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Editores

Joel Thiago Klein
Universidade Federal do Paraná
Curitiba, Brasil
E-mail: jthklein@yahoo.com.br

Monique Hulshof
Universidade Estadual de Campinas
Campinas, Brasil
E-mail: mohulshof@gmail.com

Robinson dos Santos
Universidade Federal de Pelotas
Pelotas, Brasil
E-mail: dossantosrobinson@gmail.com

Assistentes editoriais

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Campinas, Brasil

Tales Yamamoto
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São Paulo, Brasil

Zeljko Loparic
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Campinas, Brasil

Web site

www.sociedadekant.org/studiakantiana

Endereço para correspondência

[Mailing address]:

Joel Thiago Klein
Departamento de Filosofia, UFPR
Rua Dr. Faivre, 405, - 6º Andar - Ed.
D. Pedro II, Curitiba- PR
CEP: 80060-140

E-mail: studia.kantiana@gmail.com

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Apresentação - Women Kant Scholars

Marília Espírito Santo

Editora convidada

PNPD/CAPES - PPGLM/UFRJ (Rio de Janeiro, Brasil)

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É flagrante o descompasso entre o número de base e o número de expressão de mulheres na pesquisa científica no Brasil. Trata-se do “*efeito-tesoura para mulheres na ciência*”, como mostra a pesquisa de Amanda Gorziza e Renata Buono veiculada na revista *Piauí* em 19 de junho de 2023.¹ Embora maioria entre estudantes de mestrado (55%) e doutorado (53%), mulheres tornam-se minoria entre docentes (42%). Gorziza e Buono expõem os dados de 2022 do CNPq, organizados pelo movimento *Parent in Science* segundo recorte de gênero: de cada 100 bolsistas, 65 são homens e 35, mulheres. Dentre os pesquisadores de nível 1A, o mais alto, 73 são homens e 27, mulheres. Em 2022, dos R\$ 274,9 milhões investidos em bolsas Pq de produtividade em pesquisa, R\$ 180,8 milhões foram destinados a trabalhos desenvolvidos por homens e R\$ 94,1 milhões a trabalhos desenvolvidos por mulheres. Das 50 áreas de conhecimento da Capes, apenas 15 apresentam equidade na proporção entre homens e mulheres docentes na pós-graduação. A área de filosofia é uma das 35 em que mulheres estão sub-representadas.

A disparidade dos números na área de filosofia no Brasil confirma-se na pesquisa de Carolina Araújo, realizada entre 2004 e 2017 com dados oficiais do Inep e da Capes. No artigo “*Quatorze anos de desigualdade: mulheres na carreira acadêmica de filosofia no Brasil entre 2004 e 2017*”², Araújo mostra que mulheres eram 36,44% na graduação, 30,6% no mestrado, 26,98% no doutorado e 20,14% na docência de pós-graduação. Em um levantamento recente (junho/2023) feito pela atual diretoria da Sociedade Kant Brasileira, contam-se 65 homens e 16 mulheres entre seus membros ativos ou inativos. Segundo dados da PNAD Contínua (Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílios Contínua) 2022, coletados pelos IBGE (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística), o número de mulheres no Brasil é superior ao de homens. A população brasileira é composta por 48,9% de homens e 51,1% de mulheres.³

A sub-representatividade das mulheres na pesquisa científica não se restringe ao Brasil. Nos Estados Unidos, em 2021, Huaping Lu-Adler, então vice-presidente da Sociedade Kant Norte Americana (NAKS), lançou o projeto *Virtual NAKS Women's Network Series*, encontros remotos em que pesquisadoras apresentavam e discutiam seus trabalhos sobre a obra de Kant. Diante do convite para organizar um número que pudesse contribuir com a internacionalização da *Studia Kantiana*, o projeto de Lu-Adler serviu como incentivo para publicarmos trabalhos produzidos por mulheres. Em movimento posterior para unir forças e ampliar a iniciativa, Monique Hulshof, atual coordenadora de publicações e eventos da Sociedade Kant Brasileira

1 Acesso em 20 de junho de 2023. Disponível em: <<https://piaui.folha.uol.com.br/o-efeito-tesoura-para-mulheres-na-ciencia/>>.

2 Acesso em 24 de julho de 2023. Disponível em: <<https://www.revistas.usp.br/filosofiaalema/article/view/155750>>.

3 Acesso em 24 de julho de 2023. Disponível em: <<https://educa.ibge.gov.br/jovens/conheca-o-brasil/populacao/18320-quantidade-de-homens-e-mulheres.html>>.

(SKB), organizou o Dossiê “Kantianas”, lançado em fevereiro de 2023 na *Estudos Kantianos*.⁴

Grupos sub-representados que demandam inclusão são diversos e diversificados. Além do recorte por gênero, outros recortes poderiam analisar raça, etnia, orientação sexual e/ou classe/origem social. Para quem resiste a iniciativas identitárias como esta, observe-se que ainda se fazia necessário tramitar no Congresso Nacional, em junho de 2023, projetos de equiparação salarial entre homens e mulheres para funções ou cargos idênticos. A Constituição Federal “já proíbe a diferença de salários por motivo de sexo, idade, cor ou estado civil”⁵, recorda a Agência Câmara de Notícias.

Este volume especial, “*Women Kant Scholars*”, é uma pequena amostra da pesquisa sobre diversas áreas da obra de Kant desenvolvida por mulheres, vinculadas a diferentes Universidades, em diferentes estágios de suas carreiras e em vários países. Se um número como este é oportuno, o mínimo que se pode concluir é que ainda estão longe de realizar-se os ideais do Esclarecimento propagados por Kant, mesmo em âmbitos que deveriam ser os mais esclarecidos.

Os artigos deste número foram submetidos a dupla avaliação cega por pares. Sobre a filosofia prática de Kant escrevem Patricia Kitcher, Melissa Seymour Fahmy, Martina Favaretto, Marcia Baron, Huaping Lu-Adler e Lara Scaglia. Sobre a *Crítica da faculdade do juízo* escrevem Saniye Vatansever e Virginia Helena Aragones Aita. Sobre a filosofia teórica de Kant escreve Mitieli Seixas da Silva. Ao final, Paula Satne publica uma resenha sobre o livro *Happiness in Kant's Practical Philosophy: Morality, Indirect Duties, and Welfare Rights*, de Alice Pinheiro Walla.

No artigo *The Right vs. the Good: Kant vs. Rawls*, Patricia Kitcher confronta a tese de Rawls sobre o alegado construtivismo de Kant, a quem se deveria atribuir uma versão do realismo em matéria de moral. Rawls sustenta que a prioridade do justo sobre o bem, também presente em *Uma teoria da justiça*, seria característica do construtivismo de Kant. Kitcher pretende mostrar que o justo e o bem são necessariamente coetâneos segundo Kant. A autora aborda a natureza racional como dotada de valor intrínseco e provida dos requisitos necessários para a possibilidade da moralidade. Dentre esses requisitos, a natureza racional deve poder internalizar a lei do dever; deve poder ter a disposição para respeitar a si e àqueles que internalizam a lei do dever; e deve poder pertencer a uma comunidade com outros seres racionais. A partir de uma análise do bem, Kitcher, por fim, afasta de Kant tentativas de tornar a ética dependente da teologia.

Melissa Seymour Fahmy, no artigo *On Kantian Obligatory Ends and Their Maxims of Actions*, explora, explicita e expande a declaração de Kant na *Doutrina da Virtude* sobre a existência de fins que são também deveres. Segundo a autora, o conceito de fim obrigatório é a contribuição inédita de Kant à ética normativa. Ter um fim é ter razões para praticar ações que promovam tal fim e para omitir ações inconsistentes com ele. Fahmy explora o que significa ter um fim obrigatório centrando-se na felicidade dos outros. Ao rever e ampliar sua interpretação, argumenta que o fim moralmente necessário da felicidade dos outros é prescrito por um tipo de máxima promocional, além de outros três tipos de máximas de ação. A máxima *promocional* determina a realização de um fim. Ela conduz aos deveres amplos ou imperfeitos, como o de beneficência. A máxima *não derogatória* determina a omissão de ações que impeçam a realização do fim ou a omissão do que possa diminuir a felicidade dos outros. A máxima *epistêmica* determina que o agente aumente o conhecimento do impacto de suas ações e de seu discurso nos outros. A máxima *disposicional*, por fim, determina que o agente cultive a disposição adequada ao fim obrigatório da felicidade dos outros.

No artigo *What Is It to Incorporate an Incentive into a Maxim?*, Martina Favaretto toma

4 Acesso em 22 de julho de 2023. Disponível em: <<https://revistas.marilia.unesp.br/index.php/ek/issue/view/749>>.

5 Acesso em 24 de julho de 2023. Disponível em: <[https://www.camara.leg.br/noticias/937651-projeto-torna-obrigatoria-equiparacao-salarial-entre-homens-e-mulheres-para-funcoes-identicas/#:~:text=O%20Projeto%20de%20Lei%201111,P%C3%BCblico%20do%20Trabalho%20\(MPT\).>](https://www.camara.leg.br/noticias/937651-projeto-torna-obrigatoria-equiparacao-salarial-entre-homens-e-mulheres-para-funcoes-identicas/#:~:text=O%20Projeto%20de%20Lei%201111,P%C3%BCblico%20do%20Trabalho%20(MPT).)

como ponto de partida a análise de Henry Allison sobre a “tese da incorporação”. A autora expande essa tese e sustenta que a formação de interesse é o elo necessário para que um motivo seja adotado como máxima na constituição da conduta racional. Favaretto recorre às indicações de Kant na *Crítica da razão pura* sobre os graus de consciência das representações para sustentar que estas podem ser obscuras também no juízo prático. A autora propõe compreender a “tese da incorporação” em duplo sentido: se o motivo consiste em uma razão suficiente para agir, o agente representa sua máxima de modo claro; se o motivo apenas indica razões relevantes para agir, o agente representa sua máxima de modo obscuro. Nesse último caso, o agente seria capaz de se tornar consciente de sua máxima mediante inferência.

Marcia Baron, em *Kantian Ethics, Feminism, and Worries about Emotional Detachment*, aborda três objeções à ética de Kant centradas no conceito de “abnegação” (*detachment*). Tais objeções visam ao agente moral e versam sobre sua renúncia em relação a outras pessoas, a seus próprios projetos e a seus sentimentos. Elas aparecem principalmente, mas não só, nas críticas feministas à ética de Kant. Baron concorda que a posição de Kant sobre as mulheres é deplorável, mas defende que a filosofia é mais progressista que o indivíduo. Ponto favorável à filosofia moral de Kant seria o igualitarismo. Para além da afirmação de que as mulheres são tão racionais quanto os homens, no entanto, Baron defende que é preciso encontrar mais espaço para o cultivo de sentimentos como parte do desenvolvimento moral.

Huaping Lu-Adler, em *Know Your Place, Know Your Calling: Geography, Race, and Kant's 'World-Citizen'*, desafia o alegado igualitarismo de Kant. Lu-Adler argumenta que o ser humano cosmopolita não se refere, segundo Kant, aos seres humanos em geral, mas se restringe ao homem branco ocidental, devido a sua localização geográfica privilegiada. A partir da análise de escritos e lições pré-criticos e críticos, publicados em vida ou inéditos, Lu-Adler pretende mostrar a orientação racista do filósofo. Seu objetivo é claro: não se trata do racismo do indivíduo, mas do educador Kant, expoente do Esclarecimento, que em suas lições pretende formar cidadãos do mundo. Kant estabeleceria uma classificação teleológica das diferentes raças segundo sua situação espacial na Terra. O homem branco ocidental formaria uma raça excepcional, cuja finalidade seria o progresso humano. A filosofia prática de Kant, incluídas a moral, a antropologia e a pedagogia, não seria igualitária, mas racista, pois restrita a uma raça agraciada pela natureza.

Lara Scaglia, em *Kant's Notion of Human Dignity in Dialogue with Islamic Thinking: For an Interstitial and Extra-National Account of Human Dignity*, propõe uma abordagem original que discute apropriações contemporâneas do pensamento de Kant por sociedades interculturais. Sua análise centra-se na noção de dignidade humana, presente na ética, na política e na jurisprudência. Em reação ao dissenso sobre o significado dessa noção, dissenso que contribui para o aumento do caráter conflituoso das relações internacionais, a autora encontra nos textos de Kant instrumentos para compreendê-la como intersticial e normativa. Ao confrontar o pensamento kantiano com o pensamento islâmico, a autora faz de Kant referência valiosa para o debate sobre a dignidade humana nas tradições ocidental e oriental.

Saniye Vatansever, em *Kant's Conceptions of the Feeling of Life and the Feeling of the Promotion of Life in Light of Epicurus' Theory of Pleasure and the Stoic Notion of Oikeiôsis*, busca na Grécia Antiga as origens históricas das noções de “sentimento de vida” e “sentimento de promoção da vida”, que aparecem na *Crítica da faculdade do juízo*. Segundo Vatansever, a primeira, com a qual Kant identificaria o prazer estético, remontaria à teoria epicurista; já a segunda remontaria ao conceito estoico de apropriação de si (*oikeiôsis*). Considerados em suas funções específicas, o sentimento de vida permitiria a consciência da interação harmônica de nossas faculdades, ao passo que o sentimento de promoção da vida permitiria a consciência da relação harmônica de nossas faculdades com a natureza.

Virginia Helena Aragones Aita, em *Inflexão estética e nova dicção da Crítica: uma hermenêutica reflexiva avant la lettre*, examina textos da Primeira introdução à *Crítica da faculdade do juízo* e da

própria terceira *Crítica*, em particular os §§ 49-60. Em um primeiro momento, a autora explora os argumentos de Kant a partir das interpretações de Henry Allison, Béatrice Longuenesse e Rudolf Makkreel, para em seguida considerar as diferentes funções exercidas pela imaginação e os diferentes papéis desempenhados pela reflexão na elaboração do juízo estético, na origem dos conceitos empíricos e na produção dos esquemas transcendentais. Segundo Aita, a interpretação de Makkreel permite considerar uma hermenêutica nessas passagens da terceira *Crítica*. Em um segundo momento, Aita investiga a especificidade da reflexão estética nos §§ 49, 51, 58 e 59. Por fim, a autora confronta os argumentos de Kant com as estéticas de Arthur Danto e Jacques Rancière.

Mitieli Seixas da Silva, no artigo *As Reflexões e as Lições de lógica sobre a formação de conceitos empíricos*, propõe uma interpretação original sobre a formação de conceitos empíricos a partir da distinção entre a gênese lógica (relativa à forma) e a gênese metafísica (relativa ao conteúdo) de um conceito. Em seu argumento, é a gênese lógica o núcleo das preocupações de Kant, voltadas ao papel dos atos de comparação, reflexão e abstração na formação de conceitos empíricos. Sua interpretação é uma crítica à abordagem de Béatrice Longuenesse, cujas teses extrapolariam os limites da lógica geral e confundiriam a questão lógica com a questão metafísica, aproximando-se do tratamento dado por Meier e por Locke ao problema.

Foreword - Women Kant Scholars

Marília Espírito Santo

Guest Editor

PNPD/CAPES - PPGLM/UFRJ (Rio de Janeiro, Brasil)

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The mismatch between the number of female students and the number of female faculty in scientific research in Brazil is striking. This is the “scissors effect for women in science,” as Amanda Gorziza and Renata Buono show in the research they published in the *Piauí Journal* on June 19, 2023.¹ Although women account for the majority of graduate students (55% in master’s and 53% in doctoral studies), they become a minority among faculty members (42%). Gorziza and Buono reveal the 2022 National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq) data, organized by gender by the *Parent in Science* movement. Out of every 100 people who hold scholarships, 65 are men and 35 are women. Among researchers at level 1A, the highest, 73 are men and 27 are women. In 2022, out of the R\$274.9 million invested in research productivity grants, R\$180.8 million were allocated to work carried out by men, while only R\$94.1 million were allocated to work carried out by women. Out of the 50 scientific fields classified by the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (Capes), there is equity in the proportion of men and women faculty in graduate programs in only 15. Philosophy is one of the 35 others in which women are underrepresented.

The research conducted by Carolina Araújo between 2004 and 2017, which analyzes official data from the National Institute of Educational Studies and Research (Inep) and Capes, confirms the gender disparity in the field of philosophy in Brazil. In her article, “Fourteen Years of Inequality: Women in the Academic Career of Philosophy in Brazil between 2004 and 2017,”² Araújo shows that women were 36.44% of undergraduate students, 30.6% of those in master’s programs, and 26.98% of those in doctoral programs. Women held only 20.14% of postgraduate teaching positions. According to a recent survey (June 2023) by the current board of the Brazilian Kant Society (SKB), there are 65 male and 16 female members, both active and inactive. According to data from the Continuous National Household Sample Survey (Continuous PNAD) 2022, gathered by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), the proportion of women (51.1%) in the Brazilian population is higher than that of men (48.9%).³

The underrepresentation of women in scientific research is not limited to Brazil. In the United States in 2021, Huaping Lu-Adler, then Vice President of the North American Kant Society (NAKS), launched the V-NAKS Women’s Network Series. These virtual meetings provided a platform for women researchers to present and discuss their work on Kant. When I was invited to organize a special issue of

1 Accessed 20 June 2023, <<https://piaui.folha.uol.com.br/o-efeito-tesoura-para-mulheres-na-ciencia/>>.

2 Accessed 24 July 2023, <<https://www.revistas.usp.br/filosofiaalema/article/view/155750>>.

3 Accessed 24 July 2023, <<https://educa.ibge.gov.br/jovens/conheca-o-brasil/populacao/18320-quantidade-de-homens-e-mulheres.html>>.

Studia Kantiana that could contribute to its internationalization, Lu'Adler's project served as an inspiration to publish an issue containing only the scholarly output of women. In a further effort to collaborate and broaden the scope of the initiative, Monique Hulshof, the current coordinator of publications and events for the Brazilian Kant Society (SKB), organized the *Dossiê "Kantianas."* This dossier came out in February 2023 in the journal *Estudos Kantianos*.⁴

Members of underrepresented groups who demand inclusion are numerous and varied. In addition to women, racial and ethnic minorities, members of the LGBTQ+ community, and people from low socio-economic backgrounds are consistently underrepresented in science. Given that are those who resist identity initiatives like this one, it is important to note that in June 2023 projects of legislation to guarantee equal pay for equal work for men and women whose jobs are substantially equal were still pending approval and regulation by the Brazilian National Congress. As notes the press service of the Brazil House of Representatives (Agência Câmara de Notícias), the 1988 Brazilian Federal Constitution "already prohibits wage inequality based on gender, age, color, or marital status."⁵

This special issue, "Women Kant Scholars," provides a glimpse into the research conducted by women in various stages of their careers, affiliated with different universities and hailing from different countries. The articles in this issue cover several areas of Kant's work. The need for a special issue such as this proves that the ideals of the Enlightenment, which Kant valued and defended, are still far from being fully realized even in areas that should be the most enlightened.

The articles collected in this special issue underwent a double-blind peer review. Patricia Kitcher, Melissa Seymour Fahmy, Martina Favaretto, Marcia Baron, Huaping Lu-Adler, and Lara Scaglia write on Kant's practical philosophy. Saniye Vatansever and Virginia Helena Aragones Aita share their perspectives on the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. Mitieli Seixas da Silva turns her attention to Kant's theoretical philosophy. Last, but not least, Paula Satne reviews the book, *Happiness in Kant's Practical Philosophy: Morality, Indirect Duties, and Welfare Rights*, by Alice Pinheiro Walla.

In the article "The Right vs. the Good: Kant vs. Rawls," Patricia Kitcher challenges Rawls' thesis regarding Kant's supposed constructivism and argues that Kant is actually a kind of moral realist. Rawls argues that the priority of the right over the good, also found in *A Theory of Justice*, is a central feature of Kant's constructivism. Kitcher argues that, according to Kant, the right and the good are necessarily coeval. The author addresses Kant's claim that rational nature is endowed with intrinsic value and provided with the necessary requirements for the possibility of morality: rational nature has the law of duty within; has the predisposition to respect herself and those who have the law of duty within; and belongs to a community of rational natures. From her analysis of the good, Kitcher finally rejects any attempt to make Kant's ethics dependent on teleology.

Melissa Seymour Fahmy, in the article "On Kantian Obligatory Ends and Their Maxims of Actions," explores, explains, and expands on Kant's statement in the Doctrine of Virtue regarding the existence of ends that are also duties. According to Fahmy, the concept of obligatory end is Kant's unprecedented contribution to normative ethics. To have an end is to have reasons for doing actions that promote that end, and for omitting actions inconsistent with it. Fahmy explores what it means to have an obligatory end by focusing on others' happiness. In revising and expanding her own interpretation, she argues that the morally necessary end to promote others' happiness is prescribed by one type of promotional maxim, along with three other types of maxims of action. The promotional maxim determines the realization of

4 Accessed 22 July 2023, <<https://revistas.marilia.unesp.br/index.php/ek/issue/view/749>>.

5 Accessed 24 July 2023, <[https://www.camara.leg.br/noticias/937651-projeto-torna-obrigatoria-equiparacao-salarial-entre-homens-e-mulheres-para-funcoes-identicas/#:~:text=O%20Projeto%20de%20Lei%20111,P%C3%BCblico%20do%20Trabalho%20\(MPT\)>](https://www.camara.leg.br/noticias/937651-projeto-torna-obrigatoria-equiparacao-salarial-entre-homens-e-mulheres-para-funcoes-identicas/#:~:text=O%20Projeto%20de%20Lei%20111,P%C3%BCblico%20do%20Trabalho%20(MPT)>)

an end. It leads to wide or imperfect duties, such as beneficence. The non-diminishing maxim determines the omission of actions that prevent the achievement of the end or the omission of actions that may diminish others' happiness. The epistemic maxim determines that the agent should strive to enhance her understanding of how her actions and words affect others. The dispositional maxim, finally, determines that the agent cultivates the appropriate disposition towards the obligatory end.

In the article "What Is It to Incorporate an Incentive into a Maxim?", Martina Favaretto's starting point is Henry Allison's analysis of the "incorporation thesis." The author expands on this thesis and argues that the formation of interest is the necessary component for an incentive to be adopted as a maxim in rational agency. Favaretto recalls Kant's explanation in the *Critique of Pure Reason* on degrees of consciousness of representations, to claim that representations can also be obscure in practical judgment. The author proposes to understand the "incorporation thesis" in a dual sense: if the incentive serves as a sufficient reason for action, the agent clearly represents its maxim; if the incentive only indicates salient reasons for action, the agent obscurely represents its maxim. In the latter case, the agent would be able to become aware of its maxim by inference.

Marcia Baron, in "Kantian Ethics, Feminism, and Worries about Emotional Detachment," addresses three objections to Kant's ethics that revolve around the notion of "detachment." Such objections aim at the moral agent and deal with her detachment from other people, her detachment from her own projects, and her detachment from feelings. These objections mainly, but not exclusively, arise in feminist criticisms of Kant's ethics. Baron agrees that Kant's views on women are deplorable, but argues that his philosophy is more progressive than the man himself. A reason to look favorably to Kant's moral philosophy is its egalitarianism. In addition to the claim that women are just as rational as men, Baron argues that it is necessary to give a larger space to the cultivation of sentiments as part of moral development.

Huaping Lu-Adler, in "Know Your Place, Know Your Calling: Geography, Race, and Kant's 'World-Citizen,'" challenges Kant's alleged egalitarianism. Lu-Adler argues that, according to Kant, the expression world-citizens does not refer to human beings in general, but rather is limited to Occidental white men because of their privileged geographic location. Based on the analysis of pre-critical and critical writings and lessons, both published and unpublished during his life, Lu-Adler aims to show racism as the general orientation of Kant's philosophical system. Her objective is clear: it is not about the racism of the individual, but about the educator Kant, who was an exponent of the Enlightenment and intended to form world-citizens in his lessons. Kant establishes a teleological classification of the different races based on their geographic location on Earth. The Occidental white men are considered an exceptional race, whose purpose is the human progress. Kant's practical philosophy (including pure moral theory, pragmatic anthropology, and theory of education) is far from being egalitarian.

Lara Scaglia, in "Kant's Notion of Human Dignity in Dialogue with Islamic Thinking: For an Interstitial and Extra-National Account of Human Dignity," proposes an original approach that discusses contemporary appropriations of Kant's thought by intercultural societies. Her analysis focuses on the notion of human dignity, which is present in ethics, politics, and jurisprudence. Scaglia finds in Kant's texts instruments to understand the notion of human dignity as both interstitial and normative. These instruments also help to clarify the disagreement over the meaning of this notion, a disagreement that contributes to the increase of the conflictive character of international relations. By confronting Kantian thought with Islamic thought, the author makes Kant a valuable reference for the debate on human dignity in both Western and Eastern traditions.

Saniye Vatansever, in "Kant's Conceptions of the Feeling of Life and the Feeling of the Promotion of Life in Light of Epicurus' Theory of Pleasure and the Stoic Notion of *Oikeiōsis*," seeks in Ancient Greece the historical origins of the notions of "feeling of life" and "feeling

of the promotion of life,” which appear in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. According to Vatansever, the notion of feeling of life, with which Kant identifies aesthetic pleasure, seems to be influenced by the Epicurean theory; the notion of feeling of the promotion of life seems to be influenced by the Stoic concept of *oikeiōsis* (“belonging to one’s own self”). Regarding their specific functions, the feeling of life allows the awareness of the harmonious interaction of our faculties, while the feeling of the promotion of life allows the awareness of the harmonious relationship between our faculties and nature.

Virginia Helena Aragones Aita, in “Inflexão estética e nova dicção da *Critica*: uma hermenêutica reflexiva *avant la lettre*,” analyzes texts from the First Introduction to the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* and from the third *Critique* itself (§§ 49-60). First, the author explores Kant’s arguments as interpreted by Henry Allison, Béatrice Longuenesse, and Rudolf Makkreel. She then examines different functions of imagination and different roles of reflection in the formation of aesthetic judgment, in the origin of empirical concepts, and in the production of transcendental schemes. According to Aita, Makkreel’s interpretation allows us to consider a hermeneutics in these passages of the third *Critique*. Second, Aita investigates the specificity of aesthetic reflection in §§ 49, 51, 58, and 59 of the third *Critique*. Finally, the author confronts Kant’s arguments with the aesthetics of Arthur Danto and Jacques Rancière.

Mitieli Seixas da Silva, in her article “As Reflexões e as *Lições de lógica* sobre a formação de conceitos empíricos,” offers an original interpretation of the formation of empirical concepts based on the distinction between logical origin (regarding the form) and metaphysical origin (regarding the content) of a concept. In her view, the logical origin is the core of Kant’s argument, which deals with the role of acts of comparison, reflection, and abstraction in the formation of empirical concepts. Her interpretation is a criticism of Béatrice Longuenesse’s theses, which seem to exceed the boundaries of general logic and to conflate logical origin with metaphysical origin. According to Silva, this makes Longuenesse’s interpretation closer to Meier’s and Locke’s views than to Kant’s.

The Right vs the Good: Kant vs Rawls

[*O Justo vs o Bem: Kant vs Rawls*]

Patricia Kitcher¹

Columbia University (New York, USA)

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Abstract

Rawls regarded the priority of the right over the good as the characteristic feature of Kantian constructivism. I have four goals in the paper. First, I try to refute Rawls's reading of Kant on the relation between the right and the good. Second, I fill out Kant's picture of the rational natures that have intrinsic value: They have the law of duty within, are predisposed to respect themselves and others who have the law of duty within, and belong to a community of rational natures. Third, I argue that because Kant thought that the right and the good were coeval, he is not a constructivist, but a kind of realist. Finally, I use my examination of the good, the intrinsically valuable in Kant, to reject any temptation to regard his ethics as dependent on his teleological claim that human nature is the end of nature.

Keywords: Rawls; right; good; constructivism; motivating ground; moral community.

¹ Patricia Kitcher is the Roberta and William Campbell Professor Emerita of the Humanities, Professor Emerita of Philosophy, Columbia University, FAAAS. E-mail: pk206@columbia.edu

"This priority of the right over the good is characteristic of Kantian constructivism."
(Rawls, 1980/1999, 319)

"As Kant puts it ... 'The paradox is that the concept of good and evil is not defined prior to the moral law, to which, it would seem, the former would have to serve as a foundation; rather the concept of good and evil must be defined after and by means of the law.'"
(Rawls, 2000, 227)

1. Rawls and Kant

By carefully using “Kantian” to describe his work, Rawls tried to forestall identifying his attractive and influential Kant-inspired theory as Kant’s own. On the issue of the priority of the right over the good, however, Rawls seemed to think that there was no daylight between their positions. After citing Kant’s observation about the paradox of not defining good and evil before the moral law, he notes that emphasis is added to the whole sentence, thereby suggesting that Kant not only held this view, but that he regarded it as a central feature of his ethics – as it is of Rawls’s ethical constructivism. I will argue that Rawls misreads the paradox passage and that the doctrine that he attributes to Kant is inconsistent with Kant’s view of the relation between the first and second formulations of the Categorical Imperative. Where I agree with Rawls is on the centrality of the relation between the right and the good in an ethical theory to the nature of the theory. Rawls took Kant to prioritize the right over the good and so to be some type of moral constructivist (*avant la lettre*); I take Kant to regard the right and the good as necessarily coeval and so to be a kind of moral realist. My goal in pursuing the relation between the right and the good in Kant’s theory is less to refute Rawls’s (now) canonical reading – though I would like to do that – than use his issue to illuminate the status of Kant’s moral theory.

2. The Evidence Against Kant Prioritizing the Right over the Good from Groundwork 2

After presenting his discovery of the supreme moral principle as the Categorical Imperative (*Act only on that maxim that you can also will to become a universal law* [GMS, AA 04: 421]), Kant raises an odd question:

Is it a necessary law for all rational beings always to judge actions according to maxims which they can will to be universal laws? (GMS, AA 04: 426)²

His question is neither rhetorical, nor skeptical, but substantive. He takes himself to have already shown in *Groundwork 1* that morality, as it is ordinarily understood, requires that agents be able to act for solely moral reasons. Since he has just shown that the Categorical Imperative is the supreme moral principle, it follows that morality will be possible only if the world contains beings of a certain kind, beings who, not through or with the aid of any sensory incentive, but

2 References to Kant’s works other than the *Critique of Pure Reason* will be given in the text by the volume and page of Kant (1900-). References to the *Critique of Pure Reason* are in the text with the usual A/B pagination. Translations for the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* are from Gregor and Timmermann (2011); translations for the *Metaphysics of Morals* are from Gregor (1996), translations for the *Critique of Practical Reason* are from Pluhar 2002; translations for the *Critique of Pure Reason* are from Pluhar (1996). In all cases, however, I indicate Kant’s emphases through bold not italics and I translate “*Vorstellung*” and related forms as “representation,” not Pluhar’s preferred “presentation.”

solely through their rational nature, always evaluate actions through the Categorical Imperative. Hence, the importance of asking his odd question. Kant laments that his question can be answered only by taking a reluctant step beyond our understanding of morality into metaphysics (GMS, AA 04: 428).

Kant does not answer the question of the existence of such creatures immediately, but turns to moral psychology, noting that a will must always have an end. If we look back to *Groundwork 1*, we can bring the problem he is addressing into sharper focus. There Kant presents two versions of a case of someone in need. In the first version, the person helps the needy individual, because he takes pleasure in helping others and making them happy. In the second, the same person has lost his ability to take joy in the happiness of others, but still has the resources to help the needy individual and does so, because he recognizes that it is his duty to help. In both versions, the purpose or end of the action is to help the needy individual for his own sake. Something else is involved in the second case, however, namely, acting from duty. I take Kant's question as he moves from the first to the second formulation of the Categorical Imperative to be: What end can a will have in relieving the need for the right reason, out of respect for moral law?

Kant explains that what is required for the possibility of morality is an objective and motivating ground or basis — *Grund* — for the will. I have tried to make his inquiry more intuitive by using one of his examples. The question of the ground of respect for the moral law can also be raised in a general way. Morality is possible only if agents can adhere to the results of the first formulation of the Categorical Imperative, henceforth, 'CI1', tests. But what is the agent's basis, ground, motive for refraining from an action if it fails one of the tests? Why should she restrict what she does to actions that she could will that everyone performs? Kant's implicit question is, again, not skeptical, but substantive. He provides parameters for the answer by contrasting the moral case with the incentives that motivate the pursuit of happiness. In the latter case, the grounds for action vary from person to person, depending on what makes them happy. For CI1 to be binding on agents, however, its motivating ground cannot vary, cannot depend on the particular or subjective ends of individuals. It must be invariant across all moral agents, or objective. Here, as in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant uses 'objective' to indicate both invariance across subjects and relation to an object (e.g., B 138).

Kant juxtaposes his implicit question about the motivating ground for following CI1 and his odd question about whether it is a necessary law for rational beings to judge their actions according to CI1, because they have the same answer: the existence of agents with the moral capacity that he has delineated in *Groundwork 1 and 2*, the capacity to act out of respect for moral law. Kant abbreviates this capacity to that of having a "rational nature" (GMS, AA 04: 429), because he anticipates the positive answer to his odd question that is supposed to come in *Groundwork 3*. The law of duty lies *a priori* in reason, so those with a rational nature necessarily judge their actions according to maxims that they can will to be universal laws.

The most crucial textual fact about the second formulation of the Categorical Imperative (CI2)

Act in such a way that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or anyone else's, never merely as a means, but always also as an end. (GMS, AA 04: 429)

is that Kant tells the reader explicitly in a footnote, and implicitly through his language, that he cannot argue for it as a formulation of the supreme moral principle until *Groundwork 3*. Why does Kant present CI2 in *Groundwork 2*, before he is able to argue for it? He seems to answer this question at the end of the section when he explains that both the first two sections are analytic — are explicating the ordinary concept of morality (GMS, AA 04: 445). Presumably he thinks that CI2 and the third formulation, CI3, which he also presents in *Groundwork 2*, are important aspects of ordinary moral understanding and must be made explicit to have a tolerably complete analysis.

We can see why Kant might think that completeness requires CI2 through considering the relation between CI1 and CI2. It is important to bring in CI2, because it gives the basis or motivating ground for agents to follow CI1. On the other hand, CI1 clarifies what CI2 requires. How you show your respect for other persons is by not arrogating rights to yourself that you would not grant to all others. With this fuller picture, we can understand why Kant maintains that the different looking principles are equivalent, in the sense that it does not matter which an agent uses to figure out what she may or ought to do. Consider again the case of helping a needy individual from the motive of duty. It does not matter whether the agent foregrounds CI1 or CI2. She is either respecting humanity in her own person and that of others, by only engaging in actions that she could will that everyone do or she is not allowing herself to do something that she could not will others to do, out of respect for humanity. In the case of morally worthy actions, both elements need to be involved.

Given the relations between CI1 and CI2, we can already see that there is a strong textual case against taking Kant to prioritize the right over the good. Without the good, the existence of creatures with the rational moral capacity, there would be no suitable motivating ground for following the law of duty, and without the law, there would be no adequate means of expressing respect for all rational natures. Kant's summary of the relations among the formulae says exactly this: any maxim must have both a form and a matter (GMS, AA 04: 436). Specifically, any morally worthy maxim must have the form of universalizability and must have rational nature as its matter – as the end to which the action is directed. Since both the form of law and the end of rational nature must be present in morally worthy action, they must be coeval. Since the form cannot be prior to the matter, the right cannot be prior to the good.

What about the textual evidence on the other side? It seems to me that it is weak. Both at the beginning of the section of the *Critique of Practical Reason* where Kant discusses good and evil and right after his comment about a paradox, he makes the same point:

If the concept of the good is not to be derived from any antecedent practical law, but is rather to serve as its basis, then it can only be the concept of something whose existence produces pleasure and thus determines the causality of the subject to produce this something. (KpV, AA 05: 58, see also 05: 63, my italics).

Rational nature is not, however, a good of this type. It is an existing end that all agents have, not an end that different agents acquire through their varying experiences with pleasure and then try to bring into being for the pleasure that it will yield.

3. The Evidence Against Kant Prioritizing the Right over the Good from his Theory of Predispositions

Although Kant argued that morally good action requires both the form of universal law and the motivating ground of respect for rational natures, he might have taken the right to be prior to the good in a different sense. Kant memorably claims at the end of the *Practical Critique* that one of the two things that fill any human mind with admiration and reverence is “**the moral law within me**” (KpV, AA 05: 161, my italics). Earlier, in §7, he had argued that

So act that the maxim of your will could always hold at the same time as a principle of universal legislation. (KpV, AA 05: 30)

is a “basic law of pure practical reason” (KpV, AA 05: 30). And in a note to *Religion within the Bounds of Bare Reason*, he maintains that

If this law [CI1] were not given *within us*, no reason would ever enable us to cogitate it as a law or to talk the power of choice into it. (RGV, AA 06: 26a, my italics).

I understand all these texts to say the same thing: As the categories lie *a priori* in the mind waiting to be awakened to action by the receipt of sensory information, so too, the Categorical Imperative lies *a priori* in the mind waiting to be awakened into action by the agent's need to decide on a course of action (see also RGV, AA 06: 29). It is a basic principle of pure practical reason, a principle that pure reason uses to figure out which actions are permitted or required. The *Religion* book characterizes this law given to the mind as a "predisposition" to "personality." It is a necessary condition for the possibility of "personality," of being an agent with the moral capacity (RGV, AA 06: 27). As a predisposition, it can be neither acquired nor extirpated (RGV, AA 06: 28). It might seem that the presence of the law of duty in human reason is necessarily prior to respecting creatures with the moral capacity. After all, they must have the law within, before they can be respected by virtue of having it.

If we turn to the *Metaphysics of Morals*, however, we find more predispositions for morality (MS, AA 06: 399). Of relevance to the point at issue, humans must have a predisposition — not a duty — of self-esteem.

It is not correct to say that a man has a **duty of self-esteem**; it must rather be said that the law within him unavoidably forces from him **respect** for his own being ... It cannot be said that a man **has** a duty of respect toward himself, for he must have respect for the law within himself in order even to think of any duty whatsoever. (MS, AA 06: 402-403)

Even without working through this passage in the detail it requires, Kant is clearly making two points. First, those who have the law of duty within are thereby forced to respect their own beings. Respect for yourself as a moral agent is no more voluntary than having the law within is voluntary. Second, it makes no sense to talk about the law as prescribing duties and then to ask whether it also needs to be respected. Unless it is respected, it cannot prescribe any duties. What I leave unclear for the purposes of this paper is whether the moral law can be respected only through respecting creatures who have it within. One possible counterexample would be angels, who have the law within, but who lack opposing sensible desires and so automatically follow the moral law (Stern, 2013, p. 126-27). This section of the *Metaphysics of Morals* concerns feelings and so would be relevant only for creatures with sensibly affected feelings.³ Still, in such creatures, which includes humans, what we are seeing, again, is the correlative nature of right and value; in the absence of some value that is respected, the right cannot function as it should in prescribing duties.

Having a predisposition to self-respect may seem a long way from CI2's command to treat all rational beings with respect. For Kant, however, it is a journey of a single step. In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, he takes up the question of how it is possible to understand others as having minds. He is trying to defend his strategy of arguing from his analysis of how he thinks in the Transcendental Deduction to his critique of the Rational Psychologists' theory of thinking in the Paralogisms chapter. I quote the passage at length, because it is also key to his attempted demonstration of the freedom and so value of moral agents in *Groundwork 3*.

It must, however, seem strange at the very outset that the condition under which I think at all, and which is therefore merely a characteristic of myself as subject, is to be valid also for everything that thinks; and that upon a proposition that seems empirical we can presume to base an apodeictic and universal judgment, *viz.* that everything that thinks is of such a character as the pronouncement of self-consciousness asserts of me. The cause of this, however, lies in the fact that we must necessarily ascribe to things a priori all of the properties that make up the conditions under which alone we think them. *Now through no outer experience, but solely through self-consciousness, can I have the least representation of a thinking being. Hence objects of that sort are nothing more than the transfer of this consciousness of mine to other things, which thereby alone are represented as thinking beings.* (A 346/B 404-405, my italics)

³ I am grateful to several participants at a conference on Values at the University of Sheffield in March of 2023 for leading me to clarify this point.

In brief, since humans have only one window into the nature of thinking, namely their own thinking, they can represent another as a thinker only by using themselves as a model. Here is the one step needed to move from self-respect to respect for all moral agents:

1. The law of duty within forces a moral agent to have respect for her own being.
2. To think of others as having minds at all, an agent must use her mind as a model for them.
3. Since she uses her mind as a model and since she has the law of duty within, she represents others as having the law of duty within, which forces her to respect the beings that she thereby represents.

By combining his doctrine of the predisposition to self-esteem with his theory of representing other minds, we see that, for Kant, a moral agent not only has the law of duty within. She is also predisposed to respect all others whom she takes to be minded. Agents no more acquire respect for other moral agents from experience – which Kant thinks is just as likely to produce misanthropy (GMS, AA 04: 407, RGV, AA 06: 32) – than they acquire the law of duty from experience. The discussion of predispositions in the *Metaphysics of Morals* explains why having the law of duty and having respect for the being of others must be coeval in feeling creatures: Without respect for beings with the law within the putative law could not function as a law of duty.

4. How Does Kant Understand the Content of the Good?

I have based my arguments on an assumption about how Kant understands the content of the good, and I will now offer a retrospective defense of that assumption. In a sense Kant is clear about what the good is:

A rational nature exists as an end-in-itself. (GMS, AA 04: 429)

But we need to know which property of agents with rational natures provides the motivating ground for following CI1. The question of what it is special about rational natures has been extensively studied and I begin with a standard reading offered by Henry Allison in his *Commentary on the Groundwork*. Allison considers three possible answers:

1. All minimally rational agents who have a capacity to set ends are ends in themselves.
2. Only agents with a good will are ends-in-themselves.
3. All rational agents with a capacity for morality are ends-in themselves. (Allison, 2011, p. 209)

Option 1 is familiar from the distinguished work of Christine Korsgaard (1986, p. 188) and Allen Wood (1999, p. 120-121). Still, as Allison notes, this well-known view can probably be set aside on textual grounds alone (2011, p. 216). Here are two passages that seem conclusive:

A person is a subject whose actions can be *imputed* to him. (MS, AA 06: 223)

This predisposition [to personality is] a special predisposition. From the fact that a being has reason it does not follow ... that this reason contains an ability to determine the power of choice unconditionally through the mere representation of the qualification of its maxims for universal legislation ... (RGV, AA 06: 26a).

The second citation is from the same note where Kant explains that the moral law must be “given within us.” Both indicate that moral personhood requires considerably more than the ability to set ends.

Both Allison (2011, p. 215) and Wood (1999, p. 120) dismiss the idea that good-willing agents are those deserving of respect, option 2, because the end in question must exist and Kant takes agents with a good will to be scarce and possibly non-existent (GMS, AA 04: 407). This seems too quick. A good will is celebrated in the *Groundwork*, from the opening sentence of section 1 to a discussion in *Groundwork 2* that follows Kant's summary of the relations among the three formulations of the CI. There, he notes that he is returning to where he began, with the good will, and explains that the existing end in question

can be nothing other than the subject of all possible ends itself because it is also the subject of a possible absolutely good will. (GMS, AA 04: 437)

The passage suggests that being an end-in-itself does not require an agent to have a good will, but only the potential for one. Although this option may seem to be a variant of Allison's preferred option 3, the moral capacity, it is not. On the fourth option, the underlying source of value is a good will; the value of the potential for a good will is derivative. By contrast, the moral capacity itself is valuable on option 3, and not just because it is a necessary condition for having the property that is valuable, *viz.*, an absolutely good will. I will offer reasons for thinking that Allison is right, that what makes rational nature an end-in-itself is the possession of the moral capacity, but I want to look first at some of Kant's language that makes the good will seem an apt candidate for the most fundamental moral value.

In discussing the value of the 'end-in-itself,' Kant's language ranges from flowery to florid. The end-in-itself does not have "relative worth", but "inner worth" (GMS, AA 04: 435); it is "infinitely above any price" (GMS, AA 04: 435); it has "absolute worth" (GMS, AA 04: 428), "dignity" (GMS, AA 04: 434), "sanctity" (GMS, AA 04: 435) and "sublimity" (GMS, AA 04: 439-40). Given these epithets, it can seem that the only thing capable of measuring up would be the one thing in the world or beyond it that is good without qualification, a good will. I argue below that the relation that Kant sees between the second and third formulations of the Categorical Imperative provides evidence that he takes rational nature to be an end-in-itself just by virtue of it possessing the moral capacity, but I think it is important to deal with Kant's colorful language. The absolute, incomparable, and sublime qualities of rational nature can give the appearance that Kant's ethics rests in some way on his teleology. Rational nature is an end-in-itself, because it is the end of nature. Good-willing agents are the *raison d'être* of the creation. Teleology is an important part of Kant's system and he argued that a realm of ends was nature's ultimate goal (KpV, AA 05: 548-49). Still, I will suggest in the last section that we can make sense of Kant's laudatory claims about rational nature within the context of his ethical theory and without relying on teleology.

The transition from the first to the second formulation of the Categorical Imperative focused on the basis or motivating ground for following the law of duty; the transition from CI2 to CI3 focuses on the necessary objectivity of morality. What I mean by the 'necessary objectivity' of morality is that it is part of the ordinary moral understanding that Kant is trying to make explicit that morality – if it is to exist or make sense – must be objective. Kant sounds the theme of the objectivity of morality again and again in the *Groundwork*. Just three pages into the Preface, he explains that according to the common idea of duty and morality, "a law, if it is to hold morally, i.e., as the ground of an obligation, must ... hold" not just for human beings but for all rational beings (GMS, AA 04: 389). What distinguishes moral obligations from mere preferences is that the former are objective; they bind agents regardless of their preferences. To explain the possibility of morality, Kant must explain how moral laws can be objective.

As he moves to CI3, Kant notes that he has not established the reality of morality, a task deferred to *Groundwork 3*, but simply assumed that it was possible. His arguments have been hypothetical: If there are objective moral laws, then they must be categorical (the argument that shows that any moral law must be universal and leads to the formulation of CI1); if there are objective moral laws, then their motivating ground must be an objective end, (the argument

that leads to the positing of rational nature as an end-in-itself and the formulation of CI2). He still cannot prove the reality of morality, but notes that

[o]ne thing, however, could have yet been done, namely: that the dissociation from all interest in willing from duty, as the specific mark distinguishing categorical from hypothetical imperatives be indicated in the imperative itself. (GMS, AA 04: 432)

And this leads to the third formulation:

The principle of every human will as a will universally legislating through all its maxims ... would be very well fitted, to be the categorical imperative, [because] it is founded on no interest and thus alone, among all possible imperatives, can be unconditional. (GMS, AA 04: 432)

The point of the third formulation – the formulation that Rawls made the foundation of his theory – is not to explain how moral laws bind or obligate agents. Kant is no contractarian. Agents are not bound by moral laws because they have agreed to them. They are bound by the law of duty within them and obligated to obey by their predisposition to respect rational nature in themselves and, through themselves, in others. What, then, is the problem for which CI3 is supposed to supply the answer?

CI1 commands agents to act only on maxims that they could will to be universal laws. Since moral laws are not laws of nature, they can become laws only through rational willing. Thus, if there are no principles of action that can be willed by agents, regardless of their subjective preferences, to be laws of action, then the set of objective moral laws will be empty and morality will be impossible. Conversely the possibility of morality requires that there be laws that agents can will independently of their particular interests. Since that is a requirement for something to be a moral law, an agent's action is morally permissible (can conform to law) only if she acts on a maxim that she could, as a legislator, make into a moral law.

To see why CI3 is relevant to the issue of the good will versus the moral capacity as the property that makes rational natures valuable, consider the relation between CI2 and CI3 on the two different interpretations. If the content of CI2 is that the moral capacity is an end-in-itself, then the conditions that are captured by CI2 and CI3 will each be a necessary condition for the other. Agents can have a moral capacity only if there is a community of agents under moral laws. Without a community, an agent has no way of understanding a principle as a moral law rather than as a preference. Moral agents require a community not just to engage in mutual aid, but to be able to make sense of morality, to be able to mark a distinction between preferences and obligations. From the other direction, it is impossible to have a community that legislates *moral* laws unless each member has the law of duty within and automatically respects beings that have the law within. Otherwise, you cannot have moral laws at all, but only dictates enforced by physical or social coercion and precepts based on self-interest.

Since acting with a good will requires the existence of objective moral laws, anyone with the potential for a good will must belong to a community of moral agents that collectively wills the laws. But the reverse relation does not hold. A community of agents under moral laws is possible just so long as each has the moral law within and automatically respects beings with the moral law within. It is not necessary that these capacities also make it possible for members of the community to have absolutely good wills, even though they do. Kant maintains that each of the formulae of the Categorical Imperative unites the other two within itself (GMS, AA 04: 436). What I have just argued is that CI3 unites CI2, as well as CI1, within itself if the property that makes rational agents ends-in-themselves is the moral capacity, but not if it is the potential for a good will.

We now have an explication of the property of beings with a rational nature that make them ends-in-themselves: It is the capacity for morality that includes having the law of duty within, a predisposition to respect beings with the law of duty within, and membership in a

realm of ends. To demonstrate the reality of morality, Kant must show that creatures with this capacity exist.

5. Demonstrations that Rational Moral Agents Exist

I will not defend Kant's demonstrations of the reality of morality. I present them for interpretive purposes, specifically, to illuminate the nature of his moral theory. Let us return to the passage to which Kant appends a note explaining that he is only postulating that rational nature exists as an end-in-itself, a proposition for which he will supply grounds in *Groundwork 3*. He asserts that each person necessarily conceives of his own existence as having intrinsic worth. What is to be established in last section is that

every other rational being also represents its existence in this way, *as a consequence of just the same rational ground that also holds for me.* (GMS, AA 04: 429, my italics)

As he presents the argument to come, it seems to involve a scope fallacy. Even if each person represents her existence as intrinsically valuable on the same ground that I regard my existence as intrinsically valuable, it hardly follows that each of us regards everyone else's existence as valuable on the same ground that she regards her existence as valuable. Since it would be surprising for Kant to commit such a fallacy, it is helpful to have a reading of the *Groundwork 3* argument on which he does not.

In *Groundwork 3*, Kant argues for an identity

A free will and a will under moral laws are one and the same. (GMS, AA 04: 447)

If his argument for the claim is sound, then he would be able to prove the reality of morality – that there are wills under moral laws – by proving that rational beings have free wills. And that is what sub-section 2 of the third section is supposed to show

Freedom must be presupposed as a property of the will of all rational beings. (GMS, AA 04: 447)

Kant then offers his proof. Here are the first few moves:

1. One must prove it [freedom] as belonging universally to the activity of rational beings endowed with a will as such. 2. Now I say: every being that cannot act otherwise than **under the idea of freedom** is actually free, in a practical respect ... 3. Now I assert: that we must necessarily *lend* [*leihen*] to every rational being that has a will also the idea of freedom, under which alone it acts. For in such a being we conceive a reason that is practical, i.e., has causality with regard to its objects. 4. Now one cannot possibly think of a reason that would self-consciously receive guidance from any other quarter with regard to its judgments, since the subject would not then attribute the determination of judgment to his reason, but to an impulse. (GMS, AA 04: 448, my numbering and italics)

There are many confusing elements in this argument and much interpretive effort has been directed to the notion of acting under the idea of freedom, but I will focus on claims 3 and 4. Why would a subject who received external guidance for a “judgment” reject it as a judgment and label it as an “impulse” instead (claim 4)? Subjects have only one way of cognizing reasoning and that is from their own reasoning. In reasoning they are conscious in making a judgment and so having that thought, not conscious of thoughts intruding on reasoning from the outside. That is how they understand what reasoning is and why they cannot think of a reason that would self-consciously receive guidance from outside of itself. Hence, subjects are conscious of being free in that sense.

What about the odd locution, “lend,” in three? I take Kant literally. We lend other

rational beings the freedom from external interference of which we are conscious in our own case, when we project our mental activity onto them, as we must do to represent them as minded beings. On this reading, Kant would be providing just the argument for CI2 that he promised in *Groundwork 2*. Insofar as any individual takes herself to have intrinsic worth, because she recognizes herself to be free of external stimuli in rational action, she also takes all others whom she can understand as rational agents to have intrinsic worth on literally the same ground — *viz.*, her recognition of herself as a free agent. And, so for every rational agent.

Although it is widely agreed that Kant's *Groundwork 3* argument fails to establish the reality of morality, there are many hypotheses about what goes wrong. Without wading into this interpretive thicket, I note two obvious problems. First, even if a subject is conscious of producing *judgments* independently of sensible impulses, that does not inform her that she can also produce judgments capable of guiding action independently of them. Second, even if humans can act independently of sensible impulses, that would not show that they can act on a principle with the content of the law of duty. One reason I highlight these objections is that the argument widely believed to replace the failed argument of *Groundwork 3* — the fact of reason passages of the *Critique of Practical Reason* — seems designed to meet them.

The argument of the *Second Critique* is surprisingly direct. As the Introduction explains:

[T]he first question is whether pure reason is sufficient by itself alone to determine the will or whether reason can be a determining basis of the will only as empirically conditioned. (KpV, AA 05: 15)

The question to be answered is whether reason, through its law of duty, can determine the will to action independently of any sensible desires. I follow Marcus Willaschek in seeing Kant's demonstration as proceeding through a thought experiment (1991, p. 186). Kant invites the reader to consider two cases in order to prove to her — through her own deliberating — that her will can be moved by moral considerations. The crucial case is the second where a prince demands of someone:

on the threat of the ... penalty of death [by immediate hanging], that he give false testimony against an honest man whom the prince would like to ruin under specious pretenses ... He will perhaps not venture to assure us whether or not he would overcome that love [of life], but he must concede without hesitation that doing so would be possible for him. He judges, therefore, that he can do something *because he is conscious that he ought to do it*, and he cognizes [*erkennt*] freedom within himself — the freedom with which otherwise, without the moral law, he would have remained unacquainted. (KpV, AA 05: 30, my italics)

According to Kant, what happens when someone thinks herself into man's position? Just prior to presenting the case, he claims that humans

become conscious directly [of the **moral law**] (as soon as we frame or draft or pose maxims of the will for ourselves) ... (KpV, AA 05: 29)

Kant assumes that in considering whether to bear false witness, his readers are conscious of the moral law. As he explains in the *Groundwork* when he claims that common human reason always has the moral law "before its eye," he does not mean that the ordinary person is conscious of the abstract formula CI1, but that she is conscious of the concrete instance relevant to the case (GMS, AA 04: 402). Someone performing the thought experiment considers testifying falsely and thinks: "Unless I can will universal false testimony, I ought not to testify falsely." From the recognition that she cannot will a world of false testimony, she infers: "I ought not to testify falsely."

If Kant is right about how people think when putting themselves in the position the man whose prince demands false testimony — a huge if — then subjects participating in the experiment will be conscious of the moral law in two different ways. First, they are conscious of its content in the concrete case: I may testify falsely only if I can will a world of false witnessing.

Second, they are conscious of it as producing a change in their thinking, because they are conscious in inferring from this instance of the moral law to a judgment about what to do or, in this case, about what not to do: "I ought not to testify falsely." Ordinary moral agents would not describe the change in their thinking in terms of principles of inference. A philosopher could, however, correctly describe the consciousness that Kant envisions as demonstrating that "act only on that maxim that your will could always hold at the same time as a principle in giving universal law" is an inferential principle that is used in practical deliberation. And this is the conclusion that he draws in §7, when he asserts that the moral law is a "basic law [Grundgesetz] of pure practical reason" (*KpV*, AA 05: 30).

With this result, Kant can finally answer the odd question from *Groundwork 2*. Humans necessarily judge actions through the law of duty, because that principle is a basic law of human practical deliberation. How he answers the question is by demonstrating to creatures who have the law of duty within that they do. The content of the law gives the determination or specification of the action: not testifying falsely. But the conclusion is not "I would rather not," or "maybe I will not," but "I ought not to testify falsely." The "ought" indicates respect for the law of duty. Agents engaging in the thought experiments respect the law in their minds, even if they believe that their actions will probably fall short. And that is all that Kant needs. He is not trying to show something that is (obviously) false – that the moral "ought" always leads people to correct actions – but only that the human mind has the moral law within as a principle of deliberation and that it respects demands that derive from it.

As noted, Kant's demonstration of the existence of morally capable agents, and so of the reality of morality, rests on granting him the outcome of the thought experiment that he expects. Again, my purpose in presenting the demonstration is not to defend it, but to fill out Kant's theory of morality so that we can consider its status. The theory has two parts. First, arguments to the effect that the possibility of morality requires the existence of creatures who have the law of duty within, a predisposition to respect the beings of those who have the law within, and membership in a community of such beings. Second, an argument to the effect that there are morally capable beings, at least in so far that they have the law of duty within that they respect. My question for the last, brief section is "what kind of moral theory has Kant offered us?"

6. Kant's Metaphysics of Moral Value

Kant refers to two kinds of goodness in *Groundwork 2*. Every imperative,

every practical law represents a possible action as good. (GMS, AA 04: 414)

Since there are two kinds of imperatives, there are two kinds of goodness. With hypothetical imperatives, the action is good, because it achieves a possible purpose, ultimately, happiness. But what good is the aim of categorical imperatives? Why should we believe that there is a second kind of goodness? On Rawls's Kantian constructivism, moral value enters the world through a procedure. Because the procedure through which the basic structure is put in place is fair, actions in accord with laws sanctioned by the basic structure have moral value. They are good and good in a way that cannot be reduced to happiness.

For Kant, however, the source of moral value is different: existing beings with the moral capacity. Moral value is not real for him in the sense that it exists independently of rational agents and could be discovered by them. Moral value enters the world with the existence of creatures with the moral capacity. Creatures with the moral capacity could not discover that value, because recognizing and respecting that value are essential elements for having the capacity. Creatures with the moral capacity take that capacity – rational nature – to have intrinsic worth, to have

dignity and to be beyond any price. In using such language, Kant is not, I believe, appealing to teleology, but continuing his project of explicating ordinary moral understanding. It is part of ordinary moral understanding that morally capable creatures have a special value or status. That value is what confers goodness on actions that respect it and evil on actions that do not. Here we need a delicate balance. One element of the moral capacity is the ability to recognize moral agents and respect their value, but that does not mean that moral value exists only by virtue of being recognized and respected⁴ or that it exists only from the perspective of moral agents.

To see the difference between Kant's position and a perspectival theory, recall Mill's unfortunate discussion of higher and lower pleasures. Mill wants to offer an absolute judgment: It is better to be a human being unsatisfied than a pig satisfied. Mill defends his claim by arguing that only beings who are capable of higher pleasures can rank the pleasures and so pronounce on the sorry state of a satisfied pig (Mill, 1861/1991, p. 139-40). Unlike Mill, Kant does not argue that the human perspective should have dominion over a pig perspective – at least when he is not doing teleology – but he is not a relativist either. His view is not that, from the perspective of humans, moral value exists, but from the perspective of pigs, it does not. Kant's position is that it is part of ordinary moral understanding that creatures with the moral capacity have value, and that since those creatures exist, moral value – as we understand it – exists. The world contains a second kind of goodness, moral goodness, because the world contains creatures with the moral capacity. Even though pigs lack the ability to recognize the moral capacity and its value, they inhabit a world where moral good and evil exist.

