

Theorizing Courage as Requisite for Moral Education

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INTRODUCTION

It is perplexing to read the standard curricula of various character education programs. These curricula tend to resemble our most outdated pedagogies, relying on negative reinforcement and indoctrination as opposed to honest presentation, critical discussion, and serious reflection. More often than not, the curriculum is intended to “teach” specific virtues; of course *which* virtues are included and how they are defined depends on the orientation of the program’s author(s).¹ The method most frequently employed is to highlight one virtue at a time, in seemingly random order, (such as a different virtue each month) and tell students unwaveringly that these virtues are characteristic of the morally good person. Implied of course, is the expectation that *if* the student wants to be considered a good person, *then* she will behave according to the norms implied by the virtues taught. There is also the insinuation of the opposite, that if a student does not exercise the said virtues in a recognizable fashion, then she will be seen as a bad or morally deficient person. Regardless of their intent and even the desirability of these virtues including the good at which they aim, such programs engage in poor pedagogy by in effect, perpetuating the conformist and mindless behavior of students. Not only are students discouraged from reasoning deeply about ethics, they are prevented from simply thinking for themselves rendering them incompetent to live an ethical life.

We could discuss further the moral presumptiveness of traditional character education programs or their shoddy pedagogy. Educational theorists have already written about the flaws inherent in “virtue-of the month” techniques as dictatorial and inane or, superficial at best and have offered well-reasoned alternatives. My own approach has been to focus on ethical self-formation as both a means of moral education and as a goal of education writ large.² Based on a Foucauldian ethics, I have suggested that education ought to afford individuals the ongoing opportunity and abilities necessary to cultivate their own personhood. My claim is that self-construction *à la* Michel Foucault, the constant critique and shaping of our person as an ethical being, ought to be considered the central aim of moral pedagogy. Such an education involves more than the simple adoption of categorical truths or popular virtues. Creating an ethical self requires ongoing judgments and meta-judgments in response to the world and the condition of others. This understanding of ethical selfhood relies on a view of the “self” as coming to be in the processes of speaking, acting, and creating. The ethical nature of this “self” involves a discerning will and attendance to the presence of others in the ongoing consideration and production of judgments. It is these judgments that students need to recognize, examine, practice and critically reflect upon, in order to grow as educated and compassionate people. What will be considered in this space is, “What is necessary in order for the individual student to engage in the formation of an ethical self?” and, “What is required of those who knowingly or not, guide her through such a process?”

The argument presented here is that practicing a Foucauldian ethics is a matter of courage; and that the courage necessary is particular to the process and goal of ethical self-formation. Although specific to ethical self-formation, what we learn about the nature of courage from examining the creation of an ethical life could serve to trouble our traditional understanding of courage exemplified in the hero of battle. The willingness to engage in self-care, the ability to practice it and the eventual commitment to a moral vision that is sufficiently other-regarding but never statically moral, all require courage.³ In Foucault's writing, there is no mention of the "self-former" as *courageous*. He does however, allude to risks involved in ethical self-formation, such as the precariousness of living without a foundational self, calling into question the attitudes and beliefs of the prevailing power, and/or facing direct opposition in the form of ridicule or physical confrontation. Developing the courage to overcome apparent risks is warranted if one considers the formation of the self as an ethical being a valuable pursuit.

Foucault's ethics of care of the self has been criticized by some as too self-involved, as negatively "self-centered." I have argued instead that ethical self-formation is a truly social practice and a viable approach to life with others as it balances individual freedom with attendance to "the other."⁴ With reference to the work of William Desmond, I would like to argue further that the impetus to engage in self-formation is due initially to a courageous recognition of the other's being. A look at the practices and subjectifications that Foucault suggests as comprised by "care of the self," particularly their inherent social character, public reliance on the assistance of others coupled with an increasingly normalizing and conformist society, reveals a second type of courage necessary to continually form and express a self.⁵ Over time, a third form of courage is realized which enables the individual to persist in her quest to bring about a depth of communicated joy. It is specifically these three types of courage required for moral selfhood that will be presented here.

WHY COURAGE?

When one looks to education as a means to improving people's behavior toward others, one can see, despite continuous rhetoric to the contrary, the failure of our institutions to promote caring *and* autonomous persons. Much of the philosophical discussion around issues of 'the self' has dealt with *either* promoting caring behavior *or* pushing agentic selfhood. In order to foster both *compassion* and *freedom*, what is needed is a theoretical and practical framework that supports both simultaneously. Courageous self-formation as a theory and a practice can be seen to do just that.

