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Education, Philosophy, and Morality: Virtue Philosophy in Kant

Abstract:

This article investigates the interrelated roles of education, morality, and philosophy in Kant as a response to the transactional view of humanity promoted by the spirit of capitalism, known as the “capital form.” This article investigates the effect of the capital form upon educational institutions and self-cultivation, or *Bildung*. Kant’s views on the role of education in moral development provide a path forward in the reconstitution of *Bildung* within persons. I argue that education serves a moral role in Kant, helping humanity achieve enlightenment – in direct contrast to the “un-enlightened” and uncultivated self created by the capital form. I turn to Kant’s views on education, focusing on the role of philosophy in moral development, and the cultivation of virtues such as modesty and appropriate self-love. Finally, I turn to contemporary pedagogical theory, providing practical examples of teaching techniques to help liberate students from their “self-imposed minority.”

Keywords:

Kant, morality, virtue, education, pedagogy, enlightenment, higher education, capitalism, consumerism

Kant ends his first *Critique* pointing us to the final purpose of reason: morality.¹ In fact, the entire system of metaphysics, Kant tells us, is carried out architectonically, “in conformity with pure reason’s essential purposes.”² These essential purposes of reason serve the final purpose of reason.³ While many commentators

1) Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Werner Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1996), A 840/B 868. All Kant references use Akademie Edition pagination unless otherwise noted.

2) Ibid., A 847/B 875.

3) Ibid.

focus on Kant's practical philosophy, we cannot overlook one anthropological aspect of Kant's works, which also serves this final purpose: education. As we will come to see, education has within it a moral component. When we teach, we also (ideally) teach how to *think*, how to *do*, and how to *be free*. The relationship between education, morality, and philosophy – all connected through what I refer to as “virtue philosophy,” or the *doing* of philosophy – provides not only a more nuanced understanding of Kant, but a path for educators to consider in our own professions.

Following Kant's works, we will see that education, to be *educative*, demands a rebirth, if it is to serve its moral purpose. In the face of what Ken Stickers calls the “capital form,” with the increasing consumerization of the educational system, we need a rebirth in educational practices more than ever. This “capital form” is a dark embrace over us all, a shadow which rather than enriching us, demeans us morally. However, one place that morality and dignity⁴ can grow, a place where we can learn to live philosophically and morally, is within the world of education – not just *knowledge*, not just knowing facts, but *learning*. Thus, a challenge is presented to the teacher: How can we teach our students to be more moral? To not just *know* philosophical facts, but to *live* philosophically? We can use Kant's arguments on education to analyze and improve our own teaching practices. This work will be a *bricolage* of sources and discussions, in order to expand the relevancy of Kantian scholarship beyond a small circle of Kant scholars to a range of other philosophers and concerns; in addition, it will also show the relevancy of Kant's educational philosophy to contemporary practices and issues.

I divide this article into five parts to clarify my position. I begin with a short reflection on my views of philosophy of culture; I approach philosophy of culture as the building of *Bildung* rather than an analysis of cultural forms. From that, Section II frames the problem to which Kant's theories can be a resolution, or at least a path. Section II focuses on Kenneth Stickers' argument and conclusions concerning the “capital form.” In Section III, I investigate the special role of the philosopher as one-who-acts, as one-who-philosophizes, in the relationship between education and humanity's moral ends, focusing on parallels between this activity of philosophizing and overtones of virtue in Kant. Section IV focuses on the role of virtue in education, specifically focusing on restraint, freedom, self-love, and modesty. In Section V, I present a variety of contemporary teaching practices and dissect these teaching practices using theory from sections two and three. Section V also presents practical pedagogical tools and techniques for the classroom, techniques that emphasize ways in which we can liberate our students from their “self-imposed minority” and help them grow into moral agents through the practice of philosophy.

Section I: A Brief Interlude on *Bildung*

Before beginning our discussion of education, morality, and philosophy, I must introduce some of my own key assumptions that underlie both the framing and content of this piece. This piece is reflective of my own understanding of a branch of philosophy of culture, that is, the philosophy of self-cultivating. Thus, rather than present an analysis of culture, this paper, with its focus on moral growth through university education – particularly philosophical education – employs an understanding of “philosophy of culture” as a way to

4) As an anonymous reviewer for *Eidos. A Journal for Philosophy of Culture* rightly pointed out, there could be theoretical issues in importing a Kantian sense of dignity and applying that to culture today. To fully address the history of the concept, and how and why it might have changed throughout the centuries, requires a separate essay. I focus here on the Kantian sense of dignity for two reasons: 1) for the strong theoretical framework that ties together dignity, morality, and education and 2) for Kant's explicit statement in the *Groundwork* contrasting price (commensurate value) with dignity (incomparable value). Price, in contrast to dignity, provides a framework for the capital form in education in contrast to virtue philosophy. Oliver Sensen's works on dignity provide a wonderful analysis of the history of the concept and the many senses of dignity in Kant's works.

discuss the *building of culture*. In this understanding, I am drawing on the German conception of *Bildung* from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a conception that was vital to educational reform and practices during that time period as well. Wilhelm von Humboldt, for example, opened up his “On the Spirit and the Organizational Framework of Intellectual Institutions in Berlin” with the telling line, “The idea of disciplined intellectual activity, embodied in institutions, is the most valuable element of the moral culture of the nation.”⁵ For Humboldt, the university provided both the freedom and the social bonds necessary for self-formation.⁶ Additionally, for Humboldt, education was not for the person as *citizen*, but rather for the person as *person*; as David Sorkin writes, “education should serve the person and not the citizen. The special institutions that segregated the estates and trained students for specific functions were to be terminated.”⁷ Persons were not treated as mere instrumental means to fulfill certain roles necessary to uphold the functions of the state. Rather, they were (ideally) granted the freedom to cultivate their own interests. Whatever benefits the state gains from morally cultivated persons are incidental, indeed. Humboldt writes that the state “should instead adhere to a deep conviction that if the universities attain their highest ends, they will also realise the state’s ends too, and these on a far higher plane.”⁸

Humboldt provides just one example of the power of *Bildung*, explaining why educational institutions should be concerned with such self-cultivation. However, he provides a powerful example indeed, including these themes in his University Address. This inclusion, I think, demonstrates a *practical* commitment to what mostly remained in the realm of *theory* of education and morality. The fundamental question Humboldt – one of many in a long line of philosophers – is asking is, “How do we build character?” That question itself is prompted by the inquiry “How do we build culture?” My own questions are along the same lines, but even more specific: “How do we build cultivation through education? How do we build cultivation through philosophy?” These questions become especially pertinent when we look at the form of culture that is currently embodied in our educational structures.

Section II: The Capital Form in Education

Research from the past decade shows the increasing consumerization of higher education; within this new regime, the student views herself as a consumer, and we provide education for consumption.⁹ No longer are higher educational institutions viewed as places to learn and grow morally, critically, and as a good citizen; rather, the student, as consumer, can demand what sort of products will be supplied – degrees and grades. Of

5) Wilhelm von Humboldt, “On the Spirit and the Organizational Framework of Intellectual Institutions in Berlin” [in “University Reform in Germany”], *Minerva* 8 ([1900]1970): 242, <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF01553214>.

6) For more on this, see David Sorkin’s “Wilhelm Von Humboldt: The Theory and Practice of Self-Formation (*Bildung*), 1791–1810,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 44, no. 1 (Jan.–Mar. 1983): 55–73, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2709304>.

7) Sorkin, “Wilhelm Von Humboldt,” 62.

8) Humboldt, “On the Spirit,” 246.

9) Almost any philosophy professor – or teacher of any subject, for that matter – is likely familiar with the student who is only there for the grade, unconcerned with learning and concerned only with a degree, who wants to get in, get out, and get a job, the state of their “self” be damned. Perhaps some of us have even been subject to the Dreaded Obvious Consumer, an encounter which generally takes the form of “I’m paying you with my tuition to give me a good grade.” We also see patterns of “memorize-regurgitate-forget,” which can at times be painful, if not downright insulting, after a carefully-concocted lecture or lesson plan. The deep wisdom we wish to impart upon our students often seems to bounce from their impenetrable understanding of the world and ricochet into the ethereal realm, never again to burden them with self-understanding. Of course, these are few and far between (in my rather lucky experiences with students!), but one only has to talk to colleagues or join one of the myriad of professor groups online to find the most extreme examples of students with this mindset.

course, this attitude is on the rather extreme end of things. However, that higher education has been brought into the world of consumption and production is not in doubt; this is not a new revelation.¹⁰ Consumerism in education is also linked to grade inflation,¹¹ bias in student evaluations,¹² and (perhaps surprisingly) student learning success.¹³ Such interactions are concerning. What is happening to our students? Such dispositions are reminiscent of Ivan Illich's criticisms in *Deschooling Society*: we are more concerned with the product than the process; we care more about that piece of paper than the work we put into it.