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⁴ I am grateful to Robert Stern for raising questions about an earlier draft that led me to clarify this issue.

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On Kantian Obligatory Ends and Their Maxims of Actions

[*Kant sobre Fins Obrigatórios e suas Máximas de Ação*]

Melissa Seymour Fahmy¹

University of Georgia (Athens, USA)

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Abstract

In the Doctrine of Virtue, Kant introduces the concept of an end that is also a duty and explains that these obligatory ends prescribe maxims of actions rather than actions themselves. A common view in the literature is that these maxims of actions are *promotional* in nature. In this paper, I work from the logic of ends to defend the view that each obligatory end prescribes multiple maxims of actions: the familiar positive, promotional maxim of actions, but also a negative, non-diminishing maxim of actions, epistemic maxims of actions, and dispositional maxims of actions. The account of obligatory ends I present is consistent with what Kant writes in the Doctrine of Virtue, but also develops the concept in ways that Kant did not, at least not explicitly.

Keywords: obligatory ends; maxims of actions; beneficence; nonmaleficence; suberogatory.

¹ Melissa Seymour Fahmy is an associate professor at University of Georgia, Department of Philosophy. Email: meseymou@uga.edu

In the Doctrine of Virtue, Kant introduces his reader to the concept of an end that is also a duty. All ends are objects of free choice that determine agents to action, however, an end that is also a duty is “an end of pure reason which it represents as an end that is also objectively necessary, that is, an end that, as far as human beings are concerned, it is a duty to have” (MS, AA 06: 380).² Because ethical duties involve ends, these duties, unlike juridical ones, are subject only to internal, self-constraint. While it is possible for others to constrain me to perform actions that are a means to some end, no one can coerce me to adopt an end (MS, AA 06: 381). The concept of an end that is also a duty is one of Kant’s truly novel contributions to normative ethical theory. And while it can no longer be described as a neglected subject, in this paper, I argue that Kant’s concept of an obligatory end has depth that has not yet been appreciated.

One of the distinguishing features of ends that are also duties is that they prescribe *maxims of actions* rather than actions themselves (MS, AA 06: 388-9). A common view in the secondary literature, including my own contributions, is that these maxims of actions are *promotional* in nature.³ This is to say that obligatory ends prescribe maxims that tell us to promote the end, which is how we come to have wide or imperfect duties like beneficence. Some authors go so far as to conflate the obligatory end with its promotion, as when Nelson Potter attributes to Kant the view that “we have helping others as an end which is at the same time a duty” (Potter, 1985, p. 84).

The position I defend in this paper is that this account is incomplete. In section one, I consider what it means to have an end, defending the position that adopting an end changes what counts as a reason for action for the agent who holds that end. Specifically, having an end gives us reason to perform actions that promote the end, but also equally rationally compelling reasons to refrain from actions that are inconsistent with the end. In section two, I apply this account of what it means to have an end to obligatory ends. Focusing on the obligatory end *others' happiness*, I argue that this morally necessary end prescribes four types of maxims of actions: promotional, non-diminishing, epistemic, and dispositional. Sometimes we have a clear picture of how our actions will impact others, but this is not always the case. Sometimes we cause harm when we are intending to benefit or show respect. I use microaggressions to illustrate this phenomenon and make the case that obligatory ends also prescribe *epistemic* maxims of action that direct us to increase our understanding of how our actions, including our speech, impact others.

I take myself to be offering an account of obligatory ends that is fully consistent with what Kant writes in the Doctrine of Virtue, but also develops the concept in ways that Kant did not, at least not explicitly. My analysis of obligatory ends and the maxims of actions they prescribe demonstrates that our moral obligation to others is richer than the Doctrine of Virtue suggests. In addition to the wide, imperfect duty of beneficence, Kant’s ethics also includes a wide, imperfect duty of *nonmaleficence*. By showing that obligatory ends do more than generate moral reason to promote the end, I create space for obligatory ends to do the sort of work that Julia Driver maintains we need the category of the suberogatory to do. In section three, I turn my attention to Driver’s argument that the suberogatory is a useful and important deontic category insofar as it captures certain moral intuitions. I demonstrate that appreciating the variety of the maxims of actions obligatory ends prescribe enables us to see that the Kantian doctrine of obligatory ends not only captures these moral intuitions, it can also explain them.

Acknowledging that making *others' happiness* one’s end entails adopting both a maxim of beneficence and a maxim of nonmaleficence introduces new questions. In section four, I explore whether the wide, imperfect duty of nonmaleficence permits the same kind of latitude

2 All quotations from Kant’s work are taken from Immanuel Kant, *Practical Philosophy*, ed. and trans. Mary Gregor (Cambridge University Press, 1996). I abbreviate *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* as GMS and *The Metaphysics of Morals* as MS. Volume and page numbers refer to Kants *gesammelte Schriften*.

3 See Gregor (1963), O’Neill (1989), Hill (1992), Allison (1993), Baron and Fahmy (2009), Fahmy (2010), Stohr (2011), Edwards (2017), and Sticker and van Ackerman (2018).

Kant attributes to the duty of beneficence, as well as the relationship between nonmaleficence and the duty of gratitude. Though I do not endeavor to provide complete answers to these questions, I hope to demonstrate that we require answers to these questions if we are to fully appreciate Kant's doctrine of ends that are also duties.

1. The Logic of Ends

What does it mean to have an end? Regarding ends in general, Kant explains that

An end is an *object* of free choice, the representation of which determines it to an action (by which the object is brought about). Every action, therefore, has its end; and since no one can have an end without *himself* making the object of his choice into an end, to have any end of action whatsoever is an act of *freedom* on the part of the acting subject, not an effect of *nature*. (MS, AA 06: 384-5)

Ends are fundamentally connected to action and willing. To have an end is to be committed to bringing the end about. This may be seen more clearly when ends are contrasted with mere wishes. In the introduction to the Doctrine of Virtue, Kant contrasts wishing with choosing. He writes,

The faculty of desire in accordance with concepts, insofar as the ground determining it to action lies within itself and not in its object, is called a faculty to *do or refrain from doing as one pleases*. Insofar as it is joined with one's consciousness of the ability to bring about its object by one's action it is called *choice*; if it is not joined with this consciousness its act is called a *wish* (MS, AA 06: 213).

While a wish, like an end, is an object of desire, the representation of it does not determine one to action. In explicating our duties of love to others Kant contrasts "...benevolence in *wishes*, which is, strictly speaking, only taking delight in the well-being of every other and does not require me to contribute to it," with what he calls "active practical benevolence...making the well-being and happiness of others my *end*" (MS, AA 06: 452; cf. MS, AA 06: 452). And when describing the importance of moral cognition of oneself, Kant warns against taking mere wishes as proof of good heart, for "wishes...however ardent, always remain empty of deeds" (MS, AA 06: 441).

Wishes are "empty of deeds," whereas ends "determine one to action". Because ends are so connected to action, adopting an end as one's own places new rational constraints on our willing. When we make something our end, we commit ourselves to constructing and pursuing a plan to achieve the end. If we fail to do this, we are either behaving irrationally (though not necessarily immorally) or we have confused an end with a mere wish. The rational constraint imposed by ends is captured in what has become known as the hypothetical imperative. As Kant describes it,

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 in the volition of an object as my effect, my causality as acting cause, that is, the use of means, is already thought, and the imperative extracts the concept of actions necessary to this end merely from the concept of a volition of this end... (G, AA 04: 417)

The hypothetical imperative describes one way we might behave irrationally vis-à-vis our own ends, namely if we adopt an end but then refuse to execute the "indispensably necessary means" to that end that are within our power. There are other ways we might behave irrationally vis-à-vis our own ends.

Consider a negative inverse of the hypothetical imperative: whoever wills the end must

refrain from willing that which would make the end impossible to achieve. If it is my end to attend an event in Los Angeles at 6pm on the 14th of the month, it would be irrational to make plans to attend an event in New York at the same time on the same day. Adopting an end rationally constrains the sort of ends I may adopt in the future. I behave irrationally if I adopt an end that would make it impossible to achieve another end I currently hold.

Ends also create reasons for action in less extreme ways, that is, when the actions available to us are neither indispensably necessary nor fundamentally incompatible with some other end. Very simply, if something is your end, then you have reason to perform those actions that are within your power and conducive to achieving or securing your end. Ends change what counts as a reason for action. Insofar as attending a popular concert is not one of my ends, I do not have reason to stay awake until midnight in order to attempt to purchase tickets when they go on sale. But if attending the concert is your end, then you have reason to do this, though not necessarily decisive reason if there are other means available to you for attending the concert. Insofar as an action is not necessary for an end, reason to perform the action will not be rationally decisive.

One point I want to highlight is that having an end gives you reason to *refrain* from doing things that will hinder or undermine your success at achieving or securing the end, and these reasons are *as rationally compelling* as are reasons to perform actions that are means to your end. For example, if my end is to achieve a personal best time in an upcoming race, I have reason to train, but also reason to avoid over-training, which may cause injury and make my participation in the race impossible. Likewise, my end gives me reason to consume certain kinds of food and drink (e.g. water), but also reason to avoid consuming others (e.g. alcohol). When it comes to the rational pursuit of ends, what we refrain from doing can be as important as what we do. And what is true for ends in general – the rational constraints they impose and how they determine what counts as a reason for action – is equally true for obligatory ends.

2. Obligatory Ends and Their Maxims of Actions

By the time Kant wrote the *Metaphysics of Morals*, he was convinced that there must be ends that are at the same time duties. For, he reasons, “were there no such ends, then all ends would hold for practical reason only as a means to other ends; and since there can be no action without an end, a *categorical imperative* would be impossible” (MS, AA 06: 385).⁴ An end that is also a duty is “an end of pure reason which it represents as an end that is also objectively necessary” (MS, AA 06: 380). In answer to the question *What are the ends that are also duties?* Kant replies: “They are *one's own perfection and the happiness of others*” (MS, AA 06: 385). It is beyond the scope of this paper to investigate why Kant selected these particular ends, whether he was justified in doing so, or whether there are additional ends that are also duties that Kant failed to mention.⁵ My interest is limited to determining what maxims of actions Kant's obligatory ends *would prescribe* if they truly were ends human beings are morally obligated to adopt as their own.

In the previous section, I concluded that what is true for ends in general - the rational constraints they impose and how they determine what counts as a reason for action - is equally true for obligatory ends. Before considering the maxims of actions prescribed by obligatory ends, it is worth noting that there are some important differences between discretionary ends and obligatory ends. First, while we may abandon a discretionary end simply because we no

4 For critical discussion of Kant's argument for obligatory ends see Potter 1985, Allison 1993, and Herman 2007.

5 Later in the *Doctrine of Virtue*, Kant writes “But since ethical obligation to ends, *of which there can be several*, is only wide obligation...there are many different duties, corresponding to the different ends prescribed by the law” (MS, AA 06: 395, emphasis mine). For an account of why one's own perfection and others' happiness are ends that are at the same time duties, see Herman 2007.

longer care about it or because its pursuit is too onerous or incompatible with an end we value more, we are not at liberty to abandon obligatory ends. To do so would be a moral failing. And second, obligatory ends are not ends that can be achieved once and for all, like my end of achieving a personal best time in an upcoming race or visiting the pyramids in Egypt. Rather, obligatory ends are ends that we will have for the entirety of our lives. In this respect, obligatory ends are more like *one's own happiness* than many of the discretionary ends we hold for a limited amount of time before we achieve or abandon them.⁶

As I noted at the beginning of the paper, obligatory ends and their corresponding duties of virtue are distinguished from other types of duties by their distinctive form of lawgiving. According to Kant, whereas juridical duties give laws for *actions*, ethics, by contrast, gives laws only for *maxims of actions* (MS, AA 06: 388). The type of maxim of actions most widely acknowledged in the secondary literature is a direct, positive, promotional maxim. The reason for this is straightforward; these are the sort of maxims of actions we find articulated in the Doctrine of Virtue. We are informed that one's own perfection prescribes the maxim "Cultivate your powers of mind and body so that they are fit to realize any ends you might encounter..." (MS, AA 06: 392), as well as the maxim "...strive with all one's might that the thought of duty for its own sake is the sufficient incentive of every action conforming to duty." (MS, AA 06: 393).

The other-regarding obligatory, *others' happiness*, is most commonly associated with the duty of beneficence, which is explicitly promotional in nature. "To be beneficent," Kant tells us, "[is] to promote according to one's means the happiness of others in need, without hoping for something in return" (MS, AA 06: 453).⁷ Thomas Hill understands the principle of beneficence to mean "the general duty to promote the happiness of others, or (more strictly) to make the happiness of others an end of ours by adopting the maxim to promote that end" (Hill, 2002, p. 207 fn18). According to Hill,

Although...the principle of beneficence requires serious commitment, still the only universal act principle, applicable to all circumstances, that we can infer from this has the basic form of a wide duty: 'Sometimes, to some significant extent, promote the permissible ends of others' (Hill, 2002, p. 206-7).

This type of positive, promotional maxim of action is frequently taken to be exhaustive of the moral obligation that flows from an obligatory end. In contrast, I propose that if we think through what it means to have an end and apply this to obligatory ends, we will arrive at the conclusion that obligatory ends prescribe more than the promotional maxims of actions that Kant explicitly articulates.

In the previous section, I argued that adopting an end gives one reason to perform actions that are means to the end, as well as *equally rationally compelling* reasons to refrain from doing things that impede or undermine the pursuit of the end. Following this logic, I maintain that obligatory ends prescribe negative, non-diminishing maxims of actions in addition to the familiar positive, promotional ones.⁸ While I believe this holds true for all obligatory ends, for the remainder of the paper I will focus exclusively on *others' happiness*. It is perhaps easier to see that the end of moral perfection includes both positive and negative maxims of action. In order to fulfill all of our duties we must do what is obligatory, as well as refrain from what is forbidden. It is less obvious to see why *others' happiness* also prescribes a negative maxim of actions.

Whereas the positive maxim of action commands agents to promote the happiness of others, the negative maxim commands agents to refrain from doing things that will diminish

⁶ I acknowledge that it is possible to hold a discretionary end for the entirety of one's life. I thank Martin Sticker for calling my attention to this.

⁷ See also MS, AA 06: 388, 06: 393.

⁸ Kant maintains that duties of virtue can be both positive and negative – duties of commission and duties of omission (MS, AA 06: 419).

others' happiness. If others' happiness is our end, and a morally obligatory one at that, then we have moral reason to avoid doing things that will cause unhappiness *even when doing such things would not be morally impermissible*. A couple points of clarification are in order before considering some examples. First, I am arguing that the obligatory end gives us moral reason to refrain from doing things we anticipate will be detrimental to the happiness and well-being of others, and that these reasons are *as rationally compelling* as the reasons the obligatory end gives us to promote the happiness of others. In many situations, these moral reasons will not be decisive by themselves owing to the wide and imperfect nature of duties of virtue.⁹ Knowing that if I win a race my competitors will be disappointed will typically not be, by itself, a compelling reason to deliberately slow my pace. My happiness and well-being also matter, and deliberately slowing my pace would undermine the integrity of the competition. And second, I want to acknowledge that many things that diminish the happiness of others are impermissible for reasons that have little or nothing to do with this psychological consequence. Here I have in mind conduct such as lying, stealing, and assault. I am not interested in these types of action. Acknowledging the impact on others' happiness does not add anything very important in cases where the action is impermissible.

The set of actions I do want to consider are those that diminish others' happiness but are not prohibited by strict or perfect duty. I am arguing that the obligatory end gives us moral reason (though not necessarily decisive reason) to refrain from performing these actions. To take an example, imagine that you have plans to build an extension to your home. You take care to obtain the appropriate permits before you begin construction and to ensure that your construction plans are up to code and will not damage underground electrical lines. Your plans are perfectly legal and within your rights as a property owner. However, at some point, you come to realize that the new addition to your home will ruin the view from your neighbor's window. Instead of looking out onto a natural vista while washing the dishes or eating breakfast, once your construction is complete, your neighbor will see only the broad side to this new addition to your home. I am arguing that the obligatory end gives you some moral reason to abandon or revise your project. This reason by itself is not decisive. Like opportunities for beneficence, this will be an occasion for the exercise of moral judgment.

The set of actions that diminish others' happiness but are not prohibited by strict duty is large and diverse. Whether someone else's behavior causes you distress may have as much to do with you - your character and temperament - as it does with the offending behavior. If you suffer from the vice of envy, then another's success will diminish your happiness. If you suffer from the vice of impatience, then someone doing something at a perfectly reasonable pace may upset you. My purpose in this paper is to establish that obligatory ends prescribe at least four kinds of maxims of actions: promotional, non-diminishing, epistemic, and dispositional. To this end, it will be helpful to think about two broad categories of behaviors that typically diminish happiness or well-being.

The first category is *thoughtless behavior*, actions that *thoughtlessly* cause hurt or inconvenience to others. Consider one of Julia Driver's examples of a morally charged situation: mowing one's lawn early on a Sunday morning. Making a lot of noise seems like a good example with which to begin. It is both simple and familiar, and we have all likely been on both sides - the offender and the offended - at some point in our lives. Others' noise can make it difficult to sleep, read, think, or have a conversation, which in turn will cause frustration and irritation. I suspect it is rarely the case that noise-makers are maliciously motivated. Rather, insofar as they err, they do so by pursuing their own ends (mowing the lawn, throwing a party, learning to play the trumpet) with too little thought given to how their actions impact others.

Another way we might thoughtlessly diminish the happiness of others is through

⁹ Moral reasons to promote the happiness of particular others in particular ways will often not be decisive either. See Fahmy 2019.

emotional contagion: “the tendency to automatically mimic and synchronize expressions, vocalizations, postures, and movements with those of another person’s and, consequently, to converge emotionally” (Hatfield, et. al 1993, p. 96). As Kant himself observed, as a species, we have a natural receptivity to share in the feelings of others (MS, AA 06: 456-7). Complaining or expressing pessimistic thoughts will likely have a negative impact on those in your proximity. Other forms of inconsiderate behavior might include arriving late to an appointment or performance and failing to acknowledge and appreciate others’ contributions to a collective endeavor. Insofar as the happiness of others is our end, I am arguing that we have moral reason to be mindful of how our behavior, even our mood, impacts others, as well as moral reason to refrain from doing things that will foreseeably diminish others’ happiness or well-being.

A second category of actions that diminish the happiness of others is one that I will call *clueless behavior*, actions that cause hurt to another in virtue of genuine ignorance. I am making a distinction between thoughtless and clueless behavior. Thoughtless behavior, as I am using the phrase, occurs when one has given too little thought to how one’s behavior will impact others. Thoughtlessness can be remedied by simply redirecting one’s attention to others. It is not difficult to understand the negative relationship between unwelcomed noise and sleep or unwelcomed noise and concentration. There is no failure to understand the impact of our action in thoughtless behavior; there is merely a failure to think about the impact of our action on others. Clueless behavior, on the other hand, results from a genuine ignorance or a perspective that we lack and cannot easily take up. For this reason, it is more difficult to remedy.

The class of clueless behaviors includes a subset of behaviors collectively referred to as *microaggressions*.¹⁰ Psychologist Kevin Nadal defines microaggressions as “the everyday, subtle, intentional - and oftentimes unintentional - interactions or behaviors that communicate some sort of bias toward historically marginalized groups” (Nadal, 2008, p. 22). While some microaggressions are intentionally derogatory, *clueless* microaggressions are devoid of hostile intentions. In fact, in some cases, the perpetrator might regard her comment as a compliment when in fact she has insulted: “You’re lucky that you’re black, you don’t have to work as hard to get admitted to college.” Likewise, someone might perceive himself to be acting helpfully, when in fact he is engaging in phenomenon colloquially known as *mansplaining* - delivering unsolicited advice or explanations to a recipient who is equally or more knowledgeable in the subject area. Another might perceive herself to be demonstrating respect when addressing a stranger as *sir* or *ma’am*, but has in fact offended by wrongly gendering the recipient of her address.

Clueless microaggressions reveal implicit biases - attitudes, stereotypes, and assumptions the speaker is not consciously aware of. For this reason, microaggressions can be difficult to recognize and commonly illicit defensiveness when they are brought to our attention. From a posture of defensiveness, we might be inclined to regard the offended as excessively sensitive or demanding too much in the name of political correctness. The absence of hostile intentions, coupled with our genuine ignorance, give these behaviors a blameless appearance. However, if we care about others’ happiness, if this is one of our ends, then we have reason to want to avoid committing microaggressions. Author Ijeoma Oluo reports that

microaggressions are more than just annoyances. The cumulative effect of these constant reminders that you are “less than” does real psychological damage. Regular exposure to microaggressions causes a person of color to feel isolated and invalidated. The inability to predict where and when a microaggression may occur leads to hypervigilance, which can then lead to anxiety disorders and depression (Oluo, 2018, p. 168).

At this point, one might wonder whether the microaggressions I have described as *clueless behavior* are better characterized as failures of respect rather than behaviors that are morally problematic in virtue of their impact on others’ happiness. I certainly do not want to

¹⁰ The term microaggression was first coined by Harvard professor Chester M. Pierce in the 1970s. See Freeman (2020) for a brief history of the concept.

say that microaggressions are not disrespectful. They clearly are, though I think they are a class of disrespectful behavior much subtler than the vices Kant describes in the Doctrine of Virtue.¹¹ But I see no reason to think that the behavior cannot be morally problematic for more than one reason. This is to say, I see no reason to think that the two types of moral deficiencies - failures of respect and too little concern for others' happiness - should be mutually exclusive. On the contrary, we should expect that the two failures will be commonly joined. Persons who have proper self-regard will be pained when they receive less respect than they deserve. Disrespect will diminish their well-being, especially if the experience is frequent.

More importantly, I think there is instrumental value in focusing on the relationship between microaggressions and well-being. One of the ways that we can come to understand a behavior as disrespectful, perhaps the best way, is to recognize and understand its hurtful impact. Recognizing the hurt may be more immediately accessible to us than understanding what was offensive about our behavior. Shifting focus from our intentions to our impact may help us better understand our own behavior. One might worry that this proposal - focusing on the consequences of our actions rather than our motives - does not sound very Kantian. I maintain that a concern with consequences it is precisely what we should expect from a normative theory that includes *ends that are also duties*. To regard an end as one's own entails that we care about whether our actions promote or diminish the end. Obligatory ends are not substantially different from discretionary ends in this regard.

Speech acts commonly referred to as "toxic positivity" are another example of clueless behavior. Toxic positivity typically involves encouragement or even pressure to embrace a positive outlook even in the face of stress or hardship. Like non-malicious microaggressions, the intentions of persons engaged in toxic positivity can be seriously misaligned with their impact. Well-intended positive phrases like *cheer up*, *look on the bright side*, *at least it's not* (something worse) can leave the recipient feeling dismissed and unseen. Kate Bowler, who writes about being diagnosed with stage IV cancer in her thirties, reports that well-meaning comments like "at least you have the financial and intellectual resources to deal with it" often felt worse than the cancer itself (Bowler, 2018, p. 116). Like many instances of microaggressions, those who engage in toxic positivity may understand themselves to be acting in a way that aims to promote the other's happiness when they are in fact diminishing it. But to hold something as our end entails the rational requirement that we care about how our actions impact the end, both negatively and positively. As Barbara Herman describes it, "The obligatory end of others' happiness requires that we regard our actions, whatever our intent, as they bear on the well-being of others. So intended and unintended effects, as well as omissions, get factored in" (Herman, 2007, p. 285).

I have argued that adopting others' happiness as our end, gives us reason to want to avoid clueless behaviors that diminish others' happiness, like microaggressions and toxic positivity. Avoiding such behaviors will require resolving the underlying ignorance, and this in turn will require us to go outside of our own perspectives, to think about the impact of our actions and not just our intentions. In light of this, it is reasonable to conclude that obligatory ends must also prescribe indirect epistemic maxims of actions. These epistemic maxims of actions direct us to investigate our own biases and prejudices, to be curious about how our words and actions are received by others, and to make use of the resources available to us to better understand the perspectives and lived experiences of others, especially those whose lived experiences are substantially different from our own. In addition to talking with others, one can read blogs, personal essays, and autobiographies. I have labeled this maxim of actions *indirect* because it serves both the promotion of the obligatory end (the duty of beneficence), as well as the maxim to not diminish others' happiness (the duty of nonmaleficence).

The fourth type of maxim of actions prescribed by obligatory ends is an indirect maxim

¹¹ I take it as given that the vices that violate duties of respect for other human beings do not exhaust the ways we might fail to show others proper respect.

to cultivate the appropriate disposition toward the obligatory end. When we adopt an end for reasons having to do with our own happiness or self-interest, we typically already care about the end. If we did not, we would not make it our end. Obligatory ends are different in this regard. Here we are prompted by pure practical reason rather than sensibility to embrace these ends as our own. Elsewhere I have argued that adopting an obligatory end entails undergoing a process of self-cultivation and self-transformation such that we endeavor to become the sort of person that derives pleasure from actively promoting the end and even just passively seeing the end promoted. We make the happiness of others our end, in part, by actively cultivating the appropriate attitudes, feelings, and desires (Fahmy, 2019, p. 324). The account I provided above of a duty not to diminish others' happiness and the supportive, indirect epistemic duty suggests that intellectual virtues like humility, curiosity, and attentiveness should be cultivated as well.

3. Obligatory Ends and the Suberogatory

In her 1992 paper, "The Suberogatory," Julia Driver argues for the importance of recognizing this deontic category alongside the obligatory, the forbidden, and the permissible. According to Driver, acts which are suberogatory are those that are "bad to do," "worse than the situation calls for," and "acts which we ought not do" but are not morally forbidden (Driver, 1992, p. 286, 290, 291). Driver believes that the category of the suberogatory allows us to make sense of the moral intuition that we can act badly while acting within our rights and while not doing anything impermissible. Driver relies on a handful of examples to demonstrate that we have intuitions of this kind, including the following scenario.

...in boarding a train the person who is first gets first choice of seats. But suppose that the train is almost full, and a couple wish to sit together, and there is only one place where there are two seats together. If the person ahead of them takes one of those seats, when he could have taken a less convenient seat, and knowing that the two behind him want to sit together, then he has done something blameworthy. Yet, if he gives up his seat, and takes a less desirable one, he has done something praiseworthy. The problem is justifying the blame when the agent is acting within his rights. (Driver, 1992, p. 286-7)

Driver describes the single traveler as being in a *moral charged situation*, that is, a situation where there is no morally neutral option available to an agent; one must choose between acting well or acting poorly.¹² According to Driver, the suberogatory "is useful in describing one option open to an individual in a morally charged situation. For example, the person on the train who refuses to take a less convenient seat – and thus greatly inconveniences others – has done something bad for which he can be blamed. But he has done nothing wrong" (Driver, 1992, p. 291).

I share Hallie Liberto's concern that Driver draws the conclusion that the single traveler does something blameworthy on the basis of what appears to be too little evidence. The contextual details of the case matter. If others' happiness is an end that we are obligated to have, then the single traveler should care about the happiness of the couple. But the reverse is also true. The couple should care about the happiness of the single traveler. Perhaps it would make a big difference to his comfort to sit next to a window, close to the restroom, or facing in the direction the train is moving. The couple has as much reason to be concerned with his comfort as he does with theirs. If it would make only a small difference to the single traveler, and a significant difference to the couple, then he has moral reason to take the less convenient seat. But the same is true in the other direction. If it would make little difference to the couple

12 Driver's other example of a morally charged situation involves the choice between donating or refusing to donate a kidney to a brother. In addition to morally charged situations, Driver appeals to the problem of multiple abortions and owed favors to make her case for the suberogatory.

and a significant difference to the single traveler, they have moral reason to take their less preferred option.

The contextual details matter, but the question remains whether, knowing all the relevant information, we can render a suitable moral assessment of how the agent acts without the category of the suberogatory. Liberto contends that we can. According to Liberto, Driver's morally charged situations

are problem cases because much work in applied ethics as well as the gathering of contextual information is required to determine whether these actions are morally obligatory...They appear to be problem-cases because categorizing them takes a lot of work, not necessarily because the categories are insufficient (Liberto, 2012, p. 400).

Liberto essentially denies that there are morally charged situations. For Liberto, there are only hard cases that require a great deal of work to determine whether an agent has acted impermissibly. Liberto's confidence that all actions can be characterized as either obligatory, forbidden, or neutrally permissible – if only we have the relevant information and willingness to do the work – strikes me as unwarranted. To return to the train example, Liberto contends that “if it turns out that the couple announced, before boarding the train, that this ride constitutes their final hour together before one member of the couple is shipped off to war then the train-rider’s action is certainly impermissible” (Liberto, 2012, p. 400). Liberto offers no justification for this assessment, though I think she is correct to point out that the moral judgment that taking one seat rather than another is obligatory will depend on “how much self-partiality is permissible when making moral decisions”. However, I am skeptical that we can give an answer to this latter question that is precise enough to vindicate Liberto’s assertion that it is *certainly impermissible* to deny the couple the opportunity to sit together.

Driver seems correct to think that the familiar deontic categories *obligatory*, *forbidden* and *neutrally permissible* cannot by themselves capture the moral nuance of the great variety of situations and choices that we are confronted with in the course of living human lives. But do we need the suberogatory to capture this nuance? I think not. Kantian obligatory ends are a viable, if not superior, alternative.

Kantian obligatory ends are ends that pure practical reason tells us we ought to care about. We demonstrate this care by adopting and acting on particular maxims of actions. At the same time, Kantian duties of virtue are wide; they do not provide a precise account of how much self-partiality is permissible in any given situation. Nonetheless, obligatory ends give us a way to understand the intuition that we can act poorly even though we act within our rights and do not do anything impermissible. We can say of a person who refuses to endure a minor inconvenience for the sake of not causing another significant discomfort that her actions suggest that she does not value the happiness of others as she should. This is a critical moral assessment which implies that the agent’s action falls below some ideal. But to make these claims we must acknowledge that the obligatory end does not simply require us to *sometimes perform beneficent actions*. Acknowledging that obligatory ends prescribe negative, non-diminishing maxims, as well as indirect epistemic and dispositional maxims, illuminates the way that obligatory ends provide us with moral reasons that are nearly always relevant even when they are not decisive.

To say that an action is suberogatory, according to Driver, is to say that the action is *bad*, *blameworthy*, *worse than the situation calls for*, and *something an agent ought not to do*, but not forbidden or impermissible. The alternative Kantian description - not valuing the obligatory end as one should - contains at least some of the normative descriptions Driver attributes to the suberogatory; but it also offers more than this. The Kantian description tells us *why* the action is (or at least appears to be) bad or worse than the situation calls for. The action is bad because suggests that the agent has not adopted the obligatory end as her own rationality prescribes. She does not value the happiness of others as she ought to. Whereas the label ‘suberogatory’ is a term that accords with certain moral intuitions Driver and others have, the Kantian doctrine

of obligatory ends can explain when we are right to have these intuitions and why. However, as the discussion of the train example above suggests, determining when a choice is *worse than the situation calls for* is not an easy assessment to make.

4. Questions Regarding Latitude and Gratitude

There is general agreement that we are not required to maximally promote the happiness of others.¹³ The promotional duty of beneficence is wide and so admits *latitude* with respect to how, when, and to what degree we act for the sake of promoting others' happiness (MS, AA 06: 390, 06: 393). We may sometimes privilege our own happiness, as our happiness is no less important than the happiness of any other, but as noted in the previous section, Kant's ethics does not provide a precise account of how much self-partiality is permissible in any given situation. Acknowledging a non-diminishing maxim of actions raises an interesting question regarding the latitude permitted by wide duties. Do I have a comparable degree of latitude when it comes to *diminishing* the happiness of others? This question is distinct from the problems of thoughtless or clueless behavior that I address above. Here the question arises only once I am aware that some behavior that serves an end of mine will foreseeably diminish the happiness or well-being of another or multiple others. To return to an earlier example, once I am aware that the addition to my home will ruin my neighbor's view, how should I proceed? Do I have moral license to continue with my plans in the same way that I have moral license to forego particular opportunities to promote others' happiness?

We might be tempted to say that insofar as we are not rationally compelled to *maximally* promote any end, it can be rational to sometimes perform an action that is contrary to an end, so long as the action does not render achieving the end impossible. For example, it would not be irrational to have a child while one is currently pursuing the end of earning a law degree. While the birth of a child will likely make achieving the end more difficult, it will not make it impossible, and we should expect these kinds of trade-offs as long as we have multiple ends. On the basis of this observation, one might conclude that on occasion, agents may act in ways that foreseeably diminish others' happiness without transgressing any moral ideals. While this approach may have some plausibility, I am not confident that it is the best way answer our question about non-diminishing maxims and the question of latitude.

As authors like Barbara Herman have pointed out, my own happiness gives me reason to perform certain kinds of actions, but also, and perhaps more importantly, to craft a certain kind of plan for my life and reflect on it. I must craft this plan in such a way that renders it compatible with the obligatory ends, ends I am not at liberty to abandon nor can they ever be achieved. It would be irrational to construct a conception of my own happiness that included fundamentally immoral behavior (e.g. a life of crime), at least insofar as my own moral perfection is an end I regard as my own. We should seek to construct conceptions of our own happiness that can be pursued at minimal expense to the happiness and well-being of others.

Herman is certainly correct when she observes that morality transforms our loves and attachments rather than competing with them (Herman, 2007, p. 269). However, this observation does not give us a satisfying answer to the question of how to balance the good I seek for myself with the costs I impose on another. While morality may not compete with my loves, it might, on occasion, compete with my plans. It seems equally true that we should be prepared to sometimes subordinate our happiness for the sake of not diminishing others, but also that proper self-respect requires that we not always privilege the well-being of others over our own. Our discussion of the suberogatory revealed that an agent's reasons for choosing one way rather than another are crucial for moral assessment though they may rarely be accessible to a third-

13 See Hill (1992), Baron and Fahmy (2009), Sticker and van Ackeren (2018), and Fahmy (2019).

party observer. Furthermore, when we are assessing compliance with a wide duty, we might have to resign ourselves to focusing our attention on *patterns of action* rather than particular actions.

In addition to the question of latitude, we might also wonder about the relationship between the duty of nonmaleficence and the duty of gratitude. According to Kant, when we act beneficially (or even merely benevolently), we put others under an obligation of gratitude (MS, AA 06: 455). Do we similarly place other agents under obligation when we deliberately refrain from doing something that would diminish their happiness or well-being? Choices to refrain from performing actions that we anticipate will diminish the happiness of another might be less visible than choices to benefit them. My neighbor might never know that I revised my plan to practice the trumpet when I saw her sleeping on her porch. Gratitude at minimum requires awareness that someone has acted with our well-being in mind. But sometimes our choice to act for the sake of not diminishing the well-being of another will be apparent, as when I inform my neighbor that I am abandoning my home improvement project for the sake of not ruining her view. Should she express her gratitude for my choice? On the one hand, I have done something that was not strictly required of me, or owed to my neighbor, but that did involve a sacrifice on my part for the sake of her happiness. On the other hand, I have not improved my neighbor's condition at all; I have only not worsened it. Gratitude appears appropriate if we focus on my sacrifice, yet inappropriate when we focus on the impact on my neighbor. But if Kant is right that even "mere heartfelt benevolence, apart from any such act (of beneficence), is already a basis of obligation to gratitude" (MS, AA 06: 455), then perhaps the duty of gratitude can extend to nonmaleficent actions as well.

Conclusion

In this paper I have argued that we underestimate ends that are also duties if we assume that they prescribe only promotional maxims of actions. I have argued that the logic of ends leads us to the conclusion that obligatory ends also prescribe negative, non-diminishing maxims of actions. This is to say that obligatory moral ends provide us with reason to promote others' happiness, as well as equally rationally compelling reason to avoid doing things that will foreseeably diminish their happiness, even when such behavior is not forbidden by a strict duty. Acknowledging these direct maxims of actions leads us to acknowledge indirect epistemic maxims of actions, which in turn leads us to acknowledge the importance of cultivating intellectual virtues along with the virtues of love. They also raise new questions: *how should we think about the latitude permitted by Kantian duty of nonmaleficence and what is its relationship to the duty of gratitude?* These questions are puzzling, but they also reveal the richness of an ethical theory that makes ends that are also duties central. While I have not endeavored to provide complete answers to these new questions in this paper, I hope to have shown that they are worthy of our attention.

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What Is It to Incorporate an Incentive into a Maxim?

[*O que é Incorporar um Motivo a uma Máxima?*]

Martina Favaretto¹

University of Toronto (Toronto, Canada)

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Abstract

The Incorporation Thesis makes it clear that, according to Kant, we are not caused to act by this or that incentive, but rather we let it move us by incorporating it in our maxim. However, Kant does not provide us with a more detailed account of incorporation in which he specifies what incorporation amounts to, why it is necessary, and how it works. In this paper, I aim to lay the foundation for such an account by appealing to Kant's notion of interest. I argue that to incorporate an incentive into a maxim amounts to forming an interest on the basis of that incentive. Moreover, I argue that Kant's notion of interest allows for the idea that acting on an inclination does not necessarily involve taking that inclination as the object of one's reflection.

Keywords: Incorporation Thesis; interest; rational agency; reflection; maxims.

¹ Martina Favaretto is a postdoctoral fellow at the Center for Ethics at the University of Toronto. E-mail: martina.favaretto@utoronto.ca

In the *Religion*, Kant claims that

freedom of the power of choice has the characteristic, entirely peculiar to it, that it cannot be determined to action through any incentive *except so far as the human being has incorporated it into his maxim* (has made it into a universal rule for himself, according to which he wills to conduct himself) (RGV, AA 06: 23–4).

The claim that an incentive can determine the will to an action only insofar as it has been incorporated by the individual into his maxim has been famously dubbed by Henry Allison the “Incorporation Thesis”. The Incorporation Thesis (from here on, IT) makes it clear that Kant rejects an empiricist model of agency in which the agent is caused to act by this or that motive and, if motives are in conflict, the stronger one wins. For Kant, we act not because we are *caused* by this or that desire to act, but because we let this desire move us to act by incorporating it in our maxim.

Though in the recent scholarly literature some² have put into question the IT’s scope and significance, most contemporary Kantians agree with Allison that the IT “underlies virtually everything that Kant has to say about rational agency” (Allison, 1990, p. 40), and most believe Kant was right to hold it.³ Given this overall agreement among Kantian scholars, it is somewhat surprising that it is not fully clear what incorporation amounts to and what the IT implies more exactly.⁴ As Tamar Schapiro has pointed out, a standard way of regarding the IT is by appealing to the “practical point of view” and take it to express a requirement of rationality. According to this reading, insofar as we regard ourselves as rational agents, we cannot but take the IT to be true. As Allison writes,

I cannot conceive of myself as such an agent [who freely sets ends] without assuming that I have a certain control over my inclinations, that I am capable of deciding which of them are to be acted upon (and how) and which resisted. These are, as it were, necessary presuppositions for all who regard their reason as practical. (Allison, 1990, p. 41)

While I do not disagree with this reading, it does not provide us with an account of

² Sven Nyholm, for instance, argues that the IT’s scope does not encompass all chosen actions. He writes that the IT “is sometimes taken to imply that that Kant holds the view that all our choices involve the incorporation of certain incentives into certain maxims (cf. Allison, 1990). But this interpretation ignores the overall context in which the just-cited remark occurs. When we zoom out a little and look at the context, I think we can see that Kant does not mean to suggest that all choices are based on incentives incorporated into maxims” (Nyholm, 2017, p. 249). Another challenge to the IT has been posed by Patrick Frierson, who holds that the IT holds only for higher desires (i.e., desires stemming from the higher faculty of desire). Frierson writes that “higher desires are those for which Allison’s Incorporation Thesis holds (Allison, 1990). For Kant, human beings can sometimes act purely from instinct or inclination, without incorporating such instincts and inclinations into any principle of the understanding [...] Most actions, even those that are not guided by morality, are free in the sense that they are associated with the higher faculty of desire, where one acts on principles or maxims, even if these maxims take the satisfaction of inclination as their end. But one can also ‘act’ directly from lower desires” (Frierson, 2014, p. 63). Another challenge to the IT has been posed by Richard McCarty. He writes that “Kant’s interpreters see the incorporation requirement as telling us that whenever we act by our own free choice we ‘incorporate’ the desires or incentives on which we choose to act into maxims, making them the reasons for our actions. We therefore act on freely chosen reasons, and we are never caused to act by the strength of our desires [...] Here I shall be arguing against that Thesis as an interpretation of the text in *Religion* where Kant expressed the incorporation requirement [...] The free choice to which that requirement was meant to apply belongs to a noumenal world, and this choice makes its appearance in the phenomenal world in the form of a human being’s empirical character” (McCarty, 2008, p. 247–8).

³ Allen Wood, for instance, writes that “the Incorporation Thesis denies that desires (simply as such, even when combined with beliefs) can ever suffice to explain actions. To be a rational agent is to see oneself as standing over against one’s desires and to regard them as possible grounds for making or modifying choices.” (Wood, 1999, p. 51–53). I take Christine Korsgaard to agree with Kant’s Incorporation Thesis when she writes that “the reflective mind must endorse the desire before it can act on it, it must say to itself that the desire is a reason. As Kant puts it, we must make it our maxim to act on the desire” (Korsgaard, 1996, p. 94).

⁴ It is surprising, though, only up to a point. The reason for this is that throughout his writings, Kant never specifies what he means by incorporation. So, while the IT gives us a clear indication of the account of rational agency to which Kant is *not* committed (namely, an empiricist one in which the agent is caused to act by her motives), it leaves open to interpretation what account of rational agency it presupposes.

what incorporation amounts to and why it is something that Kant regarded as necessary to be moved to action.⁵ In this paper, I aim to provide such an account. I take as my starting point what, as Schapiro says, is uncontroversial: that the IT tells us that having an inclination is not enough to act on it. There is something that we need to do with or to that inclination, where this something is necessary in order to act on the inclination, and this is called by Kant “incorporation”. My position is that, insofar as we regard the IT as a thesis about what is necessary for a human being to make the transition from “having an inclination” to “acting on it”, this something amounts to taking an interest on the basis of one’s inclination such that one can adopt a maxim of action.

A few preliminary clarifications are in order. While the IT holds for all incentives,⁶ it has particular significance for non-moral incentives, and I will be focusing on those in this paper. (However, what I say should apply to the moral incentive too). This means that my focus will be on Kant’s notion of non-moral, empirical interest, rather than on moral, pure rational interest.⁷ Second, while the IT appears in the context of Kant’s discussion of Rigorism in the *Religion*,⁸ I will not try to explain its significance in that discussion, for this would take us too far into considering the implications of the agent incorporating both moral and non-moral incentives in her maxim, and this is not the focus of the paper.

As I explain in Section 1, my account is motivated by Kant’s speaking of an interest as “that by which reason becomes practical, i.e., becomes a cause determining the will” (GMS, AA 04: 460n), and the special significance for rational agency that he attributes to this notion when he writes that “only of rational beings does one say that he takes an interest in something; nonrational creatures feel only sensible impulses” (GMS, AA 04: 460n). Taking an interest is what differentiates rational beings from nonrational beings, and it has to do with rational beings’ capacity of going beyond merely feeling sensible impulses. This, I argue, amounts to the capacity of representing sensible impulses by means of reason. Further, I argue that the notion of interest is able to bridge the gap between incentives and maxims in the way incorporation is supposed to do.

In Section 2, I consider how an agent can take an interest, and then explain the implications for how we should think about incorporation. I focus on Allison’s account of interest-formation, bring out a puzzle in it, and use this as a springboard to develop my view. On my view, to form an interest on the basis of some form of reflective evaluation of one’s incentive should be regarded as a normative ideal towards which a rational agent should strive. Moreover, acting on an inclination does not necessarily involve taking that inclination as the object of one’s reflection.

5 See also Schapiro, who writes just after quoting the above passage from Allison that “the freedom presupposed in the practical standpoint must include, in general, freedom to choose to act or to refrain from acting on our inclinations. This much strikes me as uncontroversial. But notice that it is not enough to support the Incorporation Thesis. For the Incorporation Thesis holds not only that I can decide whether or not to act on my inclinations, but also that it is necessary for me to do so if I am to act on them” (Schapiro, 2011, p. 150).

6 Incentives can be moral and non-moral, and they differ in fundamental ways. First, while there can be a multitude of non-moral incentives, there is only one moral incentive – the moral law. Second, as Schapiro notes, “when the moral law operates as an incentive, it does so in a unique way that is not directly analogous to the way other incentives function. The moral law only functions as an incentive insofar as it shows itself to be superior to all other incentives, striking down the pretensions of self-conceit.” (Schapiro, 2011, p. 148).

7 Kant distinguishes between two kinds of interest. He writes that “reason takes an immediate interest in an action only when the universal validity of the maxim of the action is a sufficient determining ground of the will. Only such an interest is pure. But if it can determine the will only by means of another object of desire or on the presupposition of a special feeling of the subject, then reason takes only a mediate interest in the action [...] this latter interest would be only empirical and not pure rational interest” (GMS, AA 04: 460n).

8 Rigorism is the following position: “To preclude as far as possible anything morally intermediate, either in actions (*adiaphora*) or in human characters” (RGV, AA 06: 22). As Wood points out, “Kant’s Rigorism proceeds from the thesis that ‘the moral law is itself an incentive in the judgment of reason’ to the conclusions that, first, ‘whoever makes it his maxim is morally good’ and, second, whenever an agent incorporates some other incentive into his maxim ahead of the moral law, this can be considered neither morally good nor indifferent but must be judged evil (RGV, AA 06: 24)” (Wood, 2020, p. 73).

In Section 3, I examine the relation between taking an interest and the reasons one has for adopting one's maxim. Drawing on Scanlon's account of the relation between reasons and desires, I argue that, for Kant, when we take an interest on the basis of an incentive, we represent those features of the object at stake as desirable, and by doing so we confer on them the status of being reasons for acting. Moreover, I argue that, while in certain cases incorporation requires that one judges one's incentive to provide a good or sufficient reason for acting,⁹ in other cases incorporation might only require that the features to which one's incentive points are for the agent salient reasons for acting.

Finally, in Section 4 I show how the account of incorporation I put forth can be squared with Kant's account of maxims. In particular, I argue that we shouldn't take Kant to hold that all maxims are reflectively endorsed principles of action. Rather, Kant can conceive of self-imposed rules that are adopted for reasons one hasn't reflected upon. Thinking about Kant's account of maxims as entailing this possibility amounts to thinking of the human capacity and ability for self-regulation and rational agency as multifaceted.

1. Incorporating an Incentive into a Maxim as Taking an Interest

The aim of this section is to first figure out what Kant means by taking an interest, then to show the relation this has to incentives and maxims, and finally to show that the notion of interest is able to bridge the gap between incentives and maxims in the way incorporation is supposed to do. My starting point is the *Groundwork*, where Kant writes that "an interest is that by which reason becomes practical, i.e., becomes a cause determining the will. Hence only of rational beings does one say that he takes an interest in something; nonrational creatures feel only sensible impulses" (GMS, AA 04: 460n). From this quote, it is clear that Kant attributes to the notion of interest a special role for rational agency. I take the quote to imply that, while nonrational beings "only feel sensible impulses", rational beings have to do something to or with their sensible impulses, where this amounts to taking an interest. (There is a question here as to in what exactly one takes an interest, but I will bracket it for now and come back to it later). The important point is that taking an interest is what differentiates rational beings from nonrational beings, and it has to do with rational beings' capacity of going beyond merely feeling sensible impulses. (We will need to get clear on what "going beyond" amounts to, but more on this later).

Something to notice is that, according to Kant, the concept of interest can only be applied to *finite* rational beings. This is because the concept of interest, together with that of maxim and incentive,

presuppose a limitation of the nature of a being, in that the subjective constitution of its choice does not of itself accord with the objective law of practical reason; they presuppose a need to be impelled to activity by something because an internal obstacle is opposed to it. Thus, they cannot be applied to the divine will. (KpV, AA 05: 79)

The divine will does not take interest in anything, Kant tells us, because taking an interest presupposes that one's will "is not in itself completely in conformity with reason (as is actually the case with human beings)" (GMS, AA 04: 413), while the divine will is such that it is infallibly determined by reason (GMS, AA 04: 412). So, taking an interest presupposes that one's will is subject to an "internal obstacle" in the subjective constitution of its choice such that the latter

⁹ See, for instance, Andrews Reath's account of the IT: "I would argue that the Incorporation Thesis implies further that a maxim is only adopted if it is regarded as a principle with justifying force that the agent endorses. It is a constitutive feature of free choice that involves regarding one's action as good at some level. If incentives become effective through the adoption of maxims, then maxims are always chosen on the supposition that they express sufficient reasons for action." (Reath, 2006, p. 19).

does not always accord with the objective laws of practical reason.

To make some progress in understanding what Kant means by taking an interest, and which relation this has to incentives and maxims, we can turn to the *Critique of Practical Reason*. Here, Kant claims that the concept of interest arises from the concept of an incentive, and serves as a further ground for the concept of a maxim. Moreover, he provides us with a definition of “interest”:

From the concept of an incentive arises that of an interest, which can never be attributed to any being unless it has reason and which signifies an incentive of the will insofar as it is represented by reason ... On the concept of an interest is based that of a maxim. (KpV, AA 05: 79).

Kant tells us that an interest “signifies an incentive of the will insofar as it is represented by reason”. The passage lets us infer that, when we take an interest on the basis of an incentive, we represent to ourselves the incentive by means of reason – presumably forming a certain conception of it.

Since the passage makes it clear that taking an interest is dependent on having an incentive, it is helpful to understand what Kant means by “incentive”. Kant defines “incentive” as “the subjective determining ground of the will of a being whose reason does not by its nature necessarily conform with the objective law” (KpV, AA 05: 72), and from this it follows that “no incentive at all can be attributed to the divine will” (KpV, AA 05: 72). Without telling us more about what incentives are, he treats incentives – and here I will be focusing on non-moral incentives – as features of objects that make those seem desirable.¹⁰ In the *Groundwork*, for instance, Kant tells us that an incentive is “the subjective ground of desire” (GMS, AA 04: 427). You have an incentive when the features of some object make it attractive or appealing to you, and you have a desire to bring about that object on the basis of those features.

That this is the case can be inferred from Kant’s discussion in the Introduction to the *Metaphysics of Morals*, where he explains the faculty of desire and its connection to the faculty of feeling (of pleasure and displeasure). Here, Kant points out that desiring an object or state of affairs is always connected with a feeling of pleasure. Kant makes this point explicit as he holds that, every time we have a desire, that desire is connected with pleasure (but not vice versa): “*pleasure or displeasure, susceptibility to which is called feeling*, is always connected with desire or aversion; but the converse does not always hold, since there can be a pleasure that is not connected with any desire for an object” (MS, AA 06: 211).

Though scholars disagree about what specific role is to be respectively assigned to the desire and feeling that make up one’s incentive,¹¹ what is undisputed is that one’s incentive is always directed towards producing a certain object or state of affairs.¹² In the context of rational agency, when one acts from one’s incentive, the object towards which one’s incentive is directed amounts to one’s end: “an end”, Kant tells us, “is an object of the choice (of a rational being), through the representation of which choice is determined to an action to bring this object

10 “Inclinations, according to Kant, are grounded in what he calls ‘incentives,’ which are the features of the objects of those inclinations that make them see attractive” (Korsgaard, 1999, p. 1).

11 For instance, Grenberg holds the view that desire occurs when we feel or expect to feel pleasure in the existence of an object or state of affairs. She argues that “insofar as the representation of a feeling includes representation of the pleasure (or potential pleasure) to be taken in the existence of a particular object or state of affairs, one can be said to have a ‘desire’ for the object in question” (Grenberg, 2001, p. 162). Eran, instead, stresses the distinction between desire and feeling by arguing that “desires are necessarily connected with practical pleasure but differ from them in that the former are directed at producing future or past objects, which allow them to motivate action, while the latter refer to our subjective state, and so they must cause desire, which in turn may produce action” (Eran, 2022, p. 430).

12 The reason for this is that Kant regards desire as directed towards bringing about a certain object or state of affairs. Indeed, he writes that “the faculty of desire is the faculty to be, by means of one’s representations, the cause of the objects of those representations” (MS, AA 06: 211).

about" (MS, AA 06: 381).¹³

For my purposes, it is important to make the relation between Kant's account of interest, ends and maxims clear. The following passage from the *Metaphysics of Morals* can help us make progress on this task:

Pure practical reason is a faculty of ends generally, and for it to be indifferent to ends, that is, to take no interest in them, would therefore be a contradiction, since then it would not determine maxims for actions either (because every maxim of action contains an end) and so would not be practical reason. (MS, AA 06: 395)

Here, Kant is saying that pure practical reason cannot set ends without taking an interest in them. Moreover, he makes it clear that an agent cannot set an end without taking an interest in it in the *Critique of the Power of Judgement*, where he writes that "every end, if it is regarded as a ground of satisfaction, always brings an interest with it" (KU, AA 05: 221).¹⁴ In the above passage from the *Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant also claims that, since every maxim of action is adopted upon the setting of an end, every maxim of action contains an interest the agent takes in such an end. So, these passages establish that we cannot adopt a maxim without forming an interest in a certain end.

But can we take an interest in something without adopting a maxim? The passage quoted earlier in the *Second Critique* (KpV, AA 05: 79) doesn't settle the question. Here, while Kant writes that the concept of a maxim is based on the concept of interest and the concept of interest is based on that of an incentive, he leaves it open to interpretation whether the concept of interest is independent from the concept of maxim.

Intuitively, if we think of Kant's notion of interest in light of our common usage of the term, we might conclude that interests must be independent from maxims. After all, we can be interested in something without anything stemming from such interest – not an intention, nor an action, nor the adoption of a principle of action. The upshot of this reasoning is that, if it is the case that the notion of an interest is independent from that of a maxim, then it seems implausible that the notion of an interest can bridge the gap between incentives and maxims in the way in which incorporation is supposed to. From Kant's formulation of the IT, it is clear that incorporating an incentive always entails adopting a maxim. And if one can take an interest without adopting a maxim, then it seems that the notion of an interest cannot be used to explain what incorporation is.

I am going to argue, however, that we shouldn't understand Kant as holding that the notion of an interest is independent from the notion of a maxim. In order to show this, I suggest that we focus on Kant's notion of an end and on the question of whether we can set an end without adopting a maxim. Consider the following passages, the first one for the *Metaphysics of Morals* and the other two from *Metaphysik Dohna* (1792-1793):

- a) an **end** is an *object* of free choice, the representation of which determines it to an action (by which the object is brought about). Every action, therefore, has its end; and since no one can have an end without himself making the object of his choice into an end, to have any end of action whatsoever is an act of *freedom* on the part of the acting subject, not an effect of *nature*. (MS, AA 06: 384-5).
- b) Will is the faculty (with power of free choice) for acting with consciousness according to rules – one can also say – it is the faculty of ends. (VMet/Dohna, AA 28: 678).
- c) Voluntary action [*actio voluntaria*] insofar as it comes about according to maxims (maxims [*maxime*; G: *Maximen*], principles practically subjective [...]). Involuntary

13 In the *Groundwork*, Kant tells us that what gives a non-moral end worth for the subject is its "relation to a specifically constituted faculty of desire on the part of the subject" (GMS, AA 04: 428).

14 See also the *Lectures on Metaphysics*, in which Kant writes that "if satisfaction is connected with my state, then I will not be indifferent to the existence of the object, i.e., I will have interest in it" (VMet/Mron, AA 29: 898).

[*involuntaria*] – not with will, not according to one's maxims. This is a very subtle matter – as a freely acting being, a human being actually cannot do anything without the will – he acts always according to maxims even if not universally [*universaliter*]. (VMet/Dohna, AA 28: 678).

In *b*, Kant writes that the faculty for acting with consciousness according to rules is the faculty of ends. Since maxims are rules that the agent makes his principles – “the rule that the agent himself makes his principle on subjective grounds is called his maxim” (MS, AA 06: 225) – we can infer that to set ends is to act according to maxims. Moreover, in *a* Kant makes it clear that every action has its end. This means that every action presupposes a maxim. In *c*, we can find a qualification of the latter claim. Here, Kant states that an action is voluntary insofar as it comes about according to maxims. So, every *voluntary* action presupposes a maxim. We can understand what Kant means by “voluntary action” if we contrast it with “involuntary action”. An involuntary action is one that is “not with will”, whereas a voluntary action is presumably “with will”. Since in *b* Kant defines the will as the faculty of ends, we can infer that acting voluntarily is to act on the basis of an end one has freely set. From these three passages together, we can see that Kant is claiming that if an agent sets an end, then she adopts a maxim. That is, we cannot set an end without adopting a maxim.

The argument for showing that the concept of interest is dependent on the concept of maxim, then, goes as follows:

- (i) One cannot take an interest without setting an end (MS, AA 06: 395).
- (ii) One cannot set an end without adopting a maxim (MS, AA 06: 384–5; VMet/Dohna, AA 28: 678).

Thus, one cannot take an interest without adopting a maxim.

By showing that the concept of interest is dependent on the concept of maxim such that one cannot take an interest without adopting a maxim, my aim is to argue that the notion of interest is able to bridge the gap between incentives and maxims in the way incorporation is supposed to do. We have seen that, just as one cannot adopt a maxim without incorporating an incentive in it, one cannot adopt a maxim without taking an interest on the basis of one's incentive. Moreover, just as incorporating an incentive always entails adopting a maxim, one cannot take an interest without adopting a maxim. Thus, I submit that we should take incorporation to amount to interest formation.

I have claimed that, according to Kant, taking an interest is what differentiates rational beings from nonrational beings, and it has to do with rational beings' capacity of going beyond merely feeling sensible impulses. We can now get clear on what “going beyond” means: rational beings' capacity of “going beyond” merely feeling sensible impulses amounts to the capacity of representing such sensible impulses by means of reason. Representing to oneself these sensible impulses is to take an interest. This opens up a question as to which kind of representation takes place when taking an interest; I will answer this question in the next section. For the remaining part of this section, I will focus on what exactly one takes an interest in.

