
Intellectual Virtue: The Contributions of Newberry Award Winning Books, 2000-2010

Suzanne Rice

University of Kansas

Arlene L. Barry

University of Kansas

Molly McDuffie-Dipman

Lawrence Public Schools

In 1988, John Michael Atherton observed: “The virtues have fallen out of favor in curricular theory on and practice in moral education” (Atherton, 1988, p. 299.) Over the past quarter century, however, there has been a dramatic change in how virtue is regarded. Education writers and philosophers, social commentators and politicians, have all helped to create a vast, new literature on virtue and the related concept “character.” Further, an historical mission of schools—to promote the development of “good character” among youth—has been restored, at least in theory, through legislation such as the No Child Left Behind Act, which mandates character education.

Today, “character” is strongly associated with what are regarded as distinctly moral virtues. Often overlooked is the fact that Aristotle was concerned with the development of both moral and intellectual virtues. This is a serious oversight, both conceptually and practically. Conceptually, for Aristotle and the ancient Greeks more broadly, there was not a bright dividing line between moral and non- or a-moral phenomena; moral and intellectual virtues inform one another to influence all sorts of conduct, some of which we moderns would regard as belonging to the “moral” sphere and some not. And practically, human flourishing—the *raison d'être* for virtues—requires both qualities. The central aim of this essay is to illuminate some of the contributions of Newberry Award winning books published from 2000 through 2010 to the development of intellectual virtue.

The Newberry Award is named for the 18th-century English book-

seller and author John Newbery, who is widely regarded as the father of children's literature. Frederic G. Melcher, an editor of *Publisher's Weekly*, proposed creating the award in 1921 at a meeting of the American Library Association, and the first award was given the following year to *The Story of Mankind* by Hendrik Willem van Loon. The Newbery Award honors outstanding contributions to American children's literature.

The Newbery books expose readers and listeners to particular virtues and to the characters who possess them. Admittedly, there is no assurance that children will take up the intellectual traits to which they are exposed—just as there is no assurance that they will take up math or science concepts. Yet we believe that it is worth considering what intellectual virtues these books *make available* to students.

That we focus on virtues presented in literature reflects a particular theory of character development. We hold with Aristotle and contemporary writers in his tradition that if virtues are acquired at all, this will be more the result of engagement in a form of life and examples of excellence than as a result of purely didactic instruction. Literature is filled with such examples of excellence, moral and intellectual. These are works with memorable characters whose virtues and vices play out on the page, affording readers, among other things, opportunities to contemplate the workings and consequences of such character traits as honesty and deceitfulness, kindness and cruelty, and generosity and stinginess. Of the literature available for consideration, we focus on Newbery books because of their popularity with teachers and librarians. The Newbery Award itself provides something of a “seal of approval.” In addition, the award winning books generate numerous materials—discussion guides, lesson plans, and the like—that appeal to busy educators. For these reasons there is a good likelihood that relatively large numbers of students will actually encounter Newbery Award winning books.

The Idea of Virtue

The *Nicomachean Ethics* is thought to provide Aristotle's most comprehensive account of a range of issues connected with virtue: the role of virtues in promoting a well-lived life; how virtues are acquired and developed; and the conditions necessary to sustain the practice of virtues over time. Aristotle begins his inquiry into virtue with a question about the ultimate good for human beings, which he concludes is *eudaimonia*, usually translated as “happiness” but perhaps more helpfully described as thriving, flourishing, or well-being. Other goods are pursued as means to well-being, but well-being itself is the ultimate good for humans. In Aristotle's account, achieving overall well-being requires virtues, but

virtues are not merely a means to this end; virtues and well-being are inextricably linked (MacIntyre, 1984, p. 149).

Virtues are those attributes that, other things being equal, enable people who possess them to cope relatively better with life's constant and varied demands: living among others, managing one's body in sickness and health, and making a living, to name a few. A person who has developed the virtue "empathy," for instance, will be better able to "read" others and to share (to a degree) their feelings; this typically enables the empathizer to interact more decently and effectively across a range of social situations than would be the case in the absence of empathy.

