

## FORMAL AND TELEOLOGICAL VALUE IN KANTIAN ETHICS\*

**Moral value and human value in the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*.**

**Formal value.** In the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* there are two sources of value: one is the *moral law*, from which follows *moral value*, and the other is the *human person*, from which follows *human value*. Moral value, identified in the first conceptualization in this work is characterized by *formalism*. Being dependent on the moral law, the value takes over its *absolute* and *pure* characteristics. Human value figures as the nucleus of a value system integrated into the second conceptualization present in the same work, having *teleological* characteristics. Being dependent on the worth of the human person as far as she can form rational purposes, this value takes over the characteristics derived from *rationality*.

Kant does not define the value directly, but through these two sources: the one having an *absolute* character and the other the perfection of through its *rationality*. From the relations in which it stands - both to the *moral law* (and to its correlative concepts as the *will*, *duty* and *good*), and to the *human person* (with its correlative concepts such as *end in itself*, *dignity* and *respect*), we can draw it a *rational, formal, unconditioned, absolute* contour. But what is most important in characterizing this value is its placement at the level of primary moral concepts.

Kant's text presents the relation between moral value and action corresponding to the representation of the moral law as derived directly from the *faculty of reason*. Reason is the seat of our *a priori* knowledge, offering us non-empirical forms of assessment for our actions<sup>1</sup>. Therefore, the human being endowed with reason has, through his will, the possibility to make the idea of law actual by «representating» it to him. However, the subtext here is that it is possible to deduce through representation not only the *form* of the law, but also the *ab-*

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1. *Kants Werke*. Akademie Textausgabe. IV. *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*. Walter de Gruyter & Co., Berlin, 1968, p. 389.





*solute value* of law. Since in the idea of the representation of law the moral subject is not confronted with a mere abstraction made unconditionnally actual by his will (or with the form of the law), but also with a special abstraction that demands his own *participation*. In order to make this abstraction actual, the moral subject has to make a decision coming from him alone, determined by nothing from outside. And he can make the decision to represent the moral law to himself if he is conscious of its capacity to legislate for the moral domain in virtue of which the law has an absolute meaning, and therefore an absolute value.

Due to this capacity, the *representation of morality* has to involve the individual's contribution in the form of the appropriation of the law as the absolute value in the moral domain. The first conceptualization in the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, which is built on *reason*, through *form*, *representation* and *moral law*, favours this value, but at the cost of its *formal* expression. In this *critical* stage, Kant seems to be more interested in the deduction of the moral law than in the value involved in the *representation* of law. In better correspondence to his main intention, he reconstructed this line of thought differently in his second *Critique*. There he declined to make the moral law actual through representation and took a more strictly formalistic approach; but he lost the main element in the constitution of moral value.

The conceptual structure of the first scheme of the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* is one by which formal value is emphasized through the individual's contribution (in the idea of *representating* the law). This structure is consonant with a functional characteristic of the moral law: since it is an inner law, it has to be included in principles formulated by the subject, which are *subjective principles* or *maxims*. When the moral law is appropriated by the moral subject in its maxims, this transforms the moral law into a principle of a particular action or *moral norm*. This way, the law represented by the moral subject conforms to Kant's requirement to give the *supreme norm* of moral assessment. With regard to a domain having an inner source of legislation, such as the moral domain is, moral value mediates between the *inner* (the moral principle) and the *outer* (the action). It gains through this function the capacity to turn the universal moral *principle* into a *norm* of action available to every individual.

In order to understand better why morals needs a mediator between its *principle* and *action*, and also why moral *value* is a catalyst when it is applied to a moral *norm*, let us see by contrast how a *norm* acts when it does not proceed from moral *value*. This is the case with a juridical *norm*. External legislation, which is suitable to the domain of right, deprives the norm of moral value, since there is nothing here but the *faculty of reason* of every *human individual* and the universal *principle* imposing itself on him from outside. The appropriation of the principle by the individual reason is sanctioned externally, and the individual does not participate actively in this case. Consequently, it is not necessary for him to find a value in the principle, but he must consider it an external necessity imposed to him by civil society. The difference between the two kinds of norms is due to their different way of legislating. The domain of morals acts



through *value-norms*, and the domain of right acts through *norms of necessitation* (external constraint).

Kant is concerned in the *Metaphysics of Morals* with these two types of legislation. In this *critical* work he is concerned only with the higher (moral) legislation, which generates a norm for assessment of individual actions, which is supported by an inner incentive. It is intended for an assessment of the moral value of an action. At the same time, it transforms morals into a non-empirical discipline with the scientific status Kant claims for the domains of knowledge. The supreme norm of action that is the moral law itself, has as a purpose to follow the *good*, and acts as an *objective principle*. In order to maintain an action between these limits (to guide oneself to an objective principle and to follow the moral good), Kant shows us a simple way by which the moral subject will be able to distinguish the *law* from the *rule* (the *objective principle* from the *subjective principle*) and, as such, he could make the distinction between the *absolute norm* from the *relative norm*. He tells that: «...In order to be morally good, it is not sufficient to be *conforming* to the moral law, but it must be done *for the sake of it*»<sup>2</sup>. To be «conform to the law» has the sense of an accidental union of a practical action with the moral norm. In this case, we make our choice just to a *relative norm*, which has no value double. In contrast with it, the expression «for the sake of the law» has the sense of a *total and mainly deliberate* direction to what in morals is essential, to the most important norm of it. It gives the *moral value* that is an *absolute value*. To place oneself in the moral sphere means to decide either expressly on the law, from which follows a morally *necessary* action, or on the rule, from which follows a morally *contingent* action. What is neither law nor rule is *contrary to law* (to the moral norm); such actions have to be avoided, since they can not be included into the moral sphere.