In the *Groundwork*, Kant writes that one can take an interest either in the action or in the object of the action (insofar as it is regarded by the agent as agreeable):

The human will can *take an interest* in something without therefore *acting from interest*. The first signifies *practical* interest in the action, the second, *pathological* interest in the object of the action. The former indicates only dependence of the will upon principles of reason in themselves; the second, dependence upon principles of reason for the sake of inclination, namely where reason supplies only the practical rule as to how to remedy the need of inclination. In the first case the action interests me; in the second, the object of the action (insofar as it is agreeable to me). (GMS, AA 04: 413n)

Here, Kant makes it clear that, when “reason supplies only the practical rule as to how to remedy the need of inclination” (i.e., when considering non-moral actions), one’s interest is pathological, and one is interested in the *object* of the action (i.e., the object of one’s inclination). Moreover, taking an interest in the object of one’s action amounts to something more than just setting the end of producing or bringing about that object. It amounts to setting the end of bringing about that object *for a certain reason*, namely that “it is agreeable to me” when one’s interest is pathological.¹⁵

I will focus on the relation between one’s interest and one’s reason for acting in Section 3, but for now the important point is that we can regard the agent’s interest as the reason why she adopted a certain maxim. Here, I follow Allison in holding that “every maxim reflects an underlying interest of the agent, which provides the reason for adopting the maxim” (Allison, 1990, p. 90). If Allison is right that the agent’s interest “provides the reason for adopting the maxim”, then every maxim is adopted by the agent for a certain reason.

2. How Do We Form Interests?

In this section, my aim is to make clear how, according to Kant, one can take an interest, and then show which implications this has for how we should think about incorporation. My starting point is Allison’s account of interest formation. According to Allison, “a minimally rational agent is one who forms interests on the basis of some kind of reflective evaluation of inclination and adopts policies on the basis of these interests. Such policies are termed maxims” (Allison, 1990, p. 89). Here, Allison seems to hold that, in order to be a minimally rational agent, one must reflect on and evaluate one’s incentive when adopting a maxim. If this is true, then it seems that, when incorporating an incentive into a maxim, one would be required to reflectively evaluate one’s incentive. In the next page, Allison writes that “every maxim reflects an underlying interest of the agent, which provides the reason for adopting the maxim. Consequently, a reference to this interest is implicit in every maxim, constituting, as it were, part of its ‘deep structure’; but it need not be and, in fact, usually is not made explicit” (Allison, 1990, p. 90). Here, Allison holds that, while every maxim is adopted on the basis of some interest, this interest need not be made explicit in one’s maxim; it can be implicit.

Notice that there is a question as to what is meant by the claim that one’s interest need not be made explicit in one’s maxim. Does this amount to the claim that: a) The agent who adopts a maxim is reflectively aware of her interest, but makes no explicit reference to it in her maxims; or b) The agent who adopts a maxim is reflectively unaware of her interest, and it is in this sense that her interest is implicit? Allison doesn’t seem to give us the resources for answering this question, but depending on how we answer this question, the following question can be more or less compelling: How should we reconcile the claim that one must reflect on and evaluate one’s incentive when adopting a maxim with the claim that one’s interest need not be made explicit in one’s maxim? If a, the question doesn’t seem compelling: the agent who adopts a maxim would reflectively evaluate her incentive so as to form an interest, she would be aware of such an interest, but any reference to her interest would be absent from her maxim. If b, the question is compelling: one’s evaluation of one’s incentive requires that one forms an interest in a reflective manner, and that one is aware of such an interest.

To determine how we should read Allison’s claim that one’s interest need not be made explicit in one’s maxim, as well as his claim that one needs to reflectively evaluate one’s incentive

¹⁵ Notice that Kant makes it clear that the object of one’s maxim is not the determining ground and condition of the maxim when he writes that “now it is indeed undeniable that every volition must also have an object and hence a matter; but the matter is not, just because of this, the determining ground and condition of the maxim” (KpV, AA 05: 34).

when forming an interest, we shall turn to a closer analysis of Kant's discussion of the notion of interest. As we have seen, in the second *Critique* Kant tells us that an interest consists in one's incentive insofar as it is represented by reason. In the Introduction of the *Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant provides us with some more elements for understanding how an agent having an interest represents to herself an incentive. He describes "interest" as a "connection of pleasure with the faculty of desire that the understanding judges to hold as a general rule (though only for the subject)" (MS, AA 06: 212). Here, Kant writes that interest is a connection of pleasure with the faculty of desire; this connection, Kant adds, is judged by the understanding to hold as a general rule. So, an agent having an interest represents to herself an incentive by representing a connection between pleasure and the faculty of desire, where this connection is judged by her to hold as a general rule.

Now, that the agent judges this connection to hold as a general rule might be taken to mean that having an interest involves reflectively evaluating one's incentive – i.e., one would need to reflectively evaluate the connection between pleasure and the faculty of desire, and judge it to hold as a general rule.¹⁶ This is a plausible reading of Kant's notion of an interest and how the agent takes an interest in something. However, it is not the only one allowed by the text. In fact, after Kant defines "interest" in the Introduction of the *Metaphysics of Morals* as a "connection of pleasure with the faculty of desire that the understanding judges to hold as a general rule (though only for the subject)" (MS, AA 06: 212), he goes on to identify an "interest of inclination" with pleasure itself, and not, as he initially suggested, with the combination of pleasure with the faculty of desire which is judged by the understanding to hold as a general rule. He writes "so if a pleasure necessarily precedes the desire, the practical pleasure must be called an interest of inclination" (MS, AA 06: 212). I think we should take this switch to mean that Kant's conception of interest might leave open the possibility that taking an interest might be done in different ways (e.g., more or less reflectively, or even not reflectively at all).

This seems to me consistent with Kant's indication in the first *Critique* that the term "representation" [Vorstellung] encompasses various types of mental contents, both conscious and unconscious:

The genus is representation in general (*repraesentatio*). Subordinate to it stands representation with consciousness (*perceptio*). A perception which relates solely to the subject as the modification of its state is sensation (*sensatio*), an objective perception is knowledge (*cognitio*). This is either intuition or concept (*intuitus vel conceptus*). The former relates immediately to the object and is single, the latter refers to it mediately by means of a feature which several things may have in common. The pure concept, in so far as it has its origin in the understanding alone (not in the pure image of sensibility), is called a notion. A concept formed from notions and transcending the possibility of experience is an idea or concept of reason. (KrV, A 320/B 376–377/314)

Kant's indication that a representation can encompass various types of mental content should be taken as evidence that the representation of an incentive can thus be anything from a mere unconscious sensation, to a new thought, to an idea of reason.

That this is the case, moreover, can be seen from Kant's *Metaphysik Mrongovius* (1782–83), in which Kant claimed that "we are conscious of the incentives or stimuli [*stimulorum*] which are clear representations. But we can also have obscure representations and stimuli [*stimuli*] for something of which we are not conscious" (VMet/Mron, AA 29: 879). Kant explains what he means by "obscure representation" in the following way: "obscure representations are those of which I am not immediately conscious, but nevertheless can become conscious through

¹⁶ I take Jeanine Grenberg to support this reading. She writes that "in the determination of an interest, I judge that certain feelings and desires are 'good'" (Grenberg, 2001, p. 165), where this judgment is the outcome of a reflective process of identifying and endorsing my emotional states – "I have now, through the process of identifying and endorsing my emotional responses to [the object of my desires and feelings], acquired an interest" (Grenberg, 2001, p. 165).

inference" (VMet/Mron, AA 29: 879). A very similar definition is given in *Anthropology Busolt* (1788-89): "Obscure representations are those of which we are conscious not immediately, but rather through their effects" (VAnth/Busolt, AA 25: 1439). Here, Kant considers the view of those who

dispute the existence of obscure representations and say: How can one be convinced of the existence of obscure representations if we are not conscious of them? To this one can answer: It is not necessary to be conscious through sensation, if one can come to consciousness by inference (VAnth/Busolt, AA 25: 1440).

Kant then provides us with an example of an obscure representation: "Thus the ancient, for example, explained the shimmer of the Milky Way as a light of many stars, even though they did not know the stars in this Way due to their lack of telescopes" (VAnth/Busolt, AA 25: 1440). The example is illustrated in more details in *Metaphisik Mrongovius*:

When we observe it with the naked eye, we are not conscious to ourselves that the Milky Way consists in sheer small stars, but through the telescope we see that. Now we infer that since we have seen the entire Milky Way, we must also have seen all the individual stars. For were that not so, we would have seen nothing. But what we have seen we must also have represented to ourselves. Since we know nothing of these representations, they must have been obscure. (VMet/Mron, AA 29: 879)

Kant then infers that

These obscure representations actually exist and play a great role in human beings. If the human being became conscious all at once of all these representations, then he would be astonished by the great store of them. Yet the faculty for deriving these representations is so limited in us that they come to light only individually and on occasion. (VAnth/Busolt, AA 25: 1440)

It is significant that Kant thinks that we have a faculty – though we can make use of it only in a very limited way – for deriving obscure representations, for this means that he conceives of obscure representations as falling within the scope of rationality. For instance, when Kant discusses the notion of obscure representation in *Anthropology Friedländer* (1775–76), he makes clear that "all this lay in reason, only we were not aware of it" (VAnth/Fried, AA 25: 480). Indeed, Kant continues, "there exist sciences of the kind, and this is analytical philosophy, in which one sheds light on obscure representations by uncovering them" (VAnth/Fried, AA 25: 480). So, when something is represented and that representation is obscure, that something is represented by means of reason. Moreover, it is precisely because reason is that faculty through which obscure representations are possible that we can shed light on them through analytical philosophy.

Let us sum up. When Kant claims that we can have obscure representations when it comes to incentives or stimuli, we should take him to mean that we can represent incentives to ourselves in a way such that we are not conscious of these representations. This also means that Kant thinks we can become conscious of these incentives by means of inference. (I will say something more about this towards the end of Section 3, where I will discuss unreflective actions in relation to the IT). The important point is that Kant's text gives us reasons to think that there are at least three possibilities for interpreting Allison's claim that one's interest need not be made explicit in one's maxim:

- a) The agent forms an interest by reflectively evaluating her incentive such that she judges that the connection between her feelings and desires is good, she is aware of her interest, but she makes no explicit reference to it in her maxims;
- b) The agent forms an interest by representing to herself her incentive without reflectively evaluating it, she is aware of her interest, but she makes no explicit reference to it in her maxims;
- c) The agent forms an interest by representing to herself her incentive without reflectively

evaluating it, she is unaware of her interest, and it is in this sense that her interest is implicit.

Given this analysis, I want to suggest that, when Allison writes that “a minimally rational agent is one who forms interests on the basis of some kind of reflective evaluation of inclination and adopts policies on the basis of these interests. Such policies are termed maxims” (Allison, 1990, p. 89), we shouldn’t take him to mean that, for Kant, it is only possible to form interests on the basis of some kind of reflective evaluation of one’s incentive. Rather, I would argue that to form interests on the basis of some form of reflective evaluation of one’s incentive is a normative ideal a rational agent should strive towards. That is to say, it is a distinctively Kantian normative ideal to regulate, direct and govern our specific actions and overall agency on the basis of reflective evaluation, even though we do not always meet these normative standards, and even though we should.

What does this tell us about incorporation? I would argue that incorporation can come about in at least three ways. The first case is when the agent incorporates an incentive into a maxim by reflectively evaluating that incentive. This means that she is aware that she is incorporating that incentive for a certain reason, and she reflectively evaluates that reason. This is the normatively ideal scenario in which the agent displays the proper reflective attitude towards her own agency. In the second case, the agent incorporates an incentive into a maxim while being aware that she is incorporating an incentive into a maxim for a certain reason, but this time she does not reflectively evaluate that reason. This is a scenario in which one performs a certain action without thinking much about the reasons for or against doing so (at least some cases of “one-thought-too-few” situations would fit in this scenario). Finally, we have the case in which the agent incorporates an incentive into a maxim without being aware that she is doing so for a certain reason (where this of course also entails that she does not reflectively evaluate that reason). In this latter case, the agent’s representation of her incentive amounts to an obscure representation.

3. Along Scanlon’s Lines: Incorporation and Reasons for Acting

I have argued that to incorporate an incentive into a maxim amounts to forming an interest on the basis of that incentive, and following Allison I have argued that one’s interest provides the reason for one’s adoption of the maxim. But what is the exact relation between one’s interest and one’s reason for adopting a maxim? To answer this question, recall that, for Kant, an interest is an incentive insofar as it is represented by reason (where, I have been arguing, this representation can be of different kinds). Moreover, we have seen that to have an incentive is to treat the features of some object as attractive or appealing, combined with having a desire to bring about that object on the basis of those features. I would argue, then, that we experience incentives as a sort of candidate reasons for action because experiencing an incentive entails that we experience certain features of an object that make it desirable, and we consequently desire to bring that object about. The view I am putting forth is that, when we form an interest on the basis of an incentive, we represent those features, and by doing so we confer on them (more or less implicitly) the status of being reasons for acting.

There is a question, however, as to how we experience these features as reasons for action when we represent them. To answer this question, I will appeal to T.M. Scanlon’s account of rational agency and how desires and reasons figure in it. While acknowledging that Scanlon and Kant do not share the same theoretical framework when discussing rational agency, I believe we can find some important similarities between these two authors on the basis of which we can use one to enlighten the project of the other. Indeed, according to Scanlon, just as for Kant, “we should not take ‘desires’ to be a special source of motivation, independent of our seeing things as reasons” (Scanlon, 2000, p. 40). I take this to be a way of expressing an incorporation

requirement: desires (or emotions in general) are not enough on their own to move us to act; rather, they do so not independently of our seeing things as reasons on the basis of our desires.

Now, Scanlon holds that being a rational agent “involves not only the capacity to make certain judgements and to be consistent about them, but also the ability to see certain considerations as reasons” (Scanlon, 2000, p. 40). Thus, Scanlon claims that when you have a desire to φ , you are having thoughts about reasons for action. For example, Scanlon would say that when you have a desire to drink, you are taking a certain consideration (e.g., that drinking would feel good) as a reason to drink:

Suppose I am thirsty. What does this involve? First, there is the unpleasant sensation of dryness in my mouth and throat. Also, there is the thought that a cool drink would relieve this sensation and, in general, feel good. I take this consideration, that drinking would feel good, to count in favor of drinking, and I am on the lookout for some cool drink. This description includes three elements: a present sensation (the dryness in my throat), the belief that some action would lead to a pleasant state in the future, and my taking this future good to be a reason for so acting. It is this future good - the pleasure to be obtained by drinking - that makes it worth my while to look for water. The present dryness in my throat, and the fact that this condition is not about to go away on its own, give me reason to believe that a drink of water in the near future will give this particular pleasure. But the motivational work seems to be done by my taking this future pleasure to count in favor of drinking. (Scanlon, 2000, p. 38)

While Scanlon sometimes writes as if he holds that taking a certain consideration as a reason for action involves judging that consideration to be a reason, at other times he characterizes desiring as “seeing” or “perceiving” as opposed to “judging” considerations to be reasons, and of desire as involving thoughts about “seeming reasons” and “perceiving reasons” rather than full blown “assessments” of reasons.¹⁷ So, there are different ways in which we can think of the object’s features that we experience as reasons: we might judge and assess them to be candidate reasons for acting, or we might merely see or perceive them as such without assessing them.

The important point for my purposes is that the thought of something as a reason can present itself in various ways. One of them, Scanlon suggests, is the “directed-attention” way: “a person has a desire in the directed-attention sense that P if the thought of P keeps occurring to him or her in a favorable light, that is to say, if the person’s attention is directed insistently towards considerations that present themselves as counting in favor of P” (Scanlon, 2000, p. 39). For Scanlon, a person who has a desire in this sense has a tendency to perceive certain considerations as reasons for acting in a certain way: “when a person does have a desire in the directed-attention sense and acts accordingly, what supplies the motive for this action is the agent’s perception of some consideration as a reason” (Scanlon, 2000, p. 40-1).

When having a desire in the directed-attention sense, the agent would presumably think of something as a reason by having her attention insistently directed toward that something. We can imagine that in some cases one would be aware that her attention is directed in such a way. But we can also imagine that, at least in certain cases, the agent could be unaware that her attention is directed in such a way, like in the following example in Kant’s *Anthropology* Friedländer (1775–76): “If an individual reads, then the soul attends to the letters, for if it spells [the words] out, then it reads, [and] then it attends to what it reads. The individual is not conscious of all of this” (VAnth/Fried, AA 25: 479). Kant adds that, when we attend to something without being aware that we are doing so, “all this happens in the obscure representations” (VAnth/Fried, AA 25: 479).

¹⁷ For instance, in “Reasons and Passions” Scanlon discusses an example in which I desire X where “the claim that this desire has on me is not a matter of my approval or endorsement, but of the fact that it consists in something seeming to me to be a reason” (Scanlon, 2002, p. 179). See also Scanlon (2000, p. 40). This ambivalence in Scanlon’s discussion of desires and reasons has been noted by Schapiro (2021) and Gregory (2017).

Admittedly, *Anthropology Friedländer* is a rather early text, and might not reflect Kant's mature views. But that it is Kant's mature view that the thought of something as a reason can present itself without the agent being aware that she is directing her attention to certain considerations can be seen from the following passage from *Anthropology Mongrovius* (1784–85), in which Kant holds that

All attention is either positive or negative. It is positive if I direct my thoughts to something to make them clear; that is, I intensify [them] up to the consciousness of my representations; but [it is] negative if I avert my thoughts and weaken the consciousness of my representation of it. Now this latter is abstraction. (VAnth/Mron, AA 25: 1239)

Here, Kant tells us that negative attention is called “abstraction”, and such a way of attending to something consists in averting one's thoughts and weakening the consciousness of one's representation of it. A few lines later, Kant adds that “all attention and abstraction can be voluntary and involuntary. Voluntary abstraction and attention constitute the principle of self-control [...] Involuntary abstraction [...] consists of obscure representations” (VAnth/Mron, AA 25: 1239–40). Here, he tells us not only that we can attend to something involuntarily, but also that doing so amounts to having an obscure representation, that is, a representation of which we are not conscious.

What are the implications of all of this for incorporation? My analysis shows that, while in certain cases incorporation requires the agent to judge that her incentive provides a sufficient or good reason for acting, in other cases incorporation might only require that the features to which the agent's incentive points are for her salient reasons for acting. Moreover, Kant can allow for cases in which, when such features are for the agent salient reasons for acting, she is not reflectively aware of treating them as such.

We have seen that, when one has an obscure representation, Kant thinks one can become aware of such representation “by inference” (VAnth/Busolt, AA 25: 1440). I want to suggest, then, that when one is unaware that one is directing one's attention to certain features – thus being unaware of taking them to be salient reasons for acting – one can proceed by way of inference in bringing such reasons to one's awareness. Focusing on unreflective actions and the reasons the agent has to adopt a certain maxim when acting unreflectively will help with figuring out exactly which kind of inferences we should be making when reconstructing the agent's reasons.

Suppose that I find myself stopping to help someone whose car is broken on the side of the highway. Trying to identify the reason I had to act as I did, I might face some doubts. On the one hand, I might say that I stopped because I just wanted to help, and this might be taken to mean that I perceived features of that practical situation as reasons for helping – let's say, I saw the situation as one in which I could further someone's ends (and not, for example, as something humorous at which to laugh). On the other hand, I might realize that, when I helped, I was accompanied by a passenger whom I wished to impress with my humanitarian concern. So, it might be a challenge to identify for which reasons I adopted a certain maxim, or even which maxims I adopted after all.

Talbot Brewer has argued that this kind of example makes clear “that the maxims of unreflective actions cannot always be read directly from the immediate phenomenology of desires that precede and give rise to them” (Brewer, 2002, p. 558). Putting the point more broadly, the maxims of unreflective actions, and the reasons the agent has for adopting such maxims, cannot always be read from the immediate phenomenological experience of perceiving certain features of a practical situation as reasons for acting. As Brewer has suggested, what is needed to fully assess the status of unreflective actions, their maxims, and the reasons the agent has to adopt those maxims is a diachronic (self)scrutiny. For instance, if I notice that I have consistently performed benevolent actions only when, by doing so, I stood to impress friends or acquaintances with my humanitarian concern, I might have reason to think, under

the most coherent interpretation, that my reason for acting was that I wanted to improve my social standing, and my maxim was “Help strangers who need it when I stand to improve my reputation by doing so”.

4. Only Reflectively Endorsed Maxims?

So far, I have provided an analysis of incorporation in terms of interest, and I have shown that Kant’s account of interest formation does not rule out instances in which neither reflection nor awareness that the agent is incorporating an incentive into a maxim are required for incorporation. However, I can see how this account could raise some doubts among some of Kant’s scholars who share a certain commitment.¹⁸ This commitment, which has been most recently defended by Sven Nyholm, is to conceive of maxims as reflectively endorsed rules of actions: “for principles or rules that we follow to qualify as maxims of ours, it must be that we reflectively endorse these principles or rules” (Nyholm, 2027, p. 237).

If my discussion of Kant’s notion of interest is right, then we should abandon this commitment: while for Kant many maxims are self-imposed reflectively endorsed principles, he can conceive of a self-imposed rule that we adopt for a reason we haven’t reflected upon and/or made clear to ourselves. But by looking at some of Kant’s remarks on maxims – thus, independently from what we can infer from Kant’s notion of interest – we can see that there are good reasons for thinking that Kant allows for there to be maxims that are not reflectively adopted.

First, it is important to remember Kant’s distinction between maxims, which are subjective principles of actions, and objective principles of action. The former are the principles according to which the agent actually acts; the latter those according to which she ought to act:

A maxim is a subjective principle of action and must be distinguished from an *objective principle* – namely, a practical law. The former contains a practical rule determined by reason in accordance with the conditions of the subject (often his ignorance or again his inclinations): it is thus a principle on which the subject *acts*. A law, on the other hand, is an objective principle valid for every rational being; and it is thus a principle on which he *ought to act*, that is, an imperative. (GMS, AA 04: 421n)

A maxim is a subjective principle of action, a principle which the subject himself makes his rule (how he wills to act). A principle of duty, on the other hand, is a principle that reason prescribes to him absolutely and so objectively (how he ought to act). (MS, AA 06: 226)

But I take the following remark found in Vigilantius’s notes on Kant’s *Metaphysics of Morals* (1793) about how maxims differ from objective principle to be particularly telling:

The maxim of an action differs, that is, from an objective principle in this, that the latter occurs only insofar as we consider the possibility of the action on certain rational grounds, whereas the former includes all subjective grounds of action whatsoever, insofar as they are taken to be real. (VMS/Vigil, AA 27: 495)

Here, Kant tells us that objective principles are those adopted by the agent upon considering the possibility of the action on certain rational grounds. I take that considering the possibility of the action in this way amounts to engaging in some form of reflection. Thus,

¹⁸ For instance, take the account of maxims provided by Otfried Höffe according to which maxims are very general principles or “life rules” [*Lebensregeln*] that the agent adopts in light of her general outlook on her sphere of action. “Principles which have several rules under them, [and] denote the manner in which one leads his life as a whole – in relation to certain basic aspects of individual and collective life, such as being in need of help, being tired of life, or being insulted” (Höffe, 1994, p. 149). This way of thinking about maxims implies that reflective evaluation of one’s general outlook is needed for forming a maxim.

objective principles are those principles which are always reflectively endorsed. Maxims, on the other hand, are those principles that include “all subjective grounds of action whatsoever, insofar as they are taken to be real”. This strongly suggests that maxims can be either reflectively endorsed or unreflectively adopted – all that matters is that these maxims are adopted for a subjective ground that is “taken to be real”, that is, that the agent actually regards as her subjective ground.

I submit, then, that Kant can conceive of a self-imposed rule that we adopt for a reason without having reflected upon it. Moreover, thinking about Kant’s account of maxims as entailing this possibility does not amount to offering “a trivialized or watered down understanding of the idea of having certain maxims” (Nyholm, 2017, p. 242), but rather suggests that our capacity and ability for self-regulation and rational agency can be multifaceted.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have argued that to incorporate an incentive into a maxim is to make the transition from “having a desire” to “acting on it”, where this amounts to forming an interest on the basis of one’s incentive. This means that we must represent that incentive to ourselves by means of reason. Importantly, this does not require that one reflectively evaluates one’s incentive when adopting a maxim – one can represent to oneself an incentive without reflecting on whether to act from it, or even without being aware that one is representing such incentive. On the view I have proposed, incorporation can allow for different degrees and kinds of reflection depending on how the agent forms an interest on the basis of that incentive, that is, how she represents the incentive to herself. Thus, maxims can be adopted for reasons upon which one has reflected more or reflected less, or even for reasons upon which one has not reflected at all.

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Kantian Ethics, Feminism, and Worries about Emotional Detachment

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

Marcia Baron¹

Indiana University (Bloomington, USA)

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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.

¹ Marcia Baron is the James H. Rudy Professor of Philosophy, Indiana University. E-mail: mbaron@indiana.edu.

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, or 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 effective 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 commanding the ‘What’s it to me?’ thought is not quite as troubling if he is commanding 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 commanding 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 commanding 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 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 (vermittelst 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 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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Know Your Place, Know Your Calling: Geography, Race, and Kant's "World-Citizen"

[*Saiba seu Lugar, Conheça sua Vocaçāo: Geografia, Raça e o Cidadāo do Mundo Segundo Kant*]

Huaping Lu-Adler¹

Georgetown University (Washington, USA)

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Abstract

Anthropology and physical geography were among Kant's most popular and longest running courses. He intended them to give his students the world-knowledge [*Weltkenntniß*] that they needed in order to be effective world-citizens [*Weltbürger*]. Much of this indoctrination amounted to teaching Occidental white men, Kant's default audience, to perceive themselves as uniquely entitled and obliged to work as agents of human progress on the assumption that they, thanks to their geographic location on Earth, were naturally formed as an exceptional race. I trace this perception to a combination of Kant's lectures and publications. He already indicated it in some of his works from the 1750s and 1760s. He subsequently fleshed it out through a theory of race based on his geography course in conjunction with a pure moral theory, a pragmatic anthropology that complements the moral theory, and a theory of education that builds on those three.

Keywords: anthropology; embodiment; geography; human progress; moral destiny; race; world-knowledge [*Weltkenntniß*]; world-citizen [*Weltbürger*].

¹ Huaping Lu-Adler is Associate Professor of Philosophy at Georgetown University. E-mail: hl530@georgetown.edu.

1. Introduction

Nosce te ipsum (know yourself). Carl Linnaeus used this dictum to introduce the concept of *homo* in his *Systema Naturae* (1735). He followed it with a division of all humans into four varieties according to a four-continent view of the world: whitish Europeans, reddish Americans, tawny or darkish Asians, and black Africans. Later, in the tenth edition of the *Systema Naturae* (1758), Linnaeus explicated the dictum about *homo* in various respects, from physiology and pathology to morality and theology. And he now differentiated the four human varieties not only by skin color but also by such characteristics as temperament and habit of the mind. For instance, he described the American as obstinate and free, the African as slothful and negligent, the Asian as haughty and avaricious, and the European as acute and inventive (Linnaeus, 1758, p. 20–22).

This basic Linnaean worldview would be reflected in Kant's work, only to be bolstered by the latter's cutting-edge scientific theory of "race."² In the first announcement about his physical geography course (1757), Kant outlined a plan to compare humans "in respect of their differences in natural shape and colour in various regions of the Earth" and to explain "those tendencies of human beings that are derived from the zone in which they live," including their "way of thinking." Kant intended such world-knowledge (*Weltkenntniß*), as he would call it in his 1775 essay on race (VvRM, AA 02: 443), to enhance his students' *self-knowledge* (EACG, AA 02: 9; see PG, AA 09: 183–375; VPG/Holstein, AA 26: 3–5).³ How so?

Kant's younger contemporary Friedrich Schiller would later suggest an illuminating answer to this question, in the famous inaugural lecture on "universal history" that he delivered in 1789. "Our [white] race," Schiller told the young men crowding the largest lecture hall at the University of Jena, can clearly see itself as a superior race in the "mirror" constituted by all the other "races contemporary in time but in different geographical areas." In these distant others, the white man sees nothing but manifestations of indolence and stupidity, slavery or otherwise "lawless freedom," and "rude taste." By contrast, he is to view himself as a spirited thinker, an educated man of the world [*Weltmann*], who is linked to other thinking minds of his race in a cosmopolitan [*weltbürgerlich*] bond (Schiller, 1972, p. 325–28). According to Schiller, these world-citizens or *Weltbürger* have a shared "vocation" [*Bestimmung*]: they are to cultivate themselves as individuals whose lives link up to the universal history of humanity (Schiller, 1972, p. 322). Each of them is thereby called to "contribute something" to humanity's "rich legacy of truth, morality, and freedom" (Schiller, 1972, p. 334).

This call to action was Schiller's concluding appeal to the young men at his lecture. He was thereby channeling a similar call that Kant made at the end of the "Conjectural Beginning of Human History" (1786), which we will encounter in section 3.2. Schiller's invocation of a cosmopolitan standpoint also mirrored Kant's in the "Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim" (1784). By 1789, Schiller had read both of those essays,⁴ and Kant had published all three of his dedicated essays on race (1775/7, 1785, 1788).⁵ Schiller's lecture exhibited an astute grasp of the Kantian message to the *Weltbürger*, including its racial inflection. In short, the message is this: white men have a unique calling to work as the agents of human progress because they, thanks to their privileged location on Earth, represent an exceptionally well-endowed race.

2 On the relation between Kant's scientific theory of race and Linnaeus's classification of human varieties, see Lu-Adler (2023a, p. 181–89).

3 *Physical Geography*, edited by Friedrich Theodor Rink, was published in 1802. But much of its content—from §53 (PG, AA 09: 273) onward—was based on notes that Kant prepared around 1757–59. The Holstein manuscript (VPG/Holstein, AA 26.1: 7–320) is a close copy of those notes (Stark, 2011, p. 72). When I cite from *Physical Geography*, I also include corroborating segments from the Holstein manuscript wherever applicable.

4 See the editor's note in Schiller (1972, p. 321).

5 On the history of these essays, see Mikkelsen (2013, p. 18–32).

In what follows, I explain how this message took shape in Kant's own writings and teachings. We will begin with some important clues in his works from the 1750s and 1760s, in which he established the image of the *Weltbürger* as an Occidental white man. This Kantian *Weltbürger* would understand himself both through iterated contrasts with the other - the "Oriental," the "Negro," and the American "savage" (section 2.1) - and in view of his cosmic situation as an earthbound rational creature (2.2). We will then see how this self-image would be completed and sharpened through Kant's works from the 1770s onward, including his *theory of race* (section 3.1), his pure *moral theory* plus the complementary *anthropology* (3.2), and the *theory of education* that builds on those three (3.3). This interpretation will have some implications for how to deal with the racist orientation of Kant's philosophy (section 4).

2. Some clues in Kant's early works

2.1 The Kantian *Weltbürger* as an Occidental white man

Kant published his first essay on race, "Of the Different Races of Human Beings," in 1775. By then, he had lectured on physical geography for nearly two decades (since 1756/7) and started to teach a new course on anthropology (since 1772/3).⁶ As he saw them, these two courses together constituted the world-knowledge that would prepare a student "for life" and introduce "the accomplished apprentice (...) to the stage of his destiny, namely, the *world*" (VvRM, AA 02: 443). Who was the apprentice-to-be?

Kant indicated the answer to this question in an earlier essay, "Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime" (1764). The final paragraph of this essay contains a history of "the taste of human beings." This history started with ancient Greeks and Romans, who in Kant's view "displayed clear marks of a genuine feeling for the beautiful as well as the sublime in poetry, sculpture, architecture, legislation, and even in morals." This feeling allegedly "degenerated" during the medieval period. Then, Kant sees a happy revival of the human genius in his own time. His special wish for this era is to tap into "the as yet undiscovered secret of education (...) in order early to raise the moral feeling in the breast of every young world-citizen into an active sentiment" (GSE, AA 02: 255–56, modified translation).

The "world-citizen" [*Weltbürger*] Kant has in mind here is an Occidental white man - not any of the nonwhite or "Oriental" white men he has depicted,⁷ nor any woman.⁸ The preceding parts of the "Observations" make this exclusionary view amply clear. The history of taste I just mentioned appears at the end of the section "On national characters in so far as they rest upon the different feeling of the sublime and the beautiful" (GSE, AA 02: 243–56). Insofar as peoples' mental characters [*Gemüthscharaktere*] are "most evident in that which is moral," Kant considers a people's feeling from this perspective (GSE, AA 02: 245).⁹ He begins with a detailed treatment of "the peoples of our part of the world." These include the *Italian* and *French* peoples, on the one hand, and the *German*, *English*, and *Spanish* peoples, on the other, who in Kant's view excel in the feeling of the beautiful and that of the sublime respectively (GSE, AA 02: 243).

Kant then takes "a quick look through the other parts of the world." To those "in the Orient" (GSE, AA 02: 252), he attributes a "false taste" but "no conception of the morally

⁶ On the origin of Kant's anthropology lectures and their relation to his geography lectures, see Wilson (2006, p. 7–26).

⁷ For Kant's distinction of the "Occidental" and "Oriental" whites, see V-Anth/Mensch, AA 25: 1188.

⁸ To appreciate the literal nature of Kant's references to the European *man*, see GSE, AA 02: 228–43 (also V-Anth/Mensch, AA 25: 1188–94; Anth, AA 07: 303–6).

⁹ On Kant's notion of "character" as pivotal to his raciology, see Yab (2021, p. 135–87).

beautiful" (GSE, AA 02: 254). He says, for instance: the Arab has an "inflamed power of imagination [which] presents things to him in unnatural and distorted images"; the Indian has "a dominant taste for grotesqueries"; and the "verbose and studied compliments" of the Chinese are likewise only "ridiculous grotesqueries" (GSE, AA 02: 252). In Kant's vocabulary, "grotesqueries" are "unnatural things, in so far as the sublime is thereby intended, even if little or none of it is actually found" (GSE, AA 02: 214), while the "ridiculous" is that which "sinks [most] deeply beneath the sublime" (GSE, AA 02: 233). Given his conception of sublimity as the "criterion" of manhood (GSE, AA 02: 228), he is thereby implicitly associating what is Oriental with what is effeminate or at least childish.¹⁰

This insinuation of immaturity also extends to "the Negroes of Africa," who in Kant's view "have by nature no feeling that rises above the ridiculous." The difference between the "Negroes" and the "whites" is so "essential," he claims, that "it seems to be just as great with regard to the capacities of mind as it is with respect to color." As for the native inhabitants of the "new world" (America), Kant characterizes them as "savages" who "have little feeling for the beautiful in the moral sense" and who overall exhibit "an exceptional lack of feeling" (GSE, AA 02: 253–54).

In sum, Kant's Occidental man "alone" has all sorts of feelings, drives, and inclinations plus the ability to interweave them "with so much that is moral" and thereby make them "proper" (GSE, AA 02: 254). So, when he subsequently urges for an education to cultivate the moral feeling in every young *Weltbürger*, Kant is targeting a very specific audience. Accordingly, the *Weltkenntniß* delivered first through his geography course and then through the complementary course on anthropology is intended only to prepare the young Occidental white men for the world as *their* stage. Part of the preparation is for them to know themselves better - especially regarding their capacity and destiny as a naturally privileged race - through iterated contrasts with *other* inhabitants on Earth (more on this in sections 3.1 and 3.3).

Meanwhile, the early Kant also invited his audience to zoom out further and consider themselves as *earthbound* rational beings, in contrast with the rational creatures inhabiting *other planets*. As odd as this move may sound, we will see that it constitutes a crucial piece of the backdrop for understanding how the later Kant would flesh out his plan for the young Occidental *Weltbürgern* simultaneously through a pure moral philosophy, a pragmatic anthropology, and a scientific theory of race building on physical geography.

2.2 Knowing the human being as an earthbound rational creature

In the *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* (1798), Kant states that one may call the human species a "race" if one thinks of it "as a species of rational *beings on earth* in comparison with rational beings on other planets, as a multitude of creatures arising from one demiurge" (Anth, AA 07: 331). The expression 'beings on earth' reflects an important feature of Kant's notion of race: the characteristics of a race - in comparison with other races that share the same phylum - causally depend on the *material conditions* of its embodiment. That is why locating one's geographic origin matters: a geographic location is associated with a type of *climate*; the climate, which on Kant's account has mainly to do with air (dry or humid) and sun (hot or cold), in turn determines what natural characteristics get to be developed or expressed in its inhabitants. These characteristics, as Kant understands them, include such things as one's physical form, temperament, and level of intelligence. When we consider Kant's account of different races within the same human species in section 3.1, we will see how he correlates four basic climates - according to a four-continent map of the globe - with four distinct sets of those

10 Kant portrays the "Orient" as "the land of sensation" (VAnth/Fried, AA 25: 552) and its peoples as in "the childhood of the understanding" (Refl. 1486, AA 15: 710). One manifestation of this supposed immaturity is their "child's language" made of mere pictures [Bildern]; by contrast, the Occidentals purportedly have "a more masculine language" made of words (VAnth/Mron, AA 25: 1232–33). On the significance of this contrast, see Lu-Adler (2023b).

characteristics. He already laid down the "law" for this kind of correlation in an essay published in 1755, "Universal Natural History and Theory of the Heavens."

Part Three of this tripartite essay is "an attempt to compare the inhabitants of the different planets" (NTH, AA 01: 349). The attempted comparison is not a mere fiction, Kant contends, but accords with a natural law akin to the Newtonian law of universal gravitation. The putative law goes as follows:

the perfection of the spiritual world [Geisterwelt] as well as of the material world increases and progresses in the planets from Mercury on to Saturn [...] in a correct sequence of degrees in proportion to their distances from the Sun. (NTH, AA 01: 360)

Of the then-known planets in our solar system, Mercury is the closest to the Sun, Saturn the furthest, and Earth at the midpoint between those. Accordingly, Kant submits two propositions that are "more than probable conjecture[s]," with "a degree of credibility that is not far removed from an established certainty":

(a) from Mercury, through Earth, to Saturn, the *matter* that constitutes the inhabitants of various planets goes from coarser to finer;

(b) the same inhabitants are less or more excellent in their *intellectual abilities* (particularly the ability to form clear concepts), as such abilities "have a necessary dependence on the material of the machine they inhabit" - the finer the matter, the greater the intellect (NTH, AA 01: 358–59).

Assuming this dependence of intellect on material embodiment, Kant locates earthlings at the midpoint on the spectrum of all finite (i.e., created) intellects. Depending on which direction they look, their sense of self may vary from perspective to perspective. While "the idea of the most sublime classes of rational creatures that inhabit Jupiter or Saturn arouses their jealousy and humiliates them by the knowledge of their own baseness" (NTH, AA 01: 359), they may be comforted by the thought of the Mercurians, who belong in a "class [of rational beings that] borders more closely on the lack of reason" (NTH, AA 01: 362).

To illustrate this perspectival relativity, Kant writes: "On the one hand, we saw thinking creatures [on Mercury] among whom a Greenlander or Hottentot would be Newton, on the other hand, those [on Jupiter and Saturn] who would marvel at [bewundern] him as an ape" (NTH, AA 01: 359–60, modified translation). This reference to the Greenlandic Inuit and the "Hottentot" (derogatory reference to an African people) is telling. Kant is using them to mark the lowest bounds of humanity and to make the point that, in the eyes of the Mercurians (the dullest race of all rational creatures), *even* a human being like the "Hottentot," for instance, would appear very intelligent, whereas to someone from Saturn, this being amounts to a mere animal.

On Kant's account, a similar material principle underlies the inferiority of a Mercurian (relative to the more intelligent planetarians) and that of a "Hottentot" (relative to the more intelligent humans). Roughly speaking, the intelligence of a class of rational creatures depends on how far from the Sun their native habitat is, where their class developed its unique characteristics in adaptation to the local climate.¹¹ Regarding the human being as such (as an earthbound race), "his ability to think rationally" is limited by "the constitution of the matter to which he is bound and which is proportionate to the distance from the Sun." This limitation is not equally materialized in all members of the human species: provided it takes several stages for the human being to approximate "the purpose of his being," *some* humans may advance far less than others and forever "remain at [an early] stage of development." For instance, they may

¹¹ In the case of the Greenlandic Inuit, Kant would say that they are *too far* from the source of heat: *extreme* cold (in the polar region) and *extreme* heat (along the equator) have similar effects on human development (PG, AA 09: 311).

never develop the “faculty of combining abstracted concepts and controlling the tendencies of the passions by the free application of insights” (NTH, AA 01: 355–56). Kant can conveniently single out the “Hottentot” as a case in point.¹²

When we connect this account of the human race with what we uncovered in section 2.1, we can see that Kant’s *Weltbürger* would know himself along two basic dimensions. First, he would know himself as an *earthbound* rational creature, whose rationality is finite - since all are finite who are created - and limited by the materiality of his earthly embodiment. In this respect, he must learn about the dispositions and capacities of the human being as such, insofar as these depend on the overall conditions of his cosmic habitat and, at the same time, determine what kind of perfection he is capable of achieving.

Second, turning the gaze onto Earth itself, Kant’s *Weltbürger* would have to orient himself geographically on this planet, in order to get a more specific sense of what natural dispositions and talents characterize his class of humans, insofar as these again depend on the material conditions of his native habitat. Kant had introduced a multifaceted framework for this orientation by the end of 1775, when he published his first essay on race after nearly two decades of teaching geography. One may begin with the two angles presented in the “Observations,” which consist in contrasts between the *Orient* and the *Occident* and between the *wilderness* of America and the *cultured* part of Europe. Meanwhile, there is a latitudinal division of “zones” in Kant’s geography lectures: two torrid zones around the equator, two frigid zones between the polar circles and the poles in both hemispheres, and two temperate zones in the middle (PG, AA 09: 177). This division serves as an organizing principle for Kant to sort humans in terms of “form [*Bildung*] and colour” among other things and to locate the fair-skinned and “most attractive of the Earth’s peoples” in the temperate zones, particularly “along the line of longitude running through Germany, and some degrees on either side” (PG, AA 09: 311; see V-PG/Holstein, AA 26.1: 85–6). Finally, the conception of climate as the basic material factor that affects the development of a creature lays the foundation - together with a four-continent mapping of the globe - for Kant’s rigid fourfold classification of human races (VvRM, AA 02: 432–41).

With all these framing apparatuses, the Occidental white (male) *Weltbürgern* would come to perceive themselves as the aesthetically most pleasing, culturally most advanced, and morally most promising class of all earthbound rational creatures thanks to the most suitable place where their race was formed on the planet Earth. This self-perception is supposed to inspire in the *Weltbürgern* a sense of calling and entitlement to be the sole agents of human progress - as Schiller would highlight in his 1789 lecture. In next section, I will explain how we can read this message off a combination of Kant’s theory of race (3.1), his pure moral theory plus the anthropology that complements it (3.2), and his plan of education (3.3).

3. Race and destiny

3.1 One species, four races: establishing the natural superiority of the white race

Kant holds a monogenetic view of humanity, according to which different human races belong in the same species. This view tends to be associated with humanitarian and egalitarian ideas (we are all humans, right?). For that reason, some scholars have claimed that Kant’s racist views are simply “at odds” with his monogenism (Wilson, 2014, p. 205) or that the latter has

12 Negative reports about the “Hottentots” were abound in the eighteenth century. See Bernasconi (2014) on how some of them might have influenced Kant’s view.

a "moral meaning" that squarely contradicts racism (Louden, 2000, p. 103–4). Such claims misunderstand Kant's monogenism, though. In fact, not only is it perfectly compatible with racism, but it also provides a potent theoretical foundation for the latter. As Charles Mills (2014) puts it, Kant's racism is a form of "monogenetic racism."

To see this, it is worth emphasizing that Kant uses the idea of the unity of human species primarily to explain perceived hereditary *differences* among its members. Above all, he emphasizes that racial differences - as necessarily, unfailingly, and persistently hereditary differences - are comprehensible only on the assumption of a shared original phylum [Stamm], whereas polygenism, which posits multiple original phyla, would render this phenomenon unintelligible. Thus, the Kantian concept of race already contains not only a notion of "necessarily hereditary characters" that differentiate the races but also that of a "common phylum," from which those characters must be derived (BBM, AA 08: 98–9; see ÜGTP, AA 08: 163).

As a general explanatory model to make sense of the diversity within any given organic species (be it a plant or an animal), Kant posits the following teleological principle: nature originally equips the species "through hidden inner provisions for all kinds of future circumstances, so that it may preserve itself and be suited to the difference of the climate or the soil." The inner provisions include certain "germs [Keime]" and "natural predispositions [Anlagen]" contained in the original phylum of the species; those germs and predispositions would develop differently under different material conditions in different climates; if a population remained in a given climate for a sufficiently long period of time, the specific characteristics developed through the adaptive process could become persistently hereditary in the descendants, even in altered climates (VvRM, AA 02: 434).

With the human species, the early developments of its original germs and predispositions depended on the various climates in which the most ancient humans had to adapt and preserve themselves. On Kant's account, there are exactly four climate types determined by the qualities of air and sun: humid cold, dry cold, humid heat, and dry heat. Four distinct skin colors emerged as a result of prolonged and isolated adaptations in those climates - white (Europeans), red (Americans), black ("Negroes"), and yellow (Asiatic Indians).¹³ These developments became irreversible and necessarily hereditary, which is why each skin color marks a race (VvRM, AA 02: 441; BBM, AA 08: 93–4).

In Kant's system, the racial characteristics occasioned by a climate include more than skin color. He writes: the same hot and humid equatorial climate where "Negroes" became black also made them "strong, fleshy, supple" - because "humid warmth is beneficial to the robust growth of animals in general" - and "lazy, soft and trifling" due to the natural abundance of their motherland. Meanwhile, Kant derives native Americans "as an incompletely adapted race," whose poor acclimation led to "a half extinguished life power" (VvRM, AA 02: 437–38). As a result, Kant claims, this race is "too indifferent for industry and incapable of any culture," wherefore it ranks "still far below even the Negro, who stands on the lowest of all the other steps that we have named as differences of the races" (ÜGTP, AA 08: 176). That is, while "Negroes" are still usable as field labor on the plantations, "the red slaves (Americans)" are suitable only for domestic chores due to a lack of power and endurance (VvRM, AA 02: 438n).¹⁴

Kant is adamant that whatever "adapted natural character" a race acquired in its native climate would become persistently hereditary in other climates as well. He finds evidence for this proposition in the "Creole Negroes" and the "Indians under the name of the gypsies": both races lack an "immediate drive [Trieb] to activity"; they have not brought "any more of this impetus into other climates and pass it on to their offspring than was needed for their preservation in

¹³ Kant locates "true Negroes" in the Senegambian region (VvRM, AA 02: 441–42; PG, AA 09: 312; VPG/Holstein, AA 26.1: 87). The air is so "phlogistized," he reasons, that only those with the blackest skin can survive there (BBM, AA 08: 103; ÜGTP, AA 08: 169–70n).

¹⁴ On Kant's differential treatments of these two races, see Lu-Adler (2022a; 2022b).

their old motherland”; this shows that their natural laziness or disinclination to work - as an “inner predisposition” - “extinguishes just as little as the externally visible [skin color]” (ÜGTP, AA 08: 174).¹⁵ As far as Kant is concerned, the inner and outer characteristics are indelible for the same reason: they were ancient products of climatic adaptations. That is,

the germs which were originally placed in the phylum of the human species for the generation of the races must have developed already in most ancient times according to the needs of the climate, if the residence there lasted a long time; and after one of these predispositions was developed in a people, it extinguished all the others entirely. (BBM, AA 08: 105; see ÜGTP, AA 08: 173–77)

Thus, Kant may posit a whole range of predispositions in the original human phylum, so that all races can be derived from it and that “even the character of the whites is only the development of one of the original predispositions that together with the others were to be found in that phylum” (BBM, AA 08: 105). What matters to him in the end, however, is the *differential* development whereby a distinct race was formed, in whom only some of the original predispositions were expressed whereas others were permanently stifled.

This racialization of characteristics other than skin color has a practical upshot: it gives Kant’s audience a sense of which race is *by nature* (in)capable of “culture” (I will explain the significance of this focus on culture in section 3.2). Kant already indicated this much when he depicted native Americans as a naturally weak race incapable of any culture. To get a view of his complete system of racial profiles and the deep meaning he attaches to it, though, we will have to turn to his work on anthropology. The most striking text in this regard is the *Menschenkunde*, which contains student notes of Kant’s anthropology lectures from sometime in the 1780s. “Despite the unity of the human species,” he reportedly said, “there is still a difference of races to take up” (V-Anth/Mensch, AA 25: 1195). After affirming that there are four human races on earth “descend[ing] from a single phylum,” Kant offers a list of their respective characteristics. He focuses on the ones that determine what, if any, culture a race is capable of. Here is a rough sketch.

(1) The Americans have no driving force [*Triebfeder*], no affects or passions, and no care for anything. They acquire no culture.

(2) “Negroes” are full of passions. Being sensitive and “afraid of beatings,” they can be trained [*abrichten*]. They are suitable only for a “culture of slaves”.

(3) Asiatic Indians or “Hindus” have driving forces and passions, but no ability for abstract thoughts. Accordingly, they can acquire some culture in the arts, but not in the sciences. They have come to a standstill.

(4) The white race contains all the driving forces and talents (V-Anth/Mensch, AA 25: 1187).¹⁶

Kant presents this system of racial profiles only to explain why his anthropology course is designed exclusively for the white race. “As a result,” he says right after the statement about this race, “it must be considered in a bit more detail. Information concerning it is given above” (V-Anth/Mensch, AA 25: 1187, original emphasis).

What was the antecedently provided “information concerning [the white race]”? In the *Menschenkunde*, the preceding parts discussed, among other things, such inner characteristics as “talent, temperament, and character; that is, natural gifts, the way of sensing, and the way of thinking” (V-Anth/Mensch, AA 25: 1156–76). It is important to talk about these things

¹⁵ For a contextualized analysis of these remarks and what they can tell us about Kant’s view on chattel slavery, see Lu-Adler (2022b).

¹⁶ We can find similar racial profiles at, for instance, Refl. 1520, AA 15: 877–78; V-Anth/Parow, AA 25: 450–51; V-Anth/Pillau, AA 25: 843; V-PG/Hesse, AA 26.2: 119–23; V-PG/Dönhoff, AA 26.2: 900–1, 907–8.

because, if (as I shall explain in section 3.2) the Kantian anthropology is primarily concerned with what the human being can make of himself, there must be something for him to work on: "The human being is formed according to talent, he is made polite (civilized) according to temperament, and he is moralized according to character." Take talent, which includes "natural aptitude, or the capacity to learn, and spirit [Geist] or genius." Kant finds it important to learn about these because to ascribe a natural aptitude to someone, for example, is to demarcate "the natural vocation of talent, the end for which *nature has equipped one subject more than another*" (VAnth/Mensch, AA 25: 1157, emphasis added).

The italicized part of this claim resonates well with Kant's ensuing outline of an extremely uneven distribution of such natural provisions as drives and talents among the four races. To his Occidental white audience, this outline must sound like a straightforward demonstration that nature has equipped their race significantly better than all the other races and that this arrangement at the same time indicates their "natural vocation." That is, insofar as nature has generously endowed their race *alone* with all the favorable drives and talents, they also have a *unique calling* to work as the agents propelling the human species toward its final (moral) end. This is basically the same message that Kant signaled in the "Observations" back in 1764, except that now he has an elaborate raciology to repackage and sharpen the message in explicitly racial terms.

At this juncture, you may wonder: what about the universalist moral theory that Kant also articulated in the 1780s? After all, in the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785), he was talking about humanity as such, not this or that race. Don't the universal moral concepts and laws that he set down there, you may ask, directly contradict the racist - racially exclusionary - view I just attributed to him? My answer is this: there is really no contradiction between Kant's moral universalism and his racist view of who gets to participate as agents in human progress;¹⁷ to the contrary, if we read the former in connection with other parts of his system, including the works I mentioned in section 2, we can see it as just another layer of the Kantian *Weltbürger*'s self-understanding: the moral outlook presented in the *Groundwork* now gives them a clearer view of the moral destiny that their race is uniquely prepared to pursue as agents. Let me explain.

3.2 The moral destiny of humanity as a species

In the *Groundwork*, Kant seeks to establish moral concepts and laws in their universality [*im Allgemeinen*]. He does so by setting them forth *in abstracto* and tracing their "origin completely *a priori* in reason" (GMS, AA 04: 409, 411). To him, strict universality - as opposed to "empirical universality" - presupposes apriority (KrV, B 3–4). So, moral concepts and laws "cannot be abstracted from any empirical and therefore merely contingent cognitions"; rather, they must be derived *a priori* "from the universal concept of a rational being as such [*überhaupt*]" (GMS, AA 04: 411–12), which is a concept "of pure reason" (GMS, AA 04: 389). The resulting claim that moral concepts and laws hold for "human beings" in general therefore comes with a significant caveat: the beings in question must be considered solely in terms of their putative rationality, in abstraction from "the nature of the human being" and from "the circumstances of the world in which he is placed" (GMS, AA 04: 389). As Henry Allison puts it, in the *Groundwork* Kant uses 'humanity' only as "a place-holder for finite rational agency"; so construed, it refers neither to concretely embodied individuals nor even to the human species (Allison, 2011, p. 207, 209–18).

To clarify this point, recall what we learned in section 2.2: Kant divides rational creatures into three classes according to their locations in the solar system, each of which has a degree of rational capacity that depends on the material conditions of its cosmic habitat. Nonetheless, as beings who are created by and hence ontologically dependent on a higher "demiurge" (Anth, AA 07: 331), they share the feature of finite rationality. Now, what Kant does in the *Groundwork*

¹⁷ I give a detailed argument for this view in Lu-Adler (2023a, p. 33–75).

is to treat human beings merely in terms of this feature, in abstraction from their unique nature as earthbound beings. He thereby leaves undetermined whether the abstract morals that he has established for a (finite) rational being *überhaupt* are indeed applicable to humans *qua earthly creatures*, whose ability for rationality is fundamentally limited by the specific conditions of their embodiment.

This is where anthropology comes in. Kant says: the system of morals, which must first be established a priori as pure metaphysics of morals, “needs anthropology for its *application to human beings*” (GMS, AA 04: 412). What anthropology studies for this purpose, as Kant later puts it in *The Metaphysics of Morals* (1797), is “the particular *nature* of human beings.” Above all, it will specify “the subjective conditions in human nature that hinder people or help them in fulfilling the laws of a metaphysics of morals” (MS, AA 06: 217; see GMS, AA 04: 388–89). This point resonates with Kant’s account of “the character of the species” in the *Anthropology*, which considers how “the human being, as an animal endowed with the *capacity of reason* (*animal rationabile*), can make out of himself a *rational animal* (*animal rationale*)” in accordance with “the idea of possible rational beings on earth in general [*überhaupt*]” (Anth, AA 07: 321–22).

Anthropology thus complements Kant’s pure moral teachings with its account of the human being “according to his species as an earthly being [*Erdwesen*] endowed with reason.” It teaches what the human being “as a free acting being makes, or can and should make of himself” (Anth, AA 07: 119). This being, one is told, “is destined by his reason to live in a society with human beings and in it to cultivate himself, to civilize himself, and to moralize himself by means of the arts and sciences” (Anth, AA 07: 324–25). This anthropological account is still abstract in its own way: it mainly studies “human nature in general [*überhaupt*]” (V-Anth/Pillau, AA 25: 838), so as to establish the hope - as “an idea which is possible” - that “the human race (...) will attain the greatest degree of perfection,” namely moralization (V-Anth/Fried, AA 25: 696–97).

Importantly, Kant reserves this hope for humanity *as a species*, which is not the same as the aggregate of all individual humans. Unlike the other animals on Earth, he submits,

with the human being only the *species*, at best, reaches [its complete destiny]; so that the human race can work its way up to its destiny only through *progress* in a series of innumerable many generations (Anth, AA 07: 324).

What explains this difference is that the human being is an animal endowed with reason. Kant elaborates this point in the “Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim [*in weltbürgerlicher Absicht*]” (1784), the title of which suggests that he is once again addressing the *Weltbürger*-to-be.

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 only in the species, but not in the individual. Reason (...) needs attempts, practice and instruction in order gradually to progress from one stage of insight to another. (...) nature perhaps needs an immense series of generations (...) in order finally to propel its germs in our species to that stage of development which is completely suited to its aim. (IaG, AA 08: 18–19; see Anth, AA 07: 329–30)

Kant stresses this species-bound viewpoint partly because he needs to instill in his audience the hope that the human race, for all the evils that presently beset it and that may make any observer of human affairs pessimistic, *can eventually* reach its destiny. The Kantian *Weltbürger* is to trust that nature has already laid certain predispositions in the human being for this purpose; and the future perfection of humanity - at least as an “idea” - must be “the goal of his endeavors.” Otherwise, Kant cautions, “the natural predispositions would have to be regarded for the most part as in vain and purposeless,” which would violate the rational principle that nature is purposive. The task for the *Weltbürger* is that they each do their share to facilitate the purposive development of the innate “germs in our species,” especially through intergenerational education whereby insights are communicated and improved upon over time

(IaG, AA 08: 19).

In emphasizing this idea of species-bound progress, Kant is evidently cognizant of the need to address the suspicion that the culture of the supposedly civilized part of the world - the Occident - has in fact made humanity worse off. "Under the present conditions of human beings," he recognizes, "there is still the question whether we would not be happier in a raw state, without all this culture, than we are in our present condition" (Päd, AA 09: 451). Indeed, he observes, some may feel so disenchanted with the present culture that they long for a "golden age" of the past. This is only an "empty longing" in Kant's view, however (MAM, AA 08: 122). The "true golden age," he contends, can only be "the age of the developed culture of humanity" (V-Anth/Mron, AA 25: 1418). For the state of culture, as opposed to the state of nature or savagery, is "the only condition in which all the natural predispositions of the human being can be developed" (V-Anth/Mron, AA 25: 1423; see V-Anth/Fried, AA 25: 685–88). Rather than being a regression from past goodness, culture is a necessary preparation for a truly good and truly free future, when the human species has finally reached its destined perfection (moralization).¹⁸

"The course of things human on the whole," Kant insists, "does not start from good and progress toward evil, but develops gradually from the worse toward the better." He presents this view of progress to inspire a sense of duty in his audience, the *Weltbürger*: "each of us, for his part, is called upon by nature itself to contribute as much as lies in his power to this progress" (MAM, AA 08: 123). Given Kant's anthropological account of the human being as an earthbound animal with the yet-to-be-fully-developed capacity for rationality, it follows that each *Weltbürger* has the vocation "to make himself worthy of humanity by actively struggling with the obstacles that cling to him because of the crudity of his nature" (Anth, AA 07: 325). Specifically, he must contribute to the perfection of humanity "through progressive culture" and hard work, even if this means "some sacrifice of his pleasures of life" (Anth, AA 07: 321–22; see V-Anth/Mron, AA 25: 1423). If "nature has laid in human beings" the trajectory of progress - from culture and civilization to moralization - that befits their station as the only earthly creatures capable of rationality (V-Anth/Mensch, AA 25: 1198), it behooves on the human beings themselves "to develop the natural predispositions proportionally and to unfold humanity from its germs and to make it happen" that the species reaches its destiny (Päd, AA 09: 445, modified translation).

