

Intellectual Charisma

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1. Introduction

In this article, I aim to contribute to ongoing discussions of the intellectual virtues by presenting an account of one aspect of our intellectual characters that has yet to receive such direct treatment. That aspect is our capacity to influence others in ways that make inquiry go better. In developing my account of this capacity, I will argue that one ought to include it on one's list of the intellectual virtues because we have reason to think (1) that it is a genuine social-psychological phenomenon, (2) that it plausibly qualifies as an intellectual virtue, and (3) that including it on one's list of the intellectual virtues is helpful in various ways. Adding this capacity to our picture of intellectually virtuous agency can not only make the picture more apt and complete, but can also lead us to think differently about the rest of the picture. This can allow us to better understand and to take more seriously the ways in which the other intellectual virtues, and our intellectual agency more generally, are socially embedded.

The capacity for virtuous social influence, albeit it in moral rather than epistemic contexts, has an analogue in the history of philosophy in the form of the early Chinese virtue concept '*de*'. '*De*' is often translated as "virtue", "power", or "moral charisma". It is referenced, for instance, in an oft-cited passage in the *Analects of Confucius* in which Confucius claims that a virtuous ruler should influence people to be good rather than punish them because a virtuous ruler's *de* can move people like the wind moves the grass (*Analects*, 12:19). Given this, we might call the intellectual virtue I am concerned with "intellectual *de*". However, '*de*' tends to refer both to one's being virtuous generally and to the charismatic power that the early Confucians believed accrues to a virtuous person. Since I am primarily focused on the capacity for beneficial social influence, and want to remain open about how much this depends on possessing other virtues, I will instead refer to the intellectual virtue that I am concerned with as *intellectual charisma*.¹

1. Thank you to an anonymous reviewer for suggesting the term "intellectual charisma" rather than the clunkier "intellectually virtuous social influence" used in a previous draft.

I will begin, in Section 2, by constructing a sketch of intellectual charisma as it can be observed in the world. With that sketch in mind, I will develop, in Section 3, a philosophical account of intellectual charisma that (1) explains some of its distinctive features and (2) shows how it can meet some widely accepted conditions for qualifying as an intellectual virtue. In Section 4, I conclude by explaining some of the key benefits of including intellectual charisma in our picture of intellectually virtuous agency.

2. An Empirical Sketch of Intellectual Charisma

In constructing a sketch of intellectual charisma, I have two primary tasks. First, I aim to show that there is some likelihood that intellectual charisma is a genuine phenomenon. My goal here is simply to assuage enough initial skepticism about the reality of intellectual charisma to warrant further discussion and study (both philosophical and empirical). Second, I aim to see what more specific claims, if any, we are justified in making about intellectual charisma. My goal here is to build a partial picture of intellectual charisma based on the available evidence, so that we can see how this picture might inform my subsequent analysis of intellectual charisma in section 3.

In pursuing these tasks, I take it that support for the general claim that there are inquiry-improving ways that people can influence others might result from finding support for any of a variety of more specific claims regarding which modes of influence have which effects on inquiry. This means that we might see the more general claim as supported while still withholding credence from, and continuing to investigate, most of the specific claims. As I will make clear, this is where I believe we are regarding the currently available support for the more general and more specific claims that we might make about intellectual charisma.

We can perhaps get an initial handle on intellectual charisma by reflecting on our own experiences. Upon reflection, you might remember people who appeared to take you or others “off their game”, intellectually speaking, and you might recall people who appeared to

bring out something closer to your or others’ intellectual best selves. Reflection on your own practices as a teacher and colleague may also reveal some capacities for social influence that you have employed to help make inquiries go better, capacities that you may have intentionally worked to strengthen.

We can move from this reflection to observe that there are other professions in which proper training and best practices, which have evolved through success-seeking processes that are likely to be somewhat reality-responsive, include the development and exercise of the kinds of influence under discussion. It is standard, for instance, in psychotherapy and other counseling professions to be intentional in influencing one’s patients, often through the use of one’s demeanor and tone, in ways that make one’s patients more likely to engage in honest, insightful, and productive discussion about their lives. This ability to influence one’s patients in these ways is a part of what has been called “Facilitative Interpersonal Skills” (FIS). Research on therapist effectiveness has shown that there is a significant correlation between successful therapeutic outcomes and therapist FIS (Anderson et al. 2009) and that these FIS can be improved with practice (Anderson et al. 2020).

In discussing the techniques often used by salespeople, advertisers, negotiators, and the like, Robert Cialdini discusses several forms of influence that, while often wielded to a target’s intellectual detriment, might also be applied in ways that make inquiry go better. In discussing how and why such techniques tend to be effective, Cialdini (2021) draws on research in cognitive psychology to show that:

1. People tend to reciprocate favors and other benefits (ch. 2);
2. People tend to acquiesce to the wishes of people they like (ch. 3) and those with authority (ch. 5);
3. People tend to conform to groups and be swayed by social proof (ch. 4);

4. People tend to try to remain consistent with their sense of self and prior commitments (ch. 7).²

If these routes of influence can be used to get people, for instance, to purchase a car or vote for a candidate, then there is little reason to think that they cannot be used to get people, for instance, to persevere longer during a difficult inquiry, exhibit more curiosity, or behave in other ways that make inquiry go better.

