

From Discipline to Autonomy: Kant's Theory of Moral Development

Issues surrounding moral development and education form one of the major themes of Kant's philosophical output (see Herman 1998; Munzel 2003; Shell 2000; and Surprenant 2010). But Kant's keen interest in this area seems to raise a number of significant tensions in his work. These tensions arise because, depending on which strand of thought we focus on, education and development seem either essential or superfluous for morality. We shall examine two versions of this tension here, which I shall call the knowledge and revolution tensions. The knowledge tension arises because Kant makes strong claims about the ability of a boy of ten, but even as young as eight or nine (TP: 8:286), to correctly differentiate right from wrong in even complex cases (KpV: 5:155-57). But if we *already* know what we morally ought to do, if our moral knowledge is *already* complete and sound, then what role does this leave for moral development and education (see Moran 2009: 471)? The revolution tension arises because, Lewis White Beck (1978: 203-04) argues, Kant "expects and emphasizes the gradual progress toward the good through the historical process, including that of education" and also "teaches that there is a supernatural, superhistorical dimension to morality and the transition to it" in which "education" can "play only a preliminary role". But, Beck argues, these two elements, gradual moral progress through education and a sudden revolutionary transition to morality, were "never reconciled".

In this paper I shall seek to resolve these two tensions by, in section one, briefly outlining the contemporary theories of moral development advanced by Lawrence Kohlberg and John Rawls. The aim of briefly illustrating these two theories is not to defend or criticise these views, since this has already been undertaken in an extensive literature, but rather to use these theories as models for extracting Kant's own distinct, but structurally similar, theory of moral development. This task is undertaken in section two in which I extract Kant's theory of

moral development from a number of texts. Finally, in section three, I draw on Kant's theory to resolve the knowledge and revolution tensions.

1. Kohlberg and Rawls on Moral Development

Kohlberg develops a theory of moral development, or justice reasoning, which consists of six stages following an invariant sequence (see Crain 1985: 118-136; Gibbs 2003; Kohlberg *et al.* 1983). The six stages cover three levels of reasoning, preconventional, conventional and postconventional, with two stages per level. Stage one is "punishment and obedience" reasoning. At this stage prohibitions, which are given by some higher power (such as a parent), are seen as fixed and absolute, and the reason for obedience is typically to avoid punishment. Stage two is "individualism and exchange" which is a stage of self-interested reasoning combined with an "if you scratch my back I'll scratch yours" mentality. Stage three is that of "good interpersonal relationships" and at this stage motives, intentions and feelings, and not merely consequences, become more important. Children at this stage tend to make judgments in terms of role ideals and what counts as being a "good boy or girl". Stage four, "social order", involves seeing oneself not merely as involved in local affective ties, but also as a member of a society governed by laws and norms whose social order is worth maintaining. At stage five, "social contract and individual rights", people ask not merely what maintains social order but what constitutes a good social order, and they realise that morality and the legal order can come into conflict. Stage six is that of "universal principles" and at this stage persons come to understand the basis of principles of universal justice.

Rawls develops a three stage account of moral development, with each stage having its own "psychological law", which approximately corresponds with the three levels of Kohlberg's account (Rawls 1999: 404). Rawls' account is based on the assumption that the child matures in a "well-ordered society realizing the principles of justice as fairness" (Rawls

1999: 404). The first stage is the “morality of authority”. At this stage the child simply finds himself subject to injunctions set by his parents.¹ He cannot question the legitimacy of these injunctions since he lacks, at this age, the very concept of justification. The operative psychological law here is that the child recognises the “evident love of him” that his parents have and as a result “comes to love them”, and “if he loves and trusts his parents” then “he will tend to accept their injunctions” (Rawls 1999: 407, 429). The child will then tend to obey these injunctions out of fear of losing some of his parent’s love and affection.

