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3

A place for affects and passion in the Kantian system

An empirical psychology in an *a priori* moral theory?

What is the role of empirical knowledge in an *a priori* theory? If the question is posed in such a way, the answer is easy: none. However, even though a moral theory may be able to obtain its supreme moral principle without considering human nature, it cannot fail to question the application of these principles to sensitive rational beings. The object of what can be called empirical psychology is the empirical nature of man. This object is addressed by Kant in *Anthropology* and *Lectures on Metaphysics*. Without a doubt, the empirical description of the faculties of the human being is not part of the description of the *a priori* principles of morality, and nor do the particular laws of nature provide *a priori* concepts. However, just as in physics, the empirical study of the laws of nature must agree with the *a priori* knowledge obtained in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the empirical science of man must show the same for the law of morality obtained in the *Groundwork* and the *Critique of Practical Reason*.

The relation between moral metaphysics and empirical Kantian philosophy can be enunciated in two theories: a strong one and a weaker one. The strong

theory proposes that the content of moral philosophy should be submitted to empirical verification, and the weaker theory would be that, at least, they should not be contradictory. Kant in many passages vigorously opposes the strong theory. In the *Groundwork*, he warns us about the damage caused by those who presume to extract morality from experience: “If we have so far drawn our concept of duty from the common use of our practical reason”—Kant points out, referring to the method in the first section of the *Groundwork*—“it is by no means to be inferred from this that we have treated it as a concept of experience” (G, 4: 406). Indeed, the philosopher warns, “No one could give worse advice to morality than by wanting to derive it from examples” (G, 4: 408).

Aside from this, Kant’s works are filled with references to the impossibility of empirically determining the morality of actions, since we do not have access to others’ motives and incentives. The mere observation of actions will not give us access to their morality: the grocer can fail to increase the price of goods out of a sense of duty or self-interest, just as the philanthropist can help those in need due to compassion and not out of duty. Not only are others’ intentions opaque, also we do not have complete access to our empirical selves. According to Allen Wood, this is one of the reasons for the need for a theory regarding the noumenal self in Kant: “Kant’s conjectures about noumenal freedom are possible only because we can never have satisfactory empirical knowledge of the mind. If we had reliable access to the natural causes of our behavior, then it would be quite untenable to claim that the real causes are different from these and transcend all experience.”¹ Wood’s position is interesting because it shows that one of the reasons we talk about a noumenal self is precisely because we cannot have access to our empirical selves and their motivations.

If we cannot have proof of morality through empirical investigation, we are left with the weak theory: the empirical investigation of man cannot contradict *a priori* moral philosophy. Human inclinations, emotions, and passions, in other words, all that separates the rational sensitive being from a divine will, cannot constitute an obstacle to morality.

Between the properly empirical investigation of the human being, his peculiarities, inclinations, and tendencies, and the supreme principle of morality, there exists what we can call principles of application. As well as having principles of application of the *a priori* principles of experience to objects of experience, we should have an analogy in a theory of the principles of application for morality.

In an interesting text on friendship by Paton,² originally from 1956 and thus much earlier than the publication of the *Vorlesungen über Anthropologie* and the comments regarding these student notes, this traditional commentator had already pointed out the importance of anthropology in Kant. He emphasizes that Kant taught anthropology for thirty years and that he considered this as an important part of his role as a professor of pure philosophy. Paton recalls even that the philosopher considered the anthropology and physical geography classes as important for the knowledge of the world and human nature, without which the duty prescribed by reason cannot be put into practice. However, as Paton highlights, Kant distinguished three levels: one of moral principles, one of application principles, and one of psychology itself.³

Even if we can agree with Paton regarding the necessity of distinguishing these three levels, Kant was not always clear on this. The identity or difference of psychology and anthropology, the place of anthropology in the system, and even the late conception of a pragmatic anthropology show us that the distinction between these levels is not so precise in Kant. Our purpose now will be to examine some of the moments of this distinction.

