# 15   Kant's conception of virtue

## VIRTUE ETHICS BEFORE KANT

Most ancient ethicists regarded virtues both as instrumentally valuable qualities of a person that enable her to live well, and also as valuable in themselves by being partly constitutive of happiness (*eudaimonia*).[1] The four cardinal virtues recognized by most ancient ethicists are courage, temperance, justice, and intelligence. Common among ancient theories of virtue are the following theses. First, the virtues are stable dispositions. For someone to be brave, she must be reliable and constant in her brave acts; they must be characteristic of her. Second, though ancient philosophers often described virtues as habits, they did not take them to be *mere* habits. Virtues are dispositions that require cultivation and involve choice.[2] Third, virtues involve reason. To be virtuous, a person must not only do or pursue the right things; she must know why they are the right things. The intellectual aspect of the virtues is illustrated by the common ancient view that virtues are a special kind of craft, or are formally similar to crafts in some ways.[3]

Fourth, for many ancients, virtue involves emotions. Plato (ca. 430–347 B.C.E.) and Aristotle (384–322 B.C.E.) took the soul to have both rational and non-rational parts, and virtue to involve both. Aristotle emphasized that the development of virtue requires not merely gaining control of one's emotions, but training them, bringing them into harmony with one's judgments about what is valuable and what virtue requires.[4] The virtuous person takes pleasure in performing right actions, and is pained by performing wrong ones. Furthermore, Aristotle's doctrine of the mean says that a virtuous person not only acts rightly, but also has the appropriate kind and

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intensity of feeling – feeling neither excessively nor deficiently angry at a particular injustice, for example.[5]

Stoicism (which originated ca. 300 B.C.E.) denied that the soul has both rational and non-rational parts, and that most emotions (passions) have a role in virtue.[6] Stoics understood the passions as unavoidably contrary to reason and virtue.[7] Stoics said that virtue motivates in itself; the virtuous person acts based on her judgment of what virtue requires, unimpeded by competing influences. For Stoics, passions are *misguided judgments*: unreflective judgments that attribute value to things other than virtue, and thereby hinder virtuous action. A fully virtuous person recognizes that virtue has a value incomparably higher than anything else.[8] Such a person would not feel grief at the death of a loved one, nor envy another's financial success. Thus, rather than train one's emotions, Stoics sought to etiolate them, advocating dispassion.[9]

While ancient ethicists generally agreed that virtue comprises the main part of happiness, they disagreed about whether virtue is *sufficient* for happiness. In *Republic* II, Plato argued only that one is always better off if one is just than if one is unjust. Aristotle argued that virtue is necessary for happiness, and the dominant part of happiness, but not sufficient for happiness. He emphasized that, as the final end, happiness must be a complete and self-sufficient good – a good that fulfills our desires, that lacks nothing.[10] Without "external goods" such as wealth, health, or family, even the person with a life of virtuous activity cannot be considered happy; he has reason to want more, to feel unsatisfied with his life.[11] Unlike Aristotle, Stoics and Epicureans argued – in different ways – that virtue is sufficient for happiness. Stoics held that virtue is valuable for its own sake, and indeed that it has such a special, high value that it cannot be made better or more complete by adding other things to it. For Stoics, happiness is constituted purely by a life of virtuous activity. No matter how poor, ill, or hated the virtuous person is, Stoics claimed she is happy. Thus, Stoics reduced Aristotle's "external goods" to "preferred indifferents," things reasonable to pursue so long as they accord with virtue, but not themselves necessary for happiness.[12] Epicurus (341–270 B.C.E.) conceived of happiness as pleasure, and took virtue to be valuable only as a means to happiness.[13] But Epicureans were not hedonists as we now commonly use the term, for they understood pleasure as an inner state of equanimity,

which could obtain in the virtuous person no matter what hardships she suffered.[14]

With Christianity came increasing interest in understanding morality as commanded by God. Christian thinkers offered ethical interpretations of their New Testament, as well as of the Hebrew bible, developing, for example, the notion of original sin. Nevertheless, many medieval Christian philosophers retained aspects of ancient virtue ethics, which they transformed to accommodate their theological commitments. Saint Augustine (354–430), for example, followed the ancients in taking the ultimate end as central to morality.[15] But whereas the ancients saw virtues as at least largely constitutive of happiness in *this* life, Augustine and other Christians saw them as the basis for happiness in the *next* life; no one can be completely happy until united with God.[16] Augustine held that God rewards those who are virtuous in this life with happiness in the next. Yet he also claimed that God gives us virtues so that we can achieve this very salvation.[17] Finally, Augustine's view of the connection among the virtues had a distinctly Christian slant: all virtues express the love of God.[18]

Peter Abelard (1079–1142) defined virtues as dispositions to do good deeds, and vices as dispositions to do bad ones.[19] For example, Abelard described charity as the will's "consent" and "readiness" to aid the poor.[20] In keeping with his ethics of intention, Abelard took charity (and its moral value) to be independent of what a charitable agent accomplishes.[21] Moreover, Abelard considered struggle essential to virtue, rather than an accidental feature of it resulting from Adam's fall. For Abelard, without resistance from vice, there is no virtue; and the greater our internal opposition to virtue, the greater our merit before God in overcoming it.[22]

Saint Thomas Aquinas (ca. 1225–1274) understood virtues as habitual inclinations to act in accordance with the nature of a human being – that is, rationally, in control of one's passions.[23] Like Augustine and most of his other Christian predecessors, Aquinas accepted Aristotle's moral virtues of courage, temperance, intelligence, and justice, and added the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity, which he thought were "infused" by God.[24] Whereas the four cardinal virtues aim at our earthly happiness as human beings, the three theological virtues aim at our "supernatural happiness," beyond the constraints of human nature. Thus, though altered considerably by

the influence of Christianity, eudaimonistic virtue ethics remained important throughout the Middle Ages – and indeed through the Renaissance as well.[25]

Virtue had a much smaller role in the "natural law" philosophies that dominated in the seventeenth century, such as those of Hugo Grotius (1583–1645) and Samuel Pufendorf (1632–1694), which gave notions of duty, obligation, law, rights, and right action prominence.[26] Within the natural lawyers' philosophical framework, virtue was restricted to the class of "imperfect duties" – meritorious duties of indeterminate scope and requirement, which are not appropriately coerced, pertaining to and motivated by the good of others.[27]

In Thomas Hobbes's (1588–1679) moral theory, virtue was subordinate to self-interest.[28] Traits such as justice, mercy, and gratitude are moral virtues because they advance self-preservation. Hobbes understood the virtues as commanded by the laws of nature, yet he saw these laws as justified by consideration of what best promotes self-preservation. Although Hobbes took the laws of nature to be "immutable and eternal," he did not think it rational (or required) for people to follow them at the cost of their ability to protect themselves. Hobbes said the laws of nature always bind "*in foro interna*" (by demanding cultivation of certain desires, dispositions, or ends), but not always "*in foro externo*" (by demanding external actions).[29]

Virtue regained prominence with the "moral sense" theorists Anthony Ashley Cooper, Earl of Shaftesbury (1671–1713) and Francis Hutcheson (1694–1746). Moral sense theories of virtue tended to define virtue in terms of a *spectator* rather than of a deliberating agent.[30] Moral sense was said to be the faculty through which we perceive and judge people's moral qualities. What we love and approve in others' characters and motives, we call virtues; similarly, we call an act virtuous if it issues from a motive we love or approve.[31] Shaftesbury's work was motivated in part by his opposition to the portrayal of human nature as selfish found in Hobbes and Bernard de Mandeville (1670–1733). Although Shaftesbury believed that virtue is in the best interest of the virtuous person, and that this provides virtue's ultimate justification, he also believed that virtue leads people to act for the general good for unselfish reasons.[32] For Shaftesbury, a candidate for virtue must be a reflective being, able to order her own affections.[33] Virtue requires a self-authored, inner harmony. Shaftesbury's notion of virtue had a prominent aesthetic

aspect: Moral goodness is a kind of beauty. Hutcheson rejected the psychological hedonism found in Hobbes and Shaftesbury. For Hutcheson, all virtues can, in some way, be understood as manifestations of benevolence. A virtuous person is one in whom universal benevolence reliably restrains lesser forms of benevolence ("kind affections" and "particular passions") and other passions, affections, and desires.[34]

Hutcheson's work greatly influenced David Hume's moral philosophy. According to Hume (1711–1776), virtues are whichever traits of character produce in observers the sentiment of moral approbation.[35] Hume thought that virtues are rooted in human nature: They develop naturally in us, are frequently manifested by us, and can be recognized and agreed upon by all who take up the "general point of view."[36] The basis for our shared reaction to people's traits and actions is the natural human tendency to care about the public good. Virtues were primary in Hume's understanding of moral action: We value virtuous actions *as expressions of virtuous character*.[37] Hume mentioned *many* virtues, which he divided into "artificial" and "natural" virtues.[38] Artificial virtues (e.g., fidelity, modesty, justice, and allegiance to one's government) develop in an organized social life and are necessary for the functioning of society. Such virtues may not please us in every manifestation of them; yet we recognize them as good on the whole. Natural virtues (e.g., good sense, wit, knowledge, eloquence, temperance, constancy, tenderness, discernment, veracity, frugality, and industry) enrich social life. Though less urgent for society's maintenance, they are more reliably pleasing than the artificial virtues. Hume rejected "monkish virtues," such as fasting, celibacy, mortification, penance, and self-denial.