Ken Stickers' discussion of what he deems the "capital form" can, I believe, go quite a long way in explaining this attitude toward education. Stickers draws from Scheler, Weber, and Nietzsche to discuss both the history of the capital form and its prominence today. Quite simply stated, the capital form is a *form* of domination, one that can exist separately from systems of capitalism. Drawing from Weber's *The Protestant Work Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Stickers identifies the "spirit" of capitalism as separate from institutions themselves; this capital form is an entire system of values and ethics, a way of life and thought.¹⁴

The capital form took prominence after a transvaluation of values.¹⁵ Now, all creatures – great and small – and all things are valued insofar as they can be *used* for something else; the value, in other words, is the value of a price, a value as a means to economic profit. In advanced states of this form of life, the instrumental values become psychologically and morally internalized: we "sell ourselves" as a measure of our value.¹⁶ Our own self-worth becomes tied up in our "image," our "brand," our ability to manage time, be as productive as possible, and be bought by potential sellers. Language of this *ethos* is not only part and parcel of the expected corporate practices, but rampant within higher education as well. Stickers provides an example from his own life: "Moreover people ... also internalize the capital form and hence come to see and value themselves as capital: 'Your future depends on how you market yourself,' proclaimed a flier on my university's bulletin

10) In a 2004 article, Janice A. Newson uses the phrase "global knowledge industry," and writes: "Scholars, policymakers, journalists and students alike, whether they are critical or supportive of the trend, agree that this way of conceiving of the relationship between the receivers and deliverers of higher education services is a good fit with the new reality of university and college education." See Janice A. Newson, "Disrupting the 'Student as Consumer' Model: The New Emancipatory Project," *International Relations* 18, no. 2 (2004): 227, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047117804042674>. Yet, not everyone disagrees with the consumer model of education. As Newson relates, there are those who find that this model of education can liberate students and grant them autonomy: "Its advocates argue that enacting this conception of students is, on the one hand, pedagogically emancipatory because it frees students' learning experiences from the authoritative oversight and guidance of teachers. On the other hand, it is politically emancipatory because it provides students with grounds for rights claims – their rights as consumers of a service – which they did not have in the traditional model of the teacher as the official 'in charge' of their learning"; see *Ibid.*, 230.

11) Jeff Gentry, "Why Grades Still Matter," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, November 20, 2018.

12) Nancy Bunge, "Students Evaluating Teachers Doesn't Just Hurt Teachers. It Hurts Students," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, November 27, 2018.

13) Newson, "Disrupting the 'Student as Consumer' Model," 231.

14) For Stickers, "emancipation from capital must include emancipation not just from the institutional structures of capitalism but also from the capital form, or 'spirit' of capitalism (in the sense of Max Weber), that is, from the epistemological and ethical system created by the regime of capital"; see Kenneth W. Stickers, "Emancipation from Capital," *Pragmatism Today* 6, no. 2 (2015): 87.

15) Drawing from Scheler's response to Nietzsche, Stickers posits that this *ethos* took prominence after a transvaluation of values, in which consumption is the end goal of production – an antithesis of the early Greek and Christian value of minimizing consumption. See Kenneth W. Stickers, "Redefining the Meaning of 'Morality': A Chapter in the Cultural Politics of Capitalism," *Pragmatism Today* 7, no. 2 (2016): 44.

16) "That is, persons' own *self*-value is tied to their marketability as economically productive machines: one 'sells oneself' in the labor market and packages and 'brands' oneself in whatever manner is necessary to make a sale." See Stickers, "Redefining the Meaning of 'Morality,'" 45–46.

board.”¹⁷ Consider even – as Stickers points out – the way we speak: in terms of “human capital” and “human resources.” We are “driven continuously to affirm one’s value in terms of one’s economic productivity and efficiency.”¹⁸ Dignity is no longer part of the conversation.¹⁹ The capital form, as it replaces human dignity with human price, is a form of exploitation, enslavement, and death.²⁰

Despite the noble history of educational institutions, no longer is self-cultivation the main concern of the university or its students; rather than being educated as *persons* (which, you may recall, was Humboldt’s desire), students are educated as consumers (which can, depending on your knowledge of political funding, also be equated to a new role of citizens). Teachers and students become, within the hallowed halls of institutions, instruments to consume and be consumed; *Bildung* is stripped, for there is no sacred self to cultivate.

As such, this capital form is also *our* problem, as teachers and as philosophers. The purpose of this paper is to present the moral “liberation” that can occur in education, and this is where, I believe, Kant can be rather inspirational. His focus on the *dignity* of persons pushes back against the instrumentalization of life that appears nearly everywhere; furthermore, the link between Kant’s moral philosophy and his work on education shows that education is a moral endeavor.²¹ Education is how we create *Bildung*. Finally, Kant’s own suggestions for how to teach in such a way that a student can be free of her own minority status can provide some guidance to teachers today. Kant can, in short, be used as a guide to helping students actualize their own human vocation through self-cultivation.

Section III: Philosophy and Our Human Vocation

Within Kant’s architectonic, there is reserved a role for one important historical figure: the philosopher, a symbol for the ideal archetype of philosophy itself.²² The philosopher can only be an ideal,²³ for *philosophy itself* is only an ideal; it is an “archetype for judging all attempts at philosophizing ... Philosophy is a mere idea of a possible science that is given nowhere *in concreto* but that by various roads we try to approach.”²⁴ Philosophy is never completed in experience, but, rather, is an intelligible ideal by which we judge our acts of philosophizing, striving always to find unity and completion.

17) Stickers, “Emancipation from Capital,” 91.

18) Stickers, “Redefining the Meaning of ‘Morality,’” 46. Any professional academic on the job market has also experienced this internalization of the capital form; we are, after all, on the job *market*, and a quick internet search will bring up dozens of sites about anxiety, depression, PTSD, guilt, and other mental health issues that stem not only from unemployment, but from feelings of being *worthless* due to being unemployable – as if worth or price is all that matters.

19) One might also think of Paulo Freire’s theory of oppression and its psychological effects, in which “*to be is to have*” – people no longer *are*, but they simply *have*; see Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), 58. This, Freire tells us, is necrophilic; more of a way of death than a way of *life*. To possess, to control, to consume and to have, are ways that are “nourished by love of death, not life.” See *Ibid.*, 77.

20) See also Kenneth W. Stickers, “Growth and Well-Being, Economic and Human,” *Eidos. A Journal for Philosophy of Culture* 1, no. 2 (2017), 54–67, <http://doi.org/10.26319/2915>.

21) While the capital form, as a system of value, influences all social relations, I would like to avoid fatalism by suggesting that dignity in education can be at least a small act of rebellion against this.

22) Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 839/B 867.

23) Lest we fear that philosophy as an ideal means that philosophy is somehow “merely” fictive, we can draw some comfort from Kant’s words on virtue: “The fact that no human being will ever act in a manner adequate to what is contained in the pure idea of virtue in no way proves that there is in this thought anything chimerical. For it is still only by means of this ideas that any judgment about moral value of lack of value is possible.” See *Ibid.*, A 315/ B 372.

24) *Ibid.*, A 838/B 866.

In addition to the distinction between philosophy and philosophizing, Kant also distinguishes between *learning philosophy* and *doing philosophy*. Learning philosophy, is not, in the strict sense of the word, “true” philosophy; learning philosophy employs only reproduction. Learning the history of philosophy, for example, reproduces knowledge, but does not actively produce new knowledge or systems of thought. Thus, Kant states, “as far as reason is concerned, one can at most learn only *to philosophize*.”²⁵ Mere reproductive learning is not enough; we must *do*. In the *Dohna-Wundlacken Logik*, it is reported that Kant did not teach his pupils how to learn merely historically, but rather, how to philosophize: “Not to learn philosophy – but rather to learn to philosophize, otherwise it remains only imitation – but to attain it oneself through exercise of the understanding, that is what matters. ... To learn to philosophize means one must learn to use his reason himself, and here of course there is a use of healthy and of speculative reason.”²⁶ Philosophizing then, cannot be learned by imitation or memorization; it must be done (much akin to the artistic genius).

Kant’s discussion of philosophy as an *act*, never fully completed, but only idealized in its completion, is reminiscent of his words regarding virtue: virtue is “the moral attitude in the struggle”²⁷ and is “always *in progress* and yet always *starts from the beginning* ... It is an ideal and unattainable.”²⁸ We can see from Kant’s *Lectures on Education* and even his *Conflict of the Faculties* that education has a distinctly moral purpose – a proper education instills within citizens the ability to recognize and follow moral commands *and* be good citizens. Morally speaking, education teaches us how to discipline²⁹ ourselves, and how to rise above mechanism, whether that involves passively following the commands of others, or acting merely upon instinct rather than reason. Through education we are humanized, and we grow closer, as a species, to reaching our human vocation. Kant writes, for example, “Discipline prevents the human being from deviating by means of his animal impulses from his destiny: humanity,”³⁰ and “The human being can only become human through education.”³¹ We know from the third *Critique* that it is “man’s vocation to be the ultimate purpose of nature,” a vocation which we humans have by virtue of our ability to set purposes.³² Otherwise stated, the vocation of humanity is our ability to set purposes, which also makes us *the* purpose of nature, and this ability to set purposes stems from our own freedom. Education makes us human because it helps us become more rationally free. As stated in *On Education*,

The child must be shown that it can only reach its goals by letting others also reach theirs, for example, that it will not be pleased if it does not do what one wants it to do, that it should learn, etc. ... One must prove to it that restraint is put on it in order that it be led to the use of its own freedom, that it is cultivated so that it may one day be free, that is, so that it need not depend on the care of others.³³

25) Ibid., A 837/B 865.

