemplary model for each of the virtues—choosing well in accordance with other virtues. Regardless of the truth or falsity of the unity of virtues thesis, in practice, we are not likely to meet many, if any, people who meet this standard of being virtuous in all respects. As I described in Chapter Two, strong moral virtues are rare, and very few people, including many of our exemplars, have many strong virtues, if any at all. Likely, many of our exemplars are excellent in some respects and in certain situations, but not all. Where this complicates things regarding practical wisdom is that I should not assume a person who seems practically wise in general will also be generous or courageous, or provide constructive guidance for particular virtues. A circumspect, practically wise agent, aware of the features of his or her situation and of the relevant social conventions, may also turn out to be an ungenerous person.

An example of the divergence of *phronesis* and moral virtues is that Plato's sophists are excellent reasoners but desire the wrong things. They can choose well with respect to their chosen ends, but the goods they are pursuing (fame, money, etc.) are not goods worthy of pursuit. Another example is Machiavelli. His political prudence consists in rulers manipulating the people they rule in order to preserve their own power. Machiavelli is remarkably practically wise but does not use his intellect in accordance

with moral virtues. The point is that, simply because a person is practically wise, does not mean he or she will direct us to virtue. There is a further question we have to ask about whether this person is pursuing the right ends.

The divergence between *phronesis* and moral virtue is a cause for concern if we admire a person primarily because of his or her intellectual excellence, since, as I said, moral virtue does not necessarily follow from strong practical reasoning skills. But, for the most part, because we are talking about aretaic exemplars—people we admire because of their moral virtues—we are assuming that these people should exemplify *phronesis* in the domain of that trait. If an exemplar is morally excellent in a given way, then we can safely assume he or she is also practically wise toward a constructive, non-Machiavellian or sophistic end.

(2) Sophia – Theoretical Wisdom Support

Sophia is theoretical wisdom, which includes wisdom about the value of ends. As I said, practical wisdom is not sufficient for growth in virtue because it only supplies guidance as a type of means-ends coordination to something already conceived of as good. This is why Aristotle opens the *Nicomachean Ethics* with an inquiry about the appropriate ends for human life—because virtues are teleological concepts. It only makes sense to ask about virtues if there is already some good in mind. For example, if the goal of human life is to acquire wealth, then the virtues in question will be those qualities that enable a person to become wealthy, like fiscal responsibility, industriousness, and entrepreneurial skills. If the goal is to love God and neighbor, as it is in a Christian framework, then virtues like faith, hope, and love become important. Furthermore,

specific virtues that are common across different value or belief systems with different ends are transformed by those ends, such as in the temperance example in A-1.

Because virtues are teleological in this way, and because the way we live our lives is a testament to the things we value, growth in virtue requires growth in wisdom as well. We need to know what goods or ends are worth pursuing. Aretaic exemplars can assist in this process.

In fact, in Alfred Archer's new article, "Admiration and Motivation," he defines the motivational profile of admiration strictly in terms of value-promotion, rather than emulation.[16] He makes this case by first challenging the connection between admiration and the desire to imitate, targeting Zagzebski's account in particular. Archer proposes that approbation, rather than a desire to act, is the most basic motivational feature of our admiration and that imitation is derivative. We are motivated to "promote the value that is judged to be present in the object of admiration."[17]

In Chapter Five (The Motivational Role of Exemplars), I evaluate admiration's connection to imitation, so I take up Archer's and Zagzebski's claims more directly. But for the purpose of understanding admiration's role in directing us toward the right ends, I will say here that I think Archer is right in claiming value-promotion is typical of admiration. If the dispositional attitude of admiration involves an appreciative perspective, as I defined it in Chapter One, this inclines us toward approval. The appreciative perspective is not itself a judgment of goods, but it would incline us toward

[16] Alfred Archer, "Admiration and Motivation," *Emotion Review* 11, no. 2 (2018): 140-150.

[17] Ibid.

that judgment.[18] And if it is true that admiration lends to the promotion of certain values, then we can understand exemplars as offering more than just practical guidance for virtue formation but playing a role in our growth in wisdom as well.

Epistemic assistance toward the right ends will look different at various developmental stages. For children, exemplars can help cultivate affections toward their proper objects by drawing attention to the right things. For example, I may admire a teacher who has good taste in quality music. Because he or she has my attention, I might develop a habit of enjoying the same music. This person will play a role in cultivating higher tastes so that I am accustomed to perceiving good art as valuable when I am older. While at a younger age, I am not mature enough to articulate what is good about the music, I will be in the habit of appreciating it. An example in the moral domain is that, through my imitation of a charitable exemplar, I may come to see others as valuable. Watching how the exemplar interacts with others might draw my attention to noticing the goodness in people or encourage a habit of careful social interaction that lends to the development of my own charity as I mature and come to choose charitable acts for myself. Even apart from the work of drawing attention to the practical and situational features of virtues, an exemplar can inform our cares and orient us toward the right ends. This work belongs more to *sophia* than to *phronesis*.

For older admirers, this epistemic work can become more explicit. I might take my cues from an exemplar about goods worth pursuing. Sometimes this can involve conscious recognition of a good in the exemplar that I desire for myself. The work might involve not having been previously aware of something of value and being introduced to

[18] Robert Roberts & Michael Spezio, "Admiring Moral Exemplars," 10.

it. For example, I might see someone recycling, and I am pressed to consider the earth as worthy of care. I might be moved to be a good steward of the earth, too, whether or not I saw this as a worthwhile investment before I encountered the exemplar. Other times, an exemplar can reinforce values I already have, reminding me to care about something I already do. An example is that I may personally value industriousness yet fail to do my work because everyone around me is lazy. If one person starts to work hard, this may prompt me to remember what I value and follow suit.

A final note about this epistemic assistance is that I may also have to explicitly align myself with certain goods. An example is the case in which the end in question is theological, such as belief in Christ. In this case, my imitation can be superficial—targeting actions themselves, or I might take a further step of assenting to a belief.

Imagine I admire a Christian saint. I can imitate that person's loves to the best of my ability, acting in the way he or she does, and I can emulate that person's loves in a local way. But I cannot, in the same way, emulate that person's beliefs, or the source of their loves. I would have to take the further step of deciding I believe in one thing rather than another for myself. The saint can direct my attention toward that belief by the fruits of his or her life, but I have to take the additional step of deciding I share the belief in question.

(3) Prohairesis – Deliberation Support

Prohairesis is deliberate, free choice, and Aristotle considers it the "the decisive factor in virtue and character."[19] He defines moral virtue as *hexis prohairetike*—a state in

[19] Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics* 1163a22-23 as found in Charles Chamberlain, "The Meaning of *Prohairesis* in Aristotle's Ethics," *The Transactions of the American Philological Association* 114 (1984): 147-15

accordance with free choice.[20] So, the deliberative work we do is what enables virtue. Without it, we might be acting from instinct or imitation, and our good actions will not be free.

Epistemic assistance of this sort can take on a number of forms. First, in the case in which a person has access to an exemplar, she can ask for reasons why a person acted as he did. This will help to expose the admirer to reasons for particular actions. Children are notorious for their "why" questions—why we do one thing rather than another—and this sort of engagement can provide preliminary work in the engagement with reasons and motivations for actions. Ideally, education will refine these capabilities, with logic training and critical reflection exercises. (I explain this in Chapter Seven.) Having first-person access to an exemplar who provides insight into the reasons he or she acts, and dialoguing about these reasons, would be an especially fruitful way to mature a person's deliberative reason. But the exemplar need not be, and in many cases cannot be, the one who teaches the learner how to morally deliberate.

In many cases, we may not have close access to an exemplar or insight into his or her reasons for actions. An example is a historical figure, like Clovis, whose legacy is great but whose personal accounts are scant. In Clovis' case, we can sometimes guess why he acted as he did. An example is that it appears his conversion to Christianity was politically motivated. He was said to have bargained with God for victory over the Alemani in return for his fidelity to the Christian faith. Under these conditions, we might guess the motivation for his conversion was for personal gain, rather than for love of God or for something else. We would be speculating about his reasoning and might be wrong,

[20] Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics* 1106b36-a2.

particularly if the historical accounts are biased in some way. Still, it is still a fruitful exercise to ask questions about the appropriate motivations for Clovis' conversion, both in this particular case—since his conversion had a tremendous impact on the Merovingians (and later, the French state) since he mandated the religion for everyone—and more generally, for the action type, to discern what is a fitting reason to decide to worship God.

When we are unable to guess the motivations for the actions of a remote exemplar, we still benefit from reflecting on possible motivations for action. In the case of a remote exemplar, it helps if a teacher or a caretaker leads the charge on this, asking questions of possible motivations for action. This practice both cultivates a habit of inquiring about good reasons but also makes the learner aware that not all motivations are good ones, even if you do the right thing. Talking about motivations for actions can help a child to develop circumspection toward those he or she admires.

In some cases, remote exemplarism—having a distance between an admirer and an exemplar—is a good thing. This is because proximity to someone we admire who is not as good as he or she seems can be disappointing or cause us to be disillusioned. This happens a great deal today. For example, it used to be the case that our access to American political leaders was restricted to speeches or printed accounts. Now we have daily tweets and sound bites. The consequence is that fairly good political leaders now seem fickle because we are exposed to small inconsistencies in their language and lapses in integrity. And political leaders with bad characters are given a platform to spout bad reasons and horrifying sentiments whenever they are inclined to do so. Whereas in the past we did not have daily reminders of the frailties of our leaders, our proximity to these

people provides us with this reminder. This means that if we conceive of these people as role models, the distant, distinguished image of these people and the high ideals they represent in their positions of leadership are eroded by daily reminders of their personal defects. Clearly, a large part of this problem is the lower character expectations of our public officials. This proximity would be less problematic if the people who had public platforms (or web access) were genuinely good people. In the case of a bad exemplar, it may not be morally constructive to have access to his or her reasons. But a separate issue is that proximity makes an exemplar vulnerable to critique in new ways because his or her interaction with the public can be less measured when it happens with such regularity.

A final note about *prohairetic* deliberation is this: The intellectual threshold required for virtue is not exceedingly difficult. A person should be able to recognize, in a *de re* or relational manner, that one action is preferable to another, in order that the virtuous choice qualify as their own. Cultivating a habit of examining our exemplar's actions for motivations is a great way to prepare a learner to see these choices for herself.

(4) Epistemic Support from Different Types of Exemplars

In Chapter Two, I classified exemplars into four main types based on their primary objects, with a final, catch-all category: (1) Heroes, (2) Saints, (3) Sages, and (4) Mundane Exemplars. Each type contributes to our virtue formation in largely the same way, by demonstrating how to act well in particular circumstances, by suggesting reasons for action, and by orienting us toward the proper ends. In this section I look at the unique epistemic contributions they offer to virtue development.

Heroes. In Chapter Two, I characterized heroes as being marked by *thumos*, the honor-loving part of the soul. Heroes typically possess virtues such as fortitude and fidelity and are shame-avoidant. Some examples of heroes I provided are firefighters, superheroes, Odysseus, Beowulf, and certain high-level athletes. The category of hero includes a wide range of people, but there is a particular knowledge set that heroes characteristically provide. These regard (a) shame and glory, (b) physical skill, (c) expectations and supererogatory action, and (d) moral beauty. In (e), I address epistemic pitfalls of learning from heroes.

(a) Shame, Fame, Glory, and Honor. Shame, fame, glory, and honor are four socially-indexed measures of actions that apply in particular when we speak about heroes. While there are accounts of absolute shame and theological glory and honor that are subject-independent measures of action, in many cases these four terms are applied socially to people who are praiseworthy in a supererogatory way, like heroes are, or who underperform to social expectations in a noteworthy fashion, in the case of shame. Consider athletes.

In *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, Diogenes Laertius attributes to Pythagoras an analogy of soul types in which athletes are described as being primarily motivated by glory. At the Great Games, "some went to compete for the prize and others went with wares to sell, but the best as spectators; for similarly, in life, some grow up with servile natures, greedy for fame and gain, but the philosopher seeks for truth."[21] There are three soul types. Vendors want money. Athletes want fame. Philosophers want truth. Only the philosophers have good, non-servile natures. Athletes and vendors do not.

[21] Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, VIII.i.viii.

And yet, we emulate athletes. I raise this illustration because of the object-orientation of athletes to fame. While this is just a basic analogy of parts of the soul (and while Pythagoras himself was a wrestler), the analogy works because there is truth to the idea that fame-seeking has a central motivational role in athletics. While athletics are not strictly entertainment and many athletes have alternative ends in mind (diversion, physical stewardship, self-improvement, etc.), sports are performative, or other-indexed. In particular, football and basketball are sports for which there is a glory culture. Athletes play in massive arenas with chants, cheers, and festival atmospheres and are treated like demigods. And when they fail to perform well, they are met with a type of shame.

Aside from athletics, shame, fame, honor, and glory also featured in classical descriptions of heroism. For the Greeks and Romans, pagan heroes sought *kleos*—renown, a sort of immortality achieved because the hero would continue to be spoken of in the land of the living after death. In fact, in Dante's *Inferno*, a few heroes call out to Dante, asking whether they are still "spoken of" in the land of the living, indicating a concern for their *kleos*. This is obviously a tragic moment—that on the first occasion they meet a living soul, they do not ask about their families, cities, or the outcomes of battles. They desire a fame with an empty promise of immortality that cannot relieve their suffering.

Indeed, glory-seeking and other types of people-pleasing and shame-avoidance are pernicious moral motivations and, as such, are incompatible with most virtues. I cannot act from both (a) fear of shame and (b) the love of others, for example, or from (c) love of God and (d) love of fame. Another example is that if I donate to a cause to garner the attention of peers, then this is not a generous action.

Still, there can be great moral benefit to living in a culture that recognizes and praises heroes. In an honor culture, there is heightened sensitivity to moral transgressions and the impact of our virtues on other people because actions are socially-indexed. We are made to consider how our actions will be received by others and we are in a habit of seeing certain actions as better than others.

In watching heroes, we can be made aware of certain social features of our world—namely, what is valued by society and general expectations for actions that can help us to be sensitive to what is not just socially good, but is *in fact* good. This can be the case because, if we develop a habit of inquiring about how our actions will be received, this habit can aid in the maturing of our social intelligence, which, as I argued earlier, plays a central role in moral development. Furthermore, there is a heightened sense of aspiration for good character, since heroes are given a positive social platform. When heroes are accorded glory and honor, this makes their good deeds look attractive. This can encourage children to see and appreciate, and potentially imitate, those deeds.

To clarify, attention placed on honor and heroism can also cause children to emulate heroes for the wrong reasons—out of a hero complex, desiring not to be a good person but to garner praise. Furthermore, virtue and social commendation pull apart in significant ways. This is particularly true in corrupt regimes (Nazi Germany, Stalin's Russia) or character-defunct societies like much of the contemporary western world, where celebrities are accorded great praise for reasons not pertaining to virtues. However, it is also plausible to think that shame-avoidance and love of honor could, in certain settings, serve as a propaedeutic to virtue development, by inclining us to habituate good actions because of the promise of social praise and the avoidance of blame. This would

just require (i) situations in which good actions are socially reinforced, and (ii) explicit redirection of moral motivations away from socially-indexed motivations toward the right motivations down the road.

(b) Physical Skill. Consider Beowulf. He would not have been a hero for King Hrothgar and the Danes at Heorot if not for his great physical strength. No matter how much fortitude he possessed, weakness would have disqualified him from saving the Danes from Grendel and Grendel's mom. Whereas saints and sages can lack physical strengths and skills without being disqualified from great service, many heroes have advanced physical abilities. Of course, this is not always true of heroes. Sometimes our heroes are those people who overcome great trials with a resilient spirit, or courageously speak out in the face of opposition. Resilience has no physical requirement. Still, this category of exemplars contains more physically adept people than the other categories, since it contains superheroes, legendary war heroes, and great athletes. For this reason, there are certain qualities that many heroes can demonstrate better than other types of exemplars can. These are physical stewardship and physical discipline, and non-moral bodily excellences. We can learn specific athletic skills—kicking a ball, running far, or flinging a frisbee.

First, while athletic skills are not themselves moral virtues, they require certain local virtues to be in place in order to do well. These virtues might include perseverance, fortitude, discipline, and resilience. An athlete will be unable to consistently perform at a high level unless he or she has the disposition of persisting through discomfort. This means that, at least with respect to the virtues I named above, they can serve as helpful exemplars.

Second, athletic skills are acquired in a structurally analogous way to how we acquire moral virtues—through repeated, targeted practice and by habituating the right responses in various situations. This means that if we look to an exemplar, we can acquire habits of constructive character formation. It is readily available to the imagination that athletes work very hard to become excellent, and this focus on the process can give a child a better sense that becoming good at something requires work and time. If there is an explicit bridge between athletics and virtue education, learners can be taught to look at moral virtues in the same way, as something acquired through repeated work. For this reason, athletic exemplars in particular can be helpful in doing epistemic work, since they model practice and discipline so well.

(c) Supererogatory Actions. Some heroes run into burning buildings to save people. Others go on decades-long battles and defeat mythical creatures, returning home to Ithaca against all odds. In many cases of heroism, our heroes exceed expectations, or do far more than we could ever ask or imagine they would do. Their deeds are supererogatory. Because of this tendency, heroes are often epistemically valuable in terms of (i) stretching our moral imaginations and (ii) defining ranges of good responses.

(i) By stretching our moral imaginations, I mean that heroes act in such a way that we are shown possibilities for moral action. In seeing a person stand up to a corrupt regime, I might see a possibility for my own actions or contribution to that cause that I did not see before. This moral surprise can encourage me to think through what I could do, or embolden me to join in the work he or she is doing. The presence of heroes can help cultivate our moral creativity by making cognitively available actions that are outliers or beyond expectation.

One might argue that supererogatory acts go beyond what is required of us to develop moral virtues. Others have argued that virtuous actions are whatever a situation requires of us, so supererogatory actions are not actually supererogatory; they are just virtuous actions.[22] I am not going to take a position in this debate. Either way, the great deeds of heroic exemplars often surprise us in our ordinary contexts, and the consequence of them is that we are emboldened to reconsider our own actions, in a context that includes good actions we had not considered for ourselves.

(ii) By defining expectations, I mean that watching a hero can, paradoxically, define what other good, non-supererogatory actions might have been. "The fireman could have done action *x* or *y*, but she impressively did action *z* instead." We can learn a great deal from the initial social responses to the heroic action of the firefighter, the recognition of the action as being outstanding in some way, and from the conversations that result from this. For example, heroic actions are often accompanied by a type of empathetic self-evaluation, on what you or I would have done in the hero's place. "I am not sure I would have climbed the tree to rescue the cat, but I certainly would have called animal control to help." The heroic act becomes an occasion for me to examine how I may have acted in the same situation, and whether it would have been a good response.

(d) Beauty. When Aristotle speaks of courage—a trait typical of heroes—he switches over from the language of *agathon* (good) to *kalon* (fine). This is because courage sometimes demands self-effacing actions, like dying for one's polis. This is not an action that is strictly for my own good, since it is not conducive to my flourishing. Still, it is an act that is intrinsically good, regardless of its impact on an agent. Heroes can

[22] Susan C. Hale, "Against Supererogation." *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 28, no. 4 (1991): 273-285.

demonstrate goods that come at a cost to themselves, through self-effacing courage and other deeds.

Kalon means fine, admirable, or noble. It is a shining or compelling quality of a great person and is used to describe both Alcibiades and Achilles, for example. Aristotle's great-souled person is called the *kalos k'agathos*, the good and fine man. Ideally, goodness and fineness will always come together in an exemplar so that his or her good deeds are made attractive or compelling to us by his or her fineness. This would incline us to pay attention, admire, or imitate. However, these qualities do not always come together. For example, Alcibiades is described as having this shining quality that leads many people to admire him, but he is not also morally good. In this case, *kalon* becomes an impediment to constructive character development because we should not admire Alcibiades. *Kalon* can misdirect us if used as a heuristic for identifying virtues, in the same way that non-moral types of charisma can.

Interestingly, our culture often depicts moral beauty or fineness as *physical* beauty—portraying heroes as good-looking and villains as ugly. Think of Disney, fairy tales, and superhero films. This speaks to the finding from Erika Carlson that I introduced in Chapter Two—that we tend to describe our moral exemplars as being more physically attractive than average people. Perhaps this is because we have a selection bias in admiring people who are in fact attractive, and are using beauty as a heuristic for moral goodness. An alternate explanation is that moral exemplarity can make someone seem more compelling in the *kalon*, rather than physically attractive sense to us but we lack a separate vocabulary to describe this phenomenon in non-physical terms. To borrow Roald Dahl's description of this phenomenon, "A person who has good thoughts cannot ever be

ugly. You can have a wonky nose and a crooked mouth and a double chin and stick-out teeth, but if you have good thoughts they will shine out of your face like sunbeams and you will always look lovely."[23] Maybe virtues make people appear more pleasant to us, or we perceive them as more welcoming.

Setting aside this phenomenon of the association of physical beauty and moral goodness, I think Aristotle is right about needing a separate term to describe courage, since it does not serve the end of *eudaimonia*. This is important because it can remind us that there are moral goods beyond our own flourishing. Encountering a hero can offer a great introduction to learn about goods that are non-egoistic—intrinsically good, politically good, altruistically good, or theologically good—since heroism often comes at the expense of the ego.

(e) Pitfalls of Learning from Heroes. There are many pitfalls from learning about heroes, and I described some of them above. Briefly, these are (i) confusing beauty for goodness, (ii) the one-hit wonder problem, (iii) emulation of the wrong quality, and (iv) the fact that heroes can "ruin your life," to borrow a phrase from Alfred Archer.

(e.i.) Confusing Beauty for Goodness. This is the problem I described in section (d)—*kalon* is sometimes unhelpfully used as a heuristic for goodness, and these two qualities pull apart. It is wonderful when a good person is also a fine or noble person. This means goodness will be viewed as attractive and encourage our emulation. It may even be the case that, as we mature in our desires for moral goodness, we refine our vision for what is truly *kalon*. But *kalon* can also mislead us in cases like Alcibiades or Achilles, people who are great and compelling leaders but who are not morally virtuous.

[23] Roald Dahl, *The Twits*, p. 9.

(e.ii.) The One-Hit Wonder Problem. Some heroes are people who live lives of great integrity and fortitude. An example is George Washington. Another is Dietrich Bonhoeffer. However, many are not like this. Often people who run into burning buildings or rescue a drowning child are one-hit wonders. They do a heroic task, but the rest of their lives lack comparable levels of supererogatory moral excellence. Perhaps they may be disposed to do another great deed should another opportunity present itself, but no such opportunity presents itself. In these cases, if we bring a great deal of attention to the person, this may be poorly-placed attention over the long-term.

A different version of this problem is that often heroes are exemplary in a minimal way—such as by being extraordinarily courageous or resilient, but lacking moral excellence in a consistent fashion in other areas of their lives. An example is Beowulf, who was ferocious in battle but lacked humility and gentleness. Another example is that a not insignificant number of professional football players are arrested for domestic abuse on an annual basis. They are bold and heroic on the field, but in the rest of their lives, they may lack temperance, patience, charity, or social graces. In other words, their excellence is local to athletic arena. A third example is that great musicians often serve as heroes for teenagers, and many have drug addictions and other unhealthy traits non-local to their music. This is not to discount their musical excellence, which can encourage learners to be disciplined and to steward to their own talents well. But unreflective conformity to an otherwise unexemplary musician will be morally problematic.

I should also clarify that I think this minimal excellence problem is true of many types of exemplars but is particularly exaggerated in cases of bravery—exemplars of *thumos*. I have two historical examples of people who shared this asymmetry concern.

The first example is that medieval churches developed chivalric codes to hedge the unruly spiritedness of knights. They bound knights to be both "meek in the hall and ferocious in battle"[24] The ferocity came easily; the meekness did not. A second example is that, in Plato's *Republic*, he calls for poetry to soften the guardians. Otherwise, their spiritedness would take hold of them and they would be imbalanced, or unjust. The idea is that, the same tendency of soul that makes heroes exemplary is also a detriment to their character in other areas.

A final issue about heroism is that a hero's excellence can be directed at the wrong ends—glory, honor, and fame. While a hero's actions themselves may be imitable, we do not also want learners to learn from and imitate the wrong ends. It can be difficult to navigate how to draw attention to excellences in a limited capacity without a child being drawn toward the same ends as the hero.

(e.iii) Emulation of the Wrong Quality. A number of years ago, American news channels reported an epidemic among children—that they were emulating superheroes by jumping off their decks in order to fly. Clearly, they admired the heroes and were drawn to imitate, but they did not have the prudence to know which qualities were imitable and which were not. Another example is that children often want to copy the hairstyles of their favorite soccer players. This involves a type of alignment—positioning oneself in relation to the excellent other—but this is not a character alignment. It is an alignment with an accidental feature of the hero, and it will not improve the child's soccer skills or virtues.

[24] See C.S. Lewis' essay "On Chivalry."

This tendency—emulation of unproductive or accidental qualities of a hero—is something that can be easily addressed through explicit conversations with children. We just need to make sure we have these conversations. We cannot assume that children are learning the right things from their exemplars or that their admiration will move them productively in the direction of virtue.

(iv) The "Ruin Your Life" Problem. In Alfred Archer, Alan Thomas, and Bart Engelen's "How Admiring Moral Exemplars Can Ruin Your Life,"[25] they draw attention to a problem with the elevation of heroes. Admirers may admire heroes *qua* hero, rather than *qua* good person. They may want to be heroic, rather than good. Admiring heroes can also result in a grandstanding posture, leading children only to rise for truly heroic, grand actions and not lowering themselves to basic, non-special moral deeds. The idea of becoming a hero is compelling, particularly for young children. This can be fruitful if a child wants to be a good person, advocating for others in need, the way that heroes often do. But hero exposure can have the adverse effect of minimizing the importance of small acts by highlighting great deeds.

Saints. A saint is one who is "both morally and spiritually exemplary."[26] In my introduction to saints in Chapter Two, I described how "saint" can mean a number of things. There are faith traditions aside from Christianity that name saints or saint-like figures, and these figures vary in their general qualities. For example, a Hindu rishi is known for having great knowledge, and, in this way, he seems sage-like. In my account

[25] Alfred Archer, Bart Engelen, and Alan Thomas, "How Admiring Moral Exemplars Can Ruin Your Life: The Case of Conrad's 'Lord Jim,'" as found in *The Moral Psychology of Admiration*, edited by Alfred Archer and Andre Grahle (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2019), 233-248.

[26] L. Zagzebski, *Exemplarist Moral Theory*, 1, 23-24.

of saints, for the sake of clarity and to avoid making claims that misrepresent other traditions, I focused exclusively on Christian saints. I designated two sets of Christian saints: (a) First, I included those who have been named by the Catholic and Orthodox churches. These people are essentially institutionally-vetted good people and, as such, are fairly ideal candidates to serve as moral exemplars. (b) Second, I included Christians who are *de facto* spiritual exemplars—those morally and spiritually exemplary Christians we know in our own contexts who serve as spiritual role models for us. A saint's unique epistemic contributions are knowledge of (a) the theological virtues and (b) qualities of God.

(a) Theological Virtues. Thomas Aquinas describes three theological virtues—faith, hope, and love. Insofar as these are infused virtues, rather than acquired, only those who are Christians exemplify them. An example is that faith in Christ is freely received, and there is nothing a person can do to merit that. So it does not make sense to speak of it as acquired in the same way that we do for cardinal virtues, which we practice in order to attain. Thus far, this project has investigated virtue acquisition by natural means, so I need to clarify that theological virtues are not imitable in the same way.

I described earlier how some features we admire in a person are inimitable without first assenting to a belief the admired person holds. Faith in God is an example of this because it requires an intermediary step of assent to belief in Christ. We can learn from a person's faith and from the conditions for the continuation of their belief in different circumstances, but we cannot also participate or see out from that faith without having this faith ourselves. Often the testimony of someone else's faith leads us to investigate the belief in question.

(b) Qualities of God. Aquinas writes that "faith, hope, and charity are virtues directing us to God."[27] That these qualities direct us to God means that we should be able to learn about God by observing a saint. Saints can demonstrate for us what Christ is like through their own suffering, service, and love. An example is that St. Francis of Assisi modeled Christ's love of the poor and God's provision for the animals. Through his cares, we learned about God's cares.

Sages. A sage is a "wise person, whose admirable features include both moral and intellectual excellences, and sometimes spiritual excellences."[28] Some examples are Moses Maimonides, Socrates, and Epictetus. The category of "sage" is antiquated in that this is not a term we often use to describe people anymore. This is possibly because our culture devalues wisdom or because in a capitalist society, being a sage is either an unsustainable vocation or no vocation at all. Although, arguably it was an unsustainable vocation in Socrates' time as well, judging by the sophists' motivation to be paid.

