Chapter 6

KANTIAN MORAL EDUCATION
AND SERVICE-LEARNING

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Introduction

THIS CHAPTER ARISES out of some reflections about an intermediate-level ethics course that I have taught for ten years at Calvin and before that for fifteen years at a secular university. Next, I describe my experience of teaching two sections of the course in one semester with a service-learning component in one section but not in the other. Finally, I analyze what I learned about moral education from this experiment. The discussion is philosophical rather than social-scientific. Although I will mention some numbers from course evaluations, I do not have the competence to produce a quantitative comparison of the two sections, for example, through a multiple-regression analysis. I am planning to attempt this with some expert assistance next time I teach the course. In the present chapter, I am interested in the theoretical understanding of moral education that would justify the inclusion of a service-learning component. My observation is that the literature in service-learning has usually drawn this understanding from Dewey. For example, Thomas Ehrlich (1996) says, "The basic theory of service-learning is Dewey's: the interaction of knowledge and skills with experience is key to learning." Dwight Giles (1991) says, "At least since Dewey, the literature on experiential learning has claimed the superiority of action-reflection and the connected pedagogical approaches that characterize service, over more traditional modes of classroom instruction." McPherson and Negben (1991) describe the effect of community service on teaching in self-consciously Deweyan terms,

[Such an approach] involves and immerses students in relational learning environments and engages multiple senses and intelligences. Learning becomes more accessible by expanding the definition of competence and redefining the relationship of teacher to student and student to learning. The teacher, rather than simply being the provider of information and the evaluator of competence, is the creator of environments where the students learn by doing, working with others, and reflecting on their experiences (See also Harkavy and Benson 1998; Saltmarsh 1996; and Hatcher 1997).

I do not want to deny that service-learning can be justified in such ways, and, in fact, I often talk about my own course in these terms. There is, however, an older theme in the Western tradition of reflection about moral education that Dewey did not recapitulate (see Frankena 1965, especially 192-200). It can be found in Kant, and it came to Kant through Luther, Scotus, Anselm, and Augustine. This is not the place to recount this history in detail, but the theme is explicit in the most vivid discussion of moral education that we have from the ancient world, namely Plato's *Meno*. This dialogue starts with the question of whether virtue is acquired by teaching or by practice. At the end, Socrates is left with the answer that virtue comes by neither of these but by divine gift (*Meno* 99d to the end). Twentieth-century interpreters have been altogether unsympathetic to this answer and have supposed that Socrates is being ironic or hiding what he really thinks. This is an interpretive maneuver that twentieth-century interpreters have also used in order to lessen the significance of Kant's references to God's role in human morality, and I have elsewhere argued that the maneuver should be used only as a last resort where there is not a more straightforward reading available (Hare 1996, chapter 2). I will call the theme of divine gift "the vertical theme," in order to distinguish it from Dewey's emphasis, for example, in the humanist manifesto of which he was an original signatory (1933), that "man is at last becoming aware that he alone is responsible for the realization of the world of his dreams, that he has within himself the power for its achievement." Although Dewey is close to Kant in many ways, his views on religion are consistently horizontal; human moral problems have exclusively human solutions. What I want to do in this chapter is to discuss some differences that it makes to a service-learning component in an ethics course whether the vertical theme is admitted or not.

Especially at a Christian liberal arts institution we need an understanding of the merits of service-learning that is receptive to God's role in human

morality. Dewey's view is inappropriate not only because he denies (amongst all the other dualisms) the dualism between Creator and creature but also because the modern scientific worldview has not in fact produced the fruits in this century that Dewey projected. He, himself, came to see by the end of his long life that his earlier optimism about education could not be sustained. We need to be as critical about Dewey as Dewey was about Kant. We should retrieve from our own tradition and outside it whatever we can use, and aim at an understanding that is distinctively Christian and that fits our present circumstances.

What concerns me is that the school's role in moral education and, derivatively, the contribution of service-learning is being oversold because the vertical theme has been forgotten. I am not denying the significant contribution of school in general and service-learning in particular to moral growth in students. My main point in this chapter is to affirm this contribution. But it is dangerous to make this contribution carry too much weight. Too much expectation leads, as Plato says in the *Phaedo* (88-91) to disillusion. I was part of a moral education team at a teaching hospital in Philadelphia for several years, which oversold its potential to produce morally good doctors. I noticed a medical ethics backlash, which was partly caused by the observation on the part of the medical faculty that students were learning fancy argument techniques to rationalize their preferences but were not learning to be good. There is wisdom in the Kantian picture that the ethics teacher can produce an occasion for the acquisition of virtue but cannot produce virtue itself.

Kant's Theory of Moral Education

I will focus in this section of the chapter on Kant's account of moral education, though it would be interesting in a longer treatment to trace the vertical theme backward in its connection with traditional thought about the acquisition of virtue. There are two features of Kant's account that I want to emphasize. First, Kant denies that we can, and therefore denies that we should, make other people morally better. Second, he denies that we can, in any fundamental way, make even ourselves morally better.