Though Christian Wolff (1679–1754) and Christian August Crusius (ca. 1715–1775) opposed each other on many points, both heavily influenced Kant's ethics. Kant agreed with Wolff's secular leanings, including his view that morality is fundamentally independent of God. He also took up many of Wolff's positions about duties to oneself and duties to others. But Kant rejected Wolff's strong perfectionism as well as the consequentialism Wolff paired with it.[39] Wolff noted that a usual definition of virtue is a "[readiness] to direct one's actions according to the law of nature."[40] For Wolff, "the law of nature requires the perfection of us and our condition."[41] So Wolff ultimately defined virtue as "a readiness to perfect oneself and

others as much as possible."⁴² Crusius, a Pietist minister as well as a philosopher, defined virtue as "the agreement of the moral condition of a mind with the divine laws."⁴³ Crusius considered the love of God "the main virtue from which all others must flow."⁴⁴ Like Kant after him, Crusius distinguished between the form and the matter of virtue.⁴⁵ Crusius held that human beings have an innate drive to comply with duties of virtue, which comprise morality. Crusius also held that virtue makes one worthy of happiness, that God rewards the virtuous with proportionate happiness, and that the absence of such rewards in this life gives us reason to hope for immortality;⁴⁶ here Crusius's influence on Kant is evident.

## KANT'S THEORY OF VIRTUE

### Virtue

Kant's ethics contains several related theses concerning virtue. First, Kant describes virtue as a *disposition to do one's duty out of respect for the moral law*. Kant calls virtue "the morally good disposition" (*Groundwork*, 4:435) or "conformity of the *disposition* to the law of duty" (*Religion*, 6:37).⁴⁷ This disposition is a manifestation not of natural temperament but of will. This disposition implies a maxim (subjective principle) of acting as the moral law commands: "virtue consists in *rectitudo actionum ex principio interno* [rectitude of actions on an internal principle]" (*Collins*, 27:300; *Practical Reason*, 5:118; see also *Religion*, 6:23n. and *Morals*, 6:395) and "the persistent maxim of making [one's] will conform to the moral law" (*Mrongovius*, 29:611). Finally, this disposition reflects respect for the moral law: It is a disposition to comply with the moral law *out of* respect for that law (*Practical Reason*, 5:128, 160; *Collins*, 27:308; *Morals*, 6:387).

Second, Kant calls virtue a kind of *strength*. He defines virtue as "the concept of strength" (*Morals*, 6:392) and appeals to etymology: "The very Latin word *virtus* originally signifies nothing else but courage, strength, and constancy" (*Vigilantius*, 27:492); "the word *Tugend* [virtue] comes from *taugen* [to be fit for]" (*Morals*, 6:390; see also *Religion*, 6:57). In particular, virtue is "the strength of one's resolution" (*Morals*, 6:390), or still more precisely, "a moral strength of the will" (*Morals*, 6:405), "moral strength in pursuit of one's duty"

(*Anthropology*, 7:147). We can begin to understand Kant's conception of virtue as moral strength when we consider the context in which the agent strives to express her commitment to morality: one of inner conflict.

Third, then, Kant says that virtue *presupposes opposition and entails struggle* – struggle that calls for strength. Virtue is "moral disposition in conflict" (*Practical Reason*, 5:84), "the capacity and considered resolve to withstand a strong but unjust opponent ... with respect to what opposes the moral disposition *within us*" (*Morals*, 6:380). Kant often seems to identify our inclinations as the primary opponents of morality in us. For example, Kant calls virtue "the struggle of inclination with the moral law, and the constant disposition ... to carry out [one's] duties" (*Vigilantius*, 27:492; see also *Collins*, 27:465; *Vigilantius*, 27:570; *Groundwork*, 4:405). But his considered view is that inclinations are not the source of the problem.

Human beings do not have holy wills, wills "whose maxims are necessarily in accord with laws of autonomy (the moral law)" (*Groundwork*, 4:439), wills "incapable of any maxims which conflict with the moral law" (*Practical Reason*, 5:32). If we had holy wills, the moral law would not be an imperative for us. We would act rightly without moral obligation or struggle. According to Kant, we have a predisposition to moral goodness, but we also have one to evil. We can, and routinely do, act contrary to the moral law. Although this often amounts to satisfying inclinations at the expense of obedience to the moral law, the inclinations themselves are not to blame for this. We cannot be determined by an inclination unless we ourselves incorporate it into our maxim (*Religion*, 6:23–4). Thus, virtue's constant opponent is not self-love or inclination, but the *radical evil in human nature* – a propensity to give self-love (and inclinations generally) priority over the moral law in our maxims (*Religion*, 6:29, 35–7, 57n., 58; see also *Collins*, 27:463). Because of this ordering of our incentives, we find ourselves – as we have made ourselves (*Morals*, 6:394) – susceptible to temptations to violate the moral law or its purity in order to gratify our inclinations. It is because of this tendency, this radical evil, that virtue implies struggle and demands strength. Fundamentally, the goal of the virtuous person is to achieve the right ordering of her incentives, giving the moral law undisputed priority over self-love in her supreme maxim.

Thus, fourth, for Kant, virtue is *a feature of non-holy (e.g., human) rational beings*. Virtue is "a law-abiding disposition resulting from respect for the law and thus implying consciousness of a continuous propensity to transgress it, or at least to a defilement" (*Practical Reason*, 5:128). Moreover, "as a naturally acquired faculty, [virtue] can never be perfect" (*Practical Reason*, 5:33).

Fifth, Kant understands virtue as a form of self-constraint – *moral self-constraint* – "based on inner freedom" (*Morals*, 6:408). Inner freedom is motivational independence, the capacity to act on the autonomously chosen principles of morality, despite temptations to act otherwise.[48] Virtue does not tell us what the right thing to do is, but allows us to do what we recognize to be right, simply because it is right. "Virtue is . . . a self-constraint in accordance with a principle of inner freedom, and so through the mere representation of one's duty in accordance with its formal law" (*Morals*, 6:394). Similarly, "Virtue is . . . the moral strength of a *human being*'s will in fulfilling his *duty*, a moral *constraint* through his own lawgiving reason, insofar as this constitutes itself an authority *executing* the law" (*Morals*, 6:405).[49] For Kant, virtue not only expresses but also promotes inner freedom: The greater one's moral self-constraint, the more one acts based on one's judgments about what one ought to do, and the less one acts based on the strength of one's inclinations (*Morals*, 6:382 n.; *Collins*, 27:464). This notion of virtue fits well with what Kant calls the general obligation to virtue, the obligation to do all of our duties *from* duty (*Morals*, 6:410; *Vigilantius*, 27:541). It also explains one of Kant's main distinctions between duties of virtue and duties of right in the *Metaphysics of Morals*. Duties of virtue allow only for self-constraint, whereas with duties of right, external constraint is morally possible (*Morals*, 6:379–81, 394–5). The "Doctrine of Virtue" concerns inner freedom; the "Doctrine of Right," outer freedom.

Sixth and finally, Kant distinguishes between *phenomenal virtue*, "a facility in *actions* conforming to duty (according to their legality)," and *noumenal virtue*, "a constant disposition toward such actions from duty (because of their morality)" (*Religion*, 6:14). Phenomenal virtue, like noumenal virtue, reflects the agent's commitment to conform to the moral law. Purity of motivation, however, is an essential feature only of noumenal virtue: Phenomenal virtue "has the abiding maxim of *lawful* actions, no matter where one draws the incentives that the power of choice needs for such actions"

(*Religion*, 6:47). Yet although phenomenal virtue *can* exist without moral purity, Kant does not dismiss phenomenal virtue as a mere pretender. He instead describes it as virtue's "empirical character," meaning that phenomenal virtue is the form in which true virtue *appears to us* (*Religion*, 6:47; *Vigilantius*, 27:583).[50] Humans cannot cognize noumenal virtue (virtue's "intelligible character"); cognition of our supreme maxim is possible for God, but not for us (*Religion*, 6:47–8). Moreover, Kant is explicit that the duty to morally perfect oneself requires striving not only for the moral purity of noumenal virtue, but also for the success in fulfilling all one's duties characteristic of phenomenal virtue (*Morals*, 6:446–7).

