

Kantian Ethics, Feminism, and Worries about Emotional Detachment

[Ética Kantiana, Feminismo e Preocupações com a Abnegação Emocional]

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Abstract

This essay is a much-revised version of my “Kantian Ethics and Claims of Detachment” (Baron, 1997). I am grateful to the editors at Penn State University Press for permitting me to use the material in that paper for this one. My essay addresses three criticisms of Kant’s ethics, all involving the notion of detachment: that it requires us to be detached from other persons (at the very least, to hold them at arm’s length); that it requires us to have a sort of detachment from our own projects; and that it requires detachment from feeling. I frame these worries in terms of a broader question of whether Kant’s ethics is deeply or only very superficially at odds with feminism, doing so in light of claims by some feminists that it is indeed deeply at odds with it.

Keywords: Kant; ethics; detachment; feminism; affect.

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This essay is a much-revised version of my “Kantian Ethics and Claims of Detachment,” published in Robin May Schott, ed., *Feminist Interpretations of Immanuel Kant* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997). I am very grateful to the editors at Penn State University Press for permitting me to use the material in that paper for this essay.

1. Introduction

Feminist criticisms of Kant's ethics often meet with the following reply: Clearly, Kant's own views on women are deplorable.² But as is sometimes the case with brilliant thinkers, his theory was way ahead of him. It contains in it the basis for a challenge to positions, such as his own, that give women a subordinate moral and political status. All that needs altering, on this view, are Kant's disturbing anthropological remarks about women, and his claims about their moral and political status that rest on those "observations." Sally Sedgwick articulates this line of defense as follows:

In Kant's defense we would like to be able to say when we read his denial to women of the right to citizenship and equality that he is simply laboring under a faulty or antiquated anthropology, and that all that needs correction is his grasp of the facts. We would like to say that there is nothing about the questionable assumptions that make up his moral anthropology that need cause any worry about the validity of the supreme moral law itself. While he may have been ideologically misled or empirically mistaken, his moral *groundwork* on this interpretation remains safely intact. Following this line of defense, we might then go on to argue that one fact that indeed needs correcting is his assumption that it is the *nature* of women to be more determined by inclination than by reason. In light of what we know about the social-historical forces that have confined them to the home and hindered their participation in the public domain, we might claim that women have simply been deprived of the opportunity to exercise their rational faculties to the extent that men have. And this is surely a correction that can be made without requiring any adjustment in our guiding principle. (Sedgwick, 1997, p. 89-90)

In other words, we would correct Kant by saying that women are not by nature inferior to men in their moral and cognitive abilities. In addition (and here I take the liberty of going beyond what Sedgwick said), if by chance it is more common among women than among men to be blinded by emotion, to be morally weak, or to have "impure wills",³ this could easily be explained by the fact that girls and women are taught in myriad ways that females *are* more emotional than men and that any female who isn't, is highly suspect (as are emotional men). Moreover, feminine traits are assiduously cultivated. As John Stuart Mill memorably put it,

In the case of women, a hot-house and stove cultivation has always been carried on of some of the capabilities of their nature, for the benefit and pleasure of their masters. Then, because certain products of the general vital force sprout luxuriantly and reach a great development in this heated atmosphere and under this active nurture and watering, while other shoots from the same root, which are left outside in the wintry air, with ice purposely heaped all round them, have a stunted growth, and some are burnt off with fire and disappear; men, with that inability to recognise their own work which distinguishes the unanalytic mind, indolently believe that the tree grows of itself in the way they have made it grow, and that it would die if one half of it were not kept in a vapour bath and the other half in the snow. (Mill, 1859/1988, p. 22-23)

I endorse a qualified version of the reply. I do think that Kant's theory was much more progressive than he was. I deplore much of what he wrote regarding women, but I do not

² See, for example, Schott, 1997. Although I do not present this reply in my own voice, this is a good place to note that I do not believe that Kant's views were quite as deplorable as critics make them out to be. For example, while Kant says, as Schott cites, "It is difficult for me to believe that the fair sex is capable of principles," he adds that "these are also extremely rare among the male sex" (GSE, AA 02: 232. Unless stated otherwise, I am using the translations in the Cambridge edition.) It should also be borne in mind that whether or not it reflects Kant's "mature" view of women, GSE certainly does not reflect his mature ethical theory. Written in 1763, it presents a rather different moral picture than the works of the 1780's and 1790's. For this reason we should be cautious about conjoining his remarks in GSE about women with his mature ethical view as Jean Grimshaw does in Grimshaw, 1986. For more on Kant's views on women, see Kleingeld (1993); Mikkola (2011); Varden (2020 Chapter 2); and Wood (2008 Chapters 1.3 and 13).

³ That is, to seek incentives for doing what is morally required rather than taking the fact that it is morally required as a decisive reason for acting accordingly. See RGV, AA 06: 29-30.

think that it impugns his theory.⁴ I also think that feminists have reason to look favorably on his moral theory, principally because of its egalitarianism. At the same time, however, I think that Kant's ethics needs a little more reform than what is suggested in the view that Sedgwick limns above. In addition to recognizing the effects of socialization on women, we recognize its effects on men: men have not had adequate encouragement (and thus, opportunity) to develop their emotional and affectional capacities. The correction needed is not merely to say, with Mary Wollstonecraft, that women are just as rational as men, or that they are when they have comparable educational and professional opportunities (including encouragement). A further correction needed to Kant's ethics is to give a larger place to the cultivation of sentiments as part of moral (self-) development.⁵ And this is tied to the feminist point that insofar as generic humans are thought of as male, what is seen as virtuous tends to favor qualities of character traditionally associated with men.

In this essay I articulate and assess a set of criticisms of Kant's ethics which are often, though by no means always, developed as feminist objections, and which are presented as reasons for thinking that not just Kant's own views, but his ethical theory, is deplorable. Since the same points are often made by those who flag them as feminist as well as by those who do not, I will generally not try to sort out the feminist from the non-feminist claims, but I will at some points assess the claim that a particular objection draws sustenance from feminism. What I will have to say on this will not be novel, however, and so I shall not belabor it; all it amounts to, in a nutshell, is that the disagreements regarding the objections to Kant's ethics that are presented as feminist objections reflect differences among feminists regarding feminism. Feminists who find Carol Gilligan's "other voice" (Gilligan, 1982) a feminist voice, or at least a voice very congenial to feminism, find the criticisms more compelling than I do. Feminists have responded in various ways to Gilligan's work, and I think the differences show up plainly in the sharply divergent stances we take regarding Kant's ethics. (See *Superson*, 2020, Sect. 1.)