The provisory refuge of empirical psychology in metaphysics

Kant exposed the doctrines of rational psychology and empirical psychology as a part of his course during the classes on metaphysics he taught in the

1770s. The students' notes grouped as *Metaphysik* L1 expose the analogy that physics maintains with psychology. Both are part of what is called physiology, known in Kant's day as the knowledge of the object of the senses. The sum of all the objects of the senses is nature, thus, physiology is the knowledge of nature. Physiology can be either empirical or rational: "Empirical physiology is the cognition of the object of the senses insofar as it is obtained from principles of experience. Rational physiology is the cognition of objects insofar as it is obtained not from experience, but rather from a concept of reason" (ML1, 28: 221). Here Kant clarifies that the division between the empirical and the rational refers only to the form of knowledge, not to its object:

The *object* is always an object of the senses and experience; only the cognition of it can be attained through pure concepts of reason, for thereby physiology is distinguished from transcendental philosophy, where the object is also borrowed not from experience, but from rather from pure reason. (ML1, 28: 221–22)

An example of rational physiology (*physiologia rationalis*) is given by the study of the doctrine of movement through the concept of the body: a body is infinitely divisible; a quantity of matter belongs to it. Matter occupies space, matter has inertia, thus it can only move through an external power. In this we understand an object of the senses—the movement of bodies—through a concept, the concept of body. Other properties of the bodies would be studied by empirical physiology (*physiologia empirica*): bodies attract one another, are heavy, and so on.

The classification of physiology can be made according to form (rational and empirical) and also according to the object or matter. We then have the division according to objects of external sense and of internal sense: physics is the physiology of external sense, and psychology of internal sense. Both are divided in a rational and an empirical part.

Metaphysics is considered a science of pure reason; thus, neither empirical physics nor empirical psychology should have a place in it. However, empirical psychology is taken into account within metaphysics. What is the reason for this? Kant answers the following:

The cause as to why empirical psychology <*psychologia empirica*> has been placed in metaphysics is clearly this: one never really knew what metaphysics is, although it was expounded on for so long. One did not know how to determine its boundaries, therefore one placed much in it that did not belong there; this rested on the definition, in what one defined it by the first principles of human cognition. . . . The second cause was this: the doctrine of experience of the appearances of the soul has not arrived at any system such as that it could have constituted a separate discipline. (ML1, 28: 223)

There was, therefore, a habit of placing empirical psychology within the study of metaphysics due to the lack of definition of the latter's limits, as well as its still incipient state as a complete doctrine. However, Kant predicts, "With time there will accordingly be trips undertaken in order to cognize human beings, such as have been undertaken to become acquainted to plants and animals" (ML1, 28: 224).

What is interesting is that Kant tells us we do not know why empirical psychology should have a place in metaphysics and, if it does, it is due to the vagueness of the term "metaphysics" and to the fact that psychology has not yet been developed as a science.

One of the central concepts of empirical psychology is the concept of the self: "The substrate which underlies and which expresses the consciousness of inner sense is the concept of the I, which is merely a concept of empirical psychology" (ML1, 28: 224). The analysis of this concept is done through the analysis of faculties. I can feel myself, I have the intuition of myself: what belongs to my faculty while I am passive belongs to my inferior faculty;

what belongs to myself while I am active belongs to my superior faculty. We have three faculties according to the three things that belong to the self: representations, desires (appetites), and pleasure and displeasure. The self is therefore composed of three faculties (cognitive, desire and pleasure, and displeasure), and each is divided into inferior and superior. Through the inferior cognitive faculty there are representations of the objects which affect us; the superior cognitive faculty is the power to have representations from ourselves. The inferior faculty of desire is the power to desire objects which affect us; the superior is the power to desire something by ourselves, regardless of the affection of the objects. Analogously, the inferior faculty of pleasure and displeasure is the ability to feel satisfaction (*Wohlgefallen/complacentia*) or non-satisfaction through the objects which affect us. The inferior faculties have the property to be affected by the objects; instead, the superior faculties have as a characteristic independence from this affection.

In relation to this exposition, it is interesting to make a few observations. First, what could be denominated, in general, as a doctrine of the faculties is treated as empirical psychology in the context of these *Lessons*. Empirical psychology is opposed to rational psychology, which deals with substantiality, immortality, and the interaction of the soul with other substances. Second, it is worth pointing out that critical philosophy tries to refute rational psychology, but not empirical psychology. The substantiality of the soul and what accompanies it (simplicity, unity, etc.) is refuted in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, especially in the paralogisms. Critical philosophy is the refutation of the attempt to know objects of the internal sense through concepts (of substance, of one, etc.), and not the attempt to get to know the objects of the internal sense through experience. The conception of the transcendental self is distinct from the substantialized self of rational psychology, but is not incompatible with the study of the empirical self as an object of the internal sense. This would perhaps explain why empirical psychology is tolerated and even accepted as part of metaphysics.