The *good*, as the object of morals, and the *duty*, as the instrument of the first one, have to be *necessary* joined to the moral law; therefore, they can not follow but from the second expression. Just in this way these concepts can enjoy the *universality* claimed by their moral functions, as well as *moral value*. Consequently, the expression “for the sake of the law” does not refer only to the *law* (as its pair expressing the contingency), but inevitably to the two concepts through which one can come to it as well: the *good* and the *duty*, making together a value nucleus.

The criterion Kant gives us to distinguish the typical moral situations from the quasi-moral situations offers us a certain theoretical surety; but it is more difficult to frame reality into these situations, for this reason: There is, at the very beginning, a *theoretical* claim to act for the sake of the law that remains at the mental level. Here is the place of value. Since this claim has a practical finality,

2. «Denn bei dem, was moralisch gut sein soll, ist es nicht genug, daß es dem sittlichen Gesetze gemäß sei, sondern es muss auch *um desselben willen* geschehen». *Ibid.*, p. 390.



it has to be transposed into actions; they are carried out through maxims that invoke this mental presence that is the *representation of the moral law*. Although Kant presents the theoretical side invested with *objectivity* concentrated in the law as being defining for the discipline of morals and although it generates value, the practical side, having a marked *subjective* dominant and, for this reason, being deprived of value, dominates the activity of human being. We can be conscious of this unequal situations if we compare the subjective principle or the *maxim*, defined by Kant as the “principle according to which the subject acts”<sup>3</sup>, with the *law*, conceived just as a state of law, as a *legislation* that ought to be represented. Therefore, if from the theoretical point of view the two norms (objective and subjective) are congruous with the Kantian transcendental idealism, respectively with its phenomenal and noumenal levels, the reality confronts us with actions ruled by maxims more or less subjective and never by law. Consequently, just relative norms come to work in reality, so that only the expression “conform to law” is realizable. Anyway, the *universality of reason* requests the lessening of the subjective quantum of maxims through the transposing into practice of the universal *form* of the moral law; this request is the *moral duty*. The law transmits to it, at the same time, its value, since similar to the law, the duty develops to the *rational* level as well, being characterized as *formal, unconditioned, absolute*. And similar to the law, the duty can become a prey to the illusion of the absolute (and, consequently, it can give only the illusion of value); the moral law can be observed in a *moral intention*, but as well by chance, the duty being this observance itself, becomes the subject to the same alternative, and so it becomes a prey to quasi-morality.

As the duty in its quality of an instrument of moral law receives value from the law, in the same way will receive value the object of law that is the *good*. Such a good, corresponding to the moral value, has to be *unconditioned* and *absolute*. Therefore – says Kant – it does not designate either the spiritual qualities or the temperamental qualities that although benefic to the human individual, are relative and conditioned on the faculty that emphasizes them, that is the *will*. Only the *will* that conditiones all practical qualities benefic to the human being has the capacity to be unconditioned good, to be a *good will*. The good of this volitive form is due to the value it includes, independent of any utility produced by it; since it can produce something, or it can produce nothing<sup>4</sup>. It is a form with an *absolute value*, and - says Kant - it comes from the *reason* the human being is invested with in a practical purpose; that is, it was given to him in order to produce the rational turn of his will. As a result of this turn it will gain a value independent of any goods, but able to produce that unconditioned good. This act of modeling done by reason as its purpose places the will on the

3. *Ibid.*, p. 400 footnote.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 394.



*itself* level, generator of value. The demand by which the will is called to reason sounds: «I ought never to act in such a way that I could not also will that my maxim be a universal law»<sup>5</sup>. The rational will, bearer of value is considered, in the formal background of the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, as the *supreme good* the reason can achieve.

Claiming in a rational way the absolute norm located at the mental level which is the unique generator of value, Kant's practical criticism develops an *ideality* that oversteps the *reality* as far as it appears to us as resulted from an *a priori* principle of human reason (and so, independent of any experience in the limits of reality); and it brings near to it as far as the absolute norm has the task to influence the reality imposing an universal behaviour that has a moral value. For this reason, Kant does not consider that the principle should be done with the intention to become real, but to help indirectly the reality, limiting its tendency to divert from universal behaviour. The formal scheme, from which comes the absolute norm, does not impel the moral subject to the *relative good fact* (although its positive meaning would have a direct impact on reality), but to observe a form which, due to its universality, has a value of a principle; it gives the only statement through which one can avoid the difficulties resulted from *particular* actions: the interest, the egoism, the defraudment of the other one a.o. (under the conditions in which the most important characteristic of the moral law is its *universality*, through which an universal behaviour takes shape). The *relative norms* are annex elements that try to come forth to *reality*, offering to the moral agent forms easier to attain by his will essentially dual. The *absolute value* and the *absolute norm* are the great models of the dual will, but as such they remain intangible, because for such a dual will the most important impediment to attain them is the disagreement between the *reason* disposing the rational action at the intelligible level, and the *will* accomplishing the disposal of reason to act *on the whole* at this level. For this one, the *absolute norm* can not turn to reality, remaining just a statement to orientate after it, but it is universal as the faculty of reason from which it comes. In comparison with it, the *relative norm*, accessible to such a sensible-rational will, is particular; it can be generalized, but not universalized. «In reality – says Kant - *it* is absolutely impossible to find in experience a single case in which one can demonstrate with whole certainty that the maxim of a certain action, although conformable to the duty, should be exclusively grounded on moral principles and on the idea of duty»<sup>6</sup>.