Another discussion of professional applications of this kind of influence comes from Chris Voss, former lead international hostage negotiator for the FBI. Voss discusses using his demeanor to influence his negotiation counterparts in epistemically relevant ways. This includes influencing them to slow down and think more clearly and collaboratively by using what he calls his “late night FM DJ voice”, which he also calls “the voice of calm and reason” (Voss 2016, 32). Voss also discusses a technique that he calls mirroring. This involves repeating the last few words a person said in the form of a question, which Voss says is effective in influencing people to “elaborate on what was just said and sustain the process of connecting” (2016, 36). He also advocates a positive tone and demeanor to put others in a positive frame of mind because they will then be “more likely to collaborate and problem-solve” (Voss 2016, 33). In line with this technique, a study by Sigal Barsade (2002) found that a contagious positive affect can decrease conflict and increase cooperation in groups, and a study by Will Felps and colleagues (2006) found that the expression of negative affect is one key way in which dysfunction-causing “rotten apples” can undermine a group’s performance.

Looking more specifically at the relevant literature in empirical psychology, one prominent constellation of results concerns ways in which influencing people’s affect can influence their cognitive performance. These studies do not directly test for intellectual charisma, but

2. While, as I discuss more below, the recent replication failures in psychology might cast doubt on Cialdini’s results, we should be heartened by the fact that one large preregistered study (Genschow et al. 2021) has replicated the effect found in a study Cialdini uses to support his claim about reciprocity.

rather manipulate affect through a variety of non-social means. Nonetheless, I believe that the results show affect to be a plausible path through which one’s intellectual charisma could operate on others. After all, it should be relatively uncontroversial that people can influence others’ affective states through various intentional actions. There is also reason to think that—as in Voss’ use of a positive demeanor to induce positive affect in others—people can pass on their own affective states to others (see Hatfield et al. 1994).

The first set of results I will attend to has previously been drawn on by Mark Alfano (2012, 2013) in his discussion of the situationist challenge to virtue epistemology. Alfano relies most heavily on “the research of Alice Isen and her colleagues on the influence of positive moods on cognitive motivation and processing” (2012, 234). According to Isen, the upshot of this research is that

in most circumstances, positive affect enhances problem solving and decision making, leading to cognitive processing that is not only flexible, innovative, and creative, but also thorough and efficient. (2001, 75)

One paradigmatic study in this vein found that inducing positive affect improved performance on measures of creativity and cognitive flexibility. One of these measures was the Duncker candle task, which challenges participants to find a creative solution to a moderately vexing practical problem. Another was the remote associates test, which challenges participants to find a word that, for each of 3 given words, helps to complete a well-known phrase (like “cheese” given “cottage/Swiss/cake”) (Isen et al. 1987). Another study found that medical students in whom positive affect was induced were quicker than students in a control group to identify “which of six hypothetical patients ... was most likely to have lung cancer” (Isen et al. 1991, 221). Those students also showed more curiosity in discussing potential diagnoses and treatments of the remaining patients. In line with Voss’ view that positive affect facilitates problem-solving in negotiation, two studies by Peter Carnevale and Isen (1983; 1986) found that induced positive

affect led negotiators to be more likely than controls to collectively find integrative solutions based on mutually beneficial trade-offs.

Some of these benefits of positive affect might be due to it activating a more open, flexible cognitive style. In line with this explanation, Isen and Daubman (1984) found that, compared to those in a control condition, those in a positive affect condition tended to group more disparate items together in a single category, and were more likely to judge more disparate items to be members of the same category. This suggests a more flexible cognitive style that could help explain the increased creativity and problem solving. A recent study by Wei-lun Lin and colleagues (2014) also showed that positive affect leads to a more flexible cognitive style. They found that those in a positive-affect condition were less affected by task-switching than those in a control condition (as shown by lower reaction times when switching between responding to a stimulus according to one rule versus another). This greater cognitive flexibility also fully mediated the subsequent superior performance of the positive-affect group on an insight problem-solving task.

While such studies paint an intriguing picture, there are reasons to think that the general claim that positive affect improves cognitive performance is not as well justified as it first appears. The recent high profile replication failures in psychology should lead us to be more cautious about which claims we draw from most of the existing studies on affect and its influence on cognition.³ In light of this caution, we should note that although meta-analyses of the affect and creativity literature by Matthijs Baas and colleagues (2008) and Mark Davis (2009) suggest some support for the general claim that positive affect increases creativity, the effect sizes are somewhat small. These meta-analyses also help, though, to identify specific effects that might be more robust depending on the features of the induced positive mood and the kind of creative task being performed. In line with the greater complexity

3. This is especially the case here given early failures to replicate Isen and Levin's famous study of the influence of positive affect on helping behavior (see Blevins and Murphy 1974).

that this suggests, research on affect and cognition has continued to uncover a picture in which various, more specific affective states can have various effects, both good and ill, on certain kinds of cognitive performances.

