Chapter 4

Teaching Self-Respect: The Very Idea

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Individuals placed at the margins of an unequal society by virtue of belonging to a particular gender, class, race or caste often internalise a lack of self-respect.[1] If self-respect is necessary for human well-being,[2] this lack of self-respect should constitute a problem for societies that consider equality to be an ideal. Further, social transformation requires political empowerment, which in turn must presume self-respect among the discursively marginalised.[3] Given this broader context, one could ask if education might help address some aspect of the problem of lack of self-respect. On one standard view, education is valuable if it 'change[s] [individuals] for the better' (R. S. Peters in Barrow and Woods 2006: 26); and it achieves this in part through the inculcation of autonomy and a sense of 'personal well-being' (Gingell 2008: 123). Since self-respect can be considered necessary for attaining socio-political emancipation,[4] and forms a key constituent in enabling autonomous action and personal well-being,[5] the question of whether self-respect can be taught can be raised both within the philosophy of education and the discourse on moral education.

The concept of self-respect is central to an important debate in political philosophy—between what Dillon (1992c: 107) calls the 'ethic of justice' and the 'ethic of care'. From the Rawlsian justice perspective, self-respect can be attributed to persons if they possess the same basic liberties and therefore the same status as all other persons (Rawls 1999: 478). From the care perspective, this notion of self-respect—which presumes the Cartesian-Kantian notion of the person as an abstract entity with self-consciousness, moral rights and the capacity for rational autonomy (Dillon 1992b: 56)—leads to the 'taking-into-account-and-appreciating attitude' account of self-respect, which in turn is problematic because it is a 'dispassionate, overly intellectualized, arm's length response that does not engage us emotionally' (ibid.: 58).[6] In opposition to this characterisation of self-respect, some care theorists have argued that self-respect involves 'cherishing and treasuring myself for who I am [in my concrete particularity]' (ibid.: 62).

Dillon's notion of 'care respect' tries to reconcile the abstract personhood presupposed in the justice perspective with the concrete individuality that is central to the care perspective. On this view, all persons are equally valuable because they possess an abstract 'human me-ness' which includes reflexivity, self-consciousness, experiential unity over time, a life plan attached to a conception of the good, and the ability to interpretatively construct oneself and the world (Dillon 1992c: 118–119). Yet this abstract me-ness is valuable only to the extent that it forms 'dimensions of or conditions for each person's being the particular person she is' (ibid.: 119). This view entails that while autonomy remains a moral and personal value, it is 'neither all that matters nor what matters most' for the respect-worthiness of persons, because autonomy now forms only one path to becoming a 'me' (ibid.). Further, given the dependence of the abstract

me-ness on the particular 'me', Dillon can be said to subordinate the justice to the care perspective.

In contrast, the present chapter forms part of a larger project that explores whether the best insights of the care perspective can be reconciled with an 'enlarged version of Kantian theory' that does not abstract from human psychology and the social context—as exemplified by Barbara Herman's work which broadly falls under the justice perspective (Herman 2007: ix). Specifically, I investigate if self-respect as Dillon conceives of it in her essay 'Self-Respect: Moral, Emotional, Political' (1997) can be taught if we presuppose Barbara Herman's theory of moral education. For Dillon, self-respect is a nonpropositionally held and emotionally forged interpretive orientation that determines one's understanding of oneself.[7] Further, it cannot be reconstituted through reason if it has been damaged. The claim that reason cannot remedy a lack of self-respect in persons is at odds with Herman's reason-based training in value. In this chapter, I argue that we do not have sufficient grounds to think that Herman's reason-based training in value cannot help instil Dillon-type self-respect.

In §1, I show that standard arguments supporting the view that morality cannot be taught are insufficiently convincing. Subsequently, I delineate Dillon's account of what she calls 'basal self-respect' (§2), and the basic tenets of Herman's theory of moral education (§3). In §4, I show why Hermanian moral education need not be considered entirely superfluous if the goal were to teach Dillon-type self-respect. Finally, I conclude by outlining a rudimentary pedagogical practice consistent with Herman's reason-based education in value.

1. The Claim That Morality Cannot Be Taught

The standard arguments supporting the claim that morality, which includes self-respect, cannot be taught are unconvincing. In what follows, I examine these arguments.

(i) If teaching involves transmission of expertise, then teaching morals must require moral expertise. But there are no lecturers in honesty or professors in self-respect. Therefore, self-respect, and morals in general, cannot be taught (Ryle 1972: 323, 325; Gingell 2008: 135). This argument, however, disregards the fact that expertise in self-respect is not necessary in creating the conditions that would enable the development of self-respect.[8] If creating the right conditions forms part of education, then self-respect can be taught. Here the right conditions include educational policy, but also course content, structure of the classroom and so on. Since the identification and institutionalisation of these conditions would require collective effort, and if we accept that all such efforts are in principle revisable, then it is inessential to view individual teachers as experts in self-respect providing prescriptions based on certain knowledge. Instead, one need only take the inculcation of self-respect as an explicit goal in designing the educational apparatus.

