Action irrationality, systemic practical irrationality, and the remedy in Kant

[Irracionalidade da ação, irracionalidade prática sistêmica e o remédio em Kant]

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DOI: 10.5380/sk.v21i1.91472

Abstract

In contrast to the well explored criteria of practical rationality in Kant's philosophy, there is hardly any attempt to systematically examine the sources of practical irrationality in Kant. Yet, the development of the realm of reason among human beings depends on this core issue of his philosophy. Although Kant does not provide any comprehensive analysis of irrationality, one can distinguish three kinds of problems and sources of practical irrationality, related respectively to each of the three main dimensions of practical rationality: instrumental, practical (in a narrower sense), and systemic. Inquiring into these dimensions, this paper also explores the reasons why a lack of rationality remains even in individual actions out of duty, i.e. out of practical reason, and why only acting under an idea of systemic rationality makes possible the full achievement of rationality.

Keywords: irrationality; systemic irrationality; instrumental irrationality; practical irrationality; realm of reason.

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1. Three main dimensions of practical rationality

In contrast to the criteria and conditions of practical rationality in Kant's philosophy that have been intensively explored in the last decades, there is hardly any attempt to systematically examine the sources of practical irrationality in Kant. Nonetheless, there is not only plenty said about practical irrationality by Kant, but it is also at the core of his philosophy, on which depends the development of the realm of reason among human beings, and the implementation of what Onora O'Neill calls "constructions of reason".

Although Kant does not provide any comprehensive analysis of irrationality, one can distinguish in these abundant materials three kinds of problems and sources of practical irrationality, related respectively to each of the three main dimensions of practical rationality: instrumental rationality, practical rationality (in a narrower sense), and systemic irrationality.

Instrumental rationality consists in adopting suitable means to one's ends. Its usual criteria – efficiency, regularity ("lawfulness" (*Gesetzmäßigkeit*) in Kant), consistence – are present in Kant's practical philosophy. *Practical rationality in a narrower sense* pertains to appropriate end setting. Kant does not determine it primarily by criteria of the rational choice theory – such as completeness and transitivity –, but instead as choosing ends that are suitable to the specific nature of human beings. Non-human living beings behave in accordance with laws and with an end, yet neither choosing nor having a representation of them/it. In fact, according to Kant, "only a rational being has the capacity to act in accordance with the representation of laws, that is, in accordance with principles, or has a will" (GMS, AA 4: 412).

Instinct does not provide non-human living beings only with an end/ends, but also with the means suitable to those ends. They do not really choose the means: instinct cares both for the means and for the ends. Non-human living beings behave in accordance with an end in two regards: individually, striving for self-conservation, as well as collectively, striving for the reproduction of their species. Human beings are not given their collective organization by nature. Instead, it results from individual and collective choices. Thus, human collective organization is the object of *systemic rationality*.

2. Three sources of practical irrationality

Now, there are three kinds of problems or sources of irrationality related respectively to each of these dimensions of rationality: problems or factors of irrationality pertaining (1) to the appropriate means, (2) to end setting, and (3) to collective organization.

(1) Concerning *instrumental rationality*, Kant asserts:

> Whoever wills the end also wills (insofar as reason has decisive influence on his actions) the indispensably necessary means to it that are within his power. This proposition is, as regards the volition, analytic, for [...] the imperative extracts the concept of actions necessary to this end merely from the concept of the volition of this end (GMS, AA 4: 417).

Since a human being may pursue more than one end at a time, one should talk of "actions fitting to this end" rather than "actions necessary to this end". Yet, from a non-normative point of view, a descriptively neutral characterization of the human will would be: Whoever wills the end also wills what he *believes* to be the indispensably necessary means to it that she or he *believes* to be within her or his power. Here lies a cognitive source of the irrationality of some actions, that is, wrong belief(s) about one the following objects: (i) about the indispensable – or the most appropriate – means, and (ii) about whether these means are within one's power. In the absence of reason's "decisive influence on his actions", the human being may be, or is, likely to

act irrationally, from an instrumental point of view, on the basis of one or both of these kinds of wrong belief(s). However, under reason's "decisive influence on his actions" too, such wrong beliefs may occur and lead to instrumental irrationality. In fact, Kant observes that "reason itself does not operate instinctively, but rather needs attempts, practice and instruction in order gradually to progress from one stage of insight to another" (IaG, AA 8: 18).