Part of this more complex picture has come about from researchers sharpening claims like the one discussed above that positive affect leads to a more open cognitive style. Some studies appear to support that basic claim. Gillian Rowe and colleagues (2007) found that induced positive affect broadens the scope of visuo-spatial attention, as measured by a subject's greater distractibility by outside stimuli in a directed attention task. They also found that it broadens the scope of semantic search, as indicated by greater success on the remote associates test. However, subsequent work by Philip Gable and Eddie Harmon-Jones (2008) adds further nuance to this view of the relationship between affect and cognitive style. It does so by distinguishing between low-approach-motivating positive affect (which increased global attentional focus) and high-approach-motivating positive affect (which actually reduced global attentional focus). Encouragingly, these results were later replicated in a preregistered study by Irena Domachowska and colleagues (2016), which also included a successful conceptual replication of the same idea. A follow up study by Gable and Harmon-Jones found that

approach motivation engages the same neural circuitry that drives local attention in general, and the approach-motivated activation of this circuitry biases local attention even more. (2009, 408)

This increases the plausibility that the affect-attention link Gable and Harmon-Jones describe is a genuine phenomenon.

If different kinds of positive affective states lead to different cognitive styles, then this suggests that negative affective states might function similarly with similar epistemic effects. In line with this posit, Gable and Harmon-Jones (2010) found that negative affective states high in motivational intensity (e.g., anger) narrowed attentional focus,

while negative affective states low in motivational intensity (e.g., sadness) broadened attentional focus. This suggests that this attentional effect is less a matter of the valence of the affective state than it is a matter of how activating, intense, or productive of approach motivation it is. Noting these different features of affective states helps us to explain why we sometimes see certain affective states having similar effects despite their different valence. For instance, Joseph Forgas and colleagues (2005) found that induced happiness increased susceptibility to false recall, while induced sadness reduced it. Michael Greenstein and Nancy Franklin (2020) found that increased susceptibility to false recall can also result from induced anger. Rather than valence, these more detailed features are likely operative in similar results obtained by Forgas and Rebekah East (2008), who found that induced sadness increased skepticism when judging the truth of rumors and urban legends. They are also likely operative in results found by Forgas (2007) that induced sadness led people to write more effective persuasive arguments that also contained more concrete information.

An additional layer of this emerging picture is that the relationship between cognitive performance and affect appears to differ depending on a person's baseline affective traits. Maya Tamir (2005) found that, among people high in trait neuroticism, those in whom worry had been induced performed better on an anagram task than those in whom happiness had been induced (with the opposite being found of those low in trait neuroticism). Angela Leung and colleagues (2014) similarly found that those high in neuroticism exhibited greater creativity when induced with worry compared to happiness (with the opposite being true for those low in neuroticism).

In a similar study, S. Akbari Cherhamini and Bernhard Hommel (2012) worked from the assumption that the effects of induced positive affect on creativity depend on dopamine release. They found that positive effects accrue significantly more to those with low baseline dopamine. Such differential effects might partially explain the small effect sizes in the meta-analyses mentioned earlier, since low effect sizes are what we would expect to find if the effects are robust, but

differentially so for some subset of the population. This is especially so if previous studies lumped members of that subset together with the more prevalent group.

This current empirical picture is, unfortunately, insufficient to support confident claims about what specific influences on cognitive performance one might effect by influencing people's affective states in specific ways. Nonetheless, we can, with some confidence, make the more general claim that influencing people's affect is a plausible route through which to influence their cognitive performance, and to thereby exercise intellectual charisma. We can add this to the other potential routes of influence discussed in this section. We should also note that some further possibilities exist beyond what I have been able to discuss here.⁴

Given the above, it is plausible that intellectual charisma is a genuine social-psychological phenomenon, even if the available evidence leaves us with an incomplete picture of how a person might exercise the relevant influence. It also seems plausible that some people are more capable of exercising intellectual charisma than others and that people can develop that capability. I believe that this gives us sufficient reason to continue discussing intellectual charisma and the role that it might play in a person's intellectual character.

3. A Philosophical Account of Intellectual Charisma

In this section, I present a philosophical account of intellectual charisma. This account is intended to allow us to (1) judge whether intellectual charisma should be considered an intellectual virtue and (2) explain some facets of intellectual charisma's nature as part of a person's intellectual character. This should further allow me, in section 4, to show some ways in which countenancing intellectual charisma

4. Mark Alfano (2013, ch. 7), for instance, draws on studies of labeling effects—a person's tendency to act in a trait-consonant manner when labeled with a certain trait—to make the case that we can induce what he calls "factitious" intellectual virtue in people. However, like most results in social psychology, these await appropriate replication before we can confidently say that this influence path is genuine.

might benefit our ongoing discussions of the intellectual virtues. I aim to offer an account of intellectual charisma that will be useful to as many virtue epistemology projects as possible. I will therefore try, as much as possible, to avoid making commitments about the nature of the intellectual virtues in general. Instead, I will aim to show how well intellectual charisma fares in fulfilling what are often considered important conditions for qualifying as an intellectual virtue.