Without the freedom to choose or the ability to make judgments, it is impossible to say that someone is acting "ethically." Likewise, without consideration of the particular other or one's relationship to the whole, one's behavior becomes increasingly egoistic, making the world an uncaring and inhospitable place for all beings. Therefore, our selfhood must become the object of our care. Forces also exist in society that exert tremendous power even over our definition of our selves and the direction of our lives. In order to have a hand in shaping our identities and our future, we must learn the art of cultivating a self, of making reasoned, caring and often creative judgments, which are expressed as our words and actions and creations.⁶

Our identity then becomes the funded judgments of these experiences. The claim being made is that becoming a caring and critical judge of experience, cultivating an ethical self, requires courage, several types of courage in fact, that can be promoted and nurtured in the classroom.

THE NATURE OF COURAGE IN ETHICAL SELF-FORMATION

The process of normalization is understood by Foucault to present perhaps the greatest threat to individual freedom in this historic moment. Foucault calls “normalizing” those hegemonic forces that perpetuate ideology almost imperceptibly. The dominant culture and even powerful sub-cultures and discourses define for us expected roles, relationships and orientations through a system of rewards and punishments administered by its major institutions. The most insidious, and according to Gramsci the most effective, form of restriction and control occurs when given norms are unquestioned by whole groups within society and internalized within the thought processes of individuals.⁷ Foucault includes the following functions and interactions as circumscribed by the dominant culture: gender categories, insanity, motherhood, heteronormativity and criminality, to name a few.⁸

Thus, the very decision to be consciously involved in what one is to become is a courageous one. To assert one’s agency in the face of oppressive forces, to carve out at least some dominion over the very area(s) society attempts to normalize is a brave act. Similar to Tillich’s *Courage to Be*, there must be an initial recognition of one’s position *vis á vis* the other and creation itself which prompts us to embrace our being and participate as fully as possible in it.⁹ *Ontological courage*, as I refer to it, is accepting responsibility for the person one will become by assenting to the project of one’s education and the inevitable changes one will suffer. Ontological courage is a necessary precondition to engaging earnestly in the construction of the self. The performance of self-construction is itself an existentially courageous act which I refer to as *existential courage*. Unlike the traditional existentialist, the ethical self-former acknowledges the relational, common and public nature of self-construction as having equal import as individual choice. And, unlike some Nietzschean *Übermensch*, who is certainly aware of the presence of the other, the ethical self-former admits to the incomprehensibility of a life without the other.¹⁰ The existentially courageous person has already made a choice based on ontology and is engaged in mutual self-construction. In other words, she recognizes her reliance on being itself and embraces the other as part of the ontological circumstances she is born into – which is an act of courage.

Those who practice self-formation ethically recognize that a meaningful existence must necessarily be attentive to the other, must take her being into consideration while shaping her own.¹¹ Once accepted, *practicing* ethical self-formation requires that existential risks be taken in both public and private spheres. Again, such practice is itself, and is productive of, existential courage. Through time, the practice of existential courage strengthens the individual to make more difficult decisions, to sustain ways of being in the world and give expression to a certain joy.¹² This final, though by no means fixed, form of courage will be referred to as *moral courage*. The morally courageous person has committed himself to

certain projects and therefore prefers this, over that, action. By having been a reflective self in the world, having performed and suffered the choices of his own and other selves and critiqued those choices, the morally courageous person is in a position to recommend a specific future.

These three forms of courage: ontological, existential, and moral, represent dispositions toward life as opposed to virtues that can be possessed. The pedagogy required to “produce” courageous self-formers will therefore look very different from a doctrinal approach or even the promotion of “virtue.” Put another way, it is not that we “acquire” the virtue of courage. Rather, the courageous person has chosen to be disposed to acting a certain way in the world- to seek further joy. In an effort to explicate these three modes of courageous being, it might be useful to consider them in light of the work of another ethical theorist.