5. «Ich soll niemals andern verfahren als so, daß ich auch wollen könne, meine Maxime solle ein allgemeines Gesetz werden». *Ibid.*, p. 402. The English translation belongs to Lewis White Beck (*Kant. Selections*. Edited by Lewis White Beck, New York, MacMillan Publishing Company, 1968, p. 254).

6. «In der Tat ist es schlechterdings unmöglich, durch Erfahrung einen einzigen Fall mit völliger Gewissheit auszumachen, da die Maxime einer sonst pflichtmäßigen Handlung lediglich auf moralischen Gründen und auf der Vorstellung seiner Pflicht beruht habe». *Ibid.*, p. 407.



**Teleological value.** The distinction between *absolute norm*, intangible, but invested with *value*, and *relative norm*, accessible, but *deprived of value*, has generated a value gap in the formal scheme of the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*: the one of *relative values*. In order to include them in his practical philosophy, Kant has to complete the *phenomenal*, sensible identification of end, that initially designated just the «impulses and inclinations» unable to generate value, with the *rational* framing of end, favorable to point out the value. But to create this conceptual complement, Kant has to create to it a corresponding background; therefore, he will build up a *teleological scheme*, complementary to the *formal scheme*, where he will develop the rational value of end, located on the *inside* level. This kind of purposes is meant to explain, first the *moral law* as being the law of a will that states to oneself rational ends (under the conditions where that will belongs to a being who can formulate non-rational ends as well), and second it is meant to explain the *value*, building up a hierarchy displayed between the *human value* and the *price* of a thing, from the point of view of their relation to the *rational end*.

Kant's argument does not start this time from the *law*, as the case of the *moral value* identified in the first scheme of the same work, but from the author and the beneficiary of the law, that is the *rational finite being* designated through its *existence*. (In this context, the *existence* frames just the *human value*, in the *Critique of Practical Reason* it will frame the *moral value* as well.). Although the existence of such a being makes possible both the formulations of *sensible ends* and of *rational ends*, here only rational ends unconditioned of any good procurable through them are taken into consideration; the value of these ends being independent of any kind of incentives satisfied through goods and being dependent only on the reason that produced them, it is said that it has a meaning *in itself* or an *absolute value* (in the sense of being independent of the relativity of any kind of goods). For this rational existence having ends invested with value, there is a law that brings under regulation this relation, available just to the genus of rational beings; the law of the practical domain is of this kind. Its recognition as a law suitable to this genus of superior beings claims that all their actions, both directed to themselves and to other rational beings has to place the law in a privileged position from the point of view of the end. The argument Kant makes use here engages only the *human* and the *rational* determinations of this kind of beings that comes to be finalized in ends of the same kind. (From a *non-teleological* view, such an existence gets lost its absolute character and has to be regarded as *relative* faced to the unique absolute being.)

Kant will use a teleological reasoning, which starts from the exceptional human existence. It is less abstract than the deductive reasoning used in the first part of the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, where only one of the three basic concepts involved there designated the human being through the faculty of *will*. Now, the human being will be designated through the concept in whose sphere it is included, namely its *existence*; it is determined through the *genus of humanity*; the *absolute value* and the *end in itself* will be the pillars of



the teleological scheme, that will come on the other way to the relation of *man* with his *duty* (respectively through the *teleological reasoning* and through *value*).

The present teleological view, besides its contributions to the basic moral problems (as would be the reconsideration of the moral law and of its relation to duty), and to some problems that fit into the moral form (as would be the value), brings also contributions to the reevaluation of the metaphysical tradition inherited by Kant – contributions that, in their turn, will have repercussions on the two above directions. By the idea of *end in itself* resulted from the *absolute value* of human being, Kant makes leave from the moral and metaphysical tradition, which developed a human *helpless* being in comparison with the *all-powerful* divinity. His contribution points out the power the man can gain through his *reason* well oriented on principles. As such, the man is the bearer of the *absolute value* through which he comes to open up a domain of value in practical philosophy. Being the absolute value, the reference value, the man is the one to whom any other elements of his universe are related (either beings or conceptual abstractions) in their quality of *relative values*. For the anthropocentric system of Kantian values, it is not by chance that value can be identified in the practical philosophy, where the man is regarded as the centre of power, where it is the moral law given by him that legislates, instead of the divine law. In his quality of a performer invested with a power coming from his reason, the man is regarded as an absolute value. In this position he deems what is important to his existence, what has a value (certainly, just a relative one by comparison to himself). Since the value appears to Kant within the domain of morality and is dependent on man as an *end in himself* and as an *absolute value*, non-values represent deviations from the idea of end in itself (since they disregard human dignity and are non-moral; for this reason, the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, where value makes its first appearance, does not include them; and false values are, to Kant, unconceivable (since they would mislead the human existence itself).