This road of gradual progress is paved by intermediary steps that are, from an instrumental point of view, irrational to various extents.

(2) Let us now look at the factors of *irrationality pertaining to end-setting*. Inside the same person, ends given by sensibility to the faculty of desire, that is, inclinations, which are "habitual sensible *desire*[s]" (Anth, AA 7: 452), collide with one another. This situation unavoidably results in either indeterminacy of the will ("peevish wish": Anth, AA 7: 251) or frustration of the will, to the extent to which the will is determined by inclinations:

> Now, it is impossible for the most insightful and at the same time most powerful but still finite being to frame for himself a determinate concept of what he really wills here. If he wills riches, how much anxiety, envy and intrigue might he not bring upon himself in this way! If he wills a great deal of cognition and insight, that might become only an eye all the more acute to show him, as all the more dreadful, ills [*Übel*] that are now concealed from him and that cannot be avoided, or to burden his desires [*Begierden*], which already give him enough to do, with still more needs. If he wills a long life, who will guarantee him that it would not be a long misery? If he at least wills health, how often has not bodily discomfort kept someone from excesses into which unlimited health would have let him fall, and so forth. (GMS, AA 4: 418)

Kant's point is not to deplore the existence of inclinations as habitudes. Inclinations originate in the faculty of desire, which is a natural disposition, so that it and they cannot be eradicated. Inclinations are not damaging as long as they are subordinated to reason. Thus, already the child's inclination to avoid pain ought to be directed by means of coercion into the habit to obey rules:

> children are sent to school initially not already with the intention that they should learn something there, but rather that they may grow accustomed to sitting still and observing punctually what they are told, so that in the future they may not put into practice actually and instantly each notion [*Einfälle*] that strikes them. [...] the human being must be accustomed early to subject himself to the precepts of reason (Päd, AA 9: 442).

Yet, there exist two kinds of end-setting by the faculty of desire that cannot be subordinated to reason, because they either have an excess or a deficit of habitude: (i) affects, that is, "surprise through sensation, by means of which the mind's composure (*animus sui compos*) is suspended" (Anth, AA 7: 252) and (ii) passions, that is, "inclination[s] that can be conquered only with difficulty or not at all by the subject's reason" (Anth, AA 7: 251).

Now, despite these permanent and partly deep-rooted collisions among inclinations whenever they are not subordinated to reason, human beings strive for the impossible satisfaction of all of them:

> all people have already, of themselves, the strongest and deepest inclination to happiness because it is just in this idea that all inclinations unite in one sum. [...] and yet one can form no determinate and sure concept of the sum of satisfaction of all inclinations under the name of happiness (GMS, AA 4: 399).

Whereas the "sum of satisfaction of all inclinations" is inconsistent, the satisfaction of all inclinations that are subordinated to reason is possible, to the extent to which they are subordinated to reason:

> In the sensibly practical too, reason goes from the general to the particular according to the principle: not to please one inclination by placing all the rest in the shade or in a dark corner, but rather to see to it that it can exist together with the totality of

> *all* inclinations (Anth, AA 7:251).

Yet, at the same time, passion hinders the ordering task of reason: "Inclination that prevents reason from comparing it with the sum of all inclinations in respect to a certain choice is *passion* [*Leidenschaft*] (*passio animi*)" (Anth, AA 7: 266).