It is striking that, starting in the 1980's and continuing today, so many contemporary Kant scholars and Kantians are women. Although I have not made a systematic study of it, my sense is that despite Annette Baier's advertisement for Hume as "the women's moral theorist" (and her very firm denunciation of Kant) (Baier, 1995), there are no more women working on Hume's ethics than on Kant's. Nor, I believe, is the population of philosophers who work on Hume more predominantly female (or less predominantly male) than are the philosophers who work on Kant.⁶ As someone who has worked on both Hume and Kant, I certainly do not see Hume's ethics as more congenial to feminism. Humean – and, for that matter, Aristotelian – ethics may be counted by some as more feminism-friendly than Kant's ethics because they give feeling a much larger positive role in ethics (and in Aristotle's case, because of the attention to and value assigned to *philia*), and because they seem to attend more than Kant's ethics does to human life as it is actually lived (at least in the times and places and social milieu that the authors know best). But to my mind a more important feminist consideration is the resources and, better yet, impetus for social change provided by the theory, social change that brings about (among other things) full recognition of women as moral and political equals. Kant's strongly egalitarian moral philosophy provides both (despite Kant's own views on gender and race).⁷ Placing far more value on social conventions than is apt, Hume's and Aristotle's ethics make it difficult to challenge the status quo. Whether feminists should prefer a theory that gives feeling a prominent and positive role and that accords importance to the concrete, to "particulars," is less certain than that we should favor a theory that provides the intellectual resources for social change.

⁴ His treatment of Maria von Herbert is also disturbing. See, in addition to her epistolary exchange with Kant, Langton (1992).

⁵ Too often the point is overstated to suggest that Kant fails altogether to recognize the importance of the cultivation of sentiments. See Baron (2009). See also Cohen (2009).

⁶ At least in the English-speaking world.

⁷ See Wood (2008, Chapter 1) and Kleingeld (2007).

The criticisms of Kantian ethics that I will be examining all involve the notion of detachment. The detachment that Kantian ethics is said to involve is of the following three sorts: detachment from other persons, detachment from our own projects, and detachment from our emotions and feelings.

2. Detachment from other persons

2.1 Here is one statement of the first criticism, again from Sedgwick, 1997:

The Kantian picture of agency seems to presuppose a context of distrust. My autonomy and identity as a moral subject is [sic] made to depend on my severing my ties to my community and relationships, because these are thought to endanger my capacity of self-determination and to interfere with my ability to be impartial in the face of competing self-interest. (Sedgwick, 1997, p. 93)⁸

I don't see any reason for thinking that on a Kantian view, ties to community and relationships endanger one's capacity of self-determination. It is not as if we are supposed to avoid being influenced by others. What is true is that we are to think for ourselves, and not ask others to direct our lives for us. (See WA, AA: 08). But this does not call for severing ties to community and relationships (nor does Kant say that it does).⁹ I would add that the call to think for ourselves seems not only unobjectionable but also congenial to feminism. Much more congenial than, say, the conventionalism of Hume's ethics. (Think here of the expectation that we will follow the conventions associated with justice, chastity, and the other artificial virtues, without giving the conventions much thought, and in particular, without giving them any critical thought).

The other reason indicated for thinking that on a Kantian view my "autonomy and identity as a moral subject is made to depend on my severing" ties to others, is that these ties are thought to "interfere with my ability to be impartial." Although strong attachments to others could make it harder for us to be impartial in certain circumstances where impartiality is called for, certainly no Kantians (Kant included) would take this to be a reason for severing ties to others. Severing ties would be a drastic solution. Drastic not only in the eyes of feminists and other contemporary readers who place great value on friendships and other personal ties, but also in Kant's view.¹⁰ Friendship, he says, is a duty (TL, AA 06: 469).¹¹ Presumably severing a friendship is not something we should do lightly. Ties to others may occasionally make it harder for me to act morally, but that is no reason to sever ties to others. What is needed is a firm commitment to putting morality first, no matter what the competing considerations. It should also be noted that on a Kantian view (and on any sensible view) partiality to those dear to me is no greater a temptation to act immorally than is partiality to myself. I may be tempted to make an exception to moral requirements for the sake of loved ones; but I may also be tempted to make an exception to moral requirements for my own personal benefit. So, for this reason, too, severing attachments to others would be misguided: I would cease to be partial to certain others but would still (maybe even more intensely) be partial to myself.

Moreover, strong attachment to others in some ways makes it easier for me to act morally: it heightens my appreciation of others, helping me to be more sensitive and more aware of their

⁸ See also Schott's claim that "to privilege the autonomy of the individual as the primary factor in moral thinking makes human separateness and detachment morally normative" (Schott, 1997, p. 332). For in-depth discussions of Kantian autonomy, see, *inter alia*, Sensen (ed.), (2012) and Kneller (1997).

⁹ For more on this, see Denis (2002) and Kneller (1997).

¹⁰ For a detailed discussion of Kant on personal relations, see Korsgaard (1992).

¹¹ For more on this, see Baron (2013) and Moran (2012, Chapter 4).

needs, thus more able to help others, and it is likely to deepen the respect I have for others *qua* beings who set ends for themselves (i.e., *qua* rational beings). In addition, a good (and courageous) friend will point out to me flaws in my character that I may not see and thereby help me to become morally better (TL, AA 06: 470). If I were to sever my ties to others, I would, among other things, be cutting myself off from important avenues for improving my character and helping others. Clearly, the moral loss would be far greater than the supposed moral gain, and the moral gain needn't be pursued by this route anyway. Better to address the problem head on. I am capable of doing what morality requires, and if I find it hard, the solution is not to remove temptation by not having close friends (a singularly unpromising approach) but to strengthen my commitment to acting morally.

2.2 But my reply to the objection contains the seeds of a more serious objection. If Kantian ethics doesn't require severing ties to others, it might be replied, it surely mandates that we be somewhat detached from them. Kant may say that friendship is a duty, but what he takes friendship to be must be rather chilly.

It is more serious, because it is true that our attachments to others have to be a bit tentative or qualified on a Kantian view. "I'm yours!" is a tad problematic on a Kantian view. For the most part this truth is, in my view, salutary and congenial to feminism. I'll say more about this shortly; first, I want to spell out in what way our attachments to others have to be tentative or qualified on a Kantian view.