(ii) Education requires assessments and tests, which cannot be devised in moral education. Therefore, moral education is suspect (Ryle 1972: 325; Gingell 2008: 135). But again, if the goal is to create the normative conditions required for the development of a moral temperament, then such assessments are superfluous, since the main task would then be to get the conditions right instead of monitoring the progress of individual students. If we could get the normative and institutional conditions right (for example, for instilling self-respect), then further argumentation would be required to deny that some students will not gain in self-respect as a consequence.[9]

(iii) Gilbert Ryle (1972: 325) argues that morals cannot be taught through lectures and examinations. Rather morality is 'caught' in the sense that we learn morals in the process of growing up through 'example and critically supervised practice' (ibid.). We require, first of all, acquaintance with the 'good examples set by others' like our parents, neighbours or people we have heard or read about (ibid.: 328). Second, we must be taught through 'worded homily, praise and rebuke' that some things are of 'overwhelming importance' (ibid.: 325, 328). Finally, we must train ourselves by practising moral actions (ibid.: 325). Thus, for Ryle, responding to the question of how we learn morality requires asking who we are trying to live up to (ibid.: 331). Here, emulating the role model cannot be reduced to the 'instinctive imitativeness of the young', but a person must learn to '*think* like his elder brother or hero of his adventure story, that is, to think for himself' (ibid.: 331–332).[10]

Ryle's position raises several questions. It is unclear why morals are caught if the inculcation of morals requires 'example and critically supervised practice' including 'worded homily, praise and rebuke'. This is because if the conditions enabling the generation of self-respect must be created by someone other than the person trying to acquire self-respect, then it seems reasonable to think that self-respect is being taught rather than caught. On the other hand, if it is incumbent upon the one trying to gain self-respect to catch morals on her own, then other questions emerge. Ryle (1972: 329–330) takes the acquisition of virtue as a matter of getting to *be* virtuous rather than as a matter of knowing something or knowing how to do something. Yet he also says that 'conscientiousness does not very comfortably wear the label of "knowledge" at all, since it is to *be* honorable, and *not only or primarily to be knowledgeable* [my emphasis] about or efficient at anything' (ibid.: 330). In this passage, Ryle seems to suggest that knowing something and know-how can be a part ('not only or primarily') but not the whole of virtue

acquisition. However, he does not specify the exact part that knowing something and know-how might play in gaining virtue. Further, for Ryle, becoming virtuous requires imitating a role model. Imitation is not mere imitativeness, because the person learning morality must learn to think like her role model ('think like his elder brother or hero of his adventure story, that is, to think for himself' [ibid.: 332]). Here again Ryle does not clarify either what 'thinking' entails, or the extent to which it might require knowledge, if at all. Thus, Ryle leaves indeterminate the extent to which knowledge might be required to gain morality (or self-respect). If this is the case, then the following questions can be raised with regard to the person trying to catch self-respect entirely on her own. If she does not know what self-respect is, then how could she identify self-respecting people to emulate? On the other hand, if she does know self-respect without having it, then is this knowledge a conceptual acquaintance, some sort of know-how, or both? How could she have acquired such knowledge in the first place? Was it caught or taught? If it was caught, then how was it caught, and why catch it again through emulation? If it was taught, then the claim that morality/self-respect is caught requires explanation. Also, if one can identify people to emulate only if one possesses some knowledge of self-respect, this would mean that we somehow already know what self-respect is. If this is the case, then why emulate others at all? Why would we not act in accordance with the knowledge of self-respect we already possess? Thus, the Rylean version of the morality-is-caught-not-taught view requires clarification.

(iv) In (i)–(iii), I have argued that any strong denial of the claim that morality, including self-respect, can be taught remains unsustainable, at least with regard to the influential philosophical literature on this topic. This then leaves open the possibility that self-respect can be taught.

2. Dillon on Basal Self-Respect

I now delineate Dillon's account of basal self-respect—what it is, how it arises, and what it means for it to be damaged.

Self-respect, or 'basal self-respect' as Dillon calls it, is not a 'discrete entity', but a 'complex of multilayered and interpenetrating phenomena that compose a certain way of being in the world, a way of being whose core is a deep appreciation of one's morally significant worth' (Dillon 1997: 228). As 'fundamental orientation to the self', it is the 'primordial interpretation of self and self-worth, the invisible lens through which everything connected with the self is viewed and presumed to be disclosed, that is, experienced as real and true' (ibid.: 241).

Dillon distinguishes between intellectual and experiential understanding to explain the emergence of basal self-respect. Intellectual understanding entails having beliefs based on reasons which lead inferentially to other warranted beliefs (Dillon 1997: 239). In contrast, experiential understanding relates to 'experiencing something directly and feeling the truth of what is experienced' (ibid.). As primordial interpretive valuing of oneself, basal self-respect is an experiential understanding, because it is felt to be a true experience. Moreover, one could intellectually understand that one is worthy of self-respect, but if the basal self-respect, which is an experiential understanding, is damaged, the intellectual understanding is incapable of repairing it. I now explain these claims in more detail.

First, for Dillon, respect is, 'fundamentally, perception, a mode of seeing', and 'all seeing is interpretation, a seeing of something as something' (1997: 241). Thus, basal self-respect is an 'interpretive self-perception', or a 'mode of normatively interpretive perception of self and worth' (ibid.). This interpretive self-perception arises as follows. Experiential understanding develops first, and establishes a frame of reference for all future understanding of self-worth—in

Dillon's words, 'sets the warp into which the threads of our experience are woven to create the layered understanding of self and self-worth in which we are always swaddled' (ibid.). This experiential understanding is not an 'intellectual construction', but results from our 'evidence-processing and reality-representing functions' (ibid.: 244). It comes out of a 'complex, emotionally charged interplay of self, others and institutions which begins long before we are capable of conceptualizing self, worth, persons, institutions, and relations among them' (ibid.). In this way, it 'shapes and delimits our conceptual schema' (ibid.), that is, structures the 'conceptual, emotional and behavioral possibilities' relating to a person's self-worth (ibid.: 242)—how she cognises, values and feels about herself, what she expects from herself, what she takes as reason for action, and how she reacts to stimuli (ibid.: 241). Thus, for Dillon, whether persons develop self-respect or not depends ultimately on the sorts of emotional experiences they come to have early in their lives.

Second, intellectual understanding cannot alter the experiential understanding that constitutes basal self-respect for the following reasons.