Yet, since ideas originate in the faculty of reason in its speculative use, irrationality in end-setting is not possible without reason, not only because no rule and no habitude can be acquired without reason, but also because reason is also the decisive source of the idea of happiness. Kant insists on this point:

> Passion always presupposes a maxim on the part of the subject, to act according to an end prescribed to him by his inclination. Passion is therefore always connected with his reason [...]. (Anth, AA 7: 266)

Thus, reason is both the source of rationality and the decisive source of irrationality. This results from the double characterization of reason by Kant (i) as the combination of the power of universal rules and aims and (ii) as a power that "knows no boundaries to its projects" (IaG, AA 8: 18f.). Not sensibility, but rather both of these aspects of reason are the main source of irrationality in general, and the main source of irrational inclinations in particular:

> [...] it is the property of reason that with the assistance of the power of the imagination it can concoct desires not only *without* a natural drive [*Naturtrieb*] directed to them but even *contrary to* it, which desires in the beginning receive the name of *concupiscence* [*Lüsternheit*]; but through them are hatched bit by bit, under the term *voluptuousness* [*Üppigkeit*], a whole swarm of dispensable inclinations, which are even contrary to nature (MAM, AA 8: 111).

(3) By the factors of *irrationality pertaining to collective organization*, I mean the problems related to the collision between individual wills. Reason, not as the power of rules and universal aims, but reason as the power that knows no boundaries to its projects, in other words, the faculty of illimitation, gets activated and dominates the contacts between individuals:

> the inclination to freedom as a passion [...] is the most violent inclination of all, in a condition where he [the human being] cannot avoid making reciprocal claims [*Ansprüche*] on others (Anth, AA 7: 268).

Kant enumerates the forms adopted by this passion for freedom: "These passions are the *manias for honor*; *for dominance*, and *for possession* [*Ehrsucht*, *Herrschsucht*, *Habsucht*]" (Anth, AA 7: 270).

Thus, not only happiness as the idea in which "all inclinations unite in one sum" (GMS, AA 4: 399) cannot be reached because of a collision, that is because of the collision between the inclinations of the same individual, but also that the passion for freedom necessarily leads to collisions – namely, to collisions between individual wills – that likewise necessarily impede the attainment of all of its aims.

Because of these problems, (conditional) imperatives, i.e., the imperative of skill and the imperative of prudence, seem paradoxically at the same time a source of irrationality and as originating in rationality.

All *imperatives of skill* – that is all hypothetical, problematic or technical imperatives – originate in a certain way from rationality, or, more precisely, from *instrumental rationality*, which consists in adopting laws that connect suitable means to one's ends. In fact,

> All imperatives are expressed by an *ought* and indicate by this the relation of an objective law of reason to a will that by its subjective constitution is not necessarily determined by it (a necessitation) (GMS, AA 4: 413).

The development of all-purpose skills is an end of reasons, and the object of a duty toward oneself. Thus, "as a rational being he necessarily wills that all the capacities in him be

developed, since they serve him and are given to him for all sorts of possible purposes" (GMS, AA 4: 424).

Now, passions entail the use of instrumental rationality:

> Since [these] passions [*Ehrsucht*, *Herrschsucht*, *Habsucht*] are inclinations that aim merely at the possession of the means for satisfying all inclinations which are concerned directly with the end, they have, in this respect, the appearance [*Anstrich*] of reason; that is, they aspire to the idea of a faculty connected with freedom, by which alone ends in general can be attained. Possessing the means to whatever aims one chooses certainly extends much further than the inclination directed to one single inclination and its satisfaction (Anth, AA 7: 270).

Now, the factors of irrationality pertaining to collective organization may originate not only from the cognitive source of the instrumental irrationality mentioned above, which is a problem internal to instrumental rationality, but also from the separability of the instrumental rationality from the rationality concerning end setting. Indeed, Kant affirms: "Whether the end is rational and good is not at all the question here [...]" (GMS, AA 4: 415), which contrasts with Aristotle's view on prudence, because Aristotelian prudence concerns the way in which goods – not any kind of ends – are strived for, i.e., the way virtues apply "it is not possible to be good in the true sense of the word without prudence, or to be prudent without moral goodness" (NE 1144b31).