The second stage is that of the “morality of association”. This stage commences when the child begins to be aware that he occupies various social roles, such as being someone’s son, friend, or classmate. At this stage morality is understood as consisting of standards of conduct for the particular roles and stations that one occupies. By living up to these standards one is a *good* son, friend, or classmate who realises certain *ideals*, such as being a “good sport” (Rawls 1999: 409). Eventually the emerging adolescent comes to see that his various roles and associations fit into a general system of cooperation which he recognises as just, as benefiting all members, and as maintained by the evident good will of others. The operative psychological law here is that persons living under a social arrangement that is “just and publicly known by all to be just” will develop “ties of friendly feeling and trust toward others” (Rawls 1999: 429).

The third stage is that of the “morality of principles”. While at the upper end of the morality of association a person “understands the principles of justice ... his motive for complying with” these principles “springs largely from his ties of friendship and fellow feeling for others, and his concern for the approbation of the wider society”. On reaching the third stage of development one moves beyond this level of motivation by becoming “attached to these highest-order principles [of justice] themselves” (Rawls 1999: 414). The operative psychological law here is that by coming to understand that the basic institutions of one’s

society are just and publically known to be so, a person acquires a “corresponding sense of justice as he recognises that he and those for whom he cares are the beneficiaries of these [just] arrangements” (Rawls 1999: 429-30).

2. Kant on Moral Development

The human being is not born as, but must grow and develop into, an autonomous person. How does this development unfold? By keeping the theories of Kohlberg and Rawls in mind, it shall become clear that Kant also understands moral development as occurring by progression through three distinct, but overlapping, stages: firstly disciplining (including physical education), secondly cultivating and civilising, and thirdly moralising. While physical education and discipline should be applied almost as soon as the child is born, cultivating and civilising, as well as moralising, should be commenced only when the child becomes a youth “in approximately the tenth year, for by then he is already capable of reflection”. When the youth enters manhood, which occurs when he is around sixteen, “education by discipline comes to an end” and the young man must be “appraised of his real duties, of the worth of humanity in his own person, and of respect for it in others” (VE: 27:469). We shall now investigate this process in detail.

Stage 1: Disciplining and Physical Education – The Morality of Authority

Initially the baby’s guardians must choose everything for it on its behalf. They must choose what the baby is to eat and drink, where it is to sleep, and what it is to wear. Kant calls this initial stage that of “*physical education*”, which is “actually only maintenance” or care (VP: 9:456). Toward this end Kant provides recommendations on the baby’s diet, the temperature of its baths, and the hardness of its bed. He also warns against swaddling babies and the use of leading-strings and go-carts to teach children how to walk (VP: 9:456-66; see also

LaVaque-Manty 2006). At this “first stage” education “must be merely negative, i.e. one should ... merely leave nature undisturbed. The only art permitted in the educational process is that of hardening” (VP: 9:459). The aim of physical education is thus to maintain and nurture the child by providing for its needs without perverting its nature by making it overly accustomed to “ease” (VP: 9:464).

Discipline must also “be applied very early” (VP: 9:442). Discipline takes different forms depending on the age of the child. The earliest forms that Kant mentions relate to the baby’s crying. Parents should not run to the child “as soon as it cries”, unless the baby is “being harmed” or suffering some ill, since this “only makes them cry more often” (VP: 9:479). Similarly, as children grow older parents should ignore them when “they want to get something by screaming” (VP: 9:464). This is important because otherwise children become “accustomed to having all their whims fulfilled” (VP: 9:460). But it is cruel to refuse a child something simply in order to exercise his patience. As such, parents should give children “that which they ask for in a friendly manner, provided it is useful to them” (VP: 9:464).

Kant lists three principles that should guide disciplining. The first principle is to allow from “earliest childhood” the child to “be free in all matters (except in those where it might injure himself, as, for example, when it grabs an open knife)” and except where the child gets “in the way of other’s freedom, as for example, if it screams” too loudly. This principle should be applied from the earliest stages of childhood. The second principle, which applies when the child is a little older, is that the “child must be shown that it can only reach its goals by letting others also reach theirs” (VP: 9:454). In this way the child learns to do what its guardians expect of him and to treat the freedom of others as a constraint on his own freedom. The third principle, which applies when the child is still older, is that parents should “prove to it [the child] that restraint is put on it in order that it be led to the use of its own freedom ... this third point is the last to be grasped by the child” (VP: 9:454). Initially the child

is mechanically prevented from harming himself and others. Later he comes to accept a limitation on his freedom insofar as he interferes with the freedom of others, before finally he is led to understand why his freedom is constrained in this way. This final phase marks the transition from being a child to becoming a youth with capacities for reflection.