Irish philosopher William Desmond discusses four forms of courage in his philosophical reflections on courage.¹³ What I have labeled here as *ontological* courage corresponds to Desmond’s second form of courage, which he describes as “a... *determinate affirmation of a life*, but in the context of a threat known as such” (SSS, 19). Ontological courage as courage to affirm being will be discussed more fully below. The notion of *existential* courage being offered here differs in important ways, from Desmond’s corresponding depiction of courage. His third form of courage is described as “courage in the face of a threat to a way of life” (SSS, 20). Desmond is concerned with preserving “shared ways of being,” with protecting the “communal configuration of a specific ethos” (SSS, 20). While the idea of the social is elemental to the understanding of existential courage being discussed here, its role is quite different. Existential courage involves participation in the way of life of self-inquiry and self-construction, which are fundamentally social processes. Existential courage is the ongoing critical practice of and commitment to creating and managing a self within a world of selves requiring no further common beliefs.

Finally, *moral* courage as it is being understood here, is related to Desmond’s fourth form of courage, which he claims refers to “steadfastness in the face of threats to ‘values’ beyond ways of finite life” (SSS, 22). Of course he is operating from the assumption that there are such values. Due to a lack of space we must leave the issue of whether values that transcend human finitude exist for another time. However, the theory discussed here allows us to understand ultimate worth and/or meaning as both individually discovered, reasoned to or believed in and relationally informed. Thus, even the agnostic might affirm value beyond her own life. The traditionally courageous heroes in literature and in history who have died for honor, fidelity, and country, could be said to have exhibited this form of courage.

Sacrifice to something larger than oneself is not the only criterion for moral courage; nor is the act of simply willing a better future. Knowledge and inquiry must play a role in bolstering a ‘knowing willing.’ In order to respond with care to problems in the world, particularly when they involve someone else, sentiment cannot avoid reason and rely solely on feelings of commiseration unguided and without focus.¹⁴ Ultimately, consideration and compassion without critical sanctioning lacks specific understanding and volition thus reducing our overall capacity to think and act independently. Rational, agentic, autonomous action however, does

not necessarily move us in the direction of the other. Thus, there is a “developmental” aspect to the evolution of moral courage within the individual, though more recursive than linear. The difficulty for educators is that courage, as caring, as critique and as commitment cannot be forced. Paradoxically, this fact also points to the value of courage as an ethical state of free beings, whose freedom moral education must aim to preserve.

ONTOLOGICAL COURAGE

Yet, even if the gift, the grace, of true, philosophical passion cannot be earned, might we not better learn how to await the moment of its coming? — Alven Neiman¹⁵

In essence, ontological courage is a choice to move purposefully in a certain direction. It is the decision to be oriented toward the search for meaning through participation in shared creative acts, not knowing for sure if meaning can be found. The view of selfhood which sees “the self” as a constant antagonism, as an effort to seek out and assert autonomous being “in spite of” or worse “over and above” the existence of others, is similar in form to a notion of courage derived from images of battle. The idea of selfhood as impervious sovereignty is an impoverished conception of the self as it does not necessarily admit to growth and therefore will not be open to forms of moral courage. Instead, agreement to engage in discovering and/or creating meaningful existence ought to be seen as the ontologically courageous act. It is a choice to love life and to honor being by not only accepting being in the form of the self and the form of the other, but by seeing it as positive, as something worth “doing.”

One of the most important aspects of ontological courage is its source. As Desmond states in his exploration of courage, there is a sense in which “to be is to be encouraged to be” (SSS, 14). In other words, the ability to respond to being by taking responsibility for whom one might become may not be fully at our discretion. Before we can exhibit such courage, we must first be *encouraged*. The other communicates to us both the power of being and our own vulnerability in the face of such power or, our “un-power.” Ontological courage is the opposite of what we have come to view as courage — the standing up to and against external threats to our being by the other and nature. Focusing exclusively on our vulnerability, we tend to “shut out” the call that the other makes to us. It requires great will and uncommon trust to accept that meaningful existence — even who and how I am — is not within my control, that I need others in order to be. To view otherness as a joy as opposed to a threat takes courage (SSS, 14). With courage, we respond to the solicitation of the other seen not as an intrusion but as an invitation to appreciate the full disclosure of being. The willingness to endure the other (compassion), to stand ready to be needed and to accept our need of others is summoned by the existence of the other.

The choice to link my future being — via the “creation” of my future self- with that of the other is to submit to the unknown. The ontologically courageous person asks to experience being *with* the other indeed with all of being, suffering in whatever way they do. In willing that passion and compassion be expressed in the creation of meaning, one wills to further entwine one’s fate with others, and one inevitably commits to an unknown future. Courage therefore, is in a sense an admission of need.