Before presenting this account, it may be helpful to note that this discussion of intellectual charisma sits within what has been called responsibilist (as opposed to reliabilist) virtue epistemology (Axtell 1997). This is because intellectual charisma involves elements of one's character and not just perceptual or cognitive faculties. Note also that I am not looking to incorporate the discussion of intellectual charisma into a discussion of how to analyze core epistemic concepts like 'knowledge'. My account therefore contributes to a branch of virtue epistemology that has variously been called "anti-theory" (as opposed to "theory") (Battaly 2008), "alternative" (as opposed to "conventional") (Turri et al. 2018), "autonomous" (as opposed to "conservative") (Baehr 2011), and "regulative" (as opposed to "analytic") (Wolterstorff 1996; Roberts and Wood 2007). The aim of such a project is to fill out our picture of intellectually virtuous agency and thereby, as Roberts and Wood put it, to "generate guidance for epistemic practice" (2007, 21). That said, I remain open to the possibility that including intellectual charisma in a picture of the intellectual virtues could somehow benefit the conventional project.

3.1 *Acting in an Intellectually Charismatic Way*

Given my ecumenical aims, one place to start developing my account of intellectual charisma is to discuss what it means to act in an intellectually charismatic way. This is because acting in an intellectually charismatic way can be understood independently of a particular understanding of the nature of the intellectual virtues in a way that the definitions of possessing or acting from intellectual charisma might not. Thus far, I have spoken of intellectual charisma as the capacity

to exert influence on others that makes inquiry go better. However, it is worth finding a more precise account of what intellectual charisma does, especially in light of the partial empirical picture of it drawn above. Given that this picture consists almost entirely of people being influenced to display more creativity, flexibility, curiosity, attention to detail, appropriate skepticism, intellectual generosity and cooperation, and so on, we can capture what intellectually charismatic behavior accomplishes by saying that it influences others to act in a more intellectually virtuous way. This aligns with the available empirical picture without departing too significantly from my original framing, since people's intellectually virtuous behavior accounts for a good deal of what makes inquiry go better.

With this understanding of the effect of intellectual charisma in mind, I propose the following initial definition:

One acts in an intellectually charismatic way iff one acts in a manner that influences some other person such that the other person acts in a more intellectually virtuous way.

We can note here that fully understanding this definition would require us to unpack what it means to act in a more intellectually virtuous way. Those who accept different general views of the intellectual virtues will, of course, unpack that differently. Yet, we need not actually do that unpacking to grasp the central idea here. Without knowing which account of intellectual virtue or which list of intellectual virtues lies behind it, we typically understand what someone means when they say that one displays greater virtue. We take such judgments to encompass several dimensions of success, including being more likely to perform a virtue-consonant act in the relevant circumstances, doing so more intensely, and doing so in the face of more daunting eliciting conditions. It is in these common senses that I meant that the other person acts in a more intellectually virtuous manner.

One potential issue with this definition is that, in focusing entirely on effects, it might allow for the wrong kinds of behaviors to count as intellectually charismatic so long as they have the relevant effects. For

instance, one might have these effects unintentionally, or through behavior that is otherwise vicious, or perhaps by being a powerful example of intellectual vice. This may conflict with some people's sense that acting in an intellectually charismatic way (or in an intellectually virtuous way more generally) is something that must be done intentionally or that must avoid being vicious in some other way. While I wish to remain open about these general issues, and have thus provided a more accommodating definition than some might ultimately prefer, we can note here that the definition can easily be modified in a variety of ways to include further restrictions without altering the core idea.

3.2 *Possessing Intellectual Charisma as a Virtue*

Moving from this definition of acting in an intellectually charismatic way to explore what it means to possess intellectual charisma requires that we engage with some general accounts of what it means to possess a virtue. The shortest distance to travel from here is probably to the view that Thomas Hurka develops in *Virtue, Vice, and Value*. On Hurka's view, a virtue is any instance of thought, feeling, or action that involves loving the good (2001, ch. 1, sects. 1–3). Our account of when one acts in an intellectually charismatic way could more-or-less suffice as an account of charisma as an intellectual virtue on Hurka's view, then, insofar as the intellectually charismatic acts in question involve loving intellectual goods like knowledge.

While Hurka is rather unique in not requiring that virtues be grounded as dispositions to behave in virtue-consonant ways, he is not unique in thinking that it is essential to an intellectual virtue that it involve something like love of epistemic goods. For instance, Jason Baehr presents a "Personal Worth Conception" of intellectual virtue:

an intellectual virtue is a character trait that contributes to its possessor's personal intellectual worth on account of its involving a positive psychological orientation toward epistemic goods. (2011, 102)

Linda Zagzebski also advances the requirement that an intellectual virtue involve a positive orientation toward epistemic goods, in that a virtue must contain a "motivation to produce a certain desired end" (1996, 137). For an intellectual virtue, this end is an epistemic good Zagzebski calls "cognitive contact with reality" (1996, 167). This requirement for an intellectual virtue is prevalent enough that it is worth briefly exploring how intellectual charisma might fulfill it before we continue on to flesh out what it means to possess intellectual charisma as a virtue.

3.2.1 *Intellectual Charisma and the Positive Orientation Toward Intellectual Goods*

It is plausible that intellectual charisma would generally involve the above-discussed positive orientation toward intellectual goods. This is because the immediate aim of an intellectually charismatic act would be to get someone to act in a manner that is more consonant with the other intellectual virtues, which coheres well with a positive orientation toward the other intellectual virtues. This, in turn, coheres well with a positive orientation toward intellectual goods themselves, since one typically values intellectual virtues, and acts in an intellectually virtuous way, largely because one values some intellectual good and sees the intellectual virtue as a means to attaining that intellectual good. While none of this precludes the possibility of acting with intellectual charisma for other ends, or valuing intellectual virtues without also valuing the intellectual goods at which they aim, one could rule out such possibilities by simply requiring that intellectual charisma involve a positive orientation toward epistemic goods without giving up anything central to it (much as we can with other virtues). So, intellectual charisma could easily meet a requirement that it involve a positive orientation toward intellectual goods.

