Kantian Approach to Education for Moral Sensitivity

Abstract

An important aspect of moral expertise is moral sensitivity, which is the ability to be sensitive to the presence of morally salient features in a context. This requires being able to see and acquire the morally relevant information, as well as organise and interpret it, so that you can undertake the related work of moral judgment, focus (or motivation) and action. As a distinct but interrelated component of ethical expertise, moral sensitivity can and must be trained and educated. However, despite its importance to moral education, there has been comparatively little discussion about the role of ethical sensitivity and the ways that it can be trained within the context of Kant's, and Kantian, ethics. This paper seeks to address this gap. While Kant does not explicitly focus in detail on moral sensitivity, by breaking sensitivity down into seven distinct aspects through drawing on the Four Component Model, we are able to identify a wealth of resources in Kant's work from which we can construct an account of moral sensitivity education that draws on his underlying moral theory.

1. Introduction

An important aspect of moral expertise is moral sensitivity, which is the ability to be sensitive to the presence of morally salient features in a context. This requires being able to see and acquire the morally relevant information, as well as organise and interpret it, so that you can undertake the related work of moral judgment, focus (or motivation) and action. As a component of ethical expertise, moral sensitivity can and must be trained and educated (cf. Kant, 1996c, p. 591 [6:477]). Despite its importance to moral education, there has been comparatively little discussion about the role of ethical sensitivity and the ways that it can be trained within the context of Kant's, and Kantian, ethics. This paper will seek to address that gap by, in part, drawing on the Four Component Model of ethical expertise (Rest et al., 1999), which has been widely used in moral education (Bebeau, 2002; Vozzola, 2017). This paper will also help to further correct the still common (especially in education fields) but misguided view that Kant simply ignores the positive role of moral sensitivity and the emotions in the moral life and accordingly fails to consider their role in a complete moral education. The outline of the paper is as follows. First, we define what is meant by moral sensitivity according to the Four Component Model and demonstrate this model's relevance to Kant's ethics. We then explore how moral sensitivity training can be broken down into seven distinct but related aspects, before demonstrating that Kant has something useful to say about all

seven aspects and the ways that they can be cultivated through education and training. By explicitly outlining and combining these distinct aspects of moral sensitivity training, we gain a greater appreciation of this important component of moral education within Kant's wider ethical system, and we can also expose any weaknesses in this area of Kant's account of moral education that could be strengthened.

2. Moral Sensitivity in the Four Component Model

A useful approach to moral education is to break it down into distinct components that can be trained and developed. The Four Component Model is a popular version of this approach (Narvaez, 2005; Rest et al., 1999; Staines et al., 2019). It breaks down morality into four components: moral sensitivity (being sensitive to the presence of morally relevant features); moral focus (being able to prioritise morality); moral judgment (being able to judge what to do); and moral action (being able to act morally). Each of these components is then broken down into seven skills and capacities, each with further sub-skills (such as impulse control, delayed gratification, and pushing oneself), for a total of twenty-eight moral skills. These various skills and capacities overlap, interact, and build on one another. While the focus is on the development of various 'skills', it is clear from the theory that this term is being understood broadly to include an '*ensemble*' of interactive affective and cognitive '*processes*' (Narvaez & Rest, 1995, p. 387). Broadly, we can think of these as trainable achievements or capacities, which include not just the ability to *do* various things well, such as read emotions, but also the ability to *be* disposed to act in certain ways, such as being disposed to give others the benefit of the doubt. Indeed, the theory includes a detailed mapping that connects various virtues with the development of specific sub-skills, such as linking the 'virtues' of 'respect', 'honesty', and 'compassion' with the related skill of 'reading and expressing emotion' (Narvaez et al., 2001, p. 11).