It is imperative to note the fact that the *Critique of Pure Reason*, which intends to destroy the foundations of rational psychology, by reducing it to the logic of illusion, still concedes temporary shelter to empirical psychology:

Nevertheless, in accord with the customary scholastic usage, one must still concede it a little place (although only as episode) in metaphysics, and indeed from economic motives, since it is not yet rich enough to comprise a subject on his own and yet it is too important for one to expel it entirely or attach it somewhere else where it may well have less affinity than in metaphysics. (B 876/7)

Werner Starck stresses that Kant's *Lectures on Anthropology* are divided into two parts: the first one consists of empirical psychology, according to the third part of Baumgarten's metaphysics.⁴ Rudolf Makkreel also explains the use and definition of empirical psychology in the eighteenth century: "Empirical psychology in the eighteenth century regarded the soul as the *locus* of certain capacities of the human being as a living animate being. Kant used the *psycologia empirica* of Alexander Baumgarten's *Metaphysica* as the text for his lectures on Anthropology, and the early lectures reflect this by making more references to the soul than do the later ones."⁵

Groundwork: The radical separation between practical anthropology and moral metaphysics

In the introduction to *Groundwork of The Metaphysics of Morals*, we are confronted by a clear separation between metaphysics and empirical psychology. Ethics is divided into metaphysics of morals and practical anthropology. After introducing the three basic sciences since the Greeks, physics, ethics, and logic, Kant states that the first and second ones deal with objects, while the third is formal. We have a science of the laws of nature and a science of the laws

of freedom, both admitting a pure and empirical part. Physics has an empirical part but also a rational one: metaphysics of nature. In ethics, its empirical side is named practical anthropology and its pure side metaphysics of morals (G, 4: 388). The latter provides us with the law according to which everything must happen, while the former provides us with information regarding human nature, which should be obtained by another professional (not a philosopher) who should search only for the first principles.

Two observations should be made here. First, in this text from 1785, the empirical realm does not refer to an empirical psychology such as in the 1770s *Lectures on Metaphysics*. This does not mean that empirical psychology was banned from the realm of moral philosophy, but instead that it was incorporated into practical anthropology. One of the proofs of this incorporation is the statement in *Critique of Pure Reason* regarding the probable destiny of an empirical psychology, as long as it could abandon its provisory refuge: “It is thus merely a long-accepted foreigner, to whom one grants refuge for a while until it can establish its own domicile in a complete anthropology” (KrV, A 849/B 877). If the different groups of notes in the *Lectures on Metaphysics* are compared, we can see that same difference.⁶ In the *Lectures on Anthropology* from 1772 to 1773 (Ant, 25: 8), there is synonymy between empirical anthropology and psychology; in the *Lectures on Anthropology* from 1780 (Ant, 25: 243) and in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, empirical psychology is part of anthropology and its object is the internal sense.

The division of philosophy into a pure and an empirical part is described as well in Mrongovius’s notes from 1785,⁷ the same year as the *Groundwork*’s publication. However, as Allen Wood has pointed out,⁸ Kant did not yet know, at the time *Groundwork* was published, how his *The Metaphysics of Morals*, nor a practical anthropology, would look. The *Groundwork* is not yet *The Metaphysics of Morals* and the project of the latter as something absolutely apart from anything empirical still is to be built. The *Groundwork* is about the justification of the principle of morality—that is, the categorical imperative.

Even using examples in which a few elements relating to human nature can be verified, it is possible to affirm that the procedure of obtaining the categorical imperative is achieved without a substantial contribution of these elements. If the attainment of that which should be done is obtained without empirical elements, nowhere does Kant state that moral philosophy does not include an empirical part. On the contrary, moral philosophy is composed of metaphysics of morals and a practical anthropology.

***Metaphysics of Morals* and principles of application**

If, in the 1770s, empirical psychology was able to find a place in metaphysics, even if temporarily, as with the publication of *Groundwork* (1785), there was a clear separation between the *a priori* realm and the empirical realm of moral philosophy, *The Metaphysics of Morals* (1797) presents us with a panorama which is slightly more complex than temporary refuge or radical separation. Let us see its introduction:

But just as there must be principles in a metaphysics of nature for applying those highest universal principles of a nature in general to objects of experience, a metaphysics of morals cannot dispense with principles of application, and we shall often have to take as our objects the particular nature of human beings, which is cognized only by experience, in order to show in it what can be inferred from universal principles. . . . This is to say, in effect, that a metaphysics of morals cannot be based upon anthropology but can still be applied to it. (MS, 6: 217)