Julia Annas points out that while we think of a sage's intellect as something separate from virtue, this is anachronistic. She writes, "[I]n ancient philosophical discussions the 'sage' [*ho sophos*] is used interchangeably with 'the good person' (*ho agathos*), and 'the virtuous person' (*ho spoudaios*, *ho asteisos*). This is not very surprising when we reflect that the ancient notion of virtue is one that has wisdom at its core."[29] So, for the ancients, a wise person would have a good and virtuous end, and he or

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[27] Aquinas. *Summa Theologiæ*. II.1.62.1.

[28] L. Zagzebski, *Exemplarist Moral Theory*, 1.

[29] Julia Annas, "The Sage in Ancient Philosophy," in *Anthropine Sophia*. Edited by F. Alesse (Naples: Bibliopolis 2008), 11-27.

she would exercise his or her intellect for morally constructive purposes. Indeed, if a person were not good, then it would seem he or she was not actually wise. This qualification is important because we should not take as wisdom exemplars those who are not otherwise virtuous people. If a person were actually wise, then she could choose well for herself and would also be virtuous.

As with other aretaic exemplars, from sages we learn how to live a virtuous life through how the exemplars model virtue themselves. However, since sages model excellence in wisdom, learning from them is often more explicit than learning from other exemplars. We often encounter their wisdom in speech or in writing, and think about it for ourselves. Sages in particular are a type of exemplar we will benefit from more when we are intellectually mature, and capable of reading, reflecting, and discussing. For example, I first read Plato in early high school and learned very little. Then in early college, I read the same texts and learned and appreciated a bit more. It was not until late college and early graduate school when I was a disciplined enough reader and reflective enough to sufficiently enter into the inquiries to benefit from Plato's wisdom. Aristotle writes of youth that we "live more by [our] character than [our] calculation."[30] So, it is only natural to think that we will benefit more from sages when we are more capable of reasoning well.

The type of epistemic support sages offer learners is three-fold. They teach us about (a) the intellectual virtues and (b) global over local concerns, and they model (c) reasons-responsiveness and intellectual reflection. In (d) I describe worries about learning from sages.

[30] Aristotle. *Art of Rhetoric* 1389a35-37.

(a) Intellectual Virtues. Aristotle's intellectual virtues are *episteme* (science), *techne* (craft), *nous* (intuition or understanding), *sophia* (theoretical wisdom), and *phronesis* (practical wisdom). Excellence in all of these areas means we are capable of exercising our reason well, in both practical and contemplative ways. It is unlikely a sage would have all of these at once, nor would he need to have all of these in order to serve well as a sage. I described earlier how *phronesis* and *sophia* are particularly relevant for moral goodness, since, combined, they enable us to choose well with respect to the right ends. Likewise, *nous* is relevant to wisdom in general, since Aristotle describes it as an "intellectual grasp of things most honorable by nature."[31] The others—*episteme* and *techne*—are less directly relevant to the acquisition of moral virtues. An example is that a rhetorician can be an extraordinarily skilled persuasive speaker (*techne*), yet make the weaker argument appear to be the stronger. Another example is that a person can be tremendously adept car repair person, and this tells us nothing about his or her moral character. The reverse is true as well: A person can be morally virtuous in many respects yet lack *techne* of various sorts.

However, this disjunction between moral virtue and *episteme* or *techne* is not also true for the other intellectual virtues (*phronesis*, *sophia*, *nous*). Moral virtues have a dependence relation on these intellectual virtues, and vice versa to a certain extent. It is less likely for a person to be truly wise and practically wise,[32] yet not also be morally good—certainly on the ancient model, per Annas' analysis, and more broadly, if wisdom is defined as being ordered by the right ends. An example of the dependence of

[31] Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics* 1141b3-4.

[32] See Chapter Two. I address Aristotle's disjunction between *phronesis* in the statesman and the contemplative life of wisdom in the philosopher.

intellectual virtues on moral virtues is this: Fair-minded arguments demand thresholds of charity and humility. If a person lacks these moral excellences, he or she will be more likely to fall into certain fallacies, like *ad hominem* or strawman. On the surface, these are fallacies of reason, but reason demands that we are a certain type of person so that we are sufficiently reasons-responsive. Furthermore, considering *phronesis* is a necessary condition for moral virtues, if we have a moral virtue or a strong mixed trait, we will be *phronetic* at least in the given respect—able to choose well across situations for that trait.

In addition to Aristotle's five intellectual virtues, there many are others we can also learn from sages. Some examples are intellectual humility, curiosity, inventiveness, integrity, memory, and honesty. Another example is fair-minded reasoning. This is the ability to enter an argument and weigh claims justly, not discounting them for the wrong reasons, like personal biases or the unwillingness to see things from a different perspective. I am using the term fair-mindedness rather than open-mindedness, since open-mindedness is a type of reasoning from a stance that has no obvious intellectual commitments. In many circumstances, open-mindedness is naïve as a goal, and, in all circumstances, it is untenable for people of faith. On one hand, there is dogmatism. On the other, there is openness to all things. Fairmindedness is somewhere in the middle—receptive to reasons but with commitments. An example is that if I have a strong theistic credence and, in particular, Christian belief, this puts me at odds with certain conventional claims of ethics—such as that it is up to a culture whether they treat all people as having dignity. It would not indicate a lack of fairmindedness if I rejected a conventional claim denying human dignity. A fair-minded reflection might invite me to investigate the reasons why the person claimed what he or she did, in order to better

respond, but I would not lack the virtue of fairmindedness if I were unmoved by that argument. A fair-minded exemplar, such as philosopher Greg Ganssle,[33] could demonstrate for me what fairmindedness looks like in an argument with someone who does not share my first principles.

(b) Global over Local Concerns. Something that is true for many sages over human history is an emphasis on global over local concerns.[34] This is likely because wisdom has as its object the universal, rather than particulars. This is also likely because wise people tend to ask questions about the true nature of things, beyond received or conventional understanding.[35] In the *Ethics*, Aristotle distinguishes wisdom from prudence on this basis: Prudence is concerned with particulars, situations, and changeable things, and it is "bound up with action."[36] Wisdom is concerned with "ultimate things."[37] The wise person knows "what proceeds from the principles…[and] attain[s] truth about the principles."[38]

The significance of the global character of wisdom is that, in learning from a sage, we are given epistemic vantage over things we have accepted as true. We may be pressed to evaluate conventional wisdom. For example, we may be moved to examine certain

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[33] Greg Ganssle is a Professor of Philosophy at the Talbot School of Theology, and previously a Senior Fellow at the Rivendell Institute and professor at Yale University. Dr. Ganssle works at the intersection of Christian faith and contemporary scholarship. He is an exemplar of fairmindedness because he always listens well before he speaks. In debates with atheists, he is tactful, thoughtful, and wise, and he does not become upset easily.

[34] For someone like Alasdair MacIntyre, this is not actually possible because of the social-embeddedness of intellect. There is no 'seeing outside of.'

[35] Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics* 1141b3-4

[36] Aristotle *NE* 1141b20

[37] Aristotle *NE* 1143a36

[38] Aristotle *NE* 1141a17-21

institutions in our culture, asking whether they are truly just or whether we have just accepted things as they are because that is the way they have always been done. We might also ask about what is "honorable by nature,"[39] or *in fact* good, rather than socially honored or culturally celebrated. And we can be pressed to think about our common humanity, over and above political affiliations or state boundaries. Having reflective distance or perspective because of the influence of a sage can help us to broaden our sphere of cares beyond those that benefit just ourselves and the people closest to us.

To clarify, I do not think cultivating a global perspective is always or even usually preferable to having local concerns. For example, if I fail to see and to love my neighbor because I am preoccupied with international issues, this is not necessarily a good thing. We should care about distant people, but sometimes the best action is to care for our neighbor or for the people we know best. Being in relationships can provide us the epistemic vantage to know how to care for those we know better than for those far away. Objectively speaking, acting empathetically toward our closest sphere of influence is not generally the best way to share our resources well in a struggling world.[40] But it is a faithful way to live our lives—responding with immediacy toward the people in front of us now.

Some might argue I am wrong here. They might argue that we should maximize the utility of our resources and prioritize that over local concerns. An example of someone who holds such a view is Peter Singer, who argues for this on the basis of utilitarian commitments. Another is Paul Bloom, who argues in *Against Empathy* that our

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[39] Aristotle *NE* 1141a17.

[40] Paul Bloom, *Against Empathy: The Case for Rational Compassion* (New York: Harper Collins, 2016).

empathy for people who are local to us and whose stories we find emotionally gripping due to proximity actually impede us from thinking clearly about how we should charitably act.[41] It may be the case that our financial aid would have a greater impact abroad, even if we struggle to empathize with people we have never met before. For both Singer and Bloom, we should carefully consider where we give, to maximize our resources. My response is that there is no single way to answer the question of balancing local and global cares, since both are sorely needed. Different situations call for different responses, and both local and global giving are instances of generosity. Regardless, the global perspective of a sage—in their tendency to think beyond institutions, political boundaries, and particulars—is a needed correction to vices like pettiness, nationalism, and self-absorption. Sages can help us to think about common humanity and to realize we do have a commitment to love all people, both local and global.

(c) Reasons-Responsiveness and Intellectual Reflection. When we morally deliberate over performing one action rather than another, this means we are entertaining reasons to act in one way, rather than another. Sages can model reasons-responsiveness—taking the right considerations into account and giving appropriate attention to different reasons. Sometimes our reasons-responsiveness is clouded by situations. An example is in situations such as was demonstrated in the Stanley Milgram Shock Experiment (1963). The volunteers assigned to be "teachers" should have resisted obeying the researcher's prompts, to advocate for the "learner," who was ostensibly receiving a deadly level of shock. Yet, many of the teachers, despite some resistance, continued to administer the

[41] Ibid.

shocks. This revealed a "surprising disposition"[42]—a common human willingness to harm others in order to obey an authority.

It is important to be aware of these dispositions in ourselves and of our temptations to respond poorly in certain circumstances, rather than to do the right thing. Again, the goal of moral development is to develop global character traits. If we are only good in situations for which there are no authorities present to thwart our own agency, then this prevents us from developing a global virtue. A sage or someone who is exemplary in prudence can model the right responses in these situations because he or she will hopefully be more responsive to reasons. They can demonstrate what the relevant moral considerations are in a circumstance, and draw attention to those reasons.

(d) Worries about Learning from Sages. As I described in Chapter Two, our wisdom exemplars should be virtuous in the same way the ancients described, per Annas' evaluation above. However, most of the people we consider our sages today do not meet this standard of moral and intellectual virtue. First, it is often the case that people who are intellectually gifted are not also morally good. Lists of contemporary "sages" include people like Elon Musk, the innovator and entrepreneur behind Tesla and SpaceX, Steve Jobs of Apple, or Alan Turing. They are smart for sure, and we likely will be drawn to emulate their work and industriousness. But smart is not the same as morally and intellectually virtuous. Likely they are smart in the *techne* and *episteme* senses, and cannot model virtue for us.

[42] Christian Miller, "Virtue Cultivation in Light of Situationism," In *Developing the Virtues: Integrating Perspectives*, edited by Julia Annas, Darcia Narvaez, and Nancy E. Snow (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 157-183.

Second, if a person is wise, a follow-up question has to be wise toward what end? In 1 Corinthians 2, Paul distinguishes between God's wisdom and wisdom of the age. "We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. No, we declare God's wisdom, a mystery that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began."[43] The idea is that wisdom has certain assumptions about what is valuable, what our true nature is, and who God is, if indeed there is a God. A wisdom exemplar would be less valuable, and potentially misleading, for a Christian if he or she considered finite goods, like human happiness or comfort, the greatest goods in life.

Third, a person may be wise and serve as a sage in what they speak, write, or otherwise communicate, but this says nothing of whether he or she is a good person. Julia Markovits points out that "sages may be neither saints nor heroes: indeed, they may often not be motivated to act rightly at all. (But a sage who doesn't practice what she preaches will be harder than ever to recognize as an expert.)"[44] A sage may not be morally motivated, so, just because he or she is capable of wise words does not mean we should imitate the way he or she lives.

Another way in which reasons-responsiveness is clouded is by our doxastic commitments, biases, and other failures of the imagination. Interestingly, in Aristotle's rewriting of the myth of Oedipus in the *Poetics*, this is how he diagnoses Oedipus' tragic flaw, for which Aristotle considers Oedipus morally responsible: Oedipus failed to respond to reasons regarding the omen and of the identity of his parents. In ordinary, non-

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[43] 1 Cor 2:6-7.

[44] Julia Markovits, "Saints, Heroes, Sages, and Villains." *Philosophical Studies: An International Journal for Philosophy in the Analytic Tradition* 158, no. 2 (2012): 289-311.

Oedipal settings, something may seem obviously true to us, and we can fail to take seriously other arguments or claims to the contrary. This failure is a lack of fairmindedness, which I touched on earlier. An exemplar who models reasons-responsiveness can show us how to engage reasons well.

Mundane Exemplars. Mundane exemplar is a catch-all category for exemplars who do not qualify as the first three types, and most of the people we admire fall in this category.

Included in the category of mundane exemplars are our caretakers, and a lot of the foundational epistemic work of virtue development happens through their modeling. By foundational, I mean that they are our initial influences. They are the first ones to equip children with a moral vocabulary, and they define behavioral boundaries—calling one thing good and another bad. Their role can be described largely in terms of emotional development—directing us to love the right things, teaching us how to regulate our emotions,[45] and equipping us with an emotion vocabulary.[46] Carr describes this as "the ordering of the affective springs of human action."[47] But this work of training the emotions and redirecting our affections toward their proper objects is not purely non-rational. Rosalind Hursthouse gives the example of a young child who takes food from a cat's dish. A parent responds, "You don't want that dirty nasty thing!" Dan Russell explains, "Obviously the child does want the thing, but of course the statement is a

[45] The developmental psychology literature calls this "emotion coaching"—helping a child to regulate emotions and equipping them with a vocabulary to recognize the emotions they experience.

[46] See Ross Thompson and Deborah Laible (2000) and Shari Kidwell (2019).

[47] David Carr, "On the Contribution of Literature and the Arts to the Educational Cultivation of Moral Virtue, Feeling and Emotion." *Journal of Moral Education* 34, no. 2 (2005): 137-151, 140.

prescriptive one: we say things like that to children both to teach them 'not to want that sort of thing, and also…that the nasty and dirty is such as to be undesirable and bad.'"[48] These emotion descriptions have normative content. In speaking this way, caretakers play a foundational role in explicitly bridging our emotions and our moral concepts, aligning how we feel with notions of right, wrong, good, and bad. Caretakers also model what is of value, and—ideally—also explain why they act as they do. In *Theory of Justice*, John Rawls describes how, to foster moral development in a child, parents need to be worthy objects of admiration but also make explicit the principles of a good life. They should "enunciate clear and intelligible (and of course justifiable) rules adapted to the child's level of comprehension."[49] It is not enough that they be admirable people. Caretakers should be able to give an account for their goodness or badness as well.

Other examples of mundane exemplars are librarians, coaches, town officials, and scout leaders. Not all of these people are exemplars, although a child might be tempted to incorrectly admire them because they are important early influences and children often admire the wrong people. Only those who serve these roles and demonstrate good character should qualify as moral exemplars. For example, among my dozens of coaches since childhood, I can only think of two whom I really admired and wanted to be like—one of my five elite-development soccer coaches, and one of my two high school cross country coaches. Likely, I picked up some of the morally unproductive dispositions of a

[48] Daniel Russell, "Aristotle on Cultivating Virtue," in *Cultivating Virtue: Perspectives from Philosophy, Theology, and Psychology*, edited by Nancy E. Snow (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 26.

[49] John Rawls, *Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press, 1999), 407-408.

few of the other coaches, just through proximity and sustained influence, but I would not say I considered them my exemplars.

Kristjánsson writes that teachers naturally serve as exemplars and that there is a consensus that "the professional role of teacher cannot be clearly disentangled from the moral qualities of the person who occupies the role."[50] Peers can also serve the role of mundane exemplar and often do, particularly in logic and rhetoric school when pre-teens and teens cue more off of what people their own age are doing than what their parents are doing. The people we admire show us what is valuable and choice-worthy, and we learn from them in the same way that we adopt social cues and conventions—by observing, learning principles of action, and imitating. Ideally, if our admiration is directed at people worthy of this attention, then what they find valuable is in fact valuable and constructive toward our growth in virtue.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I first asked what knowledge is required and what knowledge would be helpful for the formation of moral virtues, and I inquired as to whether there are differences on different accounts of virtue. I explored what epistemic support from exemplars might involve, classifying it in terms of different forms of knowledge—*phronesis*, *sophia*, and *prohairesis*. I also examined unique knowledge contributions from different types of exemplars.

The next chapter is part two of the epistemology section of my dissertation. I investigate the place of moral reasoning at various stages of development and ask how exemplars contribute to development at each stage. I also take a stance in the virtue

[50] K. Kristjánsson, "Emulation and the Use of Role Models in Moral Education," 38.

articulation debate and describe the consequences for how we learn from exemplars. Lastly, I examine the ways in which exemplars are insufficient as sources of moral knowledge.

CHAPTER FOUR

Reason and Virtue Development: The Epistemic Role, Part Two

In Chapter Three, the first of two chapters on the epistemic role of exemplars, I described different types of knowledge support that exemplars provide—practical knowledge support, theoretical wisdom support, and deliberative reasoning support—and I discussed how knowledge support might vary depending on the account of virtues maintained (e.g. 'virtues as skills' versus 'virtues as social intelligence'). Next, I examined what we might learn specifically from different exemplar types.

Because our relationship to exemplars changes as we mature, in Chapter Four, I sketch what epistemic assistance from exemplars may look like at various stages of virtue development. A significant puzzle in the contemporary virtue literature is the form our knowledge must take—whether we should be able to articulate our reasons for actions, in order that they qualify as virtuous. I take a stance in this debate, discussing how the epistemic role of exemplars might change if there were such a requirement. I conclude this chapter by exploring the possibility of exemplars serving as an impediment to moral knowledge, such as by preventing us from responding to certain morally-salient information. An example of what I have in mind is that by placing our attention on an exemplar and emulating that person, we might become distracted from noticing relevant features of our own moral situations, such as duties that bind us regardless of what the exemplar is doing or the ways in which our own situation is different from the exemplar's situation.

Reason and Virtue Development

(1) Virtues and Reason

Reason plays a central role in our moral development. The question is the nature of this role. Aristotle speaks of *prohairesis*—"moral purpose" or deliberate, free choice—as being "the decisive factor in virtue and character."[1] He defines moral virtue as *hexis prohairetike*—a state in accordance with choice.[2] For Aristotle, the deliberative work we do is what enables virtue. Otherwise, our actions may be instinctual, imitative, or heteronomously imposed, but they will not be our own acquired actions.[3] In this section, I examine moral deliberation to ask what is necessary in order to acquire moral virtues. I sketch the stages of development between natural character and moral virtue, describing how the maturing of our reason, and our knowledge of what is good and of what we ought to do, might aid in transforming our character from a natural disposition to an acquired one, virtuous or otherwise. By natural character, I mean those qualities and dispositions we have by nature, prior to habituation and reason.[4] By moral virtues, I mean moral excellences acquired through a combination of constructive heteronomous influences, such as aretaic exemplars and habituation, and our own deliberate, free choice. For an extended account of moral virtue, see my remarks in Chapter Two.

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[1] Aristotle. *NE* 1163a22-23 as found in Charles Chamberlain, "The Meaning of *Prohairesis* in Aristotle's Ethics," *The Transactions of the American Philological Association 114* (1984): 147-157.

[2] Aristotle. *NE* 1106b36-a2.

[3] For a fuller treatment of *hexis prohairetike*, see Chapter Two.

[4] *Politics* 1327b18–38; 1332a38–40

Aristotle speaks of moral development as consisting of three broad stages:

(1) Pre-Deliberative. Stage 1 is natural character, prior to intellectual maturity.

(2) Deliberative. Stage 2 is the period of moral development in which a learner consciously engages reasons to act well. This stage includes sub-stages of incontinence and continence.

(3) Post-Deliberative. Stage 3 is acquired character. It ideally consists of strong virtues, though likely it consists of mixed traits (for most of us), and in some cases, vices. This final stage rests on the work done during the deliberative period, when we acted from reasons and chose the type of person we would become. Stage 3 is also called second nature, or acquired character.

Interestingly, the process both starts and ends with a type of automaticity—unreflective instinct in the first stage, and well-formed habits in the final.[5] In the middle is the explicit work of engaging with reasons. (1) In the first stage (natural character), we are children, largely spontaneous and acting without much rational reflection because we are not yet capable of it. Aristotle writes of youth that we "live more by [our] character than [our] calculation."[6] (2) Thereafter, we start to deliberate, acting from reasons—our own reasons, rather than those of our caretakers or of other authority figures. Our *phronesis* (practical wisdom) also matures at this stage, and we become more capable of

[5] Nancy Snow, "Habitual Virtuous Actions and Automaticity," *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 9 (2006): 545-561.

[6] Aristotle. *Art of Rhetoric* 1389a35-37.

choosing well. This stage is not marked by mature virtue, even when we choose the right things, because virtue has yet to become second nature for us.

In the deliberative stage, sometimes we act continently, choosing the good action even though it is hard for us,[7] and sometimes we choose the bad action out of weakness of will.[8] Regardless, we are choosing. Free, deliberate choice (*prohairesis*)[9] defines this stage. *Prohairesis* is a necessary condition for virtue because, prior to deliberating about our actions, our actions are not wholly voluntary. We need what Robert Kane calls "will-setting moments" so that we are freely choosing, even with respect to our natural characters.[10]

These *prohairetic* moments can be explicit and expressible in words, involving an agent's conscious, verbal reasoning about whether to do or be one thing rather than another. This is likely the form *prohairesis* will take in a social or an educational context. But it need not have this form. *Prohairesis* can be purely intentional, involving just "moral purpose"[11] or a basic recognition and decisive alignment with one's action over other available actions. This intentional recognition and alignment permit us to be "partly the cause of our states of character" in order to be accountable for our character.[12]

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[7] Aristotle. *NE* 1145b8-17.

[8] Aristotle. *NE* 1147a-b.

[9] Aristotle. *NE* 1114b22-25

[10] Robert Kane, "Libertarianism," in *Four Views on Free Will* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 27.

[11] C. Chamberlain. "The Meaning of *Prohairesis* in Aristotle's Ethics." *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 114 (1984): 147-157.

[12] Ibid.

Without it, our character is a combination of naturally and heteronomously formed, and is largely not in our control.

Because deliberation has this central role in virtuous action, then questions of knowledge—the content of our deliberations—are integral to discussions of how we develop the virtues. I address the specifics of deliberation in section B-2.

(3) In the final stage, we act from habits or from second nature—from the choices we made that harden into dispositions. If we have habituated virtues, then we act from well-formed emotions with a sort of "goal-directed automaticity."[13] Aristotle describes this period as post-deliberative, since *prohairesis* (while a necessary condition of virtue) is upstream of virtue, prior to this period. We act in accordance with reason but *from* emotions.[14] The virtuous person will experience these emotions "at the right times, about the right things, towards the right people, for the right end and in the right way."[15] As I said, most of our exemplars do not have mature classical virtues, so—more likely—they will act at *some* of the right times, in *some* of the right ways, demonstrating gradations of virtue.[16] At this developmental stage, we still deliberate. Many times, performing a good

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[13] Nancy Snow "Habitual Virtuous Actions and Automaticity," *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 9 (2006), 545-561.

[14] Kristjánsson calls Aristotle's account "soft rationalism:" We act from rationally-ordered emotions and desires in the virtuous life. He writes that Aristotle "makes full sense of the role and salience of emotions, without buying into unsavory forms of hard 'emotional-dog-wags-the-rational-tail' sentimentalism about arational emotions as exclusive creators of moral value." (See K. Kristjánsson. *Aristotelian Character Education*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2015, 29.)

[14] Nancy Snow, "Habitual Virtuous Actions and Automaticity," *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 9 (2006): 545-561.

[15] Aristotle. *NE* 1106b17-35

[16] C. Miller, *Moral Character: An Empirical Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

action requires that we investigate features of the situation and make a good choice. But we deliberate less frequently because we act easily from settled desires.

To clarify, these three stages are just a heuristic for virtue development, and the boundaries are murky. Children—though largely spontaneous and unreflective—are not wholly irrational and can be engaged with reasons. Furthermore, adults do not act entirely from habits. There is still deliberation and habit-formation throughout the various stages of our lives, particularly if we are adequately self-examining and trying to morally improve. As Christine Swanton points out, there are no finished agents because moral development never stops. "All virtue is virtue that is developing."[17] Regardless, as a general rule, children are largely lacking in *phronesis* and are incapable of the sort of will-setting moments which enable virtue. And in general, a virtuous person will have a settled pattern of good actions from well-formed desires, such that he or she becomes predictably and dependably good across situations.[18] What this looks like is a type of automaticity (in Snow's phrasing), or ease, around choices so that doing well becomes second nature to us.

As a reminder, I have aligned myself with an account of virtues as global dispositional traits. This picture alters this three-stage developmental sequence slightly. Because Miller defines character traits as *clusters* of interrelated mental dispositions

[17] C. Swanton, C. "Developmental Virtue Ethics" in *Developing the Virtues: Integrating Perspectives*, Edited by J. Annas, D. Narvaez, & N.E. Snow (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 125.

[18] The (absurd) extreme version of this rule is Aristotle's magnanimous man who is so immovable that he literally does not move.

relevant to a trait, rather than a single *hexis* or active disposition as Aristotle does,[19] moral deliberation becomes a more piecemeal process than Aristotle describes.

For example, on Aristotle's view, I could potentially have a single, decisive point where I choose to become a more honest person and either continue to perform habituated honest actions or discontinue dishonest ones, depending on what my actions were like prior to this point. On Miller's account, I am not forming a single active disposition but several context-sensitive dispositions pertaining to the same character trait, in different situations. This means our moral development will include many of these little *prohairetic* decision points and will involve updates to our desires and motivations throughout the process of developing a virtue (or a strong mixed trait) as well.

The consequence of this theoretical point for moral learning by way of exemplars is that the active deliberative work of aretaic formation is ongoing. While this is less of a tidy account because of various movements between Stages Two and Three (between deliberation and acquired *hexis*), this certainly seems more plausible than moving only in one direction. I may start acting from habits. At some point, I am pressed to reconsider a disposition because of the consequences I face (e.g. I am caught cheating, and this is costly to my reputation) or because I encounter an exemplar who shows me what honesty looks like (e.g. I realize I should be honest when I am given a refund at the store that is too large, just like my mom did.) This recognition of a personal lack of virtue leads me back into a deliberative phase about an aspect of my character.

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[19] Christian Miller. *Character and Moral Psychology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 31, 38.

A final note on this potential for reversion—from Stage Two to Three, then back to Two—is that there is a certain period of a learner's development that is more primed for major moral deliberation than other periods are. This is in early adolescence, when (1) our reason is mature enough that we can ask good questions about moral actions, (2) we have had enough life experiences to be a bit more prudent, and (3) we are not yet calcified in our habits so we are still amenable to substantial character change. Ideally, the vast majority of our moral deliberations will happen in this time frame, and the rest will be minor corrections.[20] In Chapter Seven, I explain these pedagogical stages in greater detail. The stage I have in mind is called the Logic stage in classical pedagogy. This is an ideal time for much of Stage Two to occur.

The significance of these developmental stages is this: The sort of epistemic aid we take from exemplars over the course of our lives will change. Our needs are different if we are in a period of unreflective habit, versus actively engaging with reasons, versus acting from acquired habits. In the unreflective stage, we need the foundational emotional work I described in Chapter Three with mundane exemplars: Exemplars can serve learners by helping learners to love the right things, by directing them to form the right habits of attention and regulate their emotions, by disciplining them so that they are teachable down the road, and by equipping them with a moral and emotional vocabulary. Exemplars can also model good actions, since young children find natural pleasure in imitation.[21] At this early stage, it is imperative for caregivers to closely monitor who is

[20] Clearly, some people have substantial moral change later in life because of conversion experiences, drug rehabilitation, the occasion of entering the discipline structure of the military, or for other reasons. I am only providing a sketch for what is most suited to stages of development. See Chapter Seven for a fuller explanation.

[21] Aristotle. *Poetics* IV.

serving as the moral exemplars for children. I described in Chapter One that our admiration is less circumspect when we are young children. This is because we are more naïve and lack moral experiences of our own. We are less calcified in our own ways and are more easily shaped by the people around us. Our lack of circumspection makes us more prone to imitate the wrong people as good. Therefore, it may be helpful to take both Plato's and Aristotle's advice—to present only good and noble heroes before children, to the extent that we are able to do so.