Not only all applications of the *imperative of skill*, but also the – hypothetical, assertoric and pragmatic – *imperative of prudence* originate in a certain way from rationality, in a negative regard as well as in a positive regard. In a *negative regard*, Kant states that unhappiness may motivate to violate the moral law of reason, and thus that unhappiness should be avoided for the sake of practical reason in the narrow sense:

> To assure one's own happiness is a duty (at least indirectly); for, want of satisfaction with one's condition, under pressure from many anxieties and amid unsatisfied needs, could easily become a great *temptation to transgression of duty* (GMS, AA 4: 399).

For this reason, not caring for one's own happiness must be considered as a factor of irrationality pertaining to collective organization. In a *positive regard*, although the happiness of the person acting morally is not the objective of an imperative, it is an object of hope resulting from morality itself. The first general imperative of duty commands "[...] act as if the maxim of your action were to become by your will a universal law of nature" (4:421). Actually, what Kant means here is *the* universal law of nature. Thus, one should act as if the maxim of one's action were to become fully successful. In fact, Kant affirms:

> morality alone, and with it, the worthiness to be happy, is also far from being the complete good. In order to complete the latter, he who has not conducted himself so as to be unworthy of happiness must be able to hope to partake of it (KrV, B841).

Admittedly, a hope is not the same as an imperative, and making an imperative out of happiness understood in an unconditioned way, i.e., not connected to morality, is immoral and irrational. Yet, this abuse results (through a paralogism) from a rational premise, which is that the perspective of success ought to be entailed in the will.

As is well known, the imperative of prudence is also a source of irrationality, not only because of its inconsistence, but also because this inconsistence manifests itself in the fulfillment of this imperative. In fact, any of the inclinations that are to be satisfied within the total satisfaction of all inclinations under the name of happiness (GMS, AA 4: 399) may become motivation to deviate from the pursuit of happiness. Kant describes this weakness of the choice pursuing happiness:

> the precept of happiness [i.e. the imperative of prudence] is often so constituted that it greatly infringes upon some inclinations. [...] Hence, it is not to be wondered at

> that a single inclination, determinate both as to what it promises and as to the time within which it can be satisfied, can often outweigh a fluctuating idea, and that a man – for example, one suffering from gout – can chose to enjoy what he likes and put up with what he can since, according to his calculations, on this occasion at least he has not sacrificed the enjoyment of the present moment to the perhaps groundless expectation of a happiness that is supposed to lie in health (GMS, AA 4: 399).

3. Why does a lack of rationality remain in individual action out of duty, i.e., out of practical reason?

Might the *categorical imperative*, like the imperative of the skill and the imperative of prudence, both originate from rationality and yet also be a source of irrationality? Paradoxically, it seems to be the case, for the following reason.

The second imperative of duty asserts the end of rational action: "*So act that you use humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means*" (GMS, AA 4: 429).

Here, humanity refers to what is specifically human, i.e., to what does not belong to animality: reason. Thus, the second imperative of duty requires that reason be considered in each person at the same time as an end and as a means. There are frequent misunderstandings related to this second imperative of duty: (i) considering each person as an end in itself and (ii) considering reason (or persons) only as end(s) in itself/themselves. Concerning the latter frequent misunderstanding, one should not forget the expression "not only", since this expression implies that there are further ends than reason itself. Indeed, reason may be used as a means for (a) satisfying inclinations or individual wills, whether an other's or mine, (to the extent that they do not violate the moral law), as well as, for (b) promoting reason's own complete and purposive development as the end of this natural disposition.