The virtue tradition can be distinguished from other orientations in that it provides no universal rules or principles and is instead highly responsive to the particular features of actual real-life situations. Aristotle describes this context-sensitivity of virtues—and the challenge of exercising virtue—thusly:

So . . . giving and spending money is easy and anyone can do it; but doing it to the right person, in the right amount, at the right time, for the right end, and in the right way is no longer easy, nor can everyone do it. Hence [doing these things] well is rare, praiseworthy and fine. (1109a25-30)

Over time, many people find themselves in numerous situations that call for generosity, and there is no rule that could provide guidance in all such situations. A person whose character is truly generous may well find himself or herself acting quite differently in each of these situations—volunteering time here, giving a cash donation there, providing extensive help in one case and relatively little in another, and so on.

For humans, life is filled with choices, and to a large extent well-being is bound up with the choices we make. It might be said that virtue in general is the habit of good choice-making. Certainly, our choices have instrumental value. But beyond that, choices both reflect and shape who we are as persons. This is most evident over a long time span, where the effects of many individual choices become indelible in the form of a *character*.

Intellectual and Moral Virtues

In recent years, especially in the education literature and in character education programs, moral virtue has received the lion's share of attention (Nash, 1997, pp. 1-15). Yet Aristotle identified two kinds of virtue, one pertaining to intellect and the other to character:

Virtue, then, is of two sorts, virtue of thought and virtue of character. Virtue of thought arises and grows mostly from teaching, and hence needs experience and time. (1103a12-15)

Intelligence, as understood by Aristotle, is a quality that involves reason and enables humans to grasp the truth; it is “concerned with action about what is good or bad for a human being” (1140b5).

There is a danger that lists of intellectual (or moral) virtues can trivialize the very idea of virtue, slurring over what is most important while emphasizing mere words. (As an example, think of what often passes for “caring” these days.) Yet when they are well-conceptualized, these lists condense ideas that would otherwise be unwieldy. Zagzebski provides one such helpful list of traits widely regarded as intellectual virtues:

The ability to recognize the salient facts; sensitivity to detail.

Open-mindedness in collecting and appraising evidence.

Fairness in evaluating the arguments of others.

Intellectual humility.

Intellectual perseverance, diligence, care, and thoroughness.

Adaptability of intellect.

The detective’s virtues: thinking of coherent explanations of the facts.

Being able to recognize reliable authority.

Insight into persons, problems, theories.

The teaching virtues: the social virtues of being communicative, including intellectual candor and knowing your audience and how they respond. (Zagzebski, 1996, p. 114)

One is less likely to succumb to the laundry-list problem by remembering that, like all virtues, those connected with intellect are enacted differently depending on the particulars of the situation at hand. Indeed, intellectual maturity is characterized in part by the ability to adjust one’s thinking to diverse and novel situations.

The term “intellectual” is off-putting to some these days, but these are not solely bookish traits; intellectual virtues motivate and sustain a wide range of activities undertaken in the pursuit of all sorts of knowledge and understanding. Even responding to others *morally* requires intellectual virtues, while acting *intelligently* (as understood in the Aristotelian tradition) requires moral virtues. A person acting from, say, generous feelings, but who lacked the intellect to discern the relevant facts of the situation at hand, would not be able to be generous to the right person, in the right amount, at the right time, etc. A person acting quite rationally, but who lacked regard for the welfare of others, may not be moved to respond at all. Thus, within the Aristotelian framework, it is impossible to conceptualize a flourishing human life in the absence

of both moral and intellectual virtues. Aristotle describes the relation between the two sorts of virtues in several different ways. One passage concludes:

What we have said, then, makes it clear that we cannot be fully good without intelligence, or intelligent without virtue of character. (1144b31-33)