In the two schemes of the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, the value has just a *positive meaning*, since it is *moral*. Only this *positive value* will be placed on the two levels of Kant's transcendental idealism: the one of *inclinations* (based on a practical principle), materially conditioned and then with a *value conditioned* by the satisfaction produced by the respective inclinations, and the level of *reason*, that attained its maximum expression in the *moral law* (governed by an objective principle) unconditioned, formal, with an *absolute value*. In comparison with the formal scheme, whose axiologic outcome was the *absolute value* of law, the present teleological scheme states a level of value that belongs to beings whose existence is governed by their rational will and, consequently, they take part to the absolute value of moral law; they are *ends in themselves* and they have the right to be regarded as *persons*. By virtue of their *absolute value* they are able to free themselves of the source of conditioned value, which are the inclinations, since just in this way persons deserve *respect*. Con-



sequently, no man alive has the right to turn them to *means* of his needs, interest or pleasure (in other words, to lower them to the position of mere things). If the *person* represents an *absolute value*, according to Kant's reasoning, she is invested with *the* moral correspondent of this value as well, which is *dignity*. Similar to *holiness*, *dignity* is a concept with a great theoretical value, but with an unimportant practical frequency; for this reason, the last two are attributed to the moral law as well, whose theoretical meaning oversteps its *practical* implication.

Only *morality* (which gives to the rational being the chance to turn to an end in oneself) and *humanity* (as far as the same being is able to become moral) are said to have dignity. The «fidelity in promises, the benevolence grounded on principles (not on instinct)»<sup>7</sup> is qualities that – for Kant – have an *inner value*. These values can not be substituted by any natural or artistic outcome, because their value does not depend upon what they produce (as it is the case in nature or in art), but on the good orientation of their maxims of will, expressed in actions. The reason imposes them to the will, which regards them as deserving respect.

At a value inferior level are placed the beings deprived of reason, whose existence is not depending on human will but on nature. As against the rational human being who represents an end in itself, they have a *relative value*, a value of *means*. This quality designates them as *things*. In the value hierarchy, the thing is placed at an inferior level faced with the one of person, because it is dependent on it and it is deprived of any *moral meaning*. Instead of the absolute value, it has a *price*, through which it can be equivalated to another thing with a similar price (by comparison with the value of the person that can be substituted with nothing else). For this reason, the price is named a *market price*, resulted from a public show and from a comparison of prices, and has a relative value)<sup>8</sup>. The relativity of value the thing represents makes it suitable to the function it has as a mediator between the being invested with absolute value and his numerous needs relating to his existence. Therefore, this inferior kind of “beings” – as Kant names them<sup>9</sup> – whose existence is grounded directly on nature and, consequently, have not the capacity to enjoy the moral law, are just *means* of certain purposes superior to themselves (given by beings endowed with reason). Human inclinations and human needs are located at an inferior value level, similar to the one of things, since they can be satisfied by means of things. Like these ones, they have a market price. Kant subsumes them the «skill and the diligence in work». Between the extremes given by the *price* of thing and the *absolute value* of person figures the corresponding value of taste; it follows from

7. *Ibid.*, p. 437.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 436.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 423.



the satisfaction produced to us by the «play without a purpose of our faculty of soul»<sup>10</sup>. This intention to organize something, but fails to come to an end, as well as its relation with human person through her sensibility, gives to the *aesthetic value* an inferior position in comparison with the moral value, similar to the one of thing. Kant designates it by a *price*, but a *fancy price* (due to sensibility drawn in a “play”). To this corresponds the relative value able to entertain an elevated play, as for example the «sharpness of mind, the imagination and the good disposition»<sup>11</sup>.

The superior beings who, due to their practical independence are called persons, have in common with the moral law their origin and their finality, from where follows their absolute value. Because of this ground, the concepts of a *rational being* designated by its *will*, the *moral law* and the *categorical imperative* through which it is performed, are correlative concepts. The human person, conscious of her quality of an *end in itself*, can do the categorical imperative as an end, since she represents oneself the universal value of the end (such a representation could be available to every person, as well as in the formal scheme every person could represent oneself the moral law). This is considered by Kant the *objective principle* of the will, which grounds a universal, practical law. Its origin is to be found in the *rational nature* of this being that exists as a *thing in itself*. The representation every man has of its existence as an end in itself is considered a *subjective principle* of action. As far as every human existence has the same representation in the same purpose, the above principle comes to be, at the same time, an *objective principle*, from which all the laws of will follow. On the ground of the relation between *end* and *rationality*, Kant turns the *subjective principle* into an *objective principle*, associating the human individuals through their possible way of acting given by the same rational faculty. Similar to the relation between end and rationality, will be treated also the relation between *end* and *humanity* (as the universality of human species existent in every human individual). According to this view, the categorical imperative will be correspondingly redefined, taking the following statement: «Act so that you treat humanity whether in your own person or in that of another, always as an end, and never as a means only»<sup>12</sup>. Like the claims the imperative did in the former scheme, the latter one calls directly to *value*; but whereas there this call is done unifying the subjective principle with the objective principle, with the law (because the value is associated to the law), here the imperative comes to unify the person with the end in itself, pointing out the idea of humanity (since the

10. *Ibid.*, p. 434.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 435.