Frankly, it is not altogether clear how Aristotle understands the place of reason in early moral habituation (what I have labeled the pre-deliberative stage)—or how *phronesis* matures if reason is not engaged in a step-wise fashion. Kristjánsson points out that, when Aristotle "explicitly mentions [rational] development, what he says tends to indicate a black-and-white picture where the animal-like, morally immature child is contrasted with the morally mature adult."[22] Kristjánsson helpfully lays out the range of interpretations of Aristotelian habituation in the current literature: Curzer describes a "mechanical, mindless" process of habituation (2002). Kristjánsson writes that Curzer's description captures Aristotle's position well, since Aristotle makes no mention of critical or discriminating engagement on the part of the learner. Conversely, Sherman describes a process that engages reason throughout, since habituation itself is a "'critical process': a gradual process of moral sensitization (Sherman, 1989: 153-99)." On Sherman's account, Aristotelian habituation must involve some degree of engagement with reasons in order to follow a goal, to understand instructions, and to pay attention to the right things. Third, Burnyeat describes Aristotelian habituation as involving non-rational formation from the

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

start, with the gradual introduction of description and explanation, to aid the development of a learner's *phronesis*.[23] As far as which position best describes Aristotle's position, I agree with Sherman that habituation is essentially a critical process, and that this must be what Aristotle has in mind when he describes directing of our attention to the noble, before we are mature enough to choose it for ourselves.

Setting aside Aristotle's position, Sherman's description is also my view—that habituation is a critical process and that reason is engaged to a certain extent throughout the process of training in the virtues. Like Burnyeat, I also think a more explicit engagement with reason should be gradually introduced over time.[24] As learners mature and become more cognitively able, virtue education should involve engagements with *phronesis*. It can be helpful for a learner to be told reasons for action and to discuss those reasons. It can also be helpful to be invited to participate in virtuous actions (like volunteering or helping a peer) so learners are well-positioned to choose these actions for themselves. If reason is not engaged in this step-wise way so that the learner matures enough for independent reasoning, then it is unclear whether they will be poised to choose well for themselves, and we understand free choice to be a necessary condition for moral virtue.

A few final points about the later stages of moral education, involving mature reasoners are as follows. First, mature learners are likely the only learners who benefit from sages, since learners are cognitively developed enough to recognize wisdom and to reflect on it for themselves. Additionally, for older learners, moral reminders are helpful.

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[23] Ibid. 108-109.

[24] For more on this debate, see my treatment of a step-wise engagement with reason in the process of habituation in Chapter Seven.

Having an exemplary person nearby can serve as a reminder for how to act well, or it can force a person to revisit whether and how his or her habits could be revised. Exemplars can also motivate improvement. Adults are generally more calcified in their actions and less likely to imitate than younger learners are. Drawing explicit attention to the deeds of exemplars can be helpful to provoke change.

(2) Puzzles of Development

In this section, I address two debated questions of moral development that impact learning from exemplars. These questions are (a) whether certain people are excluded from the process of virtue development and (b) what exactly moral deliberation entails.

(2.a.) Exclusion and Moral Virtue. The first question is whether there are moral luck constraints on the development of virtues. Just as certain natural abilities enable particular athletes to be outstanding and the absence of these abilities prevents others from becoming likewise successful,[25] it is uncontroversial that certain natural characters better position some people to develop virtues than those of others. An example is that a person who naturally dislikes sugary treats will have an easier time developing temperance than a person with an overpowering sweet tooth because his or her natural affections will be less of an obstacle in the development of that virtue. In Mariska Leunissen's excellent and controversial new book, *From Natural Character to Moral Virtue* (2017), she makes the case that for Aristotle, "having certain natural character traits can make moral development easier or more difficult, and that what traits one has

[25] An example is that most elite high jumpers have naturally long Achilles tendons. There is a lot more that goes into being a good high jumper—discipline, practice, having knowledgeable coaches early on who instruct good form, and etc., but if you have short Achilles tendons, the odds are not in your favor to compete among those who do.

causally depends on the particular mixture of blood one has as a result of living in a particular climate."[26] Leunissen argues that for Aristotle, virtue potential is a matter of moral luck: We either have a natural physiology that supports the development of virtue, or we do not. If this interpretation is right, then Aristotle effectively excludes large swaths of the population from even aspiring to virtue.

The importance of this for our purposes is that, if it is true that our potential for virtue is constrained by the natural character we are born with, then the efficacy of moral education will hinge upon who the learner is. This is not to say that Aristotle (or Leunissen's interpretation of Aristotle) is correct in excluding certain people from developing virtues altogether. Aristotle aside, this is certainly not my own view. But a difficulty of moral education is that all learners are not equally well-positioned in terms of their pre-moral prosocial baselines (such as their emotional self-control and their natural affections), the training they require, or in terms of the particular exemplars who would benefit them. We require different influences because of the specific character strengths and defects we have by nature.

An example of this is that if a person is prone to excessive drinking and eating, it may benefit him or her to be exposed to an exemplar who errs on the side of asceticism. The reason is that the ascetic can model restraint and lead the intemperate person to correct his or her course in the opposite direction. Aristotle writes that we should consider ourselves as warped pieces of wood—"inclined by nature to different faults." To steer a middle course toward virtue, we must "drag ourselves away in the opposite

[26] Mariska Leunissen, *From Natural Character to Moral Virtue* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 3.

direction," adopting the method used by carpenters to straighten warped timber.[27] Exemplars can serve this role—shaping our moral imaginations by correcting our course toward the mean. Interestingly, the inverse might happen as well, resulting in a relationship of mutual moral benefit between these two people. The person with a naturally more spartan disposition, who takes insufficient pleasure in food and drink, might benefit from exposure to an exemplar who is less abstemious. They can warp each other's wood, or provide moral chastisement in areas of deficiency, by modeling the opposite inclination.

(2.b.) What Moral Deliberation Entails. A second puzzle about moral development is what exactly moral deliberation entails. Since *prohairesis* is described in terms of taking free ownership of actions, then it will ostensibly involve the entertaining of reasons to do or to be one thing, rather than another. This is the most explicit epistemic work done by the learner in the process of virtue formation because the learner is consciously considering good and bad actions. But it is unclear how explicit this reasoning should be, or whether a person must be able to provide an account for the goodness or the badness of an action, in order to qualify that action as virtuous. In the recent virtue ethics literature, there is a debate about what is being called an "articulacy requirement" for virtue:[28] Must we be able to give an account for our apparently virtuous actions, in order that they qualify as virtuous?[29] In this section, I lay out the terms of the

[27] Aristotle. *NE* 1109b.1

[28] Matt Stichter, "Ethical Expertise: The Skill Model of Virtue." *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, 10 (2007):183–194.

[29] Julia Annas, *Intelligent Virtue* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 19-20.

debate. Then I argue that articulation is not a necessary condition for the acquisition of a virtue, but it is (i) pedagogically valuable and (ii) does make virtue acquisition more likely, serving as a type of success condition.

Julia Annas is the most vocal contemporary supporter of an articulation requirement. Her support is made by analogy to other types of practical expertise. If a person is an expert, then he or she has a skill (*techne*), which is distinguished from an "inarticulate 'knack' (*empeiria*)" by a knowledge of the conditions of the action.[30] An expert can "give an account of what he does, which involves being able to explain why he is doing what he is doing."[31] Likewise, so the argument goes, the virtuous agent is a kind of expert and should be able to give an account for his or her actions. On Annas' view, what must be articulated is not simply a single virtue concept (e.g. concept of honesty), but something like a global take on the moral life, as would befit a Platonic-inspired unity of virtues thesis, and this is in addition to two other intellectual conditions of virtue. She writes that expertise has three necessary conditions: "It must be teachable; it must involve a unified grasp of the general principles holding of the field in question; and it must involve an articulate ability to explain and defend the particular judgments and decisions that are made." So, expertise involves three types of knowledge—transferrable (teachable) knowledge, conceptual knowledge, and causal knowledge.

Of these three conditions, teachability and causal knowledge seem the least defensible. Conceptual knowledge is likely the strongest proposed condition, but ultimately, I find this indefensible also. First, for teachability, it is true that virtues, like

[30] Ibid, 20.

[31] Ibid, 20.

skills, are often taught. Virtue instruction can include modeling, and it often involves verbal exchanges (articulation) as well. But as a *necessary* condition of virtue, it would be difficult to defend a teachability claim. We can imagine someone acquiring a virtue through trial-and-error, as experts in other fields often do. An example is a peak soccer performer who, through experimentation, learns the Maradona[32] without being shown or taught. If he consistently executes the move, he is no less an expert than a person who was taught. We might think the same about a person who has never been instructed to be humble yet nonetheless recognizes humility's importance for herself and acts in accordance with this virtue.

Second, the causal condition also seems unnecessary for virtue. To clarify, it would be helpful to be able to name why someone performed an action. When children are young and misbehave, parents often ask, "Why did you do that?" And this helps a child to consider her motivations. Since appropriate motivations are a constitutive feature of moral virtues, being able to name them would be valuable, but (as I will argue shortly) not necessary. Furthermore, the causal condition would be difficult to police, since people can generally produce *post hoc* rationalizations for their thoughts and actions which may not actually describe why the thought or action arose. Jonathan Haidt provides the example of someone having a disgust response to incest, and, if later asked to explain why she had this response, she produces a moral reason to explain it. In reality, the disgust was unrelated to the reason she subsequently produced. Haidt writes that "we

[32] This is a soccer move, named after Diego Maradona. You step over the ball, pulling it with you while your back faces the defender, then turn and go.

believe our own *post hoc* reasoning so thoroughly that we end up self-righteously convinced of our own virtue."[33]

To the causal point, Stichter cites Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1991), who state the following: "It seems that beginners make judgments using strict rules and features, but that with talent and a great deal of involved experience the beginner develops into an expert who sees intuitively what to do without applying rules or making judgments at all."[34] Stichter, following Dreyfus and Dreyfus, uses this as evidence that virtues are causally inarticulate—that experts often do not act from rules or principles (and certainly not rules that they can name) but from intuitions. This is not a strong argument against the causal condition because, as I explained regarding the pre-deliberative, deliberative, and post-deliberative stages, acting from reasons is a developmental stage *prior* to virtue that does not typically characterize virtue itself. The virtuous person is more likely to act from intuitions and well-formed emotions (*hexes*), in accordance with reasons, which are causally upstream of virtuous dispositions. Insofar as an expert was once a beginner, then those reasons and principles are still grandfathered into the virtuous actions and likely could be articulated if the agent were asked. A stronger way to argue would be to claim that certain types of expertise are *not* preceded by beginner phases involving the application of principles and rules, but they arise from experiences only. As I illustrated regarding the soccer player, this is plausibly true.

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[33] J. Haidt. *The Righteous Mind* (New York: Random House, 2013), 220.

[34] H. Dreyfus and S. Dreyfus, "Towards a Phenomenology of Ethical Expertise," *Human Studies* 14, no. 4 (1991), 235. As found in M. Stichter, "The Skill Model of Virtue." *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 10, no. 2 (2007), 191.

The third condition is the conceptual articulacy condition, and this is the one that Matt Stichter devotes the most effort to addressing. He argues that there are counterexamples in the domain of practical expertise: Not all experts are able to provide a conceptual account for their actions.[35] He writes that, "Demands for a greater theoretical understanding will have their source in something more than just our demand that people act well, since on the skill model one can act well without having knowledge of unifying principles."[36] Contra Annas, he argues articulation is "irrelevant to the success of achieving the goal of the practical skill."[37] We know this through observing that many experts lack a global understanding of their craft.[38]

Perhaps another way to motivate Stichter's complaint would be to consider an analogy between a peak athletic performer and a coach on one hand, and a moral performer and a moralist on the other. A peak athletic performer (like a talented soccer player) can execute moves consistently, while the coach has a vocabulary to describe and prescribe these moves. It is a truism that often the best athletes make terrible coaches, since the ability to play well says nothing of one's ability to communicate the game in words. And conversely, a coach's ability to name the plays says nothing of one's ability to execute those plays herself. Likewise, a person may be consistently virtuous yet lack the ability to explain what is good about her actions in the ways a moralist can. Furthermore, the ability to moralize effectively in the global way Annas describes may

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[35] Cheng-hung Tsai, "Ethical Expertise and the Articulacy Requirement," *Synthese* 193 (2016): 2035-2052.

[36] M. Stichter. *The Skillfulness of Virtue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 81.

[37] Cheng-hung Tsai, "Ethical Expertise and the Articulacy Requirement," 2044.

[38] Cheng-hung Tsai, "Ethical Expertise and the Articulacy Requirement," 2044.

add nothing to her moral behavior. A good indicator of this is a study by Eric Switzgebel. He examined the moral actions of moral philosophers (including whether they called their moms, answered students' emails, and even returned their *ethics* books to the library on time) and found that on every measure, the ethicists were no more moral than non-ethicists.[39] Having articulable moral information did not incline them to virtue.

My own response to this debate is two-fold: (1) First, I argue that articulation is not needed for moral virtue. The same work of taking ownership for an action can be accomplished with a much more modest requirement, not requiring language at all. (2) Second, I make two concessions arguing that articulation is tremendously helpful for virtue formation, albeit not necessary: (a) Virtue articulation is pedagogically and socially valuable. (b) Articulation serves as a success condition for virtue.

(1) First, articulation is not needed for moral virtue. In order to discern whether we need articulation to acquire moral virtues, we should figure out what Annas believes it is accomplishing. Then we should ask whether (i) what she believes articulation is accomplishing might be accomplished without speech and (ii) whether what she believes articulation is accomplishing needs to be accomplished at all, on her account and for other accounts of virtues.

Annas seems to think articulation is a necessary condition of virtue acquisition because of the freely acquired character of moral virtues. She writes that moral virtue should be characterized by "seeking understanding of what you are doing, learning to do

[39] E. Schwitzgebel and J. Rust. "The Behavior of Ethicists." As found in *The Blackwell Companion to Experimental Philosophy*. Edited by J. Sytsma & W. Buckwalter (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2016).

it *for yourself*,[40] and striving to improve."[41] Virtue acquisition goes beyond copying a teacher, to learning and understanding for yourself.[42] Earlier in this chapter, I argued that moral virtues should be freely acquired, at least to the extent that we can be said to be partially the causes of our actions and therefore held accountable for them. Free acquisition distinguishes virtues from natural, imitative, and imposed qualities. So, to answer question (ii), the 'problem' that Annas has set out to solve is indeed a problem.

The question that remains is (i)—whether articulation is needed in order to establish that a person is not just acting from habituation, imitation, or nature. Certainly, Annas is not wrong regarding the role that she thinks speech can play. It permits us to distinguish between those acting in accordance with well-formed emotions that happen to be in accordance with good reasons, from those acting in accordance with well-formed emotions in accordance with *chosen* good reasons. If a person had reasons available, this would be good evidence that she passed through a *prohairetic* stage, such that her choices are now her own.

Still, it seems plausible that a person might pass through a *prohairetic* stage without the evidence of language by having a mere recognition of the good action, as a *de re* or relational recognition of the good. For example, if Jane is habituated into patience by caretakers, and later recognizes a single patient action as good and choice-worthy over other available actions, then this recognition is a sufficient qualifier for that action's being freely chosen. She need not also be able to explain the conditions of the action in

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[40] Italics are my own.

[41] Julia Annas, *Intelligent Virtue*, 16.

[42] Ibid. 17.

the way a moralist could. In fact, Jane can be motivated (such as in the 'drive to aspire' way Annas describes) to continue to foster her patience without being able to meet any of Annas' three criterion—teachability (i.e. being able to either receive or transfer the relevant knowledge of the virtue to someone else), the ability to provide a causal account of her motivations, or possessing a global (or even a modest, narrowly directed) articulable knowledge of the concept of patience. Returning to the peak athletic performer and coach analogy, Jane can recognize and perform the right moves at the right times, consistently, without being able to explain them. She is freely playing soccer and has actively cultivated and taken ownership for her moves. All she needs is a *de re* or relational recognition of the relevant goods of the game in order to be well-positioned to perform well. The rules and principles are internal to her performance, and her coach can explain them.

Thus far, I have argued that virtue articulation is not a *necessary* condition for moral virtues. I emphasize 'necessary' because it is feasible to imagine that people acquire virtues without language, by recognition unaccompanied by a conceptual understanding of the terms of the action. Still, language is helpful in two ways.

(a) Virtue articulation is pedagogically and socially valuable. First, it seems obvious that being supplied a vocabulary of virtues would be pedagogically useful. If I know what prudence, temperance, fortitude, and fairmindedness are, these concepts shape my experiences of the world. I recognize their presence and their absence and can think of myself in these terms. (e.g. It was imprudent of me to forget my shin guards for soccer practice.) Because I have these concepts, I can deliberate about them, assess my motivations, and grow accountable to them, ideally in the context of a discursive

community with a common accountability structure. As a former middle school teacher, I observed first-hand how my students were able to interpret their own actions better once equipped with a virtue and vice vocabulary. In particular, I recall a group of students being stunned by the notion of *acedia*, and realizing for the first time that their busyness was an impediment to their love of God. There is a sort of self-recognition that is facilitated by having a language to describe the moral features of ourselves.

Furthermore, in learning from exemplars, which is a substantial means by which we mature rhetorically, intellectually, and morally, the ability to articulate virtue concepts is invaluable. This ability enables me to name the excellences I see, both so that my imitation can be more targeted and so I am not tempted to unreflectively conform to any charismatic leader who passes before me. I can distinguish virtues from non-moral qualities. Acquiring a virtue vocabulary makes me a more circumspect admirer, and it positions me to emulate qualities I can distinguish within a person and recognize as good.

There is social value in virtue articulation, too. In Chapter Two, I described accounts of flourishing embedded in a school's mission statement. I discussed how communicating a shared vision is valuable for 'raising all ships,' or elevating cultural standards. This can occur through an honor code and explicit discussions of character in the classroom. This use of language is something Stichter also identifies as important, and he makes the same distinction that I will regarding its role. He writes, "The intellectual requirements that Annas discusses are relevant to any social discourse we have about morality, but they are not necessary for achieving expertise."[43]

[43] M. Stichter. "The Skill Model of Virtue," 194.

(b) Articulation serves as a success condition for virtue. This second concession to the importance of virtue articulation is stronger than the first, and it represents a departure from Matt Stichter's view. Earlier, I quoted Stichter as saying that "demands for a greater theoretical understanding will have their source in something more than just our demand that people act well."[44] Cheng-hung Tsai observes that Stichter seems to be saying that articulacy is "irrelevant to the success of achieving the goal of the practical skill" and that, if we want conceptual understanding, it is for some other reason.[45] This seems too strong of a position on two fronts.

First, moral education happens largely through language. A person can develop virtues without language or explicit education, since, as I argued, moral language is not a necessary condition of virtue. But it seems less likely that a person will be successful in acquiring virtues without it. Tsai uses the analogy of learning to drive "by trial-and-error from scratch."[46] A person can learn to drive safely and efficiently in this way, but it is less likely that he will stumble into success without rules and principles, explicitly stated, to guide him. Virtue education is the same. I might observe moral goods and ills in the world and in others around me and try to navigate them on my own, producing consistent good actions from the right motivations. But having another person point out moral guidelines, having someone to verbally share in my moral experiences (such as in a friendship between relative equals), and being equipped with a vocabulary to better conceive of what I am doing will all make it more likely that I am successful.

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[44] M. Stichter. "The Skill Model of Virtue," 193.

[45] Cheng-hung Tsai, "Ethical Expertise and the Articulacy Requirement," 2044.

[46] Cheng-hung Tsai, "Ethical Expertise and the Articulacy Requirement," 2046.

Second, and more substantially, I am not convinced a person is likely to succeed in developing moral virtues without articulation because language is a significant means by which our moral agency develops. As a reminder, what Annas' articulation criterion aims to protect is the freely acquired character of moral virtues. Considering that only moral agents can freely acquire virtues, we should investigate the background of what it is that matures us into agents, and whether moral language is involved.

We can consider the development of agency in both emotional and rational terms. First, emotional competency, or the ability to manage one's emotions well, can be understood as a precondition of virtue. An example is that, if I consistently throw temper tantrums and am unable to control my anger, I am poorly positioned to develop justice, or really any other virtues until I have first addressed my emotional control. If I am too sad or weepy, this will prevent me from responding to the needs of others and being caring or appropriately generous with my time or attention. I need a healthy emotional life, at least in the domain relevant to the virtue, in order to become excellent in the way a virtue requires. Interestingly, in the emotional competency literature, the most successful caretakers are described as having an "emotion coaching" style of parenting.[47] These caretakers equip children with an emotion vocabulary and discuss the consequences of expressing different emotions in certain situations. They strategize with the child about how best to manage certain unruly emotions. Their children are more likely to be emotionally competent into adulthood—capable of veridical emotional responses and able to manage emotions well. This is an example of how articulation can be used in the

[47] Ellis, B., Eva Alisic, Amy Reiss, Tom Dishion, and Philip Fisher. "Emotion Regulation Among Preschoolers on a Continuum of Risk: The Role of Maternal Emotion Coaching." *Journal of Child and Family Studies* 23, no. 6 (August 2014): 965–974.

early stages of education to prepare a learner for virtue development. A child is better equipped to recognize and name when her emotions are inappropriate. Considering that virtues are often alternatively characterized as being a "modulation of emotions,"[48] or as feeling the right things at the right times, this ability to name emotion states can be an important step in virtue acquisition. Emotion coaching matures a learner into a moral agent, more capable of emotional self-governance, and it involves equipping a child with the ability to 'give an account' for how she is feeling.

As a disclaimer, certainly there are children with parents who do not engage in this style of parenting, who subsequently develop moral virtues. But as a success condition, articulation plays a role in preparing a learner to be able to develop virtues later on. Otherwise, maturation may be a more difficult process of needing to learn to identify and regulate emotions on one's own.

Moral agency is developed in terms of rational ability as well. In Chapters Six and Seven, I discuss the phases of maturing reason through the classical stages of grammar, logic, and rhetoric. This model, which invites a learner to rationally participate in his own habituation through a stepwise process, unfolds through the development of facility of moral language. Without acquiring a moral vocabulary, as learners do in the first stage, they are not intellectually 'brought along' or actively matured to see and recognize moral choices so that they can eventually make good ones of their own volition. The significance of this process is that it may seem 'beside the point' or irrelevant to the question of virtues to have an articulation requirement for moral virtues. And I have argued that moral virtues themselves do not require language. But there are strong

[48] Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics* IV.v.i.

developmental reasons to reconsider whether moral articulation—i.e. the ability to 'give an account' for our moral actions—might make it more likely that we can successfully acquire virtues.

I will make the same disclaimer here. It is plausible that a learner can develop mature moral agency without a step-wise introduction to moral language. But consider (i) the rarity of strong moral virtues and (ii) the lack of widespread pedagogy aiming to mature a learner's agency using moral language. These two facts are certainly not evidence *against* the value of moral language as a plausible success condition.

In review, moral articulation of any sort—causal, conceptual, and teachable—is not required to acquire moral virtues. But moral articulation is not beside the point either. The ability to give an account for our moral actions is pedagogically and socially valuable, and it can serve to mitigate vulnerability in learning from exemplars. Moral language also makes more likely the successful acquisition of virtues, both because it means we are not learning to drive by trial-and-error, as Tsai describes, and because moral agency (which free acquisition demands) matures through language.

Typically, the articulation debate is framed exclusively in terms of the acquisition of particular virtues, for which speech may be beside the point. But framing the debate in this way is a mistake. We should also look at the grounds for virtue development (i.e. the development of a learner into a mature moral agent), a process which heavily relies on moral articulation. It is surely the case that people develop moral virtues without articulation, but articulation would make it much more likely that a person would be successful in acquiring virtues.

Exemplars as an Impediment to Moral Knowledge

Throughout this and the preceding chapter, I addressed numerous difficulties in acquiring moral knowledge from exemplars. In this section, (1) I briefly review these concerns to consolidate my set of worries in one place. (2) Second, I ask whether having exemplary people before us is sufficient as a source of moral knowledge. I argue it is not.

(1) A Set of Concerns

The first set of concerns pertains to the moral failings of exemplars, and goes like this: Exemplars, even the really good ones, are not perfect people, so they are bound to misdirect us at times. This can happen because good people err. It can also happen because we can be mistaken about a person's exemplarity and admire people we should not admire, and, in that case, our admiration makes us vulnerable to being misled about what is good or bad. For example, if I wrongfully consider a person a sage, and this person gives terrible advice or promotes values that are incompatible with virtue (such as promoting the acquisition of great wealth for its own sake), this will not be a constructive relationship for me. Second, I raised an asymmetry concern: Aretaic exemplars are sometimes exemplary in a limited respect, and not globally. Heroes in particular raise this worry, since their *thumos* is often at odds with the expression of other virtues. For heroes in particular, it is often a single action that qualifies a person as exemplary (the one-hit wonder problem). Maybe he or she ran into a burning building to save people. The act itself is supererogatory, but the person may not be exemplary in other ways. Sages are often marked by this virtue asymmetry as well. Annas points out that a sage, for the ancients, would be both morally and intellectually virtuous, because wisdom meant being ordered toward the right ends. But I pointed out that wisdom demands an account. For

example, Christian Scripture speaks of two types of wisdom—God's wisdom and wisdom of the age—and these offer incompatible pictures of the world. Furthermore, even if it is true that a genuinely wise person is also morally good on the ancient view, as Annas describes, most of our exemplars do not meet this standard. We may encounter a person who is seemingly wise but who is also, as Markovits describes, personally unmotivated by virtue.

An additional concern I raised in learning from exemplars is the problem of self-knowledge. An exemplar can demonstrate virtues, and an admirer can learn about how to be virtuous in a given way. However, if the admirer does not also realize there is a character gap between them—that the exemplar exceeds us in virtue[49]—then this knowledge will not benefit our moral growth. In "How Admiring Moral Exemplars Can Ruin Your Life," Archer describes how, through association with an exemplar, we can mistakenly think of ourselves in terms of his or her excellences. Rather than being pressed to grow, the admirer can become self-congratulatory and less amenable to moral growth. Thus, it is important that the epistemic work done in learning from an exemplar include working to see ourselves rightly as well.

Another version of this problem is one Kierkegaard raises in *Practice in Christianity*. Admiration leaves room for self-deception and "is inclined to give assurances."[50] He writes that "there is an infinite difference between an admirer and an imitator, because an imitator is, or at least strives to be, what he admires."[51] By admirer,

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[49] Christian Miller, *The Character Gap: How Good Are We?* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).

[50] Soren Kierkegaard, *Practice in Christianity*. Translated by H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 248-9.

[51] Ibid.

Kierkegaard means pure admiration, apart from action. His worry is similar to Archer's in that we can hide behind our admiration or self-deceive about it, thinking ourselves good because of the people we admire. For example, I might admire Martin Luther King, Jr. and take myself not to be a racist because I admire him, when, really, I act in ways that are complicit with racism. Conversely, to actually imitate MLK, Jr. by advocating for those who are oppressed because of skin color or for any other reason, would make a difference for my character. If Kierkegaard and Archer are right—and I believe that they are—then admiration alone does not always help us to see our character gap, or motivate us to close it.

(2) Exemplars and Moral Knowledge

In this section, I argue that, regardless of the goodness of the people we admire, exemplars are insufficient as sources of moral knowledge. I make this case on the basis of two claims I aim to defend: (a) Exemplars do not serve a grounding relation for moral virtue in the way that Michael Slote or Linda Zagzebski describe. (b) Not all moral decisions should be made on the basis of what other people, even very good people, are doing.

(2.a.) Exemplars and Virtue. In Chapter Two, I distanced myself from Michael Slote's and Linda Zagzebski's agent-based approach to ethics. I did so on the grounds that it did not match my intuition about how we approach exemplars. This intuition is that, in general, there is some independent account of a virtue at play, to which an exemplar is held accountable. For example, if I have an exemplar of generosity and later notice this exemplar is only giving away gifts that do not actually belong to her, this will

inform my understanding of the person's lack of virtue, rather than the virtue's lack of consistency. Instead, I proposed an account for which normativity is derived from accounts of flourishing. I said that my own account is Thomistic. But for the sake of virtue education in schools, I proposed that schools create thick mission statements that incorporate a shared vision of *eudaimonia*, from which virtues can be derived and systematically implemented in the curriculum.

The significance of my departure from an agent-based account is that, of course, exemplars are insufficient as sources of moral knowledge. Learners should be introduced to private (perhaps family) and collective (perhaps school) conceptions of flourishing, in order to make sense of what traits are helpful toward securing these ends. Consider a young Christian girl named Barb. Barb learns about how to honor God with her life, and she derives normativity from this purpose. A quality that follows from this purpose is humility. Barb might look around at her exemplars and not see the standard of humility communicated by Christian Scriptures. Her familiarity with this separate account of flourishing informs how she perceives the lack of humility in her exemplars. Barb becomes a more circumspect admirer, and she is not limited by the set of exemplars before her in how she conceives of the expression of different virtues.

The significance of my position (a non-agent-based account of virtue) for moral learning is two-fold: First, it means we can learn about a moral virtue without having access to an exemplar who will exemplify that trait. Theoretically, we can learn the concept of a virtue and attempt to practice it apart from first observing it. I say "theoretically" because, pedagogically, we learn best from observing and imitating others. This is especially the case in early childhood since we take pleasure in imitation,

and, as I explained in Chapter Three, moral learning involves a type of social learning. Learning from virtue concepts alone, while theoretically possible, is certainly a more difficult way to grow in virtue.