Drawing all these theses together, we can understand Kant's conception of virtue as the form in which a rational being with a non-holy will expresses her supreme commitment to morality: as a continually cultivated capacity to master her inclinations so as to fulfill all her duties, a capacity whose cultivation and exercise is motivated by respect for the moral law.[51]

### *Vice*

Kant distinguishes between vice and mere lack of virtue. Lack of virtue is the "*logical opposite*" of virtue, and vice virtue's "*real opposite*" (*Morals*, 6:384). Lack of virtue is weakness in duty, whereas vice implies "contempt for moral laws" (*Collins*, 27:463). An agent displays a lack of virtue when she has a commitment to morality, but is lax in her resolve to carry it out.[52] Kant associates lack of virtue also with not going very far in fulfilling flexible, meritorious, "imperfect" duties (i.e., promoting the obligatory ends of one's own perfection and the happiness of others), despite complying with strict, exceptionless, "perfect" duties. Vice, on the other hand, is a propensity to act contrary to the moral law (*Religion*, 6:37). It implies a problem not merely with resolve, but with maxims. One manifests "a true *vice*" when one allows oneself to dwell on feelings or impulses it would be wrong to act on, foster an interest in them, and then "take up what is evil (as something premeditated) into [one's] maxim" (*Morals*, 6:408). Similarly "it is when an intentional transgression has become a principle that it is properly called a *vice*" (*Morals*, 6:390). Kant associates vice with not merely failing to do much to fulfill imperfect duties, but with violating perfect duties – for example, duties not to degrade

others (*Morals*, 6:464). These content-related distinctions may seem inconsistent with the more formal ones. But they make sense in the light of the fact that for Kant, the fundamental attitude of virtue is that of respect for the moral law itself and for its instantiation in individual rational beings. One may still respect rational nature even if one falls short of all one can do to honor it. But if one acts on maxims hostile to rational nature or its dignity, one's will is set against the moral law.

### Virtue and the good will

Being virtuous is not the same thing as having a good will. Having a good will is simply a matter of having moral maxims, adopted for moral reasons; it is not a matter of strength and fitness in acting on them (*Groundwork*, 4:394, 399–400). A good will is not compatible with vice (cf. *Groundwork*, 4:455). It is, however, compatible with a lack of virtue. For example, Kant describes behavior manifesting a "lack of virtue" as "something childish and weak, which can indeed coexist with the best will" (*Morals*, 6:408). And Kant insists that "between maxim and deed there is still a wide gap" allowing an agent to fail to realize her good will in virtuous action (*Religion*, 6:47). So one could have the fundamental commitment to morality of a good will, and yet lack the strength of will in overcoming temptations that is part of virtue.

On the other hand, a good will is necessary for virtue. And virtue reflects the moral worth of a good will: "the dutifulness of our moral actions appears as *virtue*" (*Vigilantius*, 27:715). Finally, Kant explains the moral worth of a good will in terms of temptations to overcome, just as he explains virtue as strength (*Groundwork*, 4:397–403). If we understand moral worth as a property of agents and not of isolated acts, moral worth correlates with virtue. So although Kant's notions of virtue and a good will are conceptually distinct, they are intimately connected: The virtuous person has a good will; and it is through virtue that a good will finds expression.

### Virtue and human agency

For a fuller understanding of Kant's conception of virtue, we must consider the virtuous agent's motivational structure. In particular,

we should ask how moral motivation incorporates or rejects inclinations and emotions. As we have seen, virtue has its own motive: respect for the law (*Groundwork*, 4:426). For virtuous agents, respect for the moral law has priority over self-love in their supreme maxim. We now want to know what this implies for actual agents' particular acts of willing, given that there may be many layers of maxims between their supreme maxim and the maxim of any given action. Some of the answer must wait for our discussion of specific virtues and vices since part of a virtuous agent's motivational structure involves commitment to obligatory ends, cultivation of qualities that support promotion of these ends, and rejection of attitudes prohibited by the categorical imperative and hostile to obligatory ends. Yet we can answer part of the question now. We can say, for example, that respect for the moral law implies obedience to the categorical imperative, which tells us to respect rational nature in oneself and others. Therefore, if respect for oneself and others is grounded in this moral commitment, actions chosen in the light of this respect reflect moral goodness in the agent's willing. An agent need not be thinking explicitly about the moral law for her motivation to be pure.

Nevertheless, as human beings, we do not respond to others or the world in terms of respect for rational nature alone. According to Kant, we have three original predispositions, all of which supply drives, feelings, and impulses. The predisposition to *animality* "may be brought under the general title of physical or merely *mechanical* self-love, i.e., a love for which reason is not required" (*Religion*, 6:26); this predisposition contains drives for self-preservation, sexual reproduction and the care of offspring, and community with other humans, "i.e., the social drive." The predisposition to *humanity* "can be brought under the general title of a self-love which is physical and yet *involves comparison* [of our state with that of others] (for which reason is required)" (*Religion*, 6:27). The predisposition to *personality* "is the susceptibility to respect for the moral law *as of itself a sufficient incentive to the power of choice*" (*Religion*, 6:27; *Practical Reason*, 5:87).

Although the predisposition to personality is obviously morally crucial, all three predispositions are good; all encourage compliance with the moral law. The drives of humanity and animality, however, are susceptible to corruption. The drives of animality can have grafted onto them vices such as gluttony and lust. The drives of

humanity can have grafted onto them vices such as jealousy, rivalry, and malicious glee. Thus, a large part of the struggle for virtue is the effort to harmonize these three predispositions so that personality develops fully, and humanity and animality develop in ways supportive of morally practical reason. The virtuous agent must find a way to use, transform, or conquer her natural tendencies as morality requires. The virtuous agent struggles both not to act on inclinations that it would be wrong to act on, and to turn what inclinations she can into means to moral ends. She realizes herself as a self-legislating and self-governing human agent by working on and with the natural stuff of which she is made. Indeed, when we look at particular virtues and vices, we will see that they have a lot to do with how to respect oneself and others as rational *human* beings – beings with legitimate drives of animality and humanity as well as personality. In discussions of duties to oneself, Kant (like Hume) rejects "monkish virtues"; he objects to their hostility to one's animal self (*Collins*, 27:379). The duty to perfect oneself involves cultivation of one's natural capacities – and not only so one can achieve narrowly moral ends (*Morals*, 6:387, 391–2, 444–6). When developed and expressed harmoniously with morality, animality and humanity are part of the flourishing of human beings.

Kant may sound as though he is condemning our animal selves in the form of our emotions when he urges apathy and self-mastery. Kant says, "unless reason holds the reins of government in his own hands, a human being's feelings and inclinations play the master over him" (*Morals*, 6:408). Apathy and self-mastery are essential for expressing and protecting inner freedom. In praising moral apathy, Kant advocates a way of being that is opposed not to our *having* emotions, but rather to our *determining our will* by whatever strong, fleeting feelings we happen to have: "in cases of moral apathy feelings arising from sensible impressions lose their influence on moral feeling only because respect for the moral law is more powerful than all such feelings together" (*Morals*, 6:408). Self-mastery is more comprehensive than apathy: "Since virtue is based on inner freedom, it contains a positive command to a human being, namely to bring all his capacities and inclinations under his (reason's) control and so to rule over himself" (*Morals*, 6:408; see also *Practical Reason*, 5:118; *Collins*, 27:360–9).[53] So in urging self-mastery, Kant recommends not that we rid ourselves of feelings and inclinations, but

that we use them in ways that are compatible with – and perhaps even supportive of – morality. We are not completely passive with regard to our emotions (*Anthropology*, 7:254): They respond to our cultivation, and so are in part products of our choices (*Morals*, 6:402). Indeed, virtue involves feelings we have shaped in certain ways.[54]

Kant is explicit about at least three morally important roles for feelings of various kinds. First, he talks about certain emotions as naturally given feelings that we can use in the fulfilment of our duties and that we therefore have a duty to cultivate (*Morals*, 6:456–7, 458). For example, Kant says of sympathy, "it is…an indirect duty to cultivate the natural…feelings in us, and to make use of them as so many means to sympathy based on moral principles and the feeling appropriate to them" (*Morals*, 6:457). Among the ways we can make moral use of sympathy are as a means to understand what others' needs and desires are, as a means to communicate our concern for them and recognition of their wants and needs, as an incentive to facilitate helping others. Kant does not suggest we cultivate sympathy to take the place of moral motivation. He suggests, rather, that sympathy has epistemic, communicative, and subordinate motivational roles to play in agents who cultivate sympathy out of the motive of duty.

