Cultivating Virtuous Creativity

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He fired God and plagiarized the fire,
and published all the flames in the hottest how-to
book of the season. He'd teach the people to cook,
make locks and fittings, manufacture armor,
help the consumer if it cost him his game,
cordial relations with Nobodaddy Kronos
up there, and all his foothill-clinging cronies.
He'd had enough of myths. A love-starved groom
will have his bride; a people would not bide
their precious time and live like savages.
Why couldn't they even fry sausages
and eggs for breakfast? What was there left to forbid?
Then Kronos' police and their sadistic humor…
An eagle would be sent to: de-liver him,
Unless…It was a nerveless part of a man,
didn't they know? He relaxed with his Homer.

All that took place three thousand years ago.
He had since retired. His "Firehammer School"
prospered at first, but students graduated
to pyrotactics, murderous up-and-go.
Brilliant glass pears, soft-colored tubes at night
lit up; then, over the sea, one afternoon
in August, he felt the stars, sun, and moon
fuse and collapse. He saw a horrible light,
a giant mushroom rising, a tidal-wave-shaped
fortress. Their latest patent…. He recanted, humbled;
in a show of power, two cities were showered
with mushroom fire, and God was reinstated.[1]

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[1] Emery George, "Prometheus," in *Gods and Mortals: Modern Poems on Classical Myths*, ed. Nina Kossman (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 6.

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If human beings demonstrate fantastic feats of creativity, from great works like T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* to DaVinci's *Mona Lisa*, then seemingly they must have acquired the ability to create from somewhere or someone. Is it innate in people, or is it something learned? Perhaps some of human creativity is innate, whereas the greatness in an individual must be cultivated by an inspiring teacher or mentor. Either way, humans create. For years, most research on creativity has focused on the positive aspects of creativity, eschewing its negative, malevolent side. More recently, however, research has attempted to identify the personality traits of both kinds of creative people. But why? Would knowing which kinds of personality traits to model enable parents, teachers, religious leaders, etc., to foster more of the good and less of the bad kinds of creativity in young people? Could it contribute to limiting potential tragedies at the hands of the malevolently creative? One would hope so. Can positive creativity even be taught, and if it could, what would a curriculum that fosters virtuous creativity look like? Is there a way to prove that students' creativity flourishes when an understanding of the good and morally right precedes it?

Clearly the creative process requires certain virtues. In the ancient world, Aristotle helped humans understand the idea of virtue. In the more modern age, however, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, author of *Creativity: The Psychology of Discovery and Invention*, highlights many of the same virtues as Aristotle and connects them to creativity. The virtues they both list include benevolence, courage, generosity, openness, vulnerability, cooperation, delayed gratification, and empathy[2]; this would suggest that, when teachers include a formal education of the virtues, they inevitably foster more creative students. Schools should, therefore, implement teaching virtues as early as grade school to graduate students who have what Einstein called "a vivid sense of the beautiful and of the morally good." Because, according to Einstein, if one does not acquire it, "[one]—with [their] specialized knowledge—more closely resembles a well-trained dog than a harmoniously developed person. [One] must learn to understand the motives of human beings, their illusions and their sufferings, in order to acquire a proper relationship to individual fellow [individuals] and to the community."[3] As one of the most creative mathematic minds of the last century, Einstein had perhaps discovered something more important than his theory of relativity: Perhaps he understood that teaching virtue results in enhanced positive creativity.

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[2] Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Creativity: The Psychology of Discovery and Invention* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1996), 61, 68–69.

