The Trivium: Revisiting Ancient Strategies for Character Formation

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This is an unpublished conference paper for the 7th Annual Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues conference at Oriel College, Oxford University, Thursday 3th – Saturday 5th January 2019.

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Introduction

I wrote this paper as a continuation of the good work done in the article "Exemplars and Nudges: Combining Two Strategies for Moral Education" (2018).[1] Engelen, Archer, et al demonstrate how the use of nudges draws out the force of exemplars. They describe story-telling involving exemplars, in which the narrative context nudges a reader to be moved by the exemplar. The authors describe how framing effects, the availability heuristic, and the use of emotion in narratives can highlight the virtues of exemplars so that we are more inclined to emulate. After reading this, I was curious about whether any other virtue formation strategies work best in pairs. What I discovered was that many of the pairs I considered are already in use in classical education. Furthermore, in the classical tradition, there is a logic not just to the application of these methods, but also to the sequence in which they appear in one's education, based on the intellectual and emotional maturity of the learner.

The goal of my paper is to examine virtue education tactics used in classical pedagogy. By classical pedagogy, I mean the *progymnasmata*, *trivium*, and *quadrivium*—the sequence of education rooted in the ancients, refined by the Roman rhetoricians and the Scholastics, largely neglected for a time in favor of more practical modes of education,[2] and revived with Dorothy Sayers's 1947 essay, "The Lost Tools of Learning." I describe the relevant features of classical pedagogy in sections (1) and (2), and I focus on strategies related to the use of exemplars.

My project has three sections: (1) I first introduce the classical stages of education— focusing on the order in which virtue strategies appear. (2) Next, I examine three specific strategy pairings applied, namely (a) poetry and gymnasium, (b) concept-learning and imitation, and (c) imitation and discursive reasoning. These three strategy pairings all aid in maturing the emotion of admiration and helping the learner to emulate the right qualities as excellent. (3) Finally, I answer a common critique of classical education as being too Western, privileged, and stilted. I explore ways in which its methods can be made less culturally myopic—by adjusting the types of stories told and the exemplars selected, and through an emphasis on virtues in the public square.

(1) Classical Sequence

In Plato's *Protagoras*, Socrates asks whether virtue can be taught. Protagoras responds bydescribing his theory of education—a theory built around compulsion. 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

[1] Engelen, Bart, Alan Thomas, Alfred Archer, and Niels van de Ven. "Exemplars and Nudges: Combining Two Strategies for Moral Education." *Journal of Moral Education* 47, no. 3 (2018): 346-365.

[2] "Pragmatism is about human needs; and one of the first of human needs is to be something more than a pragmatist." Chesterton, G.K.C. *Orthodoxy*. New York: John Lane Company, 1908. p. 64.

straightened "with threats and blows, as if he were a twisted, bent piece of wood."[3] 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."[4] And if the boy is "temperate and gets into no mischief," then he is rewarded with music—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.[5]

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.[6] And 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. 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. Play is used from the earliest stages,[7] and music serves as a training in beauty—aesthetic and moral—to both demonstrate harmony and to introduce certain heroes,[8] those who are worthy of emulation. 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 docility, a law-abiding spirit, and self-rule are more so 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. The actions are neither free nor rightly motivated.

I have introduced this comparison between Protagoras' and Socrates' pedagogical sequences 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. (Though, "play" is conspicuously absent from Protagoras' sequence in lieu of 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

[3] *Protagoras* 325d (Transl. by S. Lombardo & K. Bell)
[4] *Protagoras* 325e (Transl. by B. Jowett)
[5] *Protagoras* 326e (Transl. by B. Jowett)
[6] I also have concerns about whether Protagoras is mistaking a docile natural character for virtue: The temperate child is rewarded with music. What child is temperate?
[7] *Laws* 797a
[8] *Republic* 377a-c In this passage, Socrates says to select certain stories of honorable men. He dismisses Homer and Hesiod as telling lies about the gods, heroes, and the afterlife, so their poems should not be shared. Only later does
he arrive at the more absurd conclusion that *all* myths are imitative and should be eliminated (while also spinning his own myths). It is difficult to know whether Socrates is being sincere here.

to me at what age these strategies are deployed or how they ought to be modified to accommodate emotional and intellectual immaturity.

