

Research Statement **Anastasia Artemyev Berg**

In my dissertation I argue that Kant, often taken to be a classical source of the opposition of reason and feeling, is in fact one of the most insightful guides toward a coherent non-dualistic view of this relationship. My research will be dedicated to the development of this idea of the unity of rational and affective life. In the near future this project will consist in the following work: (1) development of Kant's account of moral motivation, feeling and character (2) interventions in contemporary philosophical debates on the nature of moral motivation, the relation of feeling and to rationality, the compatibility of freedom and feeling, and moral responsibility, and (3) rethinking the relationship between Kant and his German Idealist predecessors in light of a new understanding of Kant's project.

I. In the upcoming three years I will publish four papers: three on Kant based on my dissertation work and one Kantian intervention into contemporary debates in ethics.

1. "Non-Pathological Feeling: Kant's Account of Moral Respect" argues that moral respect in Kant names not a particular kind of feeling among others but the distinctly rational *faculty* of feeling. To feel, according to Kant, is to have awareness of how things affect one's self, *as* a desiring being. Thus, if our faculty of desire is unique (a will) so must be our faculty of feeling. This faculty of feeling must be understood as a form of self-consciousness, which (1) constitutes and reveals the agent to be practically rational: a free, efficacious, embodied cause in the world and (2) is the basis of all particular feelings, the diverse ways we rational agents are cognitively-affectively attuned to ourselves and our fellow human beings as persons, and the activities and projects that constitute the world we hold in common.

2) "Kant's Account of Moral Character as Motivational Self-Constitution" argues for a reading of Kant's account of character as a form of rational activity. In the first part I elucidate Kant's seemingly untenable idea that constituting one's character is an exercise of the power of free choice. I introduce the idea of an ongoing activity which consists in many particular acts, and where every particular act is grounded, caused by, the person's understanding of the principle of the general activity. I conclude that character is the rational *activity* of maintaining oneself as a practical rational agent. In the second part I elucidate Kant's opaque claim that moral character consists in the ordering of incentives in a principle of the will by demonstrating that maintaining a character is necessarily grounded in the development of a receptive capacity which reveals the demands of reason on us *on particular occasions*, i.e., in feeling. This allows, in the third part, to find room in Kant's account for the notion *acquisition* of character—i.e., the development and determination of our capacities for feeling—which does not reduce to morally irrelevant empirical habituation, but is the condition of becoming a rational practical agent subject to the demands of reason.

3) "A Kantian Account of Moral Development" addresses the devastating worry that Kant's account of moral character leaves no room for the possibility of acting sometimes well and sometimes poorly—a possibility crucially necessary for moral development. In the first part, against critical the that Kant had no room for the idea of acquiring moral character progressively in time, I draw attention to a previously unrecognized complexity in Kant's conception of habit: a distinction between rational and mechanical habit which allows for a wholly Kantian idea of acquisition through practice of rational capacities in general, and moral character in particular. This distinctly Kantian notion of character acquisition in turn opens the way for a notion of moral indeterminacy, which I call "immaturity". In the second part I address the concern that if the principle of character is the ultimate source of moral worth in Kant, the actions a morally immature person, one who is neither wholly good nor evil, cannot

be morally evaluated. I argue that the idea of immaturity leaves room for moral evaluation: moral evaluation in that case is conducted with reference to the character being thereby acquired, whereby one is nearing or moving away from virtue. In the third part I demonstrate that this account of immaturity helps solve an interpretive vexing interpretive problem concerning Kant's account of grades of evil.

4) "Moral Responsibility and Habit" argues that responsibility for action must be understood as grounded in the kind of responsibility we have for habits, acquired rational capacities. I elucidate the logical character of rational habits, a character that embraces a broad range of activities: from motor skills like standing to linguistic aptitude. I argue that responsible mental activity should be understood as grounded in the way we are responsible for rational habits, exercises of skill: as bearers of acquired rational capacities. I show that my account secures the intuitive relation between responsibility and the exercise of agency, while also revealing the subject of moral assessment to be, interpersonally constituted, and thus one who's character is not merely up to us, as individuals. Thereby we come to recognize that the dependence on other persons for moral development is neither a threat nor a limitation but is a necessary condition of freedom.

II. I will dedicate the following three years to a book project on German Idealism, as well as the following paper:

1) I will undertake a book-length critical study of the development of the idea of the unity of reason and feeling in the tradition of German Idealism. Disputing the received view of Kant on reason and feeling allows to problematize and nuance the relationship between Kant's project and the project of later German Idealists: Schelling, Fichte and Hegel. In light of the new understanding of Kant, the Idealists' thought should be seen not as simply as a critique of Kant but as a continuation and deepening of the project of understanding the unity of reason and feeling that Kant inaugurates. This continuation, I argue, is grounded in the Idealists' development of the idea of "non-subjective" freedom. This is the idea of freedom that is not grounded in a Christian free will, a property of an individual "I", but in a "we": freedom depends on the existence of other persons. The first part will focus on Schelling's account of the relation between feeling and freedom in his last officially published work *Philosophical Inquiries into the Essence of Human Freedom* (1809); the second part, will deal with Fichte's account of the necessity of acquisition of rational capacities in his account of education as a summons to rationality in *Foundations of Natural Right* and *System of Ethics*; the third, concluding part will treat Hegel's *Philosophy of Spirit* from the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*: in the third chapter I will treat his account of subjective spirit and its opaque characterization of habit as the form of all rational capacities and a mode of "self-feeling" and in the fourth chapter I will turn to his account of objective spirit and his development of the idea of *Gewissen*, conscience, grounded in habit, and thereby the idea that freedom is only "actually" possible in an embodied community in a rational state.

2) "Feeling—the Capacity for Practical Judgment" argues that feeling should be understood as the exercise of the same rational capacity exercised in action. The acquisition of a rational capacity and its exercise on a concrete occasion are exercises of the same general capacity: learning to speak a French word and speaking that word on a particular occasion are two exercises of the same rational capacity: being able to speak French. This structure has been used that articulate the relationship between perception and theoretical judgment: in perception I acquire the capacity to make a particular judgment. I argue that in the same way feeling and practical judgments are two exercises of the same rational capacity, namely, our will: in feeling I become aware of a practical demand on me, and *thereby* acquire the capacity to make a particular practical judgment, i.e., to act.