From Creator to Creators

For teachers to be able to implement a curriculum that fosters positive creativity, an understanding of where humans speculate that creativity comes from must come first. For that, we must start at the "beginning." Just about every Western religious tradition recounts the creation of the world and everything in it by a God. The creator God created the world out of benevolence: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth…And God saw that it was good."[4] Likewise in the Greek tradition, Prometheus created humanity from clay, and he defied the other gods by stealing fire and giving it to humanity so they could build civilization and thrive. Like the Judeo-Christian creation story, Prometheus was also driven to create by his benevolence. For whatever reason, the goodness of these Western gods often resulted in tremendous bursts of creativity. In fact, historically speaking, creativity belonged solely to the realm of the gods and was a prerogative of supreme beings[5]; creation resulted from divine inspiration.[6] People were the passive receivers of the beneficence of the gods, not creators themselves. But that idea eventually started to shift when humans began to create. Not all of what humans created, however, was considered good. In writing about the development of creativity, John Hope Mason examines the trek from Greek to Judeo-Christian thought regarding creativity and explains how the tradition of the Creator had certain defects, warning of the potential hazards of believing that creativity was and is always used for good.[7] He uses examples of the Fall, the Tower of Babel, and Cain's murdering his brother as examples of human creativity gone awry. God (or the gods) showed humans how to create, but what humans did with it was not always benevolent. Why not, especially if humankind was made out of a sense of benevolence and in the image of a benevolent God, the first imagined creator? Perhaps humans who create need to be better prepared for the burden that comes with creating.

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[3] Albert Einstein, "Education for Independent Thought," *New York Times*, May 10, 1952.

[4] *The Bible.* Genesis 1:1–3. *The New Oxford Annotated Bible: With the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books*, New Revised Standard Version, ed. Michael D. Coogan (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

[5] Csikszentmihalyi, 5.

[6] Vlad P. Glaveanu and James C. Kaufman, "Creativity," in *The Cambridge Handbook of Creativity*, eds. James C. Kaufman and Robert J. Sternberg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 10.

After the Enlightenment, increased attention on human individualism emerged.[8] The narrative behind creativity changed into something that started with God but then transferred to humans, thus charging humans with the obligation to move it forward, hopefully inspired by goodness to do so.[9] The transference of creativity to the realm of humankind makes sense because human beings and human existence remain in a constant state of development. Our job then as humans has since shifted to sustaining existing creativity and developing greater creativity in the future. The problem, however, is that this transference does not necessarily imply that the creative exploits of god and humans have the same ultimate value. In a sense, human creativity does not match the level of creativity of the gods because we are not gods. However, this does not mean though that humans can not inspire or achieve great feats of creativity. Humankind's creativity, as theologian Paul Tillich explains, is rooted in our humanism and perhaps stems from some sense of virtue or religious obligatory piety, and that is good. It's *inspired.* (The difference being that the gods did not require inspiration.) For some humans, however, that same piety or virtue might keep them from creating (out of fear) or inspire malevolent creating (out of evil).[10] Humans must, however, work to foster and encourage greater creativity for history to move forward, whether it comes directly from or is inspired by a deity or not.

For the ancient Greeks, the idea of creativity included an understanding that every individual was expected to practice the highest forms of knowledge and goodness, and it was out of the knowledge and goodness that creativity flowed. It is not surprising, then, that Greek culture produced the most prolific philosophers, artists, and writers, all of whom had a great foundational understanding of virtue.[11] The early conception that creativity requires goodness was not, however, limited to the ancient Greeks or even to the West. For example, the Confucian conception of creativity also required moral goodness.[12] All around the globe, moral leaders encourage positive moral creativity because, in the modern secular world, learning and creativity no longer belong to the gods; it now very much belongs to individuals.[13] Therefore, it is the job of education to teach individuals what makes a good person and to help students see how being a good person and a good citizen are connected and even necessary for enhanced creativity and human thriving.[14]

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[7] John Hope Mason, "The Character of Creativity: Two Traditions," *History of European Ideas* 9 (1988): 710.

[8] Ibid, 19.

[9] Jacquelyn Ann K. Kegley, *Paul Tillich On Creativity* (New York: University Press of America, 1989), 8.

[10] Ibid, 7.

What Is Good?