Second, Kant talks about moral feeling, conscience, love of human beings, and respect as special kinds of feelings that we are made aware of only though consciousness of the moral law (*Morals*, 6:399). These feelings are "moral endowments" that "lie at the basis of morality" and are "*subjective* conditions of receptivity to the concept of duty" (*Morals*, 6:399). It is not a duty to have these feelings; for if we did not have them, we would not be aware of any duties whatever. It is a duty to cultivate them, however, because of their moral usefulness.

Third, Kant talks about certain feelings as expressive of the attitude of a truly virtuous agent. He says "a heart joyous in the *compliance* with its duty…is the sign of genuineness in virtuous disposition" (*Religion*, 6:24n.). There is an aesthetic temperament of virtue that is the result of reason working upon sensibility. The frame of mind emblematic of a virtuous agent is "*valiant* and *cheerful*" in fulfilling her duties (*Morals*, 6:484). So although Kant associates virtue with struggle, he denies that the virtuous agent will hate duty or be miserable in its fulfilment. The resolve, commitment, and appreciation for the value of virtue and the inner worth of the virtuous agent

keep such an agent from resenting morality's commands, even when they conflict with her happiness. Indeed, the virtuous agent enjoys a sense of satisfaction in her hard-earned fitness to comply with morality's commands to the degree that she does (*Practical Reason*, 5:117–19).

So for Kant, virtue involves fostering morally useful aspects of our animality and humanity, besides constraining their expression in the light of the demands of morality. He recognizes the value of various emotions, feelings, and inclinations, as well as of prudence and peace of mind, which "are not sources of virtue, but merely aids to it" (*Collins*, 27:465).[55]

### Virtues and vices

In addition to a conception of virtue and vice, Kant's moral theory includes many discussions of particular virtues and vices: "in its idea (objectively) there is only *one* virtue (as moral strength of one's maxims); but in fact (subjectively) there is a multitude of virtues, made up of several different qualities" (*Morals*, 6:447). These different qualities are required by, or facilitate fulfilment of, moral duties.

In the "Doctrine of Virtue" of the *Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant sets forth his taxonomy of directly ethical duties (duties of virtue) – duties for which no external compulsion is morally possible because they pertain to external actions only indirectly; they pertain directly to agents' maxims and ends (objects of choice), and thus are duties to which agents must constrain *themselves* through inner freedom. In presenting these duties, Kant primarily uses the formula of humanity (*Groundwork*, 4:429)[56] and the supreme principle of the doctrine of virtue:

Act in accordance with a maxim of *ends* that it can be a universal law for everyone to have. In accordance with this principle the human being is an end for himself as well as for others, and it is not enough that he is not authorized to use either himself or others merely as a means (since he could then still be indifferent to them); it is in itself his duty to make the human being in general his end.          (*Morals*, 6:395; see also 410)

Kant calls the "Doctrine of Virtue" a doctrine of ends. Duties of virtue do not merely restrict how agents may pursue their inclination-based ends; they also require agents to recognize their

own and others' rational nature as ends more valuable than any inclination-based end. Consequently, duties of virtue require agents to adopt and promote the ends of their own perfection and the happiness of others because respect for the rational nature of finite, imperfect agents implies a commitment to foster and further their agency. Perfect duties to oneself, imperfect duties to oneself, duties of respect for others, and duties of love all follow from the requirement to make rational nature one's end.

Kant explains perfect duties to oneself and duties of respect in terms of vices to be avoided out of respect for rational nature. He explains duties of love, which follow from the obligatory end of the happiness of others, in terms of virtues to be cultivated and vices to be avoided: "To think of several virtues (as one unavoidably does) is nothing other than to think of the various moral objects to which the will is led by the one principle of virtue [to do all duties from respect for the moral law], and so too with regard to the contrary vices" (*Morals*, 6:406, see also 395). Vices are "the brood of dispositions opposing the law ... monsters [the agent] has to fight" (*Morals*, 6:405). Each virtue and each vice has its own maxim (*Morals*, 6:404). An agent can have some virtues and lack others. If her virtues reflect a pure moral commitment, however, she will not also have *vices*, which imply maxims opposing the moral law (*Morals*, 6:447; *Religion*, 6:24–5).

Self-regarding duties require respect for oneself as a rational human being and promotion of one's natural and moral perfection. Perfect duties to oneself are defined primarily in terms of vices contrary to them. That is, Kant delineates his notion of proper self-respect largely in opposition to the maxims and attitudes one ought to avoid out of respect for oneself. Rarely does Kant explain perfect duties to oneself in terms of virtues – for example, humaneness, uprightness, or chastity (*Morals*, 6:443; *Collins*, 27:459–60; *Vigilantius*, 27:637, 699). One shows self-respect through how one treats one's body and its drives, as well as how one treats one's rational nature directly (*Morals*, 6:417–20). Kant calls suicide and self-mutilation (*Morals*, 6:421–4; *Collins*, 27:369–75; *Vigilantius*, 27:627–31), gluttony and drunkenness (*Morals*, 6:427–8; *Vigilantius*, 27:691), and sexual self-degradation (*Morals*, 6:424–6; *Collins*, 27:390–2; *Vigilantius*, 27:637–41) "vices contrary to perfect duties to oneself as an animal and moral being." He calls lying (to oneself and to others)

(*Morals*, 6:429–31; *Vigilantius*, 27:700–2), avarice (*Morals*, 6:432–4; *Collins*, 27:399–403), and servility (*Morals*, 6:434–7) "vices contrary to perfect duties to oneself as a moral being only." Kant's terminology here is unusual, for these "vices" are (on the face of it) not qualities or dispositions, but ways of acting: acting on various maxims that express disrespect for oneself. Calling these ways of acting "vices" makes sense, however, both because these are ways of acting that the agent must morally constrain herself to avoid (i.e., they are *vices* because they are contrary to duties of *virtue*), and because the qualities and dispositions for which we are morally accountable are those which are expressed in our maxims.

In the case of duties to oneself as an animal and moral being, disrespect for one's rational nature is shown by one's willingness to treat one's animal nature in a way destructive or disruptive to its reason-supporting role, directly or indirectly (e.g., through undermining our physical integrity or our organs' abilities to function), for an inclination-based end. So not every act of cutting off a limb amounts to the vice of self-mutilation. A maxim of removing an infected limb as a necessary means to save one's life is not vicious; but a maxim of surgically transforming one's body, regardless of the risks, in order to look as attractive as possible, is (*Morals*, 6:423). The first maxim reflects concern for one's continued existence as a rational human being, whereas the second reflects a willingness to endanger one's agency for the sake of beauty.

Avarice is an illuminating example of a vice contrary to one's duty to oneself as a moral being only. By "avarice" Kant means the hoarding of goods the agent would benefit from using. This hoarding amounts to a "slavish subjection of oneself to the goods that contribute to happiness, which is a violation of duty to oneself since one ought to be their master" (*Morals*, 6:434). Through a maxim of avarice, an agent degrades herself by treating her agency as a means to accumulating material goods – as though money or things have value above her own, or somehow give her life worth. Another important and illustrative duty to oneself as a moral being only is that of avoiding the vice of servility. Through maxims of servility, an agent treats herself, and encourages others to treat her, as though she were worth less than other rational human beings. Such a maxim is vicious because it contradicts the fundamental equality and dignity of each person as a rational being.

Difficult questions arise concerning which maxims manifest various vices opposed to perfect duties to oneself. It is sometimes hard to tell, for example, whether one is being merely polite or objectionably servile. In the "Doctrine of Virtue," Kant offers casuistical questions after his exposition of each of these duties, so that his readers can begin to make progress in their moral judgment.[57]

Kant has little to say about specific virtues to cultivate regarding the promotion of one's natural and moral perfection, perhaps because there are too many possible virtues to mention. To promote one's natural perfection, one must develop whatever excellences pertain to the abilities of mind, body, and spirit that one thinks it makes most sense to develop, given one's particular interests, desires, and talents. And to promote one's moral perfection, one must cultivate all the qualities one needs in order to purify one's moral motivation and to fulfill all of one's other duties to oneself and others (*Morals*, 6:386–7, 392–3, 444–7).

Duties of respect require treating others in keeping with their dignity.[58] As with perfect duties to oneself, Kant explicates duties of respect by discussing vices that respect precludes. Vices contrary to respect for others include arrogance, defamation, and ridicule. Arrogance is "the inclination to be always *on top*"; through maxims of arrogance, "we demand that others think little of themselves in comparison with us" (*Morals*, 6:465). Defamation is "the immediate inclination . . . to bring into the open something prejudicial to respect for others" – even if true (*Morals*, 6:466). In defaming others, the agent makes herself feel better by making someone else look worse in others' eyes. Ridicule is "the propensity to expose others to laughter, to make their faults the immediate object of one's amusement" (*Morals*, 6:467). All these vices are contrary to proper respect for others, for all deny their targets the respect they deserve as equal, rational beings with dignity (*Morals*, 6:449, 462).