All four components make sense within the context of Kant's ethics (Formosa, 2018) and fit with Kant's claim that virtue is 'not innate' and therefore 'can and must be *taught*' (Kant, 1996c, p. 591 [6:477]; cf. Surprenant, 2010, 2011). For Kant, to act morally we need to: *recognise* the need to act morally (sensitivity); *judge* what we ought to do (judgment); be *motivated* by the moral law itself (focus); and *do* what morality requires (action). However, one concern with combining this approach with Kant's ethics is that at some points Kant seems to specifically claim that 'skills' have no role in morality. For example, Kant makes a strong distinction between '*technically-practical*' rules that cover 'art and skill generally' and belong to 'theoretical' philosophy and '*morally-practical*' laws that fall 'under the concept of freedom' and are part of 'practical' philosophy (Kant, 2000, p. 8 [5:172]). However, elsewhere Kant is clear that there are various 'skills', such as speaking and thinking, which are not innate and therefore must be trained, and which are also 'necessary' precursors to moral

action (Kant, 2007a, pp. 163-64 [8:110-111]). He is also clear that there are various parts of virtue and morality which positively require the direct cultivation of various dispositions, such as a disposition of cheerfulness in the completion of our duties (Baxley, 2010), and skills or capacities, such as being able to read the emotions of others (Williamson, 2015). As such, for Kant, "skill in…handling the complexities of feeling and thought…is not only psychologically but morally necessary" (Williamson, 2015, p. 109). Generalising, there are many skills, dispositions, and capacities that Kant is clear need to be developed both as a percussor to and as part of the proper cultivation of morality itself, and we shall explore these here insofar as they relate to moral sensitivity.

While Kant discusses aspects of all four components of moral expertise in the context of education, his main educational concerns are with moral focus (or moral motivation) and moral judgment. Moral focus is central to Kant's discussion of radical evil and humanity's core moral challenge of overcoming an initially corrupted moral disposition that favours self-love over morality (see the special issue on this topic in Roth & Formosa, 2019). Whether this 'revolution' in our disposition, from prioritising self-love to prioritising morality, is to happen all at once or through gradual progress in the development of our character is a matter of debate (see e.g., Baxley, 2010; Beck, 1978; Biss, 2015; Formosa, 2018; Louden, 2011; Munzel, 2003; Sticker, 2015). Moral judgment is central to Kant's more explicit comments about 'teaching ethics' and his distinction between teaching ethics via 'lectures', where the student merely listens, and teaching it by the 'erotetic method' of a dialogue addressed to a student's reason or a catechism addressed to the student's memory (Kant, 1996c, pp. 591–597 [6:477–84]; Surprenant, 2011; Herman, 2007). Here Kant's main interest is with teaching moral concepts, such as duty, and with helping students to see what they ought to do, that is, how they should judge morally. To this Kant adds a discussion of 'ethical ascetics' or 'ethical gymnastics' that aims at promoting the development of a virtuous character which makes you 'both *valiant* and *cheerful*' in fulfilling your duties through practicing overcoming counter–moral impulses (Kant, 1996c, pp. 597–598 [6:484–86]; Formosa, 2017, p. 201; Williamson, 2015, pp. 110-114). This discussion largely concerns moral focus, that is, how we can become the sort of person who prioritises morality over self-love. Along with a broader discussion of education's historical role in helping to achieve the 'final destiny' of the human species (Dean, 2014; Kleingeld, 1999; Moran, 2012; Roth & Surprenant, 2012), most of the secondary literature on Kant's account of moral education follows Kant's emphasis on the cultivation of moral judgment and moral focus.

While the scholarly attention given to moral judgment and moral focus in Kant's account of education is clearly justified, it nonetheless means that comparatively less attention has been given to the components of moral action and moral sensitivity. In terms of moral action, while Kant