There is something else worth noting, though, about the way that intellectual charisma would involve being positively oriented toward these goods. Intellectually virtuous behavior is often thought to aim at the attainment of intellectual goods like knowledge and understanding

for oneself. However, in aiming to facilitate another's intellectually virtuous behavior, one could often be aiming at the attainment of intellectual goods like knowledge or understanding for another. We would have reason, then, to consider intellectual charisma to be an other-oriented virtue (one that aims at goods for others) rather than a fully self-oriented virtue (one that aims at goods for oneself).

Discussing examples like intellectual generosity, Jason Kawall (2002) has argued that we have good reason to allow for intellectual virtues to be other-oriented. Following Kawall in adopting this more expansive understanding would certainly help us to see intellectual charisma as an intellectual virtue, and could further clarify another important feature of it. However, one need not accept other-oriented virtues in general to accept intellectual charisma as an intellectual virtue. This is because there are abundant instances in which acting in an intellectually charismatic way could aim at intellectual goods for oneself. After all, many attempts to attain some intellectual good for oneself involve collective inquiry with others. In such cases, it is reasonable to think that influencing one's partners in inquiry to behave in a more intellectually virtuous way would be one way for a person to act in a manner that aims at intellectual goods for oneself. This is because influencing another like this would tend to make one, no less than the other person, more likely to attain the intellectual good at which the inquiry aims. So, even those holding that intellectual virtues must be self-oriented should have no problem accepting intellectual charisma as one of those self-oriented virtues. For those more sanguine about other-oriented intellectual virtues, though, intellectual charisma might be thought of as both other-oriented and self-oriented, since individual acts of intellectual charisma will often involve aiming at both one's own and others' attainment of the relevant intellectual good.

Given all of this, intellectual charisma can easily be said to involve a positive orientation toward epistemic goods. Holding a view of intellectual virtue on which this is a requirement should not, then, be a reason to reject intellectual charisma from qualifying as an intellectual virtue. So long as we add this requirement, then, our definition of

acting in an intellectually charismatic way can suffice as an account of charisma as an intellectual virtue on views like Hurka's.⁵ More common views, of course, require us to say more about what it would mean to possess intellectual charisma as a virtuous trait.

3.2.2 Possessing Intellectual Charisma as a Virtuous Trait

Generally, possessing intellectual charisma as a trait would mean having a sufficiently-reliable disposition to perform intellectually charismatic acts in the relevant eliciting conditions. Possessing intellectual charisma as a virtuous trait, specifically, would also mean having a disposition to perform these acts in the right way. Having already defined what an intellectually charismatic act is, constructing an account of possessing intellectual charisma as a virtuous trait further requires me to specify the relevant eliciting conditions, what it means for the disposition to be reliable enough, and what it means to perform the acts in the right way. Given my ecumenical aims, though, I will refrain from fully specifying what it means to perform the relevant acts in the right way.⁶ I will also refrain from fully specifying what it means for the disposition to be reliable enough to count as a trait, though we can uncontroversially say that it involves performing the relevant acts in enough relevant situations and doing so to a sufficient degree, so long as we leave open what counts as 'enough' on these dimensions.

In specifying the relevant eliciting conditions, the first thing that we can say is that one must be in a position to potentially influence another person. Similar to how situations where there are no hardships are not situations where one could persevere, situations where there is nobody for one to influence are not situations where one could act in an intellectually charismatic way. One way of further unpacking this potential-for-influence requirement is to say that the relevant

5. As mentioned, this requirement is just one of many that people may wish to add to the more accommodating definition, given above, of acting in an intellectually charismatic manner.
6. Doing so might include, as discussed above, performing the relevant acts from a positive orientation toward intellectual goods or doing so in ways that are otherwise non-accidental or non-vicious.

circumstances are those where one is interacting with another. However, this may be too narrow to accommodate some cases we might want to include as demonstrative of intellectual charisma. It might be odd to say, for instance, that I am interacting with someone whose lecture I watch online, but who, through their infectious enthusiasm, nudges me toward greater curiosity than I might otherwise have had about something, though we might want to include such cases. However, if we are clear that we also mean to include such one-way interactions, then this way of capturing the relevant circumstances will not be too narrow. However, it might not be narrow enough. Numerous interactions that people have—smiling at a passerby, for example—do not seem like relevant opportunities for one to do something that nudges another to act more consonantly with intellectual virtue. This should lead us to think that the relevant eliciting conditions for intellectual charisma would only include some more circumscribed set of interactions.

Given that the immediate aim of intellectual charisma is to facilitate another person's intellectually virtuous conduct, and given that intellectually virtuous conduct is, uncontroversially, excellent conduct that directly aims at intellectual goods, the relevant interactions could naturally be considered those interactions that already otherwise involve directly aiming at some intellectual good(s). This might include situations where two people are pursuing intellectual goods together (such as colleagues on a research team). It might also include situations where one is helping another in their pursuit of some intellectual good (e.g., a teacher/pupil relationship). It might even include, as in cases of a person's infectious enthusiasm nudging others toward greater curiosity, situations where one is pursuing some intellectual good on one's own but doing so in a way that exerts the relevant influence on another.