Accordingly, a major task of Kant's anthropology is to show what germs [Keime] and natural predispositions [Naturanlagen] are innate to humanity as a species, which will at the same time indicate the means by which to hasten their development - mainly through proper education. In the *Menschenkunde*, however, a statement of this task is immediately followed by the claim that, *despite* the unity of humanity as a species, one still has to consider "a difference of races" - exactly as Kant has done in his physical geography (V-Anth/Mensch, AA 25: 1195). And this message comes shortly after the proposition that the white race alone contains in itself all the drives and talents, wherefore the whole course has been virtually about them (V-Anth/Mensch, AA 25: 1187). We will now see how things hang together for the Kantian *Weltbürger* - the pure morals of the *Groundwork*, the anthropological account of humanity as an earthbound species endowed with a capacity for reason that can and must be perfected over time, and the account of racial differences that emerged from Kant's geography course.

3.3 You are unlike them: the heuristic role of the racial "other"

The focus on racial differences is a philosophical decision on Kant's part. As he writes in the second of his two reviews of Johann Gottfried Herder's *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*, it is "the choice of the philosopher whether he wants to assume differences of nature or wants to judge everything in accordance with the principle [all is as with us]." Specifically, the philosopher can read the same travel reports and prove either that "Americans and Negroes

¹⁸ On Kant's account of culture as the necessary medium between nature and (moral) freedom, see Marwah (2012).

are each a race, sunk beneath the remaining members of the human species in their mental predispositions" or that "as regards their natural predispositions, they are to be estimated equal to every other inhabitant of the world" (*RezHerder*, AA 08: 62). Kant has evidently chosen the former.

The timing of this choice is significant: the Herder review I just cited was published in 1785, shortly before Kant published his second essay on race and the *Groundwork*.¹⁹ It is also notable that, in both the Herder review and the *Groundwork*, Kant mentions a remote other only to show what *not* to do if one wishes to be worthy of humanity. In the former, he asks rhetorically about the "happy inhabitants of Tahiti ... in their tranquil indolence": why do such human beings exist at all, who are "happy merely enjoying themselves" (*RezHerder*, AA 08: 65)? Similarly, in the *Groundwork*, he uses the imagery of "South Sea Islanders" to depict people who "let [their] talents rust" by devoting their lives "merely to idleness, amusement, procreation - in a word, to enjoyment" (GMS, AA 04: 423; see MAM, AA 08: 122–23; V-Anth/Mron, AA 25: 1422). Given Kant's view, as we saw in section 3.2, that a human being must *make himself worthy* through active struggles, he is clearly using the trope of lazy islanders to caution against any romanticization of a state of contented existence.

This heuristic use of the trope of lazy islanders exemplifies a more general strategy on Kant's part, for which his raciology offers a convenient framework. Susan Shell summarizes it as follows.

In the absence of an *image* of cosmopolitan perfection (...) the arrested development of the nonwhite races provides tangible evidence that European man, at least, is heading in the right direction. The non-European peoples (especially those of Africa and of America) contribute to the achievement of man's moral destiny on Earth (...) in the manner of an inner wasteland, providing an historically emergent humanity with a means of (...) measuring its progress. (Shell, 2006, p. 69)

To begin with native Americans, who Kant has placed at the bottommost rank of humanity, their supposed savagery represents the state of being that is the exact opposite of human destiny and signifies the animality that always threatens to get in the way of human progress.²⁰ If the human being, as an *animal* endowed with reason, is to develop his reason and actually make a *rational* animal out of himself, he must first be disciplined or trained. Discipline, on Kant's account, is "the taming of our natural animal independence," without which one would be "wild" (V-Anth/Mensch, AA 25: 1170; see *Päd*, AA 09: 449). It "prevents the human being from deviating by means of his animal impulses from his destiny: humanity." It is therefore the "merely negative" measure by which "man's tendency to savagery is taken away" (*Päd*, AA 09: 442; see KU, AA 05: 432). One is susceptible to discipline, however, only if one has certain drives and passions. According to Kant, as I pointed out in section 3.1, native Americans lack the requisite drives and passions, wherefore they are incapable of any culture whatsoever: they represent a race of humanity that cannot even leave the state of nature or savagery. Kant can therefore use the indelible wildness attributed to them as a real-life cautionary tale: a human being must be disciplined first and foremost, whereby he is "accustomed early to subject himself to the precepts of reason," lest he "retain a certain savagery throughout his life"; for "savagery cannot be taken away, and negligence in discipline can never be made good" (*Päd*, AA 09: 442, 444; see Lu-Adler 2022a). Such is how the imagery of "savages" becomes relevant to Kant's vision of a suitable "plan of education and government" that could prepare his *Weltbürgern* for the world as the stage of their destiny (V-Anth/Fried, 25: 689).

The "positive" part of Kant's educational plan concerns culture, broadly meant to include cultivation, civilization, and moralization. This part marks a fundamental distinction between a human being who is "merely trained, conditioned, mechanically taught" and one

19 The *Groundwork* might be directly prompted by Herder's *Ideen* (Ameriks, 2012, p. 221–37).

20 On Kant's theory of animality and its relation to his raciology, see Baumeister (2022).

who is “actually enlightened” or who has learned to *think* and to comprehend the “principles from which all actions arise” (*Päd*, AA 09: 499–50). A complete education, Kant argues, must unite disciplinary training with the cultivation of “the capacity to use one’s freedom” (*Päd*, AA 09: 453). The former is *physical* education or “maintenance,” which attends to what “the human being has in common with animals.” The latter is *practical* or *moral* education “toward personality, the education of a freely acting being who (...) can have an inner value for itself” (*Päd*, AA 09: 455). Physical education is passive, whereby the student merely learns to be “obedient to the direction of someone else” and let others “think for him.” By contrast, through moral education a student - a male student to be exact - learns to act “from his own maxims, not from habit,” so that “he must at all times comprehend the ground of the action and its derivation from the concepts of duty” (*Päd*, AA 09: 475).²¹ This education forms “character” (*Päd*, AA 09: 481; see AA 09: 486–89).

To show why the *Weltbürgern* must be so educated, Kant can turn to his portraits of the remaining two nonwhite races. On the one hand, he presents “Negroes” as beings who can merely be trained and made suitable for slavery; for they lack the “immediate drive” to work, so much so that the formerly enslaved all became drifters [*Umtreiber*] once “freed” (ÜGTP, AA 08: 174n). With this imagery, the Kantian *Weltbürger* can see what a human being looks like who cannot use his freedom, but can only follow someone else’s direction and be driven by external forces.

On the other hand, the imagery of the yellow race represented by the Hindus helps Kant to emphasize that, to form a “character,” one must develop the capacity to act from moral concepts and principles, which one comprehends in their strict universality and hence *in abstracto* (as I explained in section 3.2). That is, one must cultivate a “deep” or masculine understanding (GSE, AA 02: 229–30), an understanding of the ground or principle of things. The Hindus, Kant suggests, *appear* to have intellectual depth - “they all look like philosophers” - but are really incapable of it because they never rise to the level of abstract thinking (V-Anth/Mensch, AA 25: 1187). Because they are “completely incapable of judgment in accordance with concepts” but only “according to shape, appearance, and intuition,” Kant claims, they are “not in the position to explain a single property of morality or of justice through concepts,” wherefore they are also incapable of forming any character or moral personality (V-Anth/Fried, AA 25: 655). Kant generalizes this to “all Oriental peoples,” including the Chinese, the Persians, and so on. He surmises that these peoples are bound to be stuck in their present culture of arts and cannot progress further toward the more advanced culture of sciences or toward moralization, because there is in them “a certain natural predisposition, which [they are] not capable of exceeding” (V-Anth/Mensch, AA 25: 1181; see V-Anth/Pillau, AA 25: 843).

In this way, Kant’s writings and teachings from the 1770s onward clarified, deepened, and systematized the message about *Weltbürgern* that he conveyed in the “Observations” (1764). In the latter essay, as I explained in section 2.1, Kant already submitted that the Occidental whites - in comparison with the “Orientals” as well as the “Negroes” and American “savages” - *alone* have the wherewithal to develop a mental character that is properly “moral.” He also suggested that, in the young *Weltbürgern*, such a development can only take place through proper education (GSE, AA 02: 255). This suggestion explains Kant’s subsequent interest in revolutionizing education.²² If the human being, as an animal, “can only become human through education” (*Päd*, AA 09: 443), a “truthful” education is one that “develops all of the human being’s natural

21 Kant literally intended his theory of education for males. In the *Anthropology Friedländer* (1775/6), which contains his first elaborate account of education, the section “On education” (V-Anth/Fried, AA 25: 722–28) immediately follows the section “On the difference of the two sexes” (V-Anth/Fried, AA 25: 697–722). In the latter, Kant concludes that the education of women and that of “the masculine sex” must be different in kind, especially concerning morality: while the latter must be based on moral principles and duties, the former must solely revolve around “honor and propriety,” as women are “incapable of these principles” (V-Anth/Fried, AA 25: 722; see V-Anth/Mensch, AA 25: 1170, 1172–73).

22 On Kant’s interest in education, see Shell (2015).

predispositions proportionally and purposively, thus leading the whole human species towards its vocation" (*Päd*, AA 09: 445–46).

Now, Kant's courses on anthropology and geography together with the *Groundwork* have given the Occidental *Weltbürgern* a full picture of their shared cosmopolitan vocation and of why they are uniquely equipped - and obliged - to work for it. The *Groundwork* tells them what constitutes the moralization of a finite rational being *in abstracto*. Through anthropology, they "know the human being according to his species as an earthly being endowed with reason" (Anth, AA 07: 119); and they learn that humanity can - according to "the idea of possible rational beings on earth" - reach the destiny of moralization through an ever-progressing culture (Anth, AA 07: 322), albeit only as a species (Anth, AA 07: 324). Finally, Kant's geography teaches them that, thanks to the climate in which their race was formed, they alone have the wherewithal to advance this species-bound progress. They are thereby called to enter the world as *their* stage, each to play his part as an agential world-citizen and contribute "as much as lies in his power to this progress" (MAM, AA 08: 123). As for other human inhabitants on Earth, they serve as concrete reminders of what the Occidental man should *not* be like - not the unruly American "savage," nor the slavish "Negro," nor the overly sensuous "Oriental." Through these contrasts with the racial others, the Kantian *Weltbürgern* are to see themselves as the privileged race bearing a special duty toward humanity. This was the exact message that Schiller enthusiastically delivered in 1789.

4. Conclusion

I have explained how Kant narrowly conceptualized *Weltbürgern* as Occidental white men who were uniquely entitled and obliged to work as agents of human progress because they, thanks to their geographic location on Earth, were naturally formed as an exceptional race. Kant already indicated this view in some of his works from the 1750s and 1760s (sections 2.1–2.2). He subsequently fleshed it out through a *theory of race* based on his geography course (3.1) in conjunction with a pure *moral theory*, a pragmatic *anthropology* that complements the moral theory, and a *theory of education* that builds on those three (3.2–3.3).

This interpretation weaves together diverse parts of Kant's philosophical corpus. Unlike the standard practice in Kant scholarship, I do not privilege his own publications over student notes of his lectures, or his publications from the Critical period (starting in 1781) over the pre-Critical ones, or the supposed core represented by such works as the *Groundwork* over his works on anthropology, education, and geography, which interpreters often consign to the periphery. I have two basic reasons for this holistic approach, which also indicate my view on how Kant scholars today should reckon with - atone for, if you like - his racist views.

First, racism is not just a tangential element that can be cleanly excised from Kant's broader philosophical system, but represents a general *orientation* of the system itself. By Kant's own account, as I pointed out in section 3.3, this orientation was a matter of philosophical *choice* on his part. Accordingly, anyone today who wishes to use Kant's philosophy for antiracist purposes must begin with a deliberate effort to *re-orient* it toward such purposes. This re-orientation cannot be colorblind: one cannot do antiracist work without understanding how "race" shapes lived realities in the first place. Just as Kant was color-conscious when he sought to figure out how humanity's moral potentials could be gradually realized in a non-ideal world, so must a Kantian today keep in mind that ours is a world that has been profoundly transformed by the practices of colonialism and racism that were the backdrop of the Enlightenment. The transformation is reflected not only in the systematically unequal distributions of political power, resources, and opportunities along the lines of whites versus nonwhites and the formerly colonized versus colonizers, but also in mundane social experiences. For the historically denigrated races and

peoples in particular, the legacies of racism and colonialism still affect, explicitly or implicitly, how they relate to others and how they see themselves. A Kantian who recognizes her obligation to rectify the wrongs of Kant's raciology should pay attention to these lived realities.²³

Second, while the controversy over Kant's raciology tends to follow an individualistic approach that dwells on whether or for how long he was racist, I am more interested in understanding the roles he - both as a prominent philosopher and as a lifelong educator - could play in the *formation of a racist ideology*. This is why I paid so much attention to his anthropology and geography lectures, which together constituted his most popular courses for decades. It is also why I used the young Schiller's well-attended lecture at the University of Jena to introduce the Kantian message that connected the white men's supremacist racial self-positioning with their sense of historical calling. Meanwhile, I refrained from judging either Kant or Schiller as a "racist" individual. For this individualistic judgment of past thinkers can distract us - scholars who study them as a profession - from our own burden to undo their *racist legacies* in the present.²⁴

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23 I explain this point in Lu-Adler (2023a, p. 329-52).

24 For further discussion, see Lu-Adler, (2023a, p. 76-107). I thank the following scholars for their feedback on an earlier version of this paper: Mavis Biss, Sabina Bremner, Rima Hussein, Tim Jankowiak, Katharina Kraus, Maya Krishnan, Laura Papish, Karen Stohr, and Krista Thomason.

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Kant's Notion of Human Dignity in Dialogue with Islamic Thinking: For an Interstitial and Extra-National Account of Human Dignity

[*A Noção Kantiana de Dignidade Humana em Diálogo com o Pensamento Islâmico: Por uma Explicação Intersticial e Extranacional da Dignidade Humana*]

Lara Scaglia¹

Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (Ciudad de México, México)

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Abstract

Public international law is concerned with the relationship between human dignity and human rights. Concepts such as person, freedom and justice occur in legal texts, often without an accurate definition. To solve these ambiguities, thus contributing to developing a virtuous legal and political debate, a philosophical clarification might be helpful. In this article, my aim is to provide an analysis of the notion of human dignity in Kant's works and in Islamic thought and to evaluate how Kant's approach can offer tools that are relevant to the current debates on dignity in both Western and non-Western traditions.

Keywords: Dignity; Kant; Islamic philosophy; philosophy of right.

¹ Lara Scaglia is investigadora asociada C., Instituto de Investigaciones Filosóficas, UNAM. E-mail: lara.scaglia@gmail.com.

Premise²

Uncountable accounts of human dignity (HD) have been given in ethics, politics and jurisprudence. On the one hand, everyone agrees on the acknowledgement of HD, but the lack of agreement on its theoretical and practical significance increases the conflictive character and lack of understanding in international relations.

In this text, I will defend an interstitial account which relates law, politics and morality in supporting an individual-oriented account of extra-national relations. I believe that Kant's account helps in defining HD as interstitial and normative and that this can open one path to engage philosophers in an inter-disciplinary and inter-cultural dialogue as I aim to show by clarifying Kant's concept of HD and challenge Kant's account of HD by facing modern accounts on HD in Islam to answer the question: can Kant's notion of HD be welcomed nowadays, in inter-cultural societies? I am interested in this question, because: a) in periods of crisis and clashes it is urgent to find out sharable grounds to overcome major conflicts; b) Kant has been already welcomed by some Arab thinkers (e.g. Al-Jabri, Azzi) facing the question of modernity and the possibility of an Enlightenment within the Islamic culture and can, thus, be a good starting point for such a debate.

The originality of this approach is proven by the lack of study on this specific topic, whose significance, however, is relevant not only for Kantian scholarship but also for philosophers of law as well as intercultural, social and Islamic studies.

1) An interstitial account of HD

The *Declaration of Human Rights* of 1948 states that: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood." In the so-called Western World, the 1948 *Declaration* was followed by other domestic and international documents defending human dignity in very similar terms. Examples of this are the First Article of the *German Fundamental Law* of 1949, and the Preamble of the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (1966), which establishes that rights: "derive from the inherent dignity of the human person" and defends the: "recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family [as] the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world."

In Islamic countries, however, the *Declaration* of 1948 was not welcomed by a general consensus: the declaration was approved on the 10th December 1948 by the United Nations Assembly without a dissenting vote, but Saudi Arabia abstained because the *Declaration* does not acknowledge God as the origin of the rights and permits the change of religion (see Traer, 1989). Differently, the foreign minister of Pakistan welcomed it because he saw no conflict with the *Qur'an*, in which there are passages which can be interpreted as permitting belief and disbelief (see Gurewitsch, 1973, p. 25).

This lack of agreement provides hints that there is no clear consensus in Islamic jurisprudence concerning the status of HD. However, it is a debated point which is worthy of being considered for philosophical inquiries. Concepts such as person, freedom and justice, occur in legal texts, often without a common definition, thus leading to a variety of interpretations which might lead to different political and legal positions, as demonstrated by the reaction of Pakistan and Saudi to the *Declaration* of 1948.

I will here not delve into the details of all the existing accounts on HD, but just address

² Citations to Kant will be to the *Akademie Ausgabe* by volume and page. English quotations will be from the *Cambridge* edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant.

the fact that it is used in at least three fields and in each of those with several senses.

In ethics, it is usually used to ascribe to human beings their status as autonomous agents and willing subjects (regarded as distinct-elevated over non-human animals not because superior to them, but because having the duty to act morally - see *Sensen*, 2011); in politics, it serves as a normative criterion to perfection political systems (Boylan, 2004), to preserve freedom and welfare (Gewirth, 1998) or it is associated to a theory on justice (Rawls, 2009). In jurisprudence, it remains undecided if it is foundational to human rights (e.g as criteria to give and clarify their normative force implied when confronted with tensions, and disagreements in practices and fields concerning international law) or if it is a sort of restrictive principle, prohibiting, for instance, "cruel and unusual punishment" (as it is stated in the Eighth Amendment of US). Besides, on the one hand, HD seems to be related to agency and autonomy (this is the so-called 'permissive reading' of human dignity as protecting the individual and autonomous agency from state intrusion) but on the other hand, it is also used to impose limitations (this is the 'conservative reading' that allows the law to protect individuals from themselves)³. Moreover, as Beitz observes, HD seems to be applied at two levels of thought concerning human rights: as a characteristic of a system of norms and as a specific meta-value explaining and justifying why some ways of treating ourselves and others are not permissible (Beitz, 2013, p. 283).

A possible way to clarify these difficulties and preserve the variety of uses of human dignity is to regard it as interstitial:

The concept is closely associated with the commitment "never again" - that never again should there be atrocities of the kind in the Second World War - and we could see human dignity as a predominantly political idea focused on the impermissibility of widespread and systematic attacks on civilian populations and by extension fundamental limitations on states' sovereignty. In this sense, there is credibility to an interstitial reading of human dignity that links international law, politics and morality in supporting a more individual-focused, less state-focused account of international relations. This, in turn, strengthens a link between human dignity and (moral and institutional) cosmopolitanism given that the value of individuals transcends state boundaries. (Riley & Bos, 2019, p. 13)

I believe that Kant's account of human dignity helps in characterising this interstitial⁴ function of the notion, and can open one path to engage in a dialogue with non-Western accounts of human dignity.

In what follows, my aim is to provide: an elucidation of the notion of HD in Kant's thinking; an overview of the Islamic interpretations of HD; some conclusions concerning how a local⁵ approach to HD – this being intended in a Kantian sense - can be helpful to guarantee its defence.

3 See Beyleveld and Brownsword's (2001) contrast between the empowerment and constraint conceptions of human dignity.

4 Habermas, among others, saw that HD belongs to more than one field only, when he refers to human rights as a Janus face, in which one forehead is morality, the other law. He writes: "these normative claims themselves are grounded in universalistic moral notions that have long since gained entry into the human and civil rights of democratic constitutions through the status-bound idea of human dignity. Only this internal connection between human dignity and human rights gives rise to the explosive fusion of moral contents with coercive law as the medium in which the construction of just political orders must be performed" (Habermas, 2010, p. 479).

5 For this, I am in debt with Prof. Kloc-Konkołowicz and my colleagues from the LOR Project in Warsaw, where we investigated the notion of locality of reason. We do not understand the defence of the concept of reason as a simple revival of the classical concept of reason, which considers it as a universal capacity that stands above historical and cultural contexts. Rather, our hypothesis is that reason cannot be understood independently of several different strategies for its self-construction. This approach to reason is characterised by the notion of "locality".

2) Human dignity in Kant

The notion of human dignity does not occur before the *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Moral* and it appears 111 times in Kant's published works. Although sometimes 'dignity' is related to 'worth' (GMS, AA 04: 435; AA 04: 436) a detailed analysis of the passages of the text reveals that dignity cannot be regarded as worth in the sense of a fundamental value, but rather in a Stoic sense, i.e. describing a relationship where something is elevated above something else (RGV, AA 06: 57). In this sense, the use of the notion of human dignity in Kant has not the political, ethical and social backgrounds of our actual debates. However, we can relate to Kant's account to provide content to this notion which is highly central, as aforementioned, in our political and juridical discussions, but which is often unclear⁶.

Sensen (2011b) – criticised by Bojanowski (2015) for his perspectivism which does not appreciate enough the fact that the moral law is a form of practical cognition – considers HD a secondary concept in Kant's works because it does not play any role in the justification of ethics (it does not appear in the third section of the *Groundwork*, in the derivation of the formula of humanity, in the second *Critique*, nor the *Lectures on Ethics*). However, I hypothesise that there might be a sense in which the term should be regarded as highly significant, namely insofar as it holds a normative interstitial value.

But how can dignity be grounded? How can we find legitimization in referring to it?

The answer, from a Kantian perspective, cannot be but one: because reason demands it. The unconditioned, formal law which can determine the will is what provides humanity with dignity. As moral beings, humans possess a special standing (MS, AA 06: 434), i.e. dignity.

Reason accordingly refers to every maxim of the will as giving universal law to every other will and also to every action toward oneself, and does so not for the sake of any other practical motive or any future advantage but from the idea of the dignity of a rational being, who obeys no law other than that which he himself at the same time gives. (GMS, AA 4: 434)

Dignity has no price: it cannot be traded away for something else. It is incomparable and cannot be measured:

But a human being regarded as a person, that is, as the subject of a morally practical reason, is exalted above any price; for as a person (*homo noumenon*) he is not to be valued merely as a means to the ends of others or even to his own ends, but as an end in itself, that is, he possesses a dignity (an absolute inner worth) by which he exacts respect for himself from all other rational beings in the world. He can measure himself with every other being of this kind and value himself on a footing of equality with them. (MS, AA 06, 434-5)

In other words, as lawgivers, as capable of setting ends, human beings have dignity: "Now, morality is the condition under which alone a rational being can be an end in itself since only through this is it possible to be a law-giving member in the kingdom of ends. Hence morality, and humanity insofar as it is capable of morality, is that which alone has dignity" (GMS, AA 04: 435).

Dignity, then, describes the status of humanity insofar as it is capable of setting ends. If it is so, then dignity holds an ethical significance: the subject ascribes himself ends, and he does

6 As Habermas (2010) describe HD, it can still be identified with a status, i.e. the status of democratic citizenship. Membership in a constitutional community can grant equal rights and preserve HD. As he puts it: "After two hundred years of modern constitutional history, we have a better grasp of what distinguished this development from the beginning: human dignity forms the 'portal' through which the egalitarian and universalistic substance of morality is imported into law. The idea of human dignity is the conceptual hinge that connects the morality of equal respect for everyone with positive law and democratic lawmaking in such a way that their interplay could give rise to a political order founded upon human right". (Habermas, 2010, p. 469)

so, in the forms of maxims that might be in accordance with the categorical imperative, which should serve as the primary internal motive for the determination of the will. However, the pursuit of ends must be possible not only internally, but also externally, i.e. we must have the possibility of setting our ends in the world freely. In this sense, dignity has significance for the doctrine of right, whose fundamental law aims to preserve and defend the possibility of setting ends in the world. The notion of HD, consequently, seems central both in Kant's doctrine of ethics and rights.

But what is their relationship? The *Metaphysics of Morals* distinguishes morals into ethics and doctrine of right, however, it is not clear how the two are related to each other and further inquiries into the text are required. Critics differ on the clarification of the grounds for the universal principle of right, which establishes that: "Any action is right if it can coexist with everyone's freedom in accordance with a universal law, or if on its maxim the freedom of choice of each can coexist with everyone's freedom" (MS, AA 06: 230).

According to the official view, this principle should be derived from the categorical imperative (Guyer, 2002; Bernd Ludwig 2002). This interpretation is contrasted with an alternative view (Willaschek, 1997, 2002; Flikschuh 2010), which focuses, among others, on three critical points: a) Differently from ethical duties, rights are a set of duties that do not depend on a pure incentive, but rather, by external coercion. The legislation of rights: "does not include the incentive of duty in the law and so admits of an incentive other than the idea of duty itself" (MS, AA 06: 218-19); b) The principle of right only tells which actions are right, but does not tell us or order us to perform them and only them (MS, AA 06: 231); c) The categorical imperative is synthetic, while the principle of right is analytic (MS, AA 06: 396).

I am convinced that, whatever might be our position on the relation between ethics, morality and rights in Kant, HD should be considered interstitial: it is dependent on the principle of autonomy; second, it is related to rights insofar as a just system should protect HD; third, it is relevant on a political-social dimension, because it ascribes to the individual the belongingness to a universal state of mankind, i.e. a realm of ends which is our aim to realise (Kaulbach, 1982). Therefore, HD is strictly related to cosmopolitanism: we are citizens of a world in which it is possible to interact with everyone⁷, thus implying that the significance of the individual is and cannot be limited to her membership in a state.

After achieving a definition of Kant's notion of HD I want to use it as an exemplary tool of dialogue between Western and non-Western philosophical theories, in this case, Islamic ones.

But first I must here spend a couple of words on a fundamental contextual difference between Western and Islamic systems of thought in general. In modern times, Europe underwent terrific growth in the division of sciences and the multiplication of fields and practices. This did not affect sciences solely, but social life in general. The division of powers (juridical, executive and legislative), and the independence of religious matters from political ones, came to define features that our society still owns. For sure, the borders between these domains are not always well defined and the attempt to distinguish areas of thinking is sometimes not successful nor helpful. But still, we can say that Europe and generally the so-called Western world is

7 "This rational idea of a *peaceful*, even if not friendly, thoroughgoing community of all nations on the earth that can come into relations affecting one another is not a philanthropic (ethical) principle but a principle *having to do with rights*. Nature has enclosed them all together within determinate limits (by the spherical shape of the place they live in, a *globus terraqueus*). And since possession of the land, on which an inhabitant of the earth can live, can be thought only as possession of a part of a determinate whole, and so as possession of that to which each of them originally has a right, it follows that all nations stand *originally* in a community of land, though not of a *rightful* community of possession (*communio*) and so of the use of it, or of property in it; instead they stand in a community of possible physical interaction (*commercium*), that is, in a thoroughgoing relation of each to all the others of *offering to engage in commerce* with any other, and each has a right to make this attempt without the other being authorized to behave toward it as an enemy because it has made this attempt. - This right, since it has to do with the possible union of all nations with a view to certain universal laws for their possible commerce, can be called *cosmopolitan right (ius cosmopolitanum)*." (MS, AA 06: 352)

characterised by this tendency. In Islamic countries, in contrast, this is mostly not the case. *Kalam*, *fiqh* and *falsafa* are fundamentally interconnected. We can speak of ethics in Islamic thought but by doing so, we must approach texts which refer to religious matters and focus on their ethical aspects. The same for jurisprudence: the starting point is the *Qur'an* (and the *hadith*). So, while inquiring about the notion of *karamah* one should not ignore this context. This is and remains, perhaps, the most crucial and difficult reason why it can be so hard to engage in a dialogue between Western and Islamic traditions.

3) *Karamah*

3.1 *Karamah* in the *Qur'an*

The term *karam*, as the Latin correspondent *dignitas*, refers to someone who deserves to be honoured and esteemed. It addresses rank and position (Dehkhoda, 2011). The term, which has a pre-Quranic origin, is in the *Qur'an* attributed to God's generosity and good human behaviour, noble and appreciated things (cf. Rahiminia, 2007; Mustafawi, 1989). More specifically, the most explicit affirmation of human dignity [*karamah*] in Islam is found in the Quranic verse: "We have bestowed dignity on the children of Adam... and conferred upon them special favours above the greater part of Our creation." (17: 70)

Dignity seems here to be ascribed to all human beings without qualification of any kind (this is called the universalist approach). The *Qur'an* commentator, Shihab al-Din al-Alusi (d.1854) thus wrote that everyone and all members of the human race, including the pious and the sinner, are endowed with dignity and this cannot be made exclusive to any particular group of people.

This universalistic interpretation, spearheaded by the Hanafi school of thought (about 50 per cent of all Muslims), affirms that inviolability [*'ismah*] pertains to the fact of being a human and that this also provides legal justification for the defence of human rights (cf. Kamali, 2007). More specifically, Imam Abu Hanifah (d. 767), established a nexus between *adamiyyah* and *'ismah*, stating that being a progeny of Adam (no matter if Muslim or not), creates the legal basis for possessing both: *al-'ismah bi'l-adamiyyah*, inviolability inheres in being human.

Besides, autonomy and free adherence to religion are defended by al-Sarakhsī (d. 1090), according to whom: "A human's religious choice must also be honoured, even if it is contrary to the Islamic teaching" (al-Sarakhsī, 1986, p. 86) because the relationship between God and human beings is free and based on the recognition of moral autonomy (Kamali, 2007, p. 6). Examples of this are: "there shall be no compulsion in religion." (Q, 2: 256); "Let whosoever wills, believe, and whosoever wills, disbelieve." (Q, 18: 29); "anyone who accepts guidance does so for his own good, but one who wantonly goes astray, then tell him that: "I am only a warner." (Q, 27: 92).

Al-Marghinani, another Hanafi jurist, (who opposes the communalist view) states that considering religion as the criterion of *'ismah* is unacceptable, because protection and dignity are attached, not to Islam, but to the person. Freedom, namely, is the condition for giving a meaningful response to every kind of message (religious, legal, etc.), which means that it is the condition for responsibility and morality. For this: "*'ismah* inheres in all human beings" (al-Marghinani, 1989, II, p. 221). Similarly, Ibn Abidin (d. 1834 CE), who was also an Hanafi scholar, wrote that "a human being is honoured, even if he is a non-Muslim [*al-adami mukarram wa law kefirān*]" (Abidin 1386/1966, v. V, p. 58).

In contrast to Hanafi, communalists, believe that 'ismah and its correlated notions⁸ are attached to Islam. The Imam al-Shafili (d. 820 CE) spread this interpretation and found support from the other imams, such as Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, (d. 855), Malik (d. 795) Daud al-Zahiri (d. 885) and the Shiite scholars such as al-Tusi.

Now, there is no consensus on this issue, however, most Sunni (e.g. *Tafsir AlJalalayn ma'a Al-Hawashi*, 2012) and Scii (*Tabatabai*, 1996) interpreters regard HD as inherent and belonging to all sons of Adams and: "it must be incorporated into Islamic jurisprudence and law as a rule of Islamic jurisprudence, so that such inherent quality is recognized and applied as a right in Islamic jurisprudence" (Abedi & Vaziri, 2014, p. 154). Moreover, some interpreters have quite ambiguous positions. For instance, Izzeddeen al-Khateeb al-Tameemi, the most prominent qadi in Jordan, states: "So, human dignity originates from Divine Will and the immortal law of God. Hence, human dignity is inseparable from a human being whether a male or female, irrespective of colour, time, place, social position, prestige among people, age, even if still a foetus, or dead lying in his grave" (*al-Tameemi*, 2003, p. 462). From these lines it seems that his position is universalistic, however, he declares that dignity's items concern the preservation of human life and those values that safeguard society from chaos and the damage of reputation (e.g. adultery), namely Islamic values. Dignity, namely, "does not emanate from universal declarations, international resolutions, regional agreements or inter-state conferences. Commitment to it from an Islamic standpoint is based on doctrine, not on accidental interest or temporal benefits" (ibid.). Thus, if the basis of HD is the Islamic religion, it seems that it is not possible to regard dignity as universal. Yet, many prominent scholars from different schools outside the Hanafi, including Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (Shafi'i), Ibn Rushd al-Qurtubi (Maliki), Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyah (Hanbali) support the universalist position on HD.

3.2 Karamah in jurisprudence

Among jurists, there is an open debate concerning if HD is innate or acquired⁹.

The majority of the theorists of Islamic jurisprudence stress that evidence of inherence of HD is provided by many verses of the Qur'an, according to which humans have a divine soul and nature, they have free will, angels prostrate human – the viceroy of Allah –. The firmest evidence, as already stressed, for regarding human dignity as an inherent rule¹⁰ is verse 70 of surah *Isra'*. The question is, then, how to regard dignity: is it a general rule or one among the others?

Abedi and Vaziri (2014) make 4 hypotheses: 1) the entitlement to dignity is a rule which prevails over all others and constrains the rules of shariah; 2) it is a general theory used as the basis for some rules but does not constrain shariah; 3) it is a rule among other rules, i.e., to respect human dignity, such as the rules forbidding slander; 4) it is something we presupposed till there is evidence for its contrary – as in the case of presumption of innocence.

There is no consensus¹¹ on which of these hypotheses is the most reasonable, however,

8 These are: humanity, personhood [*adamiyyah*] and the universal *maqasid* [purposes] of *Shari'ah*, which are called *al-daruriyyat* and include the preservation of life, intellect, religion, family, property and honour (see Kamali, 1999).

9 According to the doctrine of the acquisition of human dignity, dignity is provided through faith and righteous deed; whilst the pursuit of pleasures and ignorance keep humans away from dignity (cf. *Yadollahpur*, 2012).

10 There is a debate concerning the distinction between right and rule in Islamic jurisprudence: "Sunni Islamic jurisprudence has not provided any definition concerning the term "right", but Shiite Islamic jurisprudence has defined it as follows: right is a person's authority under the law with regard to another person, over property, or both, whether materially or intellectually (*Ja'fari Langenudi*, 2003). Right is something true and fixed, it is not an object to be possessed, but rather an authority itself (*Javad I Amoli*, 2009); whilst rule is a judgement concerning the accountable person or the relationships of an accountable person and others (*Al-Fayyumi*, 1984). Within this framework, dignity is a rule and it is left open to clarify which kind of rule it is.

11 For some scholars there is no incompatibility between Islam and human rights. Taha, moreover, who had great support in Sudan, stated that the Qur'an defends equal rights for women, the same was declared by an Iranian report

most Sunni (e.g. *Tafsir AlJalalayn ma'a AlHawashi*, 2012) and Shii (*Tabatabai*, 1996) interpreters regard human dignity as inherent and belonging to all sons of Adams and: "it must be incorporated into Islamic jurisprudence and law as a rule of Islamic jurisprudence, so that such inherent quality is recognized and applied as a right in Islamic jurisprudence" (*Abedi & Vaziri*, 2014, p. 154).

Now, not only in the Qur'an but also in the qanun, there are references to HD.

The *Cairo Declaration of Human Rights in Islam* is the best example of this. It serves as general guidance for the Member States in the field of human rights. The document, imitating western political language, speaks of human rights, which are derived from human HD.

Now, the first version of this document was ambiguous on HD. On the one hand, the first article stated:

All human beings form one family whose members are united by their subordination to Allah and descend from Adam. All men are equal in terms of basic human dignity and basic obligations and responsibilities, without any discrimination on the basis of race, colour, language, belief, sex, religion, political affiliation, social status or other considerations. The true religion is the guarantee for enhancing such dignity along the path to human integrity. (CD 1990, art. 1a)

But the many references to *Shari'ah* seemed to suggest that the acknowledgement of Islam as true religion is a sort of condition for defending the aim of the declaration, i.e. to affirm mankind's freedom and right to a dignified life. It was openly stated, namely, that the success of this aspiration or right could not be achieved without taking into consideration Islamic Law, as is written in articles 24th and 25th: "All the rights and freedoms stipulated in this Declaration are subject to the Islamic *Shari'ah*." (CD 1990, art. 24) and: "The Islamic *Shari'ah* is the only source of reference for the explanation or clarification of any of the articles of this Declaration" (CD 1990, art. 25).

In the new version of the *Declaration* (2020) there are no longer such ambiguities. For instance, article 1 changed into: "All human beings form one family. They are equal in dignity, rights and obligations, without any discrimination on the grounds of race, color, language, sex, religion, sect, political opinion, national or social origin, fortune, age, disability or other status" (CD 2020, art. 1) and articles 24th and 25th have been completely modified¹².

I consider these changes a great step forward towards the clarification and eventual advent of possible reforms. Still, much depends on the value ascribed to the *Declaration* by each member and in its relation to national legislation. Perhaps one should change the perspective, and try to look at those sources locally, thus going beyond communalist and universalist positions.

of 1968: "Islam, a religion based on equality, regarded women as equal to men in the political, economic, and social spheres." (Iran and Human rights, 1968, p. 95) The report goes on to acknowledge that in Islamic society ideology resulted in unequal treatment of women. But the fact is that these positions must face opposition and a lack of support from the authorities.

12 "ARTICLE 24: Fair treatment during situations of war and armed conflict. a) International Humanitarian Law shall be applied in all situations of war and armed conflicts to safeguard the rights of all persons protected by its rules, including but not limited to non-combatants, older persons, the infirm, persons with disabilities, women, children, civilians, journalists, humanitarian workers and prisoners of war. b) During situations of war and armed conflicts, it is prohibited to desecrate holy places and places of worship, damage natural resources and environment and cultural heritage. ARTICLE 25: General Provisions a. Everyone has the right to exercise and enjoy the rights and freedoms set out in the present declaration, without prejudice to the principles of Islam and national legislation. b. Nothing in this declaration may be interpreted in such a way as to undermine the rights and freedoms safeguarded by the national legislation or the obligations of the Member States under international and regional human rights treaties as well as their sovereignty and territorial integrity" (CD 2020, art. 24, art. 25).

4) New approaches: locality and reform

My suggestion is that the discourse on HD should be treated locally. A universalistic perspective, as already stated, cannot be granted by mere religion (because the sources are ambiguous) or by mere international legislation whose impact and acceptance from the regional communities is unclear.

Aware of this, An-Na'im proposes an anthropological approach to Islam, stating that it is fundamental to inquiry Islamic sources that demonstrate agreement with human rights norms on its own terms (An-Na'im, 2000, p. 98). As he puts it:

The point I wish to emphasize here is the need for a variety of strategies to enhance the influence of human rights standards in both the domestic and the global context of each society. In relation to the role of religion in particular, it is imperative to engage in an internal discourse within the framework of the religious community in question, in order to overcome objections to human rights norms. [...] The way out of the vicious cycle of the “universality-relativity debate” is to go deeper into the local context of each issue in order to find sustainable points of mediation. As with other public policy issues, the legitimacy and efficacy of the protection of human rights must be promoted through deliberate strategies that combine a visionary belief in the possibilities of social and political change with a realistic appreciation of the difficulties. (An-Na'im, 2000, p. 101)

To engage in the debate and cooperate with a variety of regional contests, we need, then, a notion of human dignity which is sufficiently determined and enough flexible to work in different contexts. I believe that Kant's one – to treat everyone as capable and authorised to set ends for herself – can be used this way. I am not saying that one should impose above new concepts and new practices in a so-to-say colonialist way. Rather, we must take seriously the differences in our social lives and see if and how understanding and collaboration are possible. For this, philosophical work (but not only) is needed to improve our reciprocal understanding. Human rights or the defence of HD, namely, cannot be accepted by religious communities unless it is shown that it is consistent or at least compatible with the faith.

This is the approach followed by many reformers of the so-called Arab Awakening.

As Al Jabri, a scholar and politician from Morocco, states:

Since the modern Arab Awakening, which soon swept across the entire Muslim world, with the efforts of Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (d. 1897 CE) and Muhammad 'Abduh (d. 1905 CE), the Muslim masses have used the slogan of 'application of Islamic shariah' to propound to the masses, the alternative which they hoped would take them to the enjoyment of a free and honourable life. Every member of the Muslim masses, all over the world, aspires to the day when Islamic shariah will be applied in a manner that can remove political and social injustice, realize freedom and dignity for the human being [...] The Muslim ummah, and many Muslim intellectuals, have consciously realized that the ideal Islamic life cannot be achieved except under exceptional situations, and probably not before the end of human life on earth [...] the realization of the Islamic Utopia, will remain relative in worldly time [...] I believe this is the idea which guided the people of authority in Islam, since the time of the Prophet, whether they were caliphs, kings, jurisprudents or any other personage who had a say in the application of alshariah. I am also of the opinion that they all believed that applying the divine shariah by humans over humans, who are inherently imperfect, cannot be done except in a relative manner. (AlJabri, 2009, p. 94)

Another example was the Sudanese scholar and reformer Ustadh Mahmoud Mohamed Taha (who later inspired Na'im), who did not propose to undermine the divine nature of the Qur'an but suggested that:

the verses emphasizing freedom of choice and individual responsibility for such choice before God should be the bases of modern Islamic law. To do that, Muslims

need to abrogate the verses of compulsion and discrimination against non-Muslims, in the sense of denying them legal efficacy in modern Islamic law. Such verses shall remain part of the holy Qur'an for all purposes except the purpose of legally binding rules. (An-Na'im, 1986, p. 59)

Taha, who was executed for apostasy, developed what he called the "Second Message of Allah", according to which the verses revealed in Medina were appropriate in their time only while the verses revealed in Mecca represented the ideal religion.

A similar approach is shared by and the Neo-Mutazilite Souroush, who calls for a revival of philosophical and theological dialogue and considered that religion should be recognised as pluralist, reasoned religion. As he puts it:

By lighting the flame of reason, theologians rescue believers from the chilling aridity of mindless dogmas and contribute to the warmth of wisdom. Theological religion is a hundred times better and sweeter than common, emulative religiosity, and it nurtures within it a plurality of which there is neither sight nor sound in the parched desert of common religiosity. This is a plurality that is built on doubt, not certitude, and it is a pluralism that is negative, not positive. (Soroush, 2009, p. 150)

Besides, the Iranian Shiite scholar Kadivar, who wants to resize the boundaries between religion and jurisprudence to modernise Islam, takes a similar direction: he believes that human rights can be defended by a believing Muslim. The method of Kadivar consists in resizing the boundaries between religion and jurisprudence. More specifically, facing the question concerning modernity and Islam¹³, he states that Islamic jurisprudence must be reformed because as it is, it is in conflict with modernity - an essential part of which is human rights: the fatwas and the legal distinctions between Muslims and non-Muslims, man and women, slaves and free persons are not compatible with modern human rights. Therefore, he proposes to reform jurisprudence - as part of a larger proposal of exegesis of Islam - involving a reading of the verses of the Mekkan period as more central than those of the Medinan, i.e. to stress the "meaning and the spirit of the religion" [ma'nā wa rūh-i dīn], the "purpose of the Prophetic mission" [hadaf-i ba that-i piyāmbar], the "exalted objectives of shari'a" and, above all, the "exalted goals of the religion" [ghāyāt-i muta'āliyi dīn]¹⁴. Kadivar named his exegesis "spiritual and goal-oriented Islam" and characterised it as a "new-thinker" (or an intellectual) narrative of Islam (Matsunaga, 2011, p. 371). Reason must exercise critique [aqāli naqqād]: it should look for the limits of validity and justifications of the claims. Religion, from this perspective, can answer only very specific needs, not all human needs: there are namely rights of human beings, independent from religion, as "subjects belonging to the reasonable people and prior to religion" [umur-i uqala ī wa ma qabla dīni] (Kadivar, 2008, p. 10). According to this new approach one should distinguish the timeless divine religious message and the customs of the time in which this message arrived. The method of this new jurisprudence, the: "ijtihād in bases and principles" [ijtihād dar mabāni wa usūl] has the task of "extracting once again the sacred message and push aside the sediment of [the revelation-era] customs" (Kadivar, 2008, p. 134, 137)¹⁵.

On the question concerning how this distinction between the "sacred message" and the "sediment" can be done, Kadivar answered that the precepts in the shari'a have to be divided

13 "The discerning religionists (dīn-dārān-i basir) realized that they could not be cut off from modernity; nor could they abandon [their] tradition and religion. [Then the question became:] how could they live in the modern world in the age of modernity while preserving the Muslim tradition?" (Kadivar, Haqq al-Nāsy, p. 17). Kadivar calls this orientation "the third thinking" [andishihāyi suwwurī]. See Kadivar, Haqq al-Nās, p. 9.

14 Kadivar (2008, p. 16, 31, 33, 138f., 146).

15 On the Question concerning how this distinction can be done, Kadivar answers that the precepts in the shari'a have to be divided into precepts whose Harms or Benefits are fixed (e.g.: Fairness) and those that regard actions whose value depends on circumstances. In this second category, most of the precepts concerning interpersonal Relations belong and it is Only at this Level that conflict between shari'a precepts and human Rights might occur. To decide if the precept of the second type is applicable or not, one must consider if it is in accordance with: being reasonable [‘uqalā'i būdan], being just [‘ādilānī būdan], and being better than alternative solutions offered by other religions [hārtar az rāh-hall-hāyi digar-i adyān wa makātib būdari] (cf. Matsunaga, 2011, p. 373-5).

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The three conditions, being reasonable, being just and being better than the alternative solutions offered by other religions, are not [exclusive to] the conditions of the arrival [of the divine revelation]. Rather, in any age, non-devotional precepts of sharia must conform to the custom of the reasonable people [*urfî 'uqalâ*] of that age according to the three criteria above. The definite conflict [*mukhâlafat-i yaqînîl*] of a precept with the manner of the reasonable people [*sîrah-yi uqalâ*] of our age, the incompatibility with the yardsticks of justice in our age, or being surpassed by the solutions of the modern age is an indicator [*kâshîf*] of the temporary and non-eternal and, in a sense, abrogated nature [*mansûkh shûdan*] of that precept. (Kadîvar, 2008, p. 145)

My suggestion is that these approaches should be taken together, combining Kadîvar's new jurisprudence with An'nâim local approach, checking in each and every case concerning the precepts for the second type if they are reasonable, just and if they are the best option available.

This approach is compatible with Kant's three maxims of the common human understanding:

The first is the maxim of a reason that is never passive. The tendency toward the latter, hence toward heteronomy of reason, is called prejudice; and the greatest prejudice of all is that of representing reason as if it were not subject to the rules of nature on which the understanding grounds it by means of its own essential law: i.e., superstition. Liberation from superstition is called enlightenment, since, although this designation is also applied to liberation from prejudices in general, it is superstition above all (in *sensu eminenti*) that deserves to be called prejudice, since the blindness to which superstition leads, which indeed it even demands as an obligation, is what makes most evident the need to be led by others, hence the condition of a passive reason. (KU, AA 05: 294)

This maxim remarks not only that we are and have to be autonomous, i.e. can determine our will independently from empirical motives, but also that our process of judging cannot but start from our individual position. The second maxim addresses the capacity to think from the standpoint of everyone else:

As far as the second maxim of the way of thinking is concerned, we are accustomed to calling someone limited (narrow-minded, in contrast to broad-minded) whose talents do not suffice for any great employment (especially if it is intensive). But the issue here is not the faculty of cognition, but the way of thinking needed to make a purposive use of it, which, however small the scope and degree of a person's natural endowment may be, nevertheless reveals a man of a broad-minded way of thinking if he sets himself apart from the subjective private conditions of the judgment, within which so many others are as if bracketed and reflects on his own judgment from a universal standpoint (which he can only determine by putting himself into the standpoint of others). (KU, AA 05: 295)

Through such a maxim "of enlarged thought" (KU, AA 05: 294), we can reflect on our own judgements by shifting from a private position to the standpoint of others (KU, AA 05: 295): this kind of reasoning, does not depend on a first instance on external conditions but is the result of an autonomous process delivered by (and possible for) the individual. Finally, the third maxim regards consistency:

The third maxim, namely that of the consistent way of thinking, is the most difficult to achieve, and can only be achieved through the combination of the first two and

after the frequent observance of them has made them automatic. One can say that the first of these maxims is that maxim of the understanding, the second that of the power of judgment, and the third that of reason. (KU, AA 05: 295)

This maxim is more difficult to achieve than it might appear because each change in the standpoint brings with it the possibility of new inconsistencies.

Now, a perfect application of the maxims should be regarded as a possible – although never-ending – task, through which we can increase our well-being, our communal life and reciprocal understanding.

There is a perhaps unavoidable inherent conflict characterising each community, i.e. a conflict between subjective needs, desires and representation of what is the content of a good life. Laws and practices should be carefully inquired about to find out if and how they are related to that subjective, conflictive level. This requires a lot of work to be done on several levels, one of these levels concerns precisely the grounds for the justification of the laws: if the justification is objective, i.e. it defends a sharable interest (as inclusive as possible of all the individuals of a society) or merely subjective, i.e. if it expressed the interest of a group of individuals.

Believers, atheists and agnostics, might have different subjective reasons to justify their moral claims: it is then highly important to stress the role of pluralism, without opposing it to a defence of HD and universal human rights. As Lindholm puts it, dialogue among representatives of different groups should be encouraged to find out which rights are well founded in a defensible way in each of the normative traditions, including their own:

the plural justification of the human rights system will be fully given at the moment when, in a reasonable way, competent and authoritative members of each of the groups of the competing normative traditions maintain that universally applicable human rights are well supported by the various normative traditions (Lindholm, 2007, p. 131, my transl.).

Once admitted a distinction between several levels of justification (belonging to one or more groups of a society; more or less generally sharable) it can be possible to dialogue and identify shared or sharable contents of those claims, i.e. human dignity – intended – in a Kantian sense as the human peculiar capacity to set ends or having moral and political authority (Forst, 2017). This definition of human dignity can be welcomed by those Islamic scholars who interpret the Israa 70 (among others) as ascribing to everyone reason intended not only as a capacity of understanding but also as moral power to make a decision – “man as rational being, however, always has a choice, on which his dignity rests” (Maroth, 2014, p. 157) – and “shape his own life with making laws that structure human life” (Babookani, Heydari, Abdarefahani, 2020, p. 886). “Dignity”, namely: “involves human beings’ perception of one another as entities that deserve respect and honor, and special care and attention for others, in their capacity, as indicated by Immanuel Kant, as ends in themselves” (Azzì, 2017).

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Kant's Conceptions of the Feeling of Life and the Feeling of the Promotion of Life in Light of Epicurus' Theory of Pleasure and the Stoic Notion of *Oikeiôsis*

[As Concepções Kantianas do Sentimento de Vida e do Sentimento de Promoção da Vida à Luz da Teoria do Prazer de Epicuro e da Noção Estóica de *Oikeiôsis*]

Saniye Vatansever¹

Bilkent University (Ankara, Türkiye)

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Abstract

This paper shows the ways in which Kant's notions of the feeling of life and the feeling of the promotion of life may be influenced by Epicurus' theory of pleasure and the Stoic notion of *oikeiôsis*, respectively. Accordingly, getting a clear picture of Epicurus' theory of pleasure and the Stoic notion of *oikeiôsis* will help us (i) understand why Kant introduces these notions in the third *Critique* and (ii) why he identifies aesthetic pleasure with the feeling of the promotion of life. As I will demonstrate, the feeling of life allows us to be conscious of the harmonious interaction of our faculties with each other while the feeling of the promotion of life allows us to be aware of the harmonious relationship between our faculties and nature. Hence, the feeling of the promotion of life indicates the well-being of the subject in its relation to its environment.

Keywords: Aesthetic pleasure; Epicurus; *oikeiôsis*; the feeling of life; the feeling of the promotion of life.

¹ Saniye Vatansever is an Assistant Professor at Bilkent University, Department of Philosophy. E-mail: saniye@bilkent.edu.tr

Introduction

In the beginning of the Analytic of the Beautiful, Kant states that

The representation of [beautiful objects] is related entirely to the subject, indeed to its feeling of life, under the name of the feeling of pleasure or displeasure, (...) of which the mind becomes conscious in the feeling of its state (KU, AA 5: 204, §1).²

In a number of other passages in the third *Critique*, Kant states that the feeling of pleasure signifies a condition promoting life and its activity, and similarly the feeling of displeasure signifies hindrance to life and its activity.

Although at first glance what Kant means by these terms seems straightforward, there is no consensus among Kant scholars on what Kant means by "life" [*Leben*], "the feeling of life" [*das Lebensgefühl*] and "the feeling of promotion of life" [*Gefühl der Beförderung des Lebens*]. According to John Z. Zammito, for instance, life for Kant is a property of an intelligent will. That is, life refers to the capacity to choose to act, which depends on having reason and the ability to act on it. Based on this limited description of life, which excludes non-rational living organisms such as animals or plants, Zammito writes that

The feeling of life, therefore, is the awareness of our empirical freedom, our status as practically purposive in the world of sense. Pleasure, in that context, is either what fosters our consciousness of freedom, or what accompanies and underscores its efficaciousness (Zammito, 1992, p. 295).

In other words, while feeling of life is the feeling of our freedom in nature, feeling of pleasure that promotes life is the feeling that accompanies our free actions.

For Katalin Makkai, on the other hand, "the feeling of pleasure or displeasure," or the capacity to feel pleasure or displeasure, is simply another name for the "feeling of life." As she writes, "What this comes to in the case of the judgment of taste is that the mind is brought to life, and one's pleasure is in this, in finding oneself to be brought to life by something (and not just in some resultant state of being 'alive')" (Makkai, 2021, p. 9). In other words, Makkai identifies the feeling of pleasure with the feeling of life, and by life she means the animation of the mental faculties in their free play that grounds our aesthetic pleasure. As she further explains in the second chapter of her book, "My pleasure is pleasure in the object *as* animating. I take pleasure in finding myself to be animated, brought to life, by the object, its inviting me to reflect upon it and, in particular, upon the way in which it brings me to life" (Makkai, 2021, p. 101). In brief, life in this reading means the free play of our mental faculties and "free play itself is a matter of the mind's being animated, or brought to life, by the object (or its representation)" (Makkai, 2021, p. 163). According to Makkai, therefore, by life Kant simply means the activity or animation of our faculties, and thereby the feeling of life refers to the feeling of this animation.

While I agree with Makkai's account of life and the feeling of life, in terms of animation or activity and the feeling of this activity, some fundamental questions regarding these notions remain unanswered. First of all, Makkai does not clearly distinguish the feeling of life from the feeling of the promotion of life. Second, she does not explain the function of the notion of feeling of life in relation to Kant's main objective in the third *Critique*. That is, she does not explain the relevance or the significance of these notions in connection with the overarching goal of the third *Critique*, namely the goal of closing the gap between the phenomenal and noumenal spheres of nature and freedom. Finally, even though she briefly refers to Plato's

2 Kant will be cited in the conventional way, an abbreviation of the German title of the work followed by volume and page of the Academy edition of Kant's Writings. I have used the translations in the Cambridge Editions of the Works of Immanuel Kant. The abbreviations of Kant's works are as follows:

KpV: *Critique of Practical Reason*

KU: *Critique of the Power of Judgment*

VMP/Herder: *Metaphysics Lectures Herder*

Refl: *Notes and Fragments*.

aesthetic theory, Makkai does not explain the historical and philosophical background for Kant's conceptions of the feeling of life and the feeling of the promotion of life.³

Eduardo Molina in his article "Kant and the Concept of Life" argues that Kant uses the concept of life in the following three distinct senses: first, in a canonical or practical sense, which refers to our ability to act voluntarily; second, in a biological sense, which refers to life of the organisms; third, in an aesthetic sense, where Kant relates life to the feeling of the animation of the faculties when we experience beautiful objects (Molina, 2010, p. 21). By distinguishing different senses of life in different contexts, Molina manages to avoid some of the problems that the previous accounts face.⁴ In the aesthetic sense of the feeling of life, Molina argues, we feel animation in relation to the feeling of the beautiful, which requires both an animal body and the rational capacity for thinking, which is a unique characteristic of humans (Molina, 2010, p. 33). The feeling of life in the aesthetic sense, on this account, mediates the rational and the organic levels of life. What is more, by accounting for the bodily animation as a kind of feeling of health [*Gesundheit*] or of the bodily well-being [*Wohlbefinden*] characteristic of humans, Molina connects Kant's account of the feeling of life in the aesthetic sense with Epicurus' account of pleasure. Although Molina briefly mentions Epicurus' account of pleasure in relation to Kant's account of the feeling of life, he does not explain why Kant introduces the feeling of the promotion of life and why Kant makes several references to Epicurus in his discussion of this notion.

Having pointed out some of the problems and explanatory gaps in some of the available interpretations of Kant's conceptions of the feeling of life and the feeling of promotion of life, in this paper I aim to present an alternative reading which accounts for the significance and the function of these notions by appealing to their apparent historical origins in ancient Greek philosophy. More specifically, I aim to demonstrate the ways in which Kant's conceptions of the feeling of life and the feeling of the promotion of life might be influenced by the Epicurus' theory of pleasure and the Stoic notion of *oikeiōsis*, respectively.

In the first part of the paper, I present a brief summary of Epicurus' theory of pleasure and argue that Epicurus views the feeling of pleasure as an indication of the proper functioning of the organism. A brief analysis of his theory will both clarify the significance of Kant's references to Epicurus in the third *Critique* and help us understand why the feeling of aesthetic pleasure can be classified as a feeling of promotion of life.

Following the introduction to Epicurus' theory of pleasure, in which pleasure is connected to the harmonious and proper functioning of the different parts of the organism and, thereby, to the inner well-being of living organisms, in the second section of this paper, I will focus on the Stoic notion of *oikeiōsis*, which is rooted in the term *oikos*, meaning house, household or home. What is important for our purposes is that *oikeiōsis* is a natural disposition that allows one to become aware of the things that belongs to one, which initially include one's mental activities, and then expands to include one's bodily activities as belonging to oneself. As this section will reveal, thanks to their developmental capacity of *oikeiōsis*, humans are able to feel a sense of ownership towards their mental and bodily activities, which develops into a sense of belonging to their immediate and extended family and transforms into a sense of affinity with one's own society, the whole of humanity and finally the universe. Thus, despite the vast diversity of empirical forms and the apparently destructive and chaotic powers in nature, *oikeiōsis* allows humans to feel at home [*oikos*] in nature. Getting clear on the Stoic conception of *oikeiōsis*, which refers to the natural disposition of human beings to feel affinity and a sense of ownership with ever-growing circles of phenomena will help us understand how this notion allows Kant to

3 In her review of Makkai's book, Melissa Meritt (2023) raises similar worries about Makkai's interpretation.

4 For Molina, the practical use of the concept of life applies to only human beings as rational and partly spiritual beings (Molina, 2010, p. 32). In that respect, Zammito's concept of life that narrowly applies to rational beings is only one of the three uses of this concept, i.e., the practical use of the concept of life. Similarly, we can say that Makkai's book, in Molina's framework, focuses on the aesthetic use of the concept of life.

bridge the gap between the mental and the physical aspects of humans and nature as well as the gap between the spheres of reason/freedom and nature.