The first point is expressed most clearly in Kant's *The Doctrine of Virtue*. He says that we have two fundamental kinds of duties. The first is the duty

toward our own perfection (especially our moral betterment), and the second is our duty towards the happiness of others (*Metaphysics of Morals*, 6:386. In referring to Kant, I will use the volume and page numbers of the Academy edition). He is denying here that we have duties toward our own happiness and toward the perfection of others. The reason for this first denial is that he thinks we already have a sufficient inclination toward our own happiness, and duty only comes in to control inclination. Why, however, does Kant deny that we have duties toward the perfection of others? The reason is that the responsibility for being a good person belongs to that person and not to anyone else. (I discuss the difficulty about whether God has such responsibility toward the perfection of others in Hare 1999, 251-62.) What constitutes a good person, for Kant, is the good will in that person. No human being can produce a good will in another human being, and therefore no human being has a duty to do so; but what implication does this have for moral education? Does it mean that a person's moral education is her own business and nobody else should interfere in it?

This is clearly *not* Kant's view. He writes a whole book on education, of which the crowning section is a treatment of how parents and teachers can and should morally educate the children in their charge. The techniques and methods he prescribes are all ways of producing an *occasion* for the fundamental choice that an individual has to make for herself. Moral goodness is not something he thinks we can graft into a person. Kant also thinks that there are precursors for the choice either for or against the moral law. For example, there is the presence or absence of what he calls "discipline," and the provision of discipline is something that *is* within the control of a child's parents and teachers. More importantly for present purposes, even after a person has reached the age of reason, there are encouragements and discouragements we can provide to each other. In particular, Kant emphasizes the *example* we provide to each other. Even though he sees the danger of examples if they substitute for reflection, he thinks that the most effective way to influence others toward morality is by living a moral life oneself. I will return to the question of what this means for teaching an ethics course to undergraduates.

A person is responsible for her own moral perfection, and other people can only provide an occasion for such a choice. This brings us slap against the second feature of Kant's view, which I mentioned. He says that we cannot produce a good will in ourselves either. This is most clearly seen in his *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*. The problem, as he sees it, is that we are born

with an innate but imputable propensity to evil (*Religion,* 6:31-2). Here he follows Luther, and before him Augustine, in a strong doctrine of the Fall. My complaint is that contemporary Kantians who write about moral education, like Kohlberg, do not repeat this part of Kant's picture, and Kant's picture is not coherent without it. Kant translates this doctrine into strictly moral terms, but he does not cease to believe it in its untranslated form (see Hare 1996, chapter 2). There is a problem here that I will not discuss, namely what is the relationship between moral goodness and salvation. For the purposes of this chapter, I will assume that Kant is right that at the deepest levels of the will we cannot be good without God. He construes the Fall as preventing the development of moral goodness, and this means that we are born with the tendency to put our own happiness above our duty. There is nothing wrong, in Kant's view, with desiring our own happiness; we will do so, he thinks, even in heaven. What is wrong, however, is the ranking, which makes doing our duty merely a means to our happiness. There is a fundamental choice of rankings. What Kant calls "the good maxim" puts duty first and happiness second. What he calls "the evil maxim" reverses this priority. Kant thinks we are born under the evil maxim, and this means that we cannot in our own power restore the predisposition to good with which humans were created. The root orientation of our wills is against this. The only answer to this difficulty, he thinks, is to suppose that there is divine assistance available that can accomplish in us a revolution of the will.

Whether we are Kantians or not, there is something deeply mysterious about the process by which people become morally good. Theologically, the mystery is expressed in terms of how we become pleasing to God and the relationship of this to divine sovereignty and human freedom. God's assistance to us is certainly mysterious, and so is the free human choice of the fundamental orientation of the will. It is mysterious, moreover, what the relationship is between these two. For example, we would like an explanation of how the revolution of the will is related to our experience within time of moral struggle. Even if the revolution of the will has taken place, there are still the traces of the dominion of the evil maxim that are ours by habit, and these traces we still have to fight. In Kant's terms, the "dear self" can be found lurking behind even the most apparently virtuous actions. It is not my purpose in this chapter to make any of this easier to understand. My project is to explore the connection between this complex doctrine and the benefits of service-learning.

Before we go further, however, I need to say something about the distinction Kant makes between physical and practical education. Neither of these terms means just what we now mean by them. The best way to understand them is to connect them with another of Kant's distinctions, that between nature and freedom. He says (*Education,* 9:469), "We may, therefore, call the cultivation of the mind physical, in a certain sense, just as well as the cultivation of the body. This physical cultivation of the mind, however, must be distinguished from moral training, in that it aims only at nature, while moral training aims at freedom." The dichotomy between nature and freedom is one of the many dualisms that Dewey wants to get beyond. He accomplishes this by recapitulating many of the points Kant makes on the "nature" side of the distinction but remains silent about some of the key points (especially the vertical theme) that Kant stresses on the "freedom" side.