What qualifies our attachments is, of course, moral constraints. No relationship, no attachment to another, justifies acting immorally (either towards another or towards oneself). Should there be a conflict between the wants and needs of another, or of a relationship, and the requirements of morality, morality is supposed to win. This is one way in which Kantian ethics might plausibly be said to require a certain detachment in one's ties to others. One cannot be unconditionally committed to doing whatever is best for one's loved one, for moral constraints circumscribe what one may do. This seems to me to be just as it should - though only, I might add, insofar as the requirements of morality are reasonable requirements. That commitments to others are subject to moral constraints is problematic just insofar as the moral constraints are dubious - extreme, silly, fastidious, or too coarse-grained.¹² Let me explain the last worry - that moral constraints are too coarse-grained, or too blunt - as it is the one that is most often raised in connection with Kant's ethics.

The suspicion is that on Kant's ethics, moral requirements are blunt rules (Never lie; Never steal; etc.) which disregard the particular circumstances. Although there is some textual basis for the worry, it has been amply shown by Barbara Herman and Onora O'Neill, among others, that this is not an accurate picture of Kant's ethics.¹³ Consider his famous examples in the *Groundwork*. One is of suicide committed out of self-love, when the agent's life threatens more evil than it promises happiness;¹⁴ another is of someone who, finding himself in comfortable circumstances, chooses not to develop his talents and instead to "give himself up to pleasure" (GMS, AA 04: 423). The circumstances and the reason for the action or policy clearly are treated as significant. This is even more apparent in the *Doctrine of Virtue*, where casuistical questions are posed. May I kill myself if I've been bitten by a rabid dog and feel dementia coming on? By killing myself I prevent the otherwise imminent dementia, in which I am likely to inflict serious harm on others (TL, AA 06: 424).

Failure to recognize the moral relevance of the particulars, on Kant's view - or believing that when Kant does treat them as relevant, he must be cheating - is due, I suspect, to supposing that because the Categorical Imperative abstracts from all empirical facts, the duties that are

¹² But see Wolf (2015), for an impassioned argument to the contrary. I discuss Wolf's paper in Baron (2017).

¹³ See Gregor (1963, Chapter 1); Herman (1993a, Chapter 2); O'Neill (1989, Part 2) and Sedgwick (1988).

¹⁴ I do not cite this approvingly, but only for purposes of illustrating that the picture is inaccurate.

based on it must also abstract from them. The inference is not warranted. Whether they must abstract from particular empirical facts depends on the particular facts. Some are relevant; others are not. Surely there is no problem here, or, indeed, anything out of the ordinary. Problems would arise only if relevant particulars were required by Kant's ethics to be treated as irrelevant (for instance, if the fact that someone is related to me had to be regarded as morally irrelevant). I see no reason for thinking that this is the case. It is okay for me to treat as morally relevant the fact that this is my sister if it is okay for anyone to treat as morally relevant, in relevantly similar circumstances, the fact that the person is his or her sister. Preferences for or exceptions for those close to us are not as such prohibited; but they must be permissible for anyone if they are to be permissible for me.¹⁵

In short, I see no reason for thinking that Kantian moral constraints are too coarse-grained (or otherwise silly, fastidious, or unreasonable), and therefore see nothing lamentable in the position that our commitments to others are not unconditional, but are circumscribed by moral constraints.

Not only is it not lamentable; it is salutary. The "old buddy system" thrives on people thinking that they should put helping those they are close to, or "their kind," ahead of "impersonal" fairness. And the worst-off people are more likely to be aided by justice than by partiality. Partiality is good for those with friends in a position to do them good turns, and this is more typically the situation of those who are well off already than of those who are not. (See *Friedman*, 1991).

A word about 'impersonal'. Sometimes it is supposed that impartiality is, or requires, being impersonal, impersonal in the sense of ignoring anything that distinguishes that person from other persons.¹⁶ Impartiality might thus be thought to require that when I grade my students' papers, I penalize each late paper equally, rather than taking into account that one student's paper was late because she had a miscarriage and was deeply distressed about this, while another student's paper was late because she chose to take part in a weekend-long dance marathon. But impartiality doesn't require this. It requires that I treat like cases alike, but does not dictate which cases are like. I do not violate the demands of impartiality if I regard the two cases just described as not alike, and choose to penalize the paper of the second student, but not that of the first student, for lateness.

Impartiality does not demand that I ignore the personal circumstances of my students. There is another way in which impartiality is sometimes thought to require that one act impersonally. It is claimed that to act impartially, I must remove myself from my particular standpoint and judge from a wholly impersonal standpoint: from the viewpoint of no one and nowhere. But 'impartial' doesn't entail 'impersonal'. Sometimes the best way to keep from being biased - for example, when I vote on which job candidate my department should hire - indeed is to try to detach my reflections about the candidates' work from my personal perspective on them. Sometimes it isn't clear whether I should so detach, simply because it isn't clear that the considerations that lead me to like or dislike the person are irrelevant. But often it is, and I may need to adopt an impersonal stance. At any rate, it is not part of the notion of impartiality that one think or judge or act impersonally. Doing so is simply one way of eliminating bias and thus being impartial, and it is not always the best way.¹⁷

2.3 There is another reason for thinking that Kant's ethics requires that our attachments to others be highly attenuated. Love, he holds, has to be tempered. Indeed, moral beings are bound together by attraction and repulsion.

¹⁵ I treat this more fully in Baron (2008).

¹⁶ This seems to be a background assumption in Schott (1997), particularly in the last pages, and in the work she cites by Iris Young (1990).

¹⁷ See Walker (1991).

In speaking of laws of duty (not laws of nature) and, among these, of laws for human beings' external relations with one another, we consider ourselves in a moral (intelligible) world where, by analogy with the physical world, *attraction* and *repulsion* bind together rational beings (on earth). The principle of **mutual love** admonishes them constantly to *come closer* to one another; that of the **respect** they owe one another, to keep themselves *at a distance* from one another; and should one of these great moral forces fail, "then nothingness (immorality), with gaping throat, would drink up the whole kingdom of (moral) beings like a drop of water" (if I may use Haller's words, but in a different reference). (TL, AA 06: 449)

Love needs to be checked by a proper sense of boundaries. Loving concern for one's friend - and here I have in mind genuine concern, not a desire to control the person - easily becomes paternalistic and heavy-handed. In addition - and here we see a desire to control the loved one - love too often involves a jealous desire that the loved one's attention be more fully (if not exclusively) focused on oneself.