(i) Basal self-respect is pre-conceptual because it moulds our conceptual understanding of ourselves (Dillon 1997: 244). It is also pre-agentive because it develops prior to our ability to exercise agency—the basal interpretation 'happens in me, not something that I do' (ibid.).

(ii) This preconceptual basal self-respect is nonpropositionally framed and cannot be altered intellectually. Experiential understanding is expressed in the form of emotions or 'nonpropositional understandings that are at odds with … beliefs and [intellectual] understanding', but without involving 'gross irrationality' (Dillon 1997: 240). That is, experiential understanding is 'nonveridical, but not without warrant and justification' (ibid.) for the following reason. Some part of experiential understanding is explicit and representational,

but much of it is made up of 'unarticulated presuppositions implicit in certain ways of being in the world' (ibid.). In other words, in experiencing our world, we acquire presuppositions about ourselves in the world—that is, some sort of understanding about the shape of our world and our place in it—which we cannot make conscious or put into words. Yet these presuppositions together form a 'nonpropositional framework for interpreting the world' (ibid.).

This nonpropositional framework is pre-reflective, unarticulated and emotion-laden, and conditions our explicit conceptualisation of self and worth (Dillon 1997: 242). It is a consequence of our emotional experiences and the worldly context in which we are located. This is because, for Dillon, basal self-respect is a 'natural interpretive response to the experiences of being a valued and valuable, or unvalued and valueless, person among others who are valued and valuable' (ibid.: 245). These experiences—which constitute the nonpropositional interpretive framework—arise in two ways: First, the 'experiential history of interactions with other people, particularly those with whom we have our earliest relationships' (ibid.). We experience and 'absorb' others' responses to us before we are capable of intellectually examining and evaluating these responses (ibid.). Second, the socio-cultural and political context conditions the experiential understanding of persons (ibid.). For instance, the devaluation and subordination of women ('what is female is worth less') shapes the nonpropositional framework of women, and leads to a 'diminished self' (ibid.: 245–246).

Since basal self-respect is primordial experientially constituted valuing prior to all conceptualisations of self and worth, it 'retains the power to control self-understanding and self-valuing even if we manage to excavate it and lift it to consciousness' (Dillon 1997: 242). So even if we come to understand explicitly that we lack self-respect, there is nothing we can do about it

intellectually, since the nonpropositional experiential understanding is 'resistant to modification through reflection, criticism, or reconceptualization' (ibid.: 240).

(iii) If basal self-respect is damaged, then one cannot respect oneself even if one is aware that one deserves self-respect on intellectual grounds for two reasons.[11]

First, since basal self-respect is a 'primordial valuing that sets the basic terms for all subsequent conceptualizations of self and worth' (Dillon 1997: 242), it can 'control self-understanding and self-valuing' (ibid.). On Dillon's view, the Darwallian categories of recognition self-respect and evaluative self-respect—both of which are intellectually accessed—depend on basal self-respect. One has recognition self-respect if one considers oneself to be an equal member of a community; keeps the dignity of one's person in view in thinking, feeling and desiring; and strives to live in accordance with one's own individual ideals and projects (ibid.: 230). In contrast, one acquires evaluative self-respect if one is living in consonance with the normative principles that constitute one's self-conception (ibid.).

If basal self-respect is damaged, then one finds little 'consolation' in recognising one's personhood or in the awareness of one's merit (Dillon 1997: 242). This is because having recognition and evaluative self-respect does not alter the negative 'basal interpretation': 'this [negative basal interpretation] is what *I am* most fundamentally, and nothing I do or become can change that fact, nothing can alter its implications' (ibid.). This means that one could intellectually have recognition and evaluative self-respect, and yet lack genuine self-respect.

Second, a damaged basal self-respect is a self-fulfilling prophecy. It is psychologically debilitating, but also morally debilitating because it deforms one's valuing and value-discerning qualities (Dillon 1997: 243). The person defines herself as 'worthless', and the 'abiding flavor of her life is shame and self-contempt' (ibid.: 226). Even if she deserves, say, evaluative self-

respect, she 'interprets the evidence as ground for uncertainty about [her] worth' (ibid.: 241). This impacts the person's life, because what we are largely depends on what we understand ourselves to be and what we aim to become, which in turn depends on what significance we give ourselves and our lives (ibid.: 243). Thus, basal self-respect is a self-fulfilling prophecy: if you don't have self-respect, you can never acquire it, certainly not intellectually. Dillon of course does think that one can somewhat repair a damaged basal self-respect by caring for others, and reshaping the oppressive institutions that caused the damage (ibid.: 247ff.).

In sum, on Dillon's view, basal self-respect is a nonpropositionally structured experiential understanding that develops by means of a set of emotional interactions located within a particular institutional context. It is a primordial valuing of oneself that emerges early in life, and that once engendered cannot be altered intellectually.

3. Herman's Theory of Moral Education

Barbara Herman outlines a theory of moral education that departs from theories based on what she calls a 'passive, descriptive project' (2007: 92). We are all 'however formed adults', because our development is contingent, and depends on where and with whom we grow up, which in turn means that we internalise some virtues but also some faults (ibid.: 79). Passive theory takes this however formed adult as a starting point, and asks what a person with such dispositions has reason to do (ibid.: 92). In contrast, Herman outlines a Kantian moral theory that aims, in constructivist vein, to form a normative moral character founded on an investigation into the 'conditions that make right [moral] judgment possible', and so does not begin with the however formed adult (ibid.).