After presenting this philosophical background, in the third and final part of the paper I argue that Kant's account of aesthetic pleasure and its relationship to the "feeling of the promotion of life" can be better understood in light of the Stoic notion of *oikeiōsis*.⁵ As will be clear, Kant aims to show that the aesthetic pleasure we receive from the experience of nature is based on the conformity of the form of empirical representations to our cognitive needs and interests. This conformity between the empirical forms and our cognitive faculties, which is not due to the *a priori* forms of our faculty of understanding, triggers the harmonious activity of the faculties of imagination and understanding. Sensible awareness of the harmony of our cognitive faculties, in turn, constitutes the feeling of life. Thus, the feeling of life, for Kant, means the sensible awareness of our intelligible self. To put it differently, the feeling of life amounts to the phenomenal (or sensible) consequence of the activity of our noumenal (or intelligible) self or soul.

While feeling of life means the sensible awareness of the activities of our soul, the feeling of the promotion of life means the sensible awareness of our mind's harmonious relationship to our body and nature. According to Kant, the relationship between the mind and the body (or between the mental and corporeal aspects of human nature) can be sensed through the satisfaction or dissatisfaction of our interests or needs in the empirical world.

As I will argue, appreciation of natural beauty not only leads to the harmony of our cognitive faculties, but also indicates the harmony between humans and nature. The aesthetic pleasure we feel when we experience nature, according to Kant, indicates this harmonious relationship, for it depends on the conformity of the form of an empirical representation to our cognitive interest and epistemic needs determined by the theoretical use of reason. Since the harmony between nature and reason promotes rational human activity and, consequently, human life, aesthetic pleasure and the feeling of the sublime signify that the harmony between nature and reason is a feeling of the promotion of life. Hence, the pleasure we experience in the experience of beautiful and sublime objects in nature gives us a sense of belonging and helps humans "feel at home" in nature.

For Kant, then, both the feeling of life and the feeling of the promotion of life play a role in closing the gap between the sensible sphere of nature and the supersensible sphere of reason (or freedom). The feeling of life amounts to the phenomenal consequence of the activity of our noumenal self, and thereby functions as the sensible awareness of our supersensible soul. The feeling of the promotion of life, on the other hand, amounts to the sensible awareness of the conformity of the empirical world to the needs and interests of our faculty of reason. In that respect, it is feeling of the harmony between the sensible sphere of nature and the supersensible sphere of reason as well as the feeling of the reign of reason over nature.

While appealing to Epicurus' theory of pleasure and the Stoic notion of *oikeiōsis* illuminates certain aspects of Kant's conceptions of "the feeling of life" and "the feeling of the promotion of life," one might worry that this philosophical background may lead to a more serious problem for Kant. Given that Epicurianism and Stoicism are rival theories with opposite assumptions about what is good, one might worry that, if Kant's views on the feeling of life and the feeling of promotion of life are in fact inspired by these theories, it must be internally inconsistent. However, the rivalry between Epicurianism and Stoicism originates from their incompatible accounts of human nature. Unlike Epicurians and Stoics who respectively define humans as either sensuous animals or rational beings, Kant acknowledges that humans have a multi-faceted nature with different yet compatible aspects and corresponding interests and ends.

⁵ There is a growing interest in discovering the influence of Stoicism on Kant's theoretical and practical philosophy. As far as I am aware, however, no one has suggested that Kant's notions of "feeling of the promotion of life" and his account of "aesthetic pleasure" could be influenced by the Stoic notion of *oikeiōsis*.

Therefore, the worry about the consistency of Kant's account will be addressed by showing that humans, for Kant, have animalistic, rational and uniquely human aspects with corresponding needs and interests. As animals, we have a natural interest in seeking and experiencing pleasure and judging pleasure to be a pathological good. As rational beings, on the other hand, we also have an interest in acting rationally. As human beings, we have an interest in using our rationality to survive in the world and to act as rational beings in the world. In the third *Critique*, Kant incorporates both the Epicurean and Stoic insights about human nature and argues that the feeling of pleasure as a result of our experience of nature indicates that nature is good to us, and that, thereby, we can judge that the empirical world is hospitable to our rational interests and needs.

1. The Function of Pleasure for Epicurus and Its Influence on Kant's Account of Pleasure

While Kant does not mention the Stoics in his discussions of aesthetic pleasure or the feeling of life, he does refer to Epicurus five times in the third *Critique*. Thus, before I explain the Stoic account of *oikeiōsis* and its relation to Kant's account of the feeling of the promotion of life, a general introduction to Epicurus' account of pleasure is in order. Hence, in this section I will first present the main tenets of Epicurus' theory of pleasure [*hēdonē*] as well as the function of the feeling [*pathos*]. As will be clear, Epicurus' account of pleasure and pain help us understand the way in which the feelings of pleasure and pain function as indicators of our well and ill-being, respectively.⁶ After a brief introduction of Epicurus' account of pleasure, I will examine Kant's references to Epicurus and point out the parts where Kant agrees with Epicurus.

1.1. Epicurus' Account of Pleasure

According to Epicurus, the human soul is a corporeal entity that is constituted of tiny atoms diffused throughout the body. The soul has both rational and irrational parts, to which Epicurus refers as the mind and the spirit respectively (LS, 14A, 65; 14B, 66).⁷ While the spirit, the irrational and sensible part of the soul, receives sensations, mind, the rational part of the soul that is concentrated in the chest area, is responsible for higher intellectual functions such as thought and feeling (LS, 14Hf, 70-1). Epicurus distinguishes sensations from feelings and thinks that, while the former simply involves the material contact between our sense organs and the external world, the latter gives us information about the appropriateness of those sensations to us (LS, 15A, 74).

Within this atomistic and materialistic world-view, sensing the world means that our sense organs are being affected by a stream of atoms originating from external objects and causing a disturbance of the atoms in our sense organs. While sensations put us in touch with the external world and form the basis of our feelings and judgments, they are not themselves judgments or feelings. According to Epicurus, the particles moving from the objects towards us to stimulate our sense organs can cause sensations in either harmonious or disharmonious ways. Depending on the nature of these stimulations, i.e., their appropriateness to us, we would have either positive or negative feelings and judgments about those objects (LS, 15A, 74). The feelings of pleasure and pain [*hēdonē*, *algēdōn*] are feelings through which we recognize the appropriateness and inappropriateness of the sensations to us. For Epicurus, then, the terms

⁶ While summarizing the relevant parts of Epicurus' theory of pleasure and the Stoic notion of *oikeiōsis*, I rely on A. A. Long and D. Sedley's *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, 2 volumes (hereafter LS). I will cite this book by referring to both the relevant section and the page numbers.

⁷ As Epicurus writes, soul resembles the wind in some respects and heat in others.

“pleasure” and “pain” refer to emotions [*pathē*] experienced through the irrational part of the soul atoms distributed throughout our body.

Epicurus situates pleasure as the greatest good and introduces different types of pleasure. As Diogenes Leartius points out, the two types of pleasure are active [*kinetic*] and static [*katastematic*]. Active [*kinetic*] pleasures are felt when one is performing an action in order to restore its state of deprivation to its natural state by satisfying its needs, such as eating when hungry, drinking when thirsty. When one is in one’s natural state of complete freedom from any depravation and physical or mental disturbance, then one feels the static pleasures of contentment and tranquility (LS, 21R, 118).⁸

The greatest pleasure, according to Epicurus, is experienced when all pain is removed from the body and soul, i.e., when we are in a healthy state (LS, 21A, 113.). In the *Letter to Menoeceus*, Epicurus writes that the goal of a blessed life is “the heath of the body and soul’s freedom from disturbance” (LS, 21B, 113). In other words, by pleasure, which is the ultimate good for humans, Epicurus means the removal of pain, i.e., a state of complete freedom from physical pain and mental distress. We can remove the pain due to physical needs, such as hunger and thirst by satisfying those needs and we can remove mental distress, i.e., feelings of fear and anxiety, by focusing on the present instead of regretting the past or worrying about the future (LS, 21B, 114; 21D, p. 115). When all physical and mental pain is removed, we can feel static pleasure or the feeling of tranquility. For Epicurus, then the state of contentment and tranquility is a kind of static pleasure and happiness [*eudaimonia*] as the ultimate goal of humanity involves this kind of pleasure.

For Epicurus, then, one is in a good and harmonious state when one attains the state of tranquility by freeing oneself from all physical disturbances [*aponia*] and mental disturbances [*ataraxia*]. As J. C. B. Gosling, and C. C. W. Taylor puts it,

It seems simplest just to suppose that when the organism is functioning harmoniously it is always having some form of perception; that since the operation is harmonious the perception is pleasant and without pain; and that is just what *aponia* is. *Ataraxia* is the condition when, because of correct views, our expectations are undisturbed by fear, our desires do not pursue empty objectives and our memories are pleasant: this leaves us to enjoy our pleasures unanxiously. (Gosling, 2011, p. 393)

That is, the state of *aponia* and *ataraxia* is a state in which all the parts of the organism are operating properly. Even though the state of freedom from all physical and mental disturbances, i.e., the state of *aponia* and *ataraxia*, is a state of static pleasure, Epicurus insists that the feelings of joy and well-being are seen in actuality in motion. This, in turn, implies that organisms feel static pleasure or tranquility when their parts are active and moving according to their inner principles, i.e., when they are operating in accordance with their nature.

Epicurus builds his theory of pleasure on the assumption that pleasure is a natural sign through which we can know what is good for us. As Cicero’s Epicurean spokesman Torquatus puts it,

His [Epicurus’] doctrine begins in this way: (2) as soon as every animal is born, it seeks after pleasure and rejoices in it as the greatest good, while it rejects pain as the greatest bad and, as far as possible, avoids it; and it does this when it is not yet corrupted, on the innocent and sound judgment of nature itself. (...) (3) Since man has nothing left if sensations are removed from him, it must be the case that nature itself judges what is in accordance with and contrary to nature. (LS, 21A, p. 112)

In other words, pleasure is good because nature directs us towards it and we naturally pursue it. For Epicurus, then, what is in accordance with nature is good and we can have a primitive

⁸ Epicurus also distinguishes the pleasures of the body and soul and values the former more than the latter. Contrary to the bodily pleasures, which concern only the present, the pleasures of the soul, Epicurus thinks, concern the past, present, and the future (LS, 21R, p. 118).

knowledge about what is good (or bad) for us through our natural desire for pleasure (and avoidance of pain). As he puts it in his *Letter to Menoeceus*,

Pleasure is the beginning and end of the blessed life. For we recognize pleasure as the good which is primary and congenital; from it we begin every choice and avoidance, and we come back to it using the feeling as the yardstick for judging every good thing (LS, 21B, 114).

The feeling of pleasure, thereby, serves as a natural guide for both animals and humans: it allows them to identify what is in accordance with their nature and, consequently, what is good. Recognition of good things through the feeling of pleasure initially happens automatically without any interference of thought. As our intellectual capacities develop, however, the feeling of pleasure also serves as a rational criterion for our choices and actions.

So far we saw that, for Epicurus, sensation of objects that satisfy our needs and interests leads to the feeling of pleasure, which is the sensible awareness of the suitability of the objects of sensation to our nature. In other words, when the sensations of objects stimulate our sense organs in an appropriate and harmonious way, they indicate familiarity of the objects to us, which in turn leads to the feeling of pleasure. Similarly, when the objects stimulate our sense organs in a disharmonious way, they cause pain, indicating that the objects in question are foreign and harmful to us. While sensations ground the feelings, the feeling of pleasure and pain ground our value judgments about objects. That is, when the sensations of objects satisfy our needs or interests, we feel pleasure, and this feeling of pleasure leads to the judgment that the object of sensation is good. According to Epicurus, therefore, sensations ground feelings, and feelings ground our judgments. Having briefly explained Epicurus' theory of pleasure, in the following section I will focus on Kant's references to Epicurus in the third *Critique*, which will shed some light on Kant's conception of the feeling of life.

1.2. Kant's Conception of the Feeling of Life

In Kant's *Notes and Fragments*, life is described as "the capacity to initiate a state (of oneself or another from an inner principle)," which means that life is an ability to act on our own based on a principle that belongs to our own nature (Refl, AA 17: 313, 1769-70).⁹ The feeling of life, then, is a feeling that allows us to become aware of the self-organizing capacities of our faculties, i.e., their capacity to act according to their unique inner principles. While the inner principle by which animals act is their impulses and inclinations, the inner principle by which humans act may be either inclinations or rational principles. Unlike animals, humans are not necessitated to act based on their instincts and inclinations, which is why humans have the power of choice, allowing them to be free, while animals are *automata* (Refl, AA 17: 313). As we shall see, when Kant claims that representations affect the feeling of life, in the context of the third *Critique* he means that empirical representations given to us can affect our mental faculties and trigger the self-governing activity of our cognitive faculties.

In the *General Remark Upon the Exposition of Aesthetic Reflective Judgments*, Kant asserts that all representations, as long as they are modifications of the subject or changes in our mental capacities, are *associated* with the feeling of pleasure and pain, however unnoticeable these feelings might be (KU, AA 05: 277-78). In other words, Kant concedes that, in the case of representations that constitute cognition of objects, even though they also cause modification in the subject, we may no longer notice the feeling that accompanies this change (KU, AA 05: 187). This means that, when the change in our mental state is either too fast or too common,

⁹ Reliance on Kant's *Notes and Fragments* may understandably raise doubts about the relevance of Kant's pre-critical views for his critical position and whether they reflect Kant's mature views on the subject. However, in his 1791 Letter to Christoph Frederich Hellwig, Kant seems to assume the same conception of life as he refers to it as having an absolutely inner cause, which suggests that life for Kant means the ability to cause a change in one's state based on an inner power or principle (Br, AA 11: 246).

we may not be conscious of this change, and thereby may not feel anything as a result of the activity of our faculties.

For Kant, then, the consciousness of the activity of our faculties, which is governed by their respective inner principles, constitutes the feeling of life. Depending on the nature of this activity, i.e., whether it is a harmonious or disharmonious activity, we feel pleasure or displeasure. In this respect, the feeling of life is the consequence of the activity of our mental capacities, i.e., our intelligible self. The feeling of pleasure (or displeasure), on the other hand, informs us of the harmonious (or disharmonious) state of this activity.

Given that the inner principle of the faculty of imagination is freedom, while the inner principle of the faculty of understanding is lawfulness, the harmonious activity of these faculties requires a state in which the imagination can be free while the understanding remains lawful. Such harmonious activity of our cognitive faculties would result in the feeling of pleasure. As mentioned before, when the empirical representation given to us by our sensibility leads to the cognition of an object through the subsumption of the representation mediated by the imagination under the *a priori* forms of the understanding, the subject may not notice the feeling that accompanies this interaction either due to the commonality or the briefness of this interaction.

When the empirical representation given to our sensibility exhibits a form that conforms to our cognitive interests and needs, on the other hand, the interaction between the faculty of imagination and the understanding is animated and vivified in a way that allows the faculties of imagination and understanding to act according to their respective inner principles of freedom and lawfulness, the feeling of life would transform into a feeling of harmonious activity of our faculties, i.e., to a feeling of pleasure. When we become sensibly aware of this harmonious activity through the feeling of pleasure, this feeling, in turn, can lead to an aesthetic judgment about the object of that representation. That is, the object of representation would be judged as beautiful. In this respect, following Epicurus Kant also thinks that, when the objects stimulate our sensibility cause sensations or empirical representations that conform to our (cognitive) needs and interests, we feel (disinterested aesthetic) pleasure, which in turn grounds the (aesthetic) judgment that the object of representation is beautiful.

According to Kant, an empirical representation that exhibits formal unity conforming to our cognitive needs and interests allows the imagination to subsume this representation under multiple different concepts or laws the understanding generates. Hence, the imagination can freely dance between multiple available concepts generated by the understanding.¹⁰ In other words, when the empirical representation presented to the faculty of understanding exhibits an empirical unity that is not imposed by the faculty of understanding, the representation would be in formal agreement *not* with any particular concept (or law) of the understanding. Rather the representation would be in agreement with the entire faculty of understanding, i.e., with the subject (KU, AA 05: 206). The formal agreement of the empirical representation with the interests and needs of the faculty of understanding means that the empirical representation exhibits purposiveness [*Zweckmässigkeit*] or suitability to our cognitive ends.

As mentioned before, the formal agreement between the empirical representation and the subject triggers the free dance or the free play of the faculty of imagination. The free motion (or dance) of the imagination among the concepts provided by the understanding constitutes a state in which both faculties are active and acting according to their respective inner principles of freedom and lawfulness without hindering each other's activity. That is why the free play of the imagination constitutes the harmony of the faculties of imagination and understanding

10 For the purposes of this paper, it suffices to note that, on my view, the multi-cognitive interpretation of Kant's account of the free play of the cognitive faculties captures the nature of the interaction between imagination and understanding best. For a detailed discussion of this interpretation please refer to section 3. 3. 3. Multicognitive Interpretation in Mojca Küplen's book, *Beauty, Ugliness and the Free Play of Imagination: An Approach to Kant's Aesthetics*.

(KU, AA 20: 224; AA 05: 189-90). Since the free play of the imagination (or the harmony of the faculties of imagination and understanding) results from the conformity of the form of the empirical representation to the general principle of the faculty of understanding, i.e., its lawfulness, this harmony is not governed by any particular concept, nor does it produce one. Instead, the harmonious activity of our cognitive faculties allows us to contemplate on the lawfulness of the empirical representation without settling on a particular law or concept. That is why the judgment we form based on this harmonious interaction of the faculties is a contemplative judgment, and it is indifferent to the existence of any particular object (KU, AA 05:209).

The harmonious and active state of the mind, in which our cognitive faculties are acting according to their inner principles and functioning properly without any external disturbance or inhibition, constitutes the ground of our awareness of this activity. Given that life, for Kant, refers to the self-governing activity of organisms, the self-governing activity of our cognitive faculties constitutes our mental life. Since the faculty of feeling belongs to the sensible aspect of human nature, the feeling of life though which we become aware of our (mental) life simply refers to the sensible awareness of our (mental) life.

For Kant, then, consciousness of our cognitive powers is not intellectual, but rather sensible consciousness, which depends on the sensation of our cognitive activities. In § 9, Kant raises the following question:

(...) in what way do we become conscious of a mutual subjective correspondence of the powers of cognition with each other in the judgment of taste – aesthetically, through mere inner sense and sensation, or intellectually, through the consciousness of our intentional activity through which we set them in play? (KU, AA 05: 218).

In response to this question, Kant writes that “the subjective unity of the relation [between our cognitive powers] can make itself known only through sensation [*Empfindung*]” (KU, AA 05: 219). In other words, by the feeling of life Kant refers to our sensible awareness of the self-organizing activity of our cognitive faculties.

The immediate question is: What is the function of the feeling of life? Why does Kant feel the need to introduce this notion in the third *Critique*? As will be clear, he points out the way in which the intelligible (or cognitive) and sensible aspects of human mind can be united through the feeling of life. In this respect, the feeling of life plays a key role in Kant's overarching aim of unifying the sensible and supersensible domains in his philosophy.

According to Kant, the system of philosophy has theoretical and practical domains (KU, AA 20: 185), which correspond to the theoretical and practical cognition of objects. While we can have theoretical cognition of sensible (phenomenal) objects, i.e., appearances, we can only have practical cognition of supersensible (noumenal) objects, i.e., things in themselves (KU, AA 05: 174-75). Within this dualist framework, we can infer that human beings have phenomenal (or sensible) and noumenal (or supersensible) aspects as well. The faculty of feeling, which informs us about our mental life through subjective sensations, belongs to the sensible part of the human nature. The inner principles governing our cognitive faculties, on the other hand, belong to the intelligible (or supersensible) part of human nature.¹¹ Given that the faculty of feeling is part of our sensible nature and our cognitive faculties are considered to be a part of our rational or intellectual nature, the feeling of life functions as the sensible awareness of the activities of our intelligible self. In this respect, the feeling of life can be considered the phenomenal consequence of the activity of our noumenal self. This in turn means that the feeling of life is the synthetic unity of the sensible (phenomenal) and rational (noumenal) aspects of human nature via the real *ground-consequence* [*Grund-Folge*] relationship.¹² Through the

11 As Kant writes, “any principle of life must be counted among the *intelligibilia*, thus the soul as well” (Refl, AA 17: 585, 143).

12 Unlike logical grounding, in the case of the real grounding relationship, the ground and the consequence are

notion of the feeling of life, therefore, Kant manages to unify the sensible and the supersensible aspects of human nature in a necessary ground-consequence relationship.

So far, we saw that the feeling of life is the feeling of the self-governing and harmonious activities of our cognitive faculties and it functions as the unifying notion of the sensible and supersensible aspects of human nature. Having established that the feeling of life constitutes the sensible awareness of our existence as cognizant beings, we can now move on to the feeling that informs us of our existence in relation to our environment. In the next section, therefore, I will focus on Kant's notion of the feeling of the promotion (or inhibition) of life, which informs us of the relationship between humans and their environment, i.e., nature. As we shall see, our environment can either promote or inhibit the activities of our cognitive faculties and mental capacities. And Kant, following Epicurus, thinks that we can be aware of the nature of our relationship with empirical nature through the feelings of pleasure and displeasure, which indicate the promotion and inhibition of life respectively.

1.3. Epicurus' Influence on Kant in the third *Critique*

As we saw in the previous section, the feeling of life simply amounts to the consciousness of our existence as a being with faculties that can generate representations and act on their own inner principles. Through "the feeling of life," by which Kant simply means "the feeling of our mental life," therefore, we gain sensible consciousness of the operations of our cognitive faculties and our existence as a being with self-governing faculties. As Kant states in the passage from *General Remark Upon the Exposition of Aesthetic Reflective Judgments*,

[L]ife without the feeling of the corporeal organ is merely consciousness of one's existence, but not a feeling of well- or ill-being, i.e., the promotion or inhibition of the powers of life; because the mind for itself is entirely life (the principle of life itself), and hindrances or promotions must be sought outside it, though in the human being himself, hence in combination with his body. (KU, AA 05: 277-78)

Here Kant clearly distinguishes the feeling of life from the feeling of the promotion of life and states that the latter requires more than having consciousness of one's mental life, as it requires the consciousness of one's corporal body and its relation to our mental life as well.

Once again, following Epicurus Kant distinguishes sensations from feelings and assumes that sensations are the sensible basis of yet are not identical to the feelings. Unlike sensations, which inform us about the objective features of things, feelings inform us about the suitability of the sensations to our subjective interests and needs. Kant distinguishes sensation [*Empfindung*] from the feeling [*Gefühl*] most clearly in the following passage:

(...) I call the representation of a thing [sensation] For in the latter case [of sensation], the representation is related to the object, but in the first case [of the feeling of pleasure or displeasure] it is related solely to the subject. (...) we understand by the word "sensation" an objective representation of the senses; and in order not always to run the risk of being misinterpreted, we will call that which must always remain merely subjective and absolutely cannot constitute a representation of an object by the otherwise customary name of "feeling." The green color of the meadows belongs to objective sensation, as perception of an object of sense; but its agreeableness belongs to subjective sensation, through which no object is represented, i.e., to feeling, through which the object is considered as an object of satisfaction (which is not a cognition of it). (KU, AA 05: 206)

As it is clear in this passage, sensations are modifications in our sense organs, and they relate to objects. While sensations are objective representations informing us about the features of objects, feelings are subjective representations informing us about the suitability of the objects

not connected to each other through the law of identity. Thus the real grounding relationship is a kind of necessary relationship between two distinct things (VMP/Herder, AA 28: 11). For a detailed discussion of Kant's conception of grounding, see Watkins (2005), Kreines (2016), Stang (2016, 2019).

to our interests and ends.

While Kant sometimes uses the term “sensation” to mean objective representations related to things, at other times he uses it to refer to all the representations of the faculty of sensibility. When he uses the term to refer to the representations of the faculty of sensibility, he distinguishes objective from subjective sensations in order to distinguish the empirical representations that relate to objects from those that relate to the subject. In this context, feelings become subjective sensations as they are representations of our sensible nature that relate to the subject and inform us about the harmonious or disharmonious relationship between the objects of our representation and our subjective needs and interests. To put it differently, feelings, such as the feelings of pain and pleasure, allow the subject to judge whether the object of our representation is appropriate for (or agreeable to) the subject or not (KU, AA 05: 189, 05: 203-6).

In the third *Critique*, Kant distinguishes three kinds of feeling of pleasure: (i) pleasure in the agreeable, i.e., gratification; (ii) pleasure in experience of beautiful objects, i.e., aesthetic pleasure; and (iii) pleasure in the moral good, i.e., respect [*Achtung*] (KU, AA 05: 209). Each kind of pleasure results from the recognition of the appropriateness of the representation of the object to a particular kind of interest we have, and each kind of interest is determined by a different kind of *end* we have by virtue of being (i) sensuous beings or animals, (ii) human beings, and (iii) rational beings, respectively. As sensuous beings, our end is to satisfy our needs and survive in nature. As rational beings, our end is to *act* according to reason at all times and to have a good will. As human beings, our end is to live as rational agents in nature, which requires both the theoretical and practical use of reason. Kant implicitly assumes that each kind of feeling of pleasure concerns the consciousness of the conformity (or appropriateness) of the empirical representation of the object to a particular end we have in virtue of having animal, rational, and uniquely human aspects.

While the feeling of life allows us to have sensible awareness of our own mental faculties' ability to act in accordance with their inner principles, the feelings of pleasure and displeasure allow us to have sensible awareness of the relationship between the subject and its corporeal surrounding. In that respect, the feelings of pleasure and displeasure serve as the feeling of the well- or ill-being of our powers, and inform us whether nature conforms to our needs and interests, which in turn informs us about whether nature promotes or hinders human life. This is because the promotions or inhibitions of our life come from the things outside of our mind even if they are in the human being, namely in combination of the mind with the body (KU, AA 05: 277-78). That is why the feeling of the promotion or inhibition of life is nothing more than the feeling of the harmony or disharmony between our mind and the things outside of the mind, namely our body, our surroundings and nature in general.

Since the feeling of the promotion of life is the feeling of the harmonious or disharmonious relationship between the mind and the corporeal nature, we can become aware of this relationship through our bodily sensations of pain and gratification, respectively. Following Epicurus, Kant contends that pain and gratification ultimately belong to the sensible and corporeal organs and writes that, “as Epicurus maintained, **gratification** and **pain** are always ultimately corporeal, whether they originate from the imagination or even from representations of the understanding” (KU, AA 05: 277-78). Similarly, at the remark after §53, Kant, just like Epicurus, classifies gratification as bodily pleasure. Unlike Epicurus, however, Kant thinks that not all kinds of pleasure is bodily pleasure and points out the difference between pleasure from the mental activity of judging and gratification as follows:

Between that which pleases merely in the judging (*Beurtheilung*) and that which gratifies (pleases in the sensation) there is, as we have often shown, an essential difference. The latter is something that one cannot, like the former, require of everyone. **Gratification** (even if its cause may lie in ideas) always seems to consist in a feeling of the promotion of the total life of the human being, consequently also

of bodily well-being, i.e., of health; so that Epicurus, who made out all gratification as at bottom bodily sensation, may to that extent perhaps not have been mistaken, and only misunderstood himself when he counted intellectual and even practical satisfaction as gratification. (KU, AA 05: 330-31, emphasis added.)

In other words, Kant thinks that we can feel pleasure as a result of judging, but this feeling is an intellectual pleasure indicating the well-being of our mental life only. Since our cognitive capacities have interests and needs that are shared by all humans, Kant writes that we can require everyone to feel the pleasure from judging that results from the harmonious state of our mental life. Gratification, on the other hand, is the bodily sensation of the well-being or health of our body. According to Kant, our bodies are unique and have particular needs and interests, which is why we cannot require everyone to feel gratification from the same things (KU, AA 05: 292).

As mentioned before, feelings for Kant are subjective sensations informing us about the suitability of the objects to our interests and ends. Like Epicurus, Kant thinks that feeling pain and gratification allows us to sense whether the parts of our body are healthy and functioning properly, i.e., functioning in accordance with the telos of our animality, namely the presentation of the *whole organism*.¹³ In that respect, gratification (and pain) amounts to the sensible awareness of the well-being (and ill-being) of *our total life*.

The feeling of gratification, although significant for informing us about the health of our existence as both mental and corporeal organisms, is not as valuable as the more elevated and noble feelings of respect and taste, which respectively involve the consciousness of ourselves as rational and cognizant beings. As Kant writes,

One can thus, it seems to me, grant to Epicurus that all gratification, even if it is caused by concepts that arouse aesthetic ideas, is **animal**, i.e., bodily sensation, without thereby doing the least damage to the **spiritual** feeling of respect for moral ideas, which is not gratification but self-esteem (of the humanity within us) that elevates us above the need for gratification, without indeed any damage even to the less noble feeling of **taste**. (KU, AA 05: 334-35).

Accordingly, the feeling of gratification allows us to be conscious of the appropriateness of the object of representation to the telos of our animality, namely self-preservation and happiness. That is, the feeling of gratification concerns consciousness of the animalistic and corporeal aspect of human nature and indicates the conformity of the objects of representations to our bodily needs and interests. Objects of gratification, therefore, serve our interests in survival and happiness. Consequently, the feeling of gratification is the subjective sensation that indicates of the promotion of our life as animals.

The feeling of respect, on the other hand, amounts to the consciousness of the appropriateness of a representation of an object to our telos moral agents with practical reason. Since there could be many different things that can serve, and thereby exhibit, suitability for our rational end of morality, Kant writes about different objects of this feeling, such as respect for oneself or self-respect, respect for honest people (KpV, AA 05: 76), respect for the law (KpV, AA 05: 80), respect for one's own being (MM, AA 06: 402). The feeling of respect, therefore, concerns the consciousness of the appropriateness of the representation of an object to the telos of morality, and consequently to the interests and needs of practical reason. In this regard, the feeling of respect is the feeling of the promotion of our life as moral agents.

Finally, the feeling of taste (or the feeling of aesthetic pleasure) concerns the harmonious relationship between the form of empirical representations and our cognitive interests. More specifically, the feeling of aesthetic pleasure amounts to the consciousness of the appropriateness

13 For Epicurus, the mind is interlinked with the soul and soul is interlinked with the body. The soul and the mind have corporeal natures made of atoms much smaller than liquid or smoke and they can be more mobile under a delicate cause (LS, 14F, 69).

of the representation of an object to the telos of our theoretical reason, i.e., to have a complete and unified knowledge of the world. Unlike other animals, which rely on their natural impulses and physical strength, humans need to use their rational capacities for self-preservation and the satisfaction of their needs. Through the activity of theoretical reason, we have a uniquely human trait to systematize our cognitions and have systematic knowledge of the laws of nature and use this knowledge to satisfy our needs and desires.¹⁴ As beings who possess theoretical reason, therefore, humans have epistemic interests and needs in experiencing lawful regularities in nature. When an empirical representation of an object exhibits formal unity in a way that triggers the free play of the imagination an understanding, we become aware of the self-governing activity of our cognitive faculties through the feeling of life. When we also become conscious of the appropriateness of the form of the representation to our cognitive needs and epistemic interests, on the other hand, we feel aesthetic pleasure. According to Kant, the conformity of the form of an empirical representation to our epistemic needs does not give us satisfaction of a particular interest, but rather satisfaction of an epistemic interest we have in virtue of being human. Since the satisfaction of our epistemic needs or interests do not require the existence of any object, but simply the existence of a certain kind of representations, Kant notes that aesthetic pleasure is a form of disinterested pleasure (KU, AA 05: 210). Since the harmonious relation between the representation of the object and the subject does not depend on any private condition, we can require all human beings to feel aesthetic pleasure when they are given an empirical representation that conforms to their cognitive and epistemic needs. Even though the feeling of aesthetic pleasure indicates the satisfaction of our subjective needs and interests, it has a universal ground (KU, AA 05: 211). For Kant, then, the feeling of aesthetic pleasure signifies the conformity of the empirical representation of an object to our subjective epistemic interests, and to that extent it is a feeling of promotion of our life as cognizant beings.

What is common to all these different kinds of feelings, namely bodily gratification, moral feeling of respect, and aesthetic pleasure in beauty, is that they respectively inform us that things outside of us conform to our sensible, moral and epistemic interests. In other word, these three feelings of pleasure concern three aspects of human nature, namely our animal, rational and human aspects, and inform us about the well-being of our life in those three spheres of human activity. Hence, the faculty of feeling through the feelings of pleasure and pain let us know whether our life as animals, as moral agents and as cognizant beings are promoted or hindered by factors outside of us (KU, AA 05: 278).

So far, we saw that, just as Epicurus, who takes sensations to be irrational modifications that occur in the subject when one is in contact with some external object, Kant also views sensations as objective representations that relate to objects and form the basis of our subjective sensations, namely feelings. Moreover, Kant, like Epicurus, thinks that, when the sensations conform to the interests and needs of the subject, they cause the feeling of pleasure. In other words, both Epicurus and Kant assume that, when our sensory experiences are appropriate to our ends and conform to our needs and interests determined by those ends, they arouse the feeling of pleasure. Similarly, when our sensory experiences are inappropriate to our natural ends, they arouse the feelings of displeasure or pain. In this respect, both philosophers consider the feeling of pleasure as a natural indication of the well-being or health of the organisms, and describe it as a feeling of the promotion of life.

Even though appealing to Epicurus' account of pleasure illuminates the reason why Kant assumes that the feeling of aesthetic pleasure indicates the well-being of our cognitive faculties and signifies a feeling of promotion of (uniquely human) life, it fails to explain the ways in which aesthetic pleasure informs us about our harmonious relationship with our environment. That is why, in the second part of this paper, I will focus my attention on the Stoic notion of

14 As Kant writes in the second *Critique*, our survival and the satisfaction of our needs depends on the knowledge of the laws of nature and our ability to use this knowledge for our purposes (KpV, AA 05: 113). Thus, reason has theoretical interest in knowing the empirical laws of nature, which in turn allows us to survive as beings with rationality in nature.

oikeiōsis, which will hopefully clarify how a primitive sense of self-awareness through the feeling of life can develop into a more robust and dynamic notion of sensible self-consciousness and an accompanying feeling of the promotion of life, which takes into account one's relationship to one's body, environment, other living creatures and ultimately the whole universe.

2. Kant's Account of Aesthetic Pleasure in Light the Stoic Notion of *Oikeiōsis*

In order to determine the extent to which Kant's account of the feeling of life [*das Lebensgefühl*] might be influenced by the stoic notion of *oikeiōsis*, in this part of the paper I will first present a brief account of that notion, focusing on its meaning and its function in Stoicism. Then I will elaborate how the Stoic notion of *oikeiōsis* can help us better understand Kant's account of aesthetic pleasure and the feeling of the promotion of life.

2.1. The Stoic Notion of *Oikeiōsis*

Oikeiōsis is usually translated as “familiarity,” “affinity,” “appropriation,” “suitability” or “belonging to one's own self,” and it is contrasted with alienation [*allotriōsis*]. Hence, *oikeiōsis* signifies a sense of *belonging* and *being at home* in one's own body and surroundings.¹⁵ *Oikeiōsis* is the natural disposition of all living beings, including plants, animals and humans to preserve and augment their life by finding the things that are conducive to living well. Since the feeling of *oikeiōsis* appears to be present not only in animals but also in plants, it functions as the first “animating principle” of animals and plants, allowing them to act in a way that protects and maintains a state appropriate to their natural constitution. While plants (through their vegetative processes) act in a way that preserve their constitution, animals have the additional faculty of impulse that help them search for what is appropriate to their nature and act accordingly (LS, 57A, 346). Unlike animals, rational beings are bestowed with a superior capacity, i.e., reason, to know what is appropriate for their natural constitution and acting in accordance with reason is natural for them (LS, 57A, 346).

Contra Epicurus who takes pleasure to be the object of animals' first impulse, Stoics think that the object of their first impulse is self-preservation and that their natural disposition to feel *oikeiōsis* (or to feel affinity) towards themselves serves this goal by making them reject what is harmful and accept what is appropriate to their nature. This natural disposition of affinity with oneself involves a primitive sense of self-perception or awareness of things as belonging to oneself. In that respect, *oikeiōsis* allows animals to have a primal self-perception and awareness of their bodily constitution, which in turn help animals to coordinate their limbs and act in a way that serves their self-preservation (LS, 57A, 346; 57B, 347). In addition to the preservation of oneself and one's bodily constitution, animals and humans naturally love and feel affinity towards their offsprings, which is the starting point for the natural affinity humans feel towards other humans and the first step on the way of forming a universal community of human race (LS, 57E, 57F, 348). Hence, as human we beings feel affinity and affection not only towards ourselves our children, but also towards other humans. This in turn means that this primitive sense of self-awareness and self-worth transforms itself into sociability and ultimately into the Stoic ideal of cosmopolitanism.

So, our affinity with ourselves and our family members expands to include all of humanity as part of our household and the realization that the world is our house/home. Hierocles writes of the expansion of this feeling of affinity in terms of concentric circles starting with individual's

15 For a very clear account of the role of *oikeiōsis* in Stoic ethics, see Gisele Striker's “The role of *oikeiōsis* in Stoic Ethics.”

body, then including immediate family members, then extended family members, other relatives, neighbors, fellow tribesman, fellow citizens, neighboring towns, fellow-countrymen and finally to include all humanity (LS, 57G, p. 349). Hence, *oikeiōsis* motivates humans to (i) have a primitive sense of self-worth, (ii) preserve their lives, and (iii) maintain their lives in a way that is appropriate to their (rational) nature.

According to this theory, at every new stage of development after birth, one acquires new things toward which one feels affinity, leading one to act accordingly. For example, the first thing that the infant feels affinity towards and values is itself, and its first motivation for action is for it to preserve its own constitution. In a sense, as humans develop, in each stage of development the number of things they feel affinity toward increases, which brings corresponding new responsibilities or duties. In other words, as one grows up, one starts to have new duties through the process of developing *oikeiōsis*. Thus, through their theory of *oikeiōsis*, Stoic philosophers aim to account for the proper way of acting, and thereby the ethical duties of humans.

In this regard, *oikeiōsis* in humans refers to the process of becoming aware of and affectionate to ourselves, others and ultimately the whole world around us. This would mean that we want inner harmony, i.e., the harmony between our body and nature, but also desire to be in harmony with other humans and the world. While in Epicurus' theory of pleasure, reason is considered a means to attain pleasure, which is the ultimate good, for the Stoics reason is not a means for some other end. Instead, through the feeling of *oikeiōsis* we sense the rationality of nature and gain awareness that nature is not foreign to us, but hospitable to our telos of acting rationally. In what follows, I will argue that Kant's account of aesthetic experience and his notion of the feeling of the promotion of life, which signifies a harmonious relationship between humans and nature, can be better understood in light of the Stoic notion of *oikeiōsis*.

2.2. The Feeling of the Promotion of Life as a Feeling of Affinity with Nature

Having explained the Stoic notion of *oikeiōsis*, in this section of the paper I will examine the ways in which Kant is inspired by this notion in his discussion of aesthetic pleasure in the third *Critique*. As we saw before, in order to determine if our mental life or our existence is promoted or inhibited, we need to understand our relationship to our environment and see if we are in a harmonious relationship with our natural surroundings. With his theory of aesthetic pleasure, Kant appears to argue that nature is promoting our life and existence and that aesthetic pleasure is an indication that nature can be a home for us.

One way we can determine if nature is hospitable to our lives is by checking if it is in conformity with our epistemic interests in experiencing lawful and uniform representations. This is because experiencing lawful and uniform empirical representations, which promote the activity of our cognitive faculties, would indicate that nature promotes the activity of our theoretical reason as well. Given that the feeling associated with the consciousness of the suitability of empirical representations to the end of theoretical reason is the feeling of aesthetic pleasure, we can infer that aesthetic pleasure is a feeling of the promotion of life.

According to Kant, pleasure in the beautiful directly brings with it a promotion of life precisely because the empirical representation that has a form of purposiveness (which simply means that it is suitable or appropriate for our epistemic end) promotes the harmonious activity of our cognitive faculties, i.e., our mental life (KU, AA 05: 244). Hence we can infer that the empirical representation causing us to feel aesthetic pleasure also promotes life.

Aesthetic pleasure, Kant argues, results from the experience of purposiveness, i.e., the experience of the agreement of the form of the representations with the general and indeterminate

forms (or concepts) of our understanding. This agreement between the empirical form of the representations presented by the imagination and the general concepts of the understanding constitutes the harmony between the faculties of imagination and understanding (KU, AA 05: 218). As Kant puts it, when an empirical representation, despite its singularity, exhibits universality and lawfulness, then it would be in a formal agreement with the *a priori* forms of our faculty of understanding. This agreement between the singular empirical representation and the faculty of understanding signifies the purposiveness or suitability of empirical representations given to us for our cognitive needs and interests. When the form of the empirical representation exhibits purposiveness and suitability in a way that fits with the needs and interest of our cognitive faculties, we judge it to be beautiful. As Kant writes, “natural beauty (the self-sufficient kind) carries with it a purposiveness in its form, through which the object seems as it were to be predetermined for our power of judgment” (KU, AA 05: 245). Hence, the purposiveness of the object also gives us a sense of affinity and ownership of the relevant representation.

Experiencing empirical representations that have a form of purposiveness and suitability to the *a priori* form of understanding without the use of any determinate concept triggers a free play of the faculties. As Kant writes, “The powers of cognition that are set into play by this representation are hereby in a free play, since no determinate concept restricts them to a particular rule of cognition” (KU, AA 05: 217). So, the harmony of the cognitive faculties that leads to aesthetic experience does not give us any specific information about particular objects, nor does it satisfy any particular need. By experiencing unity and purposiveness within the empirical manifold of objects (KU, AA 05: 359), we become aware of the real possibility of satisfying reason’s theoretical interests to unify and systematize empirically diverse forms in nature.

As Kant points out, even though understanding with its *a priori* laws and concepts, makes the experience of nature possible, those *a priori* laws does not guarantee the empirical lawfulness or the order of nature (KU, AA 05: 184). Under-determination of the empirical lawfulness of nature by the *a priori* form of understanding compels us to approach nature with a subjective principle, which can guide our scientific endeavours to systematize and unify the empirical forms in order to form an interconnected experience of nature. Despite the possibility of having infinitely many empirical laws governing the diverse empirical forms in nature, judging that nature exhibits purposiveness or suitability to our cognitive needs, and thereby can conform to the theoretical needs of reason, is simply a necessary assumption for us to approach nature scientifically. Hence, this subjective principle, according to which nature is judged to be a work of art designed in a way that agrees with the needs and interests of reason, is the principle of the purposiveness of nature. This *a priori* principle of the faculty of judgment allows us to approach nature *as if* it is designed to satisfy the theoretical and practical needs and interests of reason.

In order for this necessary assumption to have some justification that would demonstrate that it is not merely wishful thinking on our part, however, we would need some empirical support. Hence, we need to look at nature and see if it does in fact conform to the theoretical and practical interests of reason. In this context, Kant argues that appreciation of beautiful forms in nature and the experience of aesthetic pleasure serve as empirical evidence that nature is in conformity with reason’s theoretical needs and interests.

According to Kant, “the beautiful in nature concerns the form of the object” (KU, AA 05: 244) and the experience of beautiful forms in nature serves as empirical evidence that nature conforms to reason’s theoretical interest to find unity within the manifold of empirical forms of nature. Based on our experience of aesthetic pleasure, we judge certain objects to be beautiful because they have beautiful forms, i.e., their representations have subjective and formal purposiveness, namely formal suitability to our subjective cognitive interests and needs (KU, AA 05: 221) without any determinate and objective purpose being cognized in them (KU, AA 05: 236).

When the form of the empirical intuition presented to the imagination displays an empirical unity that conforms the *a priori* form of the faculty of understanding, the faculty of imagination is set into free motion between all available determinate laws of the understanding without being subsumed under any one of them. This formal agreement between the empirical representation and the *a priori* principle of the faculty of understanding, i.e., its lawfulness triggers the free play of imagination, which constitutes the ground of aesthetic judgments. As Kant writes,

[T]he judgment of taste must rest on a mere sensation of the reciprocally animating imagination in its **freedom** and the understanding with its **lawfulness**, thus on a feeling that allows the object to be judged in accordance with the purposiveness of the representation (by means of which an object is given) for the promotion of the faculty of cognition in its free play; and taste, as a subjective power of judgment, contains a principle of subsumption, not of intuitions under **concepts**, but of the **faculty** of intuitions or presentations (i.e., of the imagination) under the **faculty** of concepts (i.e., the understanding), insofar as the former **in its freedom** is in harmony with the latter **in its lawfulness**. (KU, AA 05: 287)

In other words, aesthetic judgments are based on the feeling of a harmony (or disharmony) of our cognitive faculties. Since the formal purposiveness of an empirical representation triggers the spontaneous activity of our cognitive faculties, the feeling of this harmonious activity amounts to the sensation of the promotion of the activity of the faculty of cognition and, thereby, the feeling of life. As we saw before, the feeling of life allows us to become conscious of the activity of our cognitive faculties, i.e., the harmony of the faculties of imagination and understanding.

Aesthetic pleasure, on the other hand, is based on the feeling of the harmony between the empirical form of the representations and our faculty of cognition. As Kant puts it,

To grasp a regular, purposive structure with one's faculty of cognition (whether the manner of representation be distinct or confused) is something entirely different from being conscious of this representation with the sensation of satisfaction. Here the representation is related entirely to the subject, indeed to its feeling of life, under the name of the feeling of pleasure or displeasure, which grounds an entirely special faculty for discriminating and judging that contributes nothing to cognition but only holds the given representation in the subject up to the entire faculty of representation, of which the mind becomes conscious in the feeling of its state. (KU, AA 05: 204)

Through aesthetic experience of nature, therefore, we become conscious that, despite the diversity of empirical forms, empirical nature displays some kind of formal unity, and thereby conforms to reason's theoretical end of having a systematic knowledge of nature. Unlike other animals, which rely on their impulses to preserve their lives, humans rely on the theoretical activity of reason to acquire knowledge of the empirical laws of nature and use this knowledge for their purposes. The conformity of nature to the needs of our mental faculties, more specifically to the needs and interest of reason's theoretical activity, suggests that nature is hospitable to human life. That is why following the Stoic philosophers, Kant claims that the feeling of aesthetic pleasure is "a feeling of the promotion of life [*Gefühl der Beförderung des Lebens*]," the feeling of aesthetic displeasure is the feeling of the inhibition of (mental) life (KU, AA 05: 244-245). In other words, the pleasure we feel from the experience of beautiful forms directly brings with it a feeling of the promotion of life. As Kant puts it,

The beautiful in nature concerns the form of the object, which consists in limitation (...): so that the beautiful seems to be taken as the presentation of an indeterminate concept of the understanding, but the sublime as that of a similar concept of reason. Thus the satisfaction is connected in the first case with the representation of quality (...). Also (...) pleasure (...), in that the former (the beautiful) directly brings with it a feeling of the promotion of life [*Gefühl der Beförderung des Lebens*], and hence is compatible with charms and an imagination at play. (KU, AA 05: 244)

If life is the sensible awareness of one's existence, the feeling of the promotion (or

inhibition) of life is the sensible awareness of one's existence in harmony (or disharmony) with one's corporeal body and empirical nature. Consciousness of the harmony between us and empirical nature ultimately grounds the feeling of the promotion of life, which is nothing more than the empirical awareness of nature's conformity with reason's theoretical needs and interest in knowing nature as a system of empirical laws, which would allow us to use this knowledge to preserve our lives both as individuals and as the human species. Since aesthetic pleasure signifies the harmonious relationship between reason's theoretical needs and nature, we can infer that it functions as empirical evidence for the suitability of nature to our subjective purpose, to which Kant refers as the purposiveness of nature [Zweckmäßigkeit] (KU, AA 05: 245). Thanks to aesthetic pleasure, we can judge that empirical nature, despite the diversity of its empirical forms, is not chaotic, but rather lawful and thereby hospitable to our epistemic interest in finding unity within diversity. Since receiving representations that exhibit formal unity promotes the end of theoretical reason, aesthetic experience also promotes our life as cognizant beings. That is why Kant writes that aesthetic pleasure in the beautiful directly brings with it a feeling of the promotion of life (KU, AA 05: 244).

As rational agents, the awareness that nature, despite its apparently limitless, chaotic and destructive powers and monstrous scale, can be comprehended by the theoretical use of our reason and its *a priori* ideas, resulting in the feeling of sublime (KU, AA 05: 252-55). As Kant points out, neither sensibility nor imagination can present the infinity of the sensible world or nature in its entirely through their representations. The supersensible faculty of reason or intellect, on the other hand, can think of both the infinity and totality of nature through its *a priori* idea of "the world" (KU, AA 05: 255). This shows that nature conforms to the end of our theoretical reason to systematize our cognitions, grasp and comprehend nature in its entirety, and use this knowledge of the world for our specific needs and interests. In that sense, the feeling of the sublime, which involves the feeling of reason's ability to think the infinity of nature and comprehend it completely signifies a sense of homecoming for humans, who may hope to make the empirical world their home.¹⁶

As is clear, the feeling of life is the sensible awareness of the activity of our mind or consciousness of the self-organizing activity of our cognitive faculties. While the feeling of life amounts to the feeling of the activity of our sensible and intellectual capacities, Kant also introduces the idea of the feeling of the promotion of life as the feeling that shows the harmony or appropriation between humans and nature. For the feeling of aesthetic pleasure is an indication that we are surrounded by an empirical world that is appropriate for our cognitive needs, namely the theoretical needs of reason. Hence, just as the feeling of *oikeiōsis* allows us to sense the rational order of nature and gain awareness that nature is not foreign to us, the feeling of aesthetic pleasure accompanied by the feeling promotion of life serves as an empirical evidence that nature is a home for us and gives us a sense of belonging to nature, which conforms to our ends.¹⁷

16 Robert Clewis also notes that Kant's account of sublime may be inspired by Stoicism. As Clewis writes "Perhaps drawing from Stoic sources such as Seneca, Kant quickly added that the awareness of our capacity to set and act on goals (specifically moral ones) ultimately redeems us. (...) Kant's claim that the sublime involves recognition of the powers of reason - a claim emphasized in standard interpretations of Kant - can be understood in terms of this third source of the pleasure. It is a kind of homecoming for reason. According to Kant, such recognition of reason counts as an acknowledgment of the rational being's place in the teleological order of reason" (Clewis, 2019, p. 350). Unlike Clewis, on my reading, Kant takes the feeling of aesthetic pleasure and the feeling of the sublime as sensible indications of the harmony between nature and the theoretical reason, as opposed to practical reason.

17 In his article "Self-consciousness and self-care On the Tradition of Oikeiosis in the Modern Age," Reinhard Brandt argues Kant is influenced by the Stoic notion of *oikeiōsis* presented in Cicero's *De finibus*. According to Brandt, Kant takes the harmony between nature and humans, by which he mean *oikeiōsis* with nature, as a precondition for the harmony of our cognitive faculties. Brandt further adds that through the feelings of aesthetic pleasure and sublime we get to love and respect nature for conforming to our needs of life and epistemic needs (Brandt, 2001, p. 89). While I agree with Brandt, by arguing that nature conforms to our epistemic needs and interests, Kant's main objective in the first part of the third *Critique* is to show that we may hope to attain the telos of theoretical reason in the world.

Concluding Remarks

As this paper shows, following Epicurus Kant takes pleasure as an indication of a harmonious state and maintenance of a healthy existence in the form of harmony between one's faculties and one's environment. Moreover, just like Epicurus, who takes the pleasurable state as an indication of the harmonious activity of the different parts of human nature, Kant thinks that, when we experience pleasure we want to remain in that state and similarly avoid the disharmonious state of our faculties.

Just as the Stoic notion of *oikeiōsis*, which refers to the process of becoming aware of and feeling affinity towards ourselves, others and ultimately towards the whole world around us, through the faculty of feeling and its relationship to the faculties of cognition, our body, and nature, we gain sensible awareness of the activities of our mental faculties and their relationship to nature. Being inspired by the Stoic philosophers and their notion of *oikeiōsis*, Kant argues that through the faculty of feeling, we first gain sensible awareness of the harmonious relationship between our cognitive faculties, which constitutes the feeling of life. This primitive self-consciousness then expands to include the harmonious relationship between our cognitive faculties and our body, to which Kant refers to as the feeling of the promotion of life. The feeling of aesthetic pleasure, Kant argues, further indicates the harmony between humans and empirical world. In that regard, aesthetic pleasure is not only an indicator of healthy mental life and the harmony of the intelligible and sensible faculties of the mind, but also an indicator of the harmony between the subject and its environment. Thus, for Kant, the feelings of aesthetic pleasure and aesthetic displeasure inform us about the degree of harmony between our mental faculties and the empirical world. Thanks to the feeling of aesthetic pleasure, we can judge that nature, despite its apparently chaotic and destructive forces, can be comprehended completely by us. Since it conforms to our cognitive interests and the end of our theoretical reason, we can infer that this empirical world promotes the natural development of our mental faculties, and thereby can become a safe haven for human life.¹⁸

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Inflexão Estética e Nova Dicção da Crítica: uma Hermenêutica Reflexiva *Avant la Lèttre*

[*Aesthetic Inflection and New Diction of the Critique: a Reflexive Hermeneutics Avant la Lèttre*]

Virginia Helena Aragones Aita¹

Universidade de São Paulo (São Paulo, Brasil)

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Resumo

Este artigo se propõe a investigar uma perspectiva hermenêutica, afinada com teorias estéticas contemporâneas, nas seções posteriores, §§ 49-60 da *Crítica da faculdade de juízo estético*, *KU* e *EE*. Tratando de qualificar adicionalmente a mera-reflexão e o juízo estético no contraponto da reflexão e função da imaginação que produz os esquemas e conceitos empíricos. Mas ainda, em especificar a reflexão estética como uma interpretação reflexiva, pressuposta e modelada pela estrutura complexa e polissêmica das ideais estéticas nos §§ 49, 51, 58, 59. Interpelando as formulações de Kant, com o argumento de Allison, Longuenesse e Makkreel, para explorar os pontos de interlocução com as estéticas-semânticas de Danto e Rancière.

Palavras-chave: Reflexão estética; expressão; hipotípose simbólica; interpretação reflexiva; hermenêutica.

Abstract

This article aims at investigating a hermeneutic perspective, in tune with contemporary theories, in the later sections, §§ 49-60 of the *Critique of Aesthetic Judgment*, *KU*, and *EE*. Trying to further qualify the mere-reflection and the aesthetic judgment in opposition to the reflection and function of the imagination yielding the empirical schemes and concepts. But still, in specifying the aesthetic reflection as a reflective interpretation, presupposed and modeled by the complex and polysemic structure of the aesthetic ideas in §§ 49, 51, 58, 59. Questioning Kant's formulations, aligned with the argument of Allison, Longuenesse and Makkreel, in order to establish intersections with the aesthetic-semantics of Danto and Rancière.

Keywords: Aesthetic reflection; expression; symbolic hypotyposis; reflective interpretation; hermeneutics.

¹ Virginia Helena Aragones Aita, pós-doutoranda no departamento de filosofia da Universidade de São Paulo (USP), atua como crítica, pesquisadora e curadora de arte, desenvolve pesquisa em Arthur Danto, teoria crítica, crítica de arte e teorias estéticas contemporâneas (Columbia University, NY). E-mail: virgoaita@gmail.com

Atualidade da Crítica da faculdade de juízo estética

A *Crítica da faculdade de julgar estética*² no seu contexto histórico inscreveu-se num espaço intermediário entre a doutrina do sensualismo inglês ou “teoria do sentimento moral” [Common Sense] entre a análise psicológica e a tradição do racionalismo ou “metafísica do belo” com regras objetivas e gêneros fixos, rasurando essa polarização. Esses dois partidos **estéticos** configuram a arena do debate sobre o gosto na primeira metade do século XVIII: por um lado, a escola inglesa representada por Shaftesbury, Burke, Hutcheson e Hume, por outro, o racionalismo francês (Leibniz e Descartes) sobretudo nas figuras de Wolff, Gottsched, Meier, Baumgarten. Partindo de questões centrais que distinguiram a estética judicativa de Kant na KU - compondo reflexão, ‘jogo livre’ e harmonia das faculdades com a intencionalidade do prazer do gosto para constituir um juízo reflexivo estético, que o distancia de seus pares no séc. XVIII, refaço a indagação que primeiro me levou então a investigá-lo. Contudo, agora acrescida de nova complexidade, redimensionada por novas relevâncias suscitados por teorias estéticas e filosofias da arte contemporâneas que, atravessando séculos, se reportam à *Crítica do juízo estético* em genealogias e revisões críticas que a reivindicam, ao mesmo tempo em que a desafiam a restaurar sua ampla latitude.

Qual seja, o que fez da teoria estética de Kant na *Crítica do Juízo estético* um ponto de inflexão, declinando de saberes e costumes consolidados que acenavam ao dogmatismo, reafirmando, pelo contrário, sua índole antropológica, crítica e reflexiva? O que a torna capaz de delimitar a estética como ‘esfera’ independente, não mais subsidiária das legislações do Saber? O que consigna a essa teoria vitalidade e pertinência, tornando-a incontornável a pensadores da arte contemporâneos como Arthur C. Danto e Jacques Rancière que confrontam formalismos excludentes em suas teorias estéticas pautadas no pluralismo e heterogeneidade? E mesmo antes, o que a permitiu desvincilar-se do jugo da teoria do conhecimento à reboque do neokantismo para contrapor-lhe uma hermenêutica - preconizando a circularidade e o significado hermenêutico do jogo em Gadamer (2013, p. 145-82). O que, nesse texto aparentemente descontínuo da KU, passível de leituras conflitantes, de outra parte, constitui a referência inequívoca de teorias contemporâneas que contestam o formalismo modernista numa ‘virada estética’ voltada à diversidade e novas subjetividades?

Não deixa de ser surpreendente que o mesmo deslocamento revisionista que responde a esses questionamentos é o que permite restituir à *Crítica do Juízo estético* sua verdadeira latitude, infletindo a faculdade do Juízo para dar sentido e plausibilidade a um segmento da experiência humana, a *Aisthesis*, subdimensionada como anexo da epistemologia, ou alijado da esfera das razões.