Kant puts nurture, discipline, cultivation of skill, and education in prudence under physical education. Many of the details of Kant's discussion here will strike the contemporary reader as harsh and male-centered. *Nurture* he associates with infancy. It involves mother's milk but also cold baths, cool and hard beds, and the ignoring of our babies' cries if they want what is not good for them. *Discipline* is also part of physical education. Kant associates it with childhood, and says that it consists in the restraint of inclinations and unruliness (*Education,* 9:442). "If a man is allowed to follow his own will in his youth, without opposition, a certain lawlessness will cling to him throughout his life." On the other hand, Kant says, the goal is not to break but to bend the will. A broken will produces "slavishness," whereas the destination is a manly autonomy. To this end, Kant says that a child's wishes should be granted whenever they are good for him. Opposition to a child's wishes for its own sake is always wrong. *The cultivation of skill* is produced by exercise and instruction. Mostly, for the preschool child, this will involve play and games (and Kant tells us which games are good, e.g., spinning a top and blind man's bluff). School, however, involves work. He says (*Education,* 9:482), "One often hears it said that we should put everything before children in such a way that they do it from inclination. In some cases . . . this is all very well, but there is much besides which we must place before them as duty." Here it is not moral duty that he has in mind but a precursor (where the authority is external). There will be much that is mechanical in this part of schooling, as Kant conceives of it, involving drill and memorization. Again, however, memorization for its own sake is never

the point, just as the restraint of inclination for its own sake is not the point. What is memorized must be itself useful, just as the inclination that is restrained must be itself harmful. And Kant (*Education,* 9:477) is a forerunner of Dewey when it comes to learning by doing—"The best way to understand is to do." Finally, *education in prudence* is designed to guide the child into a knowledge of what is in her own long-term interest and how to secure it for herself. This involves learning, for example, that if she wants to be happy, she must make friends. Kant thinks the child will learn at school how to live happily and acceptably in society.

All this is physical education. Practical education is, as I said, on the side of freedom, and Kant divides it into "ethical didactic" and "ethical ascetic." Here there is much that reminds one of Dewey on the first side of this distinction, which is closest to what Kant calls "nature" as opposed to "freedom." Ethical didactic is itself divided into lecturing and questioning, and questioning is divided into catechism and dialogue (*Metaphysics of Morals*, 6:478). In a *catechism* it is only the teacher who asks questions and the student has to remember the answer, whereas in a *dialogue* both teacher and student ask questions of each other and the students have to use their reason. The best of these ways of teaching is dialogue, which Kant associates with Socrates, but he thinks it can only come after catechism, and he gives an example of what a moral catechism is like. Kant introduces it as follows, "The teacher elicits from his pupil's reason, by questioning, what he wants to teach him; and should the pupil not know how to answer the question, the teacher, guiding his reason, suggests the answer to him."[1]

I want to draw a Deweyan lesson from what Kant says about ethical didactic before going on to ethical ascetic. I have found it confirmed in my teaching of the service-learning component in the ethics course. Kant recognizes that both straight lecturing and catechism become less and less appropriate as

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[1] The catechism begins this way, "1. Teacher: What is your greatest, in fact your whole, desire in life? Pupil: (is silent) Teacher: That everything should always go the way you would like it to. 2. Teacher: What is such a condition called? Pupil: (is silent) Teacher: It is called happiness (continuous well-being, enjoyment of life, complete satisfaction with one's condition). 3. Teacher: Now if it were up to you to dispose of all happiness (possible in the world), would you keep it all for yourself or would you share it with your fellow-men? Pupil: I would share it with others and make them happy and satisfied too. 4. Teacher: Now that proves that you have a good enough heart; but let us see whether you have a good head to go along with it. Would you really give a lazy fellow soft cushions so that he could pass his life away in sweet idleness? . . . . "

the child matures. The preference for dialogue over catechism shows that he thinks the teacher should be open to questioning as the student gets older. Kant makes explicit appeal to the model of Socrates. This connects with the theme that we learn best by doing. A person who entered into discussion with Socrates was likely to have his *life* up for scrutiny. Thus Nicias says, in Plato's *Laches* (187e), "Anyone who is close to Socrates and enters into conversation with him is liable to be drawn into an argument, and whatever subject he may start, he will be continually carried round and round by him, until at last he finds that he has to give an account both of his present and past life, and when he is once entangled, Socrates will not let him go until he has completely and thoroughly sifted him." The undergraduates should be questioning and answering together with the teacher their own ethical lives. This is much more natural if the students and the teacher are both engaged in a context outside the classroom where ethical issues arise. The students will learn to think ethically by doing reflection together with their teacher about their current and past ethical experience.

Finally, we come to what Kant calls "ethical ascetic." He does not have in mind here the "monkish disciplines" of "pilgrimages, mortifications, and fastings" (*Education,* 9:488). He recognizes that a large part of moral education is learning to "combat natural impulses sufficiently to be able to master them when a situation comes up in which they threaten morality" (*Metaphysics of Morals*, 6:485). This takes us back to the "dear self," and the problem of sin. I think Kant makes two important contributions to the theory of moral education here, neither of which Dewey recapitulates. Both are significant in how we see the contribution of service-learning to the teaching of ethics. The first is a positive point about what belongs in a service-learning component, and the second is a negative point about what should not be claimed for it.