So how does a teacher approach teaching what is moral or good without resorting to teaching religious dogma? The answer is simple: Do what the Greeks and Chinese did. Instead of appealing to transcendent beliefs taken on faith, they (Aristotle especially) appealed to what was good or to what was the right thing to do.[15] To begin with, they had to define good. What is good? For this we turn to Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and his enumeration of the virtues, which, when combined, result in a life of *arete*, which translate to *virtue* or *excellence*.[16] Aristotle adumbrates these virtues to examine what is necessary to develop the habits of being necessary to live a life of thriving because, he contends, excellence is "a consequence of habit."[17] Because Aristotle believed that "we do not become good or bad by nature" and that these virtues are "active conditions," then excellence and virtue, therefore, do not have to be connected, necessarily, to any particular faith—anyone can practice virtue/excellence. His notion of being virtuous included the idea of practicing specific virtues, which would suggest that Aristotle did not necessarily believe that such traits were innate; they could be learned, habituated, and maybe even perfected. In *Nicomachean Ethics* he examines and describes at length the nature of several essential virtues: courage and temperance (Book III); generosity, honor, and gentleness (Book IV); justice and decency (Book V); wisdom and thoughtfulness/compassion (Book VI). Aristotle notes that any of these virtues can be destroyed by excess or deficiency, which then results in the virtue becoming a vice (Book VI). Practicing these virtues (and avoiding vice), to the extent that they become habits, leads to a life of *eudaimonia* and thriving, or happiness, as Aristotle defines it; this makes up what the Greeks considered "good." Aristotle's ideas flourished, perhaps because human beings find happiness in life a top priority. What people may have failed to realize at the time was that Aristotle's kind of thriving and happiness leads not only to thriving and goodness but also to enhanced creativity.

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[11] Tsung Juang Wang and Kuo Hung Huang, "Pedagogy, philosophy, and the question of creativity," *Teaching in Higher Education* 23 (2018), 265.

[12] David H. Cropley and Arthur J. Cropley, "Creativity and Malevolence," in *The Cambridge Handbook of Creativity*, eds. James C. Kaufman and Robert J. Sternberg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 677.

[13] Wang and Huang, 265.

[14] The predominantly Judeo-Christian religious account given here is only one possible way of understanding the development of human being and thus of human creativity. For the purposes of the present essay, what is most essential is the demonstration of a possible relationship between virtue and creativity, toward an articulation of how the former is essential for a full development of the latter.

[15] Wang and Huang, 262.

Creativity, therefore, should be included on Aristotle's list of virtues, because, according to Matthew Kieran, "creativity is responsible for the most valuable advances of [humankind] and should be thought of as a virtue of character rather than just a mere skill or capacity."[18] But not all scholars agree. What they do agree on, however, is that the question of whether creativity is a virtue of its own is definitely worth exploring.[19] In terms of defining creativity, according to Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, "creativity is any act, idea, or product that changes an existing domain, or that transforms an existing domain into a new one."[20] Furthermore, as he later asserts, creativity is "a set of traits that a person must have to come up with a valuable novelty."[21] With this in mind, it would seem possible—maybe even probable—that virtues might just be the set of traits needed. Csikszentmihalyi also suggests that creativity includes what he calls "Habits of Strength," internal traits that are a "habitual way of thinking."[22] His use of the words "habits" and "habitual" sound much like Aristotle, who called virtues "habits of being." The two may be on to something very similar. Matthew Kieran agrees, arguing that "creativity involves intricate skills [or habits] that depend on one's character," thus linking the two ideas together.[23] Matthew Kieran also asserts that "there is good reason to conceive of creativity as a virtue when agents' creative successes are driven by deep-seated intrinsic motivations." He believes this because intrinsic motivation explains why a person creates at all, much less over the course of a lifetime.[24] Kieran concludes then that one's intrinsic motivation is constitutive of "excellence of character," which is a very Aristotelian idea. Thus, there is a distinct reason to see creativity as a virtue. And although some researchers do not quite yet claim creativity as a virtue, they certainly agree that creativity requires them.[25] Because one seems to require the other, it may thus be the case that teaching ideas such as virtue and character development would enhance student creativity.

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[16] I like the idea of excellence and virtue as synonymous here. We say a student's work is "excellent," but we don't say that it's "virtuous." Perhaps those two terms need to fuse again in some way related to creativity.

[17] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Joe Sachs (Newburyport: Focus Publishing, 2002), 1103a 15.

[18] Matthew Kieran, "Creativity as a Virtue of Character," in *The Philosophy of Creativity: New Essays*, eds. Elliot Samuel Paul and Scott Barry Kaufman (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 125.