26) Immanuel Kant, “Dohna-Wundlacken Logic,” in *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant: Lectures on Logic*, ed. and trans. by J. Michael Young, 425–516 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 24:698.

27) Immanuel Kant, “Critique of Practical Reason,” in *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant: Practical Philosophy*, ed. and trans. Mary J. Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 5:84, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511813306>.

28) Immanuel Kant, “Metaphysics of Morals,” in *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant: Practical Philosophy*, 6:409.

29) As we will see later, the issue of discipline and restraint in education can lead to certain paradoxes in educational practices.

30) Immanuel Kant, “Lectures on Pedagogy,” in *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant: Anthropology, History, and Education*, ed. Günter Zöllner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 9:442.

31) Ibid., 9:444.

32) Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. Werner Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1987), 5:431.

33) Kant, “Lectures on Pedagogy,” 9:454.

Part of becoming more human, of overcoming instincts and learning to self-legislate, is learning how to *think*. Kant speaks of this necessity several times, writing: “The human being should not merely be skilled for all sorts of ends, but should also acquire the disposition to choose nothing but good ends. Good ends are those which are necessarily approved by everyone and which can be the simultaneous ends of everyone. The human being can either be merely trained, conditioned, mechanically taught, or actually enlightened.”³⁴ Enlightenment is nothing other than learning how to think: “But to have trained one’s children is not enough, rather, what really matters is that they learn to think. This aims at principles from which all actions arise. Thus we see that in a true education there is a great deal to be done.”³⁵ For any familiar with Kant’s essay “What is Enlightenment?” this train of thought should sound familiar; there, Kant famously defines enlightenment as “the human being’s emergence from his self-incurred minority”³⁶ and distinguished it from behaving passively, under the direction of the government, in accord with mechanism.³⁷ In more contemporary terms, we might see enlightenment as the antithesis to thinking only in terms of the capital form, in which we are seen as merely mechanistic, replaceable pieces for profit.

For Kant, education, as that which teaches us how to think – how to be enlightened – and how to be *human* is a precious task that finds itself in the hands of the philosophers. The role of the philosophy faculty in the education of citizens, and their role in society, is a main area of focus in Kant’s *Conflict of the Faculties*.³⁸ The philosophy faculty, since it is subject *only* to the laws of reason, serves to keep the government “in check,” so to speak, and must be in perpetual conflict with the government and the faculty which serve the government.³⁹ The conflict between the faculties, and the philosophy faculty’s ability to put all “truths” to its rational examination, “must bring about a constant progress of both ranks of the faculties toward a greater perfection, and finally prepare the way for the government to remove all restrictions that its choice has put on freedom of public judgment.”⁴⁰ The “age of enlightenment” is brought about by the philosophy faculty, who examine all opinions put forth, are subject only to reason alone, and teach people how to think, not merely act mechanically upon externally-given commands.⁴¹ In learning to think, we are not only partaking in moral development, but political and cultural development as well; after all, as Kant writes, “Culture consists particularly in the exercise of one’s mental powers.”⁴²

34) Ibid., 9:450.

35) Ibid.

36) Kant, “What is Enlightenment?” in *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant: Practical Philosophy*, 8:36.

37) Ibid., 8:37.

38) The philosophy faculty is the faculty which tests the truth of teachings and is “subject only to the laws of reason,” for this group alone among the faculty has the “power to judge autonomously – that is, freely (according to the principles of thought in general),” also called reason. See Immanuel Kant, *Conflict of the Faculties*, ed. and trans. Mary J. Gregor (Abaris Books, 1979), 43.

39) For an example in which Kant speaks of the conflicts between the higher (medicine, law, and theology) and lower (philosophy) faculties, see Ibid., 53–55.

40) Ibid., 59.

41) As Kant writes in the *Conflict*: “Enlightenment of the masses is the public instruction of the people in its duties and rights vis-a-vis the state to which they belong. ... the natural heralds ... of these among people are not officially appointed by the state but are free professors of law, that is philosophers, who, precisely because this freedom is allowed to them, are objectionable to the state; and they are descried, under the name of enlighteners, as persons dangerous to the state”; see Ibid., 161.

42) Kant, “Lectures on Pedagogy,” 9:466.

Section IV: Virtue in the Educative Process

Enlightenment is difficult to attain; if it were easy, we would be in an enlightened age, rather than the age of enlightenment. If enlightened thinking – thinking for oneself, thinking in accord with universal reason – is necessary for morality, then morality, too, is a difficult goal to fulfill. Morally speaking, Kant provides us with some small measure of hope in the form of virtue. Virtue is, first and foremost, fully *human*;⁴³ virtue is the moral strength of the human will to fulfill her duty and morally constrain herself. Virtue itself, we must make clear, is “not a duty ... rather, it commands and accompanies its command with a moral constraint.”⁴⁴ We can have the best will in the world, but we do not always *act* on our good will; Robert Johnson notes “the good will, as Kant conceives of this, is not necessarily a virtuous will. The lack of moral virtue, which Kant holds is the lack of moral strength of will to overcome obstacles to doing one’s duty, is compatible with nevertheless having a good will.”⁴⁵ This moral strength is also referred to as “courage,”⁴⁶ an inner fortitude needed to face the many obstacles that bar the way to a moral life. This courage, however, cannot become a habit; Kant is not espousing an Aristotelian virtue ethics.⁴⁷ Virtue is an ideal; it is “always *in progress* and yet always starts *from the beginning*.”⁴⁸ Virtue, in other words, is *always* a struggle that stems from conflict with our inclinations.⁴⁹

To be clear, this paper is not taking or defending claims that Kant is a virtue ethicist. Unlike something like Aristotelian ethics, which places human flourishing and happiness as the ultimate end of action, Kant’s overall theory dismisses happiness as a moral foundation.⁵⁰ Thus, in referring to “virtue philosophy” I am not seeking to argue that Kant was a virtue *ethicist*. Rather, I am investigating the role of education in building certain elements of moral character, specifically through the teaching and practice of philosophy that can, quite simply, help us be better people.

Virtue, like education, involves a self-discipline. In terms of education, the discipline pertains to how to *think*; in regards to virtue, the discipline pertains to *how to be moral*. In terms of education – of thinking – the ideal to which we strive is none other than the philosopher; in terms of virtue – of morality – the ideal to which we strive is the moral law itself. The link between virtue and education, however, is stronger than just a mere analogy. The very content of education is virtue. Virtue, as Kant states in a very handy section called “Teaching Ethics,” *can be taught and must be exercised*.⁵¹

43) This is in contrast with something like the holy will, which needs no “ought,” for “volition is of itself necessarily in accord with the law.” See Kant, “Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals,” in *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant: Practical Philosophy*, 4:414.

44) *Ibid.*, 6:405.

45) Robert N. Johnson, “Was Kant a Virtue Ethicist?” in *Kant’s Ethics of Virtue*, ed. Monika Betzler (de Gruyter, 2008), 67. Moreover, as Thomas E. Hill, Jr. states, “Kant treats virtue as a kind of strength of the will to do what is right. Virtue is more than having good intentions, and we need to develop it over time.” See Thomas E. Hill, Jr. “Kantian Virtue and ‘Virtue Ethics,’” in *Kant’s Ethics of Virtue*, ed. Monika Betzler (New York: DeGruyter, 2008), 32.

46) Kant, “Metaphysics of Morals,” 6:405.

47) As Anne Margaret Baxley states “Aristotle, for example, would think that the grudging moralist displays continence, rather than virtue, because he thinks it is the mark of the virtuous person that he does not experience a conflict between the rational and nonrational parts of the soul and that his emotions and appetites harmonize with rational judgments.” See Anne Margaret Baxley, “Does Kantian Virtue Amount to More Than Incontinence?” *The Review of Metaphysics* 56 (March 2003), 561.

48) Kant, “Metaphysics of Morals,” 6:409.

49) *Ibid.*, 6:477.

50) To paraphrase his statement in the *Groundwork*: If Nature meant for us to be happy, she would choose both our ends and means for us. In addition, as Kant states, “a *lack of virtue* ... can indeed coexist with the best will.” See *Ibid.*, 6:408.

51) *Ibid.*, 6:477.