Kant explicates duties of love primarily in terms of other-regarding virtues, though he only rarely refers to them as virtues. Nevertheless, these are qualities it is our duty to cultivate as part of promoting the obligatory end of the happiness of others: beneficence (*Morals*, 6:448–54; *Collins*, 27:416–22), sympathy (*Morals*, 6:456–8), and gratitude (*Morals*, 6:454–6). The maxim of beneficence is one of "[promoting] according to one's means the happiness of others in need, without hoping for something in return" (*Morals*, 6:453). Cultivating love for

other human beings is also part of the duty of beneficence (*Morals*, 6:402). The maxim of sympathy is one both of sharing actively in others feelings and of cultivating one's naturally sympathetic feelings to assist oneself in understanding their feelings and needs (*Morals*, 6:456–7). Gratitude likewise involves a maxim of not only "*honoring* a person because of a benefit he has rendered us" but also fostering feelings of appreciativeness for those that help us (*Morals*, 6:454–6). For Kant, promoting the happiness of others means helping them promote their permissible ends. Beneficence directly corresponds to this requirement; sympathy helpfully assists. Gratitude's relation is less direct: When we honor a benefactor and show her that we appreciate what she has done for us, we encourage her, and perhaps others, to continue helping others.[59]

Kant explicitly calls "vices" dispositions opposed to duties of love: "the loathsome family of *envy, ingratitude*, and *malice*" (*Morals*, 6:458–60; *Vigilantius*, 27:692–5). These vices are opposed to duties of love because they conflict with the commitment to promote the happiness of others.[60] For example, malice is "the direct opposite of sympathy" (*Morals*, 6:459), "malevolence or joy at another's misfortune," which may be "coupled with a desire to render the state of the other unhappy" (*Vigilantius*, 27:695). These and most other Kantian vices can be understood as perversions of natural human tendencies – that is, as vices grafted onto animality and humanity. Vices opposed to duties of respect and duties of love, for example, generally reflect the desire to see oneself as better or better off than one's neighbors. Ambition, lust for authority, greed, and vengeance emerge all too easily from human social interactions (*Anthropology*, 7:267–74).[61]

In addition to the virtues and vices corresponding to directly ethical duties, Kant discusses many traits that he stops short of calling virtues, or that he calls virtues only inconsistently. These qualities chiefly include dispositions that do not presuppose maxims grounded in respect for rational nature, but which often indirectly promote morality. Some traits do this by building people's trust in their community; others by reinforcing what morality demands;[62] others simply by making virtue seem attractive. Many of these qualities are ones Kant calls "virtues of social intercourse," such as "*affability*, *sociability*, *courtesy*, *hospitality*, and *gentleness* (in disagreeing without quarreling)" (*Morals*, 6:473). Some social virtues require "no great degree of moral resolution to bring them about" and so are

not genuine (i.e., moral) virtues (*Collins*, 27:456). Yet we nevertheless have a duty of virtue to foster these traits "so to associate the graces with virtue" (*Morals*, 6:473):

No matter how insignificant these laws of refined humanity may seem, especially in comparison with pure moral laws, anything that promotes sociability, even if it consists only in pleasing maxims or manners, is a garment that dresses virtue to advantage, a garment to be recommended to virtue in more serious respects too. The *cynic's purism* and the *anchorite's mortification of the flesh*, without social well-being, are distorted figures of virtue, which do not attract us to it. Forsaken by the graces, they can make no claim to humanity.                                                (*Anthropology*, 7:282)

Finally, note that the discussion of virtues and vices in the "Doctrine of Virtue" is restricted to those pertaining to duties of one human being to another; it does not extend to discussions of duties and virtues for those of various ages, social positions, or sexes (*Morals*, 6:468–9). When Kant ventures into practical anthropology, however, he distinguishes between masculine and feminine virtues and vices (*Anthropology*, 7:303–8). For example, Kant describes courage as a masculine virtue, contrasting it with the feminine virtue of patience (*Vigilantius*, 27:645–6; *Anthropology*, 7:257). Tellingly, he also suggests that patience is only falsely considered a virtue (*Anthropology*, 7:149). In addition, Kant suggests that various races and nations have characteristic virtues and vices (*Anthropology*, 7:311–21).[63]

### Virtue and the human good

In Kant's system, virtue is not the whole of the human good, which Kant follows many of his predecessors in calling "the highest good" (*summum bonum*). As the complete object of pure practical reason, the highest good is the systematic unity of those ends that pure practical reason takes to be good as ends (*Practical Reason*, 5:108). Thus, for Kant, the highest good consists not only in virtue, but in happiness as well. Virtue is the unconditioned element of the highest good; pure practical reason values virtue for its own sake, in every agent, in all circumstances (*Practical Reason*, 5:110; *Theory and Practice*, 8:278). Happiness, the natural good, which consists in the satisfaction of an agent's wants, wishes, and natural needs, is the conditioned element of the highest good. As the natural, finite rational

beings that we are, we have our own happiness among our ends. When we constrain our pursuit of happiness by morality and commit ourselves to pursuing the happiness of others as well as ourselves, happiness becomes an object of pure practical reason (*Practical Reason*, 5:110; *Morals*, 6:453; *Religion*, 6:36–7; see also *Morals*, 6:451). Kant's views of virtue, happiness, and their relation within the highest good develop throughout his career.[64] In some versions of the highest good, happiness is conditioned by and consequent on virtue in such a way that happiness is perfectly proportionate to virtue. Each person gets as much happiness as she morally deserves, perhaps in the next life (*Morals*, 6:480–2; *Practical Reason*, 5:122–34). In other versions, the highest good is a shared, social good achieved through a historical and political progress, and a worldwide ethical community's moral striving (*Judgment*, 5:450, 453; *Religion*, 6:5, 93–100; *Theory and Practice*, 8:279, 307–12).[65] Whatever the details of Kant's account, however, he always insists on happiness as an ineliminable part of the highest good.

### KANT'S CRITICISMS OF HIS PREDECESSORS

Kant criticizes Aristotle and seeks to distinguish his own theory of virtue from Aristotle's on several points. Most notably, Kant insists that Aristotle was wrong to think of virtue either as a habit or as a mean between two extremes. Kant defines habit as "a uniformity in action that has become a *necessity* through frequent repetition," "a lasting inclination apart from any maxim . . . a mechanism of sense rather than a principle of thought" (*Morals*, 6:407, 479). But, according to Kant, virtue presupposes a maxim, and precludes being fettered by sensibility. Virtue requires and promotes inner freedom. If virtue were a habit, "then, like any other mechanism of technically practical reason, it [would be] neither armed for all situations nor adequately secured against the changes that new temptations could bring about" (*Morals*, 6:383–4). More seriously, Kant warns, "if the practice of virtue were to become a habit the subject would suffer loss to that *freedom* in adopting his maxims which distinguishes an action done from duty" (*Morals*, 6:409). Thus, Kant insists that virtue is not simply a habit of acting in accordance with the moral law.

Nor, Kant claims, is virtue a mean: "The distinction between virtue and vice can never be sought in the *degree* to which one follows certain maxims; it must rather be sought only in the specific *quality*

of the maxims (their relation to the law). In other words, the well-known principle (Aristotle's) that locates virtue in the *mean* between two vices is false" (*Morals*, 6:404). For Kant, virtue implies a moral maxim and a strength of resolution in acting on that maxim. Vice implies a choice to act against morality. Virtues are virtues because their maxims reflect respect for rational nature and are conducive to the fulfillment of one's duties. Vices are vices because their maxims show disrespect for rational nature and oppose the fulfilment of duties. Thus, Kant explains that a particular virtue, such as responsible management of one's resources, cannot be understood as arising from a reduction of one vice (prodigality) or an increase in its opposite vice (miserliness). Each virtue and each vice has its own "distinctive maxim" (*Morals*, 6:404, 432–3).