12. «Handle so, daß du die Menschheit sowohl in deiner Person, als in der Person eines jeden andern jederzeit zugleich als Zweck, niemals bloß als Mittel brauchst». *Ibid.*, p. 429. Beck, p. 273.





person is not unconditionally source of value, but only through the humanity it ought to include).

This conversion of principles is a consequence of the complementarity of the two schemes, where the *final* latter scheme makes complete and values the *formal* initial scheme (where it was necessary to represent in maxims, in *subjective* principles the moral law, the *objective* principle). The idea of *humanity* as an *end in itself*, besides the mentioned value implication, comes to bring an extra understanding to the formal initial relation between *duty* and *moral law*, in the following way: the humanity I suppose in myself makes me, from human grounds (coming from the characteristic element of the genus of being I am representing) to avoid non-universalizable maxims, beginning with my own person (otherwise I run the risk to limit myself to my singularity). Because the other person, as anybody, is dual (built up by *rationality* and *corporality*), the present formulation constrains me directly to preserve the humanity in a *rational* way, and in an indirect way it constrains me to take care to the *corporality* present in my maxims.

The will that comes to agree with the practical reason drawing one's attention to humanity becomes universal legislative: acting at the level of *itself*, it appears as a *free will*. This legislative side of the will comes to complete the one expressing its quality of being subject to law. On the grounds of the duality the human will shows (of being a subject to law and of being a lawgiver), Kant has conceived a particularly meaningful concept, both to the present teleological scheme, and to the concept of *human value* identified in this scheme; it is the *kingdom of ends*<sup>13</sup>. Its meaning is given by the unity of diversity the rational beings show in a community legislated by common laws. The relations established between this kind of beings and the laws governing them give birth to *common ends*. Their *formal* side, resulted from the elimination of personal differences of those rational beings reflected upon their ends, as well as from the elimination of the contents of the particular ends proposed by themselves, build up a rational community. Its main regulation comes from the consideration of these rational beings between them only as *ends in themselves*, due to their rationality, and never as *means*, bearers of some interests (either of themselves or of the other ones). From here follows that this community has as its purpose, together with the cultivation of rationality of moral principles, the cultivation of *human value* as well, where rationality has a large part.

Besides the claim to cultivate the *humanity* the teleological scheme gives as a categorical imperative, it asks the will to come to the self-control of one's *legislative* capacity too; it will be possible through the idea of equality through reason the paradigm of the *kingdom of ends* makes possible. Its statement is: «the will, through its maxim, could consider itself, at the same time, as universal leg-

13. *Ibid.*, p. 433.



islative»<sup>14</sup>. By this new statement of the imperative, the will, that so far did not agree with the claims of reason to act *as a whole* at the level of *itself*, is raised now to the legislative rank of reason.

## II. The lower interest as against value in the *Critique of Practical Reason*.

The decision taken by Kant to consolidate his practical formalism in his second *Critique* determined him to give up the central role the *representation* used to hold in the first conceptual scheme of the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*; he considered its quantum of *subjectivity* as responsible for the limited possibility to formalize the moral domain (Kant did not give up the *representation* as a whole in this work, but he declined just to concentrate on this concept all his forces in view of the deduction of the moral law.) He thought again the possibility to deduce the moral law and, accordingly, the *object* of morality – respectively *law* and *good* – through a line of action where *sensible* and *supersensible* levels appear clearly. This line of action takes the form of a *judgment*, by which it is decided if a *concrete action* developed at the *sensible* level, where the practical experience governed by laws of nature takes part, corresponds to the claim expressed by an *abstract rule*, namely by the *moral law*; it comes from the law of freedom and belongs to the *intelligible* level. A *particular* action is compared to the *universality* and the *necessity* of the rule (where the moral law works as a rule), although this action will never come either to its sphere or to its imminence. As in the former work, the rule/ the law, due to its representativeness to the moral domain, plays the role of a *norm*, being invested with *absolute value*. It imposes itself upon particular actions both by its determinations expressing the moral representativeness, and by its axiologic excellence.

The replacement of the *representation* of law in practical maxims with the *practical judgment*, through its nearness to the logical procedure made the practical procedure more precise; through this nearness, Kant's interest as against value diminished and did not bring meaningful contributions in comparison with the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*. Taking again the problem of formal value, Kant does it in a way similar to the one of the former work, but pointing out this time to *rationality*. He makes the distinction between a will determined to action conform to the *moral law* (using a feeling as well) and a will determined to action *for the sake of the law*<sup>15</sup> – then by a will having a direct relation with the *rationality* of the law, being not mediated by any other authority. The first expression (conform to the law) is deprived of a moral value, since

14. «...Der Wille durch seine Maxime sich selbst zugleich als allgemein gesetzgebend betrachten könne». *Ibid.*, p. 434.