The exercise of virtue, the exercise of education, as opposed to merely “learning via memorization” is perhaps one of the oldest-held tenets in the practice of philosophy. Socrates chastised the Athenians for not caring for their souls, and famously referred to himself as a gadfly; he publicly practiced his philosophical inquiries. As Hadot states, the point of Plato’s Socratic dialogues was to get one to attend to oneself – something that required active engagement, not just passive theoretical knowledge. According to Hadot, “the Socratic dialogue turns out to be a kind of communal spiritual exercise. In it, the interlocutors are invited to participate in such inner spiritual exercises as the examination of conscience and attention to oneself; in other words, they are urged to comply with the famous dictum, ‘Know thyself.’”⁵² One must learn to be in conversation with oneself, something the Socratic character stressed in the dialogue *Gorgias*. When speaking with Callicles, Socrates states that “it’s better to have my lyre of a chorus of men disagree with me and contradict me, than to be out of harmony with myself, to contradict myself, though I’m only one person,”⁵³ and that it is better to have wrong done to you than to be doing the wrong.⁵⁴ In her article “Thinking and Moral Considerations,” Arendt makes much of these two passages, ultimately concluding that what Socrates is alluding to is conversation with oneself, which ultimately leads to consciousness. She writes that, for Socrates, “if you want to think you must see to it that the two who carry on the thinking dialogue be in good shape, that the partners be friends. It is better for you to suffer than to do wrong because you can remain the friend of the sufferer.”⁵⁵ In other words, we must be in harmony with ourselves, and we must have dialogue with ourselves, in order to think.

Dialogues with others, as Hadot states, invite us to participate in similar dialogues with ourselves, which, ostensibly, lead to the betterment of the person. This is, as Socrates states in the *Gorgias*, the role of philosophy, and what separates it from mere rhetoric. When speaking of the “skilled orator,” or the philosopher, Socrates states that “He will always give his attention to how justice may come to exist in the souls of his fellow citizens and injustice be gotten rid of, how self-control may come to exist there and lack of discipline be gotten rid of, and how the rest of excellence may come into being there and badness may depart.”⁵⁶ Speaking with others, speaking with oneself, does not just make us “skilled” thinkers, does not just make us skilled at analyzing arguments, does not just increase our rhetorical skills. To limit ourselves to that is mere sophistry. Rather, education, dialogue and thinking will help us identify injustice and exercise self-control in order to be *better*. This is something that we all need to take note of; as Arendt says, we are all at risk of not thinking, no matter how much we know. In Arendt’s words, “the inability to think is not the ‘prerogative’ of those many who lack brain power but the ever-present possibility for everybody – scientists, scholars, and other specialists in mental enterprises not excluded – to shun that intercourse with oneself whose possibility and importance Socrates first discovered.”⁵⁷

For Kant, teaching ethics was more than just teaching theory. We might say it was teaching students to learn how to be in conversation with themselves, to borrow that old Socratic wisdom. The fact of the matter is,

52) Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault*, trans. Michael Chase (Blackwell Publishing, 1995), 90.

53) Quoted in Plato, “Gorgias,” in *Plato: Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1997), 482 b.

54) *Ibid.*, 509 c.

55) Hannah Arendt, “Thinking and Moral Considerations,” *Social Research* 38, no. 7 (Autumn 1971): 442. This discussion comes in the midst of a much longer conversation concerning the dualism of the subject in “conversing with oneself,” the required harmony with oneself, and the role of conscience as a “voice” that tells one what *not* to do. The relevant element, here, is how thinking involves a conversation with *oneself*.

56) Quoted in Plato, “Gorgias,” 504 c.

57) Arendt, “Thinking and Moral Considerations,” 445.

while many scholars – including many cited in this very article – speak of the relation between virtue, morality, and education in Kant, they do not do so in the language of actually, practically, in reality, being a better person. They are, in other words, only theoretical. There is, in fact, little evidence that the mere theory of philosophy can actually help us become better people. Eric Schwitzgebel addresses the contrast between philosophical education and expertise, and moral action and judgments, in several articles. As he points out in “Acting Contrary to Our Professed Beliefs, or Occurrent Judgment and Dispositional Belief,” there is a “gap” between what we pronounce to rationally believe, and the habits that we act upon.⁵⁸ However, as he points out against scholarship, our habits are often informed by belief, and cannot be viewed so starkly separate from them.⁵⁹ Rather, we have an “in between” belief; viewing belief this way allows us to better navigate the world.⁶⁰ In another article, “Expertise in Moral Reasoning?”⁶¹ Schwitzgebel and his co-author Cushman used the Moral Sense Test to survey participants on a variety of moral dilemmas: moral luck, double-effect scenarios, and so forth to test whether order affects the moral judgment of the participants. Schwitzgebel and Cushman concluded that “philosophers trended towards showing larger order effects than did the reference group of academic non-philosophers in a general linear mode.”⁶² In addition, the order did not affect non-philosophers’ endorsement of moral principles, but *did* affect philosophers’ endorsement of abstract moral principles.⁶³ Schwitzgebel and Cushman ultimately concluded that their “results suggest that even professional philosophers’ judgments about familiar types of cases in their own field can be strongly and covertly influenced by psychological factors that they would not endorse upon reflection, and that such unwanted influences can in turn strongly influence the general principles those philosophers endorse.”⁶⁴ Considering that “professional ethicists sometimes describe themselves as experts at moral reasoning,” this is a most interesting conclusion, indeed.⁶⁵ The takeaway from these studies is, of course, that despite their claims to the contrary, philosophers (including professional ethicists) are no morally better than anyone else. Perhaps our education, too, needs to be altered.

For philosophy and for philosophers, practical language and advice is rather important, especially when it comes to expanding philosophy beyond the bounds of a classroom, and when it comes in a world recently rife with accusations of professional philosophers and fellow academics sexually harassing or hazing students and colleagues.⁶⁶ One of the upshots of discussing education and virtue in terms of “virtue philosophy” in Kant is that the theoretical also takes on a practical and personal dimension. Perhaps seeing

58) Eric Schwitzgebel, “Acting Contrary to Our Professed Beliefs, or Occurrent Judgment and Dispositional Belief,” *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 91 (2010): 531–553, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0114.2010.01381.x>.

59) Schwitzgebel, “Acting Contrary,” 539.

60) *Ibid.*, 548.

61) Eric Schwitzgebel and Fiery Cushman, “Expertise in Moral Reasoning? Order Effects on Moral Judgment in Professional Philosophers and Non-Philosophers,” *Mind & Language* 27, no. 2 (April 2012): 135–153, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0017.2012.01438.x>.

62) *Ibid.*, 144.

63) *Ibid.*, 144–145.

64) *Ibid.*, 150.

65) *Ibid.*, 136.

66) A few examples: Colin McGinn, at University of Miami, resigned after allegations from a graduate student of sexual harassment. See Jennifer Schuessler, “A Star Philosopher Falls, and a Debate over Sexism is Set Off,” *The New York Times*, Aug. 2, 2013. Additionally, the University of Colorado at Boulder removed the chair of its philosophy department amidst many allegations of harassment and hazing among graduate students, and in the fall of 2014 suspended graduate admissions to the department. See Nick DeSantis, “U. of Colorado Removes Philosophy Chair Amid Finding of Sexual Harassment,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Jan. 31, 2014. There is, of course, the story of Peter Ludlow of Northwestern University, who was terminated being found guilty of sexually harassing two graduate students. See Colleen Flaherty, “Another Harasser Resigns,” *Inside Higher Ed*, Nov. 4, 2015. These are but three prominent cases in recent years amid a slew of troubling reports.

the need for the doing of philosophy can enhance our theoretical understanding of the philosophy as it was meant to be understood.

Fortunately, the fact that virtue can be taught has a rather important connotation: virtue is not innate. Even we philosophers have hope! The way in which we come by virtue is through moral education, which begins with education in general. At this beginning point of formal education, the teacher must do the questioning and draw answers from the pupil.⁶⁷ One needs “dogmatism” (teacher-only speaking) *and* “dialogue” for moral education, and one also needs to set an example to her pupil in her own conduct, referred to as the “experimental” technique.⁶⁸ This combination of dialogue and dogmatism together is known as “moral catechism.”

As Chris Surprenant points out, Kant’s section on teaching ethics overcomes traditional educative issues with mere catechism or dialectic alone. Since Kant starts with the claim that virtue is not innate, he also recognizes that a student does not have an innate understanding of principles. When a teacher instructs us in virtue, we do not immediately understand the principles. So, dialogue alone would become nothing other than rote memorization and dogmatism,⁶⁹ for the principles about which we are speaking would be merely definitional knowledge for us. The dialectic method, alone, fails due to its content – a student does not have an innate understanding of the principles under discussion. Dogmatism also fails alone; it trains students to act virtuously, but not to act from the proper moral disposition.⁷⁰ Kant’s answer to teaching ethics is “moral catechism,” which includes both dogmatism and dialogue in a particular order. As Surprenant states, “a student educated via moral catechism is not memorizing answers that he could not, or did not, generate himself. For Kant, virtue requires an individual to use his reason freely to determine and adopt moral maxims, and then act on these maxims out of respect for the moral law itself.”⁷¹ This progress is reflective of an earlier snippet of Kant’s, advertising his winter semester classes in 1765:

The natural progress of human knowledge is as follows: first of all, the understanding develops by using experience to arrive at intuitive judgments, and by their means to attain to concepts. After that, and employing reason, these concepts come to be known in relation to their grounds and consequences. Finally, by means of science, these concepts come to be known as parts of a well-ordered whole. This being the case, teaching must follow exactly the same path. The teacher is, therefore, expected to develop in his pupil firstly the man of *understanding*, then the man of *reason*, and finally the man of *learning*. Such a procedure has this advantage: even if, as usually happens, the pupil should never reach the final phase, he will still have benefitted from his instruction. He will have grown more experienced and become more clever, if not for school then at least for life.⁷²

While here Kant is speaking of education in general, it parallels his words on moral education: first the teacher must “guide the student to an understanding of virtue through the use of familiar examples, with the ultimate

67) Kant, “Metaphysics of Morals,” 6:479.