Here we clearly have an analogy between a metaphysics of morals and metaphysics of nature: both bring application principles which can be applied to particular objects. In the case of the *Metaphysics of Morals*, this particular object is human nature. The first principles of metaphysics of morals cannot

be based on anthropology, but should be able to be applied to it. Kant seems to implicitly answer the later critique addressed to him regarding the ineffectiveness of his practical theory: he really had no intention of creating principles which could not be applied to human nature; although the source of the principle should be based on reason alone. The application of the moral principle to the human being, so as to determine, for example, particular duties of virtue, requires the examination of a few particularities of human nature. The determination of these particularities which are morally relevant to human nature will tell us whether or not moral law can be effective. “The counterpart of a metaphysics of morals, the other member of the division of practical philosophy as a whole”—Kant states—“would be moral anthropology, which, however, would deal only with the subjective conditions in human nature that hinder people or help them in fulfilling the laws of a metaphysics of morals” (MS, 6: 217).

The concept of pragmatic anthropology

The *Anthropology*, published in 1798, presents the knowledge of human nature as a pragmatic anthropology. We will begin with the question: what is this anthropology *not*? It is not physiological, but pragmatic. Knowledge of men can be given from a pragmatic or physiological point of view. “Physiological knowledge of man, aims at the investigation of what nature makes of man, whereas pragmatic knowledge of man aims at what man makes, can or should make of himself as a freely acting being” (Ant, 7: 119).

Apart from being knowledge of men in the exercise of his freedom, it is also known as knowledge of the world (*Weltkenntnis*), as it contains knowledge of the things in the world: animals, plants, minerals of several places. Apart from that, it incorporates knowledge of man as a citizen of the world. Such knowledge can be acquired through travel or even travel books. Even literature

can be a good source of knowledge of man as a citizen of the world: Richardson and Molière's characters are models of understanding of human nature, even if their traits may become more intense.

Comments on race and sex occupy the second part, called characteristic. Kant now abandons the academic style and attempts to imitate the manner of the salons. He attempts to talk about the correct style of hosting, subjects that should be avoided, the ideal number of people at the dining table, and risks a few witty remarks on the temperaments of the sexes and the characteristics of different races. Some are quite curious. In the book regarding the faculty of desire, Kant, while speaking about emotions which are good for the health, says that crying accompanied by convulsive sobbing and shedding of tears is good for one's health. Thus, a widow who is inconsolable, who does not want to know how to dry her tears, is, without realizing it, caring for her health (Ant, 5: 263). In another passage, referring to laughter, he advocates that children, especially girls, be accustomed to broad and frank smiles, because joy expressed in the facial features will gradually imprint in their interior a disposition to joy and sociability (Ant, 7: 265). Another curious and perhaps very innovative comment as regards the feminine sex: he accepts *coqueterie*, in other words, the social flirtation between a married woman and other men, since a young wife always runs the risk of becoming widowed, which leads to her distributing her charms to would-be suitors in case such a fact occurred (Ant, 7: 219).

Some other comments are quite illustrative concerning the sociability of the time. Such is the case of the rules to be followed during a reception. For a good reception, the guests must be a minimum of three and a maximum of ten people; conversation during dinner must follow three stages: narration, argumentation, and pleasantries. This third stage is appropriate, since the guests have already eaten plentifully and argumentation requires a lot of energy, no longer available due to the requirements of digestion.

In the *Anthropology*, Kant re-elaborates the contents presented in *Lectures on Metaphysics* and in *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime*.

The former ceases to be the mere doctrine of the appearance of internal sense and the discourse regarding the faculties evolves from the concept of the transcendental self. The idea of construction through liberty and the allusion to *Weltkenntnis* are innovative in respect of the discourse regarding races and genders, presented in the characteristic.

The intention here was to show the different moments which the definition of anthropological and empirical psychology passed through. As we were able to see, empirical psychology as explained in the *Lessons on Metaphysics* is not displaced of meaning by the advent of critical philosophy. It is taken in what Kant called “anthropology,” which receives the adjectives of moral, practical, or pragmatic. Thus, its contents, such as the content relative to the pure principles of morality, are part of a practical philosophy. In the same way that experience cannot lend to principles of morality, the latter, without knowledge of human nature, would be inefficient.

What is not made clear in the Kantian system is what really the complement to moral metaphysics is, in other words, what the amplitude of practical anthropology is. Would it be composed solely by that which was an object of *Anthropology*? A viable answer would be that there is no specific text which fully explicates practical anthropology. It is discussed in the published *Anthropology*, in *Religion within the Bounds of Mere Reason* and in *The Metaphysics of Morals* itself, spanning over the contents regarding human nature which appears in *Doctrine of Virtues* and in *Doctrine of Right*. All these texts discuss, not exhaustively, that which seems to be the object of a moral metaphysics: a practical anthropology, in other words, the nature of the rational sensitive being.