Elsewhere he asserts:

Intelligence is yoked together with virtue of character, and so is this virtue with character. For the origins of intelligence express the virtues of character; and correctness in virtues of character express intelligence. (1178a17-20)

Still elsewhere Aristotle says that virtue is a prerequisite for practical wisdom. Lacking virtue, a person can be deceived about which pursuits are really worthwhile:

[What is good] is apparent only to the good person; for vice perverts us and produces false views about the origins of actions. Evidently, then, we cannot be intelligent without being good. (1144a35-1144b)

As these excerpts may suggest, while we moderns tend to think of virtue in relation to a specifically moral realm, Aristotle did not divide the world this way. A flourishing, well-lived life depends on the presence of both moral and intellectual attributes that, it would appear, often work in tandem.

Becoming Virtuous

It might be said that a person's character is something of a work in process; throughout life virtues are always developing more fully or diminishing. Aristotle recognizes that at any point up until death, the quality of a person's life could change drastically. Yet Aristotle leads us to pay special attention to the development of children because, in his view, in most cases, basic tendencies and characteristics become fairly well formed in youth. This helps to explain why Aristotle thought that most people are unlikely to acquire virtues on the basis of arguments or in light of persuasion. The sort of argument that might convince someone of the value of virtues would be beyond the grasp of young children; and once a person was old enough to understand the argument, lacking the right tendencies, inclinations, and dispositions, he or she would not likely find an argument compelling.

Aristotle's inquiry into virtue is not merely academic; above all, he seeks to actually promote human well-being—a state in which the virtues are central. His inquiry led to the seemingly paradoxical conclusion that humans become virtuous by being virtuous:

Virtues, by contrast we acquire just as we acquire crafts, by having previously activated them. For we learn a craft by producing the same product that we must produce when we have learned it, becoming builders, e. g., by building and harpists by playing the harp; so also, then, we become just by doing just actions, temperate by doing temperate actions, brave by doing brave actions. (1103a30-1103b)

Aristotle's basic idea is that virtue does not result mainly from a process of didactic instruction, but rather from engaging children in ways of thinking and acting that roughly approximate more mature embodiments of virtue. A child cannot be virtuous to the same extent or in the same way as the mature person of good character, any more than he or she can build something as well as someone who has had many years of experience in carpentry. But Aristotle sees character development as being like enculturation: The child is drawn, often imperceptibly, into virtuous ways of being over time. Practice and guidance are required to help the child to become more and more like a person in whom a particular virtue is a settled state of character, but these activities are part of the fabric of life. Praise and blame, the pleasures of accomplishment, and even the potentially educative sting of mistakes are among the kinds of experiences that advance the journey toward maturity. Certainly, there is room for explicit instruction in character education, but such instruction is "organic" in the sense of being embedded in day-to-day activity rather than separate and set apart. As described by one commentator:

[The virtues] take form (if they do at all) over time, by fits and starts, through many different kinds of contacts and interactions. (Hansen, 1993, p. 232)

Historically, across cultures stories have been an integral part of childhood and indeed the fabric of human life. Until the fairly recent development of widespread schooling, storytelling was typically the main medium of instruction. Through stories, girls and boys were taught not only values, but also ways of perceiving, feeling, believing, and acting. The world was given shape and character through stories. In the modern world, the stories are more varied and there has been a proliferation of media through which they are told, but they are no less significant in the life of the child—and her or his education. The reading, hearing, and watching of stories is so pervasive that it often escapes notice; this may be one reason why stories are so important; they are deeply, often imperceptibly, embedded in daily life.

Literature and Virtue

Research bears out Aristotle's basic insight into the development of virtues, in particular that such development is fostered more by engaging in a particular form of life than by explicit, direct instruction. Berkowitz and Bier (2005) provide an extensive review of 69 studies conducted on 33 programs. The authors conclude that one of the approaches used by effective programs is to integrate character education into the academic curriculum as opposed to teaching it as a separate course. According to the authors, approximately half of the effective programs analyzed did this. As Bryan (2005) argued, "character education should not be a discrete curriculum, but should be something children live with every day" (p. 3).