The Virtues of Creativity

Many researchers on creativity list certain traits/virtues required for creativity in individuals. Don Ambrose and Tracy Cross contend that moral action—doing the right thing—must preclude creativity.[26] They seem to believe that creative individuals must already have a predilection for what is good *before* creating. In fact, they claim that a person's creative talent itself indicates that "the individual has the cognitive capacity to consider [ethics]." Although it may seem easy to think of those who use creativity for malevolent purposes as apt counterexamples to their argument, perhaps they do not necessarily mean that the individual has to be inclined toward the good. Either way, the creative process (to Ambrose and Cross) cannot be value free. They conclude that values are needed for the development of creative potential. Perhaps then teachers, parents, and others must first teach a positive set of virtues for the young, developing, creative individual to flourish. Other researchers seem to agree with this contention, many of whom list quite a variety of virtues necessary for creativity. For example, in their study "Assessment of Creativity," Plucker, Makel, and Qian say that the creative person must practice risk-taking [courage], curiosity, personal energy [vivacity], open-mindedness, and confidence.[27] Csikszentmihalyi also lists quite a few necessary virtues: openness, curiosity, discipline, responsibility, diligence, humility, sensitivity, patience, courage, risk-taking, and balance.[28] Ambrose and Cross actually list the virtues as "intellectual virtues," citing autonomy, confidence, courage, empathy, humility, integrity, perseverance, and fair-mindedness as necessary for thinking creatively.[29] Traits like what have just been listed are not unique to the West. Weihua Niu claims that the Chinese also reported unique characteristics necessary for creativity, such as honesty, responsibility, self-discipline, selflessness, and open-mindedness."[30] Clearly, creative researchers understand that virtue and creativity go together. Matthew Kieran warns, however, that although the creative person is sensitive to and acts in the light of reasons, it is his/her responsiveness to reasons that guards his/her judgments and actions in recognizing what is new and valuable in the relevant domain.[31] What Kieran's words suggest is that the actions based on reason (or virtue) are entirely up to the creative individual, so working to focus on the positive virtues can perhaps prevent malevolent action because the world needs creative people who are creative and "responsible in the right kind of ways."[32] Ambrose and Cross agree, eventually concluding that the essential difference between those who use creativity for evil or selfish purposes and those who use it for good can be found in the values they hold.[33] Pretty simple, right? Teach those values and see what happens.

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[19] Berys Gaut, "The Philosophy of Creativity," *Philosophy Compass* 5, no. 12 (2010): 1035.

[20] Csikszentmihalyi, 28.

[21] Ibid., 51.

[22] Ibid, 351, 358.

[23] Kieran, 142.

[24] Ibid, 133.

[25] Ibid, 137.

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[26] Don Ambrose and Tracy Cross, eds., *Morality, Ethics, and Gifted Minds* (New York: Springer, 2009), 107.

[27] Jonathan A. Plucker, Matthew C. Makel, and Meihua Qian, "Assessment of Creativity," in *The Philosophy of Creativity: New Essays*, eds. Elliot Samuel Paul and Scott Barry Kaufman (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 50.

[28] Csikszentmihalyi, 53, 61,62, 68, 98, 103, 116, 118, 155.

[29] Ambrose and Cross, 121–123.

[30] Weihua Niu, "Eastern-Western Views of Creativity," in *The Philosophy of Creativity: New Essays*, eds. Elliot Samuel Paul and Scott Barry Kaufman (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 453.

Combining education for creativity with education in virtue seems to be the perfect recipe for student success, but can values like virtue and morality actually be taught? For as Ambrose and Cross claim, "it is one thing to hypothesize about the relationship between morality and creativity; it is quite another to determine how the two are related."[34] Evidence seems to suggest that it is possible, although difficulty arises with the effort of separating religion from ethics, particularly in an educational setting. Religion is culturally variant and ethics socially conditioned, so how would an educator teach morality without embedding normative authority in a religious or social bias? Researchers are working to answer this question because empirical evidence clearly supports the idea of the interconnectedness of morality and creativity.[35] And because morality cannot simply be imposed on students, the teachers, parents, and other adults must cultivate morality through encouragement and example.