An example of what I have in mind is that Zagzebski advocates “reflective admiration” of one’s exemplars. A person ought to refine the objects of her admiration by reflection in the context of her epistemic community to be sure she is admiring the right people as excellent. It seems to me that children—those who are most shaped by aretaic role models (starting with their parents)—lack the moral experience and intellectual maturity to engage in the reflective process of revision Zagzebski describes. That means, if left unchecked, they are more likely to admire the wrong people as good. Thus, imitation becomes a tool for vice formation, rather than for virtue formation. Children require training of their emotion of admiration, just as other emotions are trained. Therefore, the use of exemplars for young children should be guided by those who know what is good and beautiful, and those who instantiate the virtues should be placed before them. Over time, with sufficient moral experience and well-trained affections, learners can more independently reflect on who their role models are, to emulate the right people, to practice virtue, to develop the right motivations, and to hopefully acquire that virtue for themselves.

There are many benefits for virtue development in the order of education Socrates describes—particularly with respect to the attention that is given to training the emotions before engaging with reasons. To keep my project sufficiently narrow, I am going to focus on the specific sequence and pairing of methods regarding exemplars. These methods are (a) poetry and gymnasium, (b) concept-learning and imitation, and (c) imitation and discursive reasoning. Poetry and gymnasium 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. These are three sequential stages. Exemplars are used throughout moral education and at each of these stages, but the way they are used changes as students mature. I examine this in the following section.

(2) Specific Strategies

The classical model has a graded, step-wise approach to engagement with exemplars, to accommodate intellectual and emotional growth. In what follows, I explain these strategies and how they build on one another.

(2a) Poetry and Gymnastics

Before formal learning, students are prepared to be educated, and this happens through poetry and gymnastics—i.e. exemplars plus athletics. By poetry, Socrates means “the education of our heroes,” which takes the form of story-telling and lyric poetry.[9] By gymnastics, he means any form of physical exercise. 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 like not an especially fruitful virtue pairing, since “stories” and “physical play” are not obviously coordinated methods of moral education, nor are they regarded as very serious activities in early education.[10] Furthermore, this combination does not seem novel to the contemporary conscience because this is not too far off from what happens in preschools— story-telling and physical

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[9] *Republic* II

[10] I read Dr. Seuss books and played on the monkey bars. These things seemed more of a break for my teachers than an opportunity to form my character.

play. These are commonly paired activities. Though, in many cases, the process could be more directed and selective with the sorts of heroes portrayed and the types of exercises performed. However, I think poetry and athletics in fact constitute a very 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 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.[11] Athletics can aid this process in a few ways.

First, physical exercise enables you to truly see your lack of virtue. Consider perseverance in an exemplar. Well, if you are shown a hero with the virtue of perseverance and you see that quality as desirable, if you happen to have the opportunity to go for a run, it becomes very clear whether or not you have that quality. In running, you can measure the extent to which you can or cannot persevere in minutes or kilometers. Further examples can be made with fortitude or prudence in ball sports. Performance suffers in a controlled "game" setting if you lack prudence or if you are not brave enough to act. In "How Exemplars Can Ruin Your Life," Archer talks about how admiration can set one up for "a distinctive kind of moral error"— one may not realize the ways in which she is not an exemplar. That is, by holding an exemplar in mind, you begin to think of yourself in terms of the excellences the exemplar possesses, but you do not actually have these excellences yourself. Therefore, admiration seems to require that an actor have an adequate self-understanding in order to be motivated to improve.[12] Otherwise, what results is a type of self-glorification. Pairing athletics with exemplars can help avoid this error by showing you the ways in which you fall short, in measurable, performance-relevant ways.

Second, athletics models a means of improvement in the virtues. Taking the example of perseverance, there is a practice-based approach to improvement in this respect: You run more kilometers on a consistent basis, on various types of terrain, at various speeds. "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."[13] If we want to become virtuous, we have 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.' We wake up every day and repeatedly do the same things, with the intention of improving.

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 you are already doing. But in running, you quickly realize that remaining is difficult. When you remain, you feel burning in your legs and in your lungs, and it really does take labored practice to be able to persevere. In a formal classroom setting, you can learn about a virtue by definition, but you do not always experience *training* in that virtue and what it feels like to grow in virtue, and you do not often have the opportunity to build the habit. Physical exercise provides this opportunity. It helps a person to appreciate the difficulty of acquiring the virtue exhibited by the exemplar and to pay attention to the development the exemplar underwent to become virtuous.