Herman calls this moral theory an 'enlarged version of Kantian theory' that, unlike traditional Kant interpretations, does not abstract the categorical imperative from human psychology and social context (Herman 2007: ix), and takes the derivation of duty as 'deliberative' (ibid.). Roughly speaking, this means that, for Herman, moral reasoning occurs in a 'deliberative field', that is, a 'space in which an agent's deliberations take place' to the extent this agent is concerned with action aimed at achieving some good (ibid.: 18). This deliberative field is shaped by principles and commitments that express a person's conception of value (ibid.). These principles and commitments are 'interpreted' to the extent they relate to a particular socio-institutional context, and they 'construct a sensibility that gives practical sense to our experiences' (ibid.: 42). This sensibility—or the taken-for-granted sense of how things work—is shared, because interpretations of practical principles/commitments must be taught, or normal development would be impossible (ibid.). Children must learn which of their desires and interests have practical significance, and to value some feelings while disregarding others (ibid.). For this reason, moral education is important for Herman, and has the following features.

(i) Moral education, on Herman's view, goes beyond 'dos and don'ts', and involves the 'creation of a sense of self and other that makes shared moral life possible' (2007: 130). This is because morality relates to human flourishing in a collective, and since morality involves obligation, the 'content of extensive regions of what we ought to do will be in important ways up to us' (ibid.: 287). We can either act purely on the basis of reason, that is, our free rational agency, or be determined by our empirical circumstances (ibid.: 172). Therefore, '[t]he point of moral education is not just to make us good. It responds to a demand of our freedom—to express our capacity to make reason our rule' (ibid.). In other words, its goal is to train people to be autonomous. Autonomy is the 'capacity to judge and be motivated by the principles of a

constructed deliberative field' (ibid.: 128). Effectively autonomous moral agents are morally literate in that they possess a 'developed moral intelligence that can read and respond to moral facts, incorporating their evaluative import into a shared way of life' (ibid.). Since moral concepts are acquired in social contexts, autonomy must be empirically realised through a 'social and institutional provision of well-formed values and evaluative skills' (ibid.). The completion of moral education would bring about an 'ectypal world', which is the transformation of the natural world into a rational world (ibid.: 153). Thus, 'training to autonomy makes autonomy empirically real' (ibid.), which implies that we can overcome our upbringing through moral training instead of being determined by it (ibid.: 308).

(ii) This process of moral education involves reason-based training in value, which, according to Herman, has the following features.

(a) Moral education must instil an 'acknowledgment that rational agency is a higher order regulative value' (Herman 2007: 133). This requires that we are responsive to 'detail of circumstance, institutions, character: how rational nature is expressed, where it is vulnerable, how it may be effective' (ibid.). If we grant that rational agency is of higher value, then the aim of moral education is to develop the rational faculty from its 'natural state to concern for one's rational being as a fully moral power' (ibid.: 136). This presupposes that morality completes and perfects rational nature (ibid.: 141), which is necessary given that humans cannot naturally see moral facts or grasp moral truths, but require 'moral experiences and interpretations of experiences (instruction) to become aware of and responsive to a moral world' (ibid.: 134). Thus, moral capacity is natural, but must be produced, and involves constituting a new conception of the self, not a new nature (ibid.).

(b) Moral education as training to virtue is rational training in value (Herman 2007: 145). A moral person is trained in value, which means that she possesses a distinctive orientation to the practical world from the perspective of practical autonomy. This means that she can make connections that non-moral people cannot, and her aim is to confer the system of rational beings on the sensible world (ibid.: 134). Further, this rational training in value can be analysed into two aspects: (A) The specific role that reason plays in moral education; and (B) what it might mean to train persons in value. I discuss each of these in turn.

(A) If training in value is rational, what is the specific role of reason in moral education? Herman says that the role of moral education is not to 'fix shared moral concepts', but to provide 'deliberative tools, modes of reasoning and reflection that we might deploy together [so in community], with some confidence' (2007: 129). These deliberative tools and modes of reasoning, on Herman's view, must at least include the following aspects.

First, part of the educative task in instilling morality is to ascertain what makes for sound moral reasoning (Herman 2007: 277–278). This naturally requires exercising our 'deliberative and critical abilities' to identify the correct moral norms (ibid.: 278).

Second, moral concepts and values underlying moral judgement must be taught. For Herman, what qualifies as a reason depends on the 'story of its value' (2007: 158). The richer our grasp of reasons and the values that underpin them ('evaluative richness to our moral knowledge'), the better our ability to make moral judgements (ibid.: 287–288). Therefore, skilful moral judgement requires an introduction to moral concepts and values. Further, practical skills like cooking are analogous to moral activity in several ways. Becoming confident in exercising practical skills is similar to gaining confidence in the employment of moral skills: one starts with rules, masters basic routines, and then gains experience and knowledge through trial and error

(ibid.: 116). But there is a difference between them. Beyond a certain point, the individual exercise of judgement is authoritative in the cooking case such that over time rules are left behind, and replaced with taste and genius. In contrast, in the case of moral judgement, one must always orient oneself by means of concepts and rules that support moral reasons (ibid.).

Third, moral agents must be taught the rationale for moral rules. If the normal morally literate agent could access the rationale of moral rules, she would have 'greater control over judgment and a wider range of read and response' (Herman 2007: 119). If the agent is taught the rationale for a value in various contexts, then this would influence her attitude and judgements, because it would allow her to understand why that value is a value, and why action based on it should be performed ('appreciate the connection of moral requirement to unconditioned value' [ibid.: 133]). In the absence of the rationale for value, errors of judgement would result, or the action may not be done with the right intention (ibid.). Thus, moral educators must 'ensure that the value content of requirements is accessible, and in terms that suit our needs as moral agents' (ibid.: 288).

Fourth, moral education requires a community founded on rational principles. According to Herman, moral activity is 'intrinsically interpersonal' (2007: 117). Justifying an action as moral always rests on a reason that can 'in principle' be offered in explanation and justification of what we do (ibid.). This fact influences the nature of moral education. If we can justify our actions and judgements to each other in terms of reasons we share, then we can have confidence in our values (ibid.: 128). The formation of new moral concepts, what Herman calls 'moral creativity and improvisation', must also be social in that it is 'something we have to do together' (ibid.: 293). Such a reason-based moral education would not naturally end all discrepancies of status and power, but it is the best we can do (ibid.: 128).