Assim, passa-se em revista pontos chaves da leitura de Allison no seu antológico *Kant's Theory of Taste: A reading of the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment* (2001)³ e discussões posteriores em que refina sua defesa de uma teoria estética com regime próprio para, a seguir, explorar um certo encadeamento de tópicos redirecionando uma leitura: a caracterização da reflexão estética a par da nova concepção da crítica na KU; a função do ‘jogo livre’ como livre interpretação de conteúdos, a harmonia das faculdades cognitivas como síntese não-conceitual resultando em um ‘análogo do esquema’ como padrão formal complexo. Com efeito, esse encadeamento permitirá finalmente qualificar mediante a ‘expressão das ideias estéticas’ uma modalidade ou regime estético na função interpretativa que desempenham nas ideias ou conceitos ‘indetermináveis’ da razão. De modo que, caracterizar esse tipo de interpretação ou apresentação estética é estratégico para distinguir a reflexão indissociável do *modus operandis* da imaginação “espontânea e criadora” (§ 49).

Allison (2010, p. 182-194) corrobora o nosso *partis pris* quando impugna a reflexão

2 Daqui em diante, abreviamos *Crítica da faculdade de juízo estético*, por CJE, e a *Crítica da faculdade do juízo*, por KU.

3 Daqui em diante abreviado como KTT.

como ‘comparação’ orientada à formação de conceitos empíricos omitindo a inflexão estética dessa operação em favor da sistematicidade da natureza como pressuposição necessária do conhecimento empírico. Ou seja, em detrimento da ‘dimensão’ estética da faculdade do juízo e seu regime próprio, ou *heautonomia* que prescinde daquela “subordinação sucessiva”.

Todavia, vale notar, que a ‘mera reflexão’ estética como jogo livre das faculdades cognitivas torna ainda imprescindível o desdobramento subsequente da estrutura da CJE nas seções posteriores ao § 45, passando pela solução da Antinomia do Gosto (§ 57), Idealismo da finalidade formal (KU, § 58) e apresentação (símbólica) de ideias razão (§ 59) desempenhada pelas ideias estéticas (§ 51) redefinindo o regime da reflexão em vista desse modo de apresentação de conceitos indetermináveis, a que própria finalidade, conclusivamente, se subsume (§ 58). Nesse sentido, o argumento de Allison nessa discussão, embora qualifique uma reflexão propriamente estética com base em uma síntese heterodoxa (não-conceitual) da imaginação e seu respectivo produto, ainda não parece suficiente para justificar uma leitura capaz de pôr em relevo as operações judicativas, estéticas e hermenêuticas que efetivamente caracterizam uma leitura da CJE que faça jus à inflexão estética levada a efeito por Kant nessa obra, conferindo uma nova dicção à própria crítica.

Reitera-se, portanto, a recusa de um equacionamento sistemático *simpliciter* mediante o “fio condutor” da *Analítica do Belo* que subdimensiona o argumento das seções posteriores ao § 45, em que Kant elabora a complexa estrutura e amarra o argumento da CJE, imprescindível para qualificar o sentido e a dicção distintiva do juízo reflexivo estético. O que parece implícito numa teoria do gosto, que Allison qualifica como faculdade “apreciativa”, a um tempo reflexiva e sensível, que suspende a decibilidade do conceito em favor da normatividade do gosto (Allison, 2001, p. 8) e circularidade da interpretação reflexiva. Um efeito colateral dessa primazia sistemática seria a abordagem obtusa a que submete a apreciação estética, privilegiando o formalismo da finalidade (*Analítica do Belo*), a *beleza livre* da natureza e o juízo puro de gosto que lhes corresponde. Essa posição incorreu em equívocos como a apropriação tardia por Clement Greenberg desse mesmo juízo para justificar seu formalismo purista (*Modernist Painting*, 1960; *Homemade Aesthetics*, 1981). Já para Allison (KT), confrontar um formalismo estrito circunscrito às ‘belezas livres’ KU, § 16 (excluindo as *belezas dependentes* e a *arte bela* sob o regime do gênio), é justamente compatibilizar essas duas etapas do argumento da CJE, compreendendo *lato sensu* o formalismo da finalidade na *Analítica do Belo* de tal modo que esse seja a condição (não o impedimento) para uma teoria da expressão das ideias estéticas.

Como demonstra a investigação preliminar de Kant sobre os juízos reflexionantes e o princípio da finalidade nas duas introduções, em contrapartida aos juízos determinantes cognitivos, desde sua gênese (Zammito, 1992, p. 17-124)⁴ a KU recusa a designação de doutrina ou tratado do belo para exemplificar o caso paradigmático da reflexão estética em virtude de sua independência das legislações do entendimento e da razão, segundo um princípio próprio que assegura sua *heautonomia*. Ora, é justamente nesse contexto das figuras distintas da reflexão (transcendental, lógica e estética) e respectivas operações que Kant vai equacionar a arquitetônica da KU caracterizando o juízo reflexivo estético e o teleológico como modalidades “meramente reflexivas” da reflexão em geral, tomando o estético como caso “exemplar”, ou seja, sem qualquer componente de determinação que o atrele ao conhecimento.

A ênfase, assim, recai não tanto sobre os ‘quatro momentos’ da *Analítica do Belo* (qualidade, quantidade, relação e modalidade) em que Kant modula e transpõe ao juízo estético a tábua das formas lógicas da *Crítica da razão pura*, segundo esse “fio condutor”, ou mesmo na Dedução em que pretende justificar a exigência de assentimento universal ao juízo de gosto, sua necessidade e universalidade subjetivas com base na pressuposição do conhecimento em geral. Inversamente, trata-se aqui de examinar as seções posteriores à seção § 45, da imaginação

⁴ Zammito elabora uma ‘arqueologia do texto’ da KU com base nas investigações precedentes de Michel Souriau, Wilhelm Windelband, Gerhard Lehmann, James Meredith, em comentários, e fundamentalmente, Giorgio Tonelli que propõe uma análise da cronologia da composição do texto (“*La Formazione*”).

do gênio § 49 e suas ideias estéticas (§ 51) que compõem a solução da *Antinomia do gosto* (§ 57) mediante a distinção transposta da *Dialética* (KrV, B 735) entre conceitos determinados do entendimento (conforme o esquematismo das categorias) e conceitos indetermináveis ou *ideias* da razão⁵ e seus respectivos usos não empíricos. É quando explicita a interpretação reflexiva ou apresentação sensível dessas ideias excluídas da determinação categorial, que Kant qualifica propriamente a operação característica da “mera reflexão estética” ou jogo livre envolvido nos juízos reflexivos estéticos ou juízos de gosto.

Ponto central em que converge esta análise, a especificação da reflexão estética como interpretação reflexiva reporta-se às funções apresentativas da imaginação ‘espontânea e produtiva’ (KU, § 49) e não ‘meramente reprodutiva’, solicitada por ideias que, incapazes de apresentação direta, reportam às *ideias estéticas* que funcionam como análogos de esquemas nos termos de uma apresentação indireta, analógica e simbólica. Desse modo, é somente a partir dos resultados da *Dialética* que se pode configurar uma hermenêutica antecipando as estéticas do sentido contemporâneas, como indicamos a seguir em Danto e Rancière.

No bastidor dessas considerações, trata-se de desenvolver os argumentos oferecidos por Kant que contemplam o duplo aspecto do formalismo e da expressão na CJE que, tradicionalmente, limitou-se ao primeiro na *Analítica do Belo* e *Dedução* favorecendo a narrativa formalista das teorias estéticas e críticas de arte⁶ do séc. XX, contra a qual se voltam as teorias estéticas de Arthur C. Danto e Jacques Rancière. Ou seja, priorizando a dimensão reflexiva da faculdade do juízo, que permite equacionar a *Antinomia do gosto* distinguindo tipos de conceitos com usos diversos (reflexivo ou problemático contraposto ao apodítico), trata-se de destacar o remanejamento de conceitos (como ‘imaginação produtiva do gênio’, § 49; a ‘beleza dependente’ e a arte entendidas como ‘expressão de ideias estéticas’, § 51; ‘idealismo da finalidade’, § 58; e a apresentação analógica de ideias da razão, § 59) que passa a exigir uma hermenêutica-semântica que, finalmente, demonstra o propósito interpretativo do ‘jogo livre’ na ‘reflexão estética’. De modo que essa leitura, alinhada a tópicos de Allison em seu KTT, ao apporte hermenêutico da KU em Rudolf Makkreel, e eventuais interlocutores, se preserva, de uma parte, a estrutura da KU, de outra, desloca a ênfase para essas seções numa abordagem “*developmental*”.

Finalmente, isso nos leva a caracterizar a estrutura e *modus operandis* de ideias estéticas enquanto apresentações da imaginação que funcionam como padrões ‘análogos de esquemas’ cuja função interpretativa incide nos conceitos indetermináveis da razão. Kant pressupõe essa análise a uma hermenêutica reflexiva nos termos da hipotípose simbólica de ideias da razão, via ideias estéticas, perfazendo a última e mais relevante das passagens [*Übergangen*] da KU, qual seja, entre o conteúdo moral de ideias da razão (§ 59) e a apresentação estética que confere sentido àqueles conceitos abstratos, incondicionados.

Juízos “meramente reflexionantes” e irreduzibilidade estética

Ora, a inovação da *Crítica da faculdade do juízo* com relação à *Crítica da razão pura* e obras anteriores é justamente que Kant introduz expressamente a noção de um juízo “meramente” reflexivo, sob a forma dos juízos reflexivos estético e teleológico. Contrapondo-se àquela oposição estrita de juízos reflexionantes e determinantes, estes objetos da investigação da

5 “Por ideia entendo, um conceito necessário da razão, ao qual não pode ser dado nos sentidos nenhum objeto correspondente. Portanto, os nossos conceitos racionais puros, ora considerados, são ideias transcendentais. Eles são conceitos da razão pura pois consideram todo o conhecimento empírico como determinado por uma absoluta totalidade das condições. (...) São, por fim, transcendentais e ultrapassam os limites de toda a experiência (...).” (KrV, B 384).

6 Destacam-se na tradição anglo-americana da crítica de arte alinhada ao formalismo, Roger Fry e Clive Bell, que precedem Clement Greenberg e seus epígonos contemporâneos, Hilton Kramer e Michael Fried.

KrV e aqueles alvo da KU, o próprio Kant indica uma concepção do juízo objetivo em que a reflexão também desempenha um papel decisivo (Longuenesse, 1998, p. 164-5) visto que a aplicação das categorias é inseparável de um processo em parte reflexivo relativo à determinação categorial via esquematismo. Mas além de rasurar a separação estrita entre juízos determinantes e reflexionantes, admitindo uma fase reflexiva implícita nos primeiros, Kant distingue um juízo *meramente reflexivo*, como propõe Longuenesse:

(...) Este qualificador restritivo ['meramente' reflexionante] pretende negar que esses juízos sejam sob qualquer aspecto determinantes; eles são puramente reflexivos. Eles diferem nesse respeito de outros juízos relacionados ao dado sensível, que não são meramente reflexivos, mas também determinantes. (...) Assim, o traço peculiar dos juízos estéticos e teleológicos não é que eles sejam juízos reflexivos (pois todo o juízo sobre objetos empíricos enquanto tal é reflexivo); é antes que eles são meramente reflexivos, juízos nos quais a reflexão nunca pode chegar a uma determinação conceitual. (Longuenesse, 1998, p. 164, cf. nota 46)

Ora, como fica patente na *Primeira Introdução* além do fato de que todo juízo determinante envolve um momento de reflexão, nem toda a reflexão se conclui numa determinação [Bestimmung] delimitando assim juízos que nunca resultam num conceito. Esse é precisamente o caso dos “juízos meramente reflexionantes”, os quais se subdividem em duas espécies – juízos reflexionantes estéticos (sobre o belo e sublime) e reflexionantes teleológicos.

Juízos teleológicos referem-se a “produtos naturais”, os organismos que Kant denomina “fins naturais” (KU, § 65) pois compreendê-los implica necessariamente considerá-los como se fossem produtos de uma causa final cuja causalidade só poderia ser determinada por uma representação prévia do objeto. Por conseguinte, o organismo nos aparece como objeto que se produz a si mesmo, e nesse sentido deve ser referido, ainda que analogicamente, a uma causalidade técnica, uma forma de produção que se exerce referindo a uma representação prévia (produção natural segundo intenções). Esses juízos são “meramente reflexionantes” porque são baseados numa comparação do objeto dado na intuição empírica com a ideia da natureza como sistema. Na medida em que se trata apenas de hipóteses sobre o organismo como totalidade organizada segundo a ideia de um sistema, a finalidade objetiva fica circunscrita à faculdade do juízo em sua *heutonomia* (EEKU, AA 20: 234-243), i.e., legislando para si antes que para a natureza (cf. KU, AA 05: 185-6).

De outra parte, no juízo ‘meramente reflexivo’ estético a finalidade é formal e subjetiva, pois baseia-se num “princípio simplesmente subjetivo”, da “concordância da sua forma [do objeto] com as faculdades de conhecimento na apreensão [*apprehensio*] do mesmo, antes de qualquer conceito”. Contrasta assim nitidamente com a finalidade objetiva de um juízo teleológico que se funda num fim definido como “princípio objetivo”, relacionando a forma do objeto a um conhecimento determinado do objeto (KU, AA 05: VIII, XLIX). Aqui a faculdade do juízo reflexiva é ainda coadjuvante do conhecimento empírico, pois com suas hipóteses pensa o que o entendimento finito em suas determinações mecânicas deixa indeterminado.

Mas justamente no juízo estético, que dispensa qualquer outro princípio que não a própria faculdade de julgar, a questão é mais complexa, visto que se trata de saber de que modo juízos não lógicos, e assim não determinantes, podem ser ‘meramente’ reflexivos. Isso nos remete àquela caracterização geral da *Primeira Introdução* que tomamos para explicar a reflexão lógica com vistas à formação de conceitos:

Refletir [*Überlegen*] é comparar e manter juntas representações dadas seja com outras, seja com sua faculdade de conhecimento, em referência a um conceito tornado possível através disso. A faculdade de juízo reflexivo [*Urteilskraft*] é o que denominamos [*Beurteilungvermögen*] a capacidade de julgar [*facultas dijudicandi*]” (EEKU, AA 20: 211).

O problema é então saber se essa caracterização é igualmente capaz de explicar outros tipos de reflexão, mas sobretudo, a “mera reflexão” no juízo reflexivo estético. Segundo Allison (2001,

p. 45), o que essa caracterização geral de reflexão autoriza a inferir é que o objeto da reflexão é sempre o produto de representações dadas, consistindo essencialmente na comparação dessas representações. Primeiro dirigida à formação de conceitos e subdividida em duas espécies, uma reflexão que compara representações umas com as outras (buscando aspectos comuns), outra que as compara com a respectiva faculdade (reflexão transcendental). Esse sentido de “reflexão em geral” aplica-se, portanto, à reflexão lógica, à reflexão transcendental e ao juízo teleológico (que envolve comparação da intuição empírica de certos objetos, organismos, com a ideia de sistematicidade visando a classificação destes num conceito empírico).

No entanto, a reflexão estética que não visa um conceito resulta em um caso *sui generis*: ainda remete à comparação de representações dadas, e assim como a reflexão transcendental implica uma comparação com as faculdades cognitivas na “apreensão”, mas em contraste com essas reflexões não visa um conceito, nem por princípio nem por fim. Pelo contrário, o que resulta da reflexão estética não é um conceito, mas um sentimento correlato da harmonia das faculdades como um estado mental subjetivamente conforme a fins. De modo que, mais que nos demais momentos da Analítica do Belo, é a “qualidade” que essencialmente o distingue, consignada a um prazer intencional, apreciativo, que “funda uma faculdade de distinção e ajuizamento inteiramente peculiar, que em nada contribui para o conhecimento, mas somente mantém a representação dada no sujeito em relação com a inteira faculdade de representações...” (KU, §1) sendo, *ipso facto*, irredutível à ordem discursiva.

‘Jogo livre’ das faculdades e harmonia como ‘síntese não conceitual’

Uma caracterização suficiente da natureza estética, como a diferença específica do juízo ‘meramente reflexionante’ numa dicção ou uso distintivo da linguagem (análogo, simbólico) requer ainda qualificar adicionalmente operações envolvidas na ‘mera reflexão’ estética ou jogo livre num juízo reflexivo estético. Examina-se aqui, como um “jogo livre” de imaginação e entendimento é capaz de produzir uma harmonia diversa da relação cognitiva por meio de uma síntese ‘não conceitual’. Muito embora Kant aproxime a reflexão estética ou jogo livre das faculdades à condição pressuposta ao conhecimento empírico dada a relação entre conceitualização (*Log*, § 6) e validade universal, é antes o contraste entre essas duas operações parcialmente isomórficas que é significativo, já que não se trata de juízos lógicos subsumindo predicados num uso descritivo.

De outra parte, a noção de *harmonia* ou *acordo recíproco das faculdades*, como Kant já indica em outros textos⁷, é invariavelmente consequência de uma **síntese** e unidade formal resultante que, originariamente, refere-se ao conhecimento como determinação judicativa do múltiplo da intuição sob conceitos do entendimento. A unidade do múltiplo da intuição no conceito de um objeto sempre requer uma síntese mediante regras *a priori* arregimentadas nas formas da sensibilidade, formas lógicas do juízo, categorias, conceitos, esquemas e princípios do entendimento. No juízo estético, no entanto, deve-se encontrar um acordo sem conceitos, adequado ao “conhecimento em geral”, mas sem envolver determinação [*Bestimmung*] segundo regras pré-estabelecidas, pois aqui as faculdades da imaginação e entendimento literalmente encontram-se em um *jogo livre*.

A harmonia estética é o que as faculdades buscam encontrar no curso do seu jogo livre, e, portanto, não coincide com ele, tampouco o ultrapassa como conhecimento de objetos, mas dele resulta quando esse jogo é bem-sucedido. A harmonia serve assim de medida estética, um sintoma do belo. O que nos leva a conceber o livre jogo das faculdades cognitivas como uma

7 Refiro aqui aos escritos de 1790-91. Cf. Kant, I. *Sur une découverte selon laquelle toute nouvelle critique de la raison pure serait rendue superflue par une plus ancienne* (AA VIII 249-50; (trad. Francesa) Pléiade II, 1987), publicado próximo à Crítica da faculdade do juízo.

tentativa de síntese que, no caso de ser bem-sucedida, produz um ‘acordo sem conceito’ ou harmonia das faculdades que não resulta num conhecimento, mas é percebida reflexivamente como prazer estético e asserida em um juízo de gosto. Ou seja, essa harmonia só poderá ser a consequência da unificabilidade do múltiplo sensível sob uma ‘regra não determinada’, como um ato de síntese cuja regra de unidade não é, portanto, um conceito do entendimento, mas um tipo de norma indeterminada ou padrão distinto (§ 10, uma finalidade formal subjetiva).

Parece assim fundamental distinguir o *jogo livre* da harmonia das faculdades cognitivas, visto que nele as faculdades interagem livremente, variando aspectos, descrições do objeto, numa tentativa de obter um *acordo recíproco* ou harmonia que resulta de uma combinatória de descrições possíveis. Fazer de um objeto sensível o objeto de uma experiência estética, o correlato de um juízo reflexivo estético, implica em entrar em um jogo livre das faculdades em que uma multiplicidade de aspectos e representações desse objeto são considerados, sem serem determinados sob uma única descrição. A harmonia das faculdades, pelo contrário, é o correlato de um certo arranjo numa estrutura formal ou forma indeterminada (finalidade formal sem fim) que resulta desse percurso errático e recorrente da reflexão.

Ora, o que supostamente torna essa síntese autenticamente estética é precisamente a regra de síntese em questão. Por conseguinte, essa tentativa de caracterizar a reflexão estética como uma **síntese** com base no acordo recíproco das faculdades sem determinação de conceito, mas apenas uma adequação ao conhecimento em geral se mostra insuficiente (§ 9). Admitir a identidade da condição do conhecimento empírico (conceitualização empírica) com a harmonia à base do juízo estético, uma vez que ambas se baseiam numa reflexão como “comparação”, infligiria a natureza estética desse juízo que não resulta num conhecimento objetivo, mas num sentimento como ‘sintoma’ de uma outra ordem da representação, que não se subordina à ordem discursiva.

Não obstante, até aqui nada distingue satisfatoriamente o ‘acordo’ especificamente estético. Assim como Guyer (1979, p. 79-90), que rejeita a identificação da condição pressuposta ao conhecimento empírico com aquela à base do juízo estético (§ 9, § 29), Ralf Meerbote (1982, p. 59) adverte que se ficamos restritos à apreensão, a forma estética consistiria “nas características invariantes do múltiplo apreendido” que são também condição do conhecimento empírico, do que se seguiria a consequência inaceitável de que todo o objeto dado na percepção é, *ipso facto*, belo. Será então por remeter ao passo seguinte do argumento da *Analítica do Belo*, a finalidade sem fim (KU § 10, § 11) como único princípio operante nesse juízo que Kant nos fornece o elemento para caracterização do jogo livre (reflexão estética) como síntese estética. Ou seja, de modo a qualificar esse acordo ou harmonia estética segundo uma regra de unidade formal não conceitual. Assim, Kant caracteriza essa reflexão mediante uma síntese estética, ou melhor, uma tentativa de síntese visando uma harmonia que pode ou não ter êxito e se concluir num juízo de gosto, ao caracterizar uma harmonia própria ao juízo estético (“acordo sem conceito”). Finalmente, pode-se compreender a noção de harmonia ou “acordo sem conceito” em termos de uma síntese estética que tem como regra nada senão uma finalidade formal ou sem fim (§ 10, § 11) que a seguir vai se qualificar na solução da Antinomia do Gosto como um “conceito indeterminado” (§ 57) e único princípio do juízo reflexivo estético.

A imaginação estética “esquematiza sem conceito”

Na etapa argumentativa seguinte, esse princípio da faculdade do juízo, aparece equacionado à regra de unidade formal que preside a síntese estética caracterizada como “esquematização sem conceitos”, ou seja, a produção pela imaginação de padrões sensíveis ou regras da apreensão em um padrão análogo ao esquema [*schema-like pattern*] (Allison, 2001, p. 50). Assim, ao afirmar que “a liberdade da imaginação consiste em que esta esquematiza sem

conceitos” (§ 35), Kant justamente qualifica a peculiaridade dessa síntese pelo tipo de regra e tipo de esquema envolvidos no juízo “meramente reflexivo” estético.

Deve-se observar que na reflexão lógica, a conceitualização requerida para o conhecimento empírico resulta ainda de uma reflexão subsequente (“reportar a conceitos”) sobre uma “ordem ou estrutura prévia inscrita no sensível pela síntese (cega) da imaginação” (Allison, 2001, p. 26). O que implica que é possível ter um esquema (regra da apreensão) anterior e independentemente de dispormos de um conceito formado, ou antes mesmo da representação desse padrão num conceito *refletido* (*representatio discursiva*) e *universal*. Isso é que vai nos permitir distinguir diferentes espécies de coisas com base em ‘padrões’ e ‘aspectos estruturais percebidos’ (esquemas pré-conceituais), sem, contudo, já reconhecer aí notas características de conceitos empíricos desses objetos.

Portanto, a despeito da similaridade entre *reflexão lógica* e *reflexão estética* concebidas nos termos de uma ‘reflexão a partir de dados sensíveis’, e fundadas na mesma operação do Juízo (a “capacidade de encontrar universais para particulares dados”, KU, XXIV) as diferenças são notáveis. Primeiro, porque a reflexão estética não supõe um conceito nem por princípio, nem por fim - não visa absolutamente a formação de conceitos empíricos. De modo geral, porque a esquematização empírica implica necessariamente ‘conceitos de comparação’ e formas lógicas dirigidas à produção de um conceito, se distingue assim da “esquematização sem conceito” (§ 35) envolvida na reflexão estética, com respeito ao tipo de regra, tipo de unidade, espécie de esquema e representação resultante.

Segundo Allison (2001, p. 46), essa diferença específica se localiza precisamente na *Primeira Introdução*, VII, em que Kant caracteriza a correlação das operações da imaginação e entendimento no juízo reflexivo estético em contraste com os atos lógicos envolvidos no juízo cognitivo. Mas, o que põe em relevo é o fato desse princípio distinto - a finalidade formal - ser o único princípio operante nessa reflexão e visando unicamente a “percepção interna de uma finalidade das representações” (EEKU, AA 20: 220), ou seja, a simples forma de uma finalidade espelhando uma harmonia estética.

Kant vai contrastar, nessa seção, os ‘atos lógicos’ ou condições necessárias da faculdade do juízo (apreensão, compreensão, exposição) num juízo cognitivo com aquelas pressupostas num juízo “meramente reflexionante” (apreensão que coincide com a exposição de um conceito qualquer) que se resolve sem envolver uma determinação conceitual subsequente. Segundo essa descrição, um juízo empírico implica em três atos: apreensão [*apprehensio*] do diverso na intuição; compreensão (unidade sintética da consciência desse diverso no conceito de um objeto); exposição [*exhibitio*] do objeto correspondente a esse conceito na intuição. Kant significa com isso que o conhecimento empírico primeiro requer uma síntese do múltiplo da intuição ao ser apreendido, ou seja, a síntese da apreensão, que constitui parte da síntese tripla (KrV, A 103). Segundo ele deve ser conceitualizado, e por meio disso, referido à *unidade objetiva da apercepção* mediante conceitos do entendimento. A última condição - a exposição do conceito - expressa a exigência de que a todo conceito deva corresponder um análogo na intuição, uma interpretação sensível adequada que assegure a relação da representação ao objeto.

Não obstante, na *comparação*, essa conexão ao sensível parece ser, primeiro, explicada nos termos da *formação de conceitos empíricos* como reflexão sobre o múltiplo apreendido (“comparação sob condições sensíveis”) que gera não apenas conceitos empíricos, mas também os seus esquemas num mesmo ato de reflexão. Ora, nesse ponto Kant está interessado nas operações implícitas num juízo determinante em que a imaginação atua na apreensão do múltiplo como base para a reflexão produzir conceitos empíricos, uma vez que apenas “aquilo que é universal na regra da apreensão”, i.e., os esquemas empíricos (“apresentação de um conceito ainda indeterminado”) são aqui comparados. Essa é, portanto, a condição necessária para termos esquemas e conceitos empíricos e a sua subsequente determinação em juízos cognitivos.

Contudo, Kant pretende esclarecer nesse contraponto a harmonia das faculdades cognitivas no “juízo meramente reflexivo” estético que não visa a formação de um conceito determinado, tampouco um conhecimento. Assim explica essa assimetria observando, na *Primeira Introdução*, que, “(...) na mera percepção não se trata de um conceito determinado, mas de modo geral somente da regra para refletir sobre uma percepção em função do entendimento como uma faculdade dos conceitos” (EEKU, AA 20: 220). A regra envolvida na “mera reflexão” (Allison, 2001, p. 49) só poderá ser procurada naquilo que é percebido, a que temos acesso extra conceitual, que previamente e independente de qualquer conceitualização ou ‘comparação universalizante’ com outras percepções ainda se apresenta como contendo algo “universal em si”.

Ou seja, como *regra da apreensão* ou um ‘análogo do esquema’, e não mais um “conceito ainda não determinado”, pois em princípio nenhum conceito resulta como produto dessa reflexão. Trata-se, portanto, de um ‘esquema de esquema’ ou “padrão análogo ao esquema” [*schema-like pattern*] (Allison, 2001, p. 49), pois embora se apresente estruturado segundo uma regra, nenhuma regra particular pode ser especificada. Resta então explicar no que consiste a comparação envolvida nesse juízo. Se toda a reflexão envolve comparação entre representações visando identificar traços comuns (notas características), exceto a “mera reflexão” estética, em que consiste essa comparação, e o que é aqui comparado?

(...) vê-se bem que em um juízo meramente reflexionante, imaginação e entendimento são considerados na proporção em que têm de estar no juízo em geral em relação um ao outro, comparada com a proporção em que efetivamente estão numa percepção dada. (EEKU, AA 20: 220)

Allison (2001, p. 49-50) admite com Kant que na mera reflexão estética se compara a relação atual das faculdades cognitivas, na percepção de um objeto, com um *maximum* ou relação ideal - a harmonia pressuposta no juízo cognitivo (determinação ou subsunção). Pode-se ainda assinalar essa comparação (entre apreensão e apresentação) implícita no ato de asserir, através do sentimento, se a forma de um objeto produz ou não harmonia na mera reflexão. Com efeito, nessa caracterização da comparação própria do juízo reflexivo estético é onde Kant faz a conexão entre harmonia das faculdades, a forma do objeto da reflexão e a finalidade subjetiva.

Ora, Kant afirma que a harmonia, num juízo meramente reflexionante, é somente o estado mental em que imaginação e entendimento funcionam em conformidade. Enquanto na reflexão lógica, a imaginação sob a direção do entendimento fornece um conteúdo apreendido como esquema enquanto apresentação de “um conceito ainda não determinado”, na reflexão estética, esse estado mental corresponde à norma requerida para o conhecimento em geral sem constituir um conhecimento, mas somente impelir o entendimento a capturar a regra ou forma que subjaz a esse conteúdo apreendido num análogo do esquema, que instiga a imaginação a apresentá-lo diversamente, em tantos aspectos quantos forem possíveis. É nesse sentido que as duas faculdades se estimulam reciprocamente em sua atividade de maneira indeterminada (em jogo livre), sublinha Allison,

(...) é somente que na mera reflexão envolvida num juízo de gosto, a imaginação não exibe o esquema de um conceito específico sob o qual um objeto é subsumido num juízo de conhecimento determinante. Ao contrário, ela exibe um padrão ou ordem (forma) que sugere um número indeterminado de possíveis esquematizações (ou conceitualizações), nenhuma das quais sendo totalmente adequada, ocasionando assim uma reflexão e um envolvimento contínuo com objeto. (Allison, 2001, p. 51)

Podemos assim dizer que é uma síntese enquanto “esquematização sem conceito” que Kant caracteriza ao aplicar num juízo reflexivo estético aqueles mesmos atos que refere no juízo empírico, com a diferença que aqui apreensão e apresentação coincidem, pois a regra de unidade não é senão uma finalidade “sem fim” que só pode ser percebida esteticamente, pelo sentimento de prazer. Até então, essa explicação ainda não parece conclusiva para o que propomos de início, e como já indica a *démarche* da solução de Kant, devemos remeter à etapa seguinte do argumento

da CJE. Trata-se de uma elaboração subsequente do problema da apresentação caracterizando as operações envolvidas nesses ‘quase-esquemas’ equacionados a *ideias estéticas* que funcionam como símbolos de ideias da razão, KU, § 49, § 51, § 59 qualificando, em última instância, o que Kant entende por uma apresentação estética como produto da reflexão e imaginação sob o regime do gênio.

Hermenêutica reflexiva e apresentação estética das ideias da imaginação

Como expomos até aqui, ao analisar a reflexão estética, o jogo livre das faculdades e a harmonia que produz uma “síntese sem conceitos” num análogo do esquema que não se determina numa descrição definida, mas em um padrão que relaciona um número indefinido de possíveis descrições e esquematizações implica a recorrência dessa reflexão que nunca se conclui num conceito, predispondo nesses temas da CJE uma leitura com base no “círculo hermenêutico” caracterizado na hermenêutica filosófica de Gadamer:

Em princípio compreender é sempre mover-se em círculos, e por isso é essencial o constante retorno do todo às partes e vice-versa. À isso se acrescenta que este círculo está sempre se ampliando, já que o conceito do todo é relativo, e a integração de cada coisa em nexos cada vez maiores afeta também a sua compreensão. (Gadamer, 2013, p. 245)

De outra parte, fazendo retroagir a abordagem hermenêutica à Kant numa elaboração ampliada que se desdobra em vários autores como Dilthey, Heidegger, Gadamer, Hegel, Royce e Kant (Makkreel, 2015) extrapolando o escopo aqui tratado, torna-se possível compreender a perspectiva crítica da filosofia transcendental em Kant como um projeto de hermenêutica crítica. O autor que exploramos para elucidar a questão da expressão ou ‘esquematização estética’ como ‘interpretação reflexiva’ das *ideias estéticas*, Rudolf A. Makkreel (1999, p. 111-129), propõe, mais recentemente, uma concepção orientacional e reflexiva da interpretação (2015) na qual o juízo desempenha um papel central, investigando, além das abordagens dialógicas dominantes na hermenêutica contemporânea, o uso diagnóstico do juízo reflexivo como orientação nos vários contextos de significado em que situa sua interpretação. De modo geral, o pensamento transcendental de Kant passa a ser o modelo usado para repensar a hermenêutica como investigação crítica sobre as condições contextuais apropriadas de compreensão e interpretação. Uma tarefa decisiva da crítica hermenêutica é, assim, estabelecer prioridades entre os contextos que podem ser usados na interpretação da história e da cultura.

Considerando que para Kant, a imaginação é ao mesmo tempo a faculdade da apresentação, ou interpretação sensível de conceitos e ideias abstratas e uma capacidade de superar os limites do entendimento discursivo, uma ampla investigação de suas operações é central para se pensar os termos de uma hermenêutica. Assim, a interpretação deve lidar com os limites do entendimento discursivo remetendo à imaginação como faculdade mediadora, unicamente capaz de relacionar o que é dado diretamente na experiência sensível com aquilo que só representamos indiretamente.

A abordagem hermenêutica dos textos de Kant, como propõe Makkreel (2015), demonstra o potencial interpretativo da imaginação no âmbito da teoria do juízo reflexivo nas duas introduções à KU, e ainda, reporta-se tanto à epistemologia da KpV quanto à teoria estética da KU (§ 49, § 59) comparando juízos reflexionantes e determinantes, interpretação reflexiva e sistemática, os distintos modos do esquematismo/apresentação ou das sínteses da imaginação e suas regras. Acima de tudo, Makkreel (2015, p. 1-6) reitera que, ao contrário das regras do entendimento e arquétipos que regulam o juízo determinante, aqueles que regulam o juízo reflexionante são apenas normas indeterminadas e flexíveis, características da situação

hermenêutica. O que o leva a articular uma hermenêutica a partir dessa função essencialmente mediadora que é a imaginação, mas pontificando a distinção da *imaginação estética* em seu produto, operações e regras da imaginação da KrV, lhe permite abrir uma outra perspectiva da imaginação e do juízo reflexivo em Kant, sem tomá-los como derivativos do juízo cognitivo e da imaginação sujeita às leis do entendimento em suas sínteses.

Mas o que se considera peça central nessa abordagem é, sobretudo, o que denomina a ‘esquematização estética’ (Makkreel, 2002, p. 239) das ideias da razão em que se configura propriamente uma hermenêutica reflexiva ao caracterizar o processo de sua apresentação sensível como expressão, e as diferentes operações e funções interpretativas desempenhadas pelas *ideias estéticas* como sucedâneos dos esquemas, “quase-esquemas” que qualificam o que primeiro caracteriza como “síntese não conceitual da imaginação” (§ 35, *Observação geral primeira seção da Analítica*, 69).

Teoria da expressão e a apresentação simbólica de ideias da razão

A expressão de ideias estéticas, como ‘apresentações da imaginação’ que passam a caracterizar esse ‘análogo do esquema’, serve como substituto da exibição lógica de ideias da razão, e nos leva a examinar na *Crítica da faculdade de juízo estética* o que se poderia considerar uma complexa hermenêutica na sua teoria da expressão. Sobretudo, porque a apresentação simbólica de ideias da razão, presumindo a autonomia do gosto, se vale da própria natureza e estrutura dessas ideias estéticas para explicar o isomorfismo da reflexão em que essa se baseia. Mas ainda, porque a teoria da expressão dessas ideias constitui uma peça central da sua teoria do gosto, que não só complementa a simbolização, mas resolve o problema da conexão entre o jogo livre das faculdades e o prazer do gosto, um prazer da reflexão em que uma forma só me faz senti-lo ao pôr imaginação e entendimento em jogo livre. Como ‘estimulação recíproca’ das faculdades cognitivas esse jogo livre ou reflexão estética “dá muito a pensar sem que, contudo, qualquer pensamento determinado, um conceito, possa ser-lhe adequado” (KU, § 49). Ou seja, precisamente como Kant define nesse § 49 o modo como se processa a *expressão de ideias estéticas*.

Esse modo de apresentação associado às ideias estéticas, invariavelmente, nos remete à imaginação do gênio como a “faculdade de apresentação de ideias estéticas”, sob cujo regime a imaginação é “criadora e põe em movimento a faculdade de ideias intelectuais (a razão)” (KU, § 49). Na medida em que redefine a função apresentativa relativa aos conceitos “indemonstráveis” da razão (KU, § 57) como apresentação simbólica, a imaginação não mais se acha subordinada às leis da associação, ou à semântica dos conceitos do entendimento da *Analítica dos Princípios*.

Para dar conta dessa apresentação estética que confina na expressão, Kant primeiro introduz o conceito de gênio (KU, § 46) para resolver o paradoxo que define a *arte bela [schöne Kunst]* (KU, § 45), aquilo de que temos consciência que é arte, mas que “livre da coerção de regras arbitrárias” parece natureza, ou seja, um produto intencional que, todavia, aparece como objeto de uma finalidade sem fim. A arte bela dissimula a intenção que a gerou como um “mero espetáculo da natureza”. Contudo, insiste, “sem uma regra que o anteceda um produto jamais pode chamar-se arte” (KU, § 46), de modo que o gênio, como condição de possibilidade da arte bela, deve especificar alguma regra que prescinda de determinação conceitual, o que faz dele um “talento para produzir aquilo para o qual não se pode fornecer nenhuma regra determinada” (KU, § 46).

Assim, só pode ser uma regra “indeterminada”, não preceito universal, mas apenas uma “regra exemplar”. Por isso, Kant qualifica uma regra que serve somente como modelo, e não regra de produção (conceito da estrutura e organização do objeto). No § 48 da KU, distingue o gosto como faculdade de ajuizamento, do gênio como faculdade produtiva e *ipso facto*,

condição de possibilidade da obra bela. É o gênio que leva a efeito a passagem das condições do ajuizamento às condições de produção, e vice-versa: da finalidade técnica que engendra a obra como produto intencional a uma finalidade sem fim que a converte em signo estético, passando da arte mecânica à arte estética, da poiética [*poiesis*] à poética, da *techne* à expressão.

Mas não é senão da perspectiva da análise das *ideias estéticas* que o gênio se redefine como capacidade que reúne as condições da *expressão*, ou seja, de “expressar o inefável no estado de ânimo por ocasião de uma *certa representação* e torná-la comunicável” (KU, § 49). Uma faculdade de “apresentação de ideias estéticas” que implica descobrir ideias para um dado conceito e expressá-las, “apreender o jogo fugaz da imaginação e reuni-lo num conceito que pode ser, então, comunicado sem a coerção de regras determinadas (e justamente por isso é original e inaugura uma nova regra ...” (KU, § 49). A “originalidade exemplar” do gênio, inferindo de “modelos” que são “exemplares”, regras indeterminadas não prescritivas, consiste precisamente nesta apresentação das ideias estéticas (cf. Allison, 2001, p. 285; Makkreel, 2015, p. 119). Kant, ainda, investiga o *modus operandi* dessa imaginação ‘espontânea e produtiva’, sob esse regime estético:

A faculdade da imaginação (enquanto faculdade de conhecimento produtiva) é mesmo muito poderosa na criação como que de outra natureza a partir da matéria que a natureza efetiva lhe dá. Entretemo-nos com ela sempre que a experiência parece-nos demasiado trivial; e também a remodelamos ... segundo leis analógicas, mas contudo também segundo princípios que se situam mais acima na razão (...); neste caso sentimos nossa liberdade da lei da associação (a qual é inerente ao uso empírico daquela faculdade) (...) na verdade tomamos emprestado da natureza a matéria, a qual porém pode ser reelaborada por nós para algo diverso, a saber, para aquilo que ultrapassa a natureza. (KU, § 49)

Nesses termos o procedimento da imaginação resulta em uma *ideia estética* como seu produto final. Ao descrevê-la como uma capacidade de “*criar como que outra natureza a partir da matéria que a natureza efetiva lhe dá*”, Kant caracteriza a atividade da imaginação como o processamento dos *data* da intuição sensível numa ordem diversa que não corresponde à ordem conceitual da experiência, mas antes, toma seus dados sensíveis para “remodelá-la segundo leis analógicas” em algo muito diverso que ultrapassa a natureza (KU, § 49). Precisamente, em apresentações indiretas, simbólicas, de ideias transcendentes da razão (suprassensível). Não se trata, assim, de uma criação *ex nihilo* da imaginação produzindo imagens cujo conteúdo independe do *input* dos sentidos (Allison, 2001, p. 51). Já na Antropologia Kant adverte: “Não importa quão grande seja o artista, e quão sedutora a imaginação, ela ainda não é criadora, mas deve obter o material para suas imagens dos sentidos” (Anth, §28). Tampouco a imaginação criativa (“espontânea e produtiva”) é inconsistente com essa afirmação, já que pressupõe a matéria dos sentidos pois elabora sobre uma natureza dada. Esclarecendo essa passagem, Rudolf Makkreel distingue o que Kant significa por uma imaginação ‘criativa’ indicando, justamente, sua capacidade transformativa de reconfigurar analógica e metaforicamente a experiência sensível. Assinala nesse propósito que:

A criação envolvida em uma ideia estética não é uma *Urbildung*, ou formação original, mas um tipo de *Umbildung*, ou processo transformativo. Através da criação de uma outra natureza pela imaginação “nós transformamos [*bilden um*] a experiência” (KU, § 49) conforme leis analógicas e princípios situados mais acima na razão. No processo de transformação a imaginação é liberada das leis da associação “de modo que segundo ela tomamos da natureza a matéria que pode então ser reelaborada por nós para algo diverso, aquilo que ultrapassa a natureza. (Makkreel, 1990, p. 120)⁸

Ora, é justamente ao redimensionar a imaginação sob o regime do gênio como um “processo transformativo” que Kant define no que consistem as ideias estéticas como “apresentações da imaginação”, na medida em que “reelaboram a matéria da natureza” e exorbitam os conceitos

⁸ Makkreel observa ainda que Kant usa a locução “ultrapassa a natureza”, tanto para ideias da razão quanto para ideias estéticas, ainda que o faça de modos distintos, visto que “ideias racionais transcendem a natureza, enquanto ideias estéticas a ultrapassam por transformar e enriquecer a experiência” (1990).

do entendimento:

Por ideia estética entendo, porém, aquela representação da faculdade da imaginação que dá muito a pensar sem que contudo qualquer pensamento determinado, i.e., conceito, possa ser-lhe adequado (...). Vê-se facilmente que ela é a contrapartida de uma ideia da razão, que inversamente é um conceito ao qual nenhuma intuição (representação da faculdade da imaginação) pode ser adequada. (KU, § 49)

Caracteriza então essas ideias estéticas como a *contrapartida* das ideias da razão, já que ambas são ideias, embora de modos distintos (referindo uma à intuição, outra a um conceito, KU, § 57), são transcendentes pois envolvem uma totalização estendendo-se além dos limites da experiência na busca de um incondicionado, não constituindo conhecimento de objetos. Essas representações da imaginação podem chamar-se ‘ideias’, primeiro, “porque pelo menos aspiram a algo situado acima dos limites da experiência, e assim procuram aproximar-se de uma *apresentação dos conceitos da razão*” (KU, § 49). Assim, exercem com respeito às ideias da razão uma função mediadora e interpretativa como apresentações sensíveis funcionando como substituto de esquemas. Segundo, “principalmente porque nenhum conceito pode ser plenamente adequado a elas enquanto intuições internas” (Allison, 2001, p. 257), são inexponíveis, ou seja, transcendem a experiência possível na medida em que visam um incondicionado.

Kant precisa que a tentativa dessas ideias de expressar um conteúdo incondicionado, e estender-se a um máximo ou ao suprassensível como no seu exemplo do poeta, não se restringe à poesia [*Dichtkunst*], mas como indica alhures, se generaliza como impulso [*Dichtungstrieb*] ou pulsão poética à pintura, arquitetura, composição e mesmo à metafísica.⁹ A ideia estética, tal como Kant a descreve, comporta um excesso de material sensível, um conteúdo (empírico) não elaborado e associado a um conceito que, todavia, não pode ser subsumido e determinado sob o mesmo numa descrição definida, e assim extravasa os limites da objetividade para compor uma ordem mais complexa e indeterminada, incorporando elementos contingentes. Nessas ideias, a imaginação apresenta mais conteúdo do que poderia ser descrito num conceito - uma pluralidade indefinida de possíveis descrições e conceitualizações. Nas palavras de Kant, isso significa que

se liga a uma tal multiplicidade de representações parciais no uso livre das mesmas, que não pode encontrar para ela nenhuma expressão que designa um conceito determinado, a qual permite pensar de um conceito muita coisa de inexpressível (KU, § 49).

Com isso, a expressão, ao contrário da ‘mera representação’ ou designação além de representar, *expressa* algo sobre este conteúdo na medida em que desloca contextos e simboliza. Ou seja, apresenta indiretamente mediante analogias, ou transferências da reflexão, usando *atributos estéticos* associados ao conceito para expandir metaforicamente ou expressar algo sobre o mesmo. De resto, essa caracterização da expressão nos fornece os elementos que permitirão traçar a seguir, um paralelo com a perspectiva semântica e metafórica de uma ‘estética do sentido’ em Danto, que não só pressupõe como condição necessária da arte uma interpretação, mas ainda, uma operação transformativa (transfiguração) que a constitui, no intuito de compreender as estruturas retóricas *intensionais* que modulam o sentido da representação artística. Trata-se, assim, de examinar de que modo funcionam as ideias estéticas, sobretudo, considerando sua estrutura enquanto representação complexa que permite caracterizar a expressão como função interpretativa da reflexão.

⁹ “O poeta ousa tornar sensíveis ideias racionais (...) transcendendo as barreiras da experiência mediante uma faculdade da imaginação que pretende competir com o jogo [*Vorspiel*] da razão no alcance de um máximo (...). É propriamente na poesia que a faculdade de ideias estéticas se mostra em sua inteira medida” (KU, § 49,197).

Estrutura das ideias estéticas e o processo de “interpretação reflexiva”

A expressão de ideias estéticas (KU, § 49), fundamentalmente um modo de apresentação que substitui a “exposição lógica de um conceito”, consiste propriamente em uma expansão estética de um conceito central (ideia racional) através de *atributos estéticos* – expressões que “não constituem a apresentação de um conceito dado, mas somente expressam, enquanto representações secundárias da imaginação, as consequências conectadas a ele e o parentesco do conceito com outros” (KU, § 49). Ou seja, trata-se aqui de representações que não equivalem a notas características, pois segundo Kant:

não representam como atributos lógicos aquilo que se situa no conceito (...) mas algo diverso que dá ensejo à faculdade da imaginação de alastrar-se por um grande número de representações afins... (KU, § 49).

Portanto, a *expressão* entendida nos termos do jogo livre ou analógica da imaginação faz um uso estético, i.e., metafórico (“como se”) do meio ou forma das representações para expressar algo sobre o conceito racional que ultrapassa seu sentido lógico, ou seja, “remodela segundo leis analógicas e princípios situados, mais acima, na razão” ultrapassando a natureza. (KU, § 49). É, portanto, a análise de mecanismos interpretativos e operações implícitas na *ideia estética* como representação complexa que permite compreender a apresentação simbólica. Assim a noção de *atributos estéticos* como representações associadas a um conceito é a chave para explicitar a estrutura e funcionamento da ideia estética. Precisamente, ao tratar desses *atributos*, Kant esclarece como uma ideia estética interpreta e *ipso facto* apresenta o conteúdo de uma ideia racional:

Aquelas formas que não constituem a apresentação de um conceito dado, mas somente expressam, enquanto representações secundárias da faculdade da imaginação, as consequências conectadas com ele e o parentesco do conceito com outros, são chamados atributos estéticos de um objeto, cujo conceito, enquanto ideia da razão, não pode ser apresentado adequadamente. (KU, § 49)

Esses atributos têm aqui apenas um uso atributivo, bem entendido, não como predicados lógicos, descriptivos, mas segundo um uso retórico, metafórico dessas representações que assim constituem a expressão daquele conceito como apresentação indireta e simbólica. O que significa que atributos estéticos só representam indiretamente, elipticamente o conceito, bem como outras ideias racionais na medida em que não contribuem senão para “vivificar”, emprestar significado sensível a conceitos que, de outro modo, permaneceriam noções abstratas. Nesse sentido, podemos considerar a função interpretativa das ideias estéticas ao aproximarem ideias racionais de uma apresentação sensível que amplia esteticamente esses conceitos (extraíndo implicações, conotações, “consequências de um conceito e seu parentesco com outros”, KU, § 49) em modos lacunares, indeterminados pela ordem conceitual da experiência.

Ora, é desse modo que as *ideias estéticas* caracterizam um “processo de interpretação reflexiva” que sugere afinidades semânticas mesmo onde relações conceituais não podem ser demonstradas. Segundo Makkreel, as ideias estéticas “nos permitem integrar nossa experiência em modos deixados contingentes pelo sistema abstrato da natureza baseado no entendimento e elaborado pela razão” (1990, p. 121). O que nas palavras de Kant, equivale a que elas extraem as “implicações [Folgen] do conceito e seu parentesco com outros conceitos” (KU, § 49) e, nos termos da compreensão de Makkreel, essa função significa

(...) que as ideias estéticas contribuem no processo de interpretação reflexiva que sugere afinidades significativas mesmo quando conexões conceituais diretas não podem ser demonstradas. Embora essas ideias não possam ampliar conceitos que conceitos, elas **ampliam nossa interpretação da experiência** ao apresentar ideias racionais aos sentidos. Em particular, ideias estéticas podem acrescentar uma dimensão moral ao sentido da experiência. Essas funções interpretativas potenciais podem ser produzidas por relacionar a expressão de ideias estéticas à apresentação simbólica de ideias morais da razão. (Makkreel, 1990, p. 121)

Que essas ideias não ampliem conceitos *qua* conceitos, significa que não produzem um aumento efetivo do conhecimento empírico, todavia reelaboram, refinam, reorganizam e assim ampliam nossa interpretação da experiência no registro da reflexão estética por apresentar ideias da razão de um modo que transformam o repertório conhecido. Assim a função interpretativa das ideias estéticas fica delimitada nessa intersecção entre expressão e a apresentação simbólica de ideias da razão.

Ora, justamente o caráter complexo dessas representações leva Kant a distinguir os componentes das ideias estéticas, qual seja, (1) os ‘atributos estéticos’, enquanto representações intuitivas da imaginação, por sua vez, associadas a (2) um conceito central (ideia da razão), que nessa relação desencadeiam a expansão estética desse conceito e, desse modo, articulam muito pensamento (“dão muito a pensar sem que contudo, qualquer pensamento determinado, i.e., conceito, possa ser lhe adequado.” *KU*, § 49). Esses atributos enriquecem e expandem variando o sentido do conceito ao associá-lo a uma gama de representações suplementares, derivativas de modo apenas análogo à expansão lógica pela adição de atributos lógicos (notas características) num juízo sintético.

Assim, no exemplo extraído da mitologia de que Kant se vale para explicar a apresentação simbólica, a águia de Júpiter com o relâmpago nas garras (*KU*, § 49) funciona como atributo estético impregnando de conotações e sentidos adjacentes o pensamento racional, i.e., o conceito abstrato de “sublimidade e grandeza da criação” através dessas imagens sugestivas. Por conseguinte, essa imagem funciona como expressão (ampliação estética do conceito) desse conteúdo exercendo a função de metáfora para o que é pensado no conceito (Allison, 2001, p. 283) e desse modo, nas palavras de Kant, serve para “vivificar o ânimo enquanto abre a este uma perspectiva de um campo incalculável de representações afins” (*KU*, § 49).

Ainda, Guyer (1994, p. 279) sugere uma leitura mais detalhada, em que esclarece com precisão os componentes de uma *ideia estética* mostrando em que sentido ela é a “contrapartida de uma ideia da razão”. Guyer distingue três elementos para compreender a concepção kantiana: (1) primeiro, uma ideia da razão, que é o conteúdo intelectual da beleza e no exemplo de Kant corresponde à ideia da divindade de Júpiter (“a sublimidade e majestade da criação”) (*KU*, § 49); (2) em seguida, os *atributos estéticos* - uma diversidade de intuições sensíveis e imagens gráficas, e ideias, juntamente, com um inexaurível estoque de conotações, associações com outras imagens ou intuições particulares que apresentam sensivelmente simbolizando conceitos abstratos, como a imagem metafórica da águia de Júpiter com o relâmpago nas garras ou a figura do pavão de Juno; (3) por fim, como representação intermediária fazendo a mediação entre esses dois elementos, a *ideia estética* interpreta ideias abstratas da razão mediante aquela pluralidade de configurações sensíveis. É uma representação da imaginação que sintetiza, por um lado, a ideia da razão (regra de unidade formal) e por outro, aquele inexaurível catálogo de imagens possíveis e associáveis. Esse modo de apresentação da ideia da razão levada à efeito através dos atributos estéticos é em última análise a *expressão* de uma ideia estética que resulta dessa síntese de representações sensíveis segundo aquela ideia. Nas palavras de Guyer (1994, p. 280):

A ideia racional de majestade divina seria apresentada esteticamente, ou incorporada [embodied] pela ideia imaginativa de Júpiter, que por sua vez, sugere uma variedade indefinida de imagens gráficas, plásticas, sensações perceptuais, etc., que a interpretam sensivelmente de modo vivificante e aprazível.

Contudo, o exame da estrutura de uma ideia estética (Guyer, 1994, p. 279; Allison, 2001, p. 283, 288-89) deixa claro que não se trata de uma composição aleatória desses atributos, num feixe ou aglomerado. Essa é apenas a matéria de uma ideia estética que ainda torna imprescindível uma forma, como um modo de unidade, ordenação desses atributos, constituindo uma única ideia estética, singular, não um mero feixe de representações. É essa forma (da finalidade) que vai conferir à matéria uma certa coerência interna ou regularidade, numa unidade orgânica que embora não possa ser especificada em um conceito determinado, é unicamente o que torna as ideias estéticas universalmente comunicáveis.

Como mostra essa análise do *modus operandis* da imaginação estética especificado na função interpretativa e estrutura das ideias estéticas (análogos de esquemas), pode-se compreendê-las como representações complexas em que a expressão, como modalidade de uma imaginação “espontânea e produtiva” (KU, § 49) sob princípios da razão, constitui a apresentação simbólica das ideias racionais como, propriamente, o *modus aestheticus* da beleza (KU, § 60). É, portanto, nos termos dessa teoria da expressão que Kant esboça uma hermenêutica reflexiva da *hipotípose* estética na confluência de expressão e simbolização de ideias da razão, mediante a “ampliação estética” de conceitos através daqueles atributos estéticos. Bem entendido, supondo uma ‘interpretação reflexiva’ a par da imaginação que apresenta sensível e obliquamente conceitos racionais através de símbolos, como análogos que, ainda, funcionam como metáforas para o conteúdo indeterminável daqueles conceitos.

Um preâmbulo às teorias estéticas contemporâneas: Arthur C. Danto e Jaques Rancière

Expressão como *embodiment* em Danto

Ora, essa investigação ainda sugere, ao escrutinar as operações envolvidas na função interpretativa das ideias estéticas (KU, § 49) que articulam a apresentação simbólica (KU, § 59), o quanto se aproximam e antecipam a semântica complexa, incluindo tropos e elipses retóricas, que Danto introduz nos capítulos finais do seu *The Transfiguration of Commonplace* (1981). Considera que a interpretação é a condição intencional primeira, simultânea à identificação de uma obra, mas ainda, o processo transfigurativo que converte coisas em artefatos artísticos, implicando deslocamentos semânticos e usos metafóricos da linguagem. A seguir, Danto vai revisar os pressupostos da estética clássica do belo invertendo seu princípio para reconfigurar sua teoria como uma estética-semântica no *The Abuse of Beauty* (2004) em que ataca a estética do gosto apropriado pelo formalismo de Clement Greenberg (*Homemade Aesthetics*, 1999). Isso nos leva a um breve excuso nessas teorias contemporâneas, indicando teses centrais que iluminam pontos de intersecção com a teoria estética de Kant. Pretende-se assim um ganho de inteligibilidade dessas operações mediante esta comparação, mas sobretudo, um deslocamento da chave de interpretação da *Crítica da faculdade de juízo estética*, de uma fenomenologia ou formalismo estético para uma hermenêutica da representação estética.

Primeiro, cabe destacar um paralelo dessa abordagem da reflexão estética e jogo livre como a *interpretação reflexiva* das ideias estéticas, cuja expressão extravasa conceitos e limites discursivos numa apresentação simbólica de conceitos da razão com a noção de *embodied meanings* em Danto (1998, p. 195-6). Sobretudo, tendo em vista as operações metafóricas, deslocamentos e elipses envolvidas nessa apresentação estética ou *embodiment* (corporificação) do sentido, que presidem a *interpretação artística*, constitutiva da obra, e operam a ‘transfiguração’ que Danto investiga no *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace* (1981).

Por sua vez, no *The Abuse of Beauty* (2004), Danto propõe o que seus comentadores denominam um *Aesthetic turn*, repensando a estética sob uma ampla variedade de predicados pragmáticos [Inflectors] (2004, p. 121) que não se restringe ao belo e ao sublime, mas, compreendendo tanto o belo quanto o *grunge*, o *abjeto*, o *repulsivo*, o *horror*, o *erótico*, etc. sem qualquer hierarquia de valor, de modo igualitário. Contudo, o deslocamento decisivo que introduz remete à noção de “beleza dependente” [*pulchritudo adhaerens*] (KU, § 16) em Kant que supõe um conteúdo representacional (conceito do que a coisa deve ser) que sua tese de uma “beleza interna”, dependente e interna ao sentido, como forma de apresentação estética articulada pelo sentido, parece emular reconfigurando assim a teoria clássica do belo numa

estética-semântica correlacionando a forma ao sentido, via deslocamentos e tropos num uso metafórico. Tardiamente, é o próprio Danto que reitera essa aproximação com Kant num artigo (Danto, 2007, p. 121-129) em que reconhece seu débito à formulação das *ideias estéticas* que articulam uma teoria da expressão nas seções posteriores da *Crítica da faculdade de juízo estética*. Após confrontar o domínio do formalismo modernista na primeira metade do séc. XX, com uma teoria da arte antiestética (*The Artworld*, 1964) preconizada por Duchamp (*Fountain*, 1917) e consagrando os *ready-mades* da arte Pop, interpelado pelo pluralismo contemporâneo, Danto percebe uma latitude inexplorada da estética que converge com sua teoria do sentido:

O resultado desse excuso é que a resposta à questão de se a estética sobrevive na era do pluralismo é sim e não. É “não” se estivermos pensando na estética Kant-Greenberg do gosto e da contemplação desinteressada. É “sim” se estivermos pensando na maneira pela qual diferentes qualidades estéticas, muitas delas antitéticas ao gosto conforme interpretadas por Kant e Greenberg, são internas ao significado de obras de arte interpretadas como ‘sentidos corporificados’ [Embodied Meanings]. Em resumo, a era do pluralismo abriu nossos olhos para a pluralidade de qualidades estéticas muito mais amplas do que a estética tradicional era capaz. (Danto, 2007, p. 126)

Parece ser isso o que leva a redescobrir a estética kantiana sob uma nova perspectiva, como antes analisamos, a partir das últimas seções da CJE, mas para Danto, quase exclusivamente compactada no denso parágrafo, “Das faculdades do ânimo que constituem o gênio” (KU, § 49), a imaginação genial e suas ideias estéticas:

Chegando a esse ponto, no entanto, devo pontuar algumas correções em Kant, cuja visão sobre as obras de arte toma uma direção muito distinta numa seção posterior da Terceira Crítica – a brilhante Seção 49, “Das faculdades da mente que constituem o gênio”, onde introduz seu conceito de ideias estéticas. (Danto, 2007, p. 127)

Sem dúvida, a seguir, Danto corrobora com o recorte da CJE que propomos em nossa investigação acima, considerando-se signatário dessa formulação da teoria da expressão de Kant. Tão pertinente às abordagens semânticas e hermenêuticas das estéticas recentes, desafiadas a reconfigurar seus repertórios em vista da diversidade incontornável que se impõe às questões humanas que interpelam a arte. Com isso, ressalta o deslocamento de sentido e contexto que implica esse remanejamento hermenêutico da estrutura da CJE.