Based on these three features of athletics—the fact that physical training allows a person to see her lack of virtue, introduces a practice-based approach to acquiring virtue, and highlights the difficulty of acquiring virtue—I think using athletics in the context of exemplar exposure prepares one well to begin

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[11] Miller, C. *The Character Gap: How Good Are We?* New York: Oxford University Press, 2018.
[12] "How Exemplars Can Ruin Your Life" in *The Moral Psychology of Admiration*. (forthcoming)
[13] *Nicomachean Ethics* II.2.4

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. There are certain qualities of exemplars that translate well in and out of an athletic context, but there are others that do not (like gentleness and truthfulness[14]). 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. Even so, this is a great start—even if only a few virtues can be exemplified and effectively practiced at this stage—because the student is made aware of the responsibility he has for working to develop his own character.

(2b) Concept-Learning and Imitation

Trivium means "three ways."[15] It consists of three stages—grammar, logic, and rhetoric (the first three of the seven liberal arts). 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] Many of these recitations are hero stories or are the products of literary masters, so 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 about. At the grammar level, students also start to read and learn the basics of history, math, theology, and language.[17]

As I discussed above, 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, but I gave up after a 10-minute jog. I must not be excellent like he is. But at this point, they are unable to articulate the concepts of the virtues they lack.

These days, Annas' (and Aristotle's) articulation requirement for virtue is under debate. It is unclear whether the ability to name a virtue, is a necessary condition of having that virtue. I am not going to take a position in this broader debate. However, in the specific context of acquiring virtue by way of the emulation of exemplars, I think the ability to articulate the excellence in question is critically important. This is to assuage concerns I expressed earlier — that we may be imitating the wrong qualities. A major 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—in Kristjánsson's words—"unreflectively conform to a charismatic leader."[18] We might be training students to blindly

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[14] In soccer and wrestling, players fake left and move to the right. In basketball, players pump-fake shots. These motions are semiotic. They signal something, and the player does the opposite. Effectively, players are practicing how to lie well. These lies are understood and accepted within the conventions of the games. I am not convinced they imperil the soul. Still, if we are to believe other virtues can be developed in the athletic context that will translate into daily life outside of sport, then we also have to accept that the same can be true of vices.

[15] Jain, R.S. & Clark, K. *The Liberal Arts Tradition: A Philosophy of Christian Classical Education*. Camp Hill: Classical Academic Press, 2013.

[16] Sayers, Dorothy L. "The Lost Tools of Learning." *The Classical Outlook* 57, 1 (1979): 13-14.

[17] Littlejohn, R. & C.T. Evans. *Wisdom and Eloquence: A Christian Paradigm for Classical Learning*. Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2006. pp. 36-37.

[18] Kristjánsson, K. "Emulation and the Use of Role Models in Moral Education." *Journal of Moral*

imitate anyone they find admirable, without equipping them to critically reflect on what qualities they find emulable. Interestingly, the classical pedagogical sequence answers my worry by providing this stage— virtue grammar—after poetry and gymnasium, and alongside memorization of stories. Students are taught virtue concepts, which they memorize. This sets them up to meet Annas' articulation requirement. Even if there is no such requirement, 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.

To be fair, many of the classical Greek and Roman resources I explored[19] spoke in vague terms about the specifics of what regularly occurred at the grammar and logic levels of the *trivium*. Quintilian provides the most thorough account of the grammar stage as needing to promote memory, to impart the basics of subjects, and to form habits of speech,[20] but he is mostly concerned with educating future orators rather than citizens in general.[21] Thus, my experiences teaching in a classical school and from conversations at the Society for Classical Learning annual conferences.

In the school where I taught, virtue concept-learning looks like this: On a daily basis, students have a virtue education period (a 15-minute block between lunch and afternoon classes). This looks different based on the age range of the students. Grammar students memorize pithy definitions of virtues. "Prudence is right thinking plus action." "Temperance is not too much, not too little, just enough of the things we love."[22] The grammar students have hand signs to go with them to help them memorize. They reflect on the virtue concepts as a class and are told stories to accompany them—of people exemplifying the virtues. This virtue combination equips them with a vocabulary to discuss what is excellent, and it helps to draw out what is special and admirable in the exemplars. For this reason, I find this is a helpful virtue strategy-pairing, and it is also a pairing that builds on the work done in poetry and gymnasium.