First, moral education belongs together with the vertical theme of divine gift. Kant's view here is balanced. He is concerned to avoid the danger of making morality merely instrumental—a way to please God so as to get into heaven or avoid hell. The theology should not, therefore, precede the moral training. Kant thinks we all have a "seed of goodness" in us at birth, as well as the propensity to evil, and the seed can develop into virtue *given the right assistance*. It is not as though the theology has, so to speak, to come first so as to plant the seed, for the seed will be there already. The problem is that the required assistance is not merely from parents or teachers but from God. "The child must learn to feel reverence toward God, as the Lord of life and of the

whole world; further, as one who cares for men, and lastly as their Judge. . . . [The child should be given] an explanation which unites the ideas of *God* and *duty*" (*Education,* 9:495-6, emphasis original). It is not that we should just wait around and pray that God will provide the required help. On the other hand, however, the Christian tradition is, Kant says, the vehicle by which the moral demand has been articulated to him and his contemporaries in Europe, and those of us in this situation need to make use of this vehicle to understand what the demand is and what assistance is available to meet it. This is why Kant thinks the state has a moral interest in maintaining biblical preaching. "The Christian religion makes people humble, not by preaching humility, but by teaching them to compare themselves with the highest pattern of perfection," which is Christ (*Education,* 9:491. See *Religion,* 9:106, and *Conflict of the Faculties,* 7:43). The example of humility and pride is a significant one. Kant is right that the central thrust of the teaching of the New Testament about humility is that we should compare ourselves with Christ, but its key idea is that we should take on Christ's position of servant. Paul tells us, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who . . . took upon him the form of a servant" (Phil. 2:5-8, *KJV*). The point I want to make is that this is a significant difference both from pagan teaching about virtue and from Dewey. Virtue is not an idea whose content is neutral among worldviews. This is an important point that needs to be emphasized to those promoting a virtue-based curriculum for moral education. Aristotle thinks that high station is something of which a person should be proud, and he uses the word *humble* (*tapeinos*, the same term used in the New Testament for the virtue) as a term for the vice of pretending you do not have merit when in fact you do have it. Dewey denies that there is something like original sin in all human beings (in Kant's terms, an innate but imputable propensity to evil) that should occasion our humility, and he does not mention humility among the key dispositions he wants to produce. Here is an example of the sense in which the religious tradition is a "vehicle" of the moral demand (see Hauerwas and Pinches 1997; Meilaender 1984).

The second point is that the obstacle to virtue, as Kant sees it, is so deep that it infects all our efforts to remove it. "Extirpation could occur only through good maxims, and cannot take place when the ultimate subjective ground of all maxims is postulated as corrupt" (*Religion,* 6:37). This means that we should not be looking for some technique of moral education to do the job for us. Dewey is strikingly optimistic about the power of the school, if properly reformed, to

accomplish a better society. He talks of education as a "guarantee of a larger society which is worthy, lovely, and harmonious" (Dewey 1959, 41, 49). He says that the new education "has within itself the power of creating a free experimental intelligence that will do the necessary work of this complex and distracted world in which we and every other modern people have to live" (Dewey 1981, 111). We shall see that some proponents of service-learning have taken a Dewey-eyed view of its prospects. But Kant is less sanguine, recognizing that social institutions (without divine assistance) tend not to remove original sin but merely to express it on a larger scale (*Religion*, 6:97, *see also* 6:93-94). This is not to say that we should sit by and leave moral education up to God. As I said earlier, Kant gives us a whole book of suggestions on physical and practical education. He does not put his proposals forward as techniques sufficient (together with "custom") for the production of virtue. Because the obstacle lies so deep, moreover, we cannot tell by observation of other peoples' lives or even of our own whether it has been removed. We are never so easily deceived, Kant says, as in the good opinion we have of ourselves. This is true also of the bad opinion of ourselves we would have if we focused on our status as worms. Kant wants us to be realistic but also *cheerful* (*Metaphysics of Morals*, 6:491). The truth is, as he sees it, we simply do not know the fundamental motivations of our own lives or those of others. We can tell whether actions are in accordance with the moral law but not whether they are done *from* the moral law. We should be doubtful, therefore, about whether we can measure progress empirically, either in ourselves or in others, toward a good will. There are some proponents of service-learning who are less modest, and I will return to them at the end.

A Service-Learning Segment

In this section of the chapter, I will describe briefly the class that I taught. I had two sections of my ethics class in one semester, one with a required service-learning component and one that did not, but otherwise with identical material and format. This gave me the chance to evaluate what contribution the service-learning component made to the students' education. I will start with what the students said, then describe what we did. In the third section of the chapter I will discuss the connection of this service-learning component with what I have just been saying about Kant. I am not describing this segment of the course as a

model for how such a thing should go. On the contrary, I think it was in some ways naïve, and I can think of various improvements, but the discussion of what I learned about service-learning requires this description first.

The class had four segments, of which the first two were historical (Aristotle and Kant), the third was applied (abortion and homosexuality), and the fourth was a segment on Christian ethics. In the third segment, we read a number of individual articles that I had collected from various sources. For one of the two classes, I required them to meet for ten hours over the semester, either tutoring at Park School (a school set up especially for teenagers who were pregnant or young mothers), or with the Christian homosexual support group called AWARE. It is the second of these two options that I want to describe in more detail in this chapter. It was more successful than the first, though that was also worth doing. The difficulty with the first assignment was that my students went once a week, and the turnover of Park School students was so rapid that my students rarely got to know any of them well enough.