We should note at this point, though, that one's view regarding which situations are relevant to intellectual charisma might depend on whether, as discussed above, acts of intellectual virtue can be wholly other-regarding. Those who accept other-oriented intellectual virtues

could happily include situations where one is interacting with another in a way that aims at intellectual goods *for the other*. But, those who reject other-oriented intellectual virtues may only want to include situations where one is interacting with another in a way that aims at intellectual goods *for oneself*. Despite this potential difference, those holding either view should be able to work with an account that simply states that the relevant conditions are those where one is interacting with another in a way that directly aims at intellectual goods. This is because those who reject other-oriented intellectual virtues would likely do so in part because they see one as failing to genuinely aim at intellectual goods if one is not aiming at them for oneself. So, each group could likely accept "situations where one is interacting with another in a way that directly aims at intellectual goods" as an account of intellectual charisma's relevant eliciting conditions.

One might raise a further objection, though, that the pattern of eliciting conditions picked out by "where one is interacting with another in a way that directly aims at intellectual goods" and the pattern of the respective outputs picked out by "one acts in an intellectually charismatic manner" are too disparate to qualify as a single trait. After all, given the empirical picture presented above, consistently responding to eliciting conditions in ways that properly influence another would seemingly require a variety of different actions that further vary with respect to different circumstances, different cognitive tasks, and different people with different baseline traits. Supplementing this general concern about the unity of the disposition, we can also note that on the popular, Aristotle-inspired views of the virtues, to possess a virtue means to hit some mean with respect to some quality of action. Given that influencing another would likely be accomplished by implementing a variety of strategies, putting others in a variety of affective states, putting oneself in a variety of affective states, and so forth, exercising intellectual charisma does not seem to involve hitting some single mean.

One potential response to such a concern is to say that, when we look closely, even seemingly straightforward, unified, paradigmatic

virtues like intellectual perseverance exhibit a similar kind of complexity in terms of both their eliciting conditions and the kinds of responses that are necessary to perform the relevant act (even if not to the same degree). There are all sorts of hardships one might need to persevere through during inquiry, and continuing despite those hardships would almost certainly require a variety of self-management strategies, strategies that would make various behavioral and emotional responses appropriate in various conditions. So, there may not be some special unity issue for intellectual charisma so much as a more conspicuous version of an issue that all virtues have as a result of how complex the architecture underlying human behavior is. Additionally, at least at some level of description, intellectual charisma consists in a straightforward condition-response relationship. One is interacting with another in a way that aims at intellectual goods, and one responds by somehow influencing that person to act in a more intellectually virtuous way. This does not seem objectionably different from the case of facing hardships in the pursuit of intellectual goods and responding with perseverance. This condition-response relationship helps intellectual charisma satisfy views on which the intellectual virtues are individuated according to their characteristic internal aim (e.g., Zagzebski 1996), since intellectual charisma can be said to have a clear aim of getting another to act in a more intellectually virtuous manner. This might allow some people to set the unity objection aside and see intellectual charisma as a single, distinct intellectual virtue.

Even if one finds this response convincing (which, admittedly not everyone will), this still leaves the concern that influencing another may not involve hitting a single mean. One way around this issue is to follow Rosalind Hursthouse (1980) in simply rejecting the idea that individual virtues should be identified as means between extremes. Anyone who finds Hursthouse's rejection convincing can then accept intellectual charisma as a virtue. For those more committed to the doctrine of the mean or those unconvinced by my previous response to the general unity concern, another potential way forward would be to describe intellectual charisma as a family of virtues rather

than an individual virtue. Perhaps the various means that one would need to hit with respect to encouragement, harshness, inductions of affect, and so forth should each be thought of as individual virtues categorized under the banner of intellectual charisma. This would allow those who hold that individual virtues must be particularly unified dispositions, or must consist in hitting a single mean, to nonetheless integrate intellectual charisma into their existing picture of the intellectual virtues. Furthermore, everything one might say in identifying intellectual charisma as a distinct intellectual virtue and in describing its features would, *mutatis mutandis*, still hold in identifying it as a distinct family of intellectual virtues and describing that family's shared, distinctive features.

So, with the caveat that intellectual charisma might be seen as either a virtuous trait or as a family of virtuous traits, depending on what type of unity one thinks a disposition must exhibit to count as a virtuous trait, I have now defined acting in an intellectually charismatic manner and I have identified the eliciting conditions in which one must reliably act in an intellectually charismatic manner if one is to count as possessing it as a virtue. With those accounts handy, and recalling both the elements of this definition that I have chosen not to specify and the fact that certain requirements can be added to this definition without altering the core idea, I can now define what it means to possess intellectual charisma as a virtuous trait:

One possesses the virtue(s) of intellectual charisma iff, in enough situations, to a significant enough degree, and in the right way, when one interacts with another person in a way that directly aims at intellectual goods, one acts in a manner that influences that person to act in a more intellectually virtuous manner.