The impure part of ethics

Kantian moral theory has a pure part and another part which, by contrast, we may call impure.⁹ We are able to verify this union of two parts in the

Mrongovius's transcriptions¹⁰ of Kant's courses on ethics. According to those lectures, *methaphysica pura* is only the first part of morals—the second part is *philosophia moralis applicata*, moral anthropology, to which the empirical principles belong. The particular nature of the human being and the laws upon which it is based provide the content of a moral anthropology.

Once these two parts of Kantian ethics have been accepted, our problem becomes finding the texts which discuss *metaphysica pura* and those which express *philosophia moralis applicata*.

The book *Anthropology* is not about physiological knowledge of man, as explained in the *Introduction* (Ant, 7: 119), but about what man, through a certain sensible construction, has become in the use of his freedom. In turn, *The Metaphysics of Morals* exemplifies the sensible conditions of human beings for the effective reception and application of moral law, which was obtained through the *Faktum der Vernunft*.

If the proof of the moral law is obtained *a priori* in *Critique of Practical Reason*, in *The Metaphysics of Morals* the sensible conditions which allow its application are especially expressed. In it we can say that we are facing what Mrongovius named, according to Kant's lessons, *philosophia moralis applicata*, whose objective is precisely to determine the limits of the validity of that which is obtained in the part referring to *moralia pura* by a specific object, such as human nature. The former would provide us the principles of application of morality to human's nature. According to Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals* cannot waive the principles of application to the particular nature of human beings, which is known by experience (MS, 6: 217). The *Pedagogy* and the *Religion*, in turn, also expound on the peculiarities of the human being and how he can be educated toward virtue and morality.

If, in general, all of these works address the constitution of the rational sensitive being and the conditions of morality's possibilities, would they have the same level of particularity? Or can some be classified as belonging to

what Paton had already referred to as principles of application, and others to empirical psychology?

In his recent book, *Kant's Impure Ethics*, Robert Louden provides an important contribution to this discussion. Louden's book comes to show that aside from pure, nonempirical principles, Kant offers an ethics which is not pure. This part was named, by Kant himself, as "moral anthropology," "practical anthropology," or "moral applied philosophy." These terms refer to the empirical study of the human being, which Louden refers to as "impure ethics," in order to contrast with "pure ethics," consisting of *a priori*, nonempirical principles. Louden does not deny that the pure part of ethics provides the foundation to practical Kantian philosophy and is, thus, more important than the "impure" part. However, the author calls attention to the fact that Kant dedicated many of his writings and lessons to the empirical study of the human being, which would be necessary for the application of those principles.

Contrasting with this interpretation, we have Patrick Frierson's idea that Kant has a transcendental anthropology. This expression, taken from Kant's handwritten notes, does not appear in other texts. Frierson admits that Kant often uses the term "anthropology" to refer to pragmatic anthropology and "transcendental" for the conditions of possibility of experience; however, he explains his use of the term: transcendental anthropology "provides a useful term to contrast Kant's approach to human being in his *a priori* philosophical works with empirical and pragmatic approaches elsewhere."¹¹

Frierson understands the three critiques as parts of transcendental anthropology: the first critique would give us a "transcendental anthropology of cognition," the second critique will be the "transcendental anthropology of volition," and the *Critique of Judgment* will supply us with "transcendental anthropology of feeling."¹² He considers that the answer to the question: "What is the human being?" is given in his transcendental philosophy, "where he develops his metaphysical account of humans' free and finite natures and lays out norms that should govern cognition, feelings, and volitions," and in

his empirical anthropology, “where he provides detailed descriptions of how human beings actually think, feel, and choose.”¹³ Pragmatic anthropology will integrate, in Frierson’s view, both aspects.

Although the *Anthropology* has granted an importance in Kant scholarship since the publication of the *Vorlesungen*,¹⁴ I consider that a transcendental anthropology exceeds any reasonable understanding of Kant’s philosophy, since anthropology is always related to the empirical part of the human being, and not to the *a priori* domain. There is no *a priori* anthropology, which makes the term transcendental anthropology a little bit odd. In this sense, Loudén’s approach of a pure and impure part of ethics seems more reasonable as an interpretation of Kant’s philosophy than an idea of a transcendental anthropology.