The aim of disciplining is to get the child “to tolerate a constraint of his freedom” in order that in the future he may be led “to make good use of his freedom” (VP: 9:453). Children who lack discipline follow “every whim” and put “into practice actually and instantly each notion that strikes them”. Kant therefore calls a lack of discipline “savagery” (*Wildheit*), that is, “independence from laws” (VP: 9:442). This is why Kant says that it is through “discipline or training” that “animal nature [changes] into human nature” (VP: 9:441) and “the culture of training (discipline) ... consists in the liberation of the will from the despotism of desires” (KU: 5:432). Through disciplining, the child learns to accept norms which restrict his freedom so that it is compatible with the freedom of others. As a result, the child learns to govern himself in accordance with these norms, and this requires that he learns how to control his whims and desires. In this way, through disciplining, his will is liberated from the “despotism of desires” and he thereby acquires “human choice” (MS: 6:213).

At this stage of development the child’s obedience of injunctions is based on the fear of punishment and an ‘if you scratch my back I’ll scratch yours’ mentality. Kant explains:

The obsequiousness of the pupil is either *positive*, when he must do what is prescribed to him, because he cannot himself judge, and the mere capacity of imitation still continues in him; or *negative*, when he must do what others want if he wants others to do some favour for him in return. With the first, he may come in for punishment; with the second, others may not do what he wants (VP: 9:453; see also KpV: 5:152).

Initially the child is subject to rules which he learns by imitation and obeys from fear of punishment (“he may come in for punishment”). He cannot obey these rules for their own

sake since he is not yet able to understand their basis. This corresponds to stage one, punishment and obedience, in Kohlberg's account. The child also learns that if he does not do what others ask of him, then others will be reluctant to do what the child asks of them ("others may not do what he wants"). This corresponds to stage two, individualism and exchange, in Kohlberg's account. Together this stage also closely resembles Rawls' morality of authority, with its focus on the obedience of parental injunctions in order to avoid the punishment of withdrawn parental love.

This leads Kant to argue that it is wrong "in the first stage of education" to admonish the child by saying "Shame on you! This is not proper!" since the "child does not yet have concepts of shame and propriety" (VP: 9:465). As such, to "talk to children about duty is futile labour. In the end they regard duty as something the transgression of which is followed by the rod" (VP: 9:484). This is why morality must initially be enforced by punishment. Kant divides punishment into physical, natural and moral punishment. "One punishes *morally* by harming the inclinations to be honoured and loved, which are aids to morality". This is done by, for example, temporarily treating the child "frostily and coldly" (VP: 9:482). Natural punishment occurs when the child brings bad consequences on himself as a result of his behaviour; for example, when he feels ill from eating too much. Kant considers moral and natural punishments to be best. Physical punishments "must be merely supplements to the insufficiency of the moral [and natural] punishment", and should never be "carried out with signs of rage" (VP: 9:483). Further, physical punishment must be used with great caution since it can lead to a servile and slavish disposition in the child which is directly counter to the aims of moral development (VP: 9:464, 482).

Stage 2: Cultivating and Civilising – The Morality of Association

In the next stage of development the focus shifts from negative discipline to positive instruction and practical education through cultivating, civilising and moralising. The aim of practical education is to form the human into a “freely acting being” (VP: 9:455). However, I shall treat culture and civilisation as a single stage since both exhibit a similar developmental logic and treat moralisation as a distinct stage because of its differing developmental logic.

Culture is acquired through the acquisition of skills and knowledge (VP: 9:449). This includes cultivating the child’s lower and higher faculties of the mind, that is, his understanding, judgment and reason, as well as his wit, imagination and memory (VP: 9:472). Through cultivation the student obtains the skills and knowledge to achieve all sorts of ends. Certain skills are “good in all cases, for example reading and writing; others only for some purposes” (VP: 9:449-50). Culture also includes a component of physical education which involves “either the use of voluntary movement or the use of the organs of sense” (VP: 9:466). Sports and games are important tools for developing coordination and the ability to move one’s body at will and make skilful use of one’s senses.