It is not only love for one's close friends and relatives and romantic partners that involves these hazards, hazards that point to the need for love to be checked by a proper sense of boundaries. Consider the zealous do-gooder, eagerly offering to do favors for her neighbors. She calls me with an offer to babysit my child; on another occasion, she offers to shop for me when she goes to an outlet store in Chicago which she informs me has terrific children's clothes at unusually low prices. On another occasion she calls to say that she made too much casserole, and would I like some? As it happens, she is not one of my favorite people. Accepting her favors puts me into a closer relationship than I would like. Turning down any one of them is possible (though not the simple matter that it should be); turning most of them down is very awkward, and will no doubt seem rude to her. (The awkwardness is due in part to her manner in offering to do favors: she argues with me when I try to decline; she also calls the next time she is going to the outlet store to repeat her offer, despite my having declined it the first time.) Now that I am, thanks to having accepted one of her offers, more closely linked to her, she invites me to a dinner party. The dilemma again arises: accept and be more closely linked; decline and offend her. Accepting her favors puts me under an obligation to her. When she needs a babysitter or a ride to the airport, she of course thinks of me.

Too often, the motivation for doing favors and offering advice includes a desire to shape another person's life, to influence another, to be able to claim credit for something the other person is or does. These desires need not involve any malevolence or even go quite so far as to count as desires to control another. They are compatible with a fondness for the other person, and actions such as those of the good-doer are for some a way of expressing fondness or of trying to develop a friendship with another. That they are common, including among the (fairly) well-intentioned, is a strong reason for moral caution, and specifically for taking care to respect others as separate persons, and thus not to be intrusive.

Kant sees friendship not as perfect love, but as the perfect blend of love and respect. In his words, it is "the union of two persons through equal mutual love and respect" (TL, AA 06: 469).¹⁸ Respectful distance is needed, Kant holds, between close friends and intimates, as well as in such cases as that of the do-gooder. Within close relationships, when things go well, people learn that they should not always offer advice, and that there are times when it might be more considerate not to offer help. When one does offer help, it matters how one offers it. Such offers, like helpful advice, sometimes convey the sense that the other person is not fully competent. "Here, I'll take that" can be said in such a way as to convey only that one wants to help out, to share the burden; but it can also come across as "It's easy for me and hard for you,

18 Unfortunately, Kant speaks of unions of two people rather differently when he turns to the subject of marriage: "...one party must *yield* to the other and, in turn, one must be superior to the other in some way, in order to be able to rule over or govern him." (Anth, AA 07: 303. See also Anth, AA 07: 309-310.) For discussions of Kant on marriage, see Brake (2005); Denis (2001); Herman (1993b); and Wood (2008, Chapter 13).

given that I am strong and muscular and you are not".¹⁹

Keenly aware that accepting favors may undermine self-respect and a sense of equality with others, Kant stresses that we should render aid sensitively, taking care not to burden others with our favors and in particular, not to make them feel inferior to us. We

acknowledge that we are under obligation to help someone poor; but since the favor we do implies that his well-being depends on our generosity, and this humbles him, it is our duty to behave as if our help is either merely what is due him or but a slight service of love, and to spare him humiliation and maintain his respect for himself (TL, AA 06: 448-49).

One might worry that this is dishonest, and objectionably so. If our help is not merely what is due him, why act as if it is? But Kant points out that we may wrongly see our aid to the needy as favor-doing when it is more accurately understood as giving the needy their due.

Having the resources to practice such beneficence as depends on the goods of fortune is, for the most part, a result of certain human beings being favored through the injustice of the government, which introduces an inequality of wealth that makes others need their beneficence. Under such circumstances, does a rich man's help to the needy, on which he so readily prides himself as something meritorious, really deserve to be called beneficence at all? (TL, AA 06: 454)

Respect, in short, entails taking care not to make people feel inferior and (I add to Kant's points) not to force our favors on them, particularly if doing so puts them into a relationship with us with which they are uncomfortable. An unsympathetic reader will point out that one way of not forcing favors on others is never to help others at all. But this is of course not an option for a Kantian. We have a duty to render aid - more broadly, to promote others' happiness. Non-beneficence is not an option. The "maxim of common interest, of beneficence toward those in need, is a universal duty of human beings, just because they are to be considered fellow human beings, that is, rational beings with needs, united by nature in one dwelling place so that they can help one another" (TL, AA 06: 453).

Kant's remarks about how to understand others' happiness further illustrate the need for respect to check love. In promoting another's happiness, are we to promote what we, who seek to help, take the other person's happiness to be? Or should we promote what the person whom we want to help takes her happiness to consist in? With some qualification, the second option is the one that Kant takes. The duty to promote others' happiness is the duty to help them to realize their ends (TL, AA 06: 388). The qualification is that we are only to promote their permissible ends. We are not to "give a lazy fellow soft cushions so that he [can] pass his life away in sweet idleness," nor "see to it that a drunkard is never short of wine and whatever else he needs to get drunk" (TL, AA 06: 481). Apart from this qualification, we must not override the other person's conception of her happiness. This is yet another way in which respect shapes and constrains love.

Kant's construal of 'promoting others' happiness' reflects his staunch opposition to paternalism and almost as staunch opposition to moralism in our interactions with others. The latter is also reflected in the fact that our second obligatory end (the other obligatory end being others' happiness) is one's own perfection - and only one's own. We have no duty to perfect others.

Is there reason to regard this as antithetical to feminism? Only if we suppose that it is part

¹⁹ That this is important outside of the context of close relationships, as well, is aptly illustrated by an anecdote relayed by Martha Nussbaum: "On my flight home from delivering the Locke Lectures, I was just hoisting my small carry-on...into the overhead rack, and it was already 90 percent in, when a very large man asked whether he could help me. I said, 'No thank you,' and was about to thank him for asking - when, and by this time the bag was already in, he grabbed it and shoved it in further. [...] I was so mad that I asked the stewardess if she could change my seat" (Nussbaum, 2016, p. 149).

of feminism to oppose the degree of individualism, and the emphasis on agency and respect for persons as agents, that we find in Kant's ethics. But what we find is a less extreme individualism than some critics claim. (See for example *Rumsey*, 1997.) The Kantian idea is not that we cannot help others; indeed, it is very much our duty to help others. But we should do so in a way that does not diminish them as agents: does not invade their privacy or foist on them unwanted favors that will leave them with a sense of being beholden to us, and does not substitute for *their* conception of their happiness our own.²⁰

What about the duty to perfect only oneself, not others? This too will sound objectionable to those who believe that the boundaries of the self are more porous than is usually supposed. And, indeed, if Kant meant that it is inappropriate or impossible to help someone other than oneself to improve his or her character, I too would find his view highly objectionable. That this is not his view is indicated by his assertion that it is a duty to point out one's friend's faults to him (TL, AA 06: 470). Thus, one can, and should, sometimes help another to improve. But there is a marked difference between what goes on when one seeks to help one's friend improve and what goes on when one seeks to improve oneself. One is providing the friend with information which the friend can make use of or not as he will, depending on his view of his own self-perfection. One can provide assistance to one's friend, but cannot do the improving for him.²¹ This is the point of denying a duty to perfect another, and I see no reason for feminist opposition to it, and much reason for feminist approval.