The pure and impure parts of Kantian ethics, according to Loudén, are both necessary and complementary. Disregarding the latter would not only be to disregard an important part of Kant’s work, but also to offer material to critique and irony in relation to a practical philosophy blind to the peculiarities of the human being and, therefore, to the applicability of his principles. Loudén is not, however, unaware of those who defend strict formality in Kantian ethics. He asks himself,¹⁵ how can an anti-naturalist such as Kant support an empirical ethics or a moral anthropology, since he does not admit anything more than pure, *a priori* moral principles. At the same time, Kant explicitly admits that moral anthropology is based on experience as the complement to *The Metaphysics of Morals* (MS, 6: 217, 385, 406). How to harmonize moral metaphysics with anthropology, when both seem necessary to the Kantian ethical project?

Let’s start by answering *what impure ethics is not*. Impure ethics is not empirical content which should be mixed with *a priori* principles. Loudén reinforces the idea that there is an indispensable duty of exposing the pure part of ethics separately and completely distinctly from the empirical part of ethics, because, as Kant already enunciated in *Groundwork*, a theory in which

the pure and empirical parts mix up does not deserve to be called moral philosophy, since such a mixture perverts the purity of morality (G, 4: 390). The empirical elements are also not responsible for the obtainment of the pure principles, even if at times they may illustrate these principles, such as in the examples provided in the *Groundwork*, where suicidal humans, philanthropic people, and shop owners illustrate the application of the principle of morality. Impure ethics is necessary when it regards the application of pure principles in empirical circumstances, in which we have sensitive rational beings as moral subjects. In order for an action to be moral, however, the pure principle, in other words, nonempirical, must be the foundation of the determination of the will.

Louden presents a classification which he named “fields of impurity”: education, anthropology, art, religion, and history. These fields of impurity are not about the physiological or psychological study of man, as Kant had already forewarned in *Anthropology*, but refer to what man has done with his own nature through the use of his freedom. Thus, the study of pedagogy refers to the strategy of moral education through the training of the abilities required for practical judging. In the *Anthropology*, we can also see the importance of the universality of Kantian ethics, even in the studies of the racial and gender subgroups. In the Kantian account of art and religion, we see how aesthetic appreciation serves the purposes of morality and how religious institutions help to create a global moral community. In history, the concept of historical progress as a development toward a cosmopolitan society is emphasized.

One of the most brilliant points of Louden’s approach is the idea of levels of impurity of Kantian ethics, since Kant’s ethics is not composed only of a pure and an impure level, but also by the application of principles of the former toward the latter, and by the determination of specific duties of rational sensitive beings.

The first level of Kantian ethics, according to Louden, is pure ethics. According to Kant’s statement in *Critique of Pure Reason*, “pure morality . . .

contains merely the necessary moral law of free will in general” (KrV, A 55). On this level of total abstraction, no information regarding the peculiar nature of the human being or of another rational being is given. However, not even the *Groundwork* itself would fit into a pure ethics in this more strict sense, since this text discusses subjective limitations and obstacles, as well as the way in which moral law should be received as an imperative, which is not valid for every rational being.

The second level, present in the *Groundwork*, would be named *morality for finite rational beings*. In this case, none of the enunciated principles depend on specific information regarding human culture and nature, even if the categorical imperative is valid for rational finite subjects, who are conscious of the moral principle but whose inclinations oppose it. We then have a third level, represented by *The Metaphysics of Morals*, whose objective is to determine moral duties for human beings as such. Determining duties, as human duties, is only possible when we know the constitution of human beings (MS, 6: 217), which requires minimal empirical information about human nature. Which empirical information would be required to determine human duties? In order to apply the moral law to human beings, we should have general knowledge regarding human nature, such as the instincts, tendencies, abilities, and faculties of such beings. The project of determining specific duties to human beings is still a part of metaphysics, since empirical knowledge is not incorporated in the system (MS, 6: 205).

If the determination of the specific duties of human beings is an object of metaphysics, however, the specific study of the human peculiarities which assist or hinder the exercise of morality will be the object of a practical or moral anthropology, as the text establishes at various moments (MS, 6: 217).

What is the specific *locus* of moral anthropology? In order to answer that, we should first answer the following questions: What are the passions and tendencies which hinder or assist adherence to moral principles? How should these principles be taught to human beings? How can political, cultural, and

religious institutions be organized so that they can realize moral objectives? Are there specific aspects of modern time which assist in the establishment and development of morality?

The Anthropology, especially in its first part, answers the first question. The pedagogical texts, along with the texts on religion and history, appear to be the right place to answer the other questions of moral anthropology. On the other hand, the second part of the *Anthropology* presents a more specific description of subgroups within the human species, which implies a more detailed empirical knowledge than what is necessary in a moral anthropology.