The aim of culture is to equip us with skills and knowledge to use as means to various ends, whereas the aim of civilisation is to equip us with the capacity to judge the worth of ends. In becoming civilised we learn not only which ends are worth pursuing but also what culture it is prudent to acquire. This leads Kant to closely link civilisation and prudence (VP: 9:455). Prudence also requires that we become “well suited for human society, popular and influential. This requires ... *civilising*. Its prerequisites are manners, good behaviour and ... [the ability] to use all human beings for one’s own final purposes” (VP: 9:450). Civilising involves learning to govern oneself in accordance with the norms of politeness as defined by the taste of one’s age, as well as acquiring the art of “dissimulation, that is, holding back one’s faults” in order to maintain “propriety” and a favourable “external appearance” (VP: 9:486).

The “beautiful arts and sciences” also play a civilising role “by means of a universally communicable pleasure and an elegance and refinement [which] make[s] human beings, if not morally better, at least better mannered for society, [and which] very much reduce[s] the tyranny of sensible tendencies, and prepare[s] humans for a sovereignty in which reason alone shall have power” (KU: 5:433). By becoming civilised we learn to discipline ourselves in accordance with polite norms of social interaction. While this does not make us moral, it does *prepare* the way for morality by strengthening our capacity to control our sensible tendencies and to govern ourselves in accordance with ideals about how a person *ought* to act. However, at this stage the governing ideal is that of a conventionally successful, prudent, loved, and honourable member of society, and not the moral ideal set by our own reason. Even so, this is still a “higher step” on the path from discipline to autonomy (AP: 7:323-28).

At this stage of development “the idea of morality still belongs to culture; but the use of this idea which comes down only to a resemblance of morals in love of honour and in external propriety constitutes only being civilised” (I: 8:26). This is why Kant says that the youth “can be disciplined by honour, whereas a child is disciplined only by obedience” (VE: 27:469) and why shame can be used in admonishing youths but not children since “shame can only occur when the concept of honour has already taken root” (VP: 9:483-84). At this stage the key motives for abiding by moral norms are love of honour and external propriety, prudence, a desire for social approbation, pleasure in social intercourse, and a desire to fit in with one’s fellows. A person who acts from these motives will usually *appear* to act in conformity with morality. As such, acting from a sense of honour and external propriety resembles morality, even though acting in this way lacks moral worth. This stage of development, with its focus on living up to socially learnt role ideals and its concern for social approbation and the maintenance of social order through acting honourably and with

propriety, clearly resembles Rawls' morality of association and Kohlberg's stages three 'good interpersonal relationships' and four 'social order'.

Stage 3: Moralising – The Morality of Principles

Moralisation aims to bring the pupil to “acquire the disposition to choose nothing but good ends” (AP: 9:450), and this requires “not only [that] he does good, but that he does it because it is good” (AP: 9:475). This stage of “moral formation, in so far as it is based on principles which the human being should comprehend himself, comes last” (VP: 9:455). It requires not only the capacity to correctly judge moral particulars and to correctly understand the normative basis of such judgments in the requirements of practical reason, but also the acquisition of a disposition or character to always act in accordance with such judgments. As such, normative instruction and character formation are the two core components of moralisation. Punishment has no role whatsoever at this stage (VP: 9:481).

Kant outlines three methods for forming character. Since character “consists in the aptitude for acting according to maxims” (VP: 9:481), the first method for acquiring character is to become accustomed to acting from maxims. In order to develop this aptitude students must learn to “follow exactly” their self-given maxims (VP: 9:481). This is because the “grounding of character ... consists in the firm resolution of willing to do something, and then also in the actual performance of it ... For a man who resolves to do something but who does not do it cannot trust himself any longer” (VP: 9:487). As such, if “someone resolves always to get up early in order to study ... [and] always from one day to the next puts off his resolution – then in the end he does not trust himself any more” (VP: 9:487-88). If you cannot trust yourself to do what you will to do then you cannot be autonomous. This is because you cannot, with any confidence, set plans for yourself about how you want your life to go, since you cannot trust yourself to put those plans into action. This not only means that others