I begin with the case (a). Reason is not only allowed by morality to be used as a means for realizing both my will or other's wills, but it is also required to be used in this way in the context of moral duty:

> Providing for oneself to the extent necessary just to find satisfaction in living (taking care of one's body, but not to the point of effeminacy) belongs among duties to oneself. [...] beyond *benevolence* in our wishes for others (which costs us nothing) how can it be required as a duty that this should also be practical, [...]? – Benevolence is satisfaction in the happiness (well-being) of others; but beneficence is the maxim of making other's happiness one's end, and the duty to it consists in the subject's being constrained by his reason to adopt this maxim as a universal law (TL; AA 6: 452).

Now, there is a moral problem resulting from benevolence: the recipient's dependence on the benefactor, gratefulness being both a duty and a dependence toward the benefactor. To the latter extent, benevolence seems to collide with the duty of respect toward others and toward oneself. Indeed, this dependence may result in the recipient's distrust and even ingratitude toward the benefactor, and possibly in the benefactor's self-distrust. Kant solves the problem raised by this possible collision through (i) requiring beneficence to be exerted anonymously (neither should the benefactor know who is the recipient nor should the recipient know who is the benefactor, i.e., beneficence should be organized collectively), and (ii) requiring (moral) friendship to be limited to communicating one's ideas, cognitive, moral and esthetic judgments, expressly excluding beneficence among friends (Merle, 2021). Both requirements pertain to what Kant calls respect toward others. Indeed, generally speaking, according to Kant, the individual moral subject ought to observe an equilibrium between beneficence (also called love) and respect:

> The chief division [of duties to others] can be that into duties to others by performing which you also put others under obligations and duties to others the observance of which does not result in obligation on the part of others. Love and respect are the feelings that accompany the carrying out of these duties. [...] they are basically always united by the [moral] law into one duty, only in such a way that now one duty and now the other is the subject's principle, with the other joint to it as accessory (TL, AA 6: 448).

This results in each person's moral behavior towards others having to observe an equilibrium between attraction and repulsion by others. Now, repulsion or respect toward others amount to restricting the use of reason as a means for (a) promoting reason's own complete and purposive development as the end of this natural disposition as well as for (b) satisfying inclinations or individual wills, whether other's or mine, that do not violate the moral law. Thus, this equilibrium raises the following two problems pertaining to social irrationality.

(a) This equilibrium lead to a limited contribution to the promotion of reason, hence to a deficit of rationality:

> It is a duty to oneself as well as to others not to *isolate* oneself [...] but to use one's moral perfections in social intercourse (*officium commercii*, *sociabilitas*). [...] forming part of an all-inclusive circle of those who, in their disposition [*Gesinnung*], are citizens of the world – not exactly in order to promote as the end what is best for the world but only to cultivate what leads indirectly to this end: to cultivate a disposition of reciprocity – agreeableness, tolerance, mutual love and respect (TL, AA 6: 473).

The restrictions related to the contribution to what is "best for the world" are expressed in this quotation by "not exactly" and "indirectly", and they are clearly related to "mutual love and respect" between which an equilibrium has to be observed. That this "duty not to isolate oneself," consisting in "cultivating mutual love and respect," and an equilibrium between both amounts to no more than a limited contribution to the promotion of reason is confirmed by the fact that moral law and the categorical imperative point to a more comprehensive end of social rationality.

Let us examine this more comprehensive end of social rationality. In the second imperative of duty, "humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other" ought to be an end. Now, reason is a natural predisposition that cannot be fully developed in the individual, so that reason as an end can lie only in the species:

> *All natural predispositions of a creature are determined sometime to develop themselves completely and purposively* [...] *In the human being* (as the only rational creature on earth), *those predispositions whose goal is the use of his reason were to develop completely* [Nisbet: "could be fully developed"; "*sollten sich [...] völlständig entwickeln*"] *only in the species, but not in the individual* (IaG, AA 8: 18).