The students' evaluation of the service-learning component was overwhelmingly positive. There were nine statements on the evaluation form, and the students had to say to what degree they affirmed each statement.[2] Most of them strongly affirmed that the service-learning component connected to the

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[2] The statements were (1) that the service-learning connected to the course as a whole, (2) that the professor required reflection on it, (3) that the assignments were clear, (4) that the student was prepared by the class for the service-learning, (5) that there was good supervision, (6) that the service-learning was valuable to the organization being served, (7) that there was course-related learning, (8) that there were general skills promoted, and (9) that the transportation provided was sufficient. In the group who worked with AWARE, the results were:

	strongly affirmed	affirmed	neutral	denied	strongly denied
question 1	12	2	0	0	0
question 2	11	2	0	0	0
question 3	5	7	2	1	0
question 4	4	7	2	1	0
question 5	6	4	2	0	0
question 6	4	5	4	0	0
question 7	11	3	0	0	0
question 8	12	2	0	0	0
question 9	6	5	1	0	0

On the four questions that concern this chapter, in other words, (questions one, two, seven, and eight), over 90 percent of the students strongly affirmed the value of the service-learning component, and the remainder affirmed it. The Park School group had a significantly less favorable verdict on these questions.

course as a whole. They had no doubt that this part of the course required reflection and involved course-related learning, and they valued the general skills that it promoted.

There were a number of informal comments on the evaluations. Students said, "We had to directly deal with issues of ethics in a personal setting," "The interaction with issues in both theoretical and personal terms helped me learn more than if theoretical had been the only means of learning," "Learned ability to discuss difficult topics with people who are affected by the topics," "Made me think more about actuality, not all theoretical," "Do again, perhaps with similar readings by both sides," "I had a really wonderful experience. Whoever does the AWARE group must be open minded," "Gives a practical application to the theoretical," "Putting people before the issues puts everything in a new light."

We met once in two large groups (each group was half students and half members of AWARE) for two hours. At each of these meetings, each person was invited to talk briefly about his or her own experience with the issue of homosexuality. I was aware of the possibility that some of the students might be gay, but none of them (if they were) raised this in the large-group sessions. We then arranged ourselves into seven smaller groups, each with two students and two members of AWARE, and these groups met at their own convenience for three 2-hour sessions. I had handed out a sheet with questions, around which they could organize their discussions.[3] Finally, we met in the same two large groups toward the end of the semester and talked about what we had learned.

The whole class did a number of readings together on the topic. We read the 1973 synodical report from the Christian Reformed Church. We read a paper by James Olthuis (1995, 188-205), "When Is Sex Against Nature?" We also read a piece of mine that is not published but that discusses the argument that males and females are complementary to each other such that there is something

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[3] The questions were: (1) Has the church been faithful in carrying out its ministry toward you? (2) How has your sexual orientation related to your personal faith? (3) Do you think that the Bible has any witness on the issues surrounding same-sex relations? (4) Are there any stereotypes about homosexuals that you want to challenge? (5) Have you encountered discrimination or persecution against homosexuals? (6) What is your opinion of the current state of the debate both inside and outside the church? What do you see as the likely state of this debate in ten years' time? (7) Are there any difficulties that same-sex couples are likely to experience more than opposite-sex couples, other than the difficulties produced by social attitudes? (8) What are your views about same-sex marriage? (9) How might the atmosphere at the college be improved for students who are homosexual?

missing in same-sex relationships other than the inability to procreate (Hare, 1995). My intention was to have a range of different views presented in the readings, and it would have been better to have had more class time and more readings in order to accomplish this.

I required two five-page papers from the section of the class that was not doing the service-learning component. For those doing the service-learning, I required an ungraded journal and a report at the end. The report was either a narrative history about a person's life, as it was affected by the issue of abortion or homosexuality, or a reflective paper on the issue, informed by experience with the service-learning component. On the final exam (which was the same for everybody in both sections) there were three kinds of questions. There were questions directly about the readings, questions that asked for a connection between the readings on homosexuality (and abortion) and the readings on ethical theory, and then questions that called for longer reflective answers. One of this last kind was, "If your younger sibling told you he/she was gay or lesbian, what advice would you give?"

Service-Learning and Kant

In this final section of the chapter, I want to relate the service-learning component of the course to the vertical theme in Kant's account of moral education. I will focus this discussion around the positive and negative points about "ethical ascetic," which I mentioned at the end of the introduction to distinguish Kant's account from Dewey's. The first of these points is that moral training belongs together with the vertical theme about divine gift. I want to describe the difference it made to the service-learning that both students and AWARE members were Christians, held themselves accountable to the same God, and tried to understand their experience in terms of the same sacred texts.