cannot rely on you, but that you cannot even rely upon yourself. A “second principle feature in the grounding of character in children is truthfulness”, which is “essential in a character” since a “human being who lies has no character at all” (VP: 9:484). A habitual liar is like a person who cannot follow his own maxims: you “cannot figure them out, and one can never really know what they are up to” (VP: 9:481). This aspect of character should be developed through the “withdrawal of respect” in response to acts of lying. A “third feature in the character of the child must be *sociability*” (VP: 9:484; see also Formosa 2010). This is developed by children forming friendships with other children through peer interaction.

Kant also argues that in “order to ground a moral character in children ... One must teach them the duties [to themselves and to others] that they have to fulfil” (VP: 9:488). Children are to be taught these duties through a three step process: first by learning a moral catechism which states general principles, then by developing judgment through casuistry,² and finally by understanding the normative basis of moral principles and judgments. Catechism is a method of instruction by questions and answers. Kant has both pedagogical and moral reasons for favouring this method. Pedagogically, Kant takes it to be a general principle that the “biggest aid to understanding something is to produce it” (VP: 9:477). Since few students are autodidacts, most students require the assistance of a teacher who acts as a guide by asking them the right questions. But the teacher should “proceed Socratically by attempting to be ‘the midwife of his listeners’ knowledge”. As such, the teacher should not “carry rational knowledge into them” but rather attempt to “extract” it “from them” (VP: 9:477).³ In this way students both cultivate their reason and become confident in thinking for themselves and achieving this outcome is the moral reason for preferring the catechetical method. However, Kant notes that this method has two drawbacks. First, that it can be “slow” and second that it does not work well in large groups since “it is difficult to arrange things

such that when one extracts knowledge from one child the others also learn something in the process” (VP: 9:477).

The teacher’s questions should focus on the duties we have to ourselves and to others, the foundation of these duties in the “dignity of humanity”, and the role that this dignity plays in limiting the worth of our own happiness (VP: 9:488-89; MS: 6:480-84). This means that students must learn to value themselves, not in comparison with other human beings, which only arouses envy, but according to the idea of the absolute worth of humanity (VP: 9:491; MS: 6:480). In presenting these duties it is important to focus on the moral worth that comes from acting from duty. Teachers should only make “casual mention” of any advantages or disadvantages that arise from acting from duty “merely as an instrument, for the taste of those who are weak by nature” (MS: 6:482-83). Kant takes this to be not only the morally correct method but also an effective one since he thinks that “morality must have more power over the human heart the more purely it is presented” (KpV: 5:156, 153; TP: 8:286).

Kant argues that in “this catechistic moral instruction it would be most helpful to the pupil’s moral development to raise some casuistical questions in their analysis of every duty” (MS: 6:483). However, in using concrete examples to illustrate specific duties Kant stresses that examples should be drawn from ordinary life and history (VP: 9:490; KpV: 5:154). Kant warns against the use of examples of “so-called *noble* (supermeritorious) actions, with which our sentimental writings so abound” because they inspire “empty wishing and longings for inaccessible perfection” which produces “mere heroes of romance who ... release themselves ... from observance of common and everyday obligation” since these seem “insignificant and petty” (KpV: 5:155). Kant’s examples, in contrast, tend to focus on the sublimeness of observing common and everyday obligations, such as keeping promises, paying debts, giving to the poor, returning deposits, and so on.

As a result of this method, students will ideally develop an ennobling sense of their own worth and the worth of all other persons, an awareness of their moral obligations, and trust in their capacity to do what they will to do. This produces a solid basis for their future autonomy which is the aim of practical education. On achieving this aim and becoming a fully autonomous person the highest stage of moral development, moralisation, is reached. This highest stage resembles, although it is broader in scope, Rawls' morality of principles and Kohlberg's stage six 'universal principles', since it involves a commitment to universal moral principles themselves. At this stage of development a person not only knows *what* their duties are, but also understands *why* these duties are binding, and has acquired a trustworthy disposition to always act in accordance with these duties for their own sakes.