(2c) 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 emotional and intellectual maturity. At the logic stage, students are introduced to (unsurprisingly) logic. They study formal reasoning. They analyze language, syntax, arguments, and laws, and they critically assess different positions on an issue.[23]

Exemplar exposure looks a bit different at this stage because students have intellectually matured. 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."[24] But at this stage, the imitation 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, in literature, students read *Beowulf*, then write their own short epic poems, using tools such as alliteration, *in media*

Education 35, 1. 2006. 37-49.

[19] Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian, Augustine

[20] Quintilian. *Institutes*, Books I and II. As found in *The Great Tradition*, edited by R.M. Gamble, 110-113. Wilmington: ISI Books, 2007.

[21] By "citizens in general" I meant free men. Liberal arts were for the free. I address the widening of audiences in the final section of this paper.

[22] If you see problems with this definition, yes. I do, too.

[23] Littlejohn, R. & C.T. Evans. p. 37.

[24] Kaplan, N. 2003.

res, and kennings. Thus, students learn prudence by practicing the excellent qualities, rather than simply admiring them. They take ownership of these excellent qualities. In the moral domain, this might look like evaluating a hero and asking difficult questions about how that person's life differs from my own—how they exemplify courage and how I might do so in my own context. It can involve critical reflection on how I might incorporate good actions into my daily life, in different situations, and over the long term. This practice—*imitatio*—is taught at the same time that students learn dialectic and formal reasoning skills. In this pairing of exemplars and formal logic, the learners' prudence and reasons-responsiveness are refined while they are actively emulating exemplars in a more focused way. This stage prepares them to move beyond emulation to virtue because they are equipped to think critically about their reasons or motivations for action.

In this section, I examined three virtue growth pairings—pairings which constitute a stepwise approach to exposure to exemplars. I explained that when we consider methods in virtue pedagogy, we should not think of them 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. I suspect that after the logic stage, students are equipped to move productively in the direction of closing their character gap.

(3) Answering a Common Critique

In sections (1) and (2) I made the case that we should return our attention to the sequence of moral education embedded in the classical tradition because it is a sequence that takes into account the ways in which exposure to exemplars should change as students mature. I would be remiss if I did not answer two common critiques of classical education in the process, critiques relevant to possible impediments to developing good character: (a) Classical pedagogy is old-fashioned, Western, and stilted, and—as such—it impedes the love of one's neighbor. (b) Furthermore, while the liberal arts are no longer reserved only for free men, the fact that classical schools today are often private means they are exclusive. In what follows, I address each critique in turn.

(3a) First, the critique of classical education as Western and old-fashioned is only a problem if we think of classical education as a content, rather than as a method. In my evaluation, I treated it as a method—a sequence of strategies to apply together, and in the right order. In Dorothy Sayers' "Lost Tools of Learning," she treats the *trivium* in the same way—as a method. That said, I do not think we can be indifferent to the character of the heroes portrayed, so the stories we select and the masters we present matter. Interestingly, both Plato and Aristotle present something like a moral perfection *ad absurdum* presentation of heroes.[25] Heroes are purged of imperfections such that they become unrelatable to us, and the stories told (good guys interacting with good guys) become plot-less. Clearly, both men believe that exemplars have important motivational and epistemic roles in society. But—at least in the context of exemplar stories—preserving the quality of the narrative of these stories might mean compromising the character of a protagonist in such a way that he has enough frailties to be interesting to us. Otherwise, the stories are not good ones, however noble the protagonists are. Furthermore, the research suggests that morally imperfect exemplars are more admirable to us because we can better relate to them.[26] In fact, the more "human" an exemplar is—through increased access to personal details—admiration increases.[27] This highlights the importance of having direct conversations

[25] Aristotle in the *Poetics*, Plato in the *Republic* Books III, X
[26] Wilson, A.T. "Admiration and the Development of Moral Virtue." Work in Progress. The Beacon Summer Seminar Packet. Christian Miller. 2018.
[27] Engelen, Archer 2018

about the admired person. The heroes are not morally perfect, so we need to help students see what is admirable.