In sum, to the limited extent that our attachments to others are supposed, on a Kantian view, to be attenuated and conditional, I see no cause for opposition on feminist grounds. Again, this reflects my particular feminist commitments; those feminists who believe that ethical theories should reflect the outlook - if there is one! - that seems (traditionally) to be that of most women will take a different stand. (On the implausibility of the idea that there is, see *Moody-Adams*, 1991). That love needs to be tempered with respect (which of course includes self-respect) is something that feminists should endorse.²²

3. Detachment from projects

In his "Persons, Character, and Morality," Bernard Williams extended his criticisms of utilitarianism to include Kantian ethics. "The question arises," Williams writes,

of whether the honourable instincts of Kantianism to defend the individuality of individuals against the agglomerative indifference of Utilitarianism can in fact be effectively granted the impoverished and abstract character of persons as moral agents which the Kantian view seems to impose (*Williams*, 1981, p. 4-5).

That Kantian ethics has a severely impoverished notion of character is evident, Williams thinks, when we consider that it requires us to abandon our projects if they are in conflict with impersonal morality. Central to having a character is having projects, some nexus of which gives one's life meaning. The project or nexus of projects that provides "the motive force which propels him into the future, and gives him a reason for living," Williams calls a "ground project."

²⁰ Though as noted, we may, indeed should, seek to promote only permissible ends.

²¹ But what if one's friend has embraced self-destructive ends? Is there any scope for helping one's friends alter her ends? Melissa Seymour Fahmy argues convincingly that there is. See Fahmy (2011).

²² I would not want to endorse everything that Kant says regarding the need for respect to temper love. In his discussion of friendship in *The Doctrine of Virtue*, he writes that "the principle of respect requires [friends] to stay at a proper distance from each other." This wouldn't have to be objectionable; the point could be that even within close friendships we need to respect the other's need for privacy, not press to know her innermost thoughts if she seems reluctant to voice them, etc. But Kant goes on to explain that this "limitation on intimacy" expresses "the rule that even the best of friends should not make themselves too familiar with each other" (TL, AA 06: 470), a rule I would not endorse.

If Kantian ethics forces us to treat our ground projects as expendable, as something we must be ready to give up if impersonal morality demands us to, it asks us not to take ourselves and our lives seriously.

This is not a particularly feminist objection to Kantian ethics. I bring it up because reflection on it supports the thought that Kantian ethics is more congenial to feminism than are at least some of the views suggested by (and some of the bases for) a rejection of Kantian ethics.

Williams' point has some force with respect to consequentialism. Although there are consequentialist moves to deflect the charge, it does indeed seem that insofar as we are morally required to maximize impersonal good, we will not be able to take our own projects very seriously. They will have to be assessed by reference to impersonal good and jettisoned if giving them up maximizes impersonal good. Of course, the cost to the agent of giving them up needs to be considered, and it might be argued that more impersonal good is promoted if people are allowed to pursue their projects (within very modest moral constraints) than if they are required to subject them to consequentialist evaluation. I will not evaluate that line of response, since my concern is with Kantian ethics.²³

The problems that arguably accrue to consequentialism don't afflict Kantian ethics, because it doesn't require that we maximize. What it requires is less drastic, and distinctively egalitarian: if pursuit of a project is part of having a character, as Williams claims, then assuming that we are all equally entitled to have a character, everyone's pursuit of a project should be subject to the constraint that it not keep anyone else from pursuing a project. Our pursuits of our projects have to be circumscribed in such a way as to avoid it being the case that one person's pursuit of a project prevents others from having or pursuing a project. This is to use Williams' terminology to express a very Kantian idea. We are all rational beings; that is, we are all beings who set ends for ourselves, and my pursuit of my ends must not undercut others' capacity to set and pursue their ends. To expect others to shape their lives around my ends, without doing likewise, is to fail to respect them as rational beings. The notion that Kantian ethics is in trouble because it might require giving up or modifying one's project in the name of impersonal morality could gain a foothold only if one either (a) failed to understand that what Kantian ethics would demand is fairness or (b) rejected egalitarianism (perhaps on Nietzschean grounds).

There is a more general point to make here. Many of the objections to Kantian ethics reflect a sort of romanticism - about projects, relationships, and feelings - that is considerably more at odds with feminism, and indeed with the task of overcoming any form of oppression, than is anything in Kantian ethics. The reason is simple: such romanticism tends to block recognition of injustices. It positions fairness and respect rather low on the scale of values. It encourages the perpetuation of something we are all too familiar with: treating one person's ambitions and projects as so very important that others - in particular, the person's wife - are expected not to form their own ambitions and projects, but simply to submerge them into his. Being his muse, or his helpmate, is supposed to be project enough for her. Or to take a different, less extreme scenario: The wife is "allowed" to form her own projects, but they are expected to be sharply circumscribed by his, while his projects are not supposed to be circumscribed by hers.

The sort of detachment that Kantian ethics asks us to take regarding what Williams calls our "projects" is detachment that we *need* to take if we are to treat others fairly. Opposition to such detachment, insistence that it is part of having a character that one not have to give up one's projects in the name of "impersonal morality," demotes fairness, and suggests (both to those who reap the benefits of the unfairness and to the losers) that concern with fairness is

²³ This line of defense is developed by Peter Railton in Railton (1984) and by Geoffrey Brennan and Philip Pettit in Brennan and Pettit (1986). See too William Wilcox's reply to Railton in Wilcox (1987) and Cocking and Oakley's in Cocking and Oakley (1995).

petty and small-minded. Not only does it encourage complacency among those who benefit from the status quo, it also encourages those who suffer from it to look beyond the unfairness, to focus on something “loftier” - the fact that the man to whom she is devoted loves (needs, depends on) her, the beauty of self-sacrifice, the importance of his project, and the pleasure (or the nobility) of giving without asking anything in return. It encourages, more generally, turning a blind eye in intimate relationships to unfairness, and to the fact that one is treated - or is treating the other - as one’s subordinate rather than as an equal.