(B) Training in value has several aspects.

First, in Herman's view, reasons have independent validity, but interests and desires can lead to their misrepresentation (2007: 172). The possession of rationality alters both the objects we desire, and the 'content and structure of the desires we come to have' (ibid.: 193). So the faculty of desire differs from the faculty of desire in accordance with concepts (ibid.: 233–234n), like desire in bees differs from that of rational agents (ibid.: 236). The 'raw stuff of desire' cannot directly form part of the deliberative field of the rational agent (ibid.: 244). Some notion of value is required to translate the material of desire into concepts construed as 'recognition of an object into a this' (ibid.: 237). The desire can then be 'addressed by [moral] judgment and deliberation' (ibid.: 244).

The goal of moral education is to 'transform' desires and interests by making them 'sensitive to reason' (Herman 2007: 173). Desires are transformed rather than constrained if one brings them into the deliberative field (ibid.: 127). Training rational agents into this process of transformation enables them to construct well-founded values from desires and interests (ibid.), such that morals are no longer in conflict with the agents' 'loves and attachments' (ibid.: 269). An agent thus trained is not an expert (ibid.: 199). Instead, the transformation of her desires makes her perception of the world different from that of a person with untransformed desires— Herman says that moral skill is structurally closer to perception than practical skill (ibid.: 306). For instance, if the categorical imperative formed part of a person's deliberative field, then it would not even occur to her to embezzle funds or disregard her sense of dignity (ibid.: 196), since embezzling funds or losing one's dignity would violate the 'content of activities and relationships she values' (ibid.: 199).

Second, one must teach values in a way that revisability is part of their form. This is because how we respond to new values depends on the 'structure of value in social institutions that shape an agent's moral intelligence' (Herman 2007: 121). In other words, moral perception is socially constituted, and therefore reflection on one's values is possible only if these values are 'evaluable' (or revisable) in their very form (ibid.: 124, also 313, 316). Revisability also includes avoiding mutually inconsistent values, since we value consistency as part of our normative practice (ibid.: 124).

Third, we need lessons in value, because we cannot individually ascertain what is valuable, and our values are often a result of 'morally suspect institutions' (Herman 2007: 145). However, if we take our values to be inherently revisable and if we could articulate a rational criterion for what would count as progress in our value system, then an ideal moral education can offer conceptual resources to construct values we could all take as valid, at least at a particular point of time. These conceptual resources would include tools of criticism, political participation geared to changing morally unsustainable institutions, and autonomy of character in the 'habit of interpret[ing] and refounding values' (ibid.: 128).

(iii) From (i)–(ii): Hermanian reason-based training in value aims to develop autonomy in persons. It requires a rational community; and involves identifying moral concepts, and teaching them through the explication of their rationale. In addition, it teaches agents to transform desire into moral concepts and values; views all values as intrinsically revisable; and provides them with tools to critique established values.

4. Damaged Basal Self-Respect and Reason-Based Training in Value

Can Herman's reason-based training in value help repair a damaged basal self-respect? I now

argue that a negative response to this question requires further argumentation.

In (i), I argue that Dillon's conception of intellectual understanding seems far too narrow. Subsequently, in (ii), I ask why Dillon takes childhood experience to determine basal self-respect such that experience and reasoning cannot alter it. Finally, I raise the questions of (iii) why reason-forged values must be powerless in mending a damaged basal self-respect, and (iv) why for Dillon emotions cannot be rearranged in tandem with new rationally acquired moral concepts. Finally, in (v), I consider some general objections to my argument.

(i) Dillon appears to conceive of reasoning far too narrowly, and thus cannot adequately support her contention that intellectual understanding cannot alter a damaged basal self-respect. In addition, even if Dillon could be seen as presupposing a broader conception of reason, it would still remain unclear why Herman's reason-based training would be ineffective in repairing a damaged basal self-respect.

Intellectual understanding 'involves having beliefs which one has reason to accept as true, then coming by inference to have other beliefs which one takes to be true in virtue of their logical relation to warranted beliefs where the believing, inferring and assessing need not engage emotions' (Dillon 1997: 239). Here, in her emphasis on inferentiality and independence from emotion, Dillon seems to model intellectual understanding on deductive reasoning. This conception of intellectual understanding combined with the emotional nature of basal self-respect leads Dillon to conclude that intellectual understanding cannot influence basal self-respect. However, if the goal is to ascertain whether reason can help instil or repair self-respect, then one could characterise Dillon's notion of intellectual understanding as being too narrow. A broader conception of reason—which Herman employs—would include not merely deduction, but also inductive reasoning that proceeds systematically in a particular social context, and that is

inherently revisable. Dillon does not discuss this sort of reasoning. Therefore, the question of the effectiveness of reason vis-à-vis a damaged self-respect must remain open.

One could, of course, deny that Dillon reduces intellectual understanding to deductive reasoning in the following way. Recall Dillon's successful professional. Her principle that professional success entitles her to self-respect is inductively gained, as is her awareness that she fulfils all the criteria for such success. From these premises, she infers deductively to the claim that she deserves self-respect. Although deduction is in play here, the overall reasoning here must be viewed as inductive, since her premises are based on probability, and gained in a particular contingent social context. Therefore, Dillon conceptualises intellectual understanding in primarily inductive rather than strictly deductive terms.