Example is one of the first ways humans learn, so mirroring could work as a first step because there are lots of ways to do just that. Csikszentmihalyi asserts that there are a variety of paths that lead to creativity, and all of them require focusing on human development.[36] One meaningful way to learn it is through imitation. Children learn the aspects of behavior by watching. Students who imitate creative adults form a "disposition of creativity" through imitation. Furthermore, teachers can focus on the skills necessary that promote both virtue and creativity.[37] And as Mark Runco asserts, creative talents are inextricable from morals and ethics; they are equally important.[38] Thus, by focusing on human development in a meaningful way, creativity and morality could result, but parental involvement, pedagogy, and personal motivation remain significant hurdles.

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[31] Kieran, 127.

[32] Ibid, 128.

[33] Ambrose and Cross, 113.

[34] Ibid, 110.

[35] Ibid, 105.

[36] Csikszentmihalyi, 181.

Parental influence remains one of the most significant factors in contributing to a child's creativity and morality. Csikszentmihalyi claims that "in most cases it is the parents who are responsible for stimulating and directing a child's interests, but parents can serve as both positive and negative examples and provide both positive and negative reinforcement.[39] Csikszentmihalyi is not alarmed by the possibility of negative memories or events; he suggests that "what matters most [to artists] is what the children make of these facts, how they interpret them, and what meaning and strength they extract from them."[40] This is good news for parents and educators alike because if resilience, grit, and optimism are part of a child's broad education, then perhaps no matter what the circumstances children might endure, they can still grow into morally upstanding creative individuals.

Teaching Creativity

Most young people (children and adolescents) spend most of their days in school, so what the schools seek to do in terms of developing creativity has a significant impact. What pedagogy would be used? Pedagogy, defined as the study of teaching methods and the aims or ends of education, includes the transmission of knowledge and the formation of the learner.[41] The definition suggests that intentional education centered on the formation of the learner should include such ideas as character and virtue education. But again, it can not just be imposed. According to Katarzyna Szorc and Beata Kunat, "traits can be honed during pedagogical studies through providing the right environment."[42] They claim that positive emotions open up human beings to be more creative, so clearly the kind of environment in which educating occurs is key.[43] No matter the material being taught, one key is how teachers motivate students. Countless research studies have been conducted on student motivation, focusing on the difference between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Matthew Kieran claims that if motivation is intrinsic, a subject is more likely to attend in an open-minded way to what is being taught. He goes on to say that the extent to which students are intrinsically motivated correlates with the production of creative work.[44] If students are open and motivated to learn about virtue, then the creativity that results would be a positive boon for society. Kieran's findings shed light on the importance for teachers (and parents) to foster intrinsic motivation because "when intrinsic motivation is embedded in character and drives creativity, it both underwrites creative achievement and is praiseworthy."[45] For creativity to be considered "good," it must also be praiseworthy. His study suggests that if learning virtue is the goal of character education, then it must involve excellence of motivation.[46] Furthermore, if the purpose of teaching is to improve humanity (both morally, creatively etc.), then it must include improving the mind of the individual, which directly impacts the harmony of society.[47] Teachers then have the power to impact learning for the good not only for the student but also for the good of humanity; they can accomplish goals on both ends. But how?

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[37] Berys Gaut, "Educating for Creativity," in *The Philosophy of Creativity: New Essays*, eds. Elliot Samuel Paul and Scott Barry Kaufman (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 272, 274.

[38] Mark A. Runco, "The Continuous Nature of Moral Creativity," in *Morality, Ethics, and Gifted Minds*, eds. T. Cross T and D. Ambrose (Boston: Springer, 2006), 107.

[39] Ibid., 161, 165.

[40] Ibid., 173.

[41] Wang and Huang, 261.

As leaders in a classroom, teachers have the unique ability to impact creativity by the way they lead and by the effectiveness of their leadership. According to Michael D. Mumford and his fellow researchers in their study "Leading for Creativity," "leadership effectiveness is strongly positively related to creativity."[48] Michael E. Palanski and Gretchen Vogelgesang agree. They found that supportive ethical leadership often resulted in increased creativity of subordinates.[49] If this is true, then their findings could also apply to the classroom. Good leadership should then increase the creativity in students. Palanski and Vogelgesang also conclude that individual creativity is the bedrock of organizational creativity, so leaders must create and sustain ethical and creative atmospheres to foster greater ethical creativity within the organization.[50] The same goes for schools. Without a school-wide vision for character education, no teacher will embrace the idea, and individual leadership and creativity cannot be nurtured in the way it could be.