68) *Ibid.*, 6:479–480.

69) Chris Surprenant, “Kant’s Contribution to Moral Education,” in *Kant and Education: Interpretations and Commentary*, ed. Klas Roth and Chris Surprenant (New York: Routledge, 2012), 1–2.

70) *Ibid.*, 5.

71) *Ibid.*

72) Kant, “M. Immanuel Kant’s Announcement of the Programme of His Lectures for the Winter Semester 1765–1766 (1765),” in *Theoretical Philosophy 1755–1770*, trans. and ed. David Walford and Ralf Meerbote (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 2:306–2:306, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511840180.035>. Surprenant cites and discusses this on pages 7–8 of his article.

goal of instilling the rules of what constitutes right and wrong behavior.”⁷³ From there, the student, rather than simply memorizing and acting in accordance with virtue, acts *because* of virtue, learning to apply principles on his own, and knowing the *why* behind such application. Thus, the student arrives at a stage in which he uses his own reason, not just memory.⁷⁴ What must be noted is that to be truly virtuous, one cannot merely act in accord with what a virtuous person might do. One must also have the right disposition, which cannot be learned, but comes from practice.⁷⁵ Kant writes, “The rules for practicing virtue ... aim at a frame of mind that is both *valiant* and *cheerful* in fulfilling its duties.”⁷⁶

We can see, here, the intersection between virtue and education – we must be educated on virtue, but we cannot *simply* be taught it. We must *do it*, just as, when it comes to philosophy, we must *think it*. Learning the moral catechism is not simply enough, for virtue is an activity, not a mere matter of memorization. Likewise, learning a theory of philosophy is not simply enough; anything other than philosophizing is merely a matter of imitation, and philosophy, like its moral twin virtue, can never be fully learned for it is never fully perfected. Just as, for Kant, one must learn the basic principles of morality, then understand them enough to apply them on one’s own, so too must a student transcend beyond rote memorization and be able to figure things out for herself, and so too must a philosopher move beyond a mere understanding of the history of philosophy and instead actively *philosophize*.

Recent scholarship, such as the respective works of Birgit Schaffer and Alix Cohen, both engage in the moral elements of education, albeit in different ways. When their works are analyzed as complementary interpretations, the moral elements of education are more clear. In her article “Changing the Definition of Education,” Schaffer focuses largely on the ostensible “paradox” between freedom and restraint in Kant’s *Lectures on Pedagogy*. Schaffer takes as her starting point Kant’s statement that “One of the biggest problems of education is how one can unite submission under lawful constraint with the capacity to use one’s freedom. For constraint is necessary. How do I cultivate freedom under constraint? I shall accustom my pupil to tolerate a constraint of his freedom, and I shall at the same time lead him to make good use of his freedom. Without this everything is a mere mechanism, and the pupil who is released from education does not know how to use his freedom.”⁷⁷ In dealing with this supposed paradox, Schaffer dismantles one of the fundamental (mis)interpretations of Kantian philosophy: that as rational beings, we are also atomistic individuals.⁷⁸ She writes:

I seek to question one of the basic assumptions in our understanding of education; namely the idea that education is a process between (at least) two different human beings who might be consid-

73) Surprenant, “Kant’s Contribution to Moral Education,” 8.

74) Jeanine Grenberg addresses an apparent paradox in Kant: How do repetition and imitation – which motivate externally – not contradict Kant’s prescription that virtue must be motivated internally? Analyzing Kant’s works, she concludes that imitation or mimicry is a tool that helps us eventually contemplate the moral principles that do internally motivate us. Thus, she states, moral education “becomes an intensely first-personal education in which autonomously chosen and vigilantly guided repeated exercises constantly re-affirm one’s commitment to morality in the face of potential incursions from external natural forces and internal evil forces.” See Jeanine Grenberg, “Autonomous moral education is Socratic moral education: The Import of repeated activity in moral education out of evil and into virtue,” *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 51, no. 13 (2019), 1345, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2018.1487285>.

75) Surprenant, “Kant’s Contribution to Moral Education,” 1–2.

76) Kant, “Metaphysics of Morals,” 6:484.

77) Kant, “Lectures on Pedagogy,” 9:453. Schaffer begins her engagement with this section on p. 6 of her article.

78) Some scholarship that seeks to provide new interpretations of Kant, focusing on our interrelatedness with others, includes: Laura J. Mueller, “Pure Reason’s Autonomy: *Sensus Communis* in Reason’s Self-Critique,” *Epoché*, 22, no. 2 (Spring 2018): 391–411, <https://doi.org/10.5840/epoche201818108>; Jeanine Grenberg, *Kant and the Ethics of Humility: A Story of Dependence, Corruption and Virtue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511627859>.

ered as units that exist separately. If we discuss, for example, whether or not the child has an own free will, identity, responsibility or rights before he/she meets his/her surrounding, then we are assuming that human beings are radically separated units to which we can attribute certain characteristics. ... My aim is to illustrate how we are misled into the notion of radical separation and how we might understand the (educational) relation in a different light.⁷⁹

Arguments concerning Kant's stance on our interrelatedness lie outside of the scope of this article, and I will take the side of Schaffer here in that the notion of radical separation is not necessarily constitutive of Kantian philosophy. Schaffer, in rejecting these common notions of radical separation, thus frees us to enter into a new understanding of Kantian education, one that permits that *every* encounter with the other is in some way morally educative.

Schaffer's goal here is to demonstrate that restraint is not necessarily in paradox with freedom, and that restraint itself is morally educative. Take, for example, Kant's well-known example of the child with the knife. Kant writes, "From earliest childhood the child must be allowed to be free in all matters (except in those where it might injure himself, as, for example, when it grabs an open knife)."⁸⁰ As Schaffer points out, one common way of interpreting this claim is that, as long as the restraint is itself not meant to be educative, but only creates a situation for "positive" education, then the restraint is legitimate.⁸¹ However, such notions do not take into consideration what restraint actually teaches, and advocates of this narrow interpretation of restraint misunderstand the far-flung scope of education.

For example, as Schaffer points out, a child can learn many things from being told not to play with a knife. Not only does the child learn what a knife can do, but she also learns the distinction between an object (the knife, an apple to be peeled), and a *person* (a sibling, or the self, who might be harmed). Thus, the child learns the distinction between things-the-knife-can-be-used-on, and *persons-who-cannot-be-harmed*.⁸² As Schaffer writes,

This insight is of a moral character because it implies at minimum a general awareness of the differences between an object (something) and a person (someone). Objects can, for example, be broken, but they do not feel pain. People can hurt themselves and become sad when important and cherished items are broken. It is not possible to distinguish between learning to see a knife as something that is dangerous and learning to see other people as valuable.⁸³

Restraint itself can be moral in scope, and what Schaffer attempts to point out here is that encounters with others and with our environment – as well as our own limitations – involve some kind of restraint. This is part of being interrelated, moral beings, and these limitations do not contribute to our development only through creating space for moral growth; rather, they can themselves constitute moral growth.⁸⁴

79) Birgit Schaffer, "Changing the Definition of Education: On Kant's Educational Paradox Between Freedom and Restraint," *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 33 (2014): 8, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11217-013-9357-4>.

80) Kant, "Lectures on Pedagogy," 9:454.

81) Schaffer, "Changing the Definition of Education," 9.

82) Ibid.

83) Ibid., 11.

84) Schaffer states, "To grow into a form of life (a culture, a social context), is often described as restrictive because the child encounters a context that already bears meaning, even before the child comes into contact with it. Nonetheless, it appears that interrelatedness with others and the authentic answers of others is what constitutes the possibility of developing and being able to speak of an individual's liberty." See Ibid., 15.

When Schaffer's argument is read in light of another recent work – Alix Cohen's "The Role of Feelings in Kant's Moral Education" – we can see even further that education is strongly moral. Cohen begins with another seeming paradox in Kant's works: his claim in *Lectures on Pedagogy* that "The inclinations to be honored and loved⁸⁵ are to be preserved as far as possible,"⁸⁶ is seemingly at odds with his other claims concerning inclinations, particularly that of self-love (such as "if self-love is determined by no distinct representations at all but merely by sensation this is called an *unfree* action."⁸⁷) Cohen refers to Kant's words on honor and love as "paradigmatically un-Kantian"⁸⁸ and seeks to find a way out of this moral morass.