However, this highest stage of moral development is, for three reasons, very rarely achieved. Firstly, because education is not organised along the lines which Kant advocates. Secondly, because the innate radical evil of human nature grounds a propensity to evil which works against moralisation (Formosa 2007; Formosa 2009). Thirdly, because this propensity to evil is exacerbated by the moral corruptness of a civilised society which encourages us to value ourselves in comparison with others and not in comparison with the moral law. In the rare cases where it is achieved, Kant thinks that it is unlikely to be "firmly established" before a person is "forty" years of age (AP: 7:295).

3. Resolving the Knowledge and Revolution Tensions

The knowledge tension arises because Kant, on the one hand, outlines a developmental story which includes positive instruction in the moral duties that we are subject to and, on the other hand, makes strong claims about the moral knowledge of youths as young as nine or ten and adults with even the most common reason (KpV: 5:155-57; TP: 8:286). Development and

positive instruction seem either essential or superfluous for moral knowledge depending on which of these two claims we focus on.

The key to resolving this tension is to appreciate the force of Kant's claim that there is a strong correlation between the historical progress of a society and the moral development of its members. This leads Kant (R: 6:93-95) to argue that only within moral communities under conditions of national, international and cosmopolitan justice can the moralisation of individuals occur (at least widely) and the radical evil of human nature be overcome. But we are still far from historically realising this state. Just as Rawls bases his developmental story on the assumption that the child of that story grows up in a well-ordered society, Kant bases his developmental story on the assumption that the child of that story grows up in a historical period identical to Kant's own. That is, "in a time" of "disciplinary training, culture and civilisation, but not by any means in a time of moralisation" (VP: 9:451; see also I: 8:26).

As such, when Kant makes claims about the moral knowledge of a ten year old youth or a man with the most common reason, he makes these claims in the context of the historical assumption that the youth or man in question have *already* been (at least partly) socialised into a disciplined, cultured and civilised society. Discipline, cultivation and civilisation, unlike moralisation, come in degrees. Some people are highly disciplined, cultured, and cultivated and others, such as a youth and a man with the most common reason, are less so. But even in these latter cases the youth and man in question have *already* been socialised at least *partly* into a society which enforces its laws and cultural norms. They are therefore not lawless "savages", in Kant's sense, since they have been somewhat socialised to act in accordance with norms through the application of disciplining, cultivating and civilising techniques.

As part of that socialisation process they will also have learnt what counts as morally right and wrong in their society and, as a result of this, they will be able to make correct

moral judgments (on the assumption that their socially learnt conception of right and wrong matches the requirements of morality which, in a civilised state, Kant thinks will generally be the case). This explains why someone who has not yet completed the process of moral development, or not yet even received formal instruction in moral duties, is able to make correct moral judgments. But it is one thing to be able to make correct moral judgments as a result of socialisation, and another thing to have a correct understanding of the normative basis of those judgments and to have a character defined by an aptitude to always act on the basis of that understanding. Without this proper understanding and firm character, which those who have yet to be moralised lack, one's moral judgments will tend to be based on social conventions which merely *resemble* morality, rather than on practical reason itself which grounds morality proper.

But does this really defuse the knowledge tension? After all, Kant's preferred teaching methodology for ethics involves *extracting* judgments from the youth's own reason and not from his memory. Does this mean that Kant thinks we have the sort of innate rational knowledge which would make education and development superfluous? No. On Kant's view we have various predispositions and capacities, including rational ones. But these predispositions and capacities must be correctly cultivated and developed through education, practice, and communicative social interactions. As such, as Allen Wood (1999: 301) argues, on Kant's view we "can develop our reason only by communicating with others". Therefore we can extract correct moral judgments from a pupil's reason, rather than from his memory, only if his reason has *already* been (at least somewhat) cultivated and developed. There is thus no real tension between Kant's views about moral knowledge and moral development.