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[42] Katarzyna Szorc and Beata Kunat, "The Importance of Emotional Intelligence in the Creative Activity of Students," in *Rethinking Teacher Education for the 21st Century: Trends, Challenges and New Directions,* eds. Marta Kowalczuk-Walêdziak, Alicja Korzeniecka-Bondar, Wioleta Danilewicz, Gracienne Lauwers (Opladen, Germany: Verlag Barbara Budrich, 2019), 377.

[43] Ibid, 368.

[44] Kieran, 131.

[45] Ibid., 134.

[46] Ibid, 139.

[47] Wang and Huang, 269.

Qinxuan Gu, Thomas Li-Ping Tang, and Wan Jiang, affirm what Palanski and Vogelsgang contended. Gu et al. sought to address the connection between moral leadership and creativity in a corporate setting. What prompted their study was their claim that "the quest to understand effective leadership has become one of the most important goals for researchers, individuals, organizations, and societies around the world."[51] To address leadership seems to address many of the worlds' problems, especially when it comes to ethical behavior and creativity. Gu et al. conclude that "leadership is one of the most influential predictors of creative behavior."[52] Whereas Gu and his colleagues focused on a business model, the same truth likely applies in a school environment. They also looked at ethical creative output in their study, and what they found was that whereas good leadership resulted in increased creativity, moral leadership had a direct positive correlation to enhanced moral creativity.[53] All of this is good news for schools that seek to teach virtue to enhance benevolent creativity.

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[48] Michael D. Mumford, Robert W. Martin, Samantha Elliott, and Tristan McIntosh, "Leading for Creativity," in *The Philosophy of Creativity: New Essays*, eds. Elliot Samuel Paul and Scott Barry Kaufman (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 548.

[49] Michael E. Palanski and Gretchen Vogelgesang, "Virtuous Creativity: The Effects of Leader Behavioural Integrity on Follower Creative Thinking and Risk Taking, *Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences* 28 (2011): 261.

[50] Ibid, 259.

[51] Qinxuan Gu, Thomas Li-Ping Tang and Wan Jiang, "Does Moral Leadership Enhance Employee Creativity? Employee Identification with Leader and Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) in the Chinese Context," *Journal of Business Ethics* 126 (2015): 513.

[52] Ibid, 514.

Malevolence

On the other hand, creativity with the absence of virtue results in what researchers call malevolent creativity. Those who study creativity are trying to discover what elements of a personality could steer a person toward malevolence.[54] Is there something that parents, schools, or others can do to instill a "benevolence bias" or to eliminate the kind of creativity deemed malevolent? According to Ambrose and Cross, malevolence is defined as an unethical misuse of creativity, something that delves into the realm of dangerous.[55] Ambrose and Cross also suggest that unethical behavior can be avoided because, as they see it, any kind of personal behavior is voluntary.[56] No one *compels* anyone to create anything destructive.[57] To the religiously inclined, however, like theologian Paul Tillich, malevolence is simply an inversion of good creativity because there is an aspect of un-creating (destruction) that usually goes along with it.[58] Tillich explains that for the malevolent sometimes chaos is necessary to usher in the good.[59] Something good can come out of what was meant to be bad. Perhaps someone needs to see the ramifications of an act of malevolent creativity to understand the changes in motivation that need to take place to emerge *beyond* malevolence. Given the more metaphysical take that Tillich places on the malevolent, he believes that these kinds of creators can be transformed with proper guidance, but it is hard to determine a malevolent creator *before* he/she creates (until it is too late), and Tillich's theory would be hard to prove. To suggest that people desire positive change once they see the kind of pain they caused through an act of malevolent creativity is optimistic at best because, as others see it, those who are malevolent are so innately. They either would not care if destruction resulted, or they might even find it satisfying.

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[53] Gu et al., 514.

[54] Cropley and Cropley, 682.

[55] Ambrose and Cross, 130.

[56] Ibid, 109.

[57] It should perhaps be clarified that the scenario described above does not account for mental, and perhaps even physical, illness.

[58] Kegley, 73.

[59] Ibid, 11.