O Kant da Seção 49 não é o Kant da estética kantiana, que se baseia quase inteiramente na “Analítica do Gosto”, reconhecendo sua proximidade, nesta seção de seu livro, cuja mera existência mostra como Kant estava registrando as profundas mudanças na cultura do Iluminismo que a era do Romantismo estava encubando a partir de dentro. Certamente, percebeu que o gosto por si só não é tudo quando se trata de arte (...). (Danto, 2007, p. 127)

Mas é sobretudo, no conceito de *ideia estética*, que considera o núcleo dessa reconfiguração dos termos da estética, em razão de sua função interpretativa nas ideias incondicionadas da razão, e assim, aptas a conferir uma apresentação sensível a um conteúdo abstrato. Segundo Danto,

Uma “ideia estética” é, na verdade, uma ideia acrescida de corporificação [embodiment] sensível (...) [Kant] atingiu algo que é tanto um dado dos sentidos quanto intelectual – em que apreendemos um significado mediado pelos sentidos, em vez de apenas perceber uma cor, sabor ou som (2007, p. 127).

Ou seja, permite exemplificar na apresentação estética uma modalidade indireta, obliqua, uma estrutura metafórica cujos tropos e deslocamentos sistematiza na semântica complexa que conclui seu livro mais filosófico, *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace*.

Com efeito, essa aproximação tardia à teoria da expressão das ideias estéticas em Kant, reitera sua definição de arte como *embodied meanings* (Danto, 1997, p. 195-7; 2006, p. 216-19), em que a diferença específica de obras de arte é justamente o uso retórico do *medium*, do modo de apresentação do conteúdo para significar algo sobre este. Danto afirma textualmente que para

“ser uma obra de arte uma coisa qualquer precisa não mais que: (i) ser sobre algo [*aboutness*], i.e., ter um conteúdo semântico; (ii) e ainda deve corporificar [*embodiment*] seu conteúdo, sentido”, destacando a relação de “adequacidade ou inadequacidade de um ao outro” (2006, p. 216). Como ‘relação interna’, ‘recíproca’ do conteúdo a uma forma que o expresse, o *embodiment* implica uma inflexão de sentido ou ‘coloração’ [*Farbung*] que extravasa a relação semântica. Ou seja, a arte como um modo de representação, distingue-se projetando intenções e atitudes por meio de elipses retóricas que se configuram no modo de apresentação ou expressão corporificado na obra. Nesse registro, portanto, explicar o *embodiment*, ou modo de apresentação [*Darstellung*] estético equivale a caracterizar a **expressão** como um modo de relação interna, complexa e indissociável, entre o sentido e sua forma de apresentação [*embodiment*] em que a adequacidade recíproca do conteúdo e da forma (*modo de apresentação*) é o ponto fundamental, significando que todo atributo sensível deve exemplificar e expressar esse conteúdo de tal modo que a obra como um todo ‘corporifique’ seu significado.

Jogo livre das faculdades, neutralização e regime estético em Rancière

De outra parte, em Rancière, é possível constatar como seu ‘regime estético’ e a questão central da redistribuição do sensível com base num ‘dissenso’, é expressamente tributário da KU, ainda que modulada pela leitura de Schiller conferindo a relação das faculdades no gosto (“estado estético”) um estatuto político.¹⁰ Nessa perspectiva, o jogo livre estético define um modo da experiência que carrega uma nova universalidade, comunal, sensível e igualitária. Ao permitir às faculdades encontrarem uma nova forma de relação, a arte estética inscreve a igualdade no campo da experiência. Rancière denomina ‘distribuição do sensível’ um sistema da percepção que simultaneamente evidencia a existência de algo comum e a delimitação que define as respectivas partes e posições dentro dele. Vale-se da formulação anterior do “jogo livre das faculdades”, como a relação estética, horizontal, de ‘reciprocidade e coordenação’ em vez de ‘subordinação’. Caracteriza, assim, a ‘neutralidade’ como o regime propriamente estético a que confere um desdobramento surpreendente nos termos do que denomina “partilha do sensível”.

Mas formula, pontualmente, seu débito à Kant, num texto (Rancière, 2009, p. 1-19) em que contrasta três modos de atribuir sentido ao dado (KU, § 2), segundo a relação das faculdades, que se subordinam uma à outra, ou, excepcionalmente, no juízo de reflexão estético, encontram-se em jogo livre, numa relação harmoniosa. Considera que esse modo (estético) remete antes ao sentimento desinteressado do belo, com base no qual suspende a *subordinação*, tanto do conhecimento como do desejo sensível do objeto e sua determinação num juízo estético empírico. Um prazer desinteressado, da ‘mera’ reflexão que deriva de uma relação harmônica entre imaginação e entendimento, uma relação horizontal, de acordo recíproco, num jogo livre das faculdades.

Rancière, assim, propõe um regime estético da arte que articule o ‘dissenso político’, como redistribuição do sensível confrontando a hierarquia de posições e lugares consensuais: “O que está em jogo é a especificidade de uma distribuição do sensível que escapa à relação hierárquica entre uma faculdade superior e uma inferior, ou seja, que escapa na forma de um nem/nem positivo, (nem uma, nem outra)” (Rancière, 2009, p. 2). Essa rejeição da hierarquia que constitui o sentido envolve uma certa neutralização da hierarquia social, segundo Rancière, é isso que fica sugerido no § 2 da KU por meio do exemplo do palácio. Sucintamente, afirma o que chama de *dimensão estética* que não é senão: “(...) outro tipo de relação entre os sentidos e o

10 Schiller, F. A *educação estética do homem*. Trad. Marcio Suzuki. São Paulo: Iluminuras, 1995. Rancière, J. *La Malaise dans l'esthétique*, p. 131. “C'est cette identité de l'accord et du désaccord qui autorise Schiller à conférer à l' ‘état esthétique’ une signification politique dépassant la simple promesse de médiation sociale incluse dans le sens commun kantien, qui devait unir le raffinement de l'élite à la simplicité naturelle des gens du peuple. Le sens commun esthétique est, pour lui, un sens commun dissensuel”.

sentido, um suplemento que revela e neutraliza a divisão no coração do sensível. Vamos chamá-lo de dissenso. Um dissenso não é um conflito, é uma perturbação da relação normal entre os dados dos sentidos e sentido" (Rancière, 2009, p. 3).

Desse modo, a neutralização da oposição entre as faculdades, as partes da alma, ou as classes sociais é a encenação de um excesso, um suplemento que traz uma forma radical de ver o conflito. Indica ainda, duas maneiras de entender esse excesso. Duas maneiras de pensar (o excesso/o suplemento) o dissenso: uma ética e outra estética.

Distingue assim a distribuição ética como vinculada à lei com base em um local, que assim, depende do exercício de uma propriedade ou de uma faculdade exclusiva dos que pertencem a um local. "Desse modo, o universal ético costuma ser duplicado por um princípio ético de discriminação. A lei ética, portanto, é uma lei de diferenciação entre a classe de sensação e a classe de inteligência" (Rancière, 2009, p. 3). Na distribuição estética, é justamente a suspensão da subordinação, a neutralização da hierarquia das faculdades e, consequentemente, da hierarquia social que vai definir a redistribuição do sensível que caracteriza a dimensão estética em Rancière. Como explica a seguir:

O que chamo de dimensão estética é isso: a contabilização de um suplemento às partes que não pode ser descrito como uma parte em si. É outro tipo de relação entre os sentidos e o sentido, um suplemento que revela e neutraliza a divisão no coração do sensível. Vamos chamá-lo de dissenso. Um dissenso não é um conflito, é uma perturbação da relação normal entre os dados dos sentidos e sentido. (Rancière, 2009, p. 3).

Desse modo, Rancière propõe uma interpretação do "jogo livre" de Kant como relação entre as faculdades de conhecimento no registro de uma estética política que explora a dimensão igualitária desse novo arranjo. Suspendendo a determinação discursiva põe em questão uma epistemologia que longe de estabelecer uma neutralidade teórica, imprime hierarquias pré-estabelecidas na esfera da distribuição sensível segundo uma ordem discriminatória.

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As Reflexões e as Lições de Lógica sobre a Formação de Conceitos Empíricos

[*The Reflections and the Logic Lessons on the Formation of Empirical Concepts*]

Mitieli Seixas da Silva¹

Universidade Federal de Santa Maria (Santa Maria, Brasil)

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Resumo

A formação de conceitos empíricos é um tema recorrente na literatura especializada dedicada à discussão da obra de Immanuel Kant. Neste texto pretendo oferecer, a partir do isolamento daquilo que considero ser a questão lógica sobre a formação dos conceitos empíricos, uma alternativa a uma interpretação muito influente sobre este tema. Assim, o texto que segue está dividido em três partes. Na primeira, me dedico a investigar a questão lógica sobre a formação dos conceitos empíricos. Na segunda parte, trato da interpretação de Béatrice Longuenesse e a aproximo com o tratamento de Meier e John Locke sobre essa questão. Por fim, ofereço, a partir de uma leitura das *Reflexões* e das *Lições sobre lógica* uma interpretação alternativa do papel dos atos lógicos na formação de um conceito empírico para Kant.

Palavras-chave: conceito; atos lógicos; comparação; reflexão; abstração.

Abstract

The formation of an empirical concept is a recurrent theme in the specialized literature dedicated to the discussion of the work of Immanuel Kant. In this text, initiating from the differentiation of the logical question from the metaphysical question about the formation of an empirical concept I intend to offer an alternative to the most influential interpretations on this subject. Thus, the text that follows is divided into three parts. First, I investigate the logical question about the formation of empirical concepts. Second, I deal with the interpretation of Béatrice Longuenesse and bring it closer to the treatment of this question by Meier and Locke. Finally, I offer, from a reading of the *Reflexion* (AA 14-19) and *Logik Vorlesungen* (AA 24) an alternative interpretation of the role of logical acts in the formation of an empirical concept for Kant.

Keywords: concept; logical acts; comparison; reflection; abstraction.

¹ Mitieli Seixas da Silva é Professora Adjunta do Departamento de Filosofia da Universidade Federal de Santa Maria (UFSM). E-mail: mitieli.silva@uol.com.br

1. A questão lógica sobre a formação de conceitos

A compreensão da lógica como ciência para Kant coloca algumas restrições ao tipo de atividade ali desenvolvida². Em primeiro lugar, à lógica não cabe uma investigação sobre como *pensamos*, pois (i) as leis da lógica não são obtidas por introspecção e generalização sobre aquilo que fazemos *in concreto* e (ii) a lógica é geral porque é *formal*, isto é, porque ela abstrai completamente do conteúdo do conhecimento. Assim, em segundo lugar, se a lógica não procede por investigar nossos atos mentais *in concreto*, à lógica caberia apenas uma investigação sobre como *devemos pensar*, isto é, sobre o que é pensar (quais são os atos que constituem o pensamento como tal) independentemente daquilo sobre o que o pensamento se aplica e independentemente das circunstâncias nas quais o pensamento se realiza. Desse modo, a *normatividade* da lógica estaria ligada ao fato dessa ciência se ocupar daquilo que o entendimento *deve fazer* ou *realizar* em circunstâncias *ideais*, ou seja, em circunstâncias tais que nada interferiria nos seus processos (Schlösser, 2013).

Mas, o que especificamente poderia ser essa investigação de certos *atos mentais* dentro da lógica geral? Ora, a lógica não poderia proceder como uma psicologia, isto é, não poderia proceder por generalização a partir da observação empírica; igualmente, a lógica tem seu escopo limitado pela sua pretensão de generalidade e, por esse motivo, seus limites não podem ser borrados, sob pena de deixar de ser *geral*. Mas, o que seria uma alternativa a uma investida por *generalização introspectiva*? Seguindo uma pista do texto de Ulrich Schrösser, uma alternativa ao modelo descritivo seria, por exemplo, proceder a uma busca pela caracterização desses atos concernentes ao *pensamento como tal* ao investigá-los a partir das *realizações cognitivas* que eles engendram. O ponto seria partir da assunção de que para cada *realização cognitiva* que pudéssemos identificar poderíamos igualmente procurar por uma *atividade cognitiva* que respondesse por essa realização. Ao fazer isso, estariamos procedendo via uma investigação sobre o *papel funcional* desses atos, contrariamente a uma investigação que partiria de uma descrição das atividades como, por exemplo, as experenciamos (Schlösser, 2013).

Se aceitamos esse ponto de partida, podemos voltar agora à questão que deve nos ocupar neste texto e perguntar, portanto, o que constitui a posse de um conceito ou qual a *atividade cognitiva* que está envolvida na *realização cognitiva* que é possuir um conceito? Grosso modo, podemos identificar duas *realizações cognitivas* envolvidas na posse de um conceito. Em primeiro lugar, é pacífico segundo Kant que pensamos os objetos através de conceitos, isto é, que somos capazes de tomar um determinado objeto *como* algo utilizando certos conceitos que aplicamos a esses objetos³. De acordo com essa primeira realização cognitiva, a qual chamaremos (a), somos também capazes de representar as coisas ao pensá-las, por exemplo, *como* sendo verdes, árvores e casas. Na *Crítica da razão pura*, parece ser essa ‘realização cognitiva’ que Kant tem em mente quando afirma que uma das fontes fundamentais do nosso conhecimento é a capacidade de “*pensar o objeto da intuição sensível*” (KrV, B75/A51) e “*pensar é conhecer por conceitos*” (KrV, A69/B94)⁴.

Em segundo lugar, somos capazes de reconhecer que uma determinada *unidade conceitual* identificada, por exemplo, com o conceito VERDE, não é uma representação de *um* objeto, mas uma representação que *pode ser comum* a uma *pluralidade* de objetos. Com relação a essa realização

2 O presente texto consiste em uma versão atualizada do Quarto Capítulo não publicado de minha Tese de Doutorado defendida no Departamento de Filosofia da UFRGS em 2016.

3 Aqui não interessa investigar se *apenas* representamos *algo* como *algo* através de conceitos, mas atentar para o fato de que o *pensamento* de “*algo como algo*” se dá, para seres humanos, por conceitos. Uma outra questão aqui seria investigar o que pode significar o “*objeto*” do pensamento (isto é, se possível, existente, intencional etc.). No entanto, também não nos ocuparemos desse ponto.

4 Por sua vez, encontramos o mesmo na Refl. 2873 “(Eu penso através de um conceito uma coisa *in abstracto* ou *concreto*.)” e na Refl. 2874 “Através de um conceito eu represento algo *in abstracto* ou *concreto*.” (Refl. 2874, AA 16: 554) Também na Ref. 2867: “Através de um conceito (representação geral) algo *in abstracto* ou *concreto* é pensado.” (Refl. 2867, AA 16: 552). Todas as traduções das Reflexões e das Lições, com exceção da Lógica de Jäsche, são de nossa autoria.

cognitiva, encontramos, por exemplo, na Refl. 2877, a seguinte qualificação: “(*repraesentatio communis*) *Conceptus* é o oposto do *intuitus*: representação do que é comum a muitos objetos, também o que pode estar contido em diferentes.” (Refl. 2877, AA 16: 556) Por sua vez, na *Lógica de Jäsche*, temos: “*Observações*: 1) O conceito opõe-se à intuição; pois ele é uma representação universal ou uma representação daquilo que é comum a diversos objetos, logo uma representação na medida em que pode estar contida em diferentes objetos.” (Log, AA 09: 91)⁵ Assim, segundo esta última realização cognitiva, a qual apontaremos por (b), somos também capazes de reconhecer que o conceito VERDE, ou talvez, algo que eu represento por esse conceito, está contido na cognição de muitas coisas: reconhecemos, por exemplo, que “verde” é algo tanto na grama quanto na folha⁶. Por sua vez, essa segunda realização cognitiva é comumente compreendida como representando a característica da *generalidade* (ou *universalidade*) dos conceitos. Assim, seguindo a citação logo acima da *Lógica de Jäsche*, ser geral para um conceito significa ser uma representação daquilo que é comum a muitos.

Resta perguntar, portanto, se alguma dessas realizações cognitivas é primitiva, ou seja, se existe alguma relação de *prioridade lógica* entre esses dois atos que seres humanos são capazes de realizar. Tomaremos como hipótese de trabalho considerar que a segunda realização cognitiva, a saber, a capacidade de tomar o conceito como sendo comum a muitos (b), é *logicamente anterior* à primeira realização cognitiva de aplicar conceitos a objetos (a). Isso porque, como apontaremos na sequência, se olharmos para as *Reflexões* à luz das *Lições de lógica*, veremos que a capacidade (b) é condição, em Kant, para a posse de representações gerais. E, portanto, seguir-se-ia trivialmente: se para sermos capazes de aplicar um conceito a um objeto (a) é preciso que já possuamos uma representação geral, logo, é preciso que (como condição de possibilidade) sejamos capazes de tomar uma característica como comum a muitos (b).

É consenso na literatura especializada que a generalidade dos conceitos significa que essas representações são comuns a muitos e também que essa característica consiste na *forma* dos conceitos⁷. Isso significa que a característica que distingue uma representação conceitual, sua *forma*, portanto, é aquilo que chamamos de realização cognitiva (b): ser uma cognição capaz de representar o que está contido em *muitos* (objetos/coisas). Por sua vez, para Kant, a *lógica geral* é uma investigação que, por ser geral, não se ocupa da *origem* do conhecimento. Sendo assim, a lógica geral não pode ocupar-se do *conteúdo* do conhecimento.

Desse modo, queremos sustentar, que a questão sobre a formação dos conceitos pode ser dividida em, ao menos, duas questões distintas: i) qual a *origem* dos conceitos?; ii) como conceitos são formados enquanto representações gerais? No que diz respeito à distinção entre essas duas questões, as notas abaixo selecionadas, retiradas das *Reflexões* e das *Lições*, devem nos dar subsídios para traçar o esquema geral da posição kantiana:

A origem dos conceitos é considerada na metafísica e ela é empírica ou arbitrária ou intelectual. Mas a forma do mesmo é lógica e consiste na reflexão, pela qual um *conceptus communis* vem a ser [wird], com aquela forma, que é exigida para o poder de julgar [Urtheilskraft]. (Refl. 2851, AA 16: 546)

A pergunta lógica não é: como nós chegamos a um conceito, mas: por quais ações

⁵ Nas *Lições de lógica*, além da já citada *Lógica de Jäsche*, a documentação dessa compreensão do conceito como uma *representação que pode ser comum a muitos* é vasta, visto referências a esse papel dos conceitos, como veremos, aparecerem nas notas de Blomberg (VLo/Blomberg, AA 24.1: 255), Philippi (VLo/Philippi, AA 24.1: 451), Pölitz (VLo/Pölitz, AA 24.2: 565-7), Viena (VLo/Wiener, AA 24.2: 904-5, 910-1) e, finalmente na Dohna-Wundlacken (VLo/Dohna, AA 24.2: 752).

⁶ A vagueda da formulação é proposital, pois o objetivo é justamente deixar, nesse primeiro momento, algumas opções em aberto. A primeira indeterminação diz respeito ao que exatamente é reconhecido como *comum* a muitos objetos: é o conceito ele mesmo, é uma nota, é um certo conteúdo no conceito, é um conteúdo intuitivo, é algo no objeto reconhecido como geral? A segunda indeterminação concerne a saber o que o termo ‘objeto’, nesse contexto específico, significa. Por enquanto, deixaremos essas duas questões em suspensão.

⁷ A respeito da afirmação da conexão entre a *forma* de um conceito e sua *universalidade*, basta aqui apelar a um argumento de autoridade: Allison, 2004, p. 79; Altmann, 2015, p. 65; Paton, 1997, p. 198. Nós voltaremos a esse ponto na próxima seção.

do entendimento um conceito é formado [*ausmachen*], ele pode agora conter algo que é elaborado a partir da experiência [*er mag nun etwas enthalten, was von der Erfahrung hergenommen ist*], ou também algo fictício ou emprestado da natureza do entendimento. (Ref. 2856, AA 16: 548)

A lógica lida apenas com o conceito enquanto conceito, com as ideias ela não se preocupa. Como nós podemos, por ex., através da razão representar algo, o que o entendimento não pode uma vez apreender, é uma questão importante, ela apenas não pertence à lógica. Ela não lida com a origem dos conceitos com respeito ao conteúdo, ou com a diferença segundo o objeto, mas antes com a forma de um conceito enquanto conceito, a qual emerge da validade comum [*Gemeingültigkeit*]. (VLo/Pölitz, AA 24.2: 567)

É fácil ver que nessa distinção entre *empiricus* e *purus* o que importa é a origem do conceito, e essa já é uma investigação metafísica, portanto. Pois, a lógica não pergunta de onde vêm os conceitos, mas como eles podem ser formados e ordenados de acordo com as leis do entendimento. Pertence à lógica, então, que um conceito exista. Não pertence à lógica se ele é independente da experiência ou vêm da experiência. (VLo/Wiener, AA 24.2: 905-6)

A questão da lógica é, como as representações tornam-se conceitos? Ela diz respeito também à forma. Como uma intuição torna-se um conceito? (VLo/Busolt, AA 24.2: 654).

A filosofia transcendental, a qual deve preceder a metafísica, se ocupa com a origem dos conceitos puros do entendimento. A lógica não lida com isso. Ela está ocupada apenas com ações efetivas [*wirklichen*]. (VLo/Dohna, AA 24.2: 753)⁸

Desse modo, se tomamos as notas acima como representações do pensamento kantiano⁹, temos que a primeira questão (nesses textos reportada como *metafísica*) diz respeito à *origem* dos conceitos quanto *ao conteúdo* ou, nos termos da Lógica Pölitz, “com a diferença segundo o objeto”. Mais ainda, mesmo sendo essa noção (conteúdo) um tanto vaga nesses trechos e, portanto, considerando a necessidade de sua elucidação, sabemos ao menos que a questão lógica não diz respeito ao conteúdo e, por conta disso, não concerne à distinção entre *empírico* e *puro*. Assim, seja lá o que venha a significar o conteúdo dos conceitos, ele não deve ser tema de uma investigação no âmbito da lógica geral.

Se a questão lógica não concerne ao *conteúdo*, a questão propriamente lógica diz respeito à *geração* de uma representação quanto à *forma*. Nós lembramos rapidamente acima a ideia kantiana de que a *forma* de um conceito é sua universalidade ou a característica dos conceitos de serem representações do que é comum a muitos objetos. Portanto, a questão que pode ser respondida pela lógica geral é como *representações do que é comum a muitos objetos* podem ser geradas a partir de representações singulares, isto é, de representações cuja *forma* é a *singularidade*. Se não é o caso de tratar, portanto, em uma investigação dentro dos limites estabelecidos pela lógica geral, do *conteúdo* do conhecimento, não é o caso, nessa investigação, de tratar tampouco da *síntese*. No parágrafo 10 da Crítica da razão pura, encontramos a tese fundamental segundo a qual a *análise* pressupõe a *síntese*. Disso decorre que nenhum conceito pode ser de origem analítica quanto ao *conteúdo*. Essencial para a compreensão dessa tese é a seguinte afirmação:

Porém, a síntese de um diverso (seja dado empiricamente ou *a priori*) produz primeiro um conhecimento, que pode aliás de início ser ainda grosseiro e confuso e portanto carecer da análise; no entanto, é a síntese que, na verdade, reúne os elementos para os conhecimentos e os une num determinado conteúdo; é pois a ela que temos de atender em primeiro lugar, se quisermos julgar sobre a primeira origem de nosso conhecimento. (KrV, A76/B103)

⁸ Além das referências já citadas, outras referências a essa distinção podem ser encontradas ainda em: VLo/Blomberg, 24.1: 255; VLo/Pölitz, AA 24.2: 566-8; VLo/Wiener, AA 24.2: 905-6; VLo/Busolt, AA 24.2: 653.

⁹ Como não estamos tratando de textos publicados por Kant, sempre há o fantasma de estarmos atribuindo uma posição ao filósofo à revelia de seu pensamento. No entanto, ao menos aqui, dada a extensa documentação acerca da insistência nessa distinção, esse não parece ser, definitivamente, o caso.

Assim, se queremos circunscrever este trabalho à contribuição da lógica geral na geração de um conceito, então é uma pressuposição de nossa investigação a tese segundo a qual a análise pressupõe a síntese e não, ao contrário, um tema dessa investigação¹⁰. Desse modo, nos parece, se conseguirmos compreender, dentro das limitações traçadas no presente texto, como a realização cognitiva (b) é possível, teremos compreendido uma resposta à questão lógica acerca da formação dos conceitos em Kant. E o ponto passa a ser, portanto, investigar, a partir das notas selecionadas nas *Reflexões* e nas *Lições*, com o suporte da *Crítica da razão pura*, como da multiplicidade dada chegamos a representações *daquilo que está contido em muitos*, isto é, chegamos em representações *gerais* ou *universais* a partir dos *atos lógicos* distinguidos por Kant. Proceder a investigação nos limites estabelecidos pela lógica geral consistirá em buscar o *papel funcional* dos atos mentais para a formação de uma representação *enquanto* representação geral.

2. A geração de um conceito quanto à forma: comparação, reflexão, abstração

É possível dizer com alguma segurança que a questão lógica sobre a origem das representações gerais é um tema recorrente nas aulas de lógica de Kant, visto estar amplamente documentada em suas notas ao exemplar da lógica de Meier, bem como nas notas reunidas dos seus alunos. Assim, nesta seção buscaremos dar conta da relação entre esses dois tipos de fonte. Na primeira parte, analisaremos como algumas passagens das *Lições* podem ser utilizadas como fonte para um primeiro modelo explicativo, o qual assemelha-se, queremos sustentar, tanto com o texto de Meier, como com o *Ensaio* de Locke. Por sua vez, na segunda parte desta seção, buscaremos, a partir de uma sugestão encontrada nas *Reflexões*, um outro modelo explicativo, o que poderia, a título de exploração, fazer justiça a alguns compromissos especificamente críticos quanto aos limites impostos pela lógica geral e ao tipo de representação que são os conceitos para Kant.

2.1 O modelo da abstração: Meier, Locke, e o exemplo da formação do conceito “árvore” nas *Lições*

Iniciemos, portanto, antes de analisar os textos de Kant, pela exposição de Meier acerca do tópico “formação de conceitos”. Esse tema ocupa os parágrafos 259 e 260 da *Auszug aus der Vernunftlehre* de Georg Friedrich Meier e serve como ponto de referência tanto para as *Reflexões* de Kant acerca dessa questão, quanto para as *Lições*:

§ 259

Nós formamos um conceito através da abstração [Absonderung] lógica (*conceptus per abstractionem logicam formatus*), quando nós comparamos entre si conceitos concordantes de coisas diferentes e as notas características, que eles tenham em comum uns com os outros, e apenas nos representamos distintamente. Ao fim 1) tomam-se ao mesmo tempo alguns conceitos que são diferentes e semelhantes, por ex. animal racional e animal irracional; 2) desmembram-se cada um deles § 142; 3) abstrai-se ou obscurece-se as diferentes notas nele; 4) juntam-se em um conceito as notas remanescentes, por ex. um animal.

§ 260

Todos os conceitos que são formados através da abstração lógica [Absonderung] são conceitos abstraídos ou abstratos (*conceptus abstractus, notio*). Conceitos que não são abstraídos chamam-se conceitos singulares (*conceptus singularis, idea*), por ex., *Leibniz*. Todos os conceitos de experiência imediatos são conceitos singulares. § 255. 201.

10 É claro, o êxito dessa estratégia dependerá de ser possível encontrar uma contribuição lógica dos atos para a geração de um conceito, o que só poderá ser medido levando-se em conta o que vem adiante.

Aquilo que é representado como uma nota do outro está contido nele e convém a ele (*in altero contineri, ipsi convenire*). O conceito abstraído está, portanto, [72] contido em todos aqueles conceitos, dos quais ele pode ser abstraído. § 259. O conceito abstraído contém aqueles sob si, dos quais ele foi abstraído, e esses estão contidos sob ele (*conceptus alios sub se continet, et conceptus sub alio continentur seu ad eum referuntur*). (Meier, AA 16: 71-72)

Em primeiro lugar, salta aos olhos a diferença entre Kant e Meier quanto à compreensão do que consiste em um conceito. Segundo Kant, a singularidade não é uma característica dos conceitos, apenas de seu uso em juízos, vide a conhecida *Segunda Observação à Lógica de Jäsche*:

É uma mera tautologia falar em conceitos universais ou comuns; um erro que se baseia numa divisão incorreta dos conceitos em *universais, particulares* e *singulares*. Não são os conceitos eles próprios, mas tão-somente seu uso que pode ser assim dividido. (Log, AA 09: 91)

Se, de acordo com Kant, não existem conceitos *singulares*, todo conceito é geral.

A diferença de perspectiva entre Kant e Meier não se esgota, contudo, na compreensão de conceitos como *Leibniz* e *Sócrates*. Consoante o §260 de Meier, temos não apenas a possibilidade de conceitos singulares, mas, além disso, a afirmação de que esses conceitos são conceitos *immediatos* da experiência. No §255, Meier escreve:

Todas nossas sensações [*Empfindungen*] são conceitos. §249.201. Um conceito de experiência (*conceptus per experientiam formatus*) é um conceito que obtemos através da experiência. Por exemplo, o conceito das modificações de nossa alma, de nosso corpo e de outras coisas fora de nós. Obtemos um conceito de experiência seja através da experiência imediata, seja através da experiência mediata. (Meier, AA 16: 69)

E ainda, no §201, ele afirma:

Uma sensação (*sensatio*) é uma representação de uma coisa presente [*gegenwärtigen*], e ao sentirmos algo claramente, então experienciamos isso. A experiência (*experiencia*) consiste, portanto, naquele conhecimento que é claro através do sentir [*Empfinden*]. (Meier, AA 16: 57)

Desse modo, quaisquer que sejam os conceitos imediatos da experiência, parece que, para Meier, tais conceitos não seriam originados pelo procedimento em quatro passos exposto acima (§ 259). Isso porque, sendo esse tipo de conceito *imediato*, ele não necessitaria ser *formado* por nenhum *ato lógico*, ele teria que ser *dado* à mente imediatamente.

Em segundo lugar, portanto, como Meier aceita a possibilidade de conceitos singulares que são imediatamente extraídos (ou dados) da experiência, ele pode agora explicar – sem cair em um *regresso ao infinito* – seu procedimento para a formação dos conceitos ditos *abstratos* (*conceptus abstractus, notio*). Uma vez que esteja disponível já algum conceito, o entendimento opera, através de seus atos lógicos, para formar conceitos *abstraídos* desses conceitos singulares e imediatos, que são os conceitos primitivos da experiência.

Isso ocorreria, conforme Meier, pelo seguinte procedimento. A primeira etapa seria a *comparação* de certos conceitos *concordantes* de coisas diferentes, o que, supostamente, poderia ser realizado, por exemplo, a partir dos conceitos singulares e imediatos *deste pinheiro* e *desta tília*. Na sequência, deveríamos *desmembrar* esses conceitos (singulares e imediatos) naquelas notas que eles possuem, por exemplo, *galhos, troncos e folhas*. O próximo passo ocorreria ao *abstrair* ou *separar* aquelas notas que esses conceitos têm em *comum* daquelas que são específicas de cada um dos conceitos singulares dos quais partimos: um determinado formato de folha, por exemplo, por não ser *comum* ao pinheiro e à tília, deveria ser desconsiderado. Por fim, teríamos apenas que *juntar* em uma única representação o resultado desse processo e representarmos distintamente o conceito *abstrato* “árvore”. O resultado desse procedimento seria, portanto, um conceito *abstrato de experiência*, porque formado a partir de conceitos *singulares* e *imediatos*.

da experiência.

Por sua vez, quando Locke descreve o processo de formação de uma ideia *geral*, o procedimento lá encontrado é bastante parecido com o acima descrito:

A isto chama-se ABSTRACÇÃO, capacidade por meio da qual as ideias tomadas de seres particulares se convertem em nomes gerais, aplicáveis a tudo quanto exista e que convenha a estas ideias abstractas. O entendimento armazena estas aparências precisas e simples na mente (com os nomes que geralmente lhes são atribuídos), sem considerar como, donde e com que outras ideias foram recebidas na mente, como padrões para ordenar as existências reais em espécies, conforme se acomodem a esses padrões, e para designá-las de acordo com eles. Assim, ao notar hoje no giz ou na neve a mesma cor que a mente recebeu ontem do leite, considera essa aparência única, converte-a em representativa de todas as da sua espécie e, tendo-lhe dado o nome de *brancura*, exprime com esse som a mesma qualidade onde quer que ela possa ser imaginada ou encontrada. E é deste modo que se formam os universais, sejam eles ideias ou termos. (Locke, 2014, p. 194-5)

O modo através do qual uma ideia simples e geral é formada para Locke, por exemplo, a ideia *branco*, é chamado pelo nome genérico de *abstração*. Essa operação consistiria, segundo Locke, em um processo de consideração em separado, que seria iniciado por percepções de algo (nesse caso, uma mesma cor) presente tanto no giz, quanto no leite e na neve. O passo seguinte seria reter e trazer à mente essas percepções e considerar a aparência sozinha: considerar uma ideia *sozinha* é considerá-la em separado de todas as outras ideias que a acompanham, por exemplo, das ideias de *liquidez* ou *solidez* que acompanham o giz e o leite e, além disso, de todas as ideias espacotemporais que porventura acompanhem essas ideias. O processo de abstração seria completado, de acordo com o filósofo inglês, tão logo fosse atribuído um nome a essa ideia considerada em separado, nesse caso, o nome *branco*.

Deve-se notar, contudo, que se o procedimento de formar uma ideia geral é um processo de separação integral, então, o que sobraria do resultado da abstração seria já uma ideia geral. Isso significa que, ao contrário do que quer Locke, não chegariam ao final do processo de abstração em uma passagem do *particular* ao *universal*, mas, tudo o que faríamos por essa operação da mente, seria “depurar” ou encontrar o geral já dado na experiência. Desse modo, para explicar a formação de uma ideia geral, Locke supõe que o geral já está na experiência, esperando apenas para ser depurado, isto é, dela *abstraído*.

Em termos kantianos, portanto, para colocar em marcha o processo de formação de uma ideia geral, enquanto Meier supõe *conceitos singulares e imediatos*, Locke supõe *intuições mediadas e gerais*. Se estamos sendo justos em nossa leitura, esse processo não poderia ser compatível com a estrita distinção *crítica* entre intuições e conceitos. Mais importante do que isso, contudo, é notar que, aparentemente, esse mesmo *tipo* de procedimento descrito pelos modelos acima, o qual supõe, sejamos claros, ora conceitos singulares e imediatos, ora intuições mediadas e gerais, parece poder ser encontrado no famoso exemplo da *Lógica de Jäsche*:

§ 6

Os atos lógicos da comparação, reflexão e abstração

Os atos lógicos do entendimento pelos quais os conceitos são gerados quanto à sua forma são:

- 1) a *comparação* [Komparation], ou seja, o cotejo [Vergleichung] das representações entre si em relação com a unidade da consciência;
- 2) a *reflexão* [Reflexion], ou seja, a consideração [Überlegung] do modo como diferentes representações podem ser compreendidas em uma consciência; e finalmente;
- 3) a *abstração* [Abstraktion], ou seja, a separação [Absonderung] de todos os demais aspectos nos quais as representações dadas se diferenciam.

Observações: 1) Para fazer conceitos a partir de representações, é preciso, pois, poder

comparar, refletir e abstrair, pois essas três operações lógicas do entendimento são as condições essenciais e universais da produção de todo conceito em geral. Eu vejo, por exemplo, um pinheiro, um salgueiro e uma tília. Ao comparar antes de mais nada estes objetos entre si, observo que são diferentes uns dos outros no que respeita ao tronco, aos galhos, às folhas e coisas semelhantes; mas, em seguida, eu reflito apenas sobre aquilo que eles possam ter em comum entre si, o tronco, os galhos, as folhas, eles próprios e, se eu abstraio do tamanho, da figura dos mesmos e assim por diante, obtenho um conceito da árvore. (Log, AA 09: 94-5)¹¹

Caso a passagem acima seja tratada ao pé da letra, devemos supor que o exemplo da formação do conceito empírico “árvore” é um exemplo da geração de um conceito *quanto à sua forma* através dos atos lógicos de *comparação, reflexão e abstração*. Isso significaria que é ao *comparar* o pinheiro, o salgueiro e a tília, ao *refletir* sobre o que eles têm em comum (tronco, galhos e folhas) e ao *abstrair* aquilo que não é comum a essas coisas (o tamanho, a figura etc.) que formamos o conceito “árvore”, isto é, que chegamos a uma representação *geral*, a qual serve agora para representar todos os objetos que compartilham as mesmas características.

Mas, se, com efeito, Kant está tratando da formação de uma representação geral no exemplo acima citado, então, parece difícil salvar a explicação kantiana da formação de uma representação geral através dos atos lógicos da mesma crítica possível de ser atribuída a Locke. Em outras palavras, Kant estaria, assim como Locke, supondo que já reconhecemos as coisas *por características gerais* antes mesmo de dispormos de uma representação geral, isto é, de um conceito¹². A esse propósito, a crítica de Hannah Ginsborg é apropriada:

First, they both seem to presuppose an antecedent recognition of general features: we have to observe the ‘same color’ in milk and snow, and we have to recognize ‘common agreements of shape and other qualities’ in respect of which individual human being resemble one another. Second, even granted that such basic features of color and shape are given to us, it is not clear how we can arrive at a complex general idea of *man* unless we already in some sense perceive the individuals presented to us as human beings. For otherwise, how could we know which of the many ‘common agreements’ we have observed in them belong to the concept of man and which do not? So it seems that, after all, Locke must regard our sensory ideas as presenting us with general qualities and features, in spite of their supposedly ‘particular’ character. (Ginsborg, 2015, p. 155)

11 Variações dessa mesma passagem podem ser encontradas nos seguintes trechos das *Lições*: “Como surgem conceitos ou como podem representações tornarem-se conceitos? Isso eu posso perguntar apenas na lógica, *per reflectionem, comparationem, separationem seu abstractionem*. Eu reflito sobre as coisas, isto é, eu me torno gradualmente consciente das representações, ou eu comparo diferentes representações com minha consciência; isto é, dessa maneira eu comparo umas sob as outras [*sie untereinander*], isto é comparação; onde eu encontro a identidade da consciência, eu separo ou abstraio do restante; assim eu obtenho um conceito; por ex., eu vejo um pinheiro, salgueiro ou tília, eu vejo que eles têm um tronco, galhos e folhas que são diferentes, um tem mais galhos do que o outro etc. eu foco minha atenção no que eles têm em comum com respeito aos troncos, galhos, e folhas, da figura eu abstraio e assim eu chego ao conceito de árvore.” (VLo/Pöltz, AA 24.2: 565)

“A questão da lógica é, como as representações tornam-se conceitos? Ela diz respeito também à forma. Como uma intuição torna-se um conceito? A isso pertence:

a.) *Reflexion* ou atenção da multiplicidade que está sendo pensada.
b.) Comparação, ou a comparação da diferença e identidade, por ex., a comparação entre pinheiro e abeto [*tannen*] e salgueiro; aquela tem pinha e essa folha; eu tenho também um conceito de madeira [*Nadelholz*] e madeira de lei. Essas duas dizem respeito ao *positivem* [aspecto]; ao negativo pertence:

c.) Abstração, eu esqueço toda diferença e apenas observo a identidade.” (VLo/Busolt, AA 24.2: 654)

12 É importante notar que, como a interpretação padrão de Locke sustenta, para este filósofo, o *geral* não é *real*. Não é por acaso, portanto, que em sua explicação da formação de uma ideia geral, Locke precise vincular essa ideia a uma palavra, a qual funcionará como um *signo* da generalidade. Mesmo assim, contudo, se a abstração é o procedimento de considerar em separado, então, mesmo adotando a estratégia de anexar um signo à ideia de experiência, Locke fica com o problema não resolvido de supor que a generalidade está *na experiência* esperando para ser dela abstraída. Não é por acaso também que na interpretação de Béatrice Longuenesse a distinção entre a explicação lockeana e a explicação kantiana para a formação de um conceito passará por distinguir diferentes “realidades” para a universalidade das coisas: “A esta Locke recusa qualquer realidade: o geral não está nas coisas, mas apenas na maneira pela qual pensamos. Para Kant, ao contrário, afirmar que o conceito só tem estatuto discursivo – que jamais é dado quanto a sua forma, mas só pode ser resultado dos atos do entendimento – não significa que ele não ‘representa’ uma realidade nas coisas.” (Longuenesse, 2019, p. 189)

Desse modo, assim como Locke supõe que devemos reconhecer a *mesma cor* no leite e no giz, Kant, no exemplo da formação do conceito de árvore, supõe que devemos reconhecer o pinheiro, o salgueiro e a tília, como *compartilhando* as mesmas características, isto é, já como possuindo *troncos, galhos e folhas*. Essa explicação, portanto, parece estar desde sempre comprometida por um *regresso*, visto supor, na formação de um conceito, a posse de conceitos antecedentes¹³.

Para afastar essa crítica, Béatrice Longuenesse sugere outra saída para o problema engendrado pela explicação acima. Segundo Longuenesse, seria possível evitar o problema do regresso se atentássemos para uma distinção, implícita nas *Lições* e na *Crítica da razão pura*, entre diferentes tipos de *comparação*: a comparação lógica, a estética, a intermediária e a transcendental (Longuenesse, 2019, p. 180ss). Como podemos encontrar em Kant, de acordo com a comentadora, esses quatro diferentes tipos de atualização do ato da *comparação*, podemos evitar o regresso se considerarmos que a comparação *lógica* que dá surgimento aos conceitos supõe uma capacidade de comparação *intermediária*, a qual existiria em uma forma embrionária na própria sensibilidade (Longuenesse, 2019, p. 203, n. 22). Essa capacidade embrionária, em outra passagem tratada como uma *comparação silenciosa* (Longuenesse, 2019, p. 191), é aqui tratada como uma comparação “graças à qual os objetos sensíveis se tornam representações por *conceitos*” (Longuenesse, 2019, p. 184). Mais ainda, segundo a autora, a comparação de representações sensíveis que dá origem à formação “dos conceitos se orienta pela busca de notas características comuns.” (Longuenesse, 2019, p. 184)

Fazendo um resumo deveras grosseiro da posição de Longuenesse, podemos dizer que partindo do ato de comparação *estética* em conjunção com a comparação *intermediária* chegamos à comparação *universalizante*: “aquela comparação generalizante coteja não objetos singulares, mas notas características diferenciais e já gerais, cujo rastro no sensível ela mesma ocasiona” (Longuenesse, 2019, p. 185). Por sua vez, esta última comparação seria tal que o que é comparado é o *universal na regra de nossa apreensão* (Refl. 2880, AA 16: 557) e, estas últimas, seriam nada mais do que *esquemas* (Longuenesse, 2019, p. 185). Mas, por que exatamente essa distinção traria alguma ajuda à tentativa de evitar o regresso na explicação da formação dos conceitos a partir dos atos lógicos? Isso ocorreria, porque tratar a comparação¹⁴ como um *ato* engendrado em diferentes níveis de nossas representações, significaria tornar a formação dos conceitos dependente dos mesmos atos responsáveis pela formação dos esquemas. E, assim, Longuenesse defenderá:

Comparar as representações em vista da formação de conceitos é, pois, comparar os esquemas; e comparar os esquemas, graças aos três atos conjugados da *comparação* propriamente dita, da *reflexão* e da *abstração*, é primeiro *suscitar* esses esquemas na tensão mesma das identidades e das diferenças. Assim, os esquemas resultam de uma comparação da qual eles são, ao mesmo tempo, o objeto. São necessárias muitas representações comparadas entre si, para que nelas surjam diferentes esquemas para a apreensão, passíveis de ser refletidos em conceitos. (Longuenesse, 2019, p. 185)

O último passo dessa explicação consistirá em sustentar que, uma vez que os atos responsáveis por gerar conceitos são os mesmos atos pelos quais esquemas são gerados, esses atos são também os mesmos que governam o uso de conceitos em juízos. Em outras palavras, a operação de comparação (e seus atos lógicos correlatos, a reflexão e a abstração) é o(s) *ato(s) discursivo(s) por excelência*, responsável, portanto, por todo uso do entendimento, seja esse *uso determinante* ou *reflexionante*, seja esse uso *consciente* ou *inconsciente* (silencioso). Desse modo, em comunhão com Steckelmacher, a filósofa conclui:

Mas, se admitimos que um ato de julgar “silencioso” e “imperfeitamente acabado” preside a própria formação dos conceitos, então é preciso concluir que as formas do

13 Henry Allison reconhece esse ponto em seu *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*: “The basic problem, which cannot be pursued here, is that Kant's official account of how we form concepts, namely, by noting common features shared by diverse particulars and abstracting from the differences, seems to presuppose what it purports to explain. For how can we recognize such commonality without in a sense already having the concept?” (Allison, 2004, p. 80).

14 E, para ser honesta com Longuenesse, os outros atos lógicos também (Longuenesse, 2019).

juízo, nas quais serão articulados os conceitos “acabados”, devem necessariamente governar até mesmo a comparação das representações “em si gerais”, configuradas no sensível. Em outras palavras, comparar as representações empíricas – ou, mais genericamente, as representações sensíveis – em vista da formação dos conceitos, comparar os *esquemas* (regras gerais de nossa apreensão) dessas representações, *configurar* esses esquemas no dado sensível, *representá-los de maneira discursiva* nos conceitos, enfim, inscrever os conceitos nos *juízos* em que, precisamente, são “comparados” (mas, desta vez, como formas puras discursivas), tudo isso advém de um mesmo ato reflexionante do entendimento. (Longuenesse, 2019, p. 191-2)

Assim, uma vez que os atos lógicos sejam colocados em ação, procedemos na busca por regras de apreensão que são adquiridas ao mesmo tempo em que são tornadas representações universais. Longuenesse utiliza ainda outro famoso exemplo, encontrado agora na *Introdução* da *Lógica de Jäsche*, para ilustrar seu ponto. Dada a complexidade da solução de Longuenesse, acreditamos ser importante trazer o exemplo e depois seu comentário:

Assim, por exemplo, se um selvagem¹⁵ vê à distância uma casa cujo uso não conhece, ele tem, é verdade, diante de si na representação o mesmo objeto representado por uma outra pessoa que o conhece de maneira determinada como uma habitação destinada a pessoas. Mas, segundo a forma, esse conhecimento de um e o mesmo objeto é diverso em ambos. Em um, é uma *mera intuição*, no outro, *intuição e conceito* ao mesmo tempo. (Log, AA 09: 33)

Segundo Longuenesse, esse exemplo mostra que a pessoa em questão é consciente tanto de uma “combinação de representações umas com as outras” quanto da relação dessas representações com “seus sentidos”. O que falta a ela, contudo, é “[uma] regra que mande privilegiar certas notas e deixar outras de lado [*absondern*] para a aplicação de tal conceito” (Longuenesse, 2019, p. 186) Isso significa que, ao não possuir um sistema conceitual de comparação, o qual forneceria regras pelas quais ela poderia ser guiada na escolha das notas a reter e daquelas a deixar de lado, isto é, regras que poderiam guiar as operações de *comparação*, *reflexão* e *abstração*, a essa pessoa faltaria o *conceito*. E, Longuenesse conclui: “[Apenas] o progressivo reconhecimento de uma regra comum para diversos objetos de mesmo uso, ao determinar notas análogas, fará surgir um conceito de casa” (Longuenesse, 2019, p. 187).

Se compreendemos corretamente sua estratégia, então, Longuenesse está afirmando que à representação da pessoa falta o conceito porque, por não possuir um sistema de comparações guiado por regras de apreensão, no qual o conteúdo da sua intuição possa ser competentemente comparado, ela não sabe quais *notas* reunir para formar um conceito como “casa”. Nesse sentido, portanto, a pessoa permaneceria apenas com uma intuição e não possuiria uma representação universal *porque* não seria capaz de reunir notas *em uma* representação. Defendo, contudo, que a *universalidade* dos conceitos não responde pela capacidade de reunir representações *em uma representação*, mas, antes, pela designação de uma representação como *fundamento de cognição*, isto é, pela capacidade de tomar as notas reunidas *em si* como fundamento de cognição de objetos e, portanto, como *subordinando* outras representações *sob si*. Se estou correta, portanto, o fato de que *em um* conceito reunimos notas não é o que explica, por si só, sua universalidade. Podemos dizer até que as notas *em um* conceito são seu *conteúdo*, mas não que uma representação é *universal* simplesmente porque reúne notas *em si*.

De tudo isso, retiramos que, se, além disso, o limite explicativo da lógica geral diz respeito apenas à *forma* do pensamento, então, é enganador querer explicar, pelo funcionamento dos *atos lógicos*, como um determinado *conteúdo* é reunido *em um* conceito¹⁶. Portanto, se a forma de

15 O uso da palavra selvagem para se referir a povos originários não europeus é, certamente, abusiva e preconceituosa. Decidi, contudo, não interferir na tradução para justamente não “maquiar” essa característica condenável dos escritos kantianos.

16 Na seguinte passagem da *Lógica Pölitz*, encontramos: “A lógica lida apenas com o conceito enquanto conceito, com as ideias ela não se preocupa. Como nós podemos, por ex., através da razão representar algo, o que o entendimento não pode uma vez apreender, é uma questão importante, apenas ela não pertence à lógica. Ela não lida com a origem dos conceitos com respeito ao conteúdo, ou com a diferença segundo o objeto, mas antes com a forma de

um conceito é a possibilidade de ser utilizado como fundamento de cognição, isto é, enquanto subordina representações *sob si*, então o que faz de um conceito uma representação *geral* não é simplesmente o fato de que reunimos notas *em* conceitos. Assim, caso a explicação de Longuenesse da geração de um conceito pretenda explicar como juntamos determinadas notas, por exemplo, *no* conceito CASA, então essa não é uma explicação tributária aos atos lógicos de *comparação*, *reflexão* e *abstração*, responsáveis pela geração de um conceito quanto à mera *forma*¹⁷. Portanto, para manter o tratamento dos exemplos da *Lógica de Jäsche* do modo como Longuenesse o faz, ou temos que considerar ser a reunião de notas no conceito sua forma, o que mina a caracterização do que é a forma de um conceito, ou temos que recusar que os atos lógicos explicam simplesmente como a *forma* do conceito é gerada (o que contraria não apenas os limites traçados pela lógica geral, mas claramente passagens importantes das *Reflexões*).

Sendo assim, nos parece que outra interpretação deve ser buscada, pois é preciso não deixar de lado os limites da lógica geral: explicar pelos atos lógicos a geração de um conceito quanto à forma não é explicar a geração de um conceito quanto ao conteúdo, isto é, não é explicar por que reúno no conceito CASA as notas *ter um telhado, janelas, paredes e portas*, e não reúno *neste* conceito, por exemplo, a nota *ser construída de madeira*; é, por outro lado, explicar como uma representação adquire o estatuto de *fundamento de cognição*.

Mesmo com o ônus de uma redução drástica de todas as sutilezas contidas na interpretação de Longuenesse, acreditamos que, para nossos fins, basta apenas resumir por que rejeitamos essa interpretação como uma interpretação condizente com alguns compromissos acerca dos limites da lógica geral¹⁸. Queremos sustentar que a citação retirada da *Lógica de Jäsche*, com a qual iniciamos a presente Seção e colocamos ao lado da abordagem de Locke e Meier, opera em dois níveis que são, se tomados conjuntamente, não apenas enganadores, pois tratam de assuntos diversos, mas mesmo contraditórios com o “espírito” das *Reflexões*.

Para adiantar, do modo como lemos o exemplo da formação do conceito “árvore” em conjunto com as *Reflexões* e outras passagens das *Lições*, entendemos que, enquanto o exemplo trata do *conteúdo* dos conceitos, por explicar como representações são tomadas *em* um conceito, a explicação do funcionamento dos atos lógicos trata de como esse conteúdo pode vir a ser “empregado” em uma representação *geral*, isto é, estes últimos respondem pela geração de um conceito quanto à *forma*. Por esse motivo, assim nos parece, ao ser levada pelo exemplo de Kant, a interpretação de Longuenesse acaba por misturar dois registros explicativos que, dados os

um conceito enquanto conceito, a qual emerge da validade comum [Gemeingültigkeit].” (VLo/Pöltz, AA 24.2: 567)

17 É nesse sentido também que encontramos algumas passagens nas *Lições* onde Kant reprime Meier por explicar a formação de conceitos quanto *ao conteúdo* através, por exemplo, do ato lógico da abstração, como nas passagens abaixo:

“Ninguém pode fazer dinheiro roubando-o de alguém, e do mesmo modo, ninguém pode fazer qualquer conceito por abstração. Através da abstração nossas representações apenas são tornadas universais, como já indicado acima. Se não temos nenhuma representação das coisas, então nenhuma abstração seria hábil para fazer conceitos para nós. Na abstração lógica, nós comparamos muitos conceitos uns com os outros, nós vemos o que esses contêm em comum, ou onde eles concordam, e através disso nossas representações tornam-se conceitos.” (grifo nosso, VLo/Blomberg, AA 24.1: 255-6)

“O autor pensa que nós chegamos a conceitos através da abstração. Mas através da abstração não chegamos a nenhuma cognição [Erkenntniß]; a cognição deve estar [disponível] antes da abstração. Através da abstração se altera [ändern] apenas a forma. [...] O conceito não surge através da abstração, mas ele é apenas tornado por si mesmo geral [er wird durch dieselbe nur allgemein gemacht]. Por conseguinte, a abstração não é um segundo caminho para chegar a conceitos diferentes da experiência [Demnach ist Abstraction nicht ein von der Erfahrung verschiedener zweiter Weg zu Begriffen zu gelangen]. Pois ela é apenas o meio para tornar geral a experiência.” (VLo/Pöltz, AA 24.1: 452)

18 Outro viés possível de crítica à explicação de Longuenesse pode ser encontrada no artigo *Thinking the particular as contained under the universal* de Hannah Ginsborg. Ginsborg sustentará que o modelo de Longuenesse, segundo o qual o peso explicativo passa para a operação de *proto-comparação*, tampouco ilumina o problema da formação de conceitos (em especial, o caso dos conceitos empíricos), pois os atos lógicos descritos por Kant na *Lógica* não permitem essa interpretação, visto serem já operações, segundo Ginsborg, sobre representações *intrinsecamente* conceituais (Ginsborg, 2015, p. 154).

limites bem traçados da lógica geral, não poderiam ser misturados, a saber, a questão lógica e a questão metafísica acerca da origem dos conceitos¹⁹.

3. O papel dos atos lógicos na geração da forma de um conceito

Nesta Seção, nos ocuparemos de dois objetivos principais. Em primeiro lugar, encontrar uma alternativa para a caracterização dos atos lógicos nas *Lições* à luz das *Reflexões*. Em segundo lugar, destacar como, do ponto de vista da lógica geral, os atos lógicos podem ter um papel para engendrar a universalidade dos conceitos, isto é, para explicar como chegamos à *forma lógica* de uma representação geral a partir dessas operações lógicas descritas por Kant.

Dada nossa discussão na seção anterior, convém aqui, portanto, buscar uma explicação do funcionamento dos atos lógicos que não seja dependente do famoso exemplo da geração do conceito árvore. Acreditamos que isso é possível se olharmos, novamente, para a própria explicação dos atos lógicos contida no parágrafo 6 da *Lógica de Jäsche* em conjunto, contudo, com outros exemplos retirados das *Lições* e, principalmente, com a sucinta explicação encontrada nas *Reflexões*. Comecemos pelo texto da *Lógica de Jäsche* ao lado de trechos semelhantes retirados de outras *Lições*:

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1) a *comparação* [*Komparation*], ou seja, o cotejo [*Vergleichung*] das representações entre si em relação com a unidade da consciência;

2) a *reflexão* [*Reflexion*], ou seja, a consideração [*Überlegung*] do modo como diferentes representações podem ser compreendidas em uma consciência; e finalmente:

3) a *abstração* [*Abstraktion*], ou seja, a separação [*Absonderung*] de todos os demais aspectos nos quais as representações dadas se diferenciam. (Log, AA 09: 94-5)

Como surgem conceitos ou como podem representações tornarem-se conceitos? Isso eu posso perguntar apenas na lógica, *per reflectionem, comparationem, separationem seu abstractionem*. Eu reflito sobre as coisas, isto é, eu me torno gradualmente consciente das representações, ou eu comparo diferentes representações com minha consciência; isto é, dessa maneira eu comparo umas sob as outras [*sie untereinander*], isto é comparação; onde eu encontro a identidade da consciência, eu separo ou abstraio do restante; assim eu obtenho um conceito; por ex., eu vejo um pinheiro, salgueiro ou tilia, eu vejo que eles têm um tronco, galhos e folhas que são diferentes, um tem mais galhos do que o outro etc. eu foco minha atenção no que eles têm em comum com respeito aos troncos, galhos, e folhas, da figura eu abstraio e assim eu chego ao conceito de árvore. (VLo/Pöltz, AA 24.2: 565)

A questão da lógica é, como as representações tornam-se conceitos? Ela diz respeito também à forma. Como uma intuição torna-se um conceito? A isso pertence:

a.) *Reflexion* ou atenção da multiplicidade que está sendo pensada.

b.) Comparação, ou a comparação da diferença e identidade, por ex., a comparação entre pinheiro e abeto [*tannen*] e salgueiro; aquela tem pinha e essa folha; eu tenho também um conceito de madeira [*Nadelholz*] e madeira de lei. Essas duas dizem respeito ao *positivem* [aspecto]; ao negativo pertence:

c.) Abstração, eu esqueço toda diferença e apenas observo a identidade.

19 Quanto ao uso dos exemplos, vale lembrar a anotação de Kant na seguinte *Reflexão*: “Os exemplos não são produtivos” (Refl. 1614, AA 16: 37).