This commonality was, I think, basic to the success of the experiment. In the first meeting that we had, for example, I started with prayer and the leader of the AWARE group closed in prayer. This set the context for the respect that he and I and the whole group were able to maintain even though we had significant differences of view. The students did not on the whole change their conclusions about the issue. They had, by and large, conservative views before the experience, though there was a range and some were more liberal. After the

experience there was the same range. I did not quantify this, but my impression is that one person had become slightly more hard-line and one person slightly more liberal. I do not want to place any reliance on this impression, however. Even though the students did not change their conclusions, they did change the considerations that they thought about and introduced into their writing. This is why one student said, as I quoted earlier, "Putting people before the issues puts everything in a new light." For example, only the students who had done the service-learning mentioned in the final exam that they would be worried about a sibling's committing suicide. I am convinced that this difference resulted from the topic of suicide having come up in the small-group discussions. I was part of one such small group, and it came up several times in ours. Here is another example. The students who had not had the service-learning tended to say that they would tell their sibling to go to the pastor of their church. Those who had met with AWARE tended to say that they would advise their sibling to find out if the pastor would be pastorally sensitive on this issue. Again, I am sure this was because of experiences that AWARE members had described. There was more information that the students acquired through the service-learning, for example, about AIDS and local politics. The key change, however, was in sensitivity. Having faces and stories to put to the issue changed the issue for them. It is not that the students changed their minds in the sense of coming down on a different side of the issue; I am tempted to say that they changed their hearts, though that would be misleading in various ways. They saw the struggle that the AWARE members had gone through and were still going through.

They also saw how they, themselves, had been guilty of a kind of contempt. We talked, for example, about the use of the term *gay* as an equivalent for *despicable*. There is a point here that Kant would put in terms of the fundamental principle of morals, which he calls "the categorical imperative." This requires sharing, as far as the moral law allows, the ends or purposes of the people affected by one's actions. Most of the students were not accustomed to the attempt to share ends with people they knew to be gay. What I wanted them to learn is that these were people like themselves—with Christian faith and with sin. Both groups had the desire to be faithful to God and struggled with sexual desires and with desires for acceptance. I wanted the students to see that the members of AWARE had the whole range of ends outside their sexual preference that the students themselves had. They had jobs and homes and political affiliations and churches. The students came to see both how deeply the

sexual preference affected everything else *and* that this was only one part of life and should not be mistaken for the whole. One of the AWARE members, for example, was an African American, and he described how much more discrimination he had experienced because of his race than because of his sexual orientation. I think the students started to learn to see these gay people as people, rather than as one-dimensionally gay.

Kant makes the great contribution of seeing that moral education consists partly in coming to see and to control one's own tendencies to pride. The students who were heterosexual tended, I think, to regard themselves as superior to gays for just this reason. This is why gay has been such a convenient term of contempt. In the dominant culture, it has provided a safe way to express superiority. In the theological setting that the students and the AWARE members shared, it was possible to see this pride as a manifestation of the original preference for the self, which Kant calls "the evil maxim." The formal setting of the service-learning component was one of equality. Each small group had two students and two AWARE members, and they had an agenda that they had to agree on together. In fact, the AWARE members tended to be older than the students, and they knew the issue better. They were therefore more ready to talk, and there was a danger of their dominating the conversation. I want to stress here the painful side of what Kant calls "ethical ascetic." The superiority that the students probably felt initially was hard to sustain. Many of them were forced to see that their attitudes had been wrong, even if their views were right. For example, one student vowed to change his language patterns. One student said he would challenge his church to be more caring to gays. Kant gives an example of teaching a child his duties toward others (*Education,* 9:489. See Dewey, 1908, 349). "For instance, were a child to meet another poorer child and to push him rudely away, or to hit him, and so on, we must not say to the aggressor, 'Don't do that, you will hurt him; you should have pity, he is a poor child,' and so on. But we must treat him in the same haughty manner, because his conduct is against the rights of man." Here is moral education in the process of life. The child has to learn about the dignity of all human beings. If he acts in such a way as to demean that dignity, he needs to be shown what this means by our "treating him in the same haughty manner." Promoting pity is, Kant thinks, the opposite; it expresses not equal dignity but a form of contempt. Transferring this idea to the undergraduate context, there is the same kind of moral education in the process of life that should take place. The students come to an ethics

course with certain unconsidered feelings of superiority. They may know in a theoretical way that they should not have such feelings, but they need to experience the feelings without disguise and see how intolerable they are through the responses of those they have despised. This kind of reflection is best done in the context of action where there are serious and engaging moral questions at issue.

One question raised in all the groups was whether sexual orientation is chosen. The students were told by the AWARE members that it is not; in Kant's terms, it is "from fortune." If this is right, then even if heterosexuality is granted to be a superior state (and this was controversial in the conversations), "we must seek to avoid every form of pride which is founded upon superiority of fortune" (*Education,* 9:491). It is, I know, disputed to what extent orientation is chosen, and there may be a difference here also between male and female homosexuality. My point here is not to engage in this discussion but to point out that the students came to see another problem about pride in the context of the issue we were discussing.

Kant recognizes that we have a natural tendency toward the vice of pride. It is like bindweed in a garden, which keeps cropping up however much we try to eradicate it. This tells us something about moral education. Undergraduates, just as much as younger students, need to be put in situations in which they first feel the wrong kind of pride and then see that it is wrong. As I quoted earlier, "Man is nowhere more easily deceived than in the good opinion he has of himself." One function of an ethics class, then, is to put students in a situation where their natural inclination is to do or say or think something that morality would prohibit. Then, in reflection and discussion, they can identify what is wrong with this. This is ethical ascetic.

A significant part of the discussion and reflection was focused on texts that both the students and the members of AWARE accepted as authoritative. This was illuminating, because the students had not often had to interpret the Bible in the face of disagreement that was so directly connected to life choices. It was a lesson in both how hard and how important it is to interpret well.