Cohen presents two views on the roles of honor and love in education: she states that the love of honor has an epistemic function as well as a motivational function.⁸⁹ Love of honor's epistemic use implores us to assess our actions by the judgments of others; this is engagement with *sensus communis*.⁹⁰ More interesting than the epistemic use of honor, though, is Cohen's argument for the *moral* use of love of honor, which allows the child to experience her own value as a bearer of dignity.⁹¹ As Cohen writes, however, the epistemic use of love of honor – and engagement with *sensus communis* – is not separated from the moral use:

But the crucial point is that whichever form it takes, at its core, the feeling of love of honour consists of acknowledging the self's potential as bearer of value which, whatever it consists of, is not merely up to her. In this sense, and somehow paradoxically, what we originally viewed as potentially un-Kantian, namely the fact that the love of honour defines the self's worth heteronomously in terms of others' opinion of it, turns out to be what makes it most conducive to morality. For, it assigns it a value that is grounded independently of the self's private sphere.⁹²

What should be added here is that self-love, or love of honor, *needs* to be restricted in order not to blossom into some kind of monstrous egoism, and, when cultivated properly, it assists in making ourselves an end for others.⁹³ Self-love⁹⁴ is properly cultivated by the restriction of being interrelated to others: "*Moderation* in

85) For a broader discussion of "love" in Kant's ethical system, see Christoph Horn, "The Concept of Love in Kant's Virtue Ethics," in *Kant's Ethics of Virtue*, ed. Monika Betzler (New York: DeGruyter, 2008), 147–174.

86) Kant, "Lectures on Pedagogy," 9:482.

87) Immanuel Kant, "Review of Schulz's 'Attempt at an Introduction to a Doctrine of Morals for All Human Beings,'" in *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant: Practical Philosophy*, 8:11. See also Kant's distinction between hypothetical and categorical imperatives: "But the inclinations themselves, as sources of needs, are so far from having an absolute worth, so as to make one wish to have them, that it must instead be the universal wish of every rational being to be altogether free from them." See Kant, "Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals," 4:428. These are but two of his many proclamations against the worth of inclinations.

88) Alix Cohen, "The Role of Feelings in Kant's Moral Education," *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 50, no. 4 (2016): 512, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9752.12161>.

89) *Ibid.*, 515.

90) "In an educational context, it makes the child care about others' judgement in such a way that she cannot help but take it into consideration. It takes her out of herself and broadens her way of thinking, thereby fulfilling an epistemic function akin to the second principle of the *sensus communis*," See *Ibid.*, 516. The second maxim of *sensus communis* is a broadened way of thinking that allows one to override her own private, subjective, conditions, and take up a universal standpoint. See Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 5:295.

91) Cohen, "The Role of Feelings in Kant's Moral Education," 517.

92) *Ibid.*, 518.

93) As Kant writes, "since our self-love cannot be separated from our need to be loved (helped in case of need) by others as well, we therefore make ourselves an end for others." See Kant, "Metaphysics of Morals," 6:393.

94) I am here using "love of honor" and "self-love" in the same context, though I recognize that there are certain differences between the two. However, love of honor is motivated by self-love.

one's demands generally, that is, willing restriction of one's self-love in view of the self-love of others, is called *modesty*. Lack of *such moderation* (lack of modesty) as regards one's worthiness to be *loved* by others is called *egotism* (*philautia*).⁹⁵ In the *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant describes self-love as "self-regard or *love for oneself*, a predominant *benevolence* toward oneself," that is "natural and active in us even prior to the moral law."⁹⁶ Kant, recognizing that we *do* have inclinations, and that we often *act from* the influence of our inclinations, thus also recognizes our tendency toward "corruption."⁹⁷ Of course, the path from "corruptive" self-love to a rational, moral, self-love, is through moral feeling:

Pure practical reason merely checks selfishness, for selfishness, as natural and active in us even prior to the moral law, is restricted [*einschraenken*] by the moral law [a condition of]⁹⁸ to agreement with the law; when this is done, it is called rational self-love. But it strikes self-conceit down, since all claims of self-esteem which precede conformity to the moral law⁹⁹ are null and quite unwarranted because certainty of a disposition in accord with this law is the first condition of any worth of a person ... and any presumption prior to this is false and opposed to the law.¹⁰⁰

Self-love can never be fully destroyed, since it is inborn to us as humans. It can, however, be reshaped in line with the moral law, wherein it then becomes "rational self-love."¹⁰¹ Cohen's discussion of love of honor, I think, assumes analyses of Kantian self-love; thus, we cannot fully get rid of "self-love" or "love of honor" for such love is natural and prior to the moral law; however, we can *use* such natural inclination to better serve our own moral demands. We recognize ourselves as bearers of value, but limit this recognition from corrosive egoism by cultivating *modesty*, a restriction of self-love in view of the self-love of others. Thus, we transcend the subjec-

95) Kant, "Metaphysics of Morals," 6:462.

96) Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, 5:73.

97) "Moral depravity is the systematic subordination of morality to self-love in one's fundamental, lifegoverning maxim." See Hill, Jr., "Kantian Virtue and 'Virtue Ethics,'" 43. I take Hill, here, to be speaking of the natural inclination of self-love, not rational self-love.

98) Translated by Lewis White Beck. My interpolation. In her translation, Gregor translates *Bedingung* as "condition." In most translations, however, *Bestimmung* is rendered as "condition." Gregor's translation, then, could lead to some confusion. Beck's translation makes clear that we are speaking of limits as self-limitation, and not of logical conditions. Gregor's translation reads as: "Pure practical reason merely *infringes upon* self-love, inasmuch as it only restricts it, as natural and active in us even prior to the moral law, to the condition of agreement with this law, and then it is called *rational self-love*. But it strikes down self-conceit altogether, since all claims to esteem for oneself that precede accord with the moral law are null and quite unwarranted because certainty of a disposition in accord with this law is the first condition of any worth of a person ... and any presumption prior to this is false and opposed to the law." Beck, to avoid confusion, leaves out *Bedingung* and repeats "moral law" again. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, trans. Lewis White Beck (Liberal Arts Press, 1956), 76 (translator's pagination). This is the only instance – unless otherwise stated – wherein I use Beck's translation.

99) Here, with "moral law," I end my use of Beck's translation, though the end of this quote is Gregor's translation.

100) Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, 5:73.

101) Henry Allison writes that self-love "needs only to be controlled or limited, not eliminated. Indeed, as a natural propensity, it cannot be eliminated," and that self-love is transformed into "a rational pursuit of self-interest limited by moral constraints." See Henry Allison, *Kant's Theory of Freedom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 124. I think rational self-love is more than Allison presents it to be; it is autonomous, whereas self-love, without moral guidance, need not be. Paul Crowther explains that the moral law strikes down and thwarts self-conceit, but this negative effect of the moral law "clears away obstacles to authentic moral decision," and "reinforces our awareness that that which has destroyed our 'self-conceit' is an 'intellectual causality'" which eventually "elevates us with a sense of our ultimate rational vocation." See Paul Crowther, *The Kantian Sublime* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 23.

tive, private sphere in comparison with a universal sphere, and cultivate rational self-love through virtues like that of modesty.¹⁰²

What Cohen and Schaffer both provide us with are two different takes that result in the same conclusion: whether looking at restraint, or looking at certain inclinations, education does not arise from the interaction of fundamentally atomistic individuals; rather, the educative process itself is grounded in our ultimate interrelatedness. Love of honor is dependent upon transcending the self's private sphere, and it entails acknowledging the vital role of others in our own morality. Likewise, restraint, rather than arising from a clash of isolated individuals, arises from being embedded in a culture and environment, and is the very stuff of morality and freedom.

So, where exactly does that leave us teachers of philosophy, and teachers of virtue? As I have outlined above, education itself has a moral component. Education, as Kant states, teaches us how to think, it teaches us how to *use our own reason*, and not simply fall into habitual imitative acts. The restraint involved in education is itself moral, for it arises from our fundamental interrelatedness with other humans, and with our environment. Virtue, too, is part of education; through such interactions with others, we recognize them as bearers of dignity, just as we recognize ourselves as worthy of respect. The freedom of using our own reason is also constituted by our relatedness with others. Recall the earlier framing of this paper, the cultural situation in which we now find ourselves – the world of the capital form. The capital form has an *ethos* of relation insofar as the human being can be consumed for profit, insofar as we have a price. Kantian education helps us once more recognize our dignity, and to act on that knowledge. Moral education, too, teaches us how to think; our own reason must be appealed to, we must understand the catechism which we are initially taught, in order to act virtuously. Kant's words on the nature of the philosopher – one who actively philosophizes and does not simply think mechanically – and moral virtue, that which is enacted, a certain strength of character against the pull of mechanistic inclination, can tell us something about the role of teachers today (and perhaps tells us something about who we should be: those who actively resist the *ethos* of the capital form).