4. Detachment from feeling

4.1 I argued above that Kant’s ethics doesn’t require detachment from other persons and from one’s own projects except in a way that is not objectionable and is congenial to feminism - at least insofar as the chief concern of feminism is to overcome oppression. To those who see the celebration of (the lives of) women as they are and (especially) as they traditionally have been as more central to feminism than I do, Kant’s ethics will seem less congenial to feminism. I am less concerned to see women’s traditional domain given its due than I am troubled by ethical theories and approaches that (inadvertently) invite men to continue to exploit women and invite women to continue to submerge their interests into those of their men, to view their own role to be that of helpmate, and to make large personal sacrifices to men without expecting sacrifices of comparable magnitude to be made for them. Although some critics have claimed that Kant’s ethics is ill-suited to address the fact that women (as we know them) tend to be “too willing to lose themselves in attending to the needs of others” and thus “require not so much a check on self-love as on their propensity for self-denial” (Sedgwick, 1997, p. 94), I think the opposite is true.²⁴ Kant’s ethics is somewhat unusual in its attention to the fact that self-sacrifice can go too far. One’s own happiness must count too. “Since all *others* with the exception of myself would not be *all*, so that the maxim would not have within it the universality of a law..., the law making benevolence a duty will include myself, as an object of benevolence...” (TL, AA 06: 451). Servility is a vice; respect for humanity involves respect for oneself as well as for others, and servility is at odds with this. So while Kant (who, after all, was not J. S. Mill) almost certainly was not thinking about women and the moral outrageousness of the roles into which they traditionally have been cajoled or forced, his ethical theory is far more able to provide the conceptual tools for challenging those roles than are many other theories.

But whereas I do not believe that Kant’s ethics requires objectionable detachment from other persons and from one’s projects, the claim that it requires objectionable detachment from one’s emotions, feelings and other affects poses a more formidable challenge. Feminists and others are right to question the acceptability of Kant’s ethics for anyone who does not regard feeling and emotion as primarily a moral hazard and who thinks that ethics is in part about proper feeling. In responding to the criticism, I want first to correct some misconceptions and thereby to argue that even though emotional agitations²⁵ and passions are viewed in Kant’s ethics primarily as moral hazards, not all affect is. But although this dispels some objections, there are lingering problems that are not as easily resolved. I do not hope to resolve them here, but I can at least isolate the more serious problems from the ones that are based on error.

²⁴ Cheshire Calhoun makes a similar claim regarding Kant’s ethics (Calhoun, 1988, p. 459). That Kant’s ethics provides a good basis for criticizing subservient roles, such as that of the deferential wife, was brought out well by Thomas Hill, Jr. in his influential “Servility and Self-Respect” (Hill, 1991), first published in 1971 and multiply reprinted. See also Friedman (1984) and Baron (1985).

²⁵ Because I need a term to encompass feeling, passion, and what Kant calls ‘Affekt’, and find the English word ‘affect’ to be a very helpful term for that purpose, I am not using ‘affect’ to translate ‘Affekt’. Instead, I use ‘emotional agitation’. This is the term used by Mary Gregor in her 1964 translation of the *Tugendlehre*, and I think it better captures what Kant means by ‘Affekt’ than does ‘affect’, the term used in the Cambridge translation of Kant’s works.

4.2 The misconceptions I particularly want to dispel are that on Kant's view, (1) everything affective is bad; (2) all affect is "on a level";²⁶ and (3) it is a matter of moral indifference, on Kant's ethics, what (or how) we feel. I use 'affect' broadly to encompass inclinations, passions, emotions, feelings, etc.

Kant's most vehemently negative remarks about affects concern passions (*Leidenschaften*). They are, he says "without exception evil" (*Anth*, AA 07: 267). Emotional agitations (*Affekten*) fare somewhat better, though only slightly. Some *Affekten* "can be healthful, provided they do not reach the point of enervating" the body (*Medicin*, AA 15: 940).²⁷ Already I have said enough to show that (1) and (2) are false. But the striking contrast is not between *Leidenschaften* and *Affekten*, which admittedly are viewed as primarily (though in the latter case not only) moral hazards, but between these and other, milder affects. Marking his disagreement with the Stoics, Kant writes in *Religion*:

Considered in themselves natural inclinations are good, i.e. not reprehensible, and to want to extirpate them would not only be futile but harmful and blameworthy as well; we must rather only curb them, so that they will not wear each other out but will instead be harmonized into a whole called happiness (RGV, AA 06: 58).²⁸

The reason why inclinations come in for so much more positive an assessment is not hard to find: passions and emotional agitations are a threat to freedom and self-mastery, while inclinations - unless they get out of control, turning into passions and emotional agitations - are not. Both passions and emotional agitations exclude "the sovereignty of reason" (*Anth*, AA 07: 251), though they operate differently. The latter tend to be short-lived, whereas passions "take root and can even co-exist with rationalizing" (*Anth*, AA 07: 265). Kant is contrasting passions to emotional agitations when he says, after noting that Socrates wondered whether it would not be good to get angry at times, that no one wishes to have passions. "For who wants to have himself put in chains when he can be free?" (*Anth*, AA 07: 253).

I turn now to (3), the claim that it is a matter of moral indifference, on Kant's ethics, how we feel. Of course, how people feel is morally relevant in at least one way. We cannot both embrace as an end others' happiness and regard as of no importance others' feelings. The duty to promote others' happiness entails that how people feel is morally relevant. Those who hold (3) probably realize this; their focus is on the feelings of the agent, not the recipient. Their idea, I take it, is that all that matters morally, on the Kantian picture, is our actions and our maxims; how we feel towards others, in helping them, etc. is morally irrelevant. Kant's emphasis in the *Groundwork* and the *Critique of Practical Reason* on the unsuitability of sentiment to serve as a foundation for ethics understandably leaves readers with the impression that sentiment is, in his view, of no moral significance.²⁹ But it is clear from the work to which the *Groundwork* is the groundwork, the *Metaphysics of Morals*, that Kant does indeed think that it matters what sentiments we have. Consider his remarks about arrogance:

²⁶ Robin Schott cites approvingly Iris Young's claim that "since all desiring is equally suspect, we have no way of distinguishing which desires are good and which bad...." (Schott, 1997, p. 329). Julia Annas makes a similar claim in Annas, 1984. I reply to Annas in Baron, 1988.