This leads naturally to a consideration of the revolution tension. This tension seems to arise because, to paraphrase Beck, Kant emphasises both the necessity of education for moralising us and also the insufficiency of education for achieving this outcome. But is there

really a tension here between gradual developmental progress through education and the sudden moral revolution which completes that process? In some passages there does seem to be such a tension. For example, Kant writes: “that a human being should become not merely *legally* good, but *morally* good ... [and this] cannot be effected through gradual *reform* but must rather be effected through a *revolution* in the disposition of the human being” (R: 6:47). This dispositional revolution requires the repudiating of one’s originally evil disposition, which takes the form of a conditional commitment to morality, by adopting a good disposition, which takes the form of a firm and unconditional commitment to moral principles (Formosa 2007). But “education, examples and teaching generally cannot bring about this firmness and persistence in principles *gradually*, but only ... by an explosion which happens one time” (AP: 7:295).

A person’s disposition is their highest-order maxim which defines the overall practical orientation of their character (Formosa 2007). However, all maxims, dispositional maxims included, are (directly or indirectly) self-given or subjective principles. Just as Kant holds that no one can force you to adopt a maxim, as opposed to force you to act in a certain way (MS: 6:218-221), equally no one can force you to adopt a disposition. For this reason education can only lead you to the view that you *ought* to adopt a good disposition, but it cannot actually *give* you a good disposition. This explains why the educational process of development, although *necessary* for moralising one’s character (AP: 7:327) since without it one’s rational predispositions remain uncultivated, is not *sufficient* for moralising one’s character. It cannot be sufficient because what is required is a revolution in one’s character, in one’s way of thinking and reasoning, and this requires the adoption of a new disposition which is something one must do for oneself. As such, Kant’s claim that education is *necessary* for bringing about the highest stage of moral development is not in tension with his

claim that education is *not sufficient* for bringing about this dispositional revolution. This insight resolves the revolution tension.

4. Conclusion

Kant develops a detailed three stage theory of moral development which structurally resembles, although it differs in details from, the contemporary accounts defended by Kohlberg and Rawls. On Kant's theory this process begins with physical education, which takes the form of maintenance and care, and disciplining, which helps the child to overcome the despotism of desires by learning to accept a normative constraint on his freedom. This stage of development comprises a morality of authority in which the obedience of norms is based on a fear of punishment and an interest in maintaining exchange relationships. Next, the positive stage of practical education begins by cultivating and civilising. This equips the youth with a capacity to both reach various ends and to judge the worth of those ends. This comprises a morality of association in which the obedience of norms is based on a sense of honour and shame, a desire for social approbation, and prudence. The final and highest stage of development, moralisation or a morality of principles, is realised through the acquisition of both the rational knowledge of one's moral duties and a character practically orientated towards always obeying these duties for their own sake. However, Kant's account of moral development appears to be in tension with other elements of his moral philosophy. But these (specifically the knowledge and revolution) tensions have been shown here to be illusory. As such, a proper understanding of Kant's theory of moral development, far from exposing genuine tensions, helps rather to deepen our understanding of Kant's moral philosophy.

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Notes

¹ Since both Rawls and Kant write exclusively in the masculine when they discuss moral development, I will do the same here in order that my discussion melds with the quotations that I use. However, I assume that Rawls thinks that the stages and means of development are the same for both sexes. Whether Kant also thinks this is less clear.

² Kant stresses that examination of “practical questions” through concrete examples should follow “after first laying the foundation in a purely moral catechism” (KpV: 5:154).

³ Kant (MS: 6:411, 478-81) contrasts the “*dogmatic*” method, in which the teacher alone lectures, with the “*erotetic*” method, which is based on questions and answers. This latter method is divided into dialogue and catechism. Confusingly, Kant makes two different distinctions between dialogue and catechism. According to the first, in a dialogue the pupil asks the questions and the teacher answers or both question each other, whereas in a catechism only the teacher asks questions. According to the second, if the pupil is expected to draw his answer “merely from his memory, the method is called the *catechistic* method proper” but if it is “assumed” to be “already present naturally in the pupil’s reason and needs only to be developed from it, then the method is called that of *dialogue* (Socratic method)”. Kant’s preferred method is therefore catechistical in the first sense, since he thinks (at least) initially that the teacher must do all the questioning because the student does not know what questions to ask, and dialogical (or Socratic) in the second sense, since he thinks that the student’s answers should be drawn from his reason and not from his memory (as in the catechistic method proper).