Having interpreted Foucault as holding that one's freedom is dependent upon taking an ethical stance (a disposition to self-construct with regard for the becoming of others), ontological courage therefore represents a primal and necessary step in achieving a state of freedom. The task for educators is to make the need for such a fundamental yet courageous choice explicit. For those with an appropriate appreciation for the being of the other, this may not be difficult to accomplish. The more pressing problem is as always, "How do those who do not feel compelled to celebrate being come to value it?" However one comes by it, whether through reason, by grace, a will to believe, desperation or some other means, the conscious and often ongoing interest in one's own de-liberation vis-à-vis the being of the other is the definition of ontological courage.

EXISTENTIAL COURAGE

"The power of "great courage" arises exclusively out of a process of ethical self-cultivation."
Menicus in *Ivanhoe*¹⁶

Existential courage involves risking the security of an essential or unalterable self in efforts to envision, experiment, fashion, produce, test, apply, judge, and practice alternative ways of being. In ethical self-formation, these acts are followed by a critiquing of the different "selves" or "ways of being" that one has considered and enacted. Submitting to critique, even self-critique, is a risky and difficult process to endure. Thus, a person displays existential courage by saying, doing and making in front of others and critiquing those judgments in order to alter, perfect, future actions/judgments: in short, by *becoming*.¹⁷ The risks include, but are not limited to (depending upon one's personality and circumstances): giving up certitude, being seen struggling, and the inevitable "putting forth" of this or that self. Such actions are "risky" because we have been taught that one ought to be able to hold out a particular 'Truth' as justification for one's actions. Only the claim to Truth is defensible in Western society, no other mode of judgment is seen as rational.¹⁸ And, as traditional moral education points out, we need not seek justification for each and every action as models of acceptable selfhood already exist, making our task simply to adopt one.

The earnest process of trial and error, with respect to cultivating one's personhood, calls forth continual acts of courage; so too, does an over-arching acceptance of one's state of perpetual incompleteness. Existential courage does not imply an elimination of fear, or becoming fearless. As we know, it is often reasonable to be afraid. But challenging one's fear in an effort to bring about the possibility of freedom allows me to be the kind of person I was not before. Thus, there is a "fundedness" to existential courage. Similar to Dewey's notion of life as experience, the increased ability to direct future experience signifies growth that results from the temporal/existential fact that I am different at every new experience because of every one past.

MORAL COURAGE

"In the course of this process [of self cultivation], one develops an understanding and appreciation of what is right and a growing commitment to pursue it." – Menicus in *Ivanhoe*¹⁹

To assemble bits and pieces of a self is to continually deepen and reaffirm certain commitments. Eventually, one sustains commitments to specific ideas, habits,

desires, and ways of being; this takes *moral* courage, which will have been built over time through the exercise of existential courage.²⁰ The morally courageous person stands for and/or cares for x, y, or z based on her knowledge and the wisdom of practice gained in self-constructing. Moving more fully into correlated living has required the exercising of her reason resulting in the accumulation of knowledge and performative intelligence. This *knowledge* and *performative intelligence* brings about a secure sense of being which strengthens one for the performance of difficult actions. The practice of reason in pursuit of selfhood via other-regarding agency has rendered her capable of principled discernment. Possession of necessary knowledge, performative intelligence (which includes knowledge of humankind both general and particular), and an articulated desire to exist *with* others, to suffer being as others do in an effort to “know” them fully, are the abilities the morally courageous person displays even under extreme threat. Although dedicated to ushering in a particular future, the person with moral courage, unlike the fanatic, is a suspicious prophet knowing that she is susceptible to anxiety from within, assault from without, as well as ambivalent and ambiguous ethical circumstances.

SUMMARIZING COURAGE

To care deeply, to commit one’s efforts, time and person to particular beings outside of ourselves requires an openness to that which could illicit such a commitment or, *ontological courage*. This courage as openness happens in response to the solicitation from the other. Because we find the courage to recognize the other as directive in our own self-formation, we are further strengthened to exercise our freedom. Ontological courage liberates reason in so far as it allows reason to correctly address what it seeks to know, namely the self and the other. In acknowledging our dependence on being and the necessity of other-dependence to sustain human freedom, we continue to publicly shape our individual person.²¹ This, as we have seen, requires *existential courage*. By practicing such courage we continually place ourselves in positions of risk and vulnerability. Such positions turn out to be humanly richer than expressing a sovereignty of self as they involve a relationship with the other and bring into play not only our capacity to know, but a deeper capacity to celebrate and bring joy. Without spaces of self-endorsed vulnerability (which require courage to endure while attempting to act) there is no learning and hence no growth.²² Confirming co-existence, assenting to fashion oneself in full presence of that existence admits of profound need. This admission makes us susceptible to the decisions of others and yet in ethical self-formation we allow others to be both reason and tool. To trust another in the co-creation of oneself is perhaps one of the most significant and expressive human acts. The joy in moral courage comes about not only from radical solidarity, but in entrusting the future to the other thereby affirming our dignity. Moral courage is humble self-giving, but it is also the empowerment of the other through correlative creation. It is the declaration of what many would like to have the strength to express, that “I need you,” that “It is only through you that I can find joy.”