Literature provides one medium for integrating character education with schooling more broadly. In fact, the renewed popular interest in virtue and character education coincides with the publication of William Bennett's, *The Book of Virtue*. In the slim introduction to that collection of fables, poems, and other literary compositions, Bennett observes: "There is nothing more influential, more determinant, in a child's life than the moral power of quiet example" (1993, p. 11). Such "quiet examples" come in many forms, but narratives are key among them; they provide the basic elements in the social universe children (and we adults) inhabit. The social universe is no more fixed or static than is the physical universe. Humans are capable of very great moral responsiveness and intellectual inventiveness—or none at all. Our capacity is enlarged by our imagination.

Similarly, Nussbaum (1997) advises putting the study of literature at the heart of a curriculum for world citizenship, because it "develops arts of interpretation that are essential for civic participation and awareness" (p. 97). Morrow, Gambrell, and Pressley (2003) noted, "We believe that children must see themselves in books to affirm themselves," (p. 168) and must observe others to expand their conception of the world" and to learn from the positive behaviors modeled. It is this "vicarious learning," learning by observation, that is the backbone of social learning theory and that serves as the theoretical framework for this study (Bandura, 1977; Tracey & Morrow, 2006).

When authors argue on behalf of literature in connection with education for virtue, they have in mind particular kinds or examples of literature. Not just anything on the printed page will do. Having examined Aristotle's ideas about virtue and related topics we are in a better position to consider which virtues the Newbery winning books exemplify and now turn to that topic.

Newbery Award Winning Books, 2000-2010

The interpretations presented below were based, first, on careful readings by this essay's authors. As each of us read individually, we took extensive notes about the book's characters. Our note-taking was aided by the *Katz and Braly List of Verbal Stereotypes* (Katz & Braly, 1933). This list of 84 "verbal stereotypes" was originally developed in 1932 when a group of 100 Princeton students were asked to choose the traits that they considered most characteristic of each of ten different racial or ethnic groups. The students were given a previously prepared list of 84 adjectives and told to add additional traits, as they felt necessary. Among the 84 were such descriptors as "aggressive," "courteous," "intelligent," "gregarious," "ambitious," "lazy," "faithful," "rude," "stubborn," and "superstitious" (See Lopez-Crowley, 2007, for a full list).

Since 1933, the *Katz and Braly List* has been used in dissertations and other research to examine the representation of racial and ethnic groups in children's and young adult literature (Caltabiano, 1991; Gast, 1965; Lopez-Crowley, 2007). Due to the existence of this language for characterizing protagonists it was deemed appropriate as a tool for thinking about the main characters in the ten Newbery books we read. Interestingly, many of the traits present in this list have also appeared in lists of positive values by other researchers, e.g., honest, generous, kind, industrious, religious.

Content analysis, specifically narrative analysis, was the methodology used to examine the Newbery novels. In narrative analysis attention is focused on "characters—their difficulties, choices, conflicts, complications, and developments" (Neuendorf, 2002, p. 5). This method uses both quantitative and qualitative information. Frequency counts were used to identify the number and types of virtues or values displayed and frequency counts were used to keep track of character descriptors. Rich description was used to support character elements identified and the actions that operationalized values. Quotes from the text with reactions and reflections were contained on coding sheets.

When we had finished reading each book and writing up our notes, we met face-to-face for discussions. While these discussions were often spirited, we always reached consensus in regard to the books' main characters' virtues. We met roughly once a week for ten weeks. Below, we provide a brief summary of the ten Newbery books with an eye toward giving some insight into what we see as the main characters' intellectual virtues.