15. *Kants Werke*. Akademie Textausgabe. V. *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*. Walter de Gruyter & Co., Berlin, 1968, p. 71.



it is just in part rational, due to the introduction of the feeling near-by the moral law. But it is no more rejected on the ground of its *contingency* (as in the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*), which made it inadequate to the claims of *universality* and *necessity* stated by morals in its quality of a scientific discipline; but it is rejected now on the ground of its incapacity to attain what to Kant's moral formalism is essential, namely *rationality*. This *formal* way to point out the value is completed by the *teleological* way of value, set going from the human person. In the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* the value appeared, on the one side, as an abstraction resident in pure concepts, as the *moral law*, as well as in concepts depending on it (such as *duty* and *good*), from where followed its absolute character and its designation of *moral value*. On the other side, there was the absolute *value of human person*, existing through the use of diverse goods designated as *relative values*. The framework the *existence* gives to the human person who follows rational purposes makes the human value a less abstract concept than the moral value. In his solution to the *moral antinomy* exposed in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant brings near the two ways to build up the value – the *formal* one and the *teleological* one – identifying the moral value in the *existence*, which turns this way into a moral existence. Both *virtue* and *happiness* are acting in the framework of existence. But only virtue (through the moral law) has the capacity to transfer its moral value to the existence, in whose framework it acts<sup>16</sup>.

### The penetration of sensibility through the domain of value in the *Metaphysics of Morals*.

The *Metaphysics of Morals* equilibrates the *rational* side of the human being (dominant in the first two moral critical works) with its *non-rational*, natural side, attracting to value this last part, formerly unfavoured. This sensible-rational equilibrium achieved by Kant in his *doctrinal* stage does not include only the two sides designating the human duality, but the two corresponding sides of the transcendental philosophy as well, respectively *nature* and *freedom* with their *sensible* and *intelligible* levels. The idea to investigate the value of man integrated in the *system of nature* (as a phenomenal man) introduced in the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, will be taken again and reinforced together with the association of *end* with *duty*. Thanks to this association, the supreme principle of the theory of virtue comes to stipulate that an action should be done conform to a maxim whose *end* could be formulated by everybody according to a universal law. But *a priori* can be prescribed no end, if it is not related to the moral law and given as a *duty*; this kind of *ends-duties* will be named conform to the faculty that makes them possible, that is the *will* directed to *virtue*; there-

16. *Von der Dialektik der reinen Vernunft in Bestimmung des Begriffs vom höchsten Gut. Ibid.*, pp. 110-119.



fore, they will be called *duties of virtue*. Through these ones, the man is constrained to follow the line of virtue, mobilizing his will to the achievement of duty. What is imposed to the will as a duty has, from the moral point of view, a value. But this time not only the duty in which the moral action finalizes has value, but also the *action* leading to duty. In agreement with the new configuration of concepts through which the *end* collaborates directly with *duty*, the moral action will receive its most important role between all Kantian practical contexts (since an end can not be present without an action that could give it such a chance). In the spirit of the former work, it is said that we have the duty to appreciate the *value of actions* only by *morality*, and not by mere *legality* (thus not on the mere conformity of actions with the moral principle, but on the one doubled by a moral intention<sup>17</sup>).

In the *formal scheme* of the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* the value (the moral one) resulted from the *moral principle* applied to an *action* (where the action as such was figured outside value). In the *teleological scheme* of the same work the value depended upon a quality, namely humanity (appearing as the value of human person). In the present work, where the *end* takes a central part, the value continues being dependent on *humanity*, to whom the quality of being a *thing* is added (by the need to satisfy the sensibility of human being through things). Although the determination of value is different in these two works, they have in common the raising of the *moral value* at its utmost place and its investment with representativeness to the whole domain of morals. In comparison with it, the value of the human individual, although has a peculiar moral relevancy due to the *humanity* it encloses, from the axiologic point of view it is located on a lower place in comparison with the moral value. Since unlike the *unity* and *purity* of moral law, from where the moral value follows, the human individual presents an irreducible *duality*, projected also on transcendental philosophy.

Therefore, man focuses in himself *humanity*, through which he aims at the moral law, and *naturalness*, through which he is on equal terms with other beings of nature, together with whom he is ruled by the laws of nature. In the phenomenal respect, Kant deems that man has a *common value* (*pretium vulgare*) as other beings of the world, since he is comparable with them from the natural point of view. He can surpass this mean importance as against value, if he makes use of his *faculties of knowledge* that other beings do not possess. One of them, the *understanding*, is able to formulate *ends*, to direct the human activity to his needs and interests. This capacity the *phenomenal* man has, confers him a «utility outer value» (*pretium usus*), that can be proved only in relation with other men able to formulate, like himself, *ends*. The end useful to the hu-

17. *Kants Werke*. Akademie Textausgabe. *Die Metaphysik der Sitten*. Walter de Gruyter & Co., Berlin, 1968, VIII. *Exposition der Tugendpflichten als weiter Pflichten*, pp. 391-394.





man being can either serve indirectly to the other one, or determine this one to make his way of life agree with it, namely with his ends. This way a system of relations the human rational being lays down with his fellow man is brought forth in order to utilize the end; it intensifies itself together with the exchange. Here the value of the rational being comes to be comparable with the one he possess in the system of nature, because man has a *price*, a value similar to the one of things that could be changed, approximately, against other things. In this position man, in spite of his superiority given by his faculties of knowledge, is treated similarly to a *merchandise*, therefore as a product with a *particular* meaning, being as itself quoted under the value of the *universal* means of circulation that is *money*; due to its exceptional quality, in the framework of the exchange of merchandises, money has an *exceptional value* (*pretium eminens*)<sup>18</sup>. In the social (outer) framework of the exchange, things happen to be in the reverse order than in the moral framework: it is not man for whom the respective action is made (an *end*) the one who has the advantage, but money with whom this is done (a *mean*). In this social framework *humanity*, that is representative to morality, lower under the level of *things*, represented by money. For this reason, human being that is under social influence enjoys a value inferior to the one of moral law.