The most specific degree of empirical knowledge in Kant is given when we ask what to do in a particular situation. Kantian philosophy, as we know, does not tell us what to do in particular cases; in that sense, we are now already outside the Kantian system. However, he occupies himself with these questions in at least two texts. In the *Lessons on Pedagogy*, he recommends that the teacher should teach a moral catechism to the students, through casuistic questions. Such practice would serve to the development of the capacity for moral judgment in young people. Kant equally dedicates a few passages of *Metaphysics of Morals* to casuistry. He then discusses matters relative to sexuality, consumption of toxic substances, alcohol abuse, and the correct degree of inebriation allowed at parties. Even if casuistry is not a part of science or a moral doctrine, it assists in the practice of moral judgment, which is especially needed for the fulfillment of imperfect duties.

Impure ethics and sensibility

In order to analyze the relation between reason and emotion, three central moments of the impure part of ethics deserve special attention, in their relation to sensibility. First, the Kantian claim that one should cultivate natural feelings, such as sympathy, in order to realize benevolent actions, which appears to

contradict the praise of the cold philanthropist found in *Groundwork*. Second, the relation between morality and feelings, especially the idea of aesthetical presuppositions of the reception of duty. And the third, a theory regarding emotions and how to handle them—be it through cultivation or control. In order for such, we ought to have a specific model for emotions and think about how Kant intends to control them through the strength of virtue.

The sensitive aspects of morality can be noticed in the conditional duty of promoting sympathy. Kant defines sympathy in the same way that an Empiricist would define it: “Sympathetic joy and sadness (*Mitfreunde und Mitleid*) (*sympathia moralis*) are sensible feelings of pleasure and displeasure (which are therefore to be called ‘aesthetic’) at another’s state of joy or pain” (MS, 6: 456). We have a duty to cultivate these sympathetic feelings in order to promote benevolence. If the moral law cannot be an objectively sufficient motive and a subjectively sufficient incentive, there is the indirect duty of strengthening a few natural sentiments which can help in acting according to duty.

It is therefore a duty not to avoid the places where the poor who lack the most basic necessities are to be found, but rather to seek them out, and not to shun sickrooms or debtors’s prisons and so forth in order to avoid sharing painful feelings one may not be able to resist. For this is still one of the impulses that nature has implanted in us to do what the representation of duty alone might not accomplish. (TL, 6: 457)

The cultivation of sympathy seems to fulfill the role of a moral incentive when the law is not sufficient to promote the moral action. In the impure part of ethics, therefore, a few sentiments which did not have moral value in *Groundwork* now have it. Part of this is due to the distinction between active and passive sympathy. The active sympathy of the *Doctrine of Virtues* may correspond to what in the *Anthropology* is denominated sensitivity (*Empfindsamkeit*). Apparently, it is suggested that sympathetic feelings

connected to sensitivity can be cultivated,¹⁶ while their passive version, the affects (*Affekten*), are uncontrollable by reason and would just hinder the realization of the moral action.

Besides sympathy, there is also, as discussed earlier, the idea of aesthetical presuppositions for the susceptibility of the mind to the concept of duty (*Ästhetische Vorbegriffe der Empfänglichkeit des Gemüts für Pflichtbegriffe überhaupt*) that appears in the introduction to *Doctrine of Virtues*, paragraph XII. These aesthetical presuppositions include moral sentiments (*das moralischen Gefühl*), conscience (*das Gewissen*), love to one's neighbors (*die Liebe des Nächsten*), and self-respect (*Achtung für Sich selbst*) or self-esteem. The most important of these presuppositions is moral feeling, defined as "the susceptibility to feel pleasure and displeasure merely from being aware that our actions are consistent with or contrary to the law of duty" (TL, 6: 399). This feeling can be pathological or moral; in the first case, it seems to precede the representation of law. In the second, it is posterior to the law, and is an effect of a concept regarding the faculty of feeling pleasure or displeasure.

Since it refers to a natural predisposition of the mind to be affected by the concept of duty, we are in the realm of practical anthropology and no longer of *metaphysica pura*. This natural predisposition is a fact about human nature: "No human being is entirely without moral feeling, for were he completely lacking in receptivity to it he would be morally dead" (MS, 6: 399).