Um conceito é o que está contido em muitas coisas, a *repraesentatio communis*. *Repraesentatio communis* é *quae efficit identitatem* da multiplicidade. Na *intuição* eu posso ter mais representações, no conceito apenas aqueles que são comuns a muitas coisas. *Usus conceptuum* é *vel in abstracto, vel in concreto, non vero conceptus ipse. In abstracto*, quando eu separo de toda a multiplicidade um conceito, por ex., o conceito de homem em geral. (VLo/Busolt, AA 24.2: 653)

Para o uso de um conceito é requerido a abstração, mas através dela um conceito não é construído. O último ocorre (1) através do fato de que algo é considerado como uma representação parcial, que pode ser comum a muitas, por ex., a cor vermelha. (2) quando eu considero a representação parcial como uma nota, como fundamento da cognição de uma coisa, por ex., eu conheço o sangue, a rosa etc. através do vermelho. A terceira ação é abstração, considerar essa representação parcial como fundamento da cognição, na medida em que ignoro todas as outras representações parciais. Um conceito é assim uma representação parcial, na medida em que abstraio ao mesmo tempo de todas as outras. (VLo/Dohna, AA 24.2: 753)

A primeira observação consiste em atentar para o fato de que não há, ou, ao menos, não é importante, segundo Kant, prioridade *temporal* entre as operações, o que é evidente visto as operações aparecerem em diferentes ordens de apresentação (ora, a *comparação* é primeira, ora a *reflexão*²⁰). Isso ocorre porque, vale destacar, como o registro de investigação para o funcionamento dos atos é *lógico*, não caberia aqui uma investigação de tipo genético. Mais importante do que isso, contudo, é observar que a caracterização dos atos lógicos nas *Lições* não parece ser unívoca. Se pegamos, por exemplo, o caso da operação de *comparação*, vemos que, se em Jäsche e Pölitz, essa operação lógica é caracterizada como uma comparação de representações *em relação com a unidade da consciência*, em Busolt, por outro lado, essa operação é entre representações gerais e, em Dohna-Wundlacken, a comparação resulta do fato de que algo é uma *representação parcial*. Desse modo, se deixado por si só, o texto das *Lições* oferece dificuldades exegéticas, provavelmente insuperáveis, quanto à possibilidade de uma interpretação única para os atos lógicos: como escolher qual(is) passagem(ns) deve(m) ser prioritária(s) na explicação da geração de um conceito quanto à forma?

Uma alternativa para enfrentar o texto das *Lições* pode ser buscar um critério externo a esses manuscritos. E sugerimos como critério balizador para ler as passagens acima selecionadas, as seguintes caracterizações encontradas nas *Reflexões*:

Actus lógicos nos conceitos: primeiramente a representação de uma *nota* como *communis comparatio*,

Em segundo lugar, esta como fundamento da cognição de uma coisa: *reflexio*.

Em terceiro lugar, a abstração daquilo que ela tem de diferente de outras coisas (Refl. 2854, AA 16: 547).

(1. atenção: relação com a consciência.)

Origem lógica dos conceitos 1. através de comparação: como elas se relacionam umas com as outras em uma consciência.

(Comparação sob uma outra.)

2. através da reflexão (com a mesma consciência): como diferentes podem ser concebidos em uma mesma consciência.

(se se poderia ter um conceito sem comparação com outros e ainda antes dela, todavia, como *repräsentationen communen*?)

3. através de abstração: omitir-se aquilo em que eles diferem.

(1. *apprehensio variorum* (Apreensão [Auffassung]).

(*comparatio* com o objeto da cognição.)

20 Em alguns casos, mesmo, a abstração aparece como a *única* operação, vide V-L/Blomberg, AA 24.1: 255.

2. *reflexio*: discernimento da conexão [*Zusammenhangs*] para a unidade do conceito.

3. *abstractio* do restante. ~ não é sempre necessário a comparação com outros, para chegar a um conceito geral, mas a consciência da possibilidade da representação de vários [Mancherley Art]. (Refl. 2876, AA 16: 555-6)

Reflexão significa: tornar-se gradualmente consciente de uma representação [*sich nach und nach de Vorstellungen bewust werden*], isto é, acompanhar [*zusammen halten*] uma consciência. Comparar: compará-la sob outras, isto é, acompanhar a unidade da consciência. Pergunta: se nós podemos, a partir de uma intuição singular sem comparação, separar algo [*etwas absonder*], para subordinar sob isso mais coisas, quando delas se deve descobrir. (Refl. 2878, AA 16: 556-7)

Com o texto das *Reflexões*, podemos agora voltar às caracterizações encontradas nas *Lições*. Procederemos no que se segue do seguinte modo: de início, iremos confrontar os textos selecionados das *Lições* a fim de verificar se há alguma unidade de significação para os atos lógicos à luz dos últimos trechos selecionados das *Reflexões*; em seguida, compararemos essa significação para os atos lógicos com a especificação da universalidade dos conceitos. A ideia consiste em encontrar, a partir da caracterização do que é a generalidade nos conceitos, uma especificação dos atos lógicos responsáveis pela formação de uma representação geral.

3.1 Comparação e reflexão

Comecemos com a operação da comparação. Em primeiro lugar, à luz das *Reflexões*, podemos descartar a compreensão da comparação como *meramente* uma comparação entre representações gerais, como aparece na *Lógica Busolt*, uma vez que a comparação naquele caso ocorria entre os conceitos *pinheiro*, *abeto* e *salgueiro*. Isso não significa que não ocorram, a fim de formar conceitos “mais gerais”, comparações entre conceitos, mas apenas que, se estamos buscando uma explicação lógica para a geração da *forma* de um conceito, a explicação de como chegamos ao conceito *abeto*, a partir dos conceitos *pinheiro* e *salgueiro*, mostra-se irrelevante, visto já supor representações gerais. Portanto, nesse caso, a operação de comparação que pode tomar parte na geração da forma de um conceito não pode ser uma comparação entre os conceitos *parciais* contidos em conceitos comparados²¹.

Em segundo lugar, vide a Refl. 2876 e a Refl. 2878, parece claro que Kant entendia a operação de comparação como uma relação das representações *com a unidade da consciência* que, de alguma maneira, ocorre por *subordinação*, embora seja preciso examinar exatamente o que isso significa. Ainda na Refl. 2876, encontramos o seguinte: “(1. *apprehensio variorum* (Apreensão [Auffassung]). (*comparatio* com o objeto da cognição.)”. A seu turno, essa passagem pode sugerir uma linha de raciocínio interessante para compreender *o que* ou *com o que* representações são comparadas nessa atividade. Por fim, de acordo com a Refl. 2854, a comparação também envolve a representação de uma nota como *nota comum*, justamente como aparece na *Lógica Dohna-Wundlacken*. Trata-se, portanto, de esclarecer como, no ato de *comparar*, relacionam-se essas características, a saber, o que *representar* como *nota comum* tem a ver com estabelecer uma relação de *comparação* (a princípio, subordinativa) entre representações para a *unidade da consciência*. Isso sem esquecer, todavia, da significação de um ato de *comparatio* com o objeto da cognição.

Por sua vez, no que concerne ao ato lógico da *reflexão*, temos, aparentemente, três acepções concorrentes. Em primeiro lugar, a Refl. 2876 parece confirmar a afirmação da *Lógica de Jäsche*, segundo a qual a operação de reflexão consistiria na consideração do modo como diferentes representações podem ser concebidas por uma consciência. Em segundo lugar, a Refl. 2854 confirmaria a caracterização da *Lógica Dohna-Wundlacken*, a saber, que esse ato diz respeito à consideração de uma representação como *fundamento de cognição*. Por fim, a Refl. 2878, acrescenta que refletir equivale a *tornar-se gradualmente consciente de uma representação*, o que, com algum esforço interpretativo, poderia ser compreendido nos termos daquilo expresso

21 Esse ponto ficará ainda mais claro na sequência, quando tratarmos da operação de *abstração*.

pelo trecho da *Lógica Busolt*: uma atenção à multiplicidade.

Repetidas vezes Kant afirma que o aspecto *positivo* da geração de um conceito quanto à forma deve-se à comparação e à reflexão, sendo a abstração apenas sua condição *negativa*²². Desse modo, justifica-se textualmente o tratamento dessas duas operações em conjunto. Mas, além disso, acreditamos que é possível oferecer uma outra justificativa para tratar dessas duas operações. Isso ocorre porque, olhando para a caracterização de Kant dessas operações lógicas, a partir dos textos escolhidos, é possível ver uma unidade de significação em torno de duas ações principais, que são remetidas ora à atividade de *comparação*, ora ao ato de *reflexão*.

Se colocarmos de lado os nomes atribuídos às atividades *positivas* que cooperam na geração de um conceito quanto à forma e atentarmos apenas às próprias atividades, acreditamos poder reunir as diferentes caracterizações que apontamos acima sob duas atividades principais. Em primeiro lugar, é possível identificar a caracterização de uma atividade segundo a qual *tornamo-nos conscientes de uma representação*²³. Em segundo lugar, é possível sublinhar um ato de considerar algo (uma *nota*, uma representação *parcial*) como *representação comum*²⁴, isto é, como fundamento de cognição. Para que faça sentido apontar para essas duas atividades, é preciso lembrar, rapidamente, o que considero ser a generalidade dos conceitos.

Nosso ponto de partida é que, dada a estrutura própria da intuição, representar algo como *parte* de uma intuição só é possível dependentemente de representar algo como *nota comum*. Isso porque é uma característica da intuição, para Kant, que o objeto seja dado *como um*. Se é assim, então, reconhecer *partes* na intuição de um objeto como *partes deste objeto* depende que tomemos essas partes como *representações parciais*, o que não pode ser realizado pela sensibilidade²⁵. Assim, como quer que representemos algo como *parte* e, portanto, como quer que chegemos a uma

22 Nas *Lições*, consultar: *Log.*, AA 09: 95; *VLo/Blomberg*, AA 24.1: 255; *VLo/Pölitz*, AA 24.1: 452; *VLo/Dohna*, AA 24.2: 752-3 e 753-4; *VLo/Wiener*, AA 24.2: 909-10.

23 Nessa rubrica, podem ser colocadas, por exemplo, as seguintes caracterizações para ambos os atos: *Lógica de Jäsche* “1) a *comparação* [*Komparation*], ou seja, o cotejo [*Vergleichung*] das representações entre si em relação com a unidade da consciência; 2) a *reflexão* [*Reflexion*], ou seja, a consideração [*Überlegung*] do modo como diferentes representações podem ser compreendidas em uma consciência”. (*Log.*, AA 09: 94) *Refl.* 2876: “(1. atenção: relação com a consciência.) Origem lógica dos conceitos 1. através de comparação: como elas se relacionam umas com as outras em uma consciência. (Comparação sob uma outra.) 2. através da reflexão (com a mesma consciência): como diferentes podem ser concebidos em uma mesma consciência. [...] 1. *apprehensio variorum* (Apreensão [*Auffassung*]). (*comparatio* com o objeto da cognição.)” (*Refl.* 2876, AA 16: 555-6). *Refl.* 2878: “Reflexão significa: tornar-se gradualmente consciente de uma representação [*sich nach und nach de Vorstellungen bewusst werden*], isto é, acompanhar [*zusammen halten*] uma consciência. Comparar: compará-la sob outras, isto é, acompanhar a unidade da consciência. Pergunta: se nós podemos, a partir de uma intuição singular sem comparação, separar algo [*etwas absonder*], para subordinar sob isso mais coisas, quando delas se deve descobrir [*vorfinden solten**.” (*Refl.* 2878, AA 16: 556-7) *Lógica Busolt*: “a.) *Reflexion* ou atenção da multiplicidade que está sendo pensada.” (*VLo/Busolt*, AA 24.2: 653) Finalmente, na *Lógica Pölitz*, onde a *reflexão* é chamada de *comparação*: “Eu reflito sobre as coisas, isto é, eu me torno gradualmente consciente das representações, ou eu comparo diferentes representações com minha consciência; isto é, dessa maneira eu comparo umas sob as outras [*sie untereinander*], isto é comparação.” (*VLo/Pölitz*, AA 24.2: 565)

24 Nesse caso, entram para a caracterização dessa atividade, a *Reflexão 2854*, onde Kant afirma: “*Actus lógicos nos conceitos: primeiramente a representação de uma nota como communis comparatio*, Em segundo lugar, esta como fundamento da cognição de uma coisa: *reflexio*.” (*Refl.* 2854, AA 16: 547) E, além disso, por exemplo, a seguinte passagem na *Lógica Dohna-Wundlacken*: “Para o uso de um conceito é requerido a abstração, mas através dela um conceito não é construído. O último ocorre (1) através do fato de que algo é considerado como uma representação parcial, que pode ser comum a muitas, por ex., a cor vermelha. (2) quando eu considero a representação parcial como uma nota, como fundamento da cognição de uma coisa, por ex., eu conheço o sangue, a rosa etc. através do vermelho.” (*VLo/Dohna*, AA 24.2: 753)

25 O ponto aqui é que uma *nota intuitiva*, isto é, uma representação parcial *deste objeto*, é dependente de uma *nota comum*, porque é dependente de que sejamos capazes de reconhecer *partes* de uma intuição. Agora, como reconhecer partes, *compor* e *decompor* a intuição, não é algo que possa ser realizado pela sensibilidade, essa atividade demanda o concurso do entendimento. Além disso, se é o entendimento que reconhece *partes*, então uma vez destacada uma *parte* da intuição, isso que é destacado como *parte* pode ser usado como *parte* na representação de qualquer objeto, ou seja, uma *parte* é justamente algo que pode ser *parte* de qualquer objeto. Se é assim, portanto, uma *nota comum* (uma representação parcial que pode ser atribuída a qualquer objeto) é uma condição de possibilidade de uma *nota intuitiva* (uma representação parcial que atribuímos a este objeto). Para uma explicação detalhada deste ponto ver o Capítulo 1 de minha tese de doutorado (Silva, 2016, UFRGS). Parte dessa explicação foi publicada no texto *Representar por conceitos – A perspectiva kantiana* (Silva, 2018).

representação *parcial*, uma vez “destacada” essa representação *parcial* da representação do objeto, poderíamos agora “utilizar” essa representação *como* uma representação, não apenas daquilo que a concebemos como sendo parte (o objeto, a coisa), mas como representação que pode ser parte de qualquer outro objeto e, portanto, uma vez que reconhecemos algo como parte, temos uma representação que pode servir como *nota comum*.

Mas, então, se para chegar a uma *nota comum*, precisamos reconhecer *partes como partes*, e, mais ainda, se isso não pode ser realizado pela sensibilidade, para chegar a notas *comuns*, é preciso um *ato* do entendimento que possibilite justamente o reconhecimento de partes na intuição *como* partes. A nossa sugestão é que a primeira atividade retirada das caracterizações dos atos lógicos de *comparação* e *reflexão*, como aparecem nas *Lições* e nas *Reflexões*, responde justamente por esse ato de *representar como parte*, ato que é condição de possibilidade para chegarmos a uma representação geral. Da nossa análise anterior, tínhamos destacado uma atividade através da qual *tornamo-nos gradualmente conscientes de uma representação*, a questão neste momento é: como essa atividade pode ser a atividade de reconhecer *partes como partes*?

Talvez essa possibilidade não pareça tão esdrúxula se olharmos, mais uma vez, para as *Reflexões* 2876 e 2878. Lá Kant caracteriza o ato da *comparação* e de *reflexão*:

(1. Atenção: relação com a consciência)

Origem lógica dos conceitos 1. através de comparação: como elas se relacionam umas com as outras em uma consciência (Comparação sob uma outra).

2. através da reflexão (com a mesma consciência): como diferentes podem ser concebidos em uma mesma consciência.

[...] 1. *apprehensio variorum* (Apreensão [Auffassung]) (*comparatio* com o objeto da cognição) (Refl. 2876, AA 16: 555-6).

Reflexão significa: tornar-se gradualmente consciente de uma representação [*sich nach und nach de Vorstellungen bewust werden*], isto é, acompanhar [*zusammen halten*] uma consciência. (Refl. 2878, AA 16: 556-7)

Deixando de lado o fato de que Kant atribui essa atividade por vezes à operação de *comparação*, por vezes ao ato de *reflexão*, o que essas caracterizações têm em comum é a identificação de uma atividade de acordo com a qual, ao atentar para a relação entre representações em uma consciência, *tornamo-nos gradualmente conscientes de uma representação*. O que significa tornar-se *gradualmente consciente* de uma representação? Ora, tornar-se gradualmente consciente de uma representação, por oposição a tornar-se gradualmente consciente de um *objeto* da cognição, é tornar-se consciente de algo que é apenas *parte* na cognição do objeto²⁶. Se é assim, portanto, uma vez que nos tornamos conscientes de uma *representação*, ao focar nossa atenção na *comparatio* com o *objeto* da cognição, tornamo-nos conscientes de uma representação *parcial*, a qual pode agora ser relacionada e comparada com outras representações parciais em relação a uma mesma consciência.

Isso significaria, por exemplo, que para *representarmos como parte* e, portanto, para que seja sequer possível termos uma representação *geral*, não precisamos *comparar* diversas percepções sensíveis e *reconhecer* que há algo em comum entre essas percepções, como ocorria na formação, por exemplo, da ideia simples e geral *branco* para John Locke. Lembremos que a ideia *branco* era formada a partir do reconhecimento de algo *comum* ao leite, ao giz e à neve. Em Kant, ao contrário, do ponto de vista lógico, basta que se tenha, no caso de conceitos cujo conteúdo provém da experiência, como consta na *Lógica Viena*, “visto a cor vermelha”²⁷, não é necessário,

26 Como aparece em Pöltz: “Eu reflito sobre as coisas, isto é, eu me torno gradualmente consciente das representações” (V-Lo/Pöltz, AA 24.2: 566-7).

27 A comparação entre coisas vermelhas é *posterior* ao conceito vermelho: “Aquele que deseja ter uma representação da cor vermelha, primeiro tem que ver a cor vermelha. Quando se compara a cor vermelha com o vermelho do cinabrio, *carmoisin* e da papoula, contudo, torna-se consciente de que existe algo geral na cor vermelha, que está contido nas outras coisas em outras representações da cor vermelha, e ele pensa pelo vermelho o que é comum a

além disso, desse ponto de vista, que se tenha observado *vários* objetos *vermelhos* para compará-los *sob essa representação* e para, só então, chegar à generalidade. Se basta que se tenha visto a cor vermelha, para que possamos construir o conceito vermelho, então não precisamos *comparar* na percepção diversas coisas vermelhas para chegar a esse conceito. Acreditamos que é nesse “espírito” que Kant anota na Refl. 2876, ao responder a uma pergunta que ele mesmo havia feito mais acima, “não é sempre necessário a comparação com outros, para obter-se um conceito geral, mas consciência da possibilidade da representação de vários modos.”²⁸ (Ref. 2876, AA 16: 556)

Assim, a comparação, como condição de possibilidade para a formação de uma representação geral, não deve ser entre *percepções* (sejam intuições ou conceitos). Queremos sugerir, portanto, que a comparação pela qual nos tornamos gradualmente conscientes de uma representação é uma comparação com o objeto da cognição, isto é, é um ato do entendimento que responde pelo fato de que seres humanos em contato com objetos são capazes de tornar-se gradualmente conscientes de *partes* desses objetos, isto é, de *representações parciais*, que, em um segundo momento, serão utilizadas justamente para pensar esses objetos sob essas representações²⁹. Nesse registro lógico, portanto, mesmo que de modo atabalhado, como testemunham as *Lições*, temos a identificação de um ato (ora nomeado *comparação*, ora *reflexão*) que responde pela atividade de *representar como parte*³⁰.

No entanto, não basta representar como *parte* para que tenhamos a generalidade, é preciso, além disso, que sejamos capazes de tomar isso que foi representado como parte como uma representação *do* objeto. É por isso que o concurso de um outro ato do entendimento é requerido. E é por isso também que Kant irá destacar um ato de tomar uma representação parcial como *fundamento de cognição* de objetos. Novamente, faz-se necessário trazer à tona esse ato como encontrado nas *Lições* com o auxílio das *Reflexões*:

Actus lógicos nos conceitos: primeiramente a representação de uma *nota* como *communis comparatio*, Em segundo lugar, esta como fundamento da cognição de uma coisa: *reflexio*. (Ref. 2854, AA 16: 547)

Para o uso de um conceito é requerido a abstração, mas através dela um conceito não é construído. O último ocorre (1) através do fato de que algo é considerado como uma representação parcial, que pode ser comum a muitas, por ex., a cor vermelha. (2) quando eu considero a representação parcial como uma nota, como fundamento da cognição de uma coisa, por ex., eu conheço o sangue, a rosa etc. através do vermelho. (VLo/Dohna, AA 24.2: 753)

Dessa maneira, se representamos *algo* – por exemplo, a vermelhidão – como *parte*, podemos tomar isso que é representado como parte, isto é, podemos tomar essa representação parcial, como *fundamento de cognição*. Por sua vez, tomar uma representação como fundamento de cognição é tomar uma representação como uma razão para conhecer um objeto, isto é, é

muitos objetos, e isso era um conceito. Um conceito, então, é uma representação do que é comum a muitas coisas.” (VLo/Wiener, AA 24.2: 904)

28 A questão era: “se se poderia ter um conceito sem comparação com outros e ainda antes dela [da comparação], todavia, como *repräsentationen communen*?” (Ref. 2876, AA 16: 556)

29 Claro, do modo como vejo, extrapola essa explicação lógica a consideração de como e por que, por exemplo, seres humanos em contato com certos estímulos são capazes de concentrar sua atenção separadamente nesses estímulos. De acordo com essa leitura, essa explicação deve dizer respeito a como certos conteúdos são constituídos e, portanto, não concerne à lógica geral.

30 Do modo como comprehendo a interpretação de Béatrice Longuenesse, a comparação de representações sensíveis que resulta na formação de conceitos depende de um sistema de comparações muito mais sofisticado do que o apresentado acima. No entanto, vejo como um dos problemas dessa interpretação justamente a não distinção entre o registro lógico e o registro metafísico da explicação da formação de conceitos. Nessa interpretação é preciso sustentar, por exemplo, a atuação de *regras silenciosas* que guiam a comparação de intuições justamente porque a comentadora pretende explicar como, da multiplicidade dada, chegamos a conceitos no que diz respeito ao seu conteúdo a partir dos atos lógicos. Mas, do modo como vejo, o que os atos lógicos devem explicar são as condições *lógicas* para chegarmos a representações gerais e não como certos conteúdos em nossa apreensão são privilegiados em detrimento de outros (Longuenesse, 2019, em especial, capítulos 5 e 6).

atribuir uma *nota* como *nota da coisa*. Mas, lembremos, a partir do momento que dispomos de uma representação *parcial*, isso significa que essa representação pode agora ser atribuída como *nota comum* não apenas a este objeto intuído, mas a qualquer objeto passível de ser pensado *sob* essa representação. Dito de outro modo, possuir uma representação comum, para ficar no exemplo da *Lógica Dohna-Wundlacken*, possuir o conceito “vermelho”, significa não apenas poder pensar os objetos apresentados na intuição, mas, sobretudo, *conhecer* as coisas (o sangue, a rosa etc.) pensadas através dessa representação.

Ora, nas duas *Reflexões* acima destacadas, temos justamente o realce dessa segunda condição *lógica* para a geração de uma representação geral: a consideração de uma *representação parcial* como *nota comum* ou, o que é o mesmo, como *fundamento de cognição*. Acrescente-se a isso o fato de que, uma vez que temos uma representação *comum*, temos um *fundamento de comparação* através do qual podemos não apenas comparar com outras representações comuns, para formar novos conceitos, mas também com os objetos intuídos a fim de saber se eles se encaixam ou não *sob* essa descrição.

No que concerne aos aspectos *positivos* do caminho *lógico* para a passagem do particular ao universal, queremos sustentar, portanto, que eles repousam nos dois passos acima descritos: em primeiro lugar, na consideração de uma representação como representação *parcial*; em segundo lugar, na consideração de uma representação *parcial* como *nota comum*.

3.2 Abstração

A última operação distinguida por Kant é a *abstração*. Com efeito, no que diz respeito a esse ato, à primeira vista, parece haver uma convergência entre os textos das *Lições*. No conjunto de textos destacados, é possível encontrar, repetidamente, a compreensão da abstração como uma operação de *separação*, para ficar com a expressão de Jäsche “de todos os demais aspectos nos quais as representações dadas se diferenciam” (*Log.*, AA 09: 94-5). Ainda como um comentário geral sobre os textos, temos uma insistência, supostamente pela parte de Kant, no papel *negativo* dessa operação. Além disso, parece confirmar essa caracterização da abstração como ato de *separação de aspectos irrelevantes*, o modo como os exemplos são dispostos no texto das *Lições*. Ao lado do famoso trecho de Jäsche citado acima, onde consta o exemplo da formação do conceito árvore, pode-se conferir, especialmente, as seguintes passagens:

Ninguém pode fazer dinheiro roubando-o de alguém e, do mesmo modo, ninguém pode fazer qualquer conceito por abstração. Através da abstração nossas representações apenas são tornadas universais, como já indicado acima. Se não temos nenhuma representação das coisas, então nenhuma abstração estaria apta para fazer conceitos para nós. Na abstração lógica, nós comparamos muitos conceitos uns com os outros, nós vemos o que esses contêm em comum, ou onde eles concordam, e através disso nossas representações tornam-se conceitos. (VLo/Blomberg, AA 24.1: 255-6)

Como surgem conceitos ou como podem representações tornarem-se conceitos? Isso eu posso perguntar apenas na lógica, *per reflectionem, comparationem, separationem seu abstractionem*. Eu reflito sobre as coisas, isto é, eu me torno gradualmente consciente das representações, ou eu comparo diferentes representações com minha consciência; isto é, dessa maneira eu comparo umas sob as outras, isto é comparação; onde eu encontro a identidade da consciência, eu separo ou absto do restante; assim eu obtenho um conceito; por ex., eu vejo um pinheiro, salgueiro ou tilia, eu vejo que eles têm um tronco, galhos e folhas que são diferentes, um tem mais galhos do que o outro etc. eu foco minha atenção no que eles têm em comum com respeito aos troncos, galhos, e folhas, da figura eu abstraio e assim eu chego ao conceito de árvore. (VLo/Pöltz, AA 24.2: 566-7)

Com efeito, como já tínhamos notado acerca da interpretação de Longuenesse sobre a passagem da *Lógica de Jäsche*, os exemplos, do modo como aparecem nas *Lições*, podem ser confusos e enganadores. No entanto, com algum cuidado, pode ser possível localizar os

objetivos de Kant com esses repetidos exemplos. Em primeiro lugar, é inegável que Kant, de fato, utilizava o exemplo da formação do conceito árvore em suas aulas, visto que ele aparece repetidamente nos textos das *Lições* (e mesmo nas *Reflexões*). Em segundo lugar, no entanto, queremos ler esse exemplo como dizendo respeito não ao modo como a *forma* dos conceitos é gerada, por conta de todos os problemas levantados anteriormente, mas como dizendo respeito ao que Kant chama na *Lógica Blomberg* de “abstração lógica” por oposição à operação de abstração que teria um papel na geração de um conceito quanto à forma (VLo/Blomberg, AA 24.1: 255-6). Provavelmente, derivado da própria dinâmica interna da sala de aula, os dois papéis da operação de *abstração* não tenham ficado suficientemente claros e, por isso, essas duas explicações diferentes apareçam misturadas nas notas dos alunos de Kant. Quanto à distinção entre tipos de *abstração*, a evidência que podemos oferecer são algumas passagens reunidas das *Lições*. Na seguinte passagem de *Dohna-Wundlacken*, por exemplo, a operação de abstração é dita poder ocorrer de dois modos:

{Abstrair no sentido filosófico é um conceito negativo – não levar em conta. Não existem conceitos abstratos. Podemos apenas abstrair de algo, de certas diferenças, notas das coisas. A distinção entre *abstract* e *concrete* não repousa no conceito, mas no *usus conceptum*.[...]} Através da abstração, entretanto, nada é produzido, mas ao contrário, muito é deixado de lado. Não devemos dizer: eu abstraio uma representação, mas eu abstraio de uma representação. Eu posso abstrair seja da variedade das coisas para as quais esse conceito é comum, seja eu posso atentar a ele em comparação com outros. (VLo/Dohna, AA 24.2: 753)³¹

Se lemos esses trechos das *Lições* em conjunto, poderíamos dizer, por exemplo, que o caso da formação do conceito árvore seria um exemplo de abstração *lógica*, a qual seria uma operação do entendimento realizada sobre representações *gerais* com a finalidade de construir conceitos mais “*abstratos*”. Segundo a citação logo acima da *Lógica Blomberg*, na abstração *lógica*, comparamos muitos conceitos uns com os outros e “vemos o que eles contêm em comum”. Ora, comparar conceitos uns com os outros e buscar o que eles *contêm em comum* é comparar as *notas* que estão *nesses* conceitos. Desse modo, portanto, olhando para o primeiro exemplo da *Lógica Pölitz*, comparamos os conceitos que possuímos de *pinheiro*, *salgueiro* e *tília* e buscamos suas notas a fim de ver o que, nessas notas, pode permanecer para chegarmos a um conceito *mais geral* que possa agora representar indiscriminadamente os pinheiros, os salgueiros e as tílias. Por essa operação, chegamos, assim, ao conceito “mais geral” árvore. Mas, por essa operação de comparação de notas nos conceitos não explicamos a generalidade dos conceitos, visto que essa operação já supõe que as representações comparadas sejam *gerais*³². Essa primeira operação de abstração é, portanto, uma operação de abstração sobre representações *gerais* e ela não parece

31 E nesta passagem, onde Kant supostamente criticaria Meier por um mau uso da operação de abstração: “O autor [no caso, Meier] pensa que nós chegamos a conceitos através da abstração. Mas através da abstração não chegamos a nenhuma cognição; a cognição deve estar [disponível] antes da abstração. Através da abstração se altera apenas a forma.” (VLo/Pölitz, AA 24.1: 452)

32 Na seguinte passagem da *Lógica Viena*, encontramos uma caracterização dos conceitos como *representação comum* que pode ter alguma utilidade aqui: “Um *conceptus* é uma *repraesentatio communis*, do que é comum a muitas coisas. Quem quisesse primeiro ter uma representação da cor vermelha, precisaria ver a cor vermelha. Mas, quando ele comparou junto a cor vermelha, o cinábrio, o *carmoisin* e papoula, então, ele percebeu que na cor vermelha há algo geral, que também em outras representações da cor vermelha estava contido, e pensou sob vermelho aquilo que era comum a vários objetos, e isso era um conceito.” (VLo/Wiener, AA 24.2: 904-5) Duas observações cabem aqui. Em primeiro lugar, o que é comparado é o conceito vermelho com os objetos cinábrio, carmosin e papoula. Em segundo lugar, temos que pensar pelo conceito vermelho o que é comum a muitos objetos, segundo o tempo verbal expresso por “*war*”, era um conceito. Mas, por que era um conceito? Supostamente, porque não se chegou a um conceito pela comparação do vermelho de várias coisas vermelhas, mas foi possível a comparação dessas coisas *sob* vermelho porque já possuímos o conceito (isto é, já possuímos uma representação comum, a qual poderia agora ser tomada como fundamento de cognição das coisas). Disso não se segue que a comparação não tenha um papel na geração da *generalidade*, apenas que seu papel não é o de comparar coisas *sob* uma característica comum.

acrescentar na explicação de como é possível chegar à generalidade^{33 34}.

Ocorre que uma segunda significação ainda pode ser destacada. A abstração aparece nas *Reflexões*, a exemplo de algumas passagens em que essa atividade é atribuída à comparação³⁵, como uma operação de *subordinação*:

A forma (lógica) do entendimento repousa na subordinação lógica dos *conceptuum communium*; a abstração é a condição, sob a qual *conceptus communes* podem vir a ser. *Abstraho ab aliis*. (Refl. 2871, AA 16: 553)

Portanto, o que provamos de um triângulo retângulo e, a saber, da propriedade da retangularidade, provamos para todos, embora em particular. O conceito parcial representado como fundamento de conhecimento *a priori* [vale] para toda comparação através da capacidade da imaginação produtiva. (Refl. 2884, AA 16: 558)

Para o uso de um conceito é requerido a abstração, mas através dela um conceito não é construído. [...] A terceira ação é abstração, considerar essa representação parcial como fundamento da cognição, na medida em que ignoro todas as outras representações parciais. Um conceito é assim uma representação parcial, na medida em que abstraio ao mesmo tempo de todas as outras. (VLo/Dohna, AA 24.2: 753)

Com efeito, considerar uma nota como *fundamento de cognição* das coisas é o mesmo que considerá-la como estando contida nas coisas representadas através dela. Isso porque, se considero que *vermelho* é um fundamento de cognição através do qual conheço a rosa, então isso significa que tomo *vermelho* como sendo uma característica da rosa, isto é, como *estando na rosa*. Mais ainda, de acordo com assunções da lógica geral, se um conceito está contido *em* uma coisa, então, essa coisa está contida *sob* o conceito: “Notas são sempre coordenadas com uma coisa e como parte constituem juntas o conceito completo de uma coisa; mas a coisa é subordinada às notas que são dadas dela e estão contidas nela.” (VLo/Blomberg, AA 24.1: 257) Se é assim, portanto, tomar uma representação como fundamento de cognição produz uma série *subordinada* de elementos: outros conceitos dos quais meu conceito principal é nota e outras coisas que conheço por esse conceito. Se a universalidade dos conceitos decorre de que conceitos são *fundamento de cognição*, e se a universalidade dos conceitos é sua *forma*, então compreendemos porque Kant anota, na Refl. 2871, que a forma lógica do entendimento repousa na “subordinação lógica dos *conceptuum communium*”. Queremos sustentar, portanto, que a ação de abstração é a ação resultante de tomarmos uma representação parcial como fundamento de cognição.

Assim, *stricto sensu*, conceitos não são tornados gerais por essa ação de subordinação, mas a ação de subordinação de conceitos e coisas é um resultado de tomarmos uma representação como fundamento de cognição. É esse o motivo garantidor do fato de que, de acordo com a Refl. 2884, “o que provamos de um triângulo retângulo [...] provamos para todos” (Refl. 2884, AA 16: 558). E, podemos, desse modo, compreender a ressalva de Kant quanto à abstração ser o aspecto *negativo* da geração de conceitos, pois uma vez que tenhamos chegado a representações gerais, temos como resultado a produção de uma série subordinada de elementos, para os quais tudo o que for provado estar contido em seus conceitos superiores, estará provado como nota dos conceitos inferiores e das coisas por eles subordinadas. Como colocado na passagem citada

33 Como vimos na nossa Seção anterior, é possível também sustentar que a operação de abstração é uma operação que gera o *conteúdo* dos conceitos, mas, disso se seguiria, como pretendemos ter sustentado, um esfacelamento dos limites impostos pela lógica geral.

34 A mesma ideia aparece em *Philippi*: “Pela separação/ abstração [*Absonderung*] comparamos muitos conceitos uns com os outros e vemos o que eles têm em comum. Quando muitos conceitos têm a mesma nota, então eu faço essa nota como se então todos esses conceitos estivessem contidos. A abstração é uma ação de subordinação. Eu subordino conceitos uns sob outros.” (VLo/Philippi, AA 24.1: 453)

35 Por exemplo, como aparece na Refl. 2878, já citada anteriormente: “Reflexão significa: tornar-se gradualmente consciente de uma representação [*sich nach und nach die Vorstellungen bewust werden*], isto é, acompanhar [*zusammen halten*] uma consciência. Comparar: compará-la sob outras, isto é, acompanhar a unidade da consciência. Pergunta: se nós podemos, a partir de uma intuição singular sem comparação, separar algo [*etwas absondern*], para subordinar sob isso mais coisas” (Refl. 2878, AA 16: 556-7).

acima da *Lógica Dohna-Wundlacken*, a *abstração* é a terceira ação, pois não é pela subordinação de elementos que produzo representações gerais, mas é por considerar representações como fundamento de cognição que considero essas representações como estando contidas nas coisas e, portanto, como subordinando essas coisas sob si.

Um outro aspecto da noção de abstração como uma atividade *negativa* cooperando na geração de um conceito quanto à forma pode ser destacado se observarmos, particularmente, na citação da *Lógica Dohna-Wundlacken*, mas amplamente documentada em outras passagens já citadas, a ideia de que a abstração é uma operação de “separação”. Ora, se pensar uma representação parcial como fundamento de cognição equivale a tomar uma determinada representação como nota da coisa, então, ao considerar a coisa *sob* essa determinação, também estou operando uma *abstração de outros aspectos da coisa*: ao pensar a rosa *como VERMELHA*, estou pensando a rosa *sob* o mesmo aspecto que penso o sangue e, assim, não estou pensando a rosa, por exemplo, *como ODORATA*, aspecto que a colocaria ao lado das lavandas, mas não ao lado do sangue. Nesse sentido, o que essa operação do entendimento faz ao colocar representações e coisas em séries de ordenação subordinativa também consiste em uma separação de outros aspectos não relevantes para essa ordenação.

Em resumo, defendemos, portanto, que enquanto os aspectos *positivos* da geração de um conceito quanto à forma podem ser atribuídos aos atos lógicos de comparação e reflexão, é possível destacar um papel *negativo* para o ato de abstração. E, assim, sugerimos que a *comparação* e a *reflexão* respondem pelas atividades de: i) tornar-se gradualmente consciente de uma representação, isto é, a capacidade de *representar como parte*, algo não explicado pela recepção de um objeto intuído e; ii) tomar uma representação parcial como representação da coisa, isto é, enquanto esta constitui um fundamento de cognição. Nesse modelo, por sua vez, caberia à *abstração*, atividade de separar representações, um papel *negativo*, porque essa atividade seria uma consequência do uso do entendimento nos atos lógicos da *comparação* e da *reflexão*: uma vez tomada uma representação como fundamento de cognição da coisa, segue-se uma subordinação da coisa, e de tudo aquilo que pode ser representado pelo fundamento de cognição, ao conceito na medida em que penso o que quero conhecer a partir do que ela tem em *comum* com outras. Se logramos êxito em nossa explicação, acreditamos ter avançado na compreensão do papel dos atos de *comparação*, *reflexão* e *abstração* na formação de um conceito quanto à sua forma, respeitados os limites de uma investigação no interior da lógica geral.

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Book Review - Happiness in Kant's Practical Philosophy: Morality, Indirect Duties, and Welfare Rights by Alice Pinheiro Walla

[Lexington Books, 2022]

Paula Satne¹

University of Leeds (Leeds, England)

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Kant is probably one of the most misunderstood philosophers in the history of Western thought. Some of the most well-known and pervasive objections to Kant's practical philosophy often rest on considerable misunderstandings of his central theses or a poor and superficial reading of his work. A common misconception is that in Kant's practical philosophy there is no place or role for human happiness. In *Happiness in Kant's Practical Philosophy: Morality, Indirect Duties, and Welfare Rights*, Alice Pinheiro Walla dispels this misunderstanding by elucidating Kant's conception of happiness (understood in broadly hedonist terms) and showing that, for Kant, the pursuit of happiness plays an important role in our personal and collective lives. This means that, far from endorsing an ascetic ideal of the moral agent, as it is commonly thought, Kant's system embraces an ideal of the human life in which there is significant space, and even a duty, to pursue pleasurable endeavours. Somehow surprisingly, in Pinheiro Walla's reading, Kant's ethics is arguably less demanding than standard interpretations of Aristotelian and Utilitarian ethical theories.

Happiness in Kant's Practical Philosophy is a rigorous book that elucidates Kant's often implicit and scattered views about happiness, dismantling its apparent contradictions, and clarifying the implications these views have for Kant's moral, legal, and political philosophy. One merit of this book is that it engages with a wide range of Kantian texts and covers a wide range of issues across various domains of Kant's philosophy. I won't be able to cover all the theses and arguments that are defended in the book in this short review. Instead, my focus will be on reconstructing Pinheiro Walla's claims that the pursuit of happiness has value and plays a central role in the life of a Kantian moral agent because "living a moral life can actually help us navigate the uncertainty of happiness and provide guidance, structure and meaning to our lives, individually and collectively" (p. 2).

Kant's alleged hostility to human happiness is often based on his rejection of the principle of happiness as the basis of human morality, an argument that Pinheiro Walla examines in chapter two. Famously, Kant argues that an adequate moral theory must be one that takes seriously the common understanding of morality as unconditional binding. For Kant, this means that "autonomy of the will is the sole principle of all moral laws" (KpV, AA 05: 33). Kant is thus the first theorist to take autonomy as the supreme principle of morality. Kant argues that all prior ethical theories are based on the principle of heteronomy, that is, they presuppose a prior object of the will to be authoritative and can only generate hypothetical, and thus, conditional imperatives. Kant also claims that all heteronomous theories are subordinated to the principle of happiness (KpV, AA 05: 22). These claims have led to Kant often being interpreted as maintaining that

¹ E-mail: P.Satne@leeds.ac.uk

the pursuit of happiness is incompatible with morality. Pinheiro Walla, however, resists this conclusion by emphasising the distinction between heteronomy and eudaimonism. Heteronomy is a specific model of the will, which places the normative source of morality outside of the will. Eudaimonism is a theory of motivation, which states that we are always motivated to pursue our own happiness. Kant's criticism of eudaimonism in moral theory is aimed at all theories that presuppose material principles as the basis of morality. It is primarily a criticism of conceptions of moral motivation that make the motivation for moral conduct something other than the thought of duty. Virtuous agents come to believe that the motivation to act morally is in fact the feeling of satisfaction with oneself which usually accompanies awareness of having acted morally. However, this feeling of contentment can only come about as awareness of having acted from duty. Thus, these theories are ultimately self-undermining. Kant's anti-eudaimonism in moral theory ultimately entails that morality cannot be reduced to happiness, but crucially Kant also argues that the feeling of self-approval that we derive from our awareness of moral motivation cannot replace the human need for happiness (KpV, AA 05: 88). Against ancient conceptions that identify virtue and happiness, Kant argues that "the highest good must be understood instead as a synthetic connection between two heterogeneous, irreducible components" (p. 55). This allows us to carve a conception of morality which can be compatible with a conception of genuine human happiness, without reducing one to the other. Kant's rejection of happiness as the foundation of morality should not be confused with a hostile attitude toward human happiness in general and an attempt to eradicate happiness from the moral life.

The first chapter clarifies Kant's fundamental assumptions about happiness, which are often tacitly presupposed in his works, but rarely overtly discussed, and then provides a reconstruction of Kant's "overall" conception of happiness. Pinheiro Walla starts her reconstruction by providing an analysis of two seemingly contradictory claims that Kant makes about happiness. On the one hand, Kant claims that happiness cannot be the *natural* end of finite beings with the capacity of practical reason (GMS, AA 04: 395). On the other hand, Kant also affirms that happiness is an end humans have according to a *natural necessity* (GMS, AA 04: 415-6). On the standard reading, the natural necessity of pursuing happiness as an end arises from our finite nature while our natural end as rational beings is morality. Pinheiro Walla rejects this standard picture, showing instead that both claims follow from Kant's conception of the finite *rational* will. Finite rational willing has two aspects, a formal and material one. The formal aspect of willing refers to the possibility of the will to conform to universal laws and to act from the recognition of this universal validity. However, determination by a pure formal principle is not sufficient for action. To act in the world, I also need to adopt *ends*, which constitute the material aspect of willing. Particular "willing" or acts of choice presuppose ends which are incorporated into one's maxims of action. Without this material aspect, the will would not be practical, and thus would not be a will at all. Kant claims that adopting an end analytically implies the commitment to take the means for its realization (GMS, AA 04: 417). Without the commitment to the realization of our ends, willing turns into mere *wishing*, which involves simply desiring an object without intending to act to bring it about. Mere wishing leads to a conception of happiness as an unrealistic ideal of imagination in which "all inclinations [are united] in one sum" (GMS, AA 04: 399).

The matter of the will is provided by our inclinations understood in hedonist terms as desires to obtain pleasure. The inclinations provide the matter for the adoption of our non-moral ends. However, since having an end necessarily involves one's commitment to its realization, in order to realize our non-moral ends and satisfy some of our inclinations, we need to form a determinate material and realistic conception of our happiness. As Pinheiro Walla puts it "because we have a plurality of ends which are incompatible with each other or must be realized in different times, agents are confronted with the task of forming a conception of the ends that constitute their happiness, in a more or less coherent hierarchy" (p. 10). We can see that the "necessity" of forming a determinate and realistic conception of one's own happiness understood as the well-defined sum of compatible ends, arises from the structure of

finite willing itself and is not imposed externally from our non-rational animal nature. While each agent's material conception of happiness would differ and agents would also differ in their ability to form a coherent model of happiness and live up to it, the formal concept of happiness is constitutive of human agency as ends-oriented, that is, required by the structure of finite rational willing. This means that the pursuit of happiness belongs to our essence as finite rational beings and there is no normative requirement to adopt happiness as an end. The normative requirement to prioritise our happiness understood as a coherent sum of ends, when it conflicts with the satisfaction of our more immediate momentary desires, applies only to agents who have adopted overall happiness as their end and it follows from the hypothetical imperative to seek the necessary means for the realization of one's ends, not from a requirement of prudential reason.

Pinheiro Walla then turns to explain Kant's claim that happiness cannot be the end of nature for human beings (GMS, AA 04: 395). This claim is the conclusion of a teleological argument from the *Groundwork*, an argument that is often considered an embarrassment even by defenders of Kant's moral theory. Adopting the perspective of the teleological principle of natural efficiency, Kant argues that we cannot assume that happiness is the highest end of nature for humanity since instinct seems to be a more efficient capacity for the attainment of our happiness than reason (GMS, AA 04: 395). However, the fact that our reason is not merely contemplative but also has a practical use provides the ultimate evidence for the claim that happiness cannot be the highest end of humanity. The only end that reason is best to promote "by itself" is the good will, which must be seen as the natural end for human beings. Kant argues that happiness is not an ideal of reason but an ideal of imagination. The concept of happiness is ultimately an *indeterminate* concept. Human cognitive limitations mean that we cannot foresee all external consequences of the achievement of our ends and the impact that this can have on our happiness. For example, we may realize an end only to find out that it is incompatible with other important ends that are constitutive of our ideal of happiness. Moreover, cognitive limitations mean that our own desires are not transparent to us, so we may be mistaken about what we really want and find out that realising an end does not bring us happiness after all. Thus, we must revise and correct our conception of happiness throughout our lives: "our urges and feelings (...) require a good deal of self-scrutiny and interpretation, and not least a certain amount of bitter life experience" (p. 18).

Pinheiro Walla argues that the teleological argument is thus not an embarrassment. On the contrary, it is because happiness is not our natural or whole end, that incompatibilities between happiness and morality are merely contingent and not intrinsic to morality. If we took happiness to be the principle of the will, then the possibility of morality would be excluded as a maxim of subordinating morality to happiness is evil (RGV, AA 06: 31) whereas subordinating happiness to morality does not exclude the possibility of happiness. Having morality as our natural end allows us to see the natural and social evils that plague humanity, not as something that we have no hope to improve, but as presenting us with a moral task, that is, as something we have a duty to address. Paradoxically, the recognition that morality is humanity's supreme good can "bring us closer to contentment than making happiness our 'whole end'" (p. 22).

The third chapter explores Kant's claim that there is an indirect duty to promote one's own happiness (GMS, AA 04: 399) and provides an elucidation of the concept of 'indirect' duties, which constitutes an important contribution to Kant's scholarship. Indirect duties are concerned with dispositions and feelings that are naturally given in human beings but that "cannot be *directly commanded*" although it is nevertheless possible to cultivate them "in a way which can provide support to our capacity of moral agency" (p. 79). Kant's explicit rationale for the duty is to make us less susceptible to temptations to immorality arising from an unhappy life. The underlying idea seems to be that a life of continuous and unbearable discontentment would make the pursuit of morality impossible. At first glance, it may seem that there is no need for an indirect duty to pursue happiness understood as overall satisfaction because, as we have

seen, we already have this end by natural necessity. The problem is that, given the indeterminacy of happiness, it is not always irrational to sacrifice long-term overall satisfaction for the sake of short-term pleasure. Since happiness is an indeterminate end, it is always possible that short-term sacrifices may fail to pay off. Thus, as Kant's example of the gout sufferer illustrates, from the point of view of desire-satisfaction, it is not necessarily irrational to choose to satisfy immediate desires over long-term health. Surprisingly, Kant argues that the gout sufferer has a duty to promote his long-term happiness and to make immediate sacrifices for the sake of his health. Pinheiro Walla explains Kant's position by arguing convincingly that Kant makes an implicit distinction between subjective and objective happiness. Objective happiness refers to "basic ends of our animal nature which have an impact on our moral integrity and thus can be commanded in case of neglect," while subjective happiness simply refers to what we happen to desire (p. 82). Pinheiro Walla argues that securing one's objective happiness can become the object of a direct duty "presumably when the agent feels no inclination to pursue her own happiness and the neglect of her wellbeing has moral relevance" because it either has an impact on her capacity for moral agency or her moral integrity (p. 81). Thus, the indirect duty to promote one's happiness can qualify as a direct duty under specific circumstances. Thus, failing to pursue one's own objective happiness is not merely a failure of prudence, but it can constitute a violation of a duty to oneself as a moral being. Thus, by the end of chapter three, Pinheiro Walla has established that the pursuit of happiness has an important place in Kant's moral philosophy, showing how the adoption of happiness as an end is required from the point of view of the structures of our rational wills and the role that it plays in supporting and maintaining our capacities for morality.

Chapter four turns to analyse Kant's claim that we have an imperfect duty to adopt the happiness of others as our end. As duties of beneficence are duties of commission, which require that we invest time and resources in helping others, this raises the question of to what extent it is permissible to promote one's own happiness and how much we should do to promote the happiness of others. Here again Pinheiro Walla provides an important contribution to the literature by dispelling some common and enduring misunderstandings of Kant's ethics. One enduring misunderstanding is the view that Kantian ethics requires strict impartiality, a view illustrated by Bernard Williams' famous "one thought too many" objection. Williams argues that Kantian ethics requires us to be impartial in choosing which of two drowning people to save, even if one of them is the agent's wife. Impartial immorality would require us to flip a coin instead of straightforwardly giving preference to one's wife. Williams claims that entertaining the idea of flipping a coin in such situation is entertaining "one thought too many" and ultimately a moral vice. On this reading, Kant's ethics would forbid us to give priority to the well-being of those close to us, or even our own well-being, over the well-being of strangers. Williams' picture thus has contributed (to the delight of some students who lack the energy to engage seriously with Kant's texts) to the popular view of Kant's ethics as one that is hostile to human happiness, that is, as a morality that is "self-alienating and allows no space for the pursuit of personal projects and human flourishing" (p. 98). Pinheiro Walla argues convincingly that Williams' picture is simply mistaken.

To properly understand Kant's position, Pinheiro Walla argues, we must pay attention to Kant's distinction between benevolence and beneficence in the *Doctrine of Virtue*. Benevolence as a "feeling of satisfaction in the well-being of others" (MS, AA 06: 450) involves a general love of humanity which can be directed equally to everyone because it simply requires that we "wish others well" without leading to any concrete action. In contrast, beneficence is a form of willing and not a mere wish. As such, beneficence requires that we take concrete actions to help others (MS, AA 06: 393) since we cannot genuinely will the end without also willing the means. In fact, Pinheiro Walla notes, there is a passage which clearly contradicts the strict impartiality interpretation. Kant writes: "[f]or in wishing I can be *equally* benevolent to everyone, whereas in acting I can, without violating the universality of the maxim, vary the degree greatly in accordance with the different objects of my love (one of whom concerns me more closely than

another)" (MS, AA 06: 451-2). According to Pinheiro Walla, the point of the passage is not to allow us to make exceptions to the universal maxim of beneficence by promoting our own happiness and the happiness of those close to us. Instead, Kant is arguing that we have *special obligations* arising from the fact that we are directly responsible for our own wellbeing and the wellbeing of those closer to us. The *Doctrine of Virtue* provides ample textual evidence that Kant did recognize special duties arising from the special relations between individuals, including duties to spouses, parents, offspring, friends, and fellow citizens. These duties do not require a special principle, only the application of the universal principle to particular circumstances (MS, AA 06: 468-9).

Wide duties of virtue possess latitude in the sense that they do not give clear instructions as to what is morally required. While doing too little may count as evidence that one has not in fact adopted a maxim of helping others, and is thus reproachable, we can never do too much when it comes to virtue. Since there is no upper limit for compliance, it is always possible to do more and become more perfect than we are. However, Pinheiro Walla warns against reading this as implying a maximization requirement, arguing that actual perfection is an unachievable task for finite beings. Again, although this is not often noticed, Kant warns against the moral fanaticism involved in striving to achieve perfection in our finite lives at all costs, often attempting to do so by searching for spurious opportunities to act morally and ultimately "turn[ing] the government of virtue into tyranny" (MS, AA 06: 409). Pinheiro Walla argues that as long as we remain firmly committed to the moral principle (i.e., to actually help others), we are not morally required to maximize help. On the contrary, provided that we do not endanger our moral integrity, "depending on the circumstances, prudence is morally permitted to shape the degree to which an agent may choose to comply with wide duties" (p. 106). Contrary to Williams, Kantian moral theory does not require the same level of impartiality as standard Utilitarianism.

Chapter five digresses to consider issues related to the demandingness of Kant's moral theory. It considers a problem that arises from Kant's classification of the duty of beneficence as being an imperfect duty. In Kant's theory, perfect duties always have priority over imperfect duties. Since we are not obliged to perform every act falling under an imperfect duty, we can forgo an opportunity to comply with an imperfect duty for the sake of complying with a perfect duty without facing a conflict of duties. The reverse however does not hold. To comply with an imperfect duty when this presupposes violating a perfect duty would amount to a violation of duty and undermine the moral worth of one's action. However, the normative priority of perfect duties over imperfect duties has an implication which seems to contradict our moral intuitions. It seems to imply that "one should not save a person from a burning house if doing so would require using the neighbour's hose without her permission" (p. 123). The problem is that duties of rescue, which in Kant's theory fell under the duty of beneficence, seem intuitively more pressing than many instances of perfect duties. Taking the intuition seriously would require us to prioritise imperfect duties over perfect ones, at least on some occasions. This raises two worries. First, there is a suspicion that practical deliberation can do without this distinction after all. Second, if duties to help can sometimes have priority over perfect duties and given that I know that the world is full of people who need urgent help, then it seems that in urgent cases, helping others is morally obligatory and would always have priority over pursuing my merely permissible end of happiness. On this picture, morality becomes overly demanding after all.

Pinheiro Walla provides an original solution to the first problem. She argues that under some very specific circumstances the latitude of an imperfect duty can shrink to zero. This happens "when refusing to help would amount to giving up one's commitment to beneficence altogether" (p. 125). I cannot refuse to save someone's life when doing so would incur very little costs to myself and still claim that I am committed to beneficence in any intelligible way. In this case, even though the duty of beneficence is imperfect, my latitude for choice is zero and I am obliged to perform the helpful act. But what if I can only save the life by violating a perfect duty? Pinheiro Walla argues that we are still not permitted to violate the perfect duty. Instead,

I am merely *excused* to do so, given the circumstances. This ingenious solution allows us to interpret Kant's theory as maintaining that duties of rescue are stringent without collapsing Kant's central distinction between perfect and imperfect duties.

Pinheiro Walla's solution to the second problem appeals to Kant's justification of the duty to help others. Assuming that we usually have a desire to pursue our happiness, we cannot adopt a maxim of indifference to the happiness of others on pain of incurring a contradiction in our willing. The condition of permissibility of the pursuit of one's own happiness is that we also adopt the happiness of others as our end. Thus, we have a duty to adopt the happiness of others as our end because we naturally want our own happiness. This, in turn, requires that the principle commanding beneficence to others must involve *latitude* for compliance. To deny genuine latitude to the duty of beneficence would amount to undermine its very *raison d'être*. This means that we are sometimes permitted to prioritise the pursuit of our own happiness over the needs of others.

The chapter ends with an important observation: often whether morality becomes very demanding is not an intrinsic feature of moral demands themselves but an extrinsic feature regarding the agent's social and political circumstances. As it is well-known, there is a tragic aspect of Kant's moral theory as it can sometimes demand that we completely sacrifice our happiness for the sake of perfect duty. This is more likely to happen under very dire circumstances, such as political turmoil, instability, war and/ or oppression, where complying with everyday ordinary duties can become an almost impossible task. If this observation is correct, as I believe it is, morality and happiness are only contingently incompatible, and our task is to create stable political and social conditions where human beings can flourish while continuing to fulfil their duties and pursue their moral ends.

The final chapter of the book analyses the place of happiness in Kant's political and legal philosophy, addressing the question of economic justice in the Kantian state. Kant is clear that happiness, as an indeterminate idea, cannot be the basis for external universal legislation (TP, AA 08: 290). Since people have different views of happiness, the state's function is only to secure people's right to pursue their individual conceptions of happiness. For the state to attempt to promote its subjects' happiness would amount to paternalistically imposing a particular conception of the good life on them. Ultimately, this would constitute a problematic form of despotism. At the same time, Kant recognises that "for reasons of state the government (...) is authorized to constrain the wealthy to provide the means of sustenance to those who are unable to provide for even the most necessary natural ends" stating that this should be done "by way of coercion, by public taxation, not merely by voluntary contributions (...)" (MS, AA 06: 326). However, Kant's justification of a state duty to aid the poor remains elusive and it is open to different and conflicting interpretations. Pinheiro Walla rejects an influential attempt to ground this duty on the need to secure the conditions of citizens' civil independence, arguing that "it is not clear why dependence on state aid would make subjects independent in the sense required for being one's own master" (p. 148). Pinheiro Walla rejects recent welfare interpretations of Kant's legal and political philosophy. However, she does not endorse a minimalist, "night watchman" interpretation of the Kantian state. Instead, Pinheiro Walla defends a middle ground position according to which although the Kantian state is not concerned with material redistribution "but only with *formal* relations of rights, it can nevertheless recognize the need to redistribute from considerations of equity or fairness, that is from the recognition of the non-enforceable rights of individuals" (p. 151).

Pinheiro Walla's book presents a unified, comprehensive, and novel interpretation of Kant's conception of happiness, a topic that had not previously received the attention that it deserves. In the course of developing and justifying this interpretation, Pinheiro Walla also dispels some common misunderstandings of Kant's practical philosophy, displaying a deep understanding and knowledge of Kant's works, and offering a compelling picture of the Kantian moral agent, one in which happiness and morality can be pursued to the fulfilment

of human flourishing in fair social and political conditions. This book not only provides an important contribution to the literature, but it is also a game changer in Kant scholarship. It is an obligatory reading for anyone wishing to engage seriously with Kant's practical philosophy.