Clare Vanderpool's *Moon Over Manifest* unfolds through chapters organized alternately between 1936 and 1918. The main narrator is Abilene Tucker, age twelve, whose father arranges for her to live in Mani-

fest, Kansas, with one of his old friends while he works for the railroad. Over the course of the book, Abilene learns a great deal about her roots and the inhabitants of her adopted town with the help of friends and sympathetic adults, especially Miss Sadie, a mysterious seer. Abilene is curious, thoughtful, and perceptive, as indicated in this passage:

I found myself listening with my eyes as well as my ears, noting the slight movements. Mrs. Dawkins folding her lace handkerchief and placing it on her lap just so. And Mr. Cooper, the barber, stroking his mustache the same way Miss Sadie had described his father, Mr. Keufer doing. It was interesting piecing together fragments of stories I'd heard from Miss Sadie. Noting what had changed and what had stayed the same. (p. 245)

It turns out that the powers of Miss Sadie are also rooted in careful observation and thoughtful listening, not a sixth sense. For years she watched at a distance as her own son grew into a young man—he never knew his mother's identity—and playing the role of a clairvoyant:

As people come to her for their palms to be read or their fortunes told, she puts on a show. She dresses the part. But what she gives them instead is the truth she observes and knows about them. (p. 333)

The Higher Power of Lucky by Susan Patron is something of a coming of age tale—if “age” is the right word to use in connection with a ten year old. Lucky is motherless, and for all practical purposes, fatherless; she fears that her guardian, Brigitte (her father's first wife), will also leave. Having eavesdropped on different twelve-step programs, Lucky is hoping to find her own higher power to guide her through the uncertainties she faces growing up on the edge of civilization in Hard Pan, California (population 43). Despite her fears, the young protagonist (and narrator) is brave, resourceful, and a budding scientist to boot. In one scene, in order to identify a snake, Lucky asks questions about the appearance of the creature who has slithered in the clothes dryer in Lucky's mobile home. The narrator tells us that Lucky admires snakes because they are so “highly adapted to their environment” (p. 51). Lucky is well adapted too, disassembling a parsley grater and then using it (unsquimishly) to remove a cholla burr which is painfully embedded in a little friend's foot.

This book provides numerous examples of Lucky's intelligence and resourcefulness; in the following, it also provides insight into her own awareness of these qualities:

Lucky felt wonderful about her Heroic Deed of figuring out how to chase the snake away without killing it in a gruesome way or waiting for it to die of old age. . . .At that moment Lucky knew she was a highly evolved human being. (p. 54)

When You Reach Me by Rebecca Stead combines mystery and science fiction. The main character and narrator is twelve-year-old Miranda, who is living with her mother in New York City. (“Mom” is preparing to appear on the game show *The \$20,00 Pyramid* and many of the chapter titles are patterned after the categories used on the show, “The Speed Round,” “Tied-up Things,” “White Things,” etc.) After being punched, Sal, Miranda’s best friend, suddenly stops talking to her, which leads Miranda to form new friendship with her sixth-grade classmates. Miranda is an astute observer of relationships, as reflected in this passage:

The girls at school had been hurting each other’s feelings for years before Sal left me and I was forced to really notice them. I had watched them trade best friends, start wars, cry, trade back, make treaties, squeal and grab each other’s arms in this fake-excited way, et cetera, et cetera. (p. 33)

Miranda becomes wrapped up in a mystery involving a boy named Marcus, who is the younger version of a local homeless man identified as Laughing Man. That this mystery has an element of time travel is hinted at by Marcus when he reveals the following about Miranda’s favorite book, *A Wrinkle in Time*:

Look, all I’m saying is that at the end of the book, they don’t get back five minutes before they left. Or they would have see themselves get back—before they left. (p. 51)

Miranda uses her observational skills and intellect to solve the mystery.