Kant says that ancient philosophers misunderstand the relation among virtue, happiness, and the human good.[66] Kant criticizes the Epicurean view this way: "The Epicurean had indeed raised a wholly false principle of morality, i.e., that of happiness, into the supreme one, and for law had substituted a maxim of free choice of each according to his inclination." Thus, Epicureans "degraded their highest good" (*Practical Reason*, 5:126). Kant contrasts the Epicurean approach with the Stoic position:

The Stoics, on the other hand, had chosen their supreme practical principle, virtue, quite correctly as the condition of the highest good. But as they imagined the degree of virtue which is required for its pure law as completely attainable in this life, they not only exaggerated the moral capacity of [the human being]...beyond all the limits of his nature...they also refused to accept the second component of the highest good, i.e, happiness, as a special object of human desire.                                   (*Practical Reason*, 5:126–7)

Kant claims that both Epicureans and Stoics went wrong in thinking we could achieve the highest good without God and through our freedom alone (*Practical Reason*, 5:125–6). More fundamentally, both went wrong in failing to appreciate the heterogeneity of the highest good and in taking the connection between virtue and happiness to be analytic rather than synthetic (*Practical Reason*, 5:112–13, 115–16). Epicureans mistakenly took happiness *as a means* to virtue, while the Stoics falsely thought that virtue *constitutes* happiness (*Practical Reason*, 5:24; *Mrongovius*, 29:623). Thus, the Epicurean conception of the highest good focused on happiness to the exclusion of (genuine) virtue, whereas the Stoic conception of the highest good focused on

virtue at the expense of happiness (properly understood). Unsurprisingly, Kant sees the Stoic view as closer to the truth: Not only is virtue the unconditioned element of the highest good, but lasting happiness requires contentment with oneself (*Vigilantius*, 27:646–50; *Practical Reason*, 5:115–19).[67]

Most of Kant's criticisms of modern moral philosophers focus on their theories of obligation rather than their theories of virtue.[68] Kant argues that these philosophers err in setting forth material determining grounds for the principle of morality. All such approaches lead to heteronomy and are incapable of grounding a categorical imperative (*Groundwork*, 4:440–4; *Practical Reason*, 5:33–41; *Mrongovius*, 29:620–9). Kant quickly dismisses theories that ground morality in such circumstantially contingent sources as education (Montaigne) or civil constitution (Mandeville) (*Practical Reason*, 5:40–1). Kant argues that the feelings in which the moral sense theorists such as Hutcheson and Shaftesbury seek to ground moral obligation are contingent on our nature: Not all rational beings have these sentiments, and not all human beings have them to the same degree (*Practical Reason*, 5:38; *Mongrovius*, 29:625–6).[69] Although Kant shares Wolff's view that self-perfection is a crucial part of morality, Kant denies that the concept of perfection is adequate to ground the supreme moral principle. Among Kant's objections to the rational, non-theological concept of perfection is that it is indeterminate, even empty: To construct a morally relevant, robust conception of perfection, one would have to presuppose the very moral principle perfection is supposed to explain (*Groundwork*, 4:443; *Practical Reason*, 5:40–1). Similarly, one of Kant's reasons for rejecting attempts of theological moral philosophers, such as Crusius, to ground the supreme moral principle in the will of God is Kant's belief that one must already have a principle of morality in relation to which one recognizes God's perfection (*Groundwork*, 4:443; *Practical Reason*, 5:41; *Mrongovius*, 29:627–8).

### RESPONSE TO KANT'S THEORY OF VIRTUE

#### *Schiller*

In his 1793 *On Grace and Dignity*,[70] Friedrich von Schiller (1759–1805) responds critically to Kant's account of virtue. Schiller

associates grace with harmony between reason and sensibility, duty and inclination. He associates dignity with reason's oppression of sensibility, and duty's repression of inclination. Schiller argues that "what is demanded of virtue is not properly speaking dignity, but grace."[71] Thus, he argues that Kant errs in linking virtue so closely with dignity. Kant's conceptions of duty and virtue are too harsh, devoid of beauty and pleasure. In contrast to Kant, who so tries clearly to distinguish the moral spring of action from inclination, Schiller proclaims, "virtue is not anything else 'than an inclination for duty.'"[72] For Schiller, the inner struggle of a person who restrains inclination in order to do her duty is preferable to the chaos of one who lets inclination determine her actions unaided by reason. But the dignity of the former agent is nevertheless inferior to the grace of an agent whose sensibility and reason harmonize: "By the fact that nature has made of [the human being] a being both at once reasonable and sensuous . . . it has prescribed to him the obligation not to separate that which she has united. . . . It is only when he gathers, so to speak, his entire *humanity* together, and his way of thinking in morals becomes the result of the united action of the two principles, when morality has become for him a second nature, it is only then that it is secure."[73]

Kant's response to Schiller's criticism is mixed. Kant reiterates views that Schiller finds unappealing, such as that virtue is the "struggle of inclination with the moral law and the constant disposition . . . to carry out [one's] duties" (*Vigilantius*, 27:492), and that humans are not capable of doing their duties without inner coercion (*Vigilantius*, 27:491). Kant says, "I readily grant that I am unable to associate *gracefulness* with the *concept of duty*, by reason of its very dignity" (*Religion*, 6:23n.). Because of the self-constraint inherent in the ideas of duty and virtue, these notions call forth in us awe, the feeling of the sublime; one misrepresents them in aligning them with beauty and charm (*Religion*, 6:23n.; *Vigilantius*, 27:490). Still, Kant accepts, in his own way, some of Schiller's points. Kant agrees that we can take pleasure in virtue. But the sort of pleasure Kant thinks we take is that of satisfaction with ourselves for having done something difficult – namely, having equipped ourselves to fulfill our duties (*Vigilantius*, 27:490). As we have seen, too, Kant takes a cheerful heart to be a sign of true virtue (*Religion*, 6:23n.). Moreover, Kant agrees virtue can be associated with grace, though in a less immediate

way than Schiller implies. For Kant, graces follow virtue because of virtue's often beneficent consequences. And although Kant sees social graces as proper accompaniments to virtue, making it more attractive and encouraging in people a sense of trust and hope in others' goodness, he does not conceptually associate virtue with grace, or claim that virtue requires grace: "virtue . . . does allow the attendance of the *graces*, who, however, maintain a respectful distance when duty alone is at issue" (*Religion*, 6:23n.)

### Schopenhauer

Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860) spends much of *On the Basis of Morality* criticizing Kant's view of morality's foundation, structure, and content. Schopenhauer rejects Kant's rationalism, his account of moral worth, his taxonomy of duties, his notion of duties to oneself, and much else.[74] Schopenhauer also charges that Kant's conception of the highest good corrupts morality by making happiness the reward for virtue, and by rendering morality dependent on religion.[75] Schopenhauer accepts Kant's distinction between noumenal and phenomenal worlds. Yet Schopenhauer argues that, whereas people are individuals phenomenally, we are all one – as will – noumenally.[76] This metaphysical thesis is important for understanding Shopenhauer's view that compassion is the basis of morality and the only true moral incentive. Schopenhauer says that, in compassion, "I suffer directly with [another person], I feel *his* woe just as I ordinarily feel only my own; and, likewise, I directly desire his weal in the same way I otherwise desire only my own. But this requires that I am in some way *identified with him*, in other words, that this entire *difference* between me and everyone else, which is the very basis of my egoism, is eliminated, to a certain extent at least."[77] The compassionate person, then, perceives and responds appropriately to our noumenal unity, whereas others, egoists in particular, remain deluded by the appearance of plurality.[78] Compassion is the core of Schopenauer's (non-eudaimonistic) virtue theory. Schopenhauer holds that the virtues of justice and philanthropy follow from compassion, and that all other virtues flow from justice and philanthropy.[79] All vices, such as greed, lust, cruelty, and treachery, spring from the incentives of egoism and malice.[80] Schopenhauer is far more pessimistic than Kant about moral self-improvement.

Schopenhauer describes virtues and vices as "inherent and enduring qualities," and the goodness or badness of one's character as "innate and ineradicable."[81]

CONTEMPORARY VIRTUE ETHICS

Neither Kant's moral theory in general, nor his theory of virtue in particular, has been warmly received by contemporary virtue ethicists. Especially early on, contemporary virtue ethicists made the case for a return to virtue through critiques of the dominant moral approaches of Kantianism and utilitarian consequentialism.[82] G. E. M. Anscombe's "Modern Moral Philosophy,"[83] which is widely credited with reviving virtue ethics, does far more than criticize Kant. Certainly, however, one of the more influential claims of Anscombe's paper is that Kant's notion of self-legislation is inadequate to ground his system of duties. According to Anscombe, Kant's moral theory is incoherent: It portrays morality as independent of religion, and yet includes notions such as moral obligation and moral law that depend on a divine law giver. Anscombe argues that "the concepts of obligation, and duty . . . and of what is *morally* right and wrong, and of the *moral* sense of 'ought', ought to be jettisoned if this is psychologically possible; because they are survivals, or derivatives from survivals, from an earlier conception of ethics which no longer generally survives, and are only harmful without it."[84]