The problem with this argument is that even if we grant that Dillon conceptualises intellectual understanding in inductive terms, it still remains unclear why such an understanding could not reconstitute a damaged basal self-respect. For instance, if one assumes like Herman that moral training includes moral concept formation, then one could conceive of a socio-historically conditioned, logically consistent and inherently revisable ideal of self-respect. This rational ideal could then be taught in classrooms through dialogue, making the rationale for it explicit and so on. Given that an account of this sort has preliminary plausibility, Dillon can deny that intellectual understanding can influence basal self-respect only if she shows that teaching reason-forged moral concepts in a rational manner can never correct a damaged self-respect. Since Dillon does not accomplish this, the possibility that reason can play some role in repairing a damaged self-respect must remain open.

(ii) Dillon (1997: 245) claims that the emotional experiences of being valued or disvalued that we gain as children, and that shape our basal respect, are prior to any 'intellectual

understanding of self-worth'. Therefore, intellectual understanding cannot alter basal self-respect. However, Dillon does not adequately support this claim for two reasons: (a) It is unclear why priority in time entails the primacy of one's childhood experiences over one's adult experiences. (b) The claim that basal self-respect is impervious to reconfiguration in adult life can be defended only if it can be shown that experience and reflection, which adulthood brings, can never influence basal self-respect.

(a) The claim that the impact of early childhood experiences on basal self-respect cannot be intellectually reconstituted requires further support for the following reason.

It is unclear why, if a person could gain self-respect through intellectual means in one area of her life, this gain would not help her gain basal self-respect. Consider Dillon's successful professional, X, who lacks basal self-respect despite believing intellectually that she deserves self-respect. Here, it must be presupposed that X has a degree of self-respect if X has achieved professional success. For it is hard to imagine X being effective if she were entirely lacking in self-respect—for example, she may lack the confidence to express her thoughts, avoid taking initiative, behave nervously and so on. Furthermore, it is not unreasonable to think that this self-respect evolved over time. That is, one can assume that X learnt to perform tasks better in the course of time—through practice, learning from her mistakes, getting a sense of the larger whole in which she operates and so on. So it can be said that X progressively developed professional self-respect in accordance with rational criteria. Since professional self-respect can be acquired only in adulthood and never in childhood, it can be said that self-respect can be rationally achieved at least in one domain in later life.

Now, if someone can gain self-respect in one sphere of her life (here, the professional sphere) through an employment of her rational capacities, then it needs to be justified why basal

self-respect cannot be rationally gained later in life. Such a justification would, first of all, require clarifying why acquiring self-respect in one area of one's life cannot help in the acquisition of self-respect in another area of one's life. For instance, being successful at her profession must give X a good sense of how the world works institutionally. But if this is the case, then why should we exclude the possibility that X might employ this understanding in reflecting upon her own experiential (personal) history in the same institutional setup, which could then potentially alter her basal self-respect. Second, if we can progressively master skills, professional or otherwise, then it is not obvious why rationally gained adult experiences cannot alter the basal self-respect rooted in unreflective and highly arbitrary early experiences. This is especially puzzling because as adults we tend to take our childhood experiences as having less significance than our adult experiences. We could of course be wrong about dismissing our childhood experiences, as psychoanalysts would point out. Nevertheless, our giving more credence to our rational adult experience should at least mean that we might try to identify and rectify childhood trauma with the aid of rational resources gained as an adult. And if this is possible, then reason can play a role in repairing a damaged basal self-respect.

Dillon does not exclude these possibilities. She merely asserts that our childhood experiences 'shape and delimit our conceptual schema' (1997: 244) without justifying the unalterable primacy of these experiences in the constitution of basal self-respect.

(b) Any justification of Dillon's claim that the experience and reflection that come with adulthood cannot alter the basal self-respect arising out of childhood experiences would minimally involve arguing for the following propositions.

First, one can argue that understanding one's situation intellectually is different from merely experiencing that situation without any understanding. In the latter case, one is entirely

subject to forces beyond one's control, and merely experiences, say, the pain of lacking self-respect. In the former case, on the other hand, one could both understand that one lacks basal self-respect in conceptual/recognitional terms, and potentially attempt to understand the rationale for this lack. For instance, X could understand intellectually—either on her own, or through some sort of education—that her lack of basal self-respect has its source in flawed institutions. Such a realisation can be expected to alter both her moral universe and her moral judgements.[12] It follows that experience and reflection can add something to unreflective childhood experience. As a consequence, any defence of the claim that reasoning in adult life cannot reconstitute a damaged basal self-respect must show that the addition of experience and reflection can never help mend a damaged basal self-respect.

Second, if we accept that reason emerges piecemeal in a social context, and if moral judgement requires giving and taking reasons (§3), then more needs to be said about why reason cannot help reconstitute a damaged basal self-respect. For example, X could have access not only to her own reason, but also the reasoning of others including a critique of unjust values and institutions, which could then open up the possibility of rationally grounded political participation. If a moral education can make critique and viable political participation available to X, and if this could offer her a new set of values and a rationale for rejecting older values in favour of new values, then it is puzzling why this could not help repair a basal self-respect damaged in childhood.

In fact, Dillon's position is puzzling in this regard. She asserts that political participation can help repair a damaged basal self-respect (Dillon 1997: 249), and yet she denies that intellectual understanding can be part of this process. This is problematic, because rationality could be seen to form some part of political participation even if such participation also involves

emotions. An oppressed person could participate in political resistance only if she grasps the reasons for resisting—for example, a law makes her life worse, and her emotions could be seen to accompany this rational/conceptual awareness. If political resistance involves both reason and emotions, and given that concepts can be put into public language, then it needs to be shown why the creation and dissemination of new moral concepts aimed at achieving rational consensus within a community could not in part aid in mending a damaged basal self-respect. Naturally this process would require several loci (political rallies, editorials and so on), but there are no prima facie grounds to think that the classroom construed as a space for rational discussion could not form part of this larger effort.