As Desmond would concur we recognize moral being in a depth of caring “in compassion for the other’s suffering, or in granting that the barbarian other, the hostile other, even the enemy is also my brother” (SSS, 23). We must therefore ask

with him, “What courage would be needed to live these realizations? What would strengthen one to place oneself before others in such a potentially radical vulnerability?” (SSS, 23).

My answer is moral courage, based on courage both ontological and existential. Having admitted to “the pull” of the other, having participated in the creation of freedom by attending to one’s own becoming, we not only desire, but have the strength to endure any reality, which brings about further joy. Moral courage comes in a sense from the informed judgment that what one is trying to bring more fully into the world, namely joy, already exists in the deep, formative connection with the other. The morally courageous person is able to transcend solitude, inaction and despair as she is anchored in a shared future. Transcendence therefore is not a movement away from one’s self and one’s body, but a stronger more committed life as *this* being, in *these* circumstances, it is courage to be *with*.

We are visited by an intimation of transcendent worth that is no aesthetic frill; that disturbs the self-satisfaction of the human; that cannot be determined through ourselves alone; that cannot univocally be known with the self-certainty we often crave; that places us in a constitutively equivocal space of having to risk what we cannot prove in advance; and that, if confirmed at all, can only be confirmed in the wager of courage itself (SSS, 23).

Ontological courage allows us to respond to “en-couragement” by the other. Existential courage teaches us that though the other and my contingencies have “a say,” I am ultimately the architect of myself. We also learn that we are fallible, that we can be ridiculous and that we are not guaranteed to “get it right.” Having exercised both forms of courage, we are empowered to take on the more difficult tasks that extreme solidarity demands, in which is found tremendous joy. As Desmond states regarding moral courage,

one has to ask again what are the sources of its own strengthening for knowing? Not knowing itself; for to know we have to be strengthened in the confidences that we *can know*, and this we cannot know *before* we know. We can only trust that we can, encouraged, impelled by an unknowing confidence that it is possible. If “being encouraged” is before “being courageous” is there not a “confiding” (*con-fides*- a “trust with”) before “being confident”? (SSS, 27).

TOWARD A PEDAGOGY OF COURAGE

Of course the practical question at this point is “How, then, do we go about teaching for, enabling or nurturing ethical self-becoming? And, “If courage is necessary to such becoming, how do we teach it if indeed it can be taught?” Classrooms, rather than demanding rigid and ready personhood or categorical and completed selves, must more intentionally become places for becoming, places to practice courage.

So, what exactly are we talking about with regard to kids and schools? Most moral education deals in some way with our *social being*. We are taught how to behave in our culture, we learn that we could be held responsible for our own actions, and we learn that the way we treat others determines their treatment of us (otherwise known as *The Golden Rule*). This rule teaches for example, that if I am “nice” to others, they will be “nice” to me and if I am “mean” to others they will (and have a right to be) “mean” to me. To this simplistic epithet we add a long list of “do’s and

don'ts." Often moral "knowledge" is presented as unambiguous, unequivocal, and unmysterious requiring no discussion, decision-making or debate and little to no courage in putting such knowledge to use. Without critical discourse and the courage derived by attempting to live with the ambiguous, equivocal and mysterious, instead of authentic, diverse, individual, dynamic people of character (whom the students themselves can hold in esteem), what we end up producing are manipulated manifestations of human integrity.

Rather than demanding that students adopt a pre-determined list of "virtues" or a moral "character" as defined by us, moral education would allow students to discover, define and defend their own personhood — a process which, it is being argued, necessitates courage. The concern here is that moral courage will not develop if students are made to think that selfhood is somehow given and deciding how one should act has been pre-determined. Without flexing the "muscles" of becoming, students never develop the strength for moral being.