Section V: Practical Pedagogy for Virtue Philosophy

One key element of education that we cannot forget is that, as teachers, we are encountering *persons*; in the classroom, as we educate, we are still fundamentally dealing with the freedom of other moral beings. We must not only seek ways in which to teach our students freedom and virtue through education, but we must also be aware that we must at all times respect their freedom. Thus, the import of articles like those by Birgit Schaffer, who, as discussed above, argues that restraint itself is educative, that restraint is not necessarily a collision with and negation of someone else's "atomistic" freedom. Will we cultivate self-love and modesty, or destroy it? Will we encourage them to be free of their "minority," cultivate Kant's clarion call of *Sapere aude!*, and help them walk confidently, or will we act as those "guardians" who "have made their domesticated animals dumb and carefully prevented these placid creatures from daring to take a single step without the walking cart in which they have confined them?"¹⁰³ How can we cultivate free individuals who have the courage to use their own

102) Modesty is a virtue that allows us to restrict our own self-love in view of the self-love of others; lack of modesty can lead to egoism, and it can lead to self-conceit. Modesty, in other words, tempers our own self-love so that we can respect others properly, and require the proper respect from others as well – such "proper" respect is a "recognition of *dignity (dignitas)* in other human beings." See Kant, "Metaphysics of Morals," 6:462. Modesty, then, is a virtue that assists in fulfilling the duty of respect for the dignity of others. Perhaps modesty is even part of having a cheerful disposition that is vital to moral actions (as opposed to acting merely in conformity with the moral law).

103) Kant, "What is Enlightenment?" 8:35–8:36.

reason, and thus become moral? In a world where all humans are “resources,” how can we cultivate persons who see more than just instrumental value?

What Kant gives us, as teachers, is a systematic way of demonstrating where the role of teaching – specifically the philosopher who teaches – lies in his overall moral and epistemic system. Universities and other educational institutions, taken over by the capital form as they are, do not prepare professors to teach students self-cultivation, or prepare us to help them achieve the liberation that comes through such formation. Kant, however, does lay out a path for us to take. Specifically, teaching does our *moral work*, and philosophers must live out and enact philosophy in the same sense that the virtuous person must enact her virtue. Both virtue and philosophy are lifelong projects, and they converge in the educative process.

Experiential learning is key to virtue philosophy. We must continue to resist settling for the traditional lecture-and-iteration model of education and expand our teaching practices. This is not to say that lectures are always uninspired, or that innovative education is always a remedy to the capital form; rather, this is a warning against settling for banking, for the “memorize-repeat-forget” style that treats students as customers. Banking style education teaches facts, but if it remains our main emphasis, it also teaches passivity and mechanical memorization, rather than how to *think*, how to become enlightened. Teaching students only passivity and memorization is what Ira Shor refers to as “disabling education,” in which teachers take part when “Classrooms confirm student rejection of critical thinking,” and when we “confirm the *curricular* disempowerment of their intelligence.”¹⁰⁴ Banking models of education are akin to what Kant refers to as dogmatism; just as dogmatism fails in moral education because, while the student might know what to mimic, she will never have the proper moral disposition; so too does banking fail. In teaching by banking alone, we disempower, we prevent active engagement, and we prevent enlightenment. We keep students in their minority.

While for Kant the moral element of education is part and parcel of his overall critical work, he rather lacks much practical advice beyond the aforementioned section of his *Metaphysics of Morals* called “Teaching Ethics.” However, that should not disabuse us of the notion that teaching practices can and do draw out the moral element of our students; in fact, more contemporary philosophers – not known for being connected to the Kantian tradition – express this moral element of pedagogy far more than those *within* the Kantian tradition. Thus, the following section, which might baffle some due to its seeming disconnect with Kantianism, focuses on other philosophers – namely Dewey and Freire – to show just how we can draw out our students’ moral capabilities through teaching philosophy.

Evidence of Kant’s own teaching is scant; there are letters from various students through his lifetime (Herz and Herder, to name two famed pupils), but he rarely reflects on his own pedagogical style. In an early letter to Lindman, Kant speaks of what looks like a life as an underappreciated instructor: “For my part, I sit daily at the anvil of my lectern and guide the heavy hammer of repetitious lectures, continuously beating out the same rhythm. Now and then I am stirred up somewhere by a nobler inclination, a desire to extend myself somewhat beyond this narrow sphere; but the blustering voice of Need immediately attacks me and, always truthful in its threats, drives me back to hard work without delay – *intentat angues atque intonat ore.*”¹⁰⁵ He seemed, however, to be an incredibly popular teacher who deeply impacted his students. A September 11, 1770 letter from Herz to Kant reads, “It is you alone that I must thank for my change of fortune, and to you alone am I indebted for what I am; without you I would still be like so many of my kinsmen, pursuing a life chained

104) Ira Shor, “Educating the Educators: A Freirean Approach to the Crisis in Teacher Education,” in *Freire for the Classroom: A Sourcebook for Liberatory Teaching*, ed. Ira Shor (Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 1987), 14.

105) Immanuel Kant, “To Johann Gotthelf Lindner. October 28, 1759,” in *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant: Correspondence*, ed. and trans. Arnulf Zweig (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 10:19.

to the wagon of prejudices, a life no better than that of any animal. I would have a soul without powers, an understanding without efficacy, in short, without you I would be that which I was four years ago, in other words I would be nothing.”¹⁰⁶ However, we cannot know what exactly Kant stated – the lecture notes are, after all, lecture notes from students¹⁰⁷ – and we cannot know what exactly he did to make such a mark on his students. As such, I would like to engage philosophers who are more clear about not what to teach, but *how* to teach – and philosophers who provide pedagogical advice in such a way that is compatible with the philosophical goals of Kantian education, which would lead us to find our own dignity in the face of the capital form.

One way to overcome the disempowerment of keeping students in their “minority” is through what Freire refers to as problem-posing education, famously discussed in his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Nina Wallerstein nicely describes the three states of problem-posing education: “listening (or investigating the issues . . .), dialogue . . . and action.”¹⁰⁸ I think through listening – identifying and investigating issues – and dialogue, which includes critical thinking and learning, we can teach students how to participate in their own enlightenment, how to engage in what Kant refers to as the public use of reason. Take, for example, an introductory level course on philosophy, in which the students are asked to learn existentialism. Learning the basic elements of existentialism are important, of course, but many students might ask *to what purpose?* So, let us begin with listening and see how we can use what we observe to not just instruct them, but to teach.¹⁰⁹

106) Marcus Herz, “From Marcuz Herz. September 11, 1770,” in *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant: Correspondence*, 100.

107) Kant himself was suspicious of the notes his own students took, writing, “Those of my students who are most capable of grasping everything are just the ones who bother least to take explicit and verbatim notes; rather, they write down only the main points, which they can think over afterward. Those who are most thorough in note-taking are seldom capable of distinguishing the important from the unimportant. They pile a mass of misunderstood stuff under that which they may possibly have grasped correctly.” See Immanuel Kant, “To Marcus Herz, October 20, 1778,” in *Philosophical Correspondence, 1759–1799*, ed. and trans. Arnulf Zweig (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), 91 [translator’s pagination].

108) Nina Wallerstein, “Problem-Posing Education: Freire’s Method for Transformation,” in *Freire for the Classroom: A Sourcebook for Liberatory Teaching*, ed. Ira Shor (Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 1987), 35. Wallerstein focuses predominantly on how this problem-posing method can be transformative for English-learners and refugee students, though her methods can certainly be extended to other groups as well. Listening, in general, involves investigating the “blocks” that students bring with them, and liberating ourselves from the supposition that classrooms are egalitarian and separated from society and its problems. We observe students – their words, their behaviors, their documents – and ask them to bring their concerns to class, making a lesson plan out of their lived experience, fears, joys, and so forth. Dialogue, for Wallerstein, includes creating a “code,” a “concrete physical representation of the particularly critical issue that has come up during the listening phase . . . a written dialogue, a story, a photograph, a skit, or a song” See Wallerstein, “Problem-Posing Education: Freire’s Method for Transformation,” 38. Discussion of the code, as Wallerstein describes, uses five steps of critical thinking, including description, definition of the problem, sharing of similar experiences, questioning the problem, and strategizing about the problem. Action includes reflection; as Freire tells us in *Pedagogy*, there is no occupation without preoccupation. Action “for students means learning to see themselves as social and political beings.” See Wallerstein, “Problem-Posing Education: Freire’s Method for Transformation,” 38–39, 42.