Therefore, in the value hierarchy built up by *end*, man can not rise himself through his appertaining to *natural* or *social* ends (for Kant those ones belong to the utilization of the end and to the exchange) to its utmost degree, but just in his quality of bearer of the faculty of ends itself, that is his *moral practical reason* (as *homo noumenon*). The possession of such a faculty makes him a *person* – quality in which he succeeds in rising himself above other value-prices. As a person (as a moral man), man can not be but an *end in himself*; this quality does not allow him to be either means of the ends of other people (what means that he must take care not to be taken down by other people to a position of mean), or means of his own ends (what means that he must take care not to be taken down by himself to an inferior position). As in the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, it is said that the end in itself gives man an «inner absolute value»<sup>19</sup>, named *dignity*, that makes him *equal* to all rational beings of the world (Kant refers here to the position man should have as against his fellow man). But what is new here in relation to the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* is the consolidation of the relation between *person*, *dignity* and *respect*. By virtue of his absolute value, here it is said that man is entitled to *constrain* all rational beings of the world to *respect* him.

In contrast with the *external* constraint of the law directly exercised by an impersonal entity applied through an intermediate (either an authorized per-

18. *Ibid.*, p. 434.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 435.



son or an institution), the moral constraint comes only by an inner way and deliberately from the other one; this one, having in his reason the form of the moral law, can constrain oneself; he perceives himself as a person endowed with reason, by virtue of which he can not but be respected and, by reciprocity, he is inclined to respect his fellow man if he is rational. The reciprocity between rational persons makes that no outer constraint could determine the respect of the constrained man, but only an inner constraint could do it. If however the respect is claimed and even more, a constraint is exercised against it, it is done by virtue of the fact that there is a condition here; it is the *humanity* existing *conditioned* in any person – the condition is given by the effective use of the representative faculty of human being, that is his *reason*; that is why man who from grounds dependent or independent of himself does not use his reason shows a deficit as against the humanity he includes and, as such, he can lose the respect the other ones owe him. But when he did not lose it, he is worthy of his own appraisal, since through it he brought into being a *moral end* that is, at the same time, a *duty against himself* <sup>20</sup>.

To the human species and to his system of rational ends, the *moral value* has, by its ideality, an absolute character. When disregarding the value area as well as the hierarchy it traces, *non-values* make their appearance (they are present for the first time in Kant in this doctrinal work). As against the *moral law*, that is *unconditioned absolute*, the moral value of a person has a lower importance, and the most appropriate feeling of the person with regard to law and to her value is the one of *humility*, as recognition of the superiority of law. The absence of this feeling and the conviction to possess a high value without a comparison with the law comes to the *vainglory* of virtue (*arrogantia moralis*). Any kind of humiliation manifested besides the one concerning the moral law, especially concerning another person, disregards man as an *end in it*. Of this kind are *hypocrisy* and *flattering*; they lessen deliberately one's own value, in order to obtain favours from the other one. The attempt to make equal or to rise oneself above the humble behaviour of other people in the intention to gain a peculiar moral value is *arrogance* (*ambitio*); it contradicts the duties we have as against the other one. The total renunciation to its own moral value with hidden intentions in view of acquiring a «hidden value» is *servility* (*humilitas moralis spuria*). It contradicts the duty we have as against our person and, as such, it is degrading.

Besides non-values followed from the violation of our *duty* as against the law, as against ourselves and as against the other one, other non-values man could fall a prey to are, according to Kant, given by different violations of the idea of *humanity* regarded as a duty, as for example: *fault* (we can not insure against), *vain philanthropy* (which does not answer a rational or a natural purpose): *par-*

20. *Ibid.*, p. 436.



*asitism, flattering, begging* (all these three are blamable, since the man that makes proof of do not develop his own humanity, taking advantage of the superior position the other one has; *prodigality, calling of his own pain* (to which humanity degenerates into egoism); *subjugation, his own prostration as against idols* (which leave aside the rationality that characterizes the human being, making proof of a religiousness that oversteps the bounds of reason). They corrupt either the natural being or the moral being of man, infringing this way upon the *duty against ourselves*<sup>21</sup> in our quality of human beings. Therefore, the observance or the transgression of *duties as against the moral law* or *as against the human quality* of the rational being gives birth to *values* and respectively to *non-values*.

The extension of the scale of value is due to the increasing, in this *doctrinal* context, of the role the *duty* plays, as well as of the role of *action* and of the *fact* dependent on it. In the *critical* context of the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, *value* was directly dependent on the *moral law*, on the principle, that used to have the meaning of a *norm*. Here, the building up of a moral *attitude* proves to be more important than the moral action guided by an intangible norm. It realizes itself through the bringing in of the *end* and, together with it of the *non-rational, subjective* side of the rational-sensible being.