Not simply a pep-rally for a prescribed list of virtues, moral education would involve instead a nurturing of courage, making classrooms incubators of courage. Adopting self-formation as an aim, education across the subjects and at all levels would relate to the creation of one's person within a multitude of persons and the complexity of existence. This existential project cannot be avoided, however it can either be haphazard or reflected upon and pointedly directed. It can be a weak and meaningless process or one that draws its import from created existence and the compelling worth of persons. It can be productive of solipsistic lives or the joy of radical affirmation. It is only through these latter processes that an ethical self comes about.

As Dewey explains when discussing educative experiences, it is inevitable being the creatures we are that we will continue to have experiences. Improving the variety and quality of these experiences can only come about through education. While we recognize the existence of all experiencing creatures, it is only those who are continually and conscientiously engaged in improving these experiences that we call "educated." Likewise, though we recognize the existence of all that claim selfhood, it is only those who are continually and conscientiously engaged in the formation of their ethical selves that we call "moral." To be so engaged takes courage.

1 See for example the curricula recommended by the Association of American Educators which includes: "Core Virtues," "Values in Action," "I CAN Character Curriculum," "S.T.A.R.," "How To Be Successful," "Lessons in Character," "Character First! Education" and "Character Counts." @<http://www.aeteachers.org/character.htm>

2 Foucauldian ethics promotes individual ethical self-formation as a practice of care of the self. This understanding of Foucault sees ethical self-formation as an ethical/liberatory/aesthetic practice. See Justen Infinito, "Ethical Self-formation and the Other; A Look at the Later Foucault," *Educational Theory* 53, no. 2 (Spring 2003).

3 By "sufficiently other-regarding" I am referring to the disposition to and the actual formation of oneself in awareness not only of the Other's freedom, but also her role in my own self-formation. See Infinito, "Ethical Self-formation."

4. Ibid.

5. Foucault's notion of ethical self-formation is a series of actions performed with and in front of others. His argument being that one's self-creating is incomplete if it does not consider the very particular beings one is surrounded by and more importantly, it is meaningless without effect to be reflected upon, shown in the response of others or the environment to our actions.

6. As described by Foucault and practiced by the ancients, e.s.f. is not a precise or codified set of procedures or techniques. Ethical self-formation more closely resembles an art in that the freedom to choose how, what and when applications are made, will vary depending on the creative judgments of the individual artist. See Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 3: *The Care of the Self*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon, 1988).

7. See: Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, ed. and trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971).

8. See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, Part 3 (New York: Pantheon, 1977).

9. Paul Tillich, *The Courage To Be*, 2d ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000).

10. In, Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Penguin USA, 1978).

11. The idea of freedom arising from and being maintained by mutual self-construction is based on a positive notion of freedom. Foucault is specifically dealing with freedom in this sense when he states that while "freedom is the ontological condition of ethics...ethics is the considered form that freedom takes." In Michel Foucault, "The Ethics of the Concern for the Self as a Practice of Freedom," in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth, Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984*, trans. Robert Hurley et. al., ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: The New Press, 1994), 284.

12. This joy was felt in admitting ontological courage, was experienced in acts of existential courage and is renewed or brought again to the center of living in moral courage.

13. William Desmond, "The Secret Sources of Strengthening: Philosophical Reflections on Courage," in *Courage*, ed. Barbara Darling-Smith (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002). This article will be cited as SSS in the text for all subsequent references.

14. See Martha Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge: Essays on Philosophy and Literature* for a full discussion of the role of reason in moral decision-making (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

15. Alven Neiman, "Rohrer on Rorty: The Contingency of Desire," in *Philosophy of Education 1999* (Urbana, IL: Philosophy of Education Society, 2000).

16. Menicus in Phillip J. Ivanhoe, "The Virtue of Courage in the Mencius," in Darling-Smith, *Courage*, 76.

17. The understanding of judgment utilized in this paper comes from the ideas of Justus Buchler, *Toward a General Theory of Human Judgment* (New York: Dover Publications, 1980).

18. Alas, as a whole we lack a sense of the ironic and its role in fostering ethical action.

19. Menicus in Ivanhoe, "The Virtue of Courage in the Mencius," 76.

20. Note that no commitment is "final," as no knowledge is certain. There is however a limited consistency that the courageous person has gained.

21. Again, for a more in depth discussion of ethical self-formation and the production of freedom, see Infinito, "Ethical Self-formation."

22. Therefore, without courage, there would be no learning. The possibility of this consequence would need to be examined more closely.