Criss Cross by Lynne Rae Perkins is a collection of vignettes about adolescent life in the 1970s: growing, changing, learning, loving, losing and coming of age. The book’s main character is Debbie, and also includes her friends, Patty, Hector, Lenny, and Phil, and a few select adults, including Debbie’s Parents. This quirky and episodic book gives insights into Debbie’s thoughts and developing sense of self. Debbie’s internal conversations are often philosophically sophisticated, as in this excerpt:

[Debbie] was thinking that happiness isn’t necessarily, as Dorothy in the Wizard of Oz says, in your own backyard. But it might be nearby, in someone else’s backyard. She was thinking that the grass really could be greener on the other side of the fence. It depended on who was standing on the grass. Maybe you had to go take a look. Maybe she was the kind of person who would have to go Somewhere Else, and she wondered how far away Somewhere Else would have to be. (p. 330)

Criss Cross is chock full of its characters’ philosophical musings and observations on the human condition.

A Single Shard by Linda Sue Park is set in the 12th century village of Ch'ulp'o, Korea, which is famous for its pottery. The central character is a homeless orphan, Tree-ear, who for years has lived under a bridge with the disabled Crane-man, a surrogate father and a friend. Tree-ear must scrounge in the village's garbage heaps for scraps of food. In the course of his foraging he is able, from a distance, to observe Min, the most accomplished potter, at his wheel. Eventually, Tree-ear becomes Min's assistant, and, through astute and sensitive observation, Tree-ear learns about the ancient art, from the handling of clay, to the preparation of the kiln, to the mixing and application of glaze. In the following passage, the narrator reveals how Tree-ear's and his beloved Crane-man's very survival depends on keen observation:

[K]eeping his ears open to the talk of village life had always been a crucial skills for Tree-ear. News of a wedding, for example meant that the bride's family would be preparing much food in the days preceding the ceremony; their rubbish heap would merit special attention during that time. The birth of a son, the death of a patriarch—these events likewise affected the state of a household's garbage heap. Of course, none of the villagers thought to tell Tree-ear of such happenings. Instead, he had learned over the years to look for the clues whispered by changes in the villagers' daily routines. . . .Crane-man often joked. . ."tree-ear! Eh, again you see the aptness of your name. You are like the ears of a scrawny little tree, noticed by none but hearing all. (pp. 44-45)

The Tale of Despereaux, by Kate DiCamillo, begins with the birth of a huge-eared, open-eyed, tiny mouse. Despereaux's physical attributes are perfect for a character who is so fully attentive to all that is before him; he uses those well-developed sense organs! Despereaux differs from other mice not only physically, but also mentally. He loves music and would rather read books than nibble them. Such differences from the mouse norm have consequences. As the narrator reminds us,

Reader, you must know that an interesting fate (sometimes involving rats, sometimes not) awaits almost everyone, mouse or man, who does not conform. (p. 25)

Born in a castle, Despereaux falls in love with the princess, Pea. This particular act of mouse nonconformity sets the story in motion when the young hero is thrown into the dungeon where, it might be presumed, he will be eaten by rats. Instead, Despereaux's bravery, intelligence, and perseverance combine to help him rescue his beloved Pea (and other characters). Themes of light and enlightenment recur throughout this narrative, in which one character's name, "Chiaroscuro," refers to the arrangement of light and darkness.

In *Kira-kira*, by Cynthia Kadohata, Katie and her beloved older sister, Lynn, are Japanese-Americans who, in the 1950s, move from Iowa to Georgia. The move is necessary because, after losing their grocery store, Katie's and Lynn's parents have found (grueling, exhausting) work in poultry processing down south. Tragedy befalls these difficult lives when Lynn develops lymphoma. The already over-worked parents work harder still to pay mounting medical bills, and, left without regular adult supervision, Katie has to take on more and more adult responsibilities, including caring for Lynn.