The vertical theme provided the context for the Deweyan justification I mentioned in the introduction of this chapter. The students saw me and the AWARE leader treat each other with respect and trust but not agreement. They saw how this was helped by our common faith. They saw me uncertain about some things and certain about others, and they saw me work hard to make

ethical sense of the experience. They and I were in the experience together, and we had a shared sense of risk and excitement about it. I am not trying to make my role glamorous. I was in many ways awkward. I think Kant is right, however, that the most effective way to teach is to show. Most ethics courses, because they stay in the classroom, have limited scope for this kind of example. Kant also says that the most effective way to learn is to do. What the students had to do in the service-learning component of this course was to get to know and understand (within the constraints of ten hours in a relatively formal setting) the lives of two particular gay people. One thing that had concerned me is that we were not really doing any *service* in this service-learning. It seemed all for the benefit of the students and nothing for AWARE. I came to see that this was quite wrong. The members of AWARE were strongly desiring and needing to tell their stories to people in the wider Christian community. This is why they volunteered, and they were pleased with the result. They gladly did it again the following semester with one of my colleagues, and it was again a strongly favorable experience both for them and for the students. We will continue it. The members of AWARE appreciated that the students were taking them seriously as people. This meant that the students were learning to think ethically about life in a life context that was problematic for them. This was why one of the students said, in a comment I quoted earlier, "made me think about actuality, not all theoretical." Sometimes it is suggested that an ethics course leaves mere theory when it gets into application. This is partly right, but it is incomplete. Even before I included a service-learning component, my ethics course had always had components of applied ethics. We discussed abortion, or international relations, or capital punishment, though this is still theoretical in the sense that matters most. It is still books and words and classroom. I am not trying to make a dichotomy between the ivory tower and real life. This dichotomy is false. The classroom (when it is functioning well) brings in wide experience from outside, and life outside the classroom (when it is being lived well) brings in reflection of the kind done in class. So, though there is not a dichotomy, there is a tension. The students have been sitting in classrooms for fifteen years or so, and they almost inevitably go into the various modes of engagement or disengagement that they reserve for the classroom. For some this is boredom, for others the pursuit of academic success. In both cases, however, this is a kind of habitual screen. What the service-learning did was to get past this screen, at least briefly, because the students had to engage in a different kind

of task; they had to interact socially with a group they had tended to dismiss. They found themselves doing ethical thinking on the other side of the screen.

I have been discussing the first (positive) point about ethical ascetic—that moral training belongs together with the vertical theme. I now want to go on to the second (negative) one. The obstacle to virtue, as Kant sees it, is so deep that it infects all our efforts to remove it, and we should not therefore be looking for some technique of moral education to do the job. Nor should we think that we can observe the fundamental moral orientation of the will, or measure progress toward it. The literature in moral education has many examples of a contrary view, which is more optimistic both about the moral changes we can produce and about our techniques for measuring them. William J. Penn (1990) gives a succinct statement of some typical assumptions:

> (1) There is a capability present within human consciousness which, when it is developed and exercised, significantly increases the probability of rational consensus on the just resolution of value conflicts. This is the capability Kohlberg and other cognitive developmentalists have identified as principled or post-conventional moral reasoning. (2) the capacity for principled moral reasoning, like the capacity for mathematical and scientific reasoning, can and must be developed by means of focussed, systematic and long-term educational effort. (3) It is necessary to develop this human capacity for moral reasoning to its highest level in order to have rational individual and social direction in modern democratic and pluralistic societies.

Penn then goes on to claim (contrary to Kohlberg) that this capacity for principled reasoning can be directly taught at the undergraduate level, and he claims that he has done so in the courses he has designed. I am not interested here in the details of the specific proposal but in the optimism of such an approach. The comparison with mathematical and scientific skills, together with the optimism that educational technique can produce these outcomes in the student, are both characteristic of Dewey's thought. T. K Stanton (1990) makes the application to service-learning: "The evolving pedagogy of service-learning is a key to *ensuring* the development of graduates who will participate in society actively, ethically, and with an informed critical habit of the mind" (emphasis added). Ronald Lee Zigler (1998) makes the comparison with physiological functions, "All virtues and vices are habits which incorporate objective forces. . .

They can be studied as objectively as physiological functions, and *they can be modified* by changes of either personal or social elements" (emphasis added).

Some writers on moral education write as though students were like plants to be cultivated into virtue or even chemicals to be combined with virtue. Thus Ernest Boyer (1987, 68) says, "it is appropriate for educational institutions that are preparing students to be citizens in a participatory democracy to understand the dilemmas and paradoxes of an individualistic culture and *cultivate* students who are personally empowered and committed to the common good" (emphasis added). Derek Bok (1986, 167) says, "What is more important is to discover ways to *combine* undergraduates with a sense of commitment and civic concern that will cause them to devote their talents in later life to addressing important social problems" (emphasis added). But undergraduates are neither plants nor chemicals. They are free agents, and the basic orientation of their wills is beyond their teachers' control. It is, for Christians, a matter between them and God.