An example of someone who cultivated virtues in this way was Ben Franklin. He published his reflections on virtue formation from his early adulthood journals. Franklin created a rule for each virtue and practiced each, one per week or until it was habituated, and then moved on to the next virtue. For example, for temperance, his rule was "do not eat or drink to dullness." Franklin's plan was based on practicing these virtue rules or principles. His final virtue was humility, which he defined in terms of imitation, so reflection and imitation of exemplars came last. Interestingly, while Ben Franklin was a commendable statesman and inventor, he was not an extraordinarily good man. He often lacked judgment and was considered spineless under pressure, and he was marked by numerous and sordid affairs. So, this single case study does not offer much by way of encouraging moral learning from virtue concepts. My point is that, while virtues are not *grounded* in exemplars, our education in virtue often starts with exemplars. Exemplars are critically important in motivating virtue growth.

Second, the fact that exemplars do not serve a grounding relation for moral virtues highlights the importance of reflection in moral education. We should exercise our moral imaginations and independently reason about what virtue requires, apart from the activity of exemplars. This is important for making sure our imitation is not narrowly focused on expressing the virtue in just the ways we have observed but in all the ways in which it is relevant. It also permits us to think about, for example, what honesty would look like in different circumstances—circumstances in which we might find ourselves later. A good

way to abstract virtues from persons is to have a large set of exemplars from different backgrounds exemplifying the same virtue. For example, I can learn from an honest politician, an honest classmate, and an honest coach. This way, I can better conceive of the virtue of honesty, as something independent from those people. I can ask the hard questions of whether the person I admire really is exemplifying a virtue well, and how I can exemplify the virtue in my own context.

(2.b.) Morally Good Acts. Not all moral decisions should be made on the basis of what other people, even very good people, are doing. Admiration is a type of other-directed, or other-indexed moral decision-making. I see what someone else is doing—or I consider what someone else would do—and on that basis, I recognize what I should do. But this other-indexed moral choosing has limitations. These limitations come in three forms: (i) theological, (ii) deontic, and (iii) lack of relevant other.

(i) By theological, I mean there are certain moral responsibilities that we cannot be made aware of socially, through exemplars. An example is from Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling*. Abraham has a responsibility to obey God, following through with the possibility of sacrificing Isaac. Since obedience to God is Abraham's most important obligation, pleasing God should be his principle moral motivation. In this scenario, if Abraham were to model his actions off of what ethically exemplary others were doing instead, his obedience would be impeded. Other examples of this kind of conflict include revealed laws like the Ten Commandments, for which social comparison can be helpful if we are in the right context, but otherwise might impede our good actions, and vocational concerns. An example of a vocational concern is that, if I am called to be a pastor or a Christian teacher, I should live above reproach. The moral requirements placed on me

will be higher than those of the people around me, even of very good people, because of my vocation.[52] So, while I can learn from the morally good people around me, I should aim to exceed them in good deeds to be worthy of that call.

(ii) By deontic, I mean that we may have duties we are bound to, regardless of the cues that exemplars are giving us. For example, someone models generosity toward a school by donating a large sum of money. I am moved to also contribute, or to be generous in some other way. However, I know that I have a duty to care for my family with this money. Or, I already made a promise to use my funds in a different way. In this case, an exemplar's good deeds, while commendable, should not inform my own actions because this will impede my ability to meet pre-existing duties. Imitation can sometimes conflict with obligations we have to act otherwise.

(iii) The final limitation is lack of a relevant other. There are occasions when our moral decisions should not be informed by the morally exemplary people around us because these exemplars are not relevant for a particular virtue. An example is this. Consider a professional runner whose family is largely sedentary. Temperance will look different for this runner than for her family because her energy needs are greater. Furthermore, her day-to-day life will need to be more disciplined and structured than those around her because of the demands of her social role. Her parents may be suitable mundane exemplars, demonstrating moral virtues in daily life. She can learn many things from them, but, in terms of practical wisdom regarding temperance and other aspects of

[52] See Luke 17:2. "It would be better for him to have a millstone hung around his neck and to be thrown into the sea than to cause one of these little ones to stumble." See also 1 Corinthians 8, about modifying behaviors for the person of weaker conscience.

physical care, she may need to investigate what works best for her in particular, rather than relying on exemplars who have a different social role.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I investigated the epistemic role of exemplars in our virtue education, with an eye to developmental questions in particular. I sketched three broad stages of virtue development: pre-deliberative, deliberative, and post-deliberative. I entered debates about when and how reason enters the picture of virtue development, to better diagnose what epistemic assistance should look like at various developmental periods. Then I closed by addressing some pedagogical concerns about the limitations of learning from exemplars. In Chapters Five and Six, I take up the question of motivating virtue—the role exemplars play in moving us from recognition of an excellence to practicing this excellence ourselves.

CHAPTER FIVE

Admiration and Imitation: The Motivational Role, Part One

In much of the education literature on role models, notions of imitation or emulation are gestured to without much explanation. Exemplars model good deeds, and then we do them. Hence, we should surround ourselves with good people. But there are many questions left unanswered here—namely, whether we are imitating actions, qualities, or the exemplars themselves, whether imitation is a copycat process or something involving deeper intellectual engagement,[1] how the imitation of certain actions is sustained long enough that these actions are habituated, and at what point we take ownership for these actions so we can develop virtues ourselves. We might even ask whether imitation is really the best motivational story to describe what happens when we interact with an exemplary person. This is an important question because we do not often cite a role model as the reason for our good actions. So, for example, it may be the case that an exemplar promotes a certain value without playing a direct causal role in our future good actions.

In this chapter, I investigate these questions, organized in terms of the three dominant motivational stories involving exemplars. One is the imitation account described by Linda Zagzebski, Alan Wilson, and others. Another is the value promotion account proposed by Alfred Archer. A third is Jonathan Haidt's prosocial and affiliative behavior account. This will provide the necessary background for me to introduce my

[1] Kristján Kristjánsson, "Emulation and the use of role models in moral education," *Journal of Moral Education* 35, no. 1 (2006): 37-49.

own preliminary account of the motivational support of exemplars in Chapter Six. My motivational story is called the Graded Engagement Account.

Different Motivational Accounts of Virtue

People are often moved to act or to feel in different ways when they experience a morally excellent other. In Chapter One, I described these actions and feelings as dispositional tendencies of admiration. In this section, I outline different proposals for the action potential of admiration, describing the role exemplars can play in our moral development. Since imitation is the dominant motivational account of the impact of exemplars, I spend the most time examining this account, and speculating about its limitations.

(1) Imitation

Among philosophers, Linda Zagzebski's account on imitation is the most well-known, but it is not the first, and it is certainly not the only, account that centers on imitation as the principal means by which we learn from exemplars. Among contemporary philosophers, Kristjan Kristjánsson (2006) and Alan Wilson (2018) both write on the nature and processes of aretaic emulation. Among cognitive scientists, Jonathan Haidt and Sara Algoe (2009), Kang Lee et al (2014), and Niels van de Ven (2011, 2017) investigate the action-potential of admiration versus envy, and admiration as compared to other-praising emotions like gratitude and adoration. Imitation features prominently in their explanations of admiration as compared to these other emotions. Further back, Myles Burnyeat (1980) wrote a seminal essay on the role of exemplars in Aristotelian character education that Zagzebski credits as providing the basis for her

account.[2] Hallavard Fossheim (2006) is another philosopher who immediately preceded Zagzebski on the question of Aristotelian imitation, whom she relies on for aid in her account as well.[3]

For the ancients, "imitation precedes art" was a maxim of education present in both Plato and Aristotle, who took for granted that we are imitative creatures who learn primarily through this impulse. Moreover, they often spoke with concern over imitation, hoping to engineer myths and social situations so that only noble men would be given a platform for our inevitable imitation.[4] In formal education, imitation was applied as an academic exercise. The idea was that we first learn by imitating a master before we are qualified to act freely on our own. This was a technique used in academic disciplines like oration—for which a learner would first imitate the great rhetors, "seeing out" from the perspective of the rhetor and speaking the rhetor's words before being intellectually mature enough and equipped with the skills to orate on his own. For moral character, we imitate those who perform noble deeds, and once we have sufficient moral experience and have habituated these good actions, we can do them ourselves. Furthermore, aside from its adoption as a technique, imitation is also descriptive of human moral and social learning. It is simply the case that we take natural pleasure in mimesis from a young age, so if we aim to direct and shape the course of a person's life, we need to examine who is

[2] Myles F. Burnyeat, "Aristotle on Learning to Be Good." In *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics*. Edited by A. O. Rorty (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 69-92.

[3] See Linda Zagzebski's fourth Gifford Lecture, entitled "Emulation."

[4] See Plato *Republic* III and X and Aristotle *Poetics* I.ii-iv.

being imitated and in what ways.[5] Whether or not we decide to manage a learner's imitation for productive ends, he or she will imitate whomever is available.

Today it remains uncontroversial that imitation is a crucial means by which education, and moral education in particular, occurs. The inquiries here are to clarify the nature of admiration's relationship to imitation, and to probe when and how exemplars motivate virtue formation over the course of a learner's development.

(1-a) Linda Zagzebski's Motivational Account. Linda Zagzebski's account is one which builds on the virtue developmental accounts of Myles Burnyeat and Hallvard Fossheim, and it is firmly rooted in the Aristotelian tradition on habituation. Her specific contribution is to clarify the role exemplars play in the process of motivating virtue. Zagzebski proposes admiration as the answer to a puzzle left by Burnyeat and Fossheim—the question of acquiring appropriate moral motivations in the process of habituation. Burnyeat's process goes like this: Early on, children are told what is kalon by their caretakers, since they are incapable of seeing it for themselves. Caretakers reward and punish on the basis of what is kalon, helping a child to repeat good actions. Once habituated, these good actions are familiar and pleasurable. Eventually, the learner takes pleasure in virtuous actions for their own sake.[6]

Fossheim responds that there is an obvious lacuna in this picture—the movement from pleasurable actions to *kalon* actions.[7] Pleasure is not a suitable moral motivation, so

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[5] See Aristotle *Poetics* I.iv. and Plato *Republic* III.

[6] Linda Zagzebski, *Exemplarist Moral Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 133-134.

[7] Ibid. 134.

how do we progress from that, to perform good actions "for their own sake"?[8] Fossheim supplies Aristotelian imitation as the bridge between pleasure and this appropriate motivation, citing the natural pleasure of imitation, which Aristotle describes in the *Poetics*.[9] Unlike actions done from punishment-avoidance, Fossheim argues that mimetic actions are done for their own sake. "Mimetic desire ensures that, whatever the learner fastens on, relating mimetically to it will at the same time mean relating to it as something to be savoured for its own sake…without any ulterior motives."[10]

Zagzebski responds that it is unclear whether Fossheim has solved the problem of moving *beyond* pleasure as the motivation for those actions. Instead, he relocates pleasure into mimesis and says there are no additional motivations beyond mimetic pleasure. Zagzebski contends that "lacking an ulterior motive is not sufficient for acting out of virtue."[11] We need the addition of the correct motivation. Furthermore, a learner might take pleasure in imitating bad actions, too, so mimetic pleasure is not a motivation unique to good deeds. To this problem, Fossheim says we need to present only good exemplars before children, reinforcing Aristotle's position on this point. Zagzebski rejects this solution arguing that the accidental nature of mimesis disqualifies mimetic pleasure as a suitable moral motivation. She argues that "the process of mimesis makes it look as

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[8] Aristotle. *NE* 1105a32.

[9] Aristotle. *Poetics* I.iv.

[10] See H. Fossheim "Habituation as Mimesis." In *Values and Virtues*. Edited by T. Chappell, 105-117 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 113, as found in Linda Zagzebski, *Exemplarist Moral Theory*, 134.

[11] Linda Zagzebski, *Exemplarist Moral Theory*, 134.

though the child's motive is good because of the accidental fact that the child was imitating a good rather than a bad model, and that is not plausible."[12]

Instead, Zagzebski proposes that our admiration for the person we imitate is what resolves the issue of motivation in this developmental story. This is because, in admiring a person, we emulate that person under the aspect of goodness. We emulate the admired person "qua good, not just qua something it would be fun to imitate."[13] She also writes that our motivation in emulating an admired person includes the desire to "emulate the admired person's motive for the act as well as the behavioral component of the act, assuming that part of what she admires in the person is the motive. Emulation arising from admiration can explain how virtuous motives develop."[14]

This is a good point that Zagzebski makes—that our emulation of the admired person may also include that person's motivations—and one I take up in the next section. But first, I have a few hesitations about Zagzebski's contributions to this developmental story. I question (a) the success of her solution, and (b) whether the solution is needed at all.

(a) First, I question the success of the solution of claiming that admiration supplies the proper motivation for the imitation of another person's virtue. To start, I worry about the consistently mistaken nature of immature admiration, as I described in Chapters One and Three. Zagzebski's claim is that admiration solves the problem of indiscriminate mimetic pleasure because admiration is inclined toward good actions,

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[12] Ibid.

[13] Linda Zagzebski, *Exemplarist Moral Theory*, 134.

[14] Linda Zagzebski, *Exemplarist Moral Theory*, 135.

unlike mimesis alone. But I am not as optimistic as Zagzebski is about the reflective nature of our admiration, particularly at a young age. If admiration gets it wrong, as it often does in youth, then we are left with the same problem she identifies in Fossheim—the indiscriminate nature of mimetic pleasure. On these grounds, I think we should, as both Fossheim and Aristotle propose, present almost exclusively good exemplars before children, to constrain the objects of admiration while we lack circumspection early on.

Second, mimesis and admiration pull apart in significant ways. Sometimes we do imitate a person because it is pleasurable to imitate, as Aristotle describes, without necessarily admiring that person as well. I might pick up toys because another child is doing so, not because I think or feel anything toward the other child. This is a type of "unreinforced" or "spontaneous" learning, to borrow from American psychologist Edward Tolman.[15] The feeling of admiring can be seen as a type of affective reinforcement for imitation—a positive construal of the other that disposes us to imitate—but imitation will also occur spontaneously, apart from admiring, because it is natural to us. Other times, we admire without imitative action, taking pleasure in the other child's helpfulness but not doing anything to contribute. Zagzebski's story helpfully describes the cases for which admiration elicits imitation, but these instances are a smaller set than cases of imitation without admiration, and vice versa. In the cases where imitation and admiration pull apart, we are left back at the Fossheimian lacuna—with no story to bridge pleasure and *kalon*.

Furthermore, imitating under the aspect of goodness assumes a de dicto, or conceptual, recognition of what is in fact good, which will be lacking for most children

[15] E.C. Tolman and C.H. Honzik, "Introduction and removal of reward, and maze performance in rats." *University of California Publications in Psychology*, 1930.

and many others. Naïve admiring often lacks both articulacy about what is good and a concomitant desire to improve morally. In Chapter One, I distinguished between the dispositional attitude (DA) of admiration and the feeling of admiring. I think it is possible to feel admiring without being able to distinguish between what is morally good versus what is just appealing in some way. For the DA, this appreciative perspective on moral goodness is part of the motivation to act. However, for the feeling of admiring—which likely characterizes most children's responses to good people—it seems implausible that admiring often successfully distinguishes moral from non-moral objects. So, the recognition of an action or a quality as 'good' that Zagzebski describes as characterizing our admiration may only be present in mature learners.

(b) More foundationally, my response to Zagzebski's solution is to question whether the problem that she is solving is really a problem at all. We do not need to imitate from the right motivation, since imitation is not the end of the virtue developmental story. All we need from the imitation stage is momentum in habituating the right actions. That is, even if I accept Zagzebski's claim about the work admiration does in replacing mimetic pleasure with a better motivation, this better motivation is not the motivation that ultimately matters in mature moral virtue because imitative action is not the end of the story. The learner will still have to progress beyond this other-indexing to self-directed action. For example, admiring another person qua honest and having this as the motivation for my imitative action gets me only as far as the imitation of honesty, not honesty itself. I still need to take ownership for my actions and act knowingly and spontaneously honest, without difficulty, and across various situations to qualify my actions as an expression of the mature Aristotelian virtue. Therefore, admiration might be

a productive motivation for that single (or multiple) imitative action(s), but there remains a story to be told about the rest of the development of that virtue, post-admiration.

Accordingly, I am not sure I understand the grounds for Zagzebski's worry about the motivation of the imitative act unless the worry were to go something like this: Acting from mimetic pleasure poorly positions a learner to develop good motivations for actions later on. This is a reasonable concern. For example, if a virtue development strategy employed malice, glory-seeking, or envy to motivate "good" actions, then this strategy would be counterproductive to virtue development over the long term. In the case of mimetic pleasure—deriving enjoyment from imitating exemplars—I do not see this motivation as being at odds with virtue development. Furthermore, since explicit, reflective work should be done at the deliberative stage of virtue development anyway, motivational revisions will be made beyond the initial, imitative motivation.

An example of a fuller developmental story involving emulation is given by Alan Wilson.[16] Wilson proposes that there are at least four stages in the movement from admiration to moral virtue: (i) the experience of admiration, (ii) the drive to emulate, (iii) the habitual performance of virtuous actions, and (iv) the possession of actual virtue. The first two stages take us as far as the imitation of a good action, which is not the end of the developmental story. Wilson describes how our admiration for an excellent person can motivate us to imitate—but not to imitate just a single good action, but to repeatedly perform that action in order to be like the excellent person or to habituate that action. If Wilson is correct (and I believe that he is in many cases, particularly when we have

[16] Alan T. Wilson "Admiration and the Development of Moral Virtue." In Andre Grahle and Alfred Archer (Eds.) *The Moral Psychology of Admiration* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2019).

prolonged exposure to the exemplar[17]) this means that our admiration can motivate both the imitation and the habituation stages, but the motivational work admiration does only goes as far as the habituation stage. Wilson explains by way of example, "But if the explanation for Ben's truth-telling is his desire to imitate Anne, then this reveals that Ben's values and reasons are not (yet) those that would be expected of a morally virtuous agent." To become virtuous, Ben has to act for the right reasons appropriate to the virtue in question. So, on Wilson's account, it is only *after* stage three (habituation) where the motivation ultimately matters for the purposes of transforming habits into virtues. This means, as long as the motivation that compels a person to act well is not at odds with virtue development long term (such as by cultivating malice or licensing greed to motivate Ben to do the 'good' deed), then motivational revisions will be made later anyway. In Chapter Six, I outline the stages of my own developmental account involving emulation, called the Graded Engagement Account.

(1-b) Nature and Acquisition. Thus far, I described the basic motivational story Zagzebski tells about admiration. Namely, she proposes admiration is the solution to bridging the gap between 'good actions from pleasure' and 'good actions for their own sake.' I agreed about the centrality of imitative action in moral development and about the helpful role admiration plays in inclining us toward the good when admiration is rightly directed, and I argued that her concerns about motivation in imitative action are placed too early in the virtue developmental story. We do not need to smuggle virtue-conducive motivations into imitation since (a) mimetic pleasure is not at odds with long-

[17] My own explanation of these stages is present in my Graded Engagement Account in Chapter Six.

term virtue-development, and (b) explicit reflective engagement with reasons (*prohairesis*) is a precondition of virtue that will provide another opportunity for motivational revision later in development. In this section, I aim to clarify a few more features of Zagzebski's project, to engage some of the questions about exemplar imitation I raised in the introduction to this chapter.

First, it should be noted that there has been a shift in Zagzebski's writings on imitation, which was first noted by Alfred Archer. This shift is that, early in her writing on admiration, Zagzebski described a *necessary* connection between admiration and imitation.[18] To admire a person, she wrote, is to see them as "imitably attractive…and to feel a desire to imitate the person."[19] On this account, admiration is, under another description, the desire to emulate. Exemplars are defined as "those persons who are the most imitable, and they are the *most imitable*[20] because they are the most admirable."[21] More recently, Zagzebski has clarified (or possibly revised) her position as that the desire to imitate is not a necessary but a typical feature of admiration.[22] She writes, "I do not want to say that the urge to imitate or emulate is a necessary component of the feeling of admiration, but calling attention to the reactive response reminds us of what it feels like to have the emotion to which we typically respond in that way."[23] This adjustment seems

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[18] See Zagzebski's publications from 2006, 2007, and 2012.

[19] Linda Zagzebski, *Epistemic Authority: A Theory of Trust, Authority, and Autonomy in Belief* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 89.

[20] Author's italics, not my own

[21] Linda Zagzebski, "Exemplarist Virtue Theory," *Metaphilosophy* 41, no. 1-2 (2010): 41-57.

[22] Alfred Archer, "Admiration and Motivation," 141-2.

[23] Linda Zagzebski, *Exemplarist Moral Theory*, 35.

more defensible, since even in non-deviant forms of admiration, imitative action is not always fitting. Regardless, for Zagzebski, the desire to imitate is characteristic of admiration. In most cases, we should be moved to imitate what we admire.

Where this shift impacts her developmental story is that admiration and imitation can pull apart, as I described earlier. So, there are some cases in which we admire an exemplar, but we do not also feel compelled to imitate. This just means there is a broader set of instances of admiration than of actions elicited from that admiration. This seems right. For every handful of times I admire an honest person, I may feel compelled to likewise act honestly only a couple of those times. For situations in which I should be honest, the goal of training my admiration would involve increasing my response rate—or the number of times I act on my admiration, as a bigger percentage of the total number of times I feel admiring toward someone. Likely, this training becomes increasingly important as we age and become more resistant learners, or are less dispositionally imitative in our actions because we already have settled habits. This is a different pedagogical goal than for children, for whom our concern is generally not increasing imitative response rates but helping children to imitate the right actions at the right times, rather than just any actions, indiscriminately.

Another key feature of Zagzebski's project is a restriction she places on the desire to emulate: We only desire to emulate those whose excellences are *acquired*, rather than those with natural talents. The consequence of this position is that Zagzebski draws the lines between prosocial emotions in a different way than cognitive scientists do. She does so for good reasons, which I will address shortly. But a consequence of her position is that it has become trickier to have cross-disciplinary conversations with cognitive

scientists, who mean something different by the same emotion concepts than do Zagzebski and those who follow in her wake, without first stipulating whose "admiration" you mean.

Briefly, the division goes like this: In the cognitive science literature, the major emotion distinction is between moral and non-moral appreciation. Jonathan Haidt and Sara Algoe (2009), who were among the first to divide the landscape of prosocial emotions, divide things this way: "Admiration is sometimes used in ordinary English as a response to moral exemplars but…we define admiration as a response to non-moral excellence, whereas elevation is a response to moral excellence."[24] So, *elevation* is what we have been calling admiration—an appreciative perspective on the morally excellent. Algoe and Haidt divide the emotions[25] in this way for two reasons: (1) First, they recognize that "disgust" is a fitting opposing emotion to emulation (moral failures), but not to admiration (non-moral failures). We are elevated by charity, for example, and are disgusted by malice. Both are moral. Conversely, while we would admire an extraordinary bicyclist, we would not feel disgusted if a person chose *not* to be an extraordinary bicyclist, even if he or she could have been. So, the opposing emotion gives us a clue that the objects of the emotions—moral versus non-moral—mean there is more than one emotion at play. (2) Furthermore, Haidt and Algoe have observed the action-potential of admiration and elevation to be different. The actions elicited by elevation are

[24] Sara Algoe and Jonathan Haidt, "Witnessing Excellence in Action: The 'Other-Praising' Emotions of Elevation, Gratitude, and Admiration," *Journal of Positive Psychology*, 4, no. 2 (2009): 105-127.

[25] As a reminder, I describe admiration as both a dispositional attitude and an emotion (the feeling of admiring). For Zagzebski (2006, p. 60) and Ben-Ze'ev (2000, p. 56), Archer (2018), and the cognitive scientists I mention above, admiration (and elevation for Haidt and Algoe) is an emotion. Regardless, I describe admiration's dispositional relationship to imitation, which is a positioned shared by all the names listed.

prosocial affiliative behaviors, or other-directed good actions (i.e. actions that do not benefit the self). Conversely, admiration (which is directed at only non-moral excellences) motivates self-improvement.[26]

In response, Zagzebski writes that "'admiration' is a perfectly good term for our emotional responses to both morally and non-morally exemplary persons."[27] So, she collapses elevation into the broader category of admiration. She does not see the distinction of self-benefitting and other-benefitting actions elicited as one warranting a new emotion term. I think this is a fair point, particularly when we are speaking of virtues. Aristotle moves seamlessly between ethics and politics because, in most cases, a virtuous person helps both himself and his city to flourish. It is true that certain virtues are motivated altruistically—with the good of others in mind (like generosity)—and some are motivated by one's own good (like temperance), but both are part of the virtuous life so the distinction as articulated in terms of moral/non-moral is not a helpful one. As for "disgust" opposing only elevation, Zagzebski argues that this emotion does not map well onto virtues. On Haidt's view, disgust and elevation are scalar concepts on the purity scale, and Zagzebski writes that "the purity scale does not coincide with the virtue-vice scale."[28] What this shows me is that if perhaps we are talking about morality more expansively than the virtues, including natural laws or a concept of transgression, then the division between elevation and admiration might become a useful one.

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[26] Ibid. See also Diana Onu, Thomas Kessler, and Joanne R. Smith, "Admiration: A Conceptual Review," *Emotion Review*, 8, no. 3 (July 2016): 218-230.

[27] Linda Zagzebski, *Exemplarist Moral Theory*, 41.

[28] Linda Zagzebski, *Exemplarist Moral Theory*, 43.

Kristjánsson actually does suggest we employ an elevation term for cases of moral awe—for "an attraction to transpersonal moral ideals."[29] The idea is that admiration does not satisfy the range of responses to exemplary persons. Kristjánsson describes how, when someone is morally excellent, we might respond *not* by admiring that person, directing our appreciation toward the goodness of that person and wishing to emulate him or her, but instead we feel an "intense appreciation that such depth of goodness could exist in the world."[30] We are moved by something like moral beauty or a transpersonal ideal that is appealing to us.[31]

Elevation can be morally productive, too, if we are drawn to participate in some way, as Kristjánsson thinks we are. I should note that the lines Kristjánsson draws between admiration and elevation are not the same as those Haidt draws because of various conceptual infelicities Kristjánsson identifies. Principally, Kristjánsson thinks Haidt's concept of "elevation" actually captures two separate emotion concepts—one which is actually just a type of admiration (the moral subtype of admiration), and the other which is the transpersonal emotion he describes.

As a reminder from Chapter One, I agree with both Kristjánsson and Zagzebski that moral admiration need not be called something else (elevation). And this is a helpful stance, since I aim to contribute to a philosophical literature that does, in large part, follow Zagzebski's lead here.[32] I also agree about the need for an additional emotion

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[29] Kristjan Kristjánsson, "Emotions targeting moral exemplarity: Making sense of the logical geography of admiration, emulation and elevation" *Theory and Research in Education*, 15, no. 1 (2017): 20-37.

[30] Ibid, 29.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Alfred Archer, "Admiration and Motivation," *Emotion Review* 11, no. 2 (2018): 140-150.

concept—Kristjánsson's version of elevation. Like Kristjánsson, I think that elevation is an emotion, rather than another DA, since it is quasi-perceptual. I do not think we develop attitudes, or intentional postures, of elevation toward people. There are cases in which the DA of admiration toward a person inclines us to feel elevation instead of admiring, and there are other cases in which we do not, or have not, held an attitude of admiration toward a particular person, yet we feel elevation upon the incidence of something he or she does. In cases of elevation, the actions elicited will be less imitative (in the narrow, mimetic sense of other-indexed actions, inspired by that single person's good actions). Rather the actions will be good in whatever way the agent happens to respond, as a consequence of his reflections on goodness. Kristjánsson supplies an example of this in his own life. His father's kindness leads him to feel elevated, which motivates him "to strive for such goodness myself because of the attractiveness of the relevant ideal rather than its attractiveness through the mediation of my father."[33]

A final note on elevation is an observation about an emotion that takes as its object the "transpersonal ideals."[34] In the classical tradition, there are three such ideals—goodness, truth, and beauty—and these map onto the three major exemplar types I named: sage (truth), saint (goodness), and hero (beauty). I suspect that elevation with respect to each of these exemplar sub-types would primarily result in reflection on the ideal named. Interestingly, Kristjánsson's example of elevation involved his father, his

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I am flagging Archer here because he makes a similar comment to mine about his commitment to Zagzebski's picture—in part, out of agreement with how she divides things and, in part, to contribute to a philosophical literature that assumes the emotion divisions that Zagzebski delineates.

[33] Kristjan Kristjánsson, "Emotions targeting moral exemplarity," 29.

[34] Ibid.

mundane exemplar. So, it seems that anyone's good actions can serve as the occasion for this sort of emotional response.