(c) Hence, from (a)–(b), more needs to be said about the primacy of childhood experiences in constituting basal self-respect, and why experience and reflection gained in adulthood cannot help repair a damaged basal self-respect.

(iii) According to Dillon, values arise out of being in the world. The values underlying basal self-respect come out of the childhood experience of being valued or disvalued within an institutional setting, and have an emotional basis. However, values, as Herman points out, can also be rationally forged. These values must be conceptual, and since concepts are capable of being publicly communicated, one can argue that these values can be taught. Therefore, to make her case that basal self-respect is impervious to intellectual reconstitution, Dillon must argue that emotion-based values cannot be altered or replaced by values arising from the process of reasoning. Further, she must demonstrate that if a person finds both emotion-based and reason-based values in her world, then an ideal moral education of the Hermanian sort that seeks to bolster reason-based value must remain ineffective in mending a damaged self-respect. Dillon argues for neither of these claims.

(iv) I have argued, in (i)–(iii), that it is unclear why a reason-based training in value could not, at least in part, aid in the process of reconstituting a damaged basal self-respect. I now address another aspect of Dillon's argument: that intellectual understanding cannot influence basal self-respect, because basal self-respect is emotionally engendered. The assumption here is that reason cannot ultimately alter emotions and desires, which leads Dillon (1997: 249) to prescribe caring for others as an antidote to a distorted basal self-respect. I propose that, while caring for others could certainly be helpful in repairing a damaged basal self-respect, this does not preclude the claim that a reason-based training in value, like Herman's, could not also assist in this process.

For Herman, moral persons desire something only if it is consistent with the prescriptions of reason. For instance, a self-respecting person would never desire anything that violated her dignity. The role of moral education is to transform desire in line with moral concepts and values (§3). Can such a moral education also transform basal self-respect? In what follows, I show that it is possible to outline a preliminary account in which a reason-based moral education helps transform desire in a way that is consistent with moral concepts including self-respect. If such an account is plausible, or at least since Dillon does not exclude it, then Hermanian moral education could potentially repair a damaged basal self-respect.

Concepts are modes of ordering reality. Equality as a concept, for instance, emphasises a different aspect of human beings as compared to feudal concepts. One could argue that the introduction of a new moral concept (for example, equality in a feudal setup) would rearrange feelings and desires over a period of time. Imagine a marginalised person, Y, in a context of gross inequality. If Y is taught the concept of equality in the classroom, she may not take to it immediately. However, if there were sufficient classrooms in which equality were being

discussed in line with the best available pedagogical practices, and if Y could be part of rational discussions both inside and outside the classroom, then it does not seem entirely implausible that her self-perception as well as her hopes and desires might alter.

In this imaginary case, rational training in value helps disseminate a concept which then leads to a gradual realignment of the emotions in tandem with this new concept. This realignment may require a long time and may depend on several factors, like the extent of Y's habituation to inequality, and so on. Yet it is not absurd to think that our emotions can rearrange themselves in light of new conceptual developments whether institutional or cultural. In fact, this is quite usual in our daily lives. For example, we may fear a situation if we don't understand it, but the fear fades away once we realise that the situation is non-threatening. If our emotions can be made to align with our rational concepts in our ordinary life, then one would have to argue for why this would not also be the case when it comes to our moral concepts, especially if the rationale of these concepts is widely taught in a way that provokes discussion.[13]

In opposition to this view, Dillon could contend that basal self-respect is a complex emotional state, and so cannot be altered through rational discussion or by merely understanding situations. She could further support this claim by arguing that low basal self-respect might become a habit that is not easily forsaken. However, to make this case, one must show that habit is indeed the normative cause that makes basal self-respect impervious to reason-based alteration.[14]

(v) In §§4(i)–4(iv), I have argued that Dillon's strong claim that intellectual understanding cannot repair a damaged basal self-respect requires further support. To make her case, Dillon must minimally account for what makes for the priority of childhood in constituting basal self-respect, and why experience and reasoning gained in adulthood cannot alter it; why

intellectual understanding must be restricted to deductive reasoning; why values arising out of emotional interactions must possess greater appeal than the values arising out of reason; and why emotions cannot be realigned in light of new reason-forged moral concepts.

I now consider some general objections that can be levelled against this argument.

First, one could argue that self-respect cannot be taught, because self-respect is different for different persons. But even if this relativistic position is defensible, it is beside the point here. On my view, the teaching of self-respect could involve several things at various levels. It could include articulating new concepts consistent with instilling self-respect, and reorganising the classroom as a democratic space in which a plurality of views could be discussed. Disagreements could appear on both these levels, and then either disappear in the course of rational discussion or persist until a new consensus emerges. Here, I am neither legislating the content of self-respect nor prescribing a way of instilling it, and am therefore unconcerned with the issue of relativism. Instead, I am merely suggesting that the question of whether reason-based training in value can help teach self-respect in classroom settings must remain open.

Second, it could be said that even if reason-based training in value can help teach morals, it cannot help teach self-respect. Such a claim would require an argument, but it does seem somewhat odd at first sight. If one can offer a rationale for why truth telling is a value—for example, it makes collective action possible—then one could also offer some sort of rationale in the case of self-respect. For instance, one could propose that a lack of self-respect limits the possibility of what we can do or become, and so on. Of course, in either case, providing the rationale alone will not help, but there is no reason to think it cannot play a part in helping people become truth tellers and persons with self-respect.

Finally, Dillon could be interpreted not as denying that intellectual understanding can

help repair a damaged self-respect, as I have done here, but as saying that intellectual understanding alone cannot accomplish this task. However, such a reading of Dillon would be problematic. Dillon says explicitly that intellectual understanding cannot help with a damaged basal self-respect (see §4[i]). In addition, she does not include reason while listing the ways to restore a damaged basal self-respect (Dillon 1997: 247ff.).