Moral feeling is distinct from both respect and from the *moral sense* of the Empiricists. The feeling of respect is just a feeling of fear and displeasure, while the moral feeling can be a feeling of pleasure, when our actions are in conformity with the law of duty. This aspect of pleasure answers, in a way, Schiller's famous jocular poem, in which he states that Kant taught him to do with repulsion the good he used to do with pleasure. What is not explained, however, is whether moral feeling is the feeling of respect through the feeling of pleasure, or whether it is a new feeling. Regardless, it is not the Empiricists' moral feeling (*moral sense*), because it does not give us the moral law, but follows

the law given by reason. We have the obligation to cultivate and strengthen this feeling as part of virtue, but it will never tell us what we should do.

The third important aspect is the interpretation of passions and affects as illnesses of the mind. This would be compatible with the idea that we have strong inclinations—be they affects (*Affekten*) or passions (*Leidenschaften*)—which are not liable to being easily cultivated as in Aristotelian texts, or excised, according to Stoic apathy. If a few feelings—such as sympathy—allow for cultivation, this is an exception, since passions and affects usually constitute hindrances to the will. Moreover, as we have seen, Kant seems to tell us about a double sympathy, a sympathy-affection and a sympathy-sensitivity, since only the latter would be capable of cultivation. Regarding passions and affects, we have interesting comments and metaphors of the *Anthropology*: Passions and affects are considered illnesses of the mind (*Krankheit des Gemüts*) (Ant, 7: 251) and exclude the sovereignty of reason; affects make reflection impossible, while passion is stated to be malign tumors (*Krebsschäden*) to pure practical reason (Ant, 7: 266). Then, regarding the degree of strength and permanence: affect acts like water rupturing a barrage (Ant, 7: 252), renders the subject blind (Ant, 7: 253), while passion is a river which digs ever deeper into its riverbed, and it is a permanent atrophy (7: 252).

In paragraph XIV of the *Doctrine of Virtue*, it is explained that affections and passions encumber moral reflection and deliberation:

Affects belong to feeling (*Gefühl*) insofar as, preceding reflection, it makes this impossible or more difficult. . . . A passion is a sensible desire that has become a lasting inclination (e.g., hatred as opposed to anger). The calm with which one gives oneself up to it permits reflection and allows the mind to form principles upon it and so, if inclination lights upon something contrary to the law, to brood upon it, to get it rooted deeply, and so to take up what is evil (as something premeditated) into its maxim. And the evil is then properly evil, that is, a true vice. (MS, XV, 6: 407–08)

Affects and passions are impediments to the moral life; however, if affects, such as anger, momentarily hinder and impede reflection, passions, such as hatred, with the calmness of reflection, form maxims which are contrary to the law, making us have a real vice, an evil which does not only accrue from weakness but from consciously taking up nonmoral motives in maxims.

Kant appears to be skeptical regarding the possibility of cultivating emotions. We can see it both in the jocular comment in *Anthropology* regarding Socrates,¹⁷ as in the *Doctrine of Virtue* itself: "For moral maxims, unlike technical ones, cannot be based on habit" (TL, 6: 409). The idea of strength thus ends up replacing the impossible cultivation and apathy: virtue contains a positive demand; to place all of your abilities under the control of reason, which goes beyond forbidding that the subject be governed by his feelings and inclinations, as these may dominate him if virtue does not take control of them. Aristotelian cultivation and Stoic apathy are not enough to fight inclinations. A strong adversary, who does not merely let itself be tamed, must be commanded and controlled. For this reason, virtue is not apathy, but the capability and reflected-upon decision to resist the temptations of sensibility.

The proof that beings with will and reason, whoever they may be, are subjected to moral law is independent of specific considerations regarding how the human being is affected. However, in order to show that *ought implies can*, in other words, that rational beings can act according to what duty orders, Kant needs to show how the moral law affects them.

The ability to be a moral agent for humans implies that our sensibility is affected, which is caused by respect and moral emotion. Without these emotions we would be, according to the Kantian expression, morally dead. Being a moral agent is the possibility of placing feelings such as sympathy in the service of morality, when the mere respect for the law is not capable of being a sufficient motive. And, in order to fight inclinations which oppose themselves to morality, one must train virtue as an interior strength capable of making one resist the temptations of sensibility, fighting an inherent weakness

to a pathologically affected will. The pure part of ethics must be, however, complemented by its conditions of validity to human beings, which can only be found in a doctrine of moral sensibility.

Is Kant closer to the Empiricists than he believed? No, since even recognizing the necessary sensitive presuppositions of moral law's effectiveness for human beings, what is correct in each case is always determined by reason and not by emotion. This is the final separation between the theorists of moral emotion and Kant: the latter's conviction that feelings are blind if they are not cultivated and trained by reason and, primarily, submitted to reason.

Since we have already examined reason, let us then move on to emotion.