Preceding with the earlier inquiry, Zagzebski proposes that the major division among objects of admiration is not moral versus non-moral but *natural* versus *acquired* excellences.[35] She makes this case on the basis that it feels different to encounter someone who has worked to achieve some excellence, versus a person who just happens to be naturally excellent.[36] For example, when I meet a peer whom I consider my relative equal in natural intellectual abilities, if this person writes a commendable essay, I am more motivated to work hard to write one myself than I would be if this person were a *miraculum*, with natural intellectual gifts that greatly exceeded my own.[37] In the first case, I perceive the excellence as attainable or open to me. In the second case, the excellence is far off and seemingly inimitable. I might admire the second person without the disposition to imitate, but more likely, I will feel something else, like awe (if I am impressed) or disinterest (if the excellence fails to capture my imagination).

On Zagzebski's account, the opposite emotions for natural versus acquired excellences are also different. If a person fails to meet a certain standard of natural ability, then, since this is ostensibly not directly within his or her control to change, we might feel pity, if anything at all. However, if a person fails to meet a certain standard of ability he or she ought to have acquired, we may feel contempt or scorn.[38] The idea is that, if something is within a person's control, then we assume that he or she is

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[35] Linda Zagzebski, *Exemplarist Moral Theory*, 37.

[36] Linda Zagzebski, Gifford Lecture 4. Emulation.

[37] Nietzsche 1996, 86.

[38] Linda Zagzebski, Gifford Lecture 4. Emulation.

responsible or culpable and hold that person accountable. We tend not to do this if the lack of excellence is not within his or her control.

I have two replies to Zagzebski on this distinction: (a) First, I affirm the idea that it feels different to encounter an acquired versus a natural excellence—that is, in cases for which I can tell the difference. For example, when I have students who are poorly-positioned for classroom success because of learning disabilities or attentional issues, yet they work hard and perform well anyway, I perceive these students as much more admirable than my students for whom classroom success comes easily. This is because part of what I admire in excellent people is the work that it took to become so. If these struggling students perform poorly, I am sympathetic or slightly aggrieved on their behalf, but I do not feel contempt. However, if I discover that a talented student is being lazy, then, yes, I do feel frustration and occasionally something like contempt. Moreover, when it is brought to my attention how much a person overcame to become excellent in a particular way, this amplifies the admiration I experience toward him. If, instead, I learn that this person was a child prodigy or had the best resources available for training, I might feel curious or impressed by his good deeds, but admiration—particularly, an admiration motivated to become likewise excellent—is unlikely to be my response. My responses to these situations are in line with Zagzebski's predictions. However, this is only the case when I can distinguish the difference between a natural and an acquired excellence, and I often cannot. These categories (natural and acquired) are particularly muddled in the moral domain.

(b) The question of the extent to which moral virtues are acquired or natural is *theoretically* clear: Moral virtues are acquired. This is stipulated by definition. Regardless

of whatever natural character a person inherits and the early habituation she undergoes, she still needs to knowingly and freely choose good actions for the right reasons on a consistent basis, in order to acquire virtues. But *practically*, determining the extent to which moral virtues are acquired or natural is fraught with difficulties. We cannot measure the impact that natural and heteronomous influences play in character formation, and the extent to which they impede or well-position us to develop the virtues. In most cases, we cannot tell the extent to which a person has acquired virtue, or just happens to naturally possess virtue-like tendencies, such as a peaceable demeanor and teachability. Furthermore, our own choices cannot be neatly decoupled from early prosocial influences. For example, a person may have been habituated by early influences to have temperate desires in accordance with reason, yet still not have knowingly chosen to be temperate. In this case, the person's good-like character is not wholly laudable or admirable on the basis of her own doing. Still, we might admire this person, and this can be morally productive for us, by inclining us to imitate regardless of whether or not we can tell the difference.

Accordingly, my concern with Zagzebski's division between natural and acquired is not whether it is theoretically apt. It is. If an apparent virtue is strictly natural, it is inimitable, so my response to it should be (and is) different than to an imitable quality when I am aware of the difference. In the acquired case, I should be motivated to do likewise. In the natural case, I understand myself to be excluded, which is not particularly motivating. Furthermore, how I understand an exemplar's personal responsibility in becoming excellent informs how I perceive my own agency in achieving the same excellence, so the natural/acquired distinction is important for the motivational role of

admiration. Rather, my concern is whether we can usually tell the difference when it comes to virtues. I do not think we can tell, and I do not think we need to in most cases for the sake of spurring on virtue.

A lot of ink has been spilled on this question—the extent to which we are culpable for our bad actions based on the constraints of upbringing and natural character—in the metaphysics of free will literature.[39] In terms of moral responsibility, much is at stake if there is a possibility of someone being held accountable for something that was not at least partially under his or her control. However, for admiration, the extent to which we can accurately discern an agent's responsibility has fewer consequences, particularly if I err on the side of assuming the moral excellence in question is acquired.

If I believe a person has acquired a mature moral virtue and I am mistaken, then I might become vulnerable to learning from and emulating a person who will not consistently direct me in morally productive ways. This is the risk of assuming a virtue is acquired, but this is always a risk in admiring imperfect people. Otherwise, it would actually be a pedagogically useful assumption to maintain that someone's apparent excellences are acquired, in order to motivate imitation. This is because all genuine moral virtue is acquired,[40] and this acquisition is open to us[41] in a way that is not the case for

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[39] See Alfred Mele "A Critique of Pereboom's 'Four Case Argument' for Incompatibilism" and "Manipulation, Compatibilism, and Moral Responsibility," Derek Pereboom "A Manipulation Argument against Compatibilism," Susan Wolf *Freedom within Reason*, Robert Kane *The Significance of Free Will*, and Fischer, Kane, Pereboom and Vargas *Four Views on Free Will*.

[40] Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics* VI.13.

[41] The claim that all moral virtue is acquired is non-controversial. However, the claim that all people can acquire moral virtue is contested in the Aristotle literature. To put it generously, Aristotle's language about virtue development is less than libertarian in the *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics*. He makes strong statements about the importance of early influences and having educational access that, if absent, prevent good character development later on. For those who lack a proper education, he thinks this cannot be retroactively corrected because emotions must be matured before reason. Therefore, what he says about rational choice and moral practice is confined only to those people who meet the early development

other, non-moral qualities. For example, I may lack the physical build necessary to become an outstanding linebacker, but I can become more honest no matter what my physical build. So, unlike in the linebacker case, my perception that I can become more honest, regardless of my background, is a true belief. And it will be a developmentally useful belief to me—even if it involves an inaccurate appraisal of the other person's character—to assume that my exemplar did put in at least a bit of work to acquire that quality, since this belief will motivate virtue development.

Moreover, it can be a damaging assumption for virtue development to assume another person is naturally or socially better-positioned to develop virtues than I am, whether or not this is true. The reason this is true regards Zagzebski's opposing emotions—that this mindset can lead to the opposing emotion of pity (in this case, self-

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and privilege preconditions of virtue (e.g. learners must have enough leisure time for intellectual reflection and have their basic needs met so they are not slavish). Aristotle was lecturing to wealthy young politicians, and likely those people would have been able to acquire virtue, hence why he tends to focus on the means to develop virtues, rather than the exclusion of large swaths of the population. Furthermore, based on Aristotle's biological writings and on the passage about blood in the *Politics*, it is apparent that Aristotle also sees virtue as being restricted by physiology. A person should be born with a certain body arising from particular soils with natural affections that are conducive to virtue-development. On this basis, Mariska Leunissen writes that whether or not a person is well-positioned for virtue is simply a matter of moral luck, for which the majority of people are not lucky. Setting aside Aristotle's view, my own position is that certain natural temperaments (such as high impulsivity or temperaments with disinclinations to imitate) and poor early educational situations make it more difficult to acquire mature, Aristotelian-type virtues, but it is still possible. The moral education literature is somewhat lacking in explanations of how this might be possible. (I make an attempt at the end of Chapter Five.) One helpful resource on this question is Kristjánsson's *Aristotelian Character Education*. His fifth chapter is called "Can Aristotelian Character Education Undo the Effects of Bad Upbringing?." Kristjánsson makes the case that, even if virtue supervenes on a certain physiology or a certain habituated character, the new neuroscience literature shows that our physiology is malleable. Furthermore, he refers to the (albeit scant) literature on religious conversion and radical change as showing possibilities for significant moral change. I share Kristjánsson's optimism about significant moral change. A final note is that regardless of whether a person can acquire mature Aristotelian virtues, she can still morally improve by degree or develop basic virtues relative to her natural abilities. This idea is shared by Sidgwick. He writes, "[T]hough Virtue is distinguished by us from other excellences by the characteristic of voluntariness—it must be to some extent capable of being realised at will when occasion arises—this voluntariness attaches to it only in a certain degree; and . . . , though a man can always do his Duty if he knows it, he cannot always realise virtue in the highest degree" (1907, Part I, ch. 5). Because moral improvement is open to everyone (regardless of whether, as Sidgwick says, it can be "realized in the highest degree"), it is a pedagogically useful assumption to regard all apparent moral virtue as acquired, in order to motivate improvement.

pity). Furthermore, it can encourage the idea that I do not have a responsibility for moral improvement because of my comparatively disadvantaged position in life.[42]

A pedagogical note on the natural/acquired distinction is that it is important for educators, coaches, and caretakers to cultivate a habit of attention in learners toward the acquired nature of moral virtues. An educator can do this by drawing attention to the process the exemplar underwent to become excellent in a particular way, then inviting the learner to participate in that process. An example of how to do this quite naturally is in the athletic context. For example, a coach can lead a player by saying something like "This exemplary soccer player has great strength. You can build strength, too, in these ways, just as the exemplar has done." Then in practice, a coach can daily impose these actions on the player to habituate them, as well as draw the player to see and appreciate the logic behind these actions so that the player desires to take ownership of these actions herself. In the same way, a teacher can point out the developmental aspects of a particular virtue—e.g. that we practice being brave in small ways in order to habituate the right disposition, to prepare ourselves to be brave in more challenging contexts as our first impulse. It is important to draw attention to the acquired nature of moral virtues because, in observing a person who exceeds you in some way, it can be discouraging to notice a character gap without knowing whether it is a bridgeable gap or how, practically, to bridge it.

[42] A likely exception is for personalities that are prone to scrupulosity or that fail to extend any grace to themselves. In these cases, it might be helpful for a man to notice, for example, that he is temperamentally high-strung and that patience might a virtue that is more natural or is more facilely acquired in others by comparison. In most cases, it will not be a productive attitude toward a morally excellent other to assume their virtue is anything but acquired.

(1-c) The Specifics of Imitation. Imitation has two major forms: (i) the appropriation of the imitated quality and (ii) the representation of that quality.[43] (i) In the first instance, the imitator 'takes up' an action or a quality of the imitated. The action is both causally and existentially dependent upon the imitated person.[44] The imitated person is the origin of the action, and the action is a good imitation only insofar as it is an effective copy of the original action. An example is when a young child puts on his father's shoes and walks about the house, impersonating his father's voice and posture. The child has appropriated the actions and qualities of his father, and when we observe the child's actions, we are drawn to think of the father. (ii) In the second instance, the imitator represents or "borrows a quality in order to mark or represent its owner."[45] A representative imitation has more reflective distance. An example is that I observe my father's kindness toward people in service positions. Then I represent him in my future actions without appropriating those same actions by being kind in other ways. Because I represent his actions rather than mimic them, I become the 'middle term' between my father's actions and my own actions. I bring myself into the imitation, representing a person in ways that makes sense to me and my context. If a different person served as middle term to the same actions, the resulting actions would be different. Because of this, there is no direct causal dependence on the original actions.

Plato writes of representative imitation regarding the imitation of poets. Actors represent the actions and qualities of those they imitate, and this practice can shape them

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[43] Gabriel Zoran, "Between Appropriation and Representation: Aristotle and the Concept of Imitation in Greek Thought," *Philosophy and Literature* 39, no. 2 (2015): 468-486.

[44] Ibid, 469.

[45] Ibid, 469.

in worrisome ways. Another worry is that the gods are often misrepresented in poetry. In Book X of the *Republic*, Socrates casts out imitation from the *kallipolis* (beautiful city) entirely, since imitation is a derivative presentation of reality, removed from the truth. However, it is unclear whether this is an ironic conclusion, since Socrates is pressed by the conversation to make this claim, and throughout the *Republic*, he spins myths. In a recent article, Gabriel Zoran makes the claim that only representative imitation is present in Plato, not imitative appropriation.[46] My response is that, while there is no direct treatment of mimetic appropriation in Plato, it is present in various texts. For example, in the *Laws*, the Athenian stranger describes a form of education that involves the recitation of poetry, which is an instance of appropriation. Furthermore, it seems that Socrates' young interlocutors are more than eager to follow him around, imitating Socrates' philosophical work, such as through self-narration.[47]

Aristotle is more forthright in speaking of both forms of imitation. He shares Plato's worries about poetic representation, recommending that only noble men with noble deeds be represented in poems. Moreover, Aristotle speaks of mimetic appropriation in the *Poetics*, describing how we are natural imitators, who learn "at first by imitation."[48]

In general, young children mimic in the first way—by appropriating actions. This is both because they genuinely seem to enjoy parroting words and actions, and because they lack reflective distance and the ability to intentionally represent concepts (like

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[46] Gabriel Zoran, Between Appropriation and Representation, 468.

[47] Anne-Marie Schultz. Chapter Four in her forthcoming book project.

[48] Aristotle. *Poetics* 1448b6.

charity or integrity) in their own actions. Infants and young children are unable to ask how they might represent a certain good or value in their own context, but they can imitate caretakers by appropriating behaviors. However, just because mimetic appropriation is typical of children, I do not also believe that representative imitation is only appropriate for mature learners. Sometimes appropriation is the best mimetic response, at any age. An example of this is learning how to cook a dish. Appropriative imitation is appropriate here because we do not want to 'represent' adding butter in our own execution of the recipe; we want to add butter exactly as we should. Of course, context sensitivity is important for mimetic appropriation because, for example, plagiarism of an admired author is problematic. If instead I were to represent certain features of the author's work using tools he or she uses, like kennings or gerunds, this is an appropriate kind of imitation. Or, I might appropriate an idea as a direct quotation, extending credit by citation. Another example of choosing between these two types of imitation is that I may 'take up' or appropriate a teaching strategy of my admired colleague that cultivates good classroom culture. Rather than reflecting on the idea of having good classroom culture and representing this idea with my own unique actions, it may be best to simply appropriate what my colleague does with permission, although even asking permission may often be unnecessary.

Developmentally, most instances of imitation are naïve and unreflective early on, but it should not stay this way. Over the course of a person's moral education, she should become more aware and selective of the actions she appropriates or represents. And she should be invited to dialogue about how these actions poorly position or prepare her character for virtue or vice. Imitation should not remain as mindless copying.

Kristjánsson puts it this way: "[I]f character educationists do not aim higher than simply wanting to replace copycat vice with copycat virtue, they seem to be presenting an unsophisticated, undemanding and uncritical – almost infantilising – model of emulation, essentially devoid of cognitive content."[49] Instead, imitation employed in character education should be accompanied by critical reflection about good deeds, and strategies should be used to move a learner from imitating virtues to possessing virtues herself. I examine the process of how to mature imitation in a step-wise fashion in section C.

A final comment on the distinction between imitation types is that both can be emulative. Emulation is a form of imitation for which "the emulated person is perceived as a model in some respect."[50] As I described in chapter two, on my own account (and on Zagzebski's revised account), our admiration disposes us to emulate. This emulation can appropriate or represent qualities or actions of the admired person, depending on, as I described above, the needs of a particular situation and the maturity of the learner. Zagzebski writes that admiration disposes us to emulate the admired person "in the way she is admired."[51] This means that if the person I admire is honest, and I admire her honesty, then I will want to be honest myself. Seeing as how some situations do not warrant my exact replication of the admired person's actions, I may be pressed to represent honesty in my actions, rather than to appropriate the admired person's actions. Or, I might do both. For example, I admirably observe that my father's system for recording taxes is accurate and is therefore honest. This compels me to both appropriate

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[49] Kristján Kristjánsson, "Emulation and the Use of Role Models in Moral Education," *Journal of Moral Education*, 35, no. 1 (2006), 40.

[50] Linda Zagzebski, *Exemplarist Moral Theory,* 131.

[51] Linda Zagzebski, *Exemplarist Moral Theory,* 43.

my father's tax system as well as seek out additional ways to be honest in other spheres of life. Both are instances of emulation.

Another question on the nature of imitation is whether we imitate people, traits, or qualities. In *Exemplarist Moral Theory*, Linda Zagzebski writes that an "admired *person* is imitably attractive." We admire people, not traits, although what we technically imitate is the trait or the action, not the person in toto. Zagzebski also explicitly remarks in a Gifford lecture that it does not matter whether we say we admire the person or the trait because these refer to the same thing: our appreciation of an embodied excellence.[52] In a 2017 article, Kristjánsson addresses this "slide in Zagzebski's account between admiration for excellences and admiration for people exhibiting those excellences."[53] He writes that, while it is strange that she does not provide an argument for why she is able to move seamlessly between person and quality, ordinary language is on her side as making "no clear distinction between admiration for persons and qualities."[54] Moreover, he does not think this distinction is necessary for understanding the process of learning from exemplars.

The question of whether more precision is needed in our descriptions of the objects of admiration and imitation is a difficult one. I agree with Kristjánsson that common language does not offer clarity here. Furthermore, excellent people, rather than unembodied excellent qualities, are what elicit admiration. We do not speak of admiring

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[52] Linda Zagzebski, Gifford Lecture 2.

[53] Kristján Kristjánsson, "Emotions targeting moral exemplarity: making sense of the logical geography of admiration, emulation and elevation', *Theory and Research in Education*, 15, no. 1 (2017), 20-37.

[54] Ibid.

qualities detached from people. (e.g. I do not admire the notion of honesty.) Instead, unembodied excellences may elevate us, to use Kristjánsson's alternate emotion term.

It may be the case that Zagzebski's direct reference account of virtues makes the quality/person distinction a not especially fruitful one. A good quality is that which characterizes an admired person, and we know this quality by direct reference to the person. However, I find the lack of distinction in Zagzebski's work puzzling because while there is no distinction in common language, there is a difference in how it feels to admire Abraham Lincoln generally, and Abraham Lincoln's honesty in particular. The first is a type of appreciation for, or an amorphous attention directed at, Lincoln, and the second is a qualified attention on Lincoln that is more actionable because it has already identified the imitable quality.

The quality/person distinction in our admiration is also pedagogically important. Part of what often happens over the course of admiration's maturation is the development of a more fine-grained sense of what is good about a person. This development at the level of our admiration is necessary for moving us beyond imitation to taking ownership for the virtue itself. Past the point of the initial elicitation of admiration in a mature admirer, our conscious reflections on that admiration should involve a detachment of person from that person's actions and qualities in order to productively engage with an exemplar beyond a naïve mimetic impulse. This is important so that we can imitate the right qualities, or even just imitate in a more focused way than we would in seeing a person as generally admirable. It is plausible that the immature emotion of admiring might remain at the level of the person, and the DA will in many cases, too. But it is helpful when the DA of admiration matures to incorporate narrower attention on the traits

and qualities worthy of this type of attention. Second, this focus on the quality, rather than the person, is important for developing the global[55] version of a trait. I can admire various people's honesty, exhibited in a wide array of situations, and this can form my practical imagination for honesty and motivate me to develop the virtue in different contexts, rather than emotionally habituating the trait in the single (or multiple) instances the exemplar happens to display to me. So, while it is true that there is ambiguity in common speech about the objects of admiration, the development of our admiration should often involve a narrowing of focus on imitable actions and qualities.

A final thought is that depending on the account of virtues undertaken, it may be more helpful to direct our mature imitation at a quality versus at an action, or vice versa. On the trait view, imitating a quality is more fitting. Just as an actor imitates the malevolence of a villain and his performance is evaluated by how closely he mirrors the traits of the person his role depicts, so, too, do we 'put on' traits and dispositions of good people and learn to 'see out' from them, as I described in terms of the Stanislavski method in chapter three. On a 'virtues as skills' account, we would more so aim to appropriate actions, not qualities, learning to master these actions ourselves as a means of becoming virtuous.

Throughout this section, I alluded to the fact that imitation is the beginning of character development, and internal work, such as the engagement with proper motivations for actions, must follow. But according to Zagzebski, some of this internal work begins during emulation. This is because our motivation to emulate an admired

[55] A global virtue or trait is one which characterizes the person in every avenue of life. e.g. A person will be honest while speaking to her parents, while compiling her works cited, while taking tests, and while filing taxes. If, instead, she had the local trait of honesty, she might be honest only while taking tests, for example.

person includes the desire to "emulate the admired person's motive for the act as well as the behavioral component of the act, assuming that part of what she admires in the person is the motive."[56] As a reminder, I challenged Zagzebski's virtue developmental story as placing motivational work too early in the process. I argued that since virtue development involves a deliberative reasoning stage,[57] there is space for motivational revision, and the only mimetic motivations that are problematic are those that obstruct good motivational development later on (such as malice or glory-seeking). However, Zagzebski's point here is a good one. It seems that part of what I emulate when I appropriate an exemplar's good deeds is the spirit in which I perceive these deeds were done by the exemplar. For example, if I 'put on' Beowulf's bravery in a race, my working assumption is that Beowulf's heroic actions were altruistic, and I step into that mindset. Unless my imitation were purely superficial—as imitation is in the call-and-response mimicking that infants do—it would be difficult to avoid imitating the internal state of the exemplar as part of my imitation of the action. This is one of Socrates' worries about imitation in *Republic* III—that the actors themselves, in imitating the actions of bad characters are internally transformed by those actions. Imitation engages our minds and our bodies.

There are three qualifiers to this observation. First, I wrote that we appropriate an exemplar's good deeds in the "spirit in which *I perceive* they were done" because unless the exemplar clearly and truthfully articulates his reasons for his seemingly virtuous actions, I lack access to these reasons. For example, I might think Beowulf acted from an

[56] Linda Zagzebski, *Exemplarist Moral Theory*, 135.

[57] Moral virtue is called *hexis prohairetike*—a state in accordance with choice (*NE* 1106b36-a2). Without deliberation, which involves an awareness of reasons to perform or abstain from a given action, on Aristotle's account, the action is not freely acquired.

altruistic motivation, when he really acted from the love of attention, or from some combination of these two motivations. It may be the case that I take myself to be emulating an exemplar's reasons for actions yet be mistaken about what those reasons actually are. Insofar as I imitate the suitable motivations (e.g. the perceived altruism instead of Beowulf's attention-seeking desire), this can be a constructive practice for me. A second qualifier is that, just as the imitation of an action or a quality is insufficient for virtue, so, too, is the imitation of a motivation. At this point, the learner still needs to take ownership for the action and motivations, apart from the emulated person.

A final qualifier is one Zagzebski makes—that emotions can be reasons.[58] She writes, "Assuming that a reason is something on the basis of which a rational person can determine whether *p*, then judgments of this kind are reasons for other judgments, such as the judgment, 'That act is wrong.' So the expression of an emotion in a judgment like 'That act is disgusting' can be a reason for the judgment, 'That act is wrong.' A judgment based on disgust is based on a reason."[59] Zagzebski makes this claim in the context of emulation for two reasons—first to assert that the emotion of admiration is a suitable motivation for imitative action, and second to explain that our emulation of an exemplar, which includes the exemplar's motivations, can be emotional in character. My response to Zagzebski is qualified agreement. Emotions can be appropriate motivations for virtuous actions. Indeed, Aristotle describes *all* moral virtues as being done from rightly-formed desires, not from the reasons that support them. Reasons are engaged at the continence stage, prior to moral virtue. Afterwards, the morally virtuous person acts from

[58] Linda Zagzebski, *Exemplarist Moral Theory*, 129.

[59] Linda Zagzebski, *Exemplarist Moral Theory*, 144.

well-formed emotions. But as stated, Zagzebski's claim permits that, if our disgust happens to track the right things, this is a sufficient condition to qualify the seemingly virtuous action that accompanies it as a virtuous action. My challenge is that the developmental story for that emotion (disgust, compassion, or etc.) must pass through a deliberate rational stage in order that it qualify the motivation as virtuous. Otherwise, it may be a habituated, imitative, or natural emotion, rather than an emotion the learner has intentionally acquired. Moreover, Zagzebski's example here (a disgust response serving as a reason for a judgment) is not a strong example, since disgust is notoriously resistant to rational correction.

(2) Value Promotion

(2.a.) Alfred Archer's Account. The Value Promotion View is Alfred Archer's account, offered as an alternative to Zagzebski's imitation view. On Zagzebski's imitation view, the desire to imitate is a "fundamental feature of the emotion itself."[60] Archer puts pressure on this claim. Instead, he proposes that approbation, rather than a desire to emulate, is the most basic motivational feature of our admiration and that imitation is derivative. We are motivated to "promote the value that is judged to be present in the object of admiration."[61]

To clarify, Archer does not reject the view that imitation is critical for moral learning, nor does he challenge the claim that we often imitate the people we admire. Rather, Archer's claim is that the *primary* motivation of admiration is value promotion or

[60] Alfred Archer, "Admiration and Motivation," *Emotion Review* 11, no. 2 (2018), 143.

[61] Ibid. 140.

alignment, rather than the desire to emulate. This is the more basic motivation because to admire (i.e. to appreciably perceive a person) lends itself to a kind of endorsement of that person and the values he or she exemplifies, while, "[a]t best, [imitation] looks like a feature that is typical of a small subset of cases of admiration, rather than a fundamental feature of the emotion itself."[62] Besides imitation, admiration can result in applause, the enhanced reputation of the admired, and praise.[63]

An example of value promotion is that, because I admire Greta Thurnberg, the 16-year-old Swedish environmental activist, I am motivated to likewise care about stewarding the Earth well and to value efforts to stall climate change. This is because Greta's skillful climate advocacy (i.e. the excellence I recognize in her) is what I appreciatively perceive about her. While an appreciative perception is not itself a judgment of value, it would incline me toward making such a judgment.[64]

On Archer's account, I may also respond to Greta through praise, imitation, or with some other action. Imitating Greta would be particularly beneficial for my moral development, as it would enable me to practice becoming excellent as she is. But these responses are secondary to my endorsement of Greta's advocacy, which is basic to my admiration of her.

(2.b.) Critiquing the Value-Promotion Account. I have two main critiques of Archer's view—a virtue type argument, and a dishabituation argument. The virtue type argument is this: There are certain accounts of virtue for which it is not always or even

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[62] Ibid. 143.

[63] Ibid. 144-5.

[64] Robert Roberts & Michael Spezio, "Admiring Moral Exemplars," 10.

usually true that our admiration involves an endorsement of value. Consider structural accounts of virtue. On a structural virtue account, there are courageous villains and practically wise thieves. It is possible to admire the bravery of a villain without endorsing the villain's values. A practically wise thief values money above other goods (such as integrity and charity toward one's neighbors), and my structural admiration for his or her practical wisdom does not include the endorsement of, or alignment with, these values. Someone might respond that structural virtues themselves are valuable, and that this structural excellence is what I value in my admiration of that person. However, this does not constitute the sort of moral 'alignment' Archer describes. He describes this alignment as an endorsement of the person—in a single virtue or in a more general sense—and I would not be able to endorse a brave villain.

My own account of virtues is non-structural. On my view, if a person has a mature virtue (like courage), then this person is oriented toward the right ends, most of the time, in the given respect. However, most people do not possess strong mature virtues, and it is likely that many of our exemplars also possess weak or moderate virtuous dispositional traits. Therefore, on my account, it is likely that my admiration of a person will often need to be divorced from what the admired person values. A common example of this, which I supplied in Chapter Two, is the admiration of athletic heroes. An athlete may be courageous for the purpose of winning glory. I can admire this person without the approbation or endorsement of glory as a suitable goal.

The dishabituation argument against value promotion is this: Admired people have a range of impacts on our values. Sometimes, they strengthen our normatively appropriate attitudes. An example is that I already value honesty, and an exemplar

increases this value or makes it more salient to me at the moment. Other times, admired people supply us with new values. Caretakers do this with young children, and this continues to happen throughout our lives. In the Greta Thurnberg case, I am sure many people will come to value environmental stewardship in ways they did not previously, because of their admiration for her.

A third way in which exemplars can impact value is by dishabituation, or by way of a gadfly type of response. By dishabituation, I mean that exemplars can be corrective of non-virtuous habits, leading us to reflect on what we value so we can change our course. An example is that I admire a loving mother who attends my church. I notice that she is very generous with her time, and this surprises me, since my habitual manner is to be guarded about my own schedule. In this case, I am not drawn to value charity of time as she does, but my admiration leads me to ask questions about my own values and commitments. Admiration does not always lead me to value what the exemplar values. Sometimes it only gets me so far as to question what it is that I value. However, I should clarify that I think this is only a problem for Archer's view if I admire a *person* and discover a new quality in him or her. I might have a dispositional attitude of admiration toward a person and discover a novel trait. If instead, I admire a person in a narrower way (admiring just her generosity or charity) then I would already have an appreciative perspective on that quality, endorsing it. In the narrower case, value-promotion is basic.