Kira-kira is the Japanese word for “glittering,” an attribute of all the things the book's young narrator, Katie, likes—including colored Kleenex. The ability to see possibility and promise in the mundane and even in hardship and loss is the central theme of this work. Katie is a keen observer of people. She uses this ability to figure out the dynamics of her own family and other social relationships, for example, how fair-weather friends are not real friends at all. Such observational powers help Katie gain control over her own life. Reflecting on Lynn's school success and her own academic struggles, it dawns on Katie that she too can do better—with more effort:

I thought getting an A was something that happened to you, not something that you made happen. But after Lynn had died and I'd spent a lot of time thinking about her, I remembered how often I'd seen her sitting at her desk, chewing her pencil as she worked for hours on her homework. (p. 229)

Political intrigue meets coming-of-age meets action-adventure in *Crispin: The Cross of Lead* by Avi. This tale begins in a small, impoverished village in Fourteenth Century England. Its protagonist, a thirteen-year-old peasant and orphan, is known initially only as Asta's son; his identity as “Crispin,” the illegitimate son of a wealthy landowner, is revealed well into this tale.

Following his mother's death, Asta's son is wrongly accused of theft and forced to flee; he has been declared a “wolf's head,” no longer human, and wanted dead or alive. Starving, lonely, and bewildered after his escape, Asta's son happens upon a seemingly brutish jester, Bear. While rough-around-the-edges, Bear turns out to be an intelligent and decent man who becomes Crispin's friend and mentor. The two travel together, surviving by their wits and their loyalty to one another. As their adventure unfolds, Crispin offers insights into his own developing self-awareness and sophistication, as in this passage:

As we went along, I kept thinking how Bear had noticed the birds, which allowed him to see the soldiers. If, I told myself, I was to stay alive in

this new world, I must learn skills as he had. The sooner I learned, I told myself, the longer my life. (p. 114)

At the beginning of this story, Crispin is a proverbial babe-in-the-woods, timid and fearful, but he thrives under Bear's tutelage, and by the end he is confident and brave. Indeed, Crispin negotiates Bear's release from prison and cuts a deal to ensure his own and Bear's safety.

Richard Peck's *A Year Down Yonder* is set in 1937. Fifteen-year-old Mary Alice is sent from her home in Chicago to live a year Down Yonder (downstate Illinois) with her Grandma Dowdel while her parents stay behind to work in the big city. Grandma is the epitome of no-nonsense and delivers Mary Alice to the local school straight from the train. Soon, Mary Alice is involved in all sorts of capers and adventures with crafty but kind-hearted Grandma. Mary Alice is the narrator of this old-timey tale and she is attentive above all else to Grandma's doings. And Grandma is nothing if not a resourceful problem-solver. (In one episode, she implements a "sliding scale" price scheme at the annual Turkey Shoot in order to get money from a wealthy banker; the money is needed to help a disabled veteran and his mothers.) Toward the story's end, Mary Alice reflects,

I haven't lived with her all year for nothing. Sometimes I thought I was turning into her. And I was to cook like her for all the years to come. (p. 151)

Neil Gaiman's *The Graveyard Book* begins with the murder of a mother and father and their daughter at the hands of the mysterious Jack. Their inquisitive son, a toddler, awakened by the commotion, climbs out of his crib, down the stairs, and up a hill to an old graveyard. There the boy (re-named Nobody, or Bod, for short) is adopted by Mr. and Mrs. Owens—dead since Victorian times—and raised by them, other ghosts, and his guardian, Silas, who is neither wholly dead nor alive. Gaiman's book affirms the proverb "it take a village to raise a child"—even if that village is populated by otherworldly souls.