stresses that since the downstream consequences of our actions can be out of our control despite 'our greatest efforts', and thus we should focus on the moral content of our 'volitions' (Kant, 1996e, p. 50 [4:394]), he does not completely ignore the outcomes of our actions. For example, he notes that one of the dangers of excessive alcohol consumption is that it can have the consequence of preventing the skilful use of our powers to realise moral choices through our actions (Kant, 1996c, p. 545 [6:420]). In terms of moral sensitivity, one of the more important discussions in the Kantian secondary literature can be found in Herman's account of 'rules of moral salience'. These rules are acquired 'as elements in a moral education', and 'structure an agent's perception of his situation' to enable 'him to pick out those elements of his circumstances or of his proposed actions that require moral attention' (Herman, 1993, p. 77). However, Herman's rule-based approach to sensitivity or salience training arguably, as we shall see below, narrows the scope of moral sensitivity too much, overplays the role that 'preformulated consciously accessible rules' can play in sensitising us to moral salience (for a detailed development of this line of criticism see DesAutels, 2012, p. 339), and underplays the importance of emotions and communications with others. Given the overall importance of moral sensitivity to a complete account of moral education and the comparative lack of attention devoted to it in the Kantian literature, there is a need for a detailed discussion, which we provide here, of moral sensitivity in the context of Kant's ethics.

In the Four Component Model, which we shall draw on here for structuring purposes, the component of moral sensitivity is broken down into the following seven skills and capacities (Narvaez et al., 2001): 1) Reading and expressing emotion; 2) Taking the perspective of others; 3) Caring by connecting to others; 4) Working with interpersonal and group differences; 5) Preventing social bias; 6) Generating interpretations and options; and 7) Identifying the consequences of actions and options. Of course, some of these aspects overlap to some extent with other components, such as the skill of 'Caring by connecting to others' which has implications for moral motivation and focus. These seven skills draw on three cognitive processes (Narvaez et al., 2001): *acquiring* information (skills 1 and 2), which involves perception and inference; *organising* information (skills 3, 4 and 5), which includes critical thinking and reflection; and *interpreting* information (skills 6 and 7), which includes divergent thinking and prediction. In the next section we shall consider each of these seven skills and capacities in turn to demonstrate what, if anything, Kant has to say about them and their cultivation.

Although Kant does not explicitly group all these seven skills and capacities under one umbrella term called 'moral sensitivity', we can find correlates of each of them discussed in Kant's work. Thus, while Kant did not explicitly group these disparate discussions together, we will demonstrate below that he did think that each was important, and by drawing them together we

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can start to *construct* a more complete Kantian approach to improving moral sensitivity training through education. This is a useful analytic tool for a Kantian approach to moral education and for understanding Kant's own approach to it, as it breaks down the problem of 'moral education' from a single entity into a series of components, sub-skills, dispositions to cultivate, and training activities to undertake. This makes conceptual and practical sense. It also helps us to appreciate the implicit account of moral sensitivity that is in Kant's work and to identify any gaps or weaknesses in Kant's account, particularly in terms of the need to cultivate sensitivity to cultural differences and the importance of dealing with bias.

3. Education for Moral Sensitivity in Kant's Ethics

In this section we consider what Kant says, and what Kantians might have to say, about each of the seven skills and capacities that make up the component of moral sensitivity. In so doing we cover numerous distinct issues raised by Kant's ethics and moral psychology. The aim in briefly outlining these issues is not, of course, to give detailed treatments of each (and, indeed, essay length investigations could be provided for all of them), but rather to show the presence of a full suite of concerns related to moral sensitivity training in Kant's works as a basis for further research in this area. Further, while emotions are important to many of the below discussions, given our focus here on the different components of moral sensitivity training, we will not address the more general issue about the overall role of the emotions in Kant's moral philosophy (for such accounts see, for example, Anderson, 2008; Baron, 1995; Baxley, 2010; Cohen, 2017; Denis, 2000; Formosa, 2017; Sherman, 1997; Williamson, 2015). Finally, it is important to keep in mind that, though presented separately, these various aspects of moral sensitivity should be seen as interconnected both to each other and to the other components of ethical expertise, such as moral judgment, that are not being focused on here. For example, being morally sensitive to our moral obligations to distant others, including those who exist in distant countries and future generations, requires the *integrated* use of several aspects of moral sensitivity. This includes being able to take the perspective of distant others, being able to connect and care about them, being able to generate a range of action options that might impact on them, and being aware of the downstream consequences of our choices, not to mention the related tasks of cultivating judgment and moral focus in such cases.

3.1 Reading and expressing emotion

Being able to *identify* emotions in yourself and others and being able to appropriately *express* emotions