(2.c.) Value-Promotion and Pedagogy. If it is the case that admiration's connection to emulation is tenuous, as Archer claims, then much of the work exemplars do is epistemic, rather than motivational. Exemplars show us what is good or honorable and can help shape virtue-relevant or prosocial attitudes, such as attitudes of helpfulness

or teachability, but they do not dependably play a direct causal role in our habituation of relevant actions.

If admiration is not a dependable means to emulation, we need to think creatively about how to elicit imitation apart from the cultivation of admiration. This will not be very hard. On Archer's account, I can count on admiration to do epistemic work—reinforcing what I pay attention to or value. This valuing may incline me to act in certain ways, including imitation, but as Archer clarifies, this motivation is a secondary feature of my admiration. Admiration might not always do the work of motivating imitation, but I think this is fine for two reasons: First, young students spontaneously imitate without admiration because it is naturally pleasurable for them to do so. Thus, even if models are unadmired, they can elicit imitative action just by being present. Second, students can be instructed to imitate an admired person. In an academic curriculum, students are often instructed to imitate masters' works, such as by reciting poems by Chaucer or writing their own short stories modeled after Hemingway. In the same way, they can be invited to participate in good actions, as exemplars have done before them, or as the teachers are able to model. An example is learning about Mother Theresa before gathering as a class to help serve the poor in a soup kitchen. Imitation can be reinforced so its relationship to admiration is less tenuous.

(3) Other Actions Elicited: A Collection of Empirical Findings

In this section, I provide a brief overview of empirical findings on the motivational potential of admiration. As a reminder, I described earlier how Jonathan Haidt and Sara Algoe's accounts of admiration and elevation differ from those of Zagzebski and Kristjánsson and from my own. In general, psychologists tend to define

admiration as Haidt and Algoe do—"as an emotion elicited by individuals of competence exceeding standards" that is specifically non-moral.[65] In contrast, elevation is elicited by the morally exceptional.[66] Zagzebski, Kristjánsson, and I make no distinction for moral and non-moral excellences and instead distinguish between acquired and non-acquired excellences. I, following Kristjánsson, also have a separate emotion word elicited by excellence that cause us to think about transpersonal ideals, rather than about the person who instantiates these ideals. For a fuller explanation of these distinctions, see the "Nature and Acquisition" section (A-1-b) of this chapter.

On Haidt and Algoe's account, elevation (i.e. moral admiration) motivates "prosocial and affiliative behavior."[67] Some examples include attempts to help others, to be kind, to associate with others and form bonds, or to hug. On their account, "moral" actions are those which "do not benefit the self,"[68] a somewhat unhelpful qualifier when engaging their project from a virtue ethics standpoint. Assuming non-self-benefitting actions are those motivated primarily by altruism (rather than by something like self-improvement), some examples of such actions are donating to charities, listening patiently to a friend, or mowing the lawn for your family. This would exclude actions like practicing temperance with sweets or managing your own money well, which involve virtues but are not self-effacing in the "moral" way they mean. On these grounds,

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[65] Diana Onu, Thomas Kessler, & Joanne R. Smith, Admiration: A Conceptual Review, *Emotion Review* 8, no. 3 (July 2016), 219.

[66] Jonathan Haidt & Sara Algoe, "Witnessing excellence in action: the 'other-praising' emotions of elevation, gratitude, and admiration," *Journal of Positive Psychology* 4, no. 2 (2009): 105-127.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Ibid.

prosocial and affiliative behaviors are elicited by a subset of virtuous actions, those which can be described as non-self-benefitting.

Haidt and Algoe also performed studies to measure the action tendencies of admiration (non-moral). Their methods included a combination of (a) recall tasks for various prosocial emotions (e.g. "Recount a time when you experienced admiration"), (b) eliciting admiration by having participants watch a video in the lab, and (c) observing events in participants' daily lives.[69] These mixed-methods are helpful because self-reports can be misleading about the actual action potential of an emotion. If a person's admiration is brought explicitly to their attention, they might report that they would respond to an excellent person with a good action of their own, believing that they ought to. Since Haidt and Algoe introduced "real world" scenarios and elicited the emotion in the lab without naming it, the actual motivational potential was evaluated. Haidt and Algoe found that admiration elicits emulation and a motivation for self-improvement, as well as a desire to "tell others how great the person was, thereby potentially enhancing the person's reputation."[70] Again, we have an association between excellence and popularity. In chapter two, I examined Erika Carlson's finding that exemplars were described as having high likeability or popularity, and I questioned the consequences of this fact—namely, that because excellent people are often popular, we sometimes incorrectly use popularity as a heuristic for identifying exemplars. I also asked which qualities are perceived as excellent. Great baseball skills might make a person more popular than gentleness, self-control, or chastity.

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[69] Ibid.

[70] Ibid.

Additional findings for the action potential of admiration are as follows. Admiration is viewed as an "energizing emotion," motivating self-improvement, rather than one that results in passivity.[71] Also, admiration can be distinguished from adoration in that it elicits emulation, rather than a desire to affiliate with the target, as adoration elicits.[72] My suspicion is that in many cases in which we admire someone, we also adore him or her, directing our attention at the person and desiring to affiliate, rather than simply emulating the excellence identified. An example is Apollodorus' affections toward Socrates. At the beginning of the *Symposium*, Apollodorus describes how he has "made it [his] job to know exactly what [Socrates] says and does each day."[73] It may be the case that Socrates is a constructive influence for Apollodorus and that Apollodorus benefits from emulating him, but Apollodorus has certainly also crossed over into adoration and is strongly motivated to affiliate with Socrates. This emotion pairing likely occurs a lot, particularly with charismatic leaders, although it is unclear whether 'charismatic' is a fitting description of Socrates' *atopia*.[74] This pairing can be troublesome if adoration either impedes emulation or prevents a learner from being reasons-responsive or circumspect in his admiration.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I examined three major accounts of the action potential of admiration—imitation, value promotion, and prosocial and affiliative behavior, and I

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[71] See Immordino-Yang (2011) and Smith (2000).

[72] Diana Onu, Thomas Kessler, & Joanne R. Smith, "Admiration: A Conceptual Review." *Emotion Review* 8, no. 3 (July 2016): 218-230.

[73] Plato. *Symposium* 172c-173.

[74] Plato. *Symposium* 175b; Vlastos, *Socrates: Ironist and Moral Philosopher*.

investigated the pedagogical repercussions of maintaining each of these views. I gave the most attention to the imitation account, as the most dominant view of how we respond to exemplars and the one I most align myself with. I asked about how imitation fits into a broader virtue developmental story—progressing a learner from admiration to moral virtue. This includes concerns about when a learner should act from suitable motivations and how imitation matures over time. Then I evaluated two types of imitation—appropriative and representative.

In the following chapter, I introduce factors that amplify and diminish our motivational responses to exemplars. Then I provide my own preliminary motivational story of exemplars, called the Graded Engagement Account.

CHAPTER SIX

From Admiration to Moral Virtue: The Motivational Role, Part Two

In the previous chapter, I examined the three dominant motivational stories involving exemplars. The first was the imitation account described by Linda Zagzebski, Alan Wilson, and others. The second was the value promotion account proposed by Alfred Archer. The third was Jonathan Haidt's prosocial and affiliative behavior account. I evaluated these accounts to provide the necessary background for me to introduce my own preliminary account of the motivational support of exemplars.

This chapter has three sections. (A) First, I examine features which amplify and diminish our responses to exemplars. An example of what I have in mind is that we tend to be more moved to imitate actions that are considered important and surprising.[1] An example of a diminished response is having a posture of willful resistance. In order to extend virtue, a mature learner needs to want to extend virtue. It is not obvious that a person who encounters an exemplar, even if that person is impressed or moved in some way, will be driven to become likewise virtuous. He or she may have competing motivations for action. (B) Next, I outline my own motivational account, called the Graded Engagement Account. As usual, developmental concerns prominently feature in my explanation. My novel contribution to the virtue motivation literature pertains to the nature of habituation and sensitization in virtue education, and how these are, at times,

[1] Niels van de Ven, Alfred T. M. Archer, and Bart Engelen. "More Important and Surprising Actions of a Moral Exemplar Trigger Stronger Admiration and Inspiration." *The Journal of Social Psychology* 159, no. 4 (2019): 383-397.

competing processes. (C) Lastly, I raise concerns about imitation, such as learner vulnerability and the question of whether directing sustained attention at an exemplar actually impedes the development of our own virtue-appropriate motivations for action.

Features That Amplify or Diminish our Responses

(1) Amplification

There are two primary features of exemplar exposure that amplify our responses to exemplars, making us more inclined to imitate. These are (a) importance and (b) surprisingness.[2] Surprising actions are those which we do not expect. This may be because the action exceeds what we anticipate in a situation, or because the action is counter-cultural in the given context, such as when someone is kind in a hostile environment. An example of the impact of suprisingness is this: If I were to observe my sister buy a coffee for a friend, this would be less compelling to me than if I were to observe my sister buy a coffee for an enemy, or for someone who had been extremely rude to her. In the second case, I am surprised by the good deed, and it motivates me to be likewise generous, more so than in the first case. Our responses are also amplified when we deem an action more important or salient. For example, if an exemplar is excellent in a way relevant to my own interests, values, or present situation, I am more likely to be moved.

The significance of these findings for moral education is that we should consider how an exemplar is introduced to a learner. If we provide a platform for an exemplar,

[2] van de Ven, Niels, Alfred T. M. Archer, and Bart Engelen. "More Important and Surprising Actions of a Moral Exemplar Trigger Stronger Admiration and Inspiration." *The Journal of Social Psychology* 159, no. 4 (2019): 383-397.

making his or her actions seem important or worthy of attention, students will respond more strongly. An example of this is making a well-behaved child team captain. He or she is given a platform, which raises the level of attention accorded to him or her, above what would have been received otherwise. The child is made important to his or her peers, and the possibility for emulative attention increases. Furthermore, if exemplars are introduced through stories or in poetry, we should consider framing effects and telling the stories in ways that highlight the surprisingness or significance of the good actions. This is how Aristotle spoke of poetry in the *Poetics*. He taught that poetry makes the good action seem choice-worthy through the force of the narrative and the beauty of the hero portrayed.

In "Exemplars and Nudges: Combining Two Strategies for Moral Education," Engelen, Thomas, Archer, and van de Ven describe how the use of nudges in story-telling can draw out the exemplar's actions, to make the exemplar seem more appealing. They argue that nudge strategies can be productively employed to structure a piece in order to make it more "navigable" for the learner. Stories can be structured in such a way that a learner is given an inside perspective of the protagonist's "choice context." This provides important insight into moral reasoning and can make that reasoning more accessible to the learner. The choices become familiar and more salient to the learner.[3]

However, I suspect that surprisingness and importance have a greater constructive impact on moral motivation when we are older and more mature. When we are young, we imitate largely without resistance. If an action were surprising and thus gave a young learner pause, this might add resistance to his imitation that did not exist before.

[3] Bart Engelen, Alan Thomas, Alfred Archer & Niels van de Ven, "Exemplars and nudges: Combining two strategies for moral education," *Journal of Moral Education*, 47, no. 3 (2018), 346-365.

However, for adults, who are generally more resistant to imitation because of settled patterns of action, it would make sense that a surprise would spur more change. Surprise might draw us to notice a morally salient feature of our situation we did not previously notice. This could be important for 'turning the ship' types of moral situations—causing a person who is stuck in bad habits to reflect on these habits, or to heighten his moral sensitivity in a period of complacency, to motivate change. To use the language of my three-stage virtue development model from Chapter Three, a moral surprise from an exemplar might cause a learner to revert from stage three (post-deliberative *hexis*) to stage three (the deliberative phase) again.

Still, throughout life, surprise can be very useful in the context of the habituation of virtue. One worry for habituation strategies in general, is that sustained exposure to a stimulus decreases our sensitivity to that stimulus. This is called the "stimulus effect." An example is hearing a loud ringing noise over an extended period of time. Over time, we cease to notice it. Of course, the stimulus effect does not always happen, especially if the noise is particularly grating. But it does happen in many cases, and it can happen with an exemplar. Because of proximity or through extended exposure, we might cease to be moved by that person toward good actions. In these cases, a surprising action, or a situation in which we are made to see the importance of the action anew, might renew our attention towards an exemplar.

(2) Diminishment

In general, the features that diminish our responses to exemplars are qualities of our persons, rather than of the exemplar or the situation in which we encounter him or her. For example, we often fail to respond to an exemplar because we are busy doing

other things. A person can be morally exceptional, but if my attention is trained on something else, I will not be moved. In the admiration chapter, I discussed how part of educating our admiration is helping a learner to become sensitive to the moral excellences of another person and teaching him or her how to respond constructively to those excellences. However, even if well-trained, it is often the case that other commitments and responsibilities will diminish my response to an exemplar by turning my attention. An example is that if my life is over-scheduled such that I am always running behind, I will fail to be present and notice the excellent people in my life.

Another reason we may not respond to an exemplar is that we may have competing motivations that impede our ability to respond to the exemplar. For example, if I made a promise to my husband to be home before dinner and then notice a student picking up trash on campus, the promise I made to my husband will supersede my desire to join the student. Another example is that I might be an envious person. If I envy a peer who exceeds me in some way, this will prevent me from acting from admiration.

A further reason why we might have a diminished response is that we might have a posture of willful resistance. In order to extend virtue, a mature learner needs to want to extend virtue. It is not obvious that a person who encounters an exemplar, even if that person is impressed or moved in some way, will be driven to become likewise virtuous. He or she might be perfectly content with his or her present state of character. Eric Schwitzgebel writes about how most people do not aim for moral improvement, but rather moral mediocrity. We desire to be just good enough to fit into our social context, rather than being an outlier of virtue or vice. If Schwitzgebel is right about this desire,

and if my context is such that most people are morally mediocre, I might find myself aiming for the mean rather than trying to be like the exemplary outlier.[4]

A final reason for a diminished response to an exemplar is that we might lack an emotional connection to the exemplar.[5] In this case, we will see the exemplar as less relatable to us. This is an interesting finding. In chapter one, I described admiration as a dispositional attitude that inclines us to feel admiring. If it is the case that this feeling plays a significant role in the causal story of disposing us to virtue, then it will benefit us to encourage the affective dispositional response, rather than just the emulative disposition. Furthermore, I described in Chapter Five regarding Apollodorus how the emotional dimension of one's relationship with an exemplar might be problematic, or impede reasons-responsiveness or reflective distance from an exemplar. On these grounds, if it is the case that we have an increased response to an exemplar because of an emotional connection to him, we also might worry whether that increased response is constructive. Sometimes having this emotional attachment can lead us to imitate without circumspection, unhelpfully directing us to imitate the wrong things. Still, it does seem true that if I am more affectively moved by the honesty of Abraham Lincoln, I will feel more inspired to act likewise. Emotional attachment is a significant means by which we experience the salience of a person or action.

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[4] Eric Schwitzgebel, "Aiming for Moral Mediocrity," *Res Philosophica* 96 (2019): 347-368.

[5] Christian Miller, Lecture October 18, 2019. Institute for Faith and Learning. Plenary Speaker. Baylor University. Miller was referencing the following study: Hyemin Han, Jeongmin Kim, Changwoo Jeong, and Geoffrey L. Cohen (2017) "Attainable and relevant moral exemplars are more effective than extraordinary exemplars in promoting voluntary service engagement," *Frontiers in Psychology* 8, 283.

My Account

My motivational story of encountering exemplars is called the Graded Engagement Account. As usual, developmental questions feature prominently in my account, as the ways in which we respond to exemplars adjust as we mature. In early childhood, our response is primarily affective and marked by near immediacy in our imitation. As we become more capable of engaging with reasons and are more settled in our own patterns of action, we are more circumspect and articulate about good actions, as well as often more resistant to imitation.

The Graded Engagement Account is inspired in part by Frans de Waal's account of empathy.[6] He presents a Russian doll model with emotional contagion at its core, followed by cognitive empathy, and finally attribution.[7] Each level reflects greater intellectual ability. Young children and primates have emotional contagion, crying when other primates cry, more out of personal discomfort than from any sincere appreciation of the distress of another. Cognitive empathy represents a more mature, yet still rudimentary ability to represent the needs of others. The agent is able to consider, from his own perspective, what the other agent[8] might need. The final level, which is only present in mature human adults, is attribution, wherein a person can see out from the perspective of another and act on the other's good. The advancement between stages is marked by an

[6] Frans de Waal *Primates and Philosophers* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).

[7] See this 'link' for an image of Frans de Waal's empathy model.

[8] I say "agent" here, mostly for lack of a better term, since "person" does not work in all cases either. For example, de Waal writes that bonobos are capable of cognitive empathy, since the most advanced among them aim to consider the needs of others in their actions. Bonobos are not moral agents, but maybe moral subjects—experiencers of a life whose desires and needs can be thwarted. Still, since I am only addressing human developmental questions here (and because a human capable of cognitive empathy would be an agent), I am using the term agent.

increasing ability to represent the actions and desires of another. As I described in the imitation section in the previous chapter, mature mimesis can be described as the ability to perform representative imitation—becoming the middle term between the imitated person and one's own enaction of the same excellence, and involves taking ownership for that action in one's unique context, rather than executing a copy-cat type of appropriative imitation. To communicate this, I need a model like de Waal's that reflects maturation in these terms.

In Chapter One, I also described how our initial admiring is just that—the feeling of admiring—rather than the dispositional attitude of admiration. Thus, like de Waal, I need an affective core for the emotion that reflects a naïve, immediate feeling. I also described how imitation cannot be the end of the virtue developmental story, since we need to take ownership of the actions ourselves, apart from other-referencing our actions to the exemplar. My Graded Engagement Model (Figure 1) shows passage from this initial stage (the feeling of admiring) to the final stage (mature moral virtue).

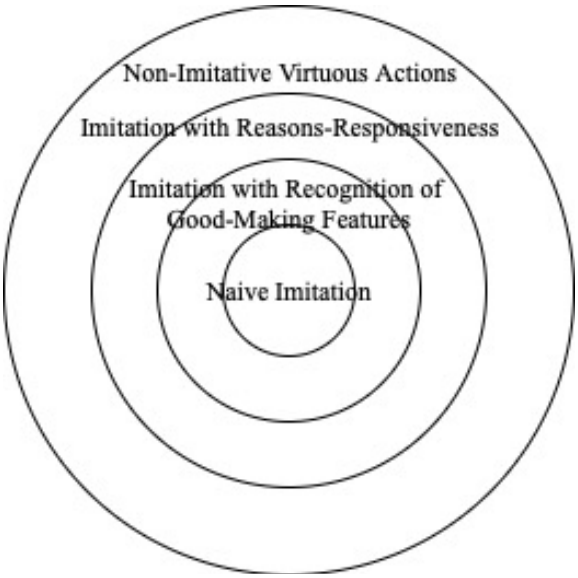

Figure 1. Graded Engagement Model

The levels are as follows: (1) Naïve Imitation, (2) Imitation with Recognition of Good-Making Features, (3) Imitation with Reasons-Responsiveness, and (4) Non-Imitative Virtuous Actions.[9] In what follows, I describe each, briefly presenting how this level is reflected in the education of our admiration. You will see that each stage represents a level in the classical *trivium*.

I use the classical *trivium* for two reason: First, this was the education system that succeeded Plato and Aristotle as a response to their teachings. Both wrote about exemplars and modeling as foundational aspects of character pedagogy, so there may be practical guidance on how to educate using exemplars. A puzzle throughout Plato and Aristotle is how to train the virtues, and in particular to do so using imitation as a crucial means by which training happens. I believe there is significant practical guidance for how to solve these issues by looking at the tradition of education that arose in the wake of their writing—in classical pedagogy. Second, classical education describes a step-wise engagement with reason that is accompanied by the use of exemplars. This provides a productive map for how to habituate reason in a learner, maturing the emotions first and developing a learner's rational faculties so that she is well-positioned to choose well for herself by the end. Since a stated goal of classical pedagogy is to develop the virtues, these methods should be evaluated toward that end. In Chapter Seven, I provide a

[9] I appreciate de Waal's reasons for creating a Russian doll model like this because, in part, he is challenging veneer theory—the theory that morality is a thin veneer disguising a brutish (or otherwise incapable of virtue) nature. He argues instead that empathy grows from a natural germ or instinct. The tradition arising from Aristotle often depicts a "black-and-white picture where the animal-like, morally immature child is contrasted with the morally mature adult" (Kristjánsson, "Habituated Reason and the Paradox of Moral Education," 104). But it seems to me that if we want to figure out how reason is habituated throughout one's development, we need a similar type of picture as de Waal's—one which grows on the basis of a common germ of an emotion or an instinct.

sustained treatment of pedagogy using exemplars. Here, I briefly mention how each stage relates to a particular level on my Graded Engagement Account.

(1) Naïve Imitation

Aristotle writes that we imitate by nature.[10] We can see this in how young children mimic the actions of adults around them, appropriating those actions. At this early stage of development, our feelings of admiring are immediate and unmeasured. And this is due to the fact that we are incapable of critical reasoning at this age. Our natural affections toward those in authority over us, and the concomitant tendency to pay attention to and to imitate these people, are the prosocial emotional and behavioral precursors of what later develops into our mature admiration. In Chapter Four, I examined the current literature assessing how non-rational early moral habituation actually is (for Aristotle, and by my own rendering), so I will not reiterate that here. Still, it is uncontroversial that our admiring is not sufficiently reflective at this level, and thus requires a great deal of external management as all emotions do at this stage.[11] Furthermore, it is clear that the imitation we do, while immediate and largely unchecked, constitutes a substantial source of early moral formation.

The stage of education for naïve imitation is what Aristotle broadly refers to as early moral habituation. This involves caretaker interactions, poetry, and gymnastics. The goals of this stage are to invite children into patterns of action by forming the right habits

[10] Aristotle. *Poetics* I.iv.

[11] Caretakers help train our emotions before we are capable of doing so ourselves. An example is soothing a crying child. The child may not be able to sooth herself. Thus the caretaker's taking initiative over the child's emotions helps train the child to downregulate those emotions without the child having to do so under her own power.

and to increase the scope and emotional competency of particular emotions (i.e. teaching a child to take delight in the right things and to start managing poorly-directed emotions, like anger or frustration). To habituate admiration at this stage is to present admirable mundane exemplars and noble heroes in front of a learner so that he learns to see and appreciate good qualities of persons, and can join in on these good actions before he becomes a more resistant imitator. This is so that when a learner is capable of rational reflection, he is reasoning from the right commitments and has his habits of attention trained on what is worth knowing.

(2) Imitation with Recognition of Good-Making Features

The next level of maturity is recognition of the excellences of an exemplar. At this stage, we start to identify what it is that makes a person admirable. This stage is marked by more facility of language, which comes with maturity, through the influences and explicit teachings of one's social context. Language enables a learner to name an excellence so that her imitation can be more targeted than it would be if she only had a general sense of admiring without any articulable content. Furthermore, the ability to name excellences positions a learner to be less drawn by appealing features of a person that are non-moral, such as charisma, attractiveness, or popularity. If we want a learner to be more circumspect than deferring to any and all charismatic persons, then we should provide her with the language to navigate what moral qualities are. Interestingly, in the classical tradition, the first stage of education following early habituation is Grammar. Grammar is the first of the seven liberal arts, forming the initial stage of the *trivium*. Students acquire a vocabulary and learn the basics (or grammars) of various disciplines, such as important dates in history, and in the moral domain, virtue concepts. Having a

virtue vocabulary permits a student to recognize the good-making features of another, while also imitating through play and recitations of hero stories. Of course, at this stage, recognition and imitation are still insufficient for the acquisition of mature virtues.

(3) Imitation with Reasons-Responsiveness

The next stage, involving a further advancement in intellectual maturity, is imitation with reasons-responsiveness, marked by the ability to engage with reasons for and against performing certain actions. This includes evaluation of motivations for actions—both in reflecting on the actions of an exemplar and in considering which motivations would be suitable for our own actions.

Pedagogically, a student at this level of maturity would be at the second stage of the *trivium*—the logic stage—wherein a student learns discursive reasoning. Another practice that occurs at this stage in the classical tradition is *imitatio*, the imitation of an exemplar. This imitation is not done entirely by rote, as it would be done at the grammar stage through recitations or copying. Instead, this level involves more practical wisdom, as students appropriate or represent various features of the exemplar in their own situation. In the moral domain, this may involve critical thinking about an excellence embodied in another person and thinking through how to incorporate the excellence in one's own context. Instead of simply recognizing and naming the excellence in question, *imitatio* allows for practice in implementation. The logic stage is crucial because, as I described in Chapter Three, virtue is *hexis prohairetike*—an active disposition in accordance with free, deliberate choice. Unless we first pass through the deliberative reasoning stage, we cannot acquire mature moral virtues, even if we have been well-

habituated by the constructive influences of our social contexts. The choices have to be our own.

At this level of admiration's maturity, it would also be appropriate to start speaking of admiration more in terms of the dispositional attitude, since we are capable of sustaining appreciative perspectives on other people, beyond an initial emotional pull. Earlier, I wrote that the DA of admiration does not itself entail a judgment of character, but it inclines us toward making such a judgment. Once we are more capable of engaging with reasons, we are better positioned to make these judgments. What follows from this is that, from the deliberative stage onward, our admiration may come with the concomitant appreciative appraisal Alfred Archer described as being essential to admiration. Our admiration involves an informed approbation which, secondarily, invites us to participate ourselves.

(4) Non-Imitative Virtuous Actions

This final stage of the admiration model is the point at which we take ownership for our own actions. That is, we become capable of mature moral virtue. Interestingly, the stage of education that corresponds to this level is rhetoric, which is finally an art. The ancient dictum of education is that "imitation precedes art" because the various levels of imitation at the first three stages equip a learner with the ability to 'make' something for himself. The rhetoric stage is marked more by spontaneous action than by imitation. By this point, a student has learned a grammar of moral action, has internalized social and moral norms, and will be oriented toward the right ends. In the humanities, this looks like the ability to take a stance and argue for a given position, making unique contributions to the intellectual life of the community. In moral terms, this looks like the ability to freely

act in excellent ways, consistently and with cross-situational stability, for the right reasons.

It is important that virtue grammar, appropriate reasons for action, and moral norms are *internal* to our actions because Aristotle describes virtues as being post-deliberative. We act from well-formed emotions in accordance with reasons, with an ease and immediacy indicative of the fact that we have already done the deliberative work to decide what sort of person we want to be. That is, if an education is rightly orchestrated such that our admiration is matured through habituated imitation, then imitation with virtue grammar, and imitation with reasons responsiveness, then we should be well-positioned for virtue ourselves.

To clarify, I am uncompelled by the idea that virtue is a state entirely post-deliberation. We might have habits of charity for example, which make it easy to love those around us. However, we still need to think about how best to do that or how to do that when we have conflicting commitments. But, as a rule, Aristotle thinks virtues involve rightly-ordered emotions that help us to act well with greater ease than if we continually bore the rational onus of needing to deliberate before every action. Furthermore, it may be the case that we pass through the deliberative phase, choosing habits of the wrong sort. In this case, we would hope that our character could still change by revisiting reasons.

Furthermore, my position is not that exemplars cease to be necessary at the non-imitative virtuous actions stage. This is certainly not true. Rather exemplars play a role throughout our lives by re-setting personal expectations for actions and encouraging us to choose well. We just engage them in a different, more measured way than we do as

children. As I described in Chapter Five and in section A-2 of this chapter, exemplars can serve to dishabituate bad dispositions, stirring us to deliberate again about why we are acting as we do so we can create new habits. They also continue to shape our moral imaginations for good actions and give us momentum for good deeds. For example, I read about the lives of particular Christian saints, and this practice offers both momentum for honoring God and chastisement for the ways in which I am not currently doing so. Exemplars serve these roles all our lives.

(5) Final Thoughts on the Graded Engagement Account

Kristjan Kristjánsson writes that "if character educationists do not aim higher than simply wanting to replace copycat vice with copycat virtue, they seem to be presenting an unsophisticated, undemanding and uncritical – almost infantilising – model of emulation, essentially devoid of cognitive content."[12] My response is one of tempered agreement—agreement because we need to engage reasons in order to productively move a child from admiration to virtue, and tempered because copycat virtue is an important part of this process. In early development, we want to encourage copycat virtue, however infantilizing and essentially devoid of cognitive content. Regarding this early imitation, Aristotle writes that "it makes no small difference to be habituated this way or that way straight from childhood, but an enormous difference, or rather all the difference."[13] We need to invite children into good patterns of action. We just cannot stop here. Zagzebski notes that "as we mature, imitation becomes more discriminatory, more targeted. We find

[12] Kristján Kristjánsson, "Emulation and the use of role models in moral education," *Journal of Moral Education* 35, no. 1 (2006): 37-49.