Suppose, like Dewey, we identify the goal of education as training students in some kind of process of reflective inquiry. Dewey (1981, 8:177) gives us a three-stage process. First, "the various parts of information acquired are grasped in their relation to one another." Then, the relation is discerned between what we do and its consequences. Finally, "we put ourselves in the place of another, to see [these consequences] from the standpoint of his aims and values" (*See* Saltmarsh 1996, 18). My point is that it is possible for an agent to go through all of this and still deliberately harm his victim. A dysfunctional married couple know precisely how to torment each other; each imagines vividly and in detail, from the other's point of view, the pain that he or she will cause, which does not prevent the torturing but urges it onward. What is necessary from a Kantian point of view is not just this kind of three-stage reflection, but the *will* to make the other person's ends my own. The question of how to acquire this will is just what remains mysterious.

In this context, I want to mention two social-scientific studies of the effectiveness of service-learning in moral education at the undergraduate level. The first is a report of a study at Vanderbilt (Giles and Eyler 1994). The second is a report of a study at the University of Rhode Island (Boss 1994). Giles and Eyler measure students' responses to certain questions before and after a one-credit "community service laboratory." It is important that they record no significant change in responses to the question whether we should help those in

need or whether it is important to volunteer time in such service (though they do report a small, but significant, increase in the view that we should aspire to be community leaders and that it is important to influence the political system). They report that there was a significant increase in the intention to do more community service. There was, however, no control group (to check whether it was the community-service component that produced this effect) and no follow-up study on whether the intention was carried out (though they project such a study). They report a significant increase in the view that the people being served "are just like anyone else," and nearly all the students attributed this change to their personal involvement with the people they were assisting. They reach an optimistic conclusion about the intended, positive impact of a limited service-learning intervention where this impact is an increased social responsibility and orientation toward others as the basis of citizenship.

Boss taught an ethics course, as I did, with two sections, one including a service-learning component and the other not. Her conclusion is also optimistic. Relying on a test devised by a student of Kohlberg, which she administered both before and after the course, she reports that the students who had the service-learning component were more successful at reaching "moral reasoning at a higher stage." There was, however, no significant correlation between participation in community service work in the past (prior to the beginning of the semester) and a student's initial score on the test. Boss attributes this to the lack of reflection accompanying the previous community service that students had done. There is, however, another uncomfortable possibility. It is that students learn in an ethics course taught with Kohlberg's schema as content how they are expected to perform. They can then gear their service-learning into this model and score more highly as a result. The question for my purposes is whether we can use the score as a measure of virtue or as progress toward it. Boss tells a significant anecdote about a student "who on his self-ratings reported that he had improved a lot and regarded himself as a highly moral person." Boss says that she agrees with his assessment, though this student showed no difference on his pretest and posttest scores. In this case, I imagine there was genuine moral improvement but not in the specific skill of demonstrating the kind of reasoning that the test scored highly.

It is significant that it is a Kohlberg-type test that Boss administers because Kohlberg's highest stage is, as he acknowledges, drawn straight from Kant's universalization procedure for testing a proposal for action. Boss assumes "that

an ethics class should foster independent or autonomous analytical thinking of the type found at the post-conventional stage of moral reasoning. . . . This assumption is based in part on a progressive philosophy of education in which the purpose of education is to stimulate the natural development of the students' moral capacities and judgements." For Kant there is not a natural progression or development toward living by the categorical imperative. Instead, there is a revolution of the will. For Kant, this is a revolution that we cannot experience either by examining the lives of others or even by introspection. It is certainly not a progression that we could measure empirically.

As with Giles and Eyler, Boss reports an improvement in moral sensitivity (in addition to the greater ability to reason well) as a result of the service-learning component of her course. I do not at all want to deny this, and it is quite consistent with my own experience of teaching a service-learning component. Boss gives a number of powerful examples of how her students changed—often in their own words. One key change was a decrease of stereotyping that resulted from dealing with people rather than abstract issues. Again, this is consistent with what I experienced. However, the only way she claims to *measure* this increase in sensitivity is by higher ratings that the students gave themselves both as moral people and as having made moral improvement. For my purposes, what would be necessary is a rating of actual moral improvement because (as Kant says) we are never more easily deceived than in the opinion we have of ourselves. This is likely to be especially true when students are rating themselves for an ethics course. Kant's view is that we do not see our own fundamental motivation, however hard we introspect, though God can see it and judge us on that basis.

I do not, however, want to end with the negative but with the positive. One of the standards I try to apply to my teaching is to ask, "Is there anything the students have learned today that will be helpful to their lives in ten years' time?" This question can be rather demoralizing, and needs to be handled with care. When I am teaching Descartes's third meditation, for example, with all its complex detail about formal reality and objective reality, I find it hard to sustain the sense that much will be retained beyond the exam. Nonetheless, it is appropriate to teach Descartes's third meditation, even to those who will only have one course in philosophy. What counts as "helpful" needs to be distinguished into many different categories, and I will not try to do that here. What I am convinced about, however, is that this service-learning component

that I have described will be remembered and will be helpful to my students' ethical lives, if they choose to use it, long after they have left college. There is not much of my teaching that I can be so sure about, but I have to retain the recognition that the choice is theirs, together with God's, in some combination that I do not claim to understand.

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