5. Concluding Remarks

I have argued that the question of whether a reason-based training in value can help repair a damaged basal self-respect must remain open. A fuller investigation of this question would at least require a rigorous analysis of the notion of self-respect, and an exploration of the pedagogical techniques that might help teach it. Yet if we assume, for the sake of argument, that self-respect can be taught, then one could provisionally sketch a pedagogical practice consistent with Herman's theory of moral education. First, the teacher would avoid denying the discrepancy between the inequalities existing in the real world, and the idealised rational-democratic space of the classroom (if it can be fashioned). In fact, she would constantly facilitate a back and forth between these two opposed domains, and emphasise the socially constructed nature of morality and self-respect. Second, following Herman and Mitchell, in-class activities and homework assignments would be structured around writing exercises, including personal statements, reading responses, writing on films, art and so on. As far as possible, these writings would be collectively discussed. Third, moral history would be taught as part of the larger goal of imparting the rationale for morals, as Herman suggests. It would include not only the history of moral reasoning, but the imbrication of morals in local institutions (Herman 2007: 293). Fourth, the teacher would present herself as a role model, but only if students are permitted to critique

her on rational grounds. Biographies could help teach the concepts presupposed by a model moral character (cf. ibid.: 266). Finally, since examinations cannot help with moral education (§1), grading could be based on effort rather than quality (cf. Ferguson 1987: 29), though how this might be put into practice would have to be worked out.

Notes

[1] For instance, Ferguson (1987: 341) says that '[m]ost feminists would take it to be a truism that women's sense of self-worth, and consequently our personal power, has been weakened by a male-dominated society which has made us internalize many demeaning images of women.'

[2] Rawls (1999: 386) characterises self-respect as a 'primary good'. Self-respect refers to a person's 'secure conviction that his conception of his good, his plan of life, is worth carrying out', and his self-confidence that he will be able to fulfil his plans (ibid.). A lack of self-respect makes a person feel that her plans are valueless, and that she would lack the will to pursue anything of value (ibid.). Robin Dillon (1992a: 134) argues that for Rawls, having self-respect is psychologically advantageous as it aids the 'zest with which we pursue our plans of life'. While granting that self-respect has psychological benefits, Dillon places more value on self-respect than Rawls does. In Dillon's view, self-respect is 'life enhancing', because its absence makes life 'not simply bland or dysfunctional … [but] meaningless' (ibid.: 135). In addition, it helps foster moral relationships between people (Dillon 1992b: 60).

[3] Dillon (1992b: 53) takes self-respect to be 'crucial to feminist political empowerment, as the source of the strength and confidence needed to effectively challenge and change subordinating institutions'.

[4] Ferguson recommends a feminist education that would help develop 'self-integrity and self-worth' so that women acquire the 'psychological resources [they] need to develop full self-realization' (1987: 341; also Dillon 1992b: 53). Such an education is necessary, because people lacking in self-respect are 'timid' and 'risk averse', and 'face the problem of contributing to [their] own subordination because of not even trying to achieve goals [they] really want' (Ferguson 1987: 341).

[5] See Kant (1996: 435–436); Rawls (1999: 385ff.).

[6] Meyers (1986: 86) admits that Rawlsian self-respect depends on life plans that include both justice and the personal aims of individuals. However, she opines that Rawls's theory of deliberative rationality which is required for planning one's life does not 'adequately deal with the role of nonrational factors in personal choice' (ibid.).

[7] Not all care theorists would agree with Dillon's general approach to care ethics; see Tong and Williams (2018). Dillon's work has been centred here because it deals with the notion of self-respect in a differentiated way.

[8] Ryle (1972: 327) says that moral experts are not required for teaching morals.

[9] Ryle (1972: 331) also denies that morals are learnt through 'tests and techniques of instruction'.

[10] Carr (1991) also presupposes the role model theory, and consequently emphasises teacher training.

[11] Dillon cites 'familiar' cases in which women lack self-respect despite their awareness that they deserve to feel self-respect (1997: 232ff.): A successful professional takes pride in her success and yet lacks self-respect. A feminist rejects the male construction of the female body, but still feels ashamed when she menstruates. A woman understands that she is well-respected, but feels an 'unjustified resentment' that others are treating her badly.

[12] As Herman says, if the normal morally literate agent could access the rationale of moral rules, she would have 'greater control over judgment and a wider range of read and response' (2007: 119).

[13] Ryle's view may seem to be at odds with the claim that reason-based education could potentially help teach morality. However, as I argued in §1(iii), Ryle's position needs clarification. Despite the fact that Ryle takes it that acquiring virtue involves coming to be virtuous, rather than getting to know something or knowing how to do something, he also suggests that knowing something and know-how can be a part but not the whole of virtue. Yet he does not clarify the extent to which knowledge might be part of virtue-acquisition. In addition, he says that a person learning self-respect must not be merely imitative, but must

learn to think like her role model. However, he does not specify either the nature of this thinking or the extent to which knowledge might be involved in it.

[14] Mitchell (1998: 129) argues that a traumatised person 'withdraws from reality at the level of his or her language'. This language is the 'verbal version of the visual language of dreams … expressions of feeling rather than meaning' (ibid.: 132). Curing such a person requires producing order and clarity not merely through naming, but also writing. This is because 'order and disorder in human experience is an interactive process' (ibid.: 130), and writing can help one perceive oneself from the perspective of the other (ibid.: 131). If we view a person with low basal self-respect as a variant of the traumatised person (which naturally requires an argument), then one could argue that naming and writing could be ways of altering the emotionally inflected basal self-respect. So if reason-based training in value makes writing an essential part of its pedagogy, then it seems plausible that reason-based training could aid in mending a damaged basal self-respect.

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