As is well-known, according to Kant, the complete and purposive development of human predispositions cannot be achieved but through the succession of an "immense" number of generations:

> nature perhaps needs an immense series of generations, each of which transmits its enlightenment to the next, in order finally to propel its germs in our species to that stage of development which is completely suited to its aim (IaG, AA 8: 19).

The explanation provided by Kant in IaG for such high number of generations is neither only, nor mainly, due to cognitive obstacles against the scientific inquiry into nature and against the development of technics, but to social obstacles. The duty to observe an equilibrium between beneficence and respect is based on the statement of the existence of such obstacles. If these obstacles were not taken into account, the moral law would not result in this duty of equilibrium between beneficence and respect that is at the core of Kant's *Doctrine of Virtue*.

Yet, strictly speaking, in this matter, not the *categorical imperative* itself, is the source of the huge deficit of rationality mentioned above, but this deficit appears first in duties derived from

the categorical imperative, i.e., the "duty to oneself as well as to others not to isolate oneself" or the duty to observe an equilibrium between benevolence and respect in the relationship to others. This points to the fact (i) that, even when a person acts out of duty, i.e., motivated by reason alone, which includes the duty to develop one's talents, this individual action alone cannot lead to the full development of reason and rationality, and (ii) that, even if each person individually acted morally, these actions alone could not lead to the full development of reason and rationality. The reason for this impossibility lies in a second problem pertaining to social irrationality, which is the following one.

(b) The – real or latent – collisions among the wills of the individual moral subjects remains unresolved by the equilibrium between benevolence and respect that limits the individual wills. Now, this constant tension among the wills is the source of passions that are socially irrational. Indeed, each individual will, led by instrumental reason, seeks to extend its skills resulting in comparison to others regarding their respective skills, in competition and in fear. In turn, a motive or temptation to act immorally against others (without beneficence or without respect) is generated. This is *a permanent temptation for social irrationality*:

> It is not the instigation [*Anreize*] of nature that arouses what should be called the *passions* [*Leidenschaften*], which wreak such great devastation in his [the human being's] originally good predisposition. His needs are but limited, and his state of mind is providing for them moderate and tranquil. He is poor (or considers himself so) only to the extent that he is anxious that other human beings will consider him poor and will despise him for it. Envy, addiction to power, avarice [*Habsucht*, *Herrschsucht*], and the malignant inclinations associated with these, assail his nature, which on his own is undemanding, as soon as he is among human beings (RGV, 6: 93f.).

Thus, drawing on an analogy with Kant's theses on perpetual peace, the mere individual observance of the categorical imperative amounts more to a cease-fire than to a true peace among individuals. Generally speaking, full rationality cannot be achieved by individual rational moral actions alone. Thus, if any, the achievement of full rationality can only be the achievement of systemic rationality.

4. The full achievement of rationality through acting under an idea of systemic rationality

In Kant, this systemic rationality rests upon the thesis of the general will inspired by Rousseau. Thus, let us first have a short look at what Rousseau's concept of a general will consist in? Rousseau presents it as follows:

> There is often a considerable difference between the will of all and the general will: the latter looks only to the common interest, the former looks to private interest, and is nothing but a sum of particular wills; but if, from these same wills, one takes away the pluses and the minuses which cancel each other out, what is left as the sum of the differences is the general will (Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Social Contract*, Book II, Ch. 3).

The core of Kant's idea of the kingdom of ends is the same as the core of Rousseau's concept of a general will despite the fact that the latter relates to external legislation, that is, to the relationships between individual free wills in their external dimension ruled by legal law, whereas the former relates to internal legislation, that is, to their relationships in their internal dimension ruled by morality or virtue. Kant explains:

> *kingdom of ends*. By a *kingdom* I understand a systematic union of various rational beings through common laws. Now since laws determine ends in terms of their universal validity, if we abstract from the personal differences of rational beings as

> well as from all the content of their private ends we shall be able to think of a whole of all ends in systematic connection (a whole both of rational beings as ends in themselves and of the ends of his own that each may set himself), that is, a kingdom of ends, which is possible in accordance with the above principles (GMS, AA 4: 433).