Bod is an excellent student, mastering "the fade," outsmarting the snake-like Smeer, and otherwise mastering life among the spirits in his graveyard world. Bod is eventually allowed to attend a regular school, where he quietly observes his classmates—and confronts a bully. But above all, Bod is described as possessing seemingly contradictory traits: "Bod was obedient, but curious" (p. 106). He did not venture outside the graveyard for his own amusement, although there was much he wanted to see and do. He ate the "beetroot-barley-stew-soup" even though he thought it would make him vomit, because Miss Lupescu told him 'it is good for you.' He memorized what Miss L. told him to memorize even

though he truly believed ‘I’m never going to need to know this.’ (p. 72). Bod’s discipline and obedience paid off because he used the information Miss Lupescu taught him (calling the night-gaunts) to literally save his own life!

While Bod is raised in a graveyard, he is destined to dwell among the living. His guardian Silas reminds him why life matters:

You are alive, Bod. That means you have infinite potential. You can do anything, make anything, dream anything. If you change the world, the world will change. Potential. (p. 179)

Good Masters! Sweet Ladies: Voices from a Medieval Village, by Laura May Schlitz, differs from the other Newbery winners under review in that it is a book of short plays—nineteen monologues and two dialogues—written for students at the school where Schlitz is a librarian. (Schlitz wanted each child to have a starring role.) Some of the characters are boys and some girls, ranging in age from about ten to fifteen. The little plays are set in a manor in England, 1255 and give a sense of what life might have been like for lords and ladies as well as peasants. In addition to the plays, the book contains historical background about such topics as the Crusades, falconry, and the medieval pilgrimage. The book gives great insight into the character traits and other values that animated medieval England. It also gives insights into the day-to-day struggles and small pleasures young people would experience.

Intellectual Virtue in the Newbery Winners

The main purpose of this essay was to highlight ways in which Newbery Award winning books published from 2000 through 2010 may nurture the development of intellectual virtue. Above all, reflecting on Zagzebski’s account of intellectual virtues enumerated previously, we were struck by the fact that all these characters are keen and sensitive observers of their respective worlds. Words that came to mind as we described the characters include “sensitive,” “astute,” “insightful,” “perceptive,” “engaged,” “attentive.” These are all characters who watch, listen, and reflect. They actively and mindfully “take in” their circumstances.

One of us commented that all of these main characters embodied what Maxine Greene calls “wide-awakeness” (Greene, 1978). The Newbery books depict characters who are wide awake to their circumstances—and increasingly awake to their own developing selves. And each in their own distinctive way, the books provide a kind of map for becoming a more competent navigator of some important—and often treacherous—aspect of life’s journey. The characters populating the Newbery books illustrate

what can be entailed in attending to the natural world, listening to and observing others, and noting the consequences of different courses of action—and what can be entailed in becoming increasingly self-aware.

These are also characters who demonstrate regard for their own development. They *want* to learn and to do the right thing. They use past experiences as data in the process of decision-making in new circumstances. In doing this, they show young readers ways in which these readers can take charge of aspects of their own lives in order to *live* those lives according to self-chosen designs rather than merely being led through them according to others' blueprints.

All of the characters in these books encounter adversity and in facing their troubles not only depict approaches to problem-solving (which might be generalized by readers to new circumstances) but also demonstrate perseverance. "Intelligence" in these works is not conceptualized as great ease in meeting challenges, but rather as a kind of stickwithitiveness. Intelligence, these works say collectively, is a quality we can all cultivate—but this requires *effort* and a willingness to *try*, and often to try again and again. And this, we think, reflects Aristotle's basic insight with which our discussion began: virtues of character and virtues of intellect are difficult to disentangle because they work together.

There is little question that different readers make different meanings in their encounters with books. And the extent to which the educative potential of these books is realized in the hearts and minds of young readers and listeners is open to further analysis. Do psychological or other personal characteristics make some young people more receptive to these books' lessons in intellectual virtue than others? What about social or cultural factors? Are there ways in which teachers and other adults interact with these books or with youngsters that make the books' messages especially resonant? These are but a few of the questions that remain in relation to the Newbery books. These questions notwithstanding, we are confident that readers and listeners who are themselves in the process of becoming more "wide-awake" will find much in these books to aid and enliven their journey.

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