[13] Aristotle, *NE* 1103b, 23-5.

some things deserving of imitation and others not. We become conscious of our own imitation mechanism, and gradually become aware of the purposes it serves."[14] Our emulation matures, and we become more capable of choosing well for ourselves. My contribution to this conversation is to map out how this occurs in developmental stages, drawing on the classical tradition, which contains a productive pedagogical map of how to engage learners in virtue, through imitation, by way of grammar, logic, and rhetoric.

Concerns about Imitation

Every chapter, I have introduced concerns relevant to admiration more generally. Here are two concerns that are unique to imitation. (1) The first is vulnerability. (2) The second is moral autonomy.

(1) Vulnerability

Vulnerability is always a concern when speaking of learning from exemplars. An example is this. This past month, an American track coach was banned from the sport for clear violations, including trafficking performance-enhancing drugs and bending Therapeutic Use Exemption (TUE) rules. In the wake of the ruling and despite unassailable evidence to the contrary, two of his most prominent athletes, who have been under his tutelage since they were teenagers, spoke in adoring terms about how their coach had been like a "father figure" to them and was not capable of doing such things. In short, their reasons-responsiveness was compromised by their proximity and emotional attachment to this man, who is notably charismatic, powerful, and engaging. They did not

[14] Linda Zagzebski, *Exemplarist Moral Theory*, 130-131.

offer reasons as to why the court of arbitration's ruling was mistaken. Rather they aligned themselves with his person, speaking with almost startling naivete and adoration.

At a young age, these two athletes aligned themselves with and took cues from a person with a troubling character. Now they share in the coach's reputation tarnishing, and have potentially compromised their own characters if indeed they took the drugs he trafficked. I provided this example to show that we are often not well-positioned to choose our own exemplars, and they can have a tremendous impact on our lives, for good or for ill. This vulnerability can be worrisome and lends support to Aristotle's and Fossheim's position (introduced in Chapter Five) that exemplar exposure prior to adulthood should be actively managed whenever possible to help learners to choose exemplars who are worthy of emulation, to the extent that we are able to tell. This is because those who are influenced the most by exemplars are also the least well-positioned to evaluate whether the exemplar is actually a good person. In the language of my Graded Engagement Account, learners are most vulnerable prior to the deliberative reason stage. And, even after this point, it helps to offer guidance for learners if they have chosen poorly for themselves. In the case of the crooked American track coach, there have been rumors circulating for decades about his illicit dealings. Ideally, someone should have stepped in and steered the two teenage athletes to a better coach.

A final thought on vulnerability is that it tends to covary with teachability. Children imitate with near immediacy and are very malleable by the influences around them. This can be tremendously productive if the right influences are in place, or problematic if the influences are bad. Later in development, learners are less vulnerable but also less teachable, since their habits and ideas are more settled. For this reason,

vulnerability should not be treated as a problem per se, but as something to take account of in moral education. Words and deeds have greater impact on a learner the younger he or she is.

(2) Moral Autonomy

The second concern goes like this: How can I develop moral autonomy through the process of other-directed, imitative moral learning?

First, I should mention this is not a characteristically Aristotelian concern. Robust, Kantian-type autonomy is not a goal he has in mind. Aristotle writes that humans are by nature political animals, and he moves seamlessly between ethics and politics because, to a certain extent,[15] the individual's good only makes sense in the context of others. An example is justice. I can only become just by dint of my actions toward others in the city. There are other virtues like this—magnificence, liberality, friendliness, and wit. I can only acquire them in the context of others. Moreover, Aristotle slots other-directedness into his definition of moral virtue: It is a "*hexis* of the soul…such that a man of practical wisdom would observe."[16] We learn about virtues by identifying those who have them and we emulate their actions. Without others, we would struggle to become virtuous ourselves, even regarding those virtues that are not essentially social (like temperance).

[15] The glaring exception is whatever is happening in Book X of *NE* regarding the contemplative life, which is a singular activity. Book X is reconciled or pitted against the earlier, political books of *NE* in a number of ways—such as with questions of possible redaction (J.E. Hare). My reading is just to say, as Mary Nichols does, that the contemplative life is the most god-like activity, but we are not gods. We are thus continually thrust back into the social, practical world of politics. Aristotle write that all humans belong in the city except for beasts and gods, who are not social as we are. So maybe god-likeness is a type of asymptote for the Aristotelian moral life that we do not ever actually reach.

[16] Aristotle *NE* 1107a1-4.

Regardless of the fact that Aristotle is disinterested in the sort of deontic autonomy of Kohlberg or Kant, he is certainly interested in freedom—because virtues need to be, to a certain extent, freely acquired, as I treated extensively in Chapter Three. This means that even if reason is developed through social means—"through the courtyard of Habit and Tradition,"[17] as R.S. Peters phrased it—we still need to stand over those habits, deciding for ourselves who we should be.

My interest in classical pedagogy is largely due to the fact that it offers a means by which moral agency is slowly brought along through the process of habituation. First, a learner learns to name what she sees. Then she is given the tools to reason about it, while practicing for herself. Finally, she is given the space to choose well for herself. Of course, questions remain about the sorts of affections put in place before we are old enough to reason, since these affections will shape what we desire and the starting points of our reasoning down the road. These are concerns not unique to Aristotle or to virtue education, but it seems classical pedagogy, when well-executed, does a fine job of inviting reason into the process, in a step-wise developmentally appropriate way.

Conclusion

The goals of this chapter were to investigate the motivational potential of admiration and to ask how that potential changes as a learner matures. I examined features which amplify and diminish our responses to exemplars, before offering my developmental story—the Graded Engagement Account. A significant pedagogical puzzle is how to introduce virtue conducive motivations into imitative, exemplar-based

[17] R.S. Peters, *Moral Development and Moral Education* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1981), 52, as first found in Kristjan Kristjánsson, "Habituated reason Aristotle and the 'paradox of moral education,'" 102.

instruction. My take is that if we want to introduce 'acting for the right reasons' into this process, then we need to think of exemplar use not as a stand-alone virtue tool but as part of a broader narrative of character development, adjusting as reason matures. Classical education, which was formed as a partial response to the ideas of the ancients, provides a productive pedagogical map for how, practically, to do so.

Further questions remain about particular virtues—whether some are more easily introduced at different developmental time periods—and whether certain virtues are more difficult to imitate in a formal education context. For example, magnificence, i.e. generosity with large sums of money, is hard to manufacture in a classroom setting, inviting students to join in and regularly practice. However, perhaps this difficulty demonstrates that magnificence is pedagogically derivative of generosity, and we should aim to cultivate that instead. Furthermore, temperance is a virtue we will want to reinforce early so that a student's appetites are governed enough that he or she is teachable, whereas magnanimity is a virtue that will have to come with a bit more maturity.

In the final chapter, I examine virtue pedagogy using exemplars in greater focus. As usual, developmental questions feature prominently in my account, assuming that the goal of education is to draw students along slowly, inviting them to rationally engage in the process in a step-wise fashion, to help them close the gap from admiration to moral virtue.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The *Trivium*: Learning from Exemplars over the Course of Education

The preceding chapters examined who exemplars are, our typical responses to them, and the roles they can play, epistemically and motivationally, over the course of a moral education. This chapter provides a comprehensive account of how to introduce exemplars over the process of development, to close the gap from admiration to moral virtue. This is a difficult pedagogical question—the practical means by which we advance learners who are disposed to admire whomever they are exposed to and train them to become more circumspect admirers who imitate the right qualities as good. Furthermore, we need learners to progress beyond the *imitation* of good actions to good actions themselves, performed of a learner's own volition, consistently and from suitable motivations. Thankfully, we need not reinvent the wheel to map out this process. In the classical tradition of education that emerged from the ancient Greek *paideia*,[1] there is a productive pedagogical sequence of mixed methods for virtue education, in which exemplars feature prominently. First, stories of heroes are paired with physical training. Virtue concept-learning comes next, and strategies involving imitation are adjusted as a student intellectually matures.

In this chapter, I introduce four classical stages of moral formation involving exemplars and discuss how each stage prepares a learner to advance to the next stage, to

[1] The *paideia* was the system of both upbringing and more formal educational methods of the ancient Greeks, which aimed at making learners into virtuous and productive citizens. It is described in greater detail in the next section.

well-position him or her to acquire virtues. Readers will note that these four stages correspond to the stages of my Graded Engagement Account from Chapter Six—(1) naïve imitation (Poetry and Gymnastics), (2) imitation with recognition of good-making features (Grammar), (3) imitation with reasons-responsiveness (Logic), and non-imitative virtuous actions (Rhetoric).

There are two merits of framing my chapter in this way, using the classical pedagogical sequence. First, virtue education is often framed in the philosophy literature as consisting of a number of discrete tactics, such as virtue-labeling, exemplar exposure, and nudging, with little regard for the level of maturity of the learner, and without guidance as to when these tactics should appear in the order of education. But moral learning is a process that consistently changes as a learner grows, and it is not reasonable to assume that a tactic that works on toddlers will also work on a 14-year-old. Classical pedagogy not only orders education appropriately; it also actively *matures* a learner as it proceeds, providing resources for intellectual growth so that a learner progresses. Furthermore, since the classical tagline is that "imitation precedes art," we can expect it will be a helpful resource for demonstrating how we learn from exemplars at various stages.

Second, this process is a helpful inroad for addressing R.S. Peters' "paradox of moral education." The paradox is that habituation involves the extrinsic imposition of desires, attitudes, and actions in a learner, which undermines attempts to develop his or her own powers of critical reflection. As educators, we might wonder how a learner can be invited into the process of her own moral formation as an active participant over time, as the learner matures emotionally and intellectually. This is an important question

because, were this transition not to occur, moral virtues would be heteronomously imposed rather than 'up to us' in any real way. In this chapter, I demonstrate that the classical pedagogical sequence—and in particular the strategic pairing of imitation and discursive reasoning—models how to successfully transition a learner from habituation to *phronesis* development in order both to develop a learner's moral agency and foster virtue development. In doing so, I demonstrate that there is no real paradox here at all.

This chapter has three sections: (I) I first introduce the classical stages of education, focusing on the order in which virtue strategies appear. (II) Next I examine four stages of classical pedagogy: (A) Poetry and Gymnastics, (B) Grammar, (C) Logic, and (D) Rhetoric. These four stages aid in maturing the emotion of admiration and helping a learner to emulate the right qualities as excellent so that she is well-positioned to develop virtues of her own. (III) In the third section, I introduce final considerations for using exemplars in our moral education, including how their place in our lives might shift following the Rhetoric stage and into adulthood. I also raise the common critique of classical pedagogy as stilted and outdated, and I address additional virtue strategies that complement learning from exemplars.

(I) Classical Sequence

(A) Protagoras and Socrates

In Plato's *Protagoras*, Socrates asks whether virtue can be taught. Protagoras says that it can and offers a myth to defend his claim. In this myth, all humans are given practical wisdom and fire to survive (*Protagoras* 321d). Subsequently, they are given a share of justice and shame so they can cooperate in a city. Virtue acquisition is open to

everyone, and society punishes and rewards on this basis (323c-324d). For Protagoras, virtue is a type of wisdom and it is neither "natural or self-generated, but [is] something taught and carefully developed in those in whom it is developed" (323c). If virtue is wisdom, then it is teachable, and this sustains his claims to be able to teach it. Over the course of the dialogue, Protagoras is turned about and in frustration seems to deny his original claims about the teachability of virtue, claims which Socrates then takes up to defend. This conversation is full of important questions about the nature of virtues and the relationships among different virtues, and the cursory treatment of the dialogue provided here does not do it justice. But one clarifying and often overlooked moment in this exchange with Socrates is Protagoras' description of his theory of education, a theory built around compulsion. Protagoras' pedagogical sequence both makes his claims to teach virtue seem dubious and highlights a practical difficulty in virtue education—the problem of how to habituate young learners without "stultifying their psychological powers of critical reflection at a later stage."[2] Protagoras prioritizes rational development over habituation in his educational sequence, and the result is learners who are neither free nor good.

For Protagoras, moral education proceeds as follows: As soon as the child is able to understand what is being said to him, he is told what is honorable and not, what is holy and not, and what he should abstain from. If he obeys, then all is well. If he does not, he is straightened "with threats and blows, as if he were a twisted, bent piece of wood" (325d). He is sent to school to learn manners and reading, and to learn by heart the works of great poets "while sitting on a bench at school" (325e). And if the boy is "temperate

[2] K. Kristjánsson, "Habituated Reason: Aristotle and the 'Paradox of Moral Education.'" *Theory and Research in Education* 4, no. 1 (2006), 102.

and gets into no mischief," then he is rewarded with music as lyric poetry and harmony. The final step in the educational sequence Protagoras provides is gymnastics to add courage. Thereafter, the young man lives under the compulsion of laws of the state. "Why, Socrates, do you still wonder and doubt whether virtue can be taught? Cease to wonder, for the opposite would be far more surprising," he concludes (326e).

Protagoras' pedagogical sequence is backward. Poetry and gymnastics are treated as education's dessert, rather than used a propaedeutic to learning. Embodiment is largely ignored, except as an object of punishment. The student is made to sit still on the school bench while learning about heroes—the ones who should spark imitative action. Since virtue is acquired by acting, the fact that they are sitting still should give us pause. Furthermore, since moral virtue is acquired and not natural, one might wonder whether Protagoras has mistaken a docile natural temperament for virtue: He says that the temperate child is rewarded with music. What child is temperate? Lastly, the process both starts and ends with external rules, seemingly because internal change has not been made such that the student can live a well-ordered life. He writes that after they finish formal schooling, the learners are "not to act as they please," indicating that post-education, their desires are still at odds with good deeds (326d). Compulsion is necessary because, in this pedagogical sequence, virtue is unmotivated. The learner is told what is choice-worthy but not formed in such a way that he sees it for himself.

In contrast, when Socrates describes education in the *Laws* and of the guardians in the *Republic*, he starts with poetry and gymnastics to form the learner's affections, then proceeds to formal learning, like reading and writing (*Republic* 376-377). Play is used from the earliest stages (*Laws* 797a), and music serves as a training in beauty—aesthetic

and moral—to both demonstrate harmony and to introduce certain heroes, those who are worthy of emulation (*Republic* 377a-c). The beauty of heroes shows students that the good life is attractive. Compulsion is used to a certain degree of course. For example, attendance is mandatory. But teachability, a law-abiding spirit, and self-rule are more the results of having the right affections in place than of fearing punishment. That is, the learner's motivations for action are the love of beauty and goodness and of desiring these things for oneself, rather than from fear. This is important because fear of punishment may be helpful in eliciting the right actions, but this does not train the learner to act for the right reasons over the long term. The actions are neither free nor rightly motivated.

This comparison between Protagoras' and Socrates' pedagogical sequences is important because it highlights the fact that order of education matters in the formation of virtue. Interestingly, both Protagoras and Socrates have mostly the same ingredients of moral education—poetry, reading, writing, gymnastics, heroes, and compulsion. One exception is that "play" is conspicuously absent from Protagoras' sequence, replaced by extra compulsion. Regardless, the teachability of virtue seems in large part to depend upon the order in which educational methods are used, rather than simply on whether those methods are used. I draw this out because, in much of the current literature on virtue pedagogy, it is not always clear at what age certain strategies are deployed or how they ought to be modified to accommodate developments in emotional and intellectual immaturity.

An example of this is that Zagzebski advocates "reflective admiration" of one's exemplars.[3] A person ought to refine the objects of her admiration by reflection in the

[3] Linda Zagzebski, "Moral Exemplars in Theory and Practice." *Theory and Research in Education* 11, no. 2 (2013), 193.

context of her epistemic community to be sure she is admiring the right people as excellent. However, young children are the most dispositionally imitative and less circumspect in their admiring. They are the most shaped by aretaic role models, yet they lack the moral experience and intellectual maturity to engage in the reflective process of revision Zagzebski describes. Furthermore, most young children lack a virtue grammar to be able to articulate what is good about the people they admire. Without sufficient guidance, they are apt to admire the wrong people as good, and their admiration can make them vulnerable to the development of poor habits. Children require training of their admiration, just as other emotions and attitudes are trained. Therefore, the use of exemplars for young children should be guided by those who know what is good and beautiful,[4] and to the extent that it is possible to manage a child's exemplar exposure, the role models who are placed before children should be those who genuinely instantiate the virtues.[5] Over time, with sufficient moral experience and well-trained affections, learners can more independently reflect on who their role models are in order to emulate the right people, to practice virtue, to develop the right motivations, and to hopefully acquire virtues for themselves.

(B) Classical Pedagogy—A Primer

The classical model is coarsely structured to engage the body and emotions first, with a step-wise introduction of prudential and critical reasoning skills as the learner

[4] As a reminder, Zagzebski argues that admiration itself reliably selects moral virtues and that, when we emulate a quality in an admired person, we emulate that quality "*qua* good, not just *qua* fun thing to imitate." I challenged admiration's ability to reliably discern good qualities, particularly in early childhood. To find this discussion, see Chapters 5 and 6.

[5] H. Fossheim "Habituation as Mimesis." In *Values and Virtues*. Edited by T. Chappell (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 115-116.

matures. There is an extensive literature on whether and how we might rationally participate in our own habituation based on textual evidence in Aristotle and intuitions about what habituation entails,[6] and I enter this debate in Chapter Five. To review, I argue that regardless of Aristotle's view (which does not provide much, if any, insight into how intellectual training occurs during the process of habituation), reason does not spontaneously and adequately mature in ways that set us up well as moral agents. Therefore, reason should be explicitly addressed in our moral educations. The classical model provides a framework for how the training of reason can be slowly introduced.

The basic classical sequence is derived from the explicit frameworks provided by Plato and Aristotle in their descriptions of *paideia*, an educational model that aimed to shape learners for virtues and citizenship. Yet this model was in no way complete in Plato and Aristotle's own time. Henri Irénée Marrou describes how there is a time-lag before a system of education adequately reflects the ideas held by a society. He writes, "That is why classical education did not attain its own distinctive form until after the great creative epoch of Greek civilization. We have to wait until the Hellenistic era before we find it in full possession of its own specific forms, its own curricula and methods."[7] Classical pedagogy would be slow to mature, but when it did (in the "Hellenistic era and beyond" according to Marrou), it would provide insight into how to educate for the theories of virtue and citizenship Plato and Aristotle introduced.[8] For our own purposes, this means that in our renewed interest in virtue education, we should look not just to the

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[6] See K. Kristjánsson 2006b, pages 108-110 for an overview of the key players in this debate—Burnyeat, Curzer, Sherman, and Dunne, as well as Kristjánsson's own helpful commentary.

[7] Henri Marrou, *The History of Education in Antiquity*, xiii.

[8] Ibid.

explicit teachings of Plato and Aristotle for guidance on how to cultivate virtues but also to the period of education that followed them and attempted to answer the puzzles their theories created. One such puzzle is the paradox of habituated reason introduced earlier.

The classical model as it is known today has three general phases: pre-education, *trivium*, and *quadrivium*. For a helpful overview of the model apart from my focused attention on virtue-formation, Dorothy Sayers' 1948 essay, "The Lost Tools of Learning," is a great resource.

Briefly, pre-education is poetry and gymnastics, which together served as a propaedeutic to formal education (*Republic* 376e). A student learned physical training for the practical end of developing competence in athletic or military contests, as well as to become disciplined enough to be teachable in a formal setting (*Laws* 654-655). Aristotle wrote, "Now it is clear that in education habit must go before reason, and the body before the mind; and therefore boys should be handed over to the trainer, who creates in them the proper habit of body" (*Politics* 1338b).

Both Plato and Aristotle had concerns about how this stage should be conducted. Plato worried about the competitive spirit's temptations to seek empty glory (*Laws* 796a), and Aristotle worried about Olympic-caliber competitions that "exhausted [learners'] constitutions" (*Politics* 1339a). Still, it is easy to see how moderate forms of athletic training can afford learners the opportunity to develop productive, emulative relationships with their peers through competition. Competition itself is a practice of out-doing or exceeding a peer in excellence, structurally analogous to Aristotelian *zelos*, a type of comparative emulation productive for encouraging virtue (*Rhetoric* 1388a). Further practice in emulation would also come from the imitation of their instructors,

who were advanced athletes themselves.[9] Also at this stage, poetry introduces learners to heroes. And, as in athletics, students learned from a poetic master whom they emulated to learn how to sing and to play the lyre (*Laws* 812). Poetry also taught students something like emotional competence and expression (*Poetics* 1447a5-30). Through harmonies, they participated in a range of emotions, partaking in and imitating these emotional experiences in songs and in dance—harmonies that reflected the aesthetic values of their culture (*Politics* 1340a17-1341a7). Both Plato (*Republic* 377b, *Laws* 810c-811b) and Aristotle (*Poetics* 1448b4-25) took for granted that we learn through imitation and worried that we would imitate ignoble deeds, rather than good and fine ones.

Trivium means "three ways." *Quadrivium* means "four ways" and was reserved for serious scholars. Together, the *trivium* and *quadrivium* constitute the seven liberal arts. The *trivium* was the basic education model, consisting of three stages: grammar, logic, and rhetoric. Regarding Marrou's observation about the delayed development of classical pedagogy, the *trivium* appears to have been enriched by both the textual focus of the Hellenic period[10] and by the clear stages of imitation applied by Roman orators, such as Quintilian.[11] Grammar focused on concept-learning, improving a learner's powers of observation and memory. Most of the imitation at this stage was done through recitations by rote. The logic stage harnessed more *phronesis* into the imitative process, while students also learned discursive reasoning, as I explain in the next section. The rhetoric stage invited spontaneous speech or invention on a topic that the learner selected as

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[9] H. Marrou *The History of Education in Antiquity*, 40.

[10] H. Marrou, *The History of Education in Antiquity*, 95.

[11] Quintilian. *Institutio Oratoria* II.ii, II.iv.

important to him, or as pertaining to his personal cares.[12] After completing the *trivium*, a student might be invited to participate in the four subjects of the *quadrivium*.

While this is certainly a concise introduction to classical pedagogy, my focus is to introduce virtue strategies. This overview should serve as sufficient background for introducing the four stages in focus for the tasks of habituating reason and developing virtues by way of exemplars.

(II) Specific Strategies

The four stages are (A) Poetry and Gymnastics, (B) Grammar, which involves two paired strategies: concept-learning and imitation, (C) Logic, which involves two paired strategies: imitation and discursive reasoning, and (D) Rhetoric. Poetry and Gymnastics are paired and applied before formal education begins. Concept-learning and imitation are paired in the *trivium* at the Grammar stage. Imitation and discursive reasoning are paired in the *trivium* at the Logic stage. Rhetoric, which involves more free action and internalized norms but also has mentors readily available, is the final stage of the *trivium*. These are four sequential stages. Exemplars are used throughout moral education and at each of these four stages, but the way exemplars are used changes as students mature.

(A) Poetry and Gymnastics

Before formal learning, students are prepared to be educated, and this happens through poetry and gymnastics, or exemplars plus athletics. Poetry means the education from our heroes, which takes the form of story-telling and lyric poetry (*Republic* 376-

[12] Dorothy Sayers, "The Lost Tools of Learning." *The Classical Outlook* 57, no. 1 (1979), 17.

278). A poet "by adorning countless deeds of the ancients educates later generations" (*Phaedrus* 245a). By gymnastics, Plato means various forms of physical exercise, such as wrestling, dancing, and sprinting (*Laws*, 795d-796a, 813e-814e). Students are exposed to hero stories and to physical training at the same time, as a propaedeutic to education, to form their affections in preparation for formal schooling.

On the surface, this seems not to be an especially fruitful virtue pairing, since stories and physical training are not obviously coordinated methods of moral education, nor are they regarded as very serious activities in early education. For example, a modern pre-school may present a combination of Dr. Seuss books and monkey bar games yet not understand these as pertaining to virtue education.[13] This combination does not seem novel to the contemporary conscience because this is not too far off from what happens in pre-schools, introduced as story-telling and physical play. These are commonly paired activities. However, in many cases, the process could be more directed and selective of the sorts of heroes portrayed and the types of exercises performed.

Poetry and athletics in fact constitute a powerful mixed-methods approach to virtue education because students can learn about heroes at the same time that they are encountering opportunities to be brave and to discipline their bodies. In general, exposure to exemplars like heroes is helpful in spurring a person to develop virtue because comparing oneself to an excellent other reveals a lack of excellence in oneself. Exemplars expose a "character gap"—a space between how we really are and the people of good character we should become.[14] Athletics can aid this process in a few ways.

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[13] These activities may even be destructive to a child's developing character, since the conventions of many playgrounds are somewhat Hobbesian.

[14] C. Miller, *The Character Gap* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).

First, physical exercise enables a learner to truly see her lack of virtue. Consider perseverance in an exemplar. If a learner is shown a hero with the virtue of perseverance and she sees that quality as desirable, if she is later presented with the opportunity to run, it becomes very clear whether or not she possesses that quality. In running, a person can measure the extent to which she can or cannot persevere in minutes or kilometers. She can practice this quality and measure her growth in objective terms.

There is more that must be said here to disentangle physical strength from perseverance. For example, some people can naturally run longer than others can without having first acquired through practice the excellence of perseverance. Still, as a general rule, physical training involves both physical work and character work to sustain an activity, and in the athletic context, it becomes very clear if a learner lacks either of these types of work.

Further examples can be made with fortitude or prudence in ball sports. Performance suffers in a controlled "game" setting if a player lacks prudence or if she is not brave enough to act. In "How Admiring Moral Exemplars Can Ruin Your Life," Alfred Archer, Thomas Alan, and Bart Engelen describe how admiration can set one up for a distinctive kind of moral error—one may not realize the ways in which one is not an exemplar.[15] That is, by holding an exemplar in mind, a learner can begin to think of herself in terms of the excellences the exemplar possesses, yet she does not actually have these excellences herself. Because of this, admiration seems to require that an actor have an adequate self-understanding in order to be motivated to improve. Otherwise, what may

[15] Archer, A., Engelen, B., and Alan Thomas, A. "How Admiring Moral Exemplars Can Ruin Your Life: The Case of Conrad's 'Lord Jim,'" In *The Moral Psychology of Admiration*. Edited by Alfred Archer and Andre Grahle (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2019), 241.

result is a type of self-glorification. Pairing athletics with exemplars can help avoid this error by showing a learner the ways in which she falls short, in measurable, performance-relevant ways.

Second, athletics models a means of improvement in the virtues. Taking again the example of perseverance, there is a practice-based approach to improvement in this respect: The athlete runs more kilometers on a consistent basis, on various types of terrain, at various speeds. Aristotle writes of virtue development that "men become builders by building and lyre players by playing the lyre; so too we become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts" (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1103a-b). Virtues are acquired by repeated practice. If a learner desires to become virtuous, she has to practice the virtues. Structurally, then, participating in a sport is helpful for character formation because this is a domain in which we apply the logic of 'practice.' Athletes wake up every day and repeatedly do the same things, with the intention of improving. Having exposure to exemplars who practice becoming better at a craft, and being invited to participate in that practice, can shape a learner's expectations for how personal development occurs.

Third, athletics aids the force of exemplars by demonstrating that virtue formation is difficult. It is something that takes focused practice and a concerted effort. Continuing with the same example, perseverance often looks effortless in one who has it, and the concept of "perseverance" sounds easy. It just means to 'remain,' or to keep doing what the person is already doing. But in running, the learner can quickly realize that 'remaining' is difficult. When a person remains, she feels burning in her legs and in her lungs, and it takes labored practice to be able to persevere. In a formal classroom setting,

students can learn about a virtue by definition, but they do not always experience *training* in that virtue or what it feels like to grow in virtue, and they are not often presented with the opportunity to build habits in a systematic way. Physical training provides this opportunity. It helps a person to appreciate the difficulty of acquiring a virtue exhibited by an exemplar, and it draws attention to the development the exemplar underwent to become excellent in that way.

Based on these three features of athletics—that physical training allows a person to see her lack of virtues, introduces a practice-based approach to acquiring virtue, and highlights the difficulty of acquiring virtues—using athletics in the context of exemplar exposure prepares one well to begin the process of virtue development. Of course, in this virtue pairing, the questions to ask are about the particulars of training and the qualities of exemplars. For example, Aristotle cautions against heavy exercises that might compromise intellectual development or stunt growth over the long term, as he characterizes the physical exercises of the Spartans as doing (*Politics* 1338b). Moreover, there are certain qualities of exemplars that translate well in and out of an athletic context, such as fortitude and patience. But there are others that do not, like gentleness and truthfulness. If the hero in question were an outstanding computer scientist, for example, the complementarity of physical practice with exposure to that person might not work as well to draw out his excellences.

Furthermore, it is not obvious that if a child were to develop a local trait (or context-specific trait) of perseverance in running that she would necessarily develop perseverance in all areas of life. Likely, she will still need to practice that virtue in various contexts to extend the virtue. Even so, this is just the beginning of the

pedagogical process. If only a few virtues, or local versions of those virtues, are effectively exemplified and practiced at this stage, the student is made aware of the responsibility she has for working to develop her own character and she acquires structural knowledge of how to grow in virtue, through repeated practice.