²⁷ Kant also says that laughing and weeping are *Affekten* "by which nature promotes health mechanically" (*Anth*, AA 07: 261).

²⁸ Readers may wonder, and with good reason, how this passage is to be squared with the following: "inclinations themselves, as sources of needs, are so far from having an absolute worth, so as to make one wish to have them, that it must instead be the universal wish of every rational being to be altogether free from them" (GMS, AA 04: 428); and "inclinations...are...always *burdensome* to a rational being, and, though he cannot lay them aside, they wrest from him the wish to be free of them" (KpV, AA 05: 118). The second quote is easier to reconcile: since (as Kant noted in the *Groundwork*) our inclinations grow and multiply as we indulge them, and since they become more demanding, sometimes becoming passions, we are bound to feel at times that life would be better without them. Nonetheless, this is futile and wrongheaded. The first quote, however, is more jarring.

²⁹ Except, that is, insofar as the fact that an action is done from inclination precludes it having moral worth. I discuss Kant on moral worth in Baron (1995, Chapter 5).

Arrogance (*superbia* and, as this word expresses it, the inclination to be always on top) is a kind of *ambition* (*ambitio*) in which we demand that others think little of themselves in comparison with us. It is, therefore, a vice opposed to the respect that every human being can lawfully claim (TL, AA 06: 465).³⁰

Notice that the vice does not seem to be one of doing something - for example, conveying to others a demand that they think little of themselves - but rather of having a particular inclination (to be always on top) and a particular attitude towards others.

Consider too his remarks about malice, which he lists as a vice of hatred for men (TL, AA 06: 458):

It is indeed natural that, by the laws of imagination (namely, the law of contrast), we feel our own well-being and even our good conduct more strongly when the misfortune of others or their downfall in scandal is put next to our own condition, as a foil to show it in so much the brighter light. But to rejoice immediately in the existence of such *enormities* destroying what is best in the world as a whole, and so also to wish for them to happen, is secretly to hate human beings; and this is the direct opposite of love for our neighbor, which is incumbent on us as a duty. (TL, AA 06: 460)

Many more examples could be provided to show that Kant thinks it does matter how we feel towards others, and that it is a duty to feel as one should. We have a duty not to feel envy or ingratitude, for these, like malice, are “vices of hatred” where the hatred is “not open and violent but secret and veiled” (TL, AA 06: 458). Envy is “a propensity to view the well-being of others with distress, even though it does not detract from one’s own” (TL, AA 06: 458). Ingratitude “stands love of human beings on its head...and degrades absence of love into an authorization to hate the one who loves” (TL, AA 06: 459).

It would be hard to deny that these passages refute (3). But one might, while conceding that they do, observe that these are all examples of sentiments and attitudes the having of which constitutes a *vice* on Kant’s ethics; and this in turn supports the thought that when feelings are morally significant, on Kant’s view, they matter only negatively. True, my imaginary interlocutor might say, I have shown that feelings have moral significance for Kant; one should not feel envy, and so on. But does he have anything positive to say about feelings? Yes. As the last sentence of the quote above on malice indicates, Kant attributes moral significance to feelings not merely negatively, but also positively. He says, for instance, that “it is a duty to sympathize actively in [the] fate [of others]” and to this end it is a duty to “cultivate the compassionate...feelings in us” (TL, AA 06: 457).³¹

4.3 Having spoken in Kant’s defense by arguing against the views that affects are for Kant, all on a level, that they are all bad, and that it doesn’t matter, morally, what or how we feel (the idea being that only our actions and our maxims matter), I now want to indicate what I think is disturbing about his view of affect.³² That is best done by quoting a passage that occurs just two paragraphs before the sentence quoted above, in which Kant says it is a duty to sympathize actively in the fate of others.

It was a sublime way of thinking that the Stoic ascribed to his wise men [*sic*] when he had him say, “I wish for a friend, not that he might help *me* in poverty, sickness, imprisonment, etc., but rather that I might stand by *him* and rescue a human being.” But the same wise man, when he could not rescue his friend, said to himself “what is it to me?” In other words, he rejected compassion. (TL, AA 06: 457).

The admiration expressed in the first sentence is fine, but Kant seems to be expressing

³⁰ For more on Kant on arrogance, see Dillon (2004).

³¹ See Fahmy (2009), for a discussion of this duty.

³² See note 24, above.

admiration for the ‘What’s it to me?’ thought, as well, and that is disconcerting. The idea seems to be that compassion for one’s friend is to be rejected if one cannot rescue one’s friend. More fully: if one cannot rescue one’s friend from such calamities as bankruptcy, a fatal disease, or imprisonment, ‘What’s it to me?’ is an appropriate response, Kant seems to affirm, and indeed preferable to feeling compassion. That is troubling.

It helps a little that in the next paragraph, the verb used (in Mary Gregor’s translation, as published in 1996 in the Cambridge edition) is not ‘rescue’ but ‘help’.³³ This removes some of the sting, since one may be able to help one’s friend without being able to rescue him. That Kant is commending the ‘What’s it to me?’ thought is not quite as troubling if he is commending it for occasions when one cannot help at all - cannot help by sitting by the friend’s bedside in the hospital, by lending a sympathetic ear when he wants to tell one his woes, by providing him with some meals or a place to stay, by visiting him in prison. But even if we take Kant to be commending the ‘What’s it to me?’ thought only when one really cannot help at all, that still does not go down well. Is it better, in such circumstances, to reject rather than feel compassion? Note that my question is not whether it is better to feel compassion when helping than to simply help without feeling compassion. That is a different question. The question, rather, is whether it is better to reject compassion than not to, in a situation where one cannot help.

What Kant seems to be commending is a rather detached attitude towards one’s emotions, and a readiness to detach emotionally from one’s friends.

Or is he? Lara Denis has called this into question. Just what is it that the sage rejects, and that Kant praises him for rejecting? Attention to a passage in *Anthropology* suggests, Denis claims, that “what Kant is praising in the sage is not a rejection of feeling, but a rejection of what we may call emotional agitation or affect” [*Affekt*] (Denis, 2000, p. 50).