In order to give to the subjective side the possibility to express oneself, the faculty of desire gained new dimensions, answering for a large part of the moral domain. An example of duties resulted from the union of the sensible side with the rational side of the human being and, as such, representative to the moral *doctrinal* period are *love* and *respect* as against the other one. They express themselves in subjective principles or in maxims of actions, being not mere feelings; to become values, we have to regard the other one as an end in oneself that deserves our esteem and our assistance. The love of the other one is understood, from the teleological view the *Metaphysics of Morals* is framed into, as *taking over of the purposes of the other one*. Making for our fellow man what he himself wants, we give him a proof of a special feeling of fusion with his sensible and intellectual *faculties*. The love of our fellow man as a duty – says Kant – has to be carried out through the *maxim of benevolence* and to have as an *end the good action* (the *fact* turned to *good*). Turning to a duty, *love* gains a positive moral meaning, becoming as well a *value*.

Understood as taking over of purposes, the love of our fellow man has as an emotional support the affective *unlimitedness*, in the sense that feelings are going beyond their personal source with the view of meeting the feelings of the other one. On the contrary, the idea of *limitation* lies as a basis of respect. We feel that we owe respect to the other one, when we limit the appraisal done to ourselves, in order to make room for the appraisal of another person, on the ground

21. *Ibid.*, p. 434.



of the recognition of the *humanity* and of the *dignity* existing in that one too. Here we express our respect as against the *value of humanity* (when it is kept and developed by the respective person).

In comparison with *love*, that entertains a passionate feeling doubled by a practical activity (resulted from the taking over the ends of the other one), *respect* does take nothing over, keeping one's distance as against the other one. It entertains a feeling devoid of passion, but superior by its intellectualism, through which humanity is thought as a value to which we take part. Its reverse side is contempt, and it is ascribed when something is devoid of value. The reverse side of love is *hate* that is regarded as a vice, not as a non-value, at the side of *ingratitude, exultation about the misfortune of the other one, envy, arrogance, striving for revenge*. The moral evil produced by vices is, as we can see, greater than the one of non-values. But what brings them near is the *phenomenal* level, unrepresentative to morals, on which they are acting. Besides the condition imposed by the consideration of the other one as an *end in itself*, *love* and *respect* request another condition to turn to *ends* and *values* of human beings in their reciprocal relations; this condition Kant imposes them is to make proof of a principle of *agreement* between their respective *wills*. The end of the other one could not be taken over, if the two involved wills do not agree, consenting to the offer and accepting. If in the case of *love* the *affectivity* is the one by which the end of the other one is offered and taken over, in the case of *respect*, *humanity* is the one by virtue of which the agreement between the will that cultivates it and the one that recognizes it in the other one is realized<sup>22</sup>. *Perfect friendship* is deemed by Kant as the paradigm of the agreement between the two involved wills. It makes *love* and *respect* agree, respectively the affectivity and the humanity implied in them, being achieved through sympathy and benevolence. Being perfection, we can not meet it in reality, in spite of its practical necessity. It has a rational side, that in the Kantian moral scheme is given as a *praiseworthy duty*, and a sensible side, made evident through a special feeling. Together the both sides of the perfect friendship make the man that cultivates it worthy of happiness<sup>23</sup>.

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22. *Ibid.*, pp. 440-450.

23. *Ibid.*, *Von der innigsten Vereinigung der Liebe mit der Achtung in der Freundschaft*, pp. 469-471.



ΤΥΠΙΚΕΣ ΚΑΙ ΤΕΛΕΟΛΟΓΙΚΕΣ ΑΞΙΕΣ ΣΤΗΝ ΚΑΝΤΙΑΝΗ ΗΘΙΚΗ

Π ε ρ ί λ η ψ η

Στὰ Θεμέλια τῆς Μεταφυσικῆς τῶν Ἡθῶν ὑπάρχουν δύο πηγές ἀξιῶν: ἡ μία εἶναι ὁ ἠθικὸς νόμος, ἀπὸ τὸν ὁποῖο ἀπορρέει ἡ ἠθικὴ ἀξία καὶ ἡ ἄλλη εἶναι ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἀπὸ τὸν ὁποῖο ἀπορρέει ἡ ἀνθρώπινη ἀξία. Ἡ ἠθικὴ ἀξία, ἐρμηνευόμενὴ στὴν πρώτη σύλληψη τοῦ ἔργου αὐτοῦ χαρακτηρίζεται ἀπὸ τὸν φορμαλισμό. Ἐξαρτώμενη ἀπὸ τὸν ἠθικὸ νόμο, ἡ ἀξία ἀποκτᾷ τὰ ἀπόλυτα καὶ καθαρὰ χαρακτηριστικά της. Ὡς κεντρικὸς πυρήνας ἐνὸς συστήματος ἀξιῶν, τὸ ὁποῖο ἐμπεριέχεται στὴ δεύτερη ἐρμηνεία ποὺ παρουσιάζεται στὸ ἴδιο ἔργο, ἡ ἀνθρώπινη ἀξία ἐμφανίζεται νὰ διαθέτει τελεολογικὸ χαρακτήρα. Ἐξαρτώμενη ἀπὸ τὴν ἀξία τοῦ προσώπου ποῦ, στὸ βαθμὸ ποὺ ἐκείνη δύναται νὰ στοιχειοθετήσῃ λογικὲς ἀρχές, ἡ ἀνθρώπινη ἀξία ἀποκτᾷ τὰ χαρακτηριστικὰ ποὺ ἀπορρέουν ἀπὸ τὴν λογικότητα.

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