This quotation does not only explain what the idea of a kingdom of ends means. It also explains why this idea is consistent, hence realizable, unlike, for example, the inconsistent idea of happiness as the sum of the satisfaction of all our inclinations.

Now, the idea of a kingdom of ends provides the basis for the third imperative of duty. The imperatives of duty, the addressee of which is the individual person, are ordered according to the categories of quantity (see KrV, B106): (1) unity (or the law of nature), (2) plurality (of the persons), (3) totality (of the kingdom of ends). Totality is the unity of plurality. Accordingly, the third imperative of duty expresses in the most adequate way the systemic rationality of the categorical imperative, while entailing both two first imperatives of duties, even though the presence of the wording of the second imperative of duty appears more clearly. Kant explains:

> For, all rational beings stand under the *law* that each of them is to treat himself and all others *never merely as means* but *always at the same time as ends in themselves*. But from this there arises a systematic union of rational beings through common objective laws, that is, a kingdom, which can be called a kingdom of ends (admittedly only an ideal) because what these laws have as their purpose is just the relation of these beings to one another as ends and means. A rational being belongs as a *member* to the kingdom of ends when he gives universal laws in it but is also subject to these laws. He belongs to it as a *sovereign* when, as lawgiving, he is not subject to the will of any other (GMS, AA 4: 433).

As is well known, here again Kant draws on Rousseau despite the fact that Rousseau deals with external legislation, whereas Kant relates to internal legislation. Indeed, Rousseau explains:

> [...] each individual, by contracting, [...] finds himself engaged in a two-fold relation: namely, as member of the Sovereign toward private individuals, and as a member of the State toward the Sovereign (Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Social Contract*, Book I, Ch. 7).

With "that each of them is to treat himself and all others never merely as means but always at the same time as ends in themselves", Kant almost expressly repeats the second imperative of duty:

> *So act that you use humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means* (GMS, AA 4: 429).

What is new in the third imperative of duty, as compared to the second imperative of duty, is the point of view adopted by the individual moral agent: the point of view of the systematic union of rational beings. In other words, the person cannot be moral nor fully rational except by thinking herself or himself as acting as part of – or under the idea of – the systematic union of rational beings. Only the idea of the united or general will makes human beings capable of adequate end-setting, that is, rational end-setting. Not only social irrationality, but also individual irrationality, cannot be remedied but with systemic practical rationality. This leads Kant to sketch the steps of the education of individual human beings as follows:

> In his education, the human being must therefore 1) be *disciplined*. To be disciplined means to seek to prevent animality from doing damage to humanity, both in the individual and in society. [...]
>
> 2) The human being must be *cultivated*. [...] It is the procurement of skillfulness. The latter is the possession of a faculty which is sufficient for the carrying out of whatever purpose. [...]
>
> 3) It must be seen that the human being becomes *prudent* also, well suited for human society [...]. This requires a certain form of culture, which is called *civilizing*. [...]

> 4) One must also pay attention to *moralization*. The human being should not merely be skilled for all sorts of ends, but should also acquire the disposition [*Gesinnung*] to choose nothing but good ends. Good ends are those which are necessarily approved by everyone and which can be the simultaneous ends of anyone. (Päd, AA 9: 449f.)

The general will of the kingdom of ends cannot adopt ends apart from such "good ends [that] are those which are necessarily approved by everyone and which can be the simultaneous ends of anyone." The idea of the kingdom of ends, which is the last step of Kant's educational curriculum, contains instrumental rationality, practical rationality (in a narrower sense) and systemic rationality. Thus, in Kant's view, the idea of the kingdom of end constitutes the ultimate and only full remedy for problems or factors of irrationality pertaining to (1) the appropriate means, (2) the end setting, and (3) collective organization.

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Recebido 11/2022 | Aprovado 02/2023