3.3 *Intellectual Charisma and the Other Intellectual Virtues*

Beyond giving this definition, we can gain a more complete understanding of intellectual charisma by further exploring how it relates to

the other intellectual virtues. As the definition has already made clear, intellectual charisma plays a role in facilitating the expression of the other intellectual virtues in one's interlocutors. As such, we might see it as a type of master virtue or meta-virtue, analogous to other master virtues that have been proposed, such as practical wisdom and skillful reflection. Whereas practical wisdom is typically thought to help one properly exercise the moral virtues, and skillful reflection is thought to help shape and develop the other intellectual virtues (see Mi and Ryan 2016), and both can thus be considered *guiding* meta-virtues, intellectual charisma can be considered a *facilitative* meta-virtue because it enables the expression of other intellectual virtues. More specifically, it can be considered a *social* facilitative meta-virtue because it enables the expression of the other intellectual virtues *in others*.

While this tells us something about how one's intellectual charisma relates to another person's intellectual virtues, there is more to say about how intellectual charisma exists alongside the other intellectual virtues one possesses oneself. On this point, we can first note that regardless of how one chooses to unpack "in enough situations" and "to a significant enough degree" in the definition above, exercising intellectual charisma such that one could plausibly be said to possess it as a trait would likely require some capacity to assess certain aspects of one's situation. It is likely that one would often need to correctly assess whether and to what degree one's interlocutors were already performing intellectually virtuous conduct, what state one's interlocutors were in, and what one might therefore do to influence them in appropriate ways. One would also likely need to make accurate assessments of one's own conduct and presence to ensure that one was doing what was required to exert the appropriate influence.

Making these assessments correctly also seems to require one to have developed the other intellectual virtues to at least some significant degree. This is because one would need to work from a background understanding of not only what those virtues look like from the outside, but also how they feel from the inside, what kinds of conditions facilitate their expression, and so on. Furthermore, to whatever

extent intellectual charisma might function through a combination of one's being an exemplar of a particular intellectual virtue and one's having a presence that leads one to be emulated, intellectual charisma depends more directly on one's possessing the other intellectual virtues. Since intellectual charisma appears attainable only by those who have developed other intellectual virtues to some significant degree, we might also think of intellectual virtue as a *capstone* virtue that, like practical wisdom, develops partly through a mastery of the other virtues. This should also help to ease the worry mentioned above that, absent some more explicit requirement in the definition, one could be thought to possess intellectual charisma by being a powerful example of intellectual vice.

Practical wisdom is also often taken to be a necessary part of the proper exercise of the moral virtues, in that one cannot fully exercise other individual virtues until one develops practical wisdom. In contrast, one might not need intellectual charisma in order to properly exercise other individual intellectual virtues. For instance, it seems that one could possess a range of virtues—such as curiosity or intellectual courage—without doing so charismatically. This is because of the ways in which being influential depends on other aspects of one's character, skills, and demeanor.⁷ This might lead one to say that intellectual charisma is not a necessary part of the character of an intellectually virtuous person. But, insofar as we acknowledge the ways that one's attainment of intellectual goods can be enhanced by influencing one's interlocutors, and insofar as we see helping others to attain intellectual goods as a part of what it means to be intellectually successful, we should be inclined to consider intellectual charisma to be a necessary capstone virtue like practical wisdom.

7. This would differ from the early Confucian understanding of the Chinese concept 'de' (section 1), since 'de' refers to one's general virtue with the added understanding that virtue simply comes with this influential effect.

4. Conclusions and the Benefits of Countenancing Intellectual Charisma

In this article, I first outlined intellectual charisma as a social-psychological phenomenon. In light of that outline, I then gave an account of intellectual charisma as an intellectual virtue, the characteristic aim of which is to influence others to act more consonantly with intellectual virtue. In presenting this account, I argued that intellectual charisma can involve a positive orientation toward epistemic goods and exist as a distinct virtuous trait (although we may prefer to think of it as a family of virtuous traits, given its complexity as a disposition). I also suggested that intellectual charisma is best thought of as a social, facilitative meta-virtue that partly develops through developing the other intellectual virtues, and that we might also see it as a capstone virtue. I will conclude by discussing some benefits of bringing intellectual charisma into our picture of the intellectual virtues. I will also suggest some helpful directions that future discussions of intellectual charisma might take.

The most immediate benefit of including intellectual charisma within our picture of the intellectually virtuous person is that, insofar as intellectual charisma is a genuine social-psychological phenomenon, including it gives us a more complete and accurate picture of our intellectual agency. Insofar as we care about the intellectual virtues because we care about being good people who pursue our intellectual lives well, we should care about what kinds of interlocutors we are no less than what kinds of inquirers we are. Countenancing intellectual charisma brings into focus this aspect of our intellectual lives that we might otherwise underappreciate while also improving our understanding of how to pursue it well. This is especially important given how many of the inquiries we perform are ones in which being a good interlocutor constitutes a significant part of what being a good inquirer requires. Pretty much every working group in business, every classroom discussion, every conversation with one's significant other, and every family meeting present us with inquiries that will go better

if we pay more attention to how we influence each other's intellectual performance, and if we do so with a more developed capacity for having that influence in an epistemically beneficial way.⁸ Assuming that professional philosophers, in particular, take our role to mean that inquiries go better when we are included in them, intellectual charisma is something we might be especially well advised to try to cultivate.