Many virtue-oriented critics of Kant have objected that his moral theory demands unreasonable impartiality, is hostile to emotions, and includes a conception of virtue that is impossibly demanding.[85] For example, in "Moral Saints,"[86] Susan Wolf draws on Kant's views of virtue and imperfect duties to sketch an account of a Kantian agent whose life is objectionably dominated by morality:

The Kantian would have to value his activities and character traits in so far as they were manifestations of respect for the moral law. If the development of our powers to achieve physical, intellectual, or artistic excellence, or activities directed towards making others happy are to have any moral worth, they must arise from a reverence for the dignity that members of our species have as a result of being endowed with pure practical reason. This is a good and noble motivation, to be sure. But . . . it is hardly what one hopes to find lying dominantly behind a father's action on behalf of his son or a lover's on behalf of her beloved.[87]

Some virtue-ethical criticisms of Kant regarding emotions and impartiality link virtue ethics to the ethics of care.[88] In this vein, Annette Baier suggests that a Humean virtue ethics better responds to the "different voice" captured by Carol Gilligan than do Kantian or consequentialist theories. In contrast to Kant, whose ethics Baier criticizes as too focused on rule-following, rationality, autonomy, equality, and interpersonal conflict, Baier sees Hume as offering a moral theory that recognizes the importance of character traits, the role of feeling in moral judgment, "fluid" boundaries between oneself and others, the moral significance of unchosen relationships (including those among nonequals), and intrapersonal conflicts.[89]

Because of the dominance of Kant's *Groundwork* and second *Critique* among Kant's ethical works in much of the English-speaking philosophical world, some criticisms of Kant's moral theory may well be made in ignorance of Kant's theory of virtue – or with a poor understanding of that theory. In contrast, Rosalind Hursthouse, a neo-Aristotelian familiar with a range of Kant's ethical writings, offers a fairly charitable appraisal of Kant's (and Kantian) ethics.[90] Hursthouse takes Aristotle's ethics to do better than Kant's in recognizing the moral significance of emotions and the relation between emotions and rationality. Yet she sees the potential for a more sophisticated Kantian account of emotions in the life of a virtuous person – perhaps to be constructed from Kant's own more thoughtful claims about emotions in the "Doctrine of Virtue."[91] We may reasonably hope that as Kantians further clarify Kant's theory of virtue, its richness will be more widely appreciated.[92]

NOTES

1. A *eudaimonistic* ethical theory takes happiness (or flourishing) as the ultimate end, and takes virtue to contribute to happiness.
2. See Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics* (NE), trans. T. H. Irwin (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1985), 1105a30–34, 1106b36–1107a2, 1144a14–20.
3. NE vi 4, and 1103a31–b1. For more on virtue and skill, see Julia Annas, *The Morality of Happiness* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993) especially pp. 68–84.
4. NE 1102a13–1103a3, 1104b4–9.
5. NE 1106a14–b28.
6. They saw some calm emotions such as caution and reasonable wanting as consistent with virtue. See Diogenes Laertius 7.116 in *The Hellenistic*

*Philosophers*, vol. 1, trans., ed. A. A. Long and D. N. Sedley (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 412.

7. Stobaeus 2.89, 8-90,6 in *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, pp. 410–11; see also Seneca, *De Clementia* II, v, in *Moral Essays*, vol. 1, trans. J. W. Basore (London: William Heinemann; Loeb Classical Library, 1928).

8. Cicero, *De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum* III, iii–iv, trans. H. Rackham (London: William Heinemann; Loeb Classical Library, 1914).

9. For a discussion of Stoics on emotion and virtue, including comparison with Kant, see Annas, *The Morality of Happiness*, pp. 53–66. For a variety of related papers, see *Aristotle, Kant, and the Stoics*, eds. Stephen Engstrom and Jennifer Whiting (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

10. NE 1097a26–b22.

11. NE 1098a7–1100a9.

12. Cicero, *De Finibus* III, viii–ix.

13. For an explanation of, and challenge to, this common interpretation, see Annas, *The Morality of Happiness*, pp. 334–50.

14. Epicurus, *Letter to Menoeceus*, 127–32, in *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, pp. 193–4.

15. Augustine follows Aristotle regarding the relation between virtue and happiness. See *The City of God Against the Pagans*, trans. R. W. Dyson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), IX, 4, XIV, 8, pp. 361–5, 593–6. See also Bonnie Kent, "Augustine's Ethics," *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine*, eds. Eleanore Stump and Norman Kretzman (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 205–33.

16. *City of God*, XIX, 11, 20, 27, pp. 932–3, 949–50, 962–4.

17. *City of God*, IV, 20–1, pp. 165–8.

18. *The Catholic and Manichaean Ways of Life*, trans. Donald A. Gallagher and Idella J. Gallagher (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 1966), XV, 25.

19. *Ethics*, in *Ethical Writings*, trans. Paul Spade (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1995), pp. 1–2.

20. *Ethics*, p. 12.

21. *Ethics*, pp. 6–14, 23–4.

22. *Ethics* and *Dialogue Between a Philosopher, a Jew, and a Christian*, in *Ethical Writings*, pp. 2–3, 5–6, 111–14. Thanks to Bonnie Kent for her suggestions regarding Abelard.

23. *Summa Theologica* (ST), trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952), Part I of the Second Part, question 55, articles 1–4, and question 59, articles 1–5.

24. ST Part I of the Second Part, question 62, articles 1–4.

25. For a discussion of medieval ethics that challenges the centrality and acceptance of eudaimonism, see Bonnie Kent, "The Moral Life," in *The*

*Cambridge Companion to Medieval Philosophy*, ed. A. S. McGrade (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

26. Grotius's main work is *On the Law of War and Peace*, trans. Francis W. Kelsey (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925). One of Pufendorf's most philosophical works is *The Law of Nature and of Nations*, trans. C. H. Oldfather and W. A. Oldfather (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1934).

27. On natural law ethics, see Knud Haakonssen, *Natural Law and Moral Philosophy: From Grotius to the Scottish Enlightenment* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), especially chapter 1. On natural law ethics and virtue, see J. B. Schneewind's "The Misfortunes of Virtue," *Ethics* 101 (1990): 42–63, especially 44–8. On natural law ethics and Kant, see Schneewind's "Kant and Natural Law Ethics," *Ethics* 104 (1993): 53–74.

28. See *Leviathan*, ed. Edwin Curley (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994), chapters 8, 14, 15.

29. See, for example, *Leviathan*, chapter 15, pp. 99–100. Thanks to Dennis Klimchuk for his suggestions regarding this discussion.

30. See Hutcheson, *Illustrations on the Moral Sense*, excerpted in *British Moralists: 1650–1800*, ed. D. D. Raphael (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1991), vol. 1, pp. 305–6, 311.

31. For a study of British moral philosophy that bears on the development of Kant's thought, see Stephen Darwall, *The British Moralists and the Internal 'Ought': 1640–1740* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

32. See Shaftesbury, *An Inquiry Concerning Virtue, or Merit*, excerpted in *British Moralists: 1650–1800*, ed. D. D. Raphael (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1991) vol. 1, pp. 175–7. 186–8.

33. Shaftesbury, *An Inquiry Concerning Virtue, or Merit*, pp. 172–4.

34. See Hutcheson, *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections*, excerpted in *British Moralists: 1650–1800*, vol. 1, pp. 303–4.

35. See Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (T), eds. L. A. Selby-Bigge and P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), p. 498. See also *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (Enq.), ed. J. B. Schneewind (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1983), Appendix I, p. 85.

36. T III, 1, iii, pp. 581–2.

37. T III, 2, i, pp. 477–8.

38. T III, 2, i, pp. 477ff., and III, iii, 1, pp. 575ff. See also Enq. VI, p. 57, and VIII, pp. 68–72.

39. See *Reasonable Thoughts About the Actions of Men, for the Promotion of Their Happiness* (RT), excerpted and translated by J. B. Schneewind

in volume 1 of *Moral Philosophy from Montaigne to Kant* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), para. 5, p. 335.