109) I would like to offer up a suggestion from my own class, which was part of a special general education curriculum; the class was for first-years. I had my students write informal blogs each week, on any topic that was relevant to what we were learning. They wrote about what mattered to them, about the struggles they were facing. We then discussed the blog, and often made a “code” (a skit, a play, a collage serving as a physical representation of the problems they are facing) that highlighted the themes they were learning. In class, after reading Sartre’s *No Exit*, I asked them to make their own interpretations of existential themes in a “code.” Many of their skits revolved around expectations of others and social media. We then discussed the “code,” defining terms, the problem, questioning in what way it was a problem, and discussing how to remedy the issue – all within the boundaries of the philosophy they were learning. Students reported to me – in further blogs, or online forums for the class – how they see themselves and their self-esteem as part of political and social contexts, and how to help themselves and others with direct action that stems from a new understanding of themselves, an understanding provided by philosophical concepts. Such a stage in learning is reminiscent of Kant’s “dialogue,” which follows “dogmatism.” The students discuss, actively engage with each other and their teacher, but they can only do this after they understand the basics. While I could just lecture them about “existence precedes essence,” leaving it at that keeps students mechanical

When discussing a Deweyan pedagogy of teaching philosophy, Stephen Fishman tends to agree with this approach, this unity of morality and education, and the liberation that can come from the latter (of course, Dewey too asserted that education is moral). According to Fishman, “as we enable students to take possession of themselves and their learning – to work with full attention and persistent effort – we also enable them to experience integrity, sincerity, and the moral exercise of the will.”¹¹⁰ Fishman advocates for shared homework assignments, both in and out of class, in order to promote attention, effort, and social collaboration.¹¹¹

Fishman and his collaborator, Lucille McCarthy, also provide specific examples of what I would deem “virtue philosophy,” learning philosophy and developing moral character through the doing. In an “Introduction to Philosophy” course, Fishman assigned student papers, the topics of which could be anything, so long as it pertained to an ongoing moral problem in the students’ lives.¹¹² The goal, says Fishman and McCarthy, was to use philosophical analysis to explore personal problems and, in doing so, to participate in self-reconstruction.¹¹³ Here, I see reflections of listening, of dialogue, and of action – listening to the students’ topics of choice and allowing them to dictate the situations in which they could understand philosophy; dialoguing with students through verbal feedback and student meetings (and assigning students to work in groups and dialogue with one another); and action as the students reconstructed a new understanding of themselves.

While Dewey and Freire are more well-known than Kant for their philosophy of education, it is important for scholars of Kant, and scholars of education, to understand the special role that education plays in Kant’s overall architectonic.¹¹⁴ We can see this role by first turning to Kant’s words on the ultimate purpose of nature: our moral vocation. Once we turn to our moral vocation, we can investigate how to fulfill that vocation – and education is one of those means. As Kant’s *Lectures on Ethics* states, “How, then, are we to seek this perfection, and from whence is it to be hoped for? From nowhere else but education.”¹¹⁵ The education of which he speaks is not only particular moral education, but education at all levels. In a discussion on education and moral ends, Kate Moran writes:

Kant ... also thinks that the system of education that he proposes will, in effect, teach these lessons much more efficiently. So, for example, a child who has not been allowed to develop habits will have a stronger and more salient appreciation of freedom. Similarly, a child who experiences some appropriate amount of discipline will learn and internalise the lesson that the world is not organised in such a way that she can always expect her desires to be fulfilled. Furthermore, children who

and passive. Education through praxis and problem-posing, however, allows them to take charge of their own situation in the world, and to be empowered in their own freedom – to take those first steps toward enlightenment, through the public use of reason. Such a kind of education helps students move from understanding, to reason, to learning, as described in Section II. This is more than just learning by rote; this is doing, this is virtue philosophy.

110) Stephen Fishman, Lucille McCarthy, *John Dewey and the Challenge of Classroom Practice* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1988), 48. Of course, as Fishman explains, for Dewey, morality extends to taking an active interest in the common good, and does not stop simply with an individual’s character development.

111) *Ibid.*, 49.

112) *Ibid.*, 182. I used this assignment in my Fall 2018 “Ethical Theory” class, to great effect. Students wrote excellent research papers and were engaged in the entire process of research, because the problem was one that *they* determined mattered to their lives.

113) *Ibid.*, 206.

114) My work here just barely scratches the surface of the role of education in Kant’s political, practical, and epistemological works. For more on that, Manfred Kuehn wrote an excellent essay on the connection of education in Kant’s critical philosophy, entitled “Kant on Education, Anthropology, and Ethics,” in *Kant and Education: Interpretations and Commentary*, eds. Klas Roth and Chris W. Surprenant (New York: Routledge, 2012), 55–68.

115) Kant, *Lectures on Ethics*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 27:471.

are taught how to pursue their ends alongside other agents will have a deeper understanding of the kinds of conflicts that can arise between agents. And, of course, when these conflicts arise, a person who has developed a deep appreciation for freedom and who is practised in moral reasoning will be more likely to make a moral decision.¹¹⁶

What we can take from Moran's statement, here, is that all levels of education from physical, to formal intellectual training, to outright moral catechism – are in some way morally educative. Even a college lesson plan that is meant to train students to “do philosophy” formally is also a morally educative process. Take, for example, a college course designed by John Rudisill.¹¹⁷ Rudisill assigns two “tiers” of projects: those that help students become familiar with the “nature” of philosophy,¹¹⁸ and also a research project that culminates in a journal-length article. Students are required, from the beginning of the semester, to share their research projects with peers, to provide feedback and commentary on their final research projects as well as their other in-class reading and writing assignments, and even have a mock-conference setup during class time in which students present their research papers and other students are assigned to provide commentaries.¹¹⁹ Each of these skills hone critical thinking, involve dialogue with others, sharpen judgments, and contribute to decision-making processes.

While Rudisill might have a rather myopic vision of what it means to “do philosophy,” as limited to the world of professional academic philosophy as it is, the skills his Junior Seminar cultivates are useful to a broader definition of “virtue philosophy” that contribute to our moral vocation and our students' enlightenment. To begin with, one element that Rudisill's pedagogy relies upon is what we might call the teacher's “fade away.” That is, as the students learn more about content and process, and become more familiar with their endeavors, the teacher slowly removes certain parts of her support and “fades away,” leaving the students to exercise their own freedom in reasoning.¹²⁰ An integral part of this “fade away” is a class structure similar to Kant's previously-described moral catechism: first students learn the content, which can come from “dogmatism” or teacher- (or author-) only speaking, and then they dialogue. In fact, much of Rudisill's course seems to be based on student dialogue, even if that is a dialogue with the text they are analyzing. Students are encouraged to write critical commentaries on their readings, as well as commentaries on their peers' projects. They are asked to verbally present and discuss articles as well as their own writings.

Students tasked with interacting with one another – which itself is a moral endeavor, for we are dealing with other *persons* after all – and they are tasked with learning to grow into their own enlightenment, as the support of the teacher slowly slips away. Rudisill is, in short, guiding his students to act on their own, and break free from the shackles of their minority, to step into the world as one who does philosophy. As a course that

116) Kate Moran, “Can Kant Have an Account of Moral Education?” *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 43, no. 4 (2009): 483, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9752.2009.00721.x>.

117) Rudisill lays out a detailed course design that pursues many of the goals discussed in this article. He writes that the benefits of philosophical knowledge extend far beyond content learned in the classroom, and these benefits “are only realized to the extent that students are able to *do philosophy* in contrast with merely knowing (even knowing masterfully) about the content of the writings of different historical figures and the influential arguments in favor of and against a variety of philosophical positions.” See John Rudisill, “The Transition from Studying Philosophy to Doing Philosophy,” *Teaching Philosophy* 34, no. 3 (September 2011): 241, <https://doi.org/10.5840/teachphil201134332>.

118) Rudisill here is discussing philosophy as limited by academic professionalization.

119) Rudisill, “The Transition from Studying Philosophy to Doing Philosophy,” 256–257.

120) Rudisill writes, “Furthermore, the assignments in the seminar are dialogic and interactive so as to facilitate mutual, real-time and ongoing, monitoring and assessment of student progress. This feature of the assignments promotes responsive calibrating of the teacher's support including the “fading” of that support when appropriate.” See *Ibid.*, 249.

constantly demands participation, dialogue, and mock-conferences, this structure also fits into a Freirean or Deweyan framework of education, comprised of listening, action, practice, and liberation. We might hazard a guess that, as students gain confidence in their philosophical abilities, they also gain a level of self-love, recognizing what they are capable of as rational agents, and that self-love is tempered by the modesty learned through interactions with others. Thus, even in something as seemingly simple as a classroom presentation, a student can learn how to hone rational decision-making skills, and simultaneously cultivate her moral disposition.

Both what we teach, and how we teach, can cultivate the morality of our students. We do not only teach them about freedom and philosophy; we teach them *how to be* free, and how to be philosophical. In this vocation of teaching, we help build culture. Neither virtue – the constant practice of our moral freedom – nor philosophy, the constant act of philosophizing, may be completed in this life, but they are certainly ideals for which we must strive, and they converge in the educative act, they meet in virtue philosophy. When analyzed in this way, we see that education is not a side-note to moral development, nor a footnote to cultural analysis, but an integral part of it. As teachers, we see the precious task that has been laid upon us.¹²¹

121) In a 1778 letter to Marcus Herz, Kant shows extreme pride in his former student, writing, “Letters of the sort that I receive from you transport me into a state of feeling that sweetens my life as I should like it to be sweetened, a feeling that gives me a kind of foretaste of another life. That is how I feel when, if my hopes are not deceived, I see in your honest and grateful soul the reassuring evidence that the central aim of my academic life, which is always before my eyes, has not been pursued in vain: the aim, that is, of spreading good dispositions based on solid principles, securing these dispositions in receptive souls, and thereby directing people to cultivate their talents in the only useful direction.” See Kant, “To Marcus Herz” in *Correspondence*, 10:231). Kant’s aim was not theory alone; his central aim was to build good character, or virtue, based on “solid” principles or, we could say, principles of reason (principles of thinking). Those who overlook the role of education in Kant’s theoretical and practical works might be met with great surprise when reading this declaration.

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