Beyond this primary contribution of yielding a more complete picture of intellectual excellence for social-epistemic creatures like us, adding intellectual charisma to our view of intellectual virtue might also provide some fruitful ways forward in certain ongoing discussions about the intellectual virtues. One such discussion regards situationist concerns about the intellectual virtues. The core of this concern is that the results in situationist social psychology showing that people's intellectual behavior is influenced by epistemically irrelevant situational factors should lead us to admit that few people, if any, possess the intellectual virtues. This gives us a practical problem because situationist influences present impediments to consistently virtuous conduct.

In response to similar concerns about the ethical virtues, Hagop Sarkissian has proposed that situationist effects "can also be seen as providing important resources for moral progress" (2010, 2). Drawing on the Confucian discussions of *de*, Sarkissian argues that the existence of situationist effects on people's behavior opens up the possibility that people can engage in what Sarkissian calls "ethical bootstrapping" (2010, 12). This involves leveraging one's contribution to situations that are affecting other people's behavior to make ethical behavior more likely. The ability to have this influence means that situationist effects might actually do more in providing solutions to the perennial challenges of getting people to act more virtuously than

8. Alkis Kotsonis (2023) also pushes us toward a more social understanding of intellectual virtue by discussing collaborativeness as an intellectual virtue. While collaborativeness itself is distinct from having intellectual charisma, there appears to be some important overlap, with intellectual charisma allowing one to engage more competently in epistemic collaboration. Collaborativeness might then be an example of an intellectual virtue that one can only fully possess when one has intellectual charisma.

they do in providing impediments to virtuous conduct. Acknowledging intellectual charisma allows us to make an analogous argument regarding situationist influences and the practical problems (and solutions) they create within people's attempts at consistently excellent intellectual conduct.

Situationist results also lead to a theoretical problem, namely that they might lead us to reject theories of the intellectual virtues altogether because they show such theories to be psychologically unrealistic. Incorporating intellectual charisma into our picture of the intellectual virtues might help us to develop a strategy for dissolving this problem. This strategy consists in revising, to some extent, our overall view of intellectual success and the other intellectual virtues. Perhaps taking the situationist results on board means accepting that most people do not have intellectual virtues when intellectual virtues are conceived of as dispositions that are robust in a strongly individualistic way, i.e., robust absent the type of social support that would come from a person with intellectual charisma. Perhaps it also means accepting that people merely have the "local" traits of being creative, flexible, careful, and so on when they have partners in inquiry who can exercise intellectual charisma. But, perhaps we can accept these things and still be left with a satisfying conception of intellectual virtue.

Such a conception would be one on which we expect intellectually virtuous behavior to be socially supported in ways that we can easily countenance when intellectual charisma enters the picture, instead of expecting it to be consistent even when one lacks such support. While we might initially think that this expectation of social support is tantamount to admitting that people largely fail to be intellectually virtuous, we could perhaps see it as simply giving us a view of intellectual excellence and the intellectually virtuous life that is free of individualist pretensions that, being psychologically unrealistic, should not have been adopted in the first place. Most people may only ever be consistently intellectually excellent as members of teams of inquiry, supported by some more intellectually virtuous group members who have intellectual charisma. Yet, we might question whether such supportive

situations are deviations from appropriate intellectual self-sufficiency as opposed to being paradigmatic examples of how the intellectual life of creatures like us should be pursued. To put it another way, incorporating intellectual charisma into our view of intellectual virtue might give us reason to remove the "merely" from the statement that most people are merely capable of socially supported intellectual excellence.

Another potential opportunity for bringing intellectual charisma into conversations about the intellectual virtues is presented by conversations about epistemic justice and injustice (Fricker, 2007). This is because attending to the kinds of influence people can have on each other's intellectual performance might allow us to diagnose ways of being epistemically unjust that we would otherwise miss. This might, in turn, give us some further explanation of what one does wrong in having an intellectually vicious social influence on others. If certain interlocutors systematically act such that they influence certain people in ways that are detrimental to their performance in contributing to inquiry, this might have much the same effect as other forms of testimonial injustice, such as a person's prejudice-influenced assessments of another's credibility. This might also be an especially pernicious source of injustice. This is because it may not be remediable by examining one's judgments for bias, since one might correctly take oneself to be accurately judging people's intellectual performances, but without realizing how one is negatively influencing those performances. How pervasively dynamics like this tend to be in play is an open question, as is the degree to which countenancing and developing intellectual charisma can help to alleviate such problems, but they are potentially fruitful questions to ask.

Such lines of thought would, of course, require more development than I have given here, and there are likely other ways in which incorporating intellectual charisma into our view of the intellectual virtues can impact discussions in virtue epistemology. Nonetheless, the foregoing examples should help us to see that there are at least some interesting directions that discussions of intellectual charisma might take. In pursuing such lines of thought in the future, philosophers will

also be in a better position to understand the implications of adding intellectual charisma to our view of the intellectual virtues the more the empirical picture of it takes shape. Given this, I hope to have generated enough interest in intellectual charisma and its role in our intellectual lives to motivate further investigation into the various ways that people can influence others to make inquiry go better.⁹

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