Cropley and Cropley answer this dilemma in their essay "Creativity and Malevolence" by accepting that a "dark side" exists. Some people in the world simply want to do harm. But the authors suggest that those who create ask themselves before creating: "how does my creativity impact others?"[60] This simple question, the authors believe, might keep someone from creating something that could potentially be harmful to others. One thing that Mark Runco further acknowledged is that no matter what, "both evil geniuses and benevolent luminaries can be creative. He suggests that the primary difference between the two is simply to be found in the values they hold, which makes teaching values of immense importance. Runco also believes that the two kinds of creators may not differ at all in terms of their cognitive capacities, intellectual abilities, or in their creative potential. According to Runco, "the key point is that immoral and morally creative persons may be identical cognitively and dissimilar only in the values used and the subsequent decisions made."[61] Again, his conclusions clearly suggest that teaching about character and virtue might result in positive creativity. Some researchers have also made claims about levels of dopamine in the brain, but no one has yet studied whether regulating the levels of dopamine impacts malevolent creativity. This area of research might prove to be the most informative because there would be immediate pharmaceutical steps one could take to impede destructive behavior.

Most people associate the idea of malevolence with an absolute absence of virtue—with innate biases towards selfishness and/or evil. That might not actually be the case either. As noted above, according to Aristotle, even virtues in excess can become vices. So maybe what would help is an education in virtue that includes the notion of acquiring balance, or what the ancient Greeks called *sophrosyne*—the concept of an ideal of excellence of character and soundness of mind, which when combined leads to qualities such as temperance, moderation, prudence, purity, decorum and self-control. All the virtues that result from a balanced life, or *sophrosyne*, also contribute to positive creativity. Again, one way to foster this kind of behavior is for schools to take up character education in a purposeful, pedagogical, and programmatic way.

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[60] Cropley and Cropley, 678.

[61] Runco, 161, 165.

Creating an Ethos

For character education to work, schools need strong leadership from the top down. Individual teachers must buy in to the program to develop a cultural ethos that supports, models, and champions ethical leadership and creativity. Ambrose and Cross acknowledge the need for consistency in terms of pedagogy and culture, and they also recognize that this kind of culture cannot be forced: "It's a process by which adults, adolescents and others engage in the development of community"; the development of such culture requires the conscious involvement of students and teachers who are committed to personal growth.[62] Schools like this need to consciously develop an ethos conducive to fostering ethical behavior and, subsequently, creativity.

Conclusion

Character education, or an education that includes deliberate instruction about virtue, seems a promising means to an end—if enhanced creativity is one of the desired ends. Furthermore, if creativity is inextricably linked to morals and ethics, then teaching them needs to become a priority in schools. Curricula need to be developed that are age-appropriate for students of all ages because students need virtues to be creative—they need to "bear fruit" from the seeds of their young imaginations, but they also need to acquire a good sense of judgment, self-control, courage, curiosity, and openness before taking on such tasks. In an age of pervasive moral relativism, we need to look at things another way. We need to decide that there are certain acts that will not satisfy our goals or preserve our moral values.[63] We need to think way ahead of the outcomes that are inevitable if we allow neutral values to prevail in schools because we need creatively ethical future leaders, not morally neutral ones. Furthermore, we need to raise the question "how can creativity contribute to positive social change?" Our future depends on young peoples' creative problem-solving abilities, so we cannot leave them to decide for themselves what good is. We must encourage them to examine moral issues and come up with valid, appropriate, and ethical answers to difficult questions. We need to educate people equipped with the moral fortitude to take on an ever-changing world with a sense of the beautiful and the morally good. If we educate students who lack these values, then the work that will result may not be as creative because the goals and values are only accidentally connected or not connected at all.[64] We don't want teachers to turn out well-trained dogs, who graduate capable of merely following orders. We need to show them how the beautiful and the morally good are connected to creativity and then set them free to create.

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[62] Ambrose and Cross, 341.

[63] Howard E. Gruber and Katja Bodeker. "Creativity in the Moral Domain," in Creativity, Psychology, and the History of Science, eds. H. E. Gruber and K. Bodeker (Boston: Springer, 2005), 428, 439.

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[64] Kieran, 136.