The principle of apathy - namely, that the wise man must never be in a state of affect [*Affekt*], not even in that of compassion with the misfortune of his best friend, is an entirely correct and sublime moral principle of the Stoic school; for affect makes us (more or less) blind (*Anth AA 07: 253*).

Denis is clearly correct to say that in the passage just quoted, what Kant attributes to, and praises, in the wise man is an absence not of compassionate feeling, but more specifically of compassionate feeling that rises to the level of an *Affekt*.

Unfortunately, however, there is nothing in the passage from TL about the wise man nor in the surrounding paragraphs to suggest that in that passage as well, Kant is praising the sage only for rejecting compassionate feeling that rises to the level of an *Affekt*. The “What is it to me?” thought suggests that the sage is rejecting compassionate feeling, period, when he cannot help his friend. This is corroborated by the sentence immediately after the TL passage:

In fact, when another suffers and, although I cannot help him, I let myself be infected by his pain (through my imagination), then two of us suffer, though the trouble really (in nature) affects only *one* (TL, AA 06: 457).

There is no reason to think that ‘infected by his pain’ means that the sadness one suffers is an *Affekt*, and Kant’s concern here seems not to be that one will be (somewhat) blinded by the pain one suffers, but only that there is no need for two to suffer the pain.

The passage suggests that Kant values a disengagement from affect. We are to cultivate our sympathetic impulses, but we cultivate them in such a way that they are completely under

³³ A small point on the translation, concerning ‘abhelfen’: The German reads, “Wenn ein Anderer leidet und ich mich durch seinen Schmerz, dem ich doch nicht abhelfen kann, auch (vermitteltst der Einbildungskraft) anstecken lasse....” More faithful a translation than Gregor’s ‘although I cannot help him’ would be ‘although I cannot alleviate his pain’. This does not, however, affect my point in this paragraph, because both ways of translating the passage involve a verb that is importantly different from *retten*. With regard to most calamities, we are far more likely to be able to help our friend/alleviate his pain than to rescue him.

our control. Up to a point this does not strike me as objectionable. It is important to be able to temper or moderate one's emotion. We need to be able to carry on even when grief-stricken - if not to go to work, keep appointments, etc., at least to phone to cancel the appointments and explain that one can't come to work; and if we have children or other dependents, we cannot simply ignore them or stash them away until we feel more able to cope. Those tending their dying loved ones cannot help very effectively unless they moderate their emotion. Likewise with rescue workers. But moderation is one thing; "shutting it off" is another (although, interestingly, shutting off emotion does not seem objectionable if the agent is in the midst of a demanding task - rescuing victims from a bomb explosion, performing emergency surgery - particularly if the people she is helping are strangers to her or mere acquaintances). The passage seems to reflect too little appreciation of the value of affect and to advocate (what to non-Stoics is) excessive self-control.

Denis points out that Kant's praise for the Stoic sage's self-control need not be read as advocating this for the rest of us. This is an encouraging thought for Kantians like me. However, it does seem from the next sentence, quoted above ("In fact, when another suffers...") that Kant is advising all of us, not just the sage, that it is better to turn off the feelings of sadness if one can't help one's friend.

More work is needed to locate our disagreement³⁴ with the view Kant expresses in the passage from *TL* 457 (assuming I am right about the view there expressed). Perhaps the problem is this: we don't believe that someone can be a real friend, or even have others' happiness as one of her ends, if, when she cannot help her friend, she thinks 'What's it to me?' If so, our disagreement could be about the nature of friendship and what it is to care about others' happiness or about the nature of emotion and the extent to which it is subject to self-control - or about all of these.³⁵ Our disagreement may also be normative: we may disagree with Kant not (only) about the extent to which it is possible to turn off our emotions, but the extent to which it is desirable (morally and, if this is different, for the agent's well-being). We think it possible and desirable for a rescue worker or a medical practitioner trying to resuscitate accident victims to be able to shut off her emotions while immersed in her work; but we also think less of such a person (and are perplexed) if she never feels emotional distress about the plight of those whose lives were lost. We think - but of course we may in years to come revise our opinion - that if she never feels (never "lets herself feel") emotional distress about an acute crisis she will later suffer more distress. (One thinks here of reports of war veterans who never grieved the loss of their buddies and fifteen years later were, to their great puzzlement, devastated by the death of a pet.) I suspect that our disagreement with Kant involves more than one of these elements: we disagree about the desirability of shutting off emotion for a suffering friend when one cannot help, and we think less of someone who never feels sympathetic sadness in such circumstances.

5. Concluding remarks

The degree of detachment that Kant thinks desirable bears a connection to his attitudes towards women. His assumptions about gender roles and the proper relations between men and women very likely color his views about emotion and self-control. He observes that "if a compassionate man were to weep, he would violate his own sex and thus with his femininity not be able to serve as protector for the weaker sex" (*Anth*, AA 07: 263). Add to this the tendency to equate male virtue with generic human virtue and it is hardly surprising that we do not find among the qualities that it is a duty to cultivate in oneself those of being nurturing, affectionate, tender, loving, and expressive, qualities which have traditionally been expected of women but

³⁴ In using 'our' rather than 'my' I am assuming that most contemporary readers of Kant find this passage disturbing.

³⁵ I think, however, that our disagreement with Kant is not about the nature of friendship. See Denis, 2000, p. 61-62.

not (or not to the same degree) of men. And there are many other qualities which are expected of women much more than of men: being patient, being good listeners, having a sense of humor (crucial for anyone who spends much time with young children), being peaceable. (I omit those which I do not think belong in the catalog of virtues, but which have traditionally been asked of women: being compliant, submissive, meek, eager to please.) Kant's picture of traits we should cultivate in ourselves and of proper affect might be different if he pictured women along with men as prototypical virtuous persons.

Thus, I don't entirely agree with the view sketched (and rejected) by Sedgwick, quoted at the start of my paper: the problem is not only that Kant did not recognize that women are full-fledged rational beings, but also that he has too narrow - too "masculine" - a picture of the virtuous person. This does not shake his theory at the very foundations, however, since his theory is in not based on a conception of the virtuous person. I see no incompatibility between accepting much of Kantian ethics while taking issue with some aspects of Kant's stance on affect (along with much that he says about women).³⁶

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³⁶ I am grateful to Jane Kneller, Robin Schott and Sally Sedgwick for comments on an early draft of the paper as published in 1997, and to Kyle Stroh for editorial assistance as I rewrote the paper into the form it now takes.

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