40. RT, para. 5, p. 335.
41. RT, para. 5, p. 335.
42. RT, para. 65, p. 338.
43. *Guide to Rational Living* (GRL), excerpted and translated by Schneewind in volume 2 of *Moral Philosophy from Montaigne to Kant* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), para. 161, p. 577.
44. GRL, para. 240, p. 582.
45. GRL, para. 177, p. 579.
46. GRL, chapter II, pp. 581–2, and para. 372, p. 584.
47. I use the following translations of Kant's works: *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, trans. Mary J. Gregor (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974); *Critique of Practical Reason*, third edition, trans. Lewis White Beck (New York: Macmillan, 1993); *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, trans. Paul Guyer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. James W. Ellington (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1993); "Kant on the metaphysics of morals: Vigilantius's lecture notes," in *Lectures on Ethics*, trans. Peter Heath, ed. Peter Heath and J. B. Schneewind (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); *Metaphysics of Morals*, in *Practical Philosophy*, trans., ed. Mary J. Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); "Morality according to Prof. Kant: Mrongovius's second set of lecture notes (selections)," in *Lectures on Ethics*; "Moral philosophy: Collins lecture notes," in *Lectures on Ethics*; *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, trans. Allen Wood and George di Giovanni (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); "On the Common Saying, That May Be Correct in Theory, But It Is of No Use in Practice," in *Practical Philosophy*.
48. On inner freedom, see Stephen Engstrom, "The Inner Freedom of Virtue," in *Kant's Metaphysics of Morals: Interpretative Essays*, ed. Mark Timmons (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).
49. Kant calls this "executive power" of the will "autocracy." See Henry Allison, *Kant's Theory of Freedom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 164, 246, 285; and Anne Margaret Baxley, "Autocracy and Autonomy," *Kant-Studien* 94 (2003): 1–23.
50. There is much literature on whether the noumenal/phenomenal distinction, which runs throughout Kant's critical philosophy, is better understood as metaphysical or epistemological. For one view of this distinction in Kant's ethics, see Christine M. Korsgaard, *Creating the Kingdom of Ends* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), chapters 6 and 7.

51. For other analyses of Kant's conception of virtue, see Paul Guyer, *Kant on Freedom, Law, and Happiness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), chapter 9, especially pp. 303–11; and Allen Wood, *Kant's Ethical Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 329–33.

52. See Kant's discussion of *frailty* throughout part one of *Religion*.

53. For Kant on the passions, see *Anthropology*, 7: 265–7; *Morals*, 6: 407–8.

54. For discussion of Kant on emotions and apathy, see Lara Denis, "Kant's Cold Sage and the Sublimity of Apathy," *Kantian Review* 4 (2000): 48–73; Marcia Baron, *Kantian Ethics Almost without Apology* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), chapter 6; Nancy Sherman, "Kantian Virtue: Priggish or Passional?," in *Reclaiming the History of Ethics*, ed. Andrews Reath, Barbara Herman, and Christine M. Korsgaard (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 270–96, and "The Place of Emotions in Kantian Morality," in *Identity, Character, and Morality*, ed. Owen Flanagan and Amelie Oksenberg Rorty (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1990), pp. 149–70.

55. For Kant, virtue is not innate; it must be taught, cultivated, and practiced. On moral education and the development of virtue, see *Collins*, 27:463–5, 467–70; *Morals*, 6:477–80; and Kant's *Education*, trans. Annette Churton (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1969), especially chapter 5.

56. See Wood, this volume.

57. For a more detailed discussion of duties to oneself, see Denis, "Kant's Ethics and Duties to Oneself," *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 78 (4) (1997): 321–48, and *Moral Self-Regard: Duties to Oneself in Kant's Moral Theory* (New York: Garland, 2001), especially chapter 4. For a wider-ranging discussion of Kant's system of duties as well as his particular ethical duties, see Mary J. Gregor, *Laws of Freedom* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1963).

58. Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) influenced Kant in many ways, including in helping him recognize the dignity of even the most common human beings. See Wood, *Kant's Ethical Thought*, pp. 5–9.

59. Kant sometimes calls these virtues "angelic"; other times, he rejects this terminology. See *Morals*, 6: 461; *Vigilantius*, 27:632, 699.

60. Kant discusses also the vice of scandal throughout his ethics. Through scandal, one indirectly encourages others to act wrongly through one's own (apparently) bad example. Kant does not neatly classify scandal in his taxonomy; he often aligns it with various other vices. See *Morals*, 6:394, 464, 474.

61. See Wood, *Kant's Ethical Thought*, pp. 259–75.

62. For example, Kant calls love of honor a constant accompaniment of virtue; yet love of honor can also lead people astray. See, for example, *Morals*, 6:334–6, 420.

63. Kant elaborates further on the character of the sexes, races, and nations in sections three and four of *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime*, trans. John T. Goldthwait (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965). Robert Louden considers the connection between work of this kind and Kant's more theoretical ethical writings in *Kant's Impure Ethics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

64. And with it, so does Kant's practical argument for the existence of God. On the practical argument, see Lara Denis, "Autonomy and the Highest Good," *Kantian Review* 10 (2005): 33–59, and "Kant's Criticisms of Atheism," *Kant-Studien* 94 (2003): 198–219. On the development of Kant's views on the highest good and the practical argument, see Eckart Förster's *Kant's Final Synthesis: An Essay on the Opus Postumum* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), chapter 5.

65. On proportionality, see Stephen Engstrom, "The Concept of the Highest Good in Kant's Moral Theory," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 52(4) (1992): 747–80; cf. Andrews Reath, "Two Conceptions of the Highest Good in Kant," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 26(4) (1988): 593–619.

66. See T. H. Irwin, "Kant's Criticisms of Eudaemonism" and Stephen Engstrom, "Happiness and the Highest Good in Aristotle and Kant," both in *Aristotle, Kant, and the Stoics*.

67. Kant admires the Stoics. His arguments regarding apathy, sympathy and other emotions, and suicide refer to Stoic positions (*Morals*, 6:422–3, 457; *Collins*, 27:368–9, 373–5). Kant appreciates Stoicism in large part for the dignity it attributes to humans as rational beings. Kant praises Epicurus for advocating moderation, resignation, and cheerfulness grounded in self-contentment (*Practical Reason*, 5:115–16; *Vigilantius* 27:648–9). Thanks to Dennis Klimchuk for his suggestions regarding this discussion.

68. See Wood, *Kant's Ethical Thought*, pp. 159–63. On Kant's relation and response to his modern predecessors, see J. B. Schneewind, *The Invention of Autonomy: A History of Modern Moral Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), chapters 22 and 23. On pre-Kantian and Kantian theories of moral obligation, see Korsgaard, *The Sources of Normativity*, chapters 1–3.

69. Kant's notion of moral feeling, however, reflects his agreement with the moral sense theorists regarding the importance of feeling in moral motivation.

70. Schiller, "On Grace and Dignity" (GD), in *Essays: Aesthetical and Philosophical*, trans. various hands for Bohn's standard library (London: George Bell, 1875).

71. GD, p. 213.

72. GD, p. 199.

73. GD, pp. 199–200.

74. Schopenhauer, *On the Basis of Morality* (BM), trans. E. F. J. Payne (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), see especially part two.

75. BM, pp. 55–6. And see Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation* (WWR), trans. E. F. J. Payne (New York: Dover Publications, 1969), vol. I, pp. 524–8.

76. See WWR, vol. I.

77. BM, pp. 143–4, and 138–47.

78. BM, pp. 199–214.

79. BM, pp. 134, 148–67.

80. BM, pp. 131–8, especially p. 136.

81. BM, pp. 196, 187.

82. Philippa Foot's work, such as the papers collected in *Virtues and Vices* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), provides an example of early, constructive contemporary virtue ethics, drawing on Aquinas, the ancients, and others. Rosiland Hursthouse's *On Virtue Ethics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999) is an example of a constructive, neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics. Christine Swanton's virtue ethics, presented in *Virtue Ethics: A Pluralistic View* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003) draws its inspiration from Nietzsche, as well as Aristotle and others.

83. *Philosophy* 33 (1958): 1–19.

84. "Modern Moral Philosophy," p. 1.

85. See, for example, Michael Stocker, "The Schizophrenia of Modern Ethical Theories," *Journal of Philosophy* 73 (1976): 453–66; and Bernard Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), for example, p. 181.

86. *Journal of Philosophy* 79 (1982): 419–39. Wolf's target is the meta-moral view that moral values and considerations are overriding. She does not take this Kantian "moral saint" to be the only possible interpretation of a virtuous Kantian agent.

87. "Moral Saints," p. 431.

88. See, for example, Lawrence Blum, *Friendship, Altruism, and Morality* (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980); and Michael Slote, "The Justice of Caring," in *Virtue and Vice*, eds. Ellen Frankel Paul, Fred D. Miller, Jr., and Jeffrey Paul (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

89. "Hume, The Woman's Moral Theorist?," in *Women and Moral Theory*, eds. Eva Feder Kittay and Diana T. Meyers (Savage, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1987). See also "What Do Women Want in a Moral Theory?," chapter 1 of Baier's *Moral Prejudices: Essays on Ethics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994).

90. *On Virtue Ethics*, chapters 4–7.

91. Or by integrating an Aristotelian theory of emotions into a broadly Kantian ethics. See *On Virtue Ethics*, pp. 119–20.

92. Many thanks to Paul Guyer, Bonnie Kent, Dennis Klimchuk, and Roger Wertheimer for their comments on an earlier draft of this essay.