A further note on the question of hero stories is that this can be a great opportunity to introduce exemplars from different backgrounds, not limited to the classical period in the Western world. This can look like figure studies of key leaders in history class—in different time periods and locations—or more direct story-telling in virtue education. This story-telling can be directed locally or abroad, such as by finding stories of bravery in local and international newspapers (through global news hubs like the website lasnoticias.com). This practice can be helpful on two fronts—both enabling a student to see and empathize with people far away for a broader cultural understanding, and helping a student to abstract a virtue from a local situation— to develop their moral imagination for different types of situations in which a person could be brave. This can prepare them to develop the cross-situational stability of the trait.

Furthermore, it should be the case that classically-educated students are better equipped to love and embrace different cultures than those who are not trained in formal reasoning and in the virtues of citizenship. They are trained to argue well, and as rhetoric students, they debate one another. It seems that arguing well is as much a function of good reasoning as it is of charity, justice, and fairmindedness, so if they are in fact learning to argue well, they are also learning to listen virtuously. Maybe these students are limited in their exposure to works of the western world, but they should be formed in such a way that they receive opposing views well.

Returning to the central critique, I should admit that the school where I taught (and many schools like it) typically are marked not just by a common method, but by a common content— the Great Books, or Western Canon. While these are tremendous resources that have lasted the test of time, in spite of the chronological snobbery of our age, they certainly leave things out. There are very few, if any, works by women, and the story of the world is told in such a way that it passes over much of eastern Europe, Asia, Africa, and the early Americas. The classical dictum “much not many” means the tradition is inclined to deeply dwell on the teachings of central voices in history, rather than providing a fly-by view of all the voices for the sake of coverage. Because many of these central voices happen to be men of Western backgrounds and privilege, they are the ones who we dwell on, at the expense of other thinkers. I am not entirely sure what the solution is here, other than the obvious—incorporating female voices and expanding the scope of history to include different people and places outside of the western world. I think varying the backgrounds of teachers can help, too. During a Plato unit, a female student told me that she didn’t think philosophy was for girls until I was the one teaching her. I was teaching from the traditional canon, but she felt it was a hospitable place to her because it was a place for me.

To be clear, all education is really like this: To choose to teach anything is to choose to not teach something else. And I do not think this necessarily a bad thing. To paraphrase political scientist Steven Smith, “There is no Shakespeare of Esperanto.” Sometimes deeply dwelling in the riches of a culture is the better choice than attempting to present a shallow multiculturalism.

Still, conversations about the western canon and what it excludes are important and need to be had if we are to return to classical modes in a richer sense than just co-opting methods.

(3b) The second critique is that classical education is private, and therefore excludes a lot of people. While it is no longer the case that only free men with leisure are able to be educated in the classical model, I think exclusion is still a problem. Most families cannot afford private schooling. I have two thoughts. First, I think the classical charter school models are a great way to expand the reach of these schools because families do not have to pay extra, apart from their usual taxes. Because they are

charter, these schools involve some curricular compromises. For example, in Texas, two years of Texas history are required for students by public mandate, which means classical history and Latin are combined into a single course to make room. Still, the curriculum follows the traditional *trivium*, at least in terms of sequence.

Furthermore, there is nothing preventing the classical moral pedagogical sequence from being applied piecemeal, throughout a child's development, even outside of schools. Think of how powerful it would be if youth athletic coaches knew about *poetry* and *gymnasium*. They can tell stories and model the virtues, and kids can practice these excellences for themselves. Parents can speak in the language of virtues around the house to provide their children a grammar of character formation and can help them to build good habits. Parents, community leaders, and teachers alike can teach students to be articulate about the ways in which exemplars are excellent and to reason about potential motivations for action. Sure, maybe our public-school curricula are presently more Protagorean than Socratic, but we can hit developmental milestones by applying the strategies I have discussed, outside of a formal classroom.

Conclusion

In this paper, I highlighted the importance of order in classical moral pedagogy, comparing the common methods but different sequences in Plato and Protagoras. Then I examined three virtue strategy pairings that helpfully train the emotion of admiration so students can better learn from exemplars, adjusting for intellectual and emotional maturity in a step-wise fashion. Finally, I answered two common critiques of the classical methods about the voices excluded, in content and in classrooms. I think if there is one thing to be taken from the classical tradition, it is that we should not think of virtue education strategies as stand-alone tools, but as part of a broader narrative of training, suitable to age, and moving a child in the direction of virtue. I welcome your questions and insights.

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