In Chapter Six, I called our initial developmental stage Naïve Imitation. I described how at this early stage of development, our feelings of admiring are mostly immediate and unmeasured and that we are largely incapable of critical reasoning at this age. The practices of poetry and gymnastics suit this developmental stage because they primarily refine a learner through emotion training, without much rational development. A learner's exemplar exposure is carefully managed. The learner is presented with pre-selected heroes, and he is made to see and appreciate the good actions of these heroes before he becomes a more resistant imitator. Furthermore, through gymnastics, he is invited to form the right habits of discipline and to increase the scope and emotional competency of particular emotions (i.e. by teaching a child to take delight in the right things and to start managing poorly-directed emotions, like anger or frustration). These two tactics prepare a learner well for the stages that follow.

(B) Concept-Learning and Imitation

In the *trivium*, intellectual virtues and linguistic abilities are developed so students can responsibly reason as orators and citizens. The first stage of the *trivium* is grammar. It is characterized by the development of memory and observation. Children at this age thrive in memorization and recitation, so chants and memory drills are common.[16] Quintilian describes this stage in this way: "Let us not waste the earliest years: there is all

[16] Dorothy Sayers, "The Lost Tools of Learning." *The Classical Outlook* 57, no. 1 (1979), 13-20.

the less excuse for this, since the elements of literary training are solely a question of memory, which not only exists even in small children, but is especially retentive at that age" (*Institutio Oratoria* I.i.vii). Many of the recitations performed at this stage are of hero stories. Students also recite the works of literary masters, including those of their own teachers. Here is the second instance of exemplars being systematically applied in education. In memorizing these stories, students' moral imaginations are shaped. And since students perform these exercises together, community standards are set by the excellences they collectively learn. At the grammar level, students also start to read and learn the basics (or grammars) of history, math, theology, and language.[17]

As was introduced earlier, after students are exposed to poetry and gymnastics, they should be aware (in a genuine *physical* sense) of their shortcomings. They are introduced to stories of heroes, and they realize they do not yet have the excellences of these heroes. They know what it feels like to lack these excellences. For example, Odysseus would never give up on a journey, yet the learner gave up after a ten-minute jog. He is not excellent like Odysseus is. But, at this point in his formation, the learner is unable to articulate the concepts of the virtues he lacks.

In the recent virtue ethics literature, there is a debate about what is being called an "articulacy requirement" for virtue: Must we be able to articulate reasons for our apparently virtuous behavior, in order that it qualify as virtuous?[18] I addressed this question extensively in Chapter Three, arguing that articulation of any sort is not a necessary condition of moral virtue, but that moral language makes it much more likely

[17] Ibid.

[18] See Stichter 2007a, 183-194; Annas 2011, 183-194.

that a person will acquire virtues, because of certain facts about how our agency matures through language. I also wrote that, in the specific context of acquiring virtue by way of the emulation of exemplars, the ability to articulate the excellence in question is of practical importance, regardless of the account of virtue maintained. This is to assuage concerns that learners may be imitating the wrong people, or the wrong qualities in the right people. A considerable worry in using exemplars in moral education is that if there is no critical reflection on specifically named qualities set apart from the person, then we are just teaching students how to unreflectively conform to a charismatic leader.[19] We may be training students to blindly imitate anyone they find admirable, without equipping them to critically reflect on what qualities they admire. Interestingly, the classical pedagogical sequence answers this concern by providing the virtue grammar state after poetry and gymnastics, and alongside the memorization of stories. Students are taught virtue concepts, which they memorize as a grammar to describe moral qualities and actions. This would equip students to meet Annas' articulation requirement, for those who share her view. Moreover, even if there is no such requirement of virtue, if a student can articulate an excellence, this means her imitation will be more targeted than it would be if she merely recognized an amorphous sense of goodness in looking at a hero.

Sayers describes the grammar stage as involving "accumulation" rather than speculation.[20] Students delight in acquiring words through recitations and rhymes, often performed with their classmates. They learn basic vocabularies and enjoy naming things, like natural specimens, historical dates, and people. At this period, acquiring a moral

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[19] K. Kristjánsson, Emulation and the Use of Role Models in Moral Education. *Journal of Moral Education* 35, no.1 (2006), 41.

[20] D. Sayers "The Lost Tools of Learning," 11.

grammar might look like the memorization of virtues with pithy definitions. For example, students might learn that "prudence is right thinking plus action." A great part about this stage is that learners at this age enjoy memorization and grammar, so—unlike Protagoras, who uses coercion to animate the process of education—this process does not work against the grain of human freedom. It capitalizes on natural affections.

English grammar lessons equip students to be able to articulate what is excellent about a good poem so they can acquire the tools to write one themselves. In the same way, the memorization of virtue concepts is a fitting complement to the hero stories and recitations students perform at this stage. This combination equips learners with a vocabulary to discuss what is excellent and choice-worthy, and it helps to draw explicit attention to the qualities one ought to imitate in an exemplar. This builds on the work done in poetry and gymnastics by naming the excellences in question, which well positions a learner to pay attention to virtues. In Seneca's "On Liberal and Vocational Studies," he describes the grammar stage in this way:

> And if you inquire, "Why, then, do we educate our children in the liberal studies?" it is not because they can bestow virtue, but because they prepare the soul for the reception of virtue. Just as that "primary course," as the ancients called it, in grammar, which gave boys their elementary training, does not teach them the liberal arts, but prepares the ground for their early acquisition of these arts, so the liberal arts do not conduct the soul all the way to virtue, but merely set it going in that direction (Seneca 2007, 101).

Grammar "prepares the ground" for virtue by equipping students with an ability to name the imitable excellences in exemplary people. This does not take them all the way to virtue, but it sets them "going in that direction." In my Graded Engagement Account, this stage matches onto the Imitation with Recognition of Good-Making Features stage, since learners becomes capable of naming good qualities. Again, this is not sufficient for

virtue, but it builds on the work of Poetry and Gymnastics and advances students in that direction.

(C) Imitation and Discursive Reasoning

The second stage of the *trivium* is logic, and in it we see a continuation of this graded approach to exemplar exposure, to accommodate growing emotional and intellectual maturity. At the logic stage, students are, unsurprisingly, introduced to logic, or formal reasoning. They analyze language, syntax, arguments, and laws, and they critically assess different positions on an issue.[21]

Exemplar exposure looks different at this stage because students have grown more capable of critical reflection. They engage in a process called *imitatio*, the imitation of a master. In *imitatio*, students memorize, translate, and copy great speeches and stories and are also expected to "imitate or emulate the heroic characters and principles described therein."[22] Furthermore, unlike the recitations performed in the grammar stage, *imitatio* is not done entirely by rote. Students are also taught to abstract excellent qualities from a work and to apply them. In literature, this might look like the imitation of specific literary conventions used by a master. For example, students read *Beowulf*, then write their own short epic poems, using tools such as alliteration,[23] *in media res*,[24] and

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[21] R. Littlejohn and C. Evans, *Wisdom and Eloquence: A Christian Paradigm for Classical Learning* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2006).

[22] N. Kaplan, "Virtuous Competition among Citizens: Emulation and Pedagogy during the French Revolution." *Eighteenth Century Studies*, 31, no. 1 (2003), 241.

[23] Alliteration is the occurrence of the same letter or sound at the beginning of adjacent or closely connected words.

[24] *In media res* is starting a story in the middle of things, rather than at the beginning of the tale.

kennings.[25] Sayers describes how, at the logic stage, "the pupil will learn to try his own hand at writing this kind of thing" and is instructed to pay special attention to the arguments contained in the work he is reading.[26] In writing their own poems using the tools of the masters, students learn prudence by practicing the excellent qualities, rather than simply admiring them. They take ownership of these excellent qualities.

In the moral domain, *imitatio* can look like evaluating a hero and asking difficult questions about how the exemplar's life differs from the learner's life. A learner may be asked how to incorporate the fortitude of a hero in his own context. These conversations involve critical reflection on how a learner might incorporate a range of good actions in his daily life, in different situations, and over the long term. Again, these discussions happen in a community context, and they consist of a type of behavior priming—imaginatively preparing to act in accordance with a virtue before the learner is in that situation. An example is that I might be impressed by the unwavering justice of the great Frankish king, Clovis. I reflect on what makes him excellent, and I consider what justice would require of me in my own context—a soccer game. I realize that feigning an injury when I get bumped during play is unjust to the opposing player because I misrepresent the force with which the other player struck me. This has consequences for the penalty she is owed. Later, when I am in a soccer game, I am more prepared to respond justly.

Imitatio is practiced at the same time that students learn dialectic and formal reasoning skills. In this pairing of exemplars and formal logic, a learner's prudence and

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[25] Kennings are compound expressions that serve as circumlocutions. They consist of two nouns together, either hyphenated or with 'of' in the middle. Examples include battle-sweat (meaning blood) and giver of rings (meaning king).

[26] D. Sayers, "The Lost Tools of Learning," 15.

reasons-responsiveness are refined while she is actively emulating exemplars in a more focused way. This stage prepares a student to move beyond emulation to virtue because she is equipped to think critically about her reasons or motivations for action.

In Chapter Three, I explained what it means that Aristotle defines virtues as *hexis prohairetike*—dispositions in accordance with *prohairesis* (free, deliberative reason). For Aristotle, virtues are done *from* well-formed emotions, but *in accordance with* good reasons. This means a learner must pass through a stage in which she engages with reasons for actions, so that these reasons are her own. I also explained how, on Miller's mixed traits view, this process is a bit more piecemeal in that a single virtue consists of a series of active dispositions in various situations. Still, on either account, there needs to be a moment at which a person takes ownership for an action in order that it qualify as virtuous, since, otherwise, it may not be freely acquired but inherited, imitative, or heteronomously imposed.

This discursive reasoning stage, which occurs at a maturity level when students ready to consider actions for themselves—both their own and those of their exemplars—satisfies the *prohairetic* condition of virtue. In my Graded Engagement Account, this pedagogical stage matches onto the Imitation with Reasons-Responsiveness level of development. Learners still take their cues from exemplars, in classwork and in character, but they are prepared to consider why certain actions are preferable to others.

(D) Rhetoric and The Aftermath of These Strategies

Beyond Logic is the Rhetoric stage—the final level of the *trivium*. This stage is marked more by spontaneous action than by imitation. By this point, students will have learned a grammar of moral action, have internalized social and moral norms, and be

oriented toward the right ends. In the humanities, this looks like the ability to take a stance and argue for a given position, making unique contributions to the intellectual life of the community. In moral terms, this looks like the ability to freely act in excellent ways, consistently and with cross-situational stability, for the right reasons. Sayers describes how, by the rhetoric stage, a learner's "tendency to express himself windily or to use his eloquence so as to make the worse appear the better reason would, no doubt, be restrained by his previous teaching in Dialectic." This is in contrast to the preparations afforded by sophistical educations, like the one Protagoras described, which was structured in such a way as to produce more sophists like him.

Interestingly, the level of intellectual maturity required to participate in the art of rhetoric is structurally analogous to the moral stage of development required for virtue. Students act *from* the rules of grammar and make arguments in accordance with good reasons, but these concepts, conventions, and rules are not held explicitly in mind in the act of oration. They are internal to it. Furthermore, Quintilian describes how rhetoric students "have neither the time nor the inclination" for the sort of deliberative work that precedes this stage (Quintilian 2011, 118). The sort of preparation of reason required at the grammar and logic stages, while pleasurable and appropriate for the young, is time-consuming and too great of a cognitive load to continually bear. But if a student is formed in the right ways, these conventions have become second nature. The learner can work from well-formed rhetorical habits.

Likewise, Aristotle describes how the virtuous person acts for the right reasons but *from* rightly-ordered emotions. Deliberative reason (*prohairesis*) is upstream of virtue as a necessary condition for becoming virtuous, but deliberative reason remains at the

level of continence. During critical reflection, the action still needs to be chosen and has not yet become a habit, whereas the virtuous person's reasons are internal and firmly held, but no longer explicitly revisited in daily actions. Nancy Snow calls this post-deliberation stage of habituation "goal-directed automaticity."[27]

Interestingly then, education starts with a type of automaticity (unreflective instinct) and ends in a type of automaticity (well-formed habits). The pedagogical stages in between work to ensure that the automaticity of the second sort consists in habits of the right kind.

The level in my Graded Engagement Account that corresponds to this pedagogical stage is called Non-Imitative Virtuous Actions. I call it non-imitative because we become capable of acting freely of our own volition, not that we cease to imitate entirely. I have two clarifications about this process. First, I am uncompelled by the idea that virtue is a state entirely post-deliberation. We might have habits of charity, for example, which make us disposed to love those around us. However, we still need to think about how best to do that or how to do that when we have conflicting commitments. But, as a rule, Aristotle thinks virtues involve rightly-ordered emotions that help us to act well with greater ease than if we continually bore the rational onus of needing to deliberate before every action. Furthermore, it may be the case that we pass through the deliberative phase, choosing habits of the wrong sort. In this case, we would hope that our character could still change by revisiting reasons. It seems clear that we can change our character at any point in life. For example, my father became a Christian at age sixty. Over the course of a few years, many of his dispositions changed on the basis of his new

[27] N. Snow, "Habitual Virtuous Actions and Automaticity," *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 9 (2006): 545-561.

faith commitments, such that his earlier character would be unrecognizable now. Were there a closing of the doors on my father's character post-Rhetoric stage, he would have been locked in for life. Additionally, I aligned myself with Miller's mixed traits account of virtue, for which a single deliberative stage (while a much tidier story to tell) does not make sense. Ideally, much of our deliberative work happens at the Logic stage to prepare our character for future actions, since developmentally, this seems to match our disposition as learners, our natural curiosity at that age, and our level of intellectual maturity. But on Miller's account, we should continually deliberate with regards to different aspects of our character throughout our lives, in order to draw our mixed traits closer in the direction of mature, global virtues, predictably and in all situations relevant to the virtue, rather than in just a selection of situations.[28]

Second, I do not mean to indicate that in the Rhetoric stage and following we cease to have a need for exemplars. This is certainly untrue. First, the Rhetoric stage happens in the context of teachers (whose role as instructors is inseparable from their role as exemplars, according to Kristjánsson), and education using exemplars continues. The use of exemplars at this stage just looks different, as it should, since the learners are more mature. For example, as I described earlier, in the humanities, students learn to defend their own positions on a given topic, but there are guardrails to keep them in line. Teachers step in to lead them back on track when necessary, and students are referred back to masters of their craft or to exemplars in their field for support. An example is a Rhetoric student in my class who was interested in environmental ethics and stewardship. She was not adrift with her own reflections throughout this process but continually

[28] See Chapter Two for a fuller treatment of Miller's mixed traits view and its differences from among other accounts of virtue.

returned to exemplars in this field (Aldo Leopold, Peter Singer, Rosalind Hursthouse, and Eric Freyfogle). She also had my help when she struggled through the process. Likewise, in the moral domain, students are not left to their own devices post-Logic. They are given more space to act freely and to take ownership for their actions but are presented with exemplars as reminders of good actions. An example is a student might be presented with stories of servant leaders over the course of a term and then be given an opportunity to organize a community service effort. Teachers and other local leaders can join in the service effort to model good motivations and effort, and teachers can be present to step in to help if the student needs support.

(III) Final Considerations

In this section, I introduce final considerations for using exemplars in our moral education, including how their place in our lives might shift following the Rhetoric stage and into adulthood. I also raise the common critique of classical pedagogy as stilted and outdated, and ask whether the method I have chosen is limited in applicability because most people cannot be educated in this way.

(A) Exemplars in Adulthood

In Chapters Three through Six, I described how the motivational work of exemplars changes as we mature. We are largely unresistant learners when we are younger. As we age, we become more circumspect admirers and more resistant to imitation because we already have firmer habits, or *hexis*, in place. Because of this resistance, there are three guidelines for exemplarism in adulthood.

First, in Chapter Five, I introduced research about how exemplars who we perceive to be more important or surprising amplify our response.[29] This is because they cause us to pause and reconsider our own actions. I described how this type of effect is not something that would be as beneficial for encouraging emulation in childhood, since children are largely non-resistant imitators anyway. Introducing something that would give them pause—i.e. invoking a surprise response—might introduce resistance to imitation that did not exist previously. However, in adulthood, the activities of exemplars we perceive as more surprising or important can stimulate a productive dishabituation response.[30] Exemplars can spur us to revisit unproductive habits of action and can draw us back into a deliberative phase of moral development so that we can make changes in the future. An example of this is, in recognizing that my neighbor (another academic) hosts an inordinate number of dinner parties during a difficult part of the semester, I am surprised by his generosity of time and am pressed to reconsider the ways in which I too fiercely guard my own time or am inhospitable. The surprising context of his action—hospitality even in the face of end-of-semester busyness—spurs me on more so than it would if he were hospitable during the summer or semester breaks. It can encourage me to work to create better habits around hosting.

Furthermore, in adulthood, exemplars are often peers who, more so than others, live above reproach. An example is a colleague in the workplace who is honest in small ways and calls everyone to a higher standard in this respect. These exemplary figures—a

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[29] van de Ven, Niels, Alfred T. M. Archer, and Bart Engelen. "More Important and Surprising Actions of a Moral Exemplar Trigger Stronger Admiration and Inspiration." *The Journal of Social Psychology* 159, no. 4 (2019): 383-397.

[30] For further explanation, see my remarks in Chapter Six.

type of mundane exemplar—serve a culture-setting role. They can act as moral reminders of how to behave in accordance with certain virtues when it would be easier not to do so. This is an important role and can have substantial institutional repercussions. In a recent article by Eric Schwitzgebel, he argues, "Most people aim to be about as morally good as their peers, not especially better, not especially worse. We do not aim to be good, or non-bad, or to act permissibly rather than impermissibly, by fixed moral standards. Rather, we notice the typical behavior of our peers, then calibrate toward so-so."[31] With this in mind, having a mundane exemplar tucked into the workplace who is going to raise the bar even slightly for certain virtues can have a great effect on the institutional culture. Moral mediocrity is contextual, and exemplars can shift the dial.

Lastly, exemplars can also be far away figures for adults, in the same way that they often are for children. Adults are less likely to be moved by superhero stories or to change their behaviors to imitate a favorite music sensation—both because they are less naïve and have more settled patterns of action. However, many Christian adults are spurred into character change by having a regular practice of reading about the saints, or learning about Christ's character. Others read novels or learn about great figures in history or in the media and are drawn into character reflection and change. Adults are certainly more resistant learners, but they are still learners and can substantially benefit from the exemplars in their lives.

(B) Critiques of Classical Pedagogy

In this chapter, I borrowed heavily from classical pedagogy to construct a framework for engaging with exemplars. I did so because in this tradition, there is a logic

[31] Eric Schwitzgebel, "Aiming for Moral Mediocrity," *Res Philosophica* 96 (2019): 347-368.

not just to the use of exemplars over the course of education, but also the order in which certain strategies appear in that education. A moral agent is slowly brought along through the process of habituation so that he is equipped with the emotional and intellectual tools to choose well for himself. This is only natural since Plato and Aristotle raised big questions about whether and how we might educate for virtue, and this system of education was shaped in response to those questions. However, in leaning into classical pedagogy, I shoulder the criticisms of this method as well. There are two main critiques. These are that (1) its content is stilted and outdated, and that (2) classical pedagogy has a limited audience. It is not helpful for me to advocate a system of education that few students have access to. In what follows, I address each of these critiques.

(B.1.) Classical education is stilted and outdated. Another way I have heard this criticism stated is to claim that classical education is stuck in the western tradition, which excludes other perspectives, or that "they just read a bunch of old white men." Briefly, my response borrows from Sayers. She says that classical pedagogy should be considered a method, not a content. In classical learning, what should not be compromised is the structure—progymnasmata, grammar, logic, and rhetoric. The method actively matures a learner as it proceeds, providing resources for intellectual growth so that a learner progresses. Including different voices, or adjusting the content, is certainly an option.

That said, it does seem to be the case that classical schools often focus on the Western canon and forfeit diverse voices because of that. There is a tagline of the Society for Classical Learning—"much not many." It is supposed to remind those who construct the curriculum to dig deeper into great texts because this is more pedagogically valuable than reading widely without much depth of inquiry, for the sake of coverage. "Much not

many" as a strategy sometimes amounts to the decision to spend an inordinate amount of time on major figures, like Plato and Thomas Aquinas, at the expense of including others.

I think this need not be the case. The works that should be highlighted are those of masters (literary exemplars and exemplars of other kinds), and masters are not restricted to the Western canon. It would be incredibly valuable for a curriculum committee to investigate different voices and perspectives to include to reverse what can amount to a narrowminded approach. Moreover, schools should include people from different backgrounds for exemplar studies in the context of virtue education. This would help a learner to grow in his or her moral imagination for a given virtue—for example, to consider what charity looks like in one culture versus another, in order to press the learner think about context-sensitivity for a given virtue. If virtues are indeed global traits,[32] then developing context-sensitivity for actions and priming the imagination in this way is a critical part of the process of virtue education. This process of considering other cultures would also benefit a learner in terms of public virtues, like fairmindedness, because learning about exemplary people from different walks of life can press him or her to see out from different perspectives.

I do not think there is any way to wholly resolve the limited content critique of classical education. However, I think this is an issue for education more generally than just classical schools. Whenever a teacher chooses to teach something in her classroom, the act of including that thing is, under another description, not choosing something else.

[32] A "global" character trait is one for which we consistently act well in nearly every aspect of life. An example is being honest when I pay my taxes, tell stories, log students' grades, when my husband asks me if his tie matches his jacket, and etcetera. "Global" is contrasted with "local." A "local" trait is one that is narrowly expressed or limited by context. e.g. I am only honest when I pay my taxes. See my fuller explanation in Chapter Two.

Classical education often systematically excludes in an obvious way that surely deserves some critique and should change, but it is not alone in doing so. My hope is that the other benefits of classical education—namely the intellectual tools that are cultivated to engage with different arguments and the constructive habits of mind that can be developed by its well-ordered pedagogy—can prepare a learner to engage with novel ideas and with diverse perspectives encountered later in life, if not directly in the classroom. Although, to reiterate, diverse perspectives should be introduced.

(B.2.) Classical pedagogy has a limited audience. A second critique is that very few students have access to classical pedagogy, since it is, at the moment, a small, private school movement. This creates concerns about privilege and character development. Few students can be given the tools to learn in this way, and it might be better if I identified a way to educate for virtues apart from a movement that excludes more learners than it includes.

This is a fair criticism. At the moment, the vast majority of American schools are public and non-classical. Most students who are classically educated are homeschooled or private schooled. There is a growing movement of classical charter schools—the Great Hearts charter initiative in Arizona and Texas, the Barney Charter School Initiative in Georgia, Arkansas, Texas, and New Mexico, and a classical charter program that recently began in the Bronx. This is a promising option, but these are still too few to make a major difference. Also, sometimes the public requirements of education crowd out some of the curricular planning of a classical school. An example is that Great Hearts has made several compromises upon entering Texas. Texas law requires two full years of Texas

history, which means other core courses (like Latin and classical history) are condensed into a single one-year course.

In any case, regardless of the kinds of school that students find themselves in, it seems plausible that teachers and parents can integrate some of the strategies I have described here. As I said, poetry and gymnastics is not unique to classical learning. These practices can be refined and redirected toward character development. Parents can also mind the three major stages of development—first equipping learners with a virtue grammar, then helping them to reason about motivations for action, and finally giving more space for free action, all in the context of strong exemplars. Classical pedagogy can be enacted in a piecemeal way if parental support is in place.

Concluding Remarks

Marrou describes how there is a time-lag before a system of education adequately reflects the ideas held by a society. This means that in our renewed interest in virtue education, we should look not just to the explicit teachings of Plato and Aristotle for guidance on how to cultivate virtues but also to the period of education that followed them and attempted to answer the puzzles their theories created. Two such puzzles are (1) how to progress a learner from admiration to moral virtue and (2) how to habituate a learner—imposing desires, attitudes, and actions in a learner, without undermining her own ability to choose well for herself.

In this chapter, I evaluated strategies in the classical sequence for practical guidance to both of these puzzles—to learn from exemplars in ways that are appropriate for a given level of maturity and to well-position a learner to develop virtues, without compromising the development of moral agency. What I found were four stages of virtue

growth strategies which together constitute a graded maturation of critical reason, in the context of exemplars. These stages provide practical guidance for how to move a learner beyond the *imitation* of good actions to good actions themselves, performed of a learner's own volition. They also invite critical reflection into the process of habituation so that by the end of the *trivium*, students are equipped to move productively in the direction of closing their character gap—to act freely and consistently in accordance with virtue.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Dissertation Conclusion

In this dissertation, I examined the epistemic guidance and motivational support aretaic exemplars provide over the course of our character development. I described how our admiration can misdirect us toward the wrong people or the wrong qualities, and how we might unhelpfully hide behind our admiration, thinking highly of ourselves by association with these good people, not because of anything we have done or intend to do in the future. Admiration can be inert and unproductive, or inappropriate, and it can impede our completion of competing moral responsibilities, like keeping promises, rather than imitating someone else. Moral admiration can be a tremendous tool in directing our attention toward the right qualities and people, but it can also make us vulnerable to having sustained or lasting exposure to those who plainly do not merit this appreciative perspective. Like other moral emotions and attitudes, our admiration needs to be carefully managed and matured over time. Otherwise, it may not play a constructive role in advancing us toward virtue. It can lead us to develop a bad character.

The innovations of this project are three-fold: I described how different accounts of moral virtues impact discussions of exemplarism and moral knowledge. This comparative treatment is not yet found in the exemplarity literature. Second, the Graded Engagement Account, my motivational story of admiration, is the first I have found of its kind. There are other accounts which speak in monolithic terms about the motivational role of admiration—being an emotion which elicits imitation, or an emotion which

inclines us to value promotion. But I have yet to locate an account which looks at how admiration matures from a germ of an emotion or an impulse (the inclination to imitate as a type of unreflective social contagion) through the stages of imitation, and to post-imitative mature moral agency with greater ownership for our own actions. At each stage, imitation looks different, and it *should* look different if we want to advance a learner toward virtue development. I also described how each level of the Graded Engagement Account corresponds to a different level of pedagogy. These levels of pedagogy are my third innovation—the classical sequence.

In classical education, we find a pedagogical sequence which moves a learner through various stages—grammar (virtue concepts), logic (discursive reasoning about moral motivations and reasons for action), and rhetoric (post-deliberative action). I address how this structure, accompanied by a number of imitative practices, offers a productive pedagogical sequence for how to move a learner from admiration to virtue, actively maturing moral reasoning through the process. An unanticipated outcome of this pedagogical sequence is practical guidance regarding one of the most persistent puzzles of moral formation—R.S. Peter's "paradox of moral education." I describe how reason is slowly matured through imitative practices in the *trivium* to prepare a learner to choose well for herself. That is, there is no real paradox here at all. It is plausible to educate a learner into a tradition, while also preparing her to choose well for herself.

Looking forward, there is a great deal more work to be done in this arena. At the moment, there are no sustained philosophical treatments of virtue formation in classical education. For a pedagogical model which predominated most of the Western world through the 1800s and has the stated intention of developing virtuous citizens, this is an

odd lacuna. There are a number of treatises on how to mature a learner's rhetoric and various isolated strategies in moral pedagogy, but there is no systematic treatment of how to move a learner from natural character to moral virtue, using the resources of the *progymnasmata* or the *trivium*. I intend to write this.

Furthermore, it would be helpful if more virtue ethicists and moral psychologists wrote in terms of moral and emotional precursors or immature emotions when it comes to virtue education, rather than only mature emotions and virtues. Just as a child's admiration is not as fully formed as an adult's admiration, we cannot assume a child's anger, disgust, contempt, or other emotions and intentional states function the same as adults' do. This seems perfectly obvious, particularly for those who have ever interacted with a child, but this is not systematically reflected in how we speak of virtue education strategies. For example, when we strategize about virtue education, we should assume that a pre-school child's shame response will not profitably contribute to her moral education in the same way a teenager's or an adult's shame would. Emotions need to be educated alongside reason. In this dissertation, I demonstrated that the "reflective admiration" Zagzebski describes as being integral to the moral life and serving as a stable guide of good qualities is not what we are going to find in a child. Therefore, if we are to constructively use admiration toward the end of character formation, we first need to develop it. Similar virtue education projects can be constructed for any number of moral emotions and attitudes: We first need to develop the emotion or attitude (or concurrently develop it alongside reason, as is the case with admiration); then we can use it constructively for moral formation.

Lastly, virtue education is often framed in the philosophy literature as consisting of a number of discrete tactics, such as virtue-labeling, exemplar exposure, and nudging. These projects are great and valuable sources of guidance in moral learning. But there is very little narrative context provided for how these strategies fit together, or when they should appear in an education. It would be helpful to have more sequential learning—looking at formation as something continuous, which builds on previous strategies and advances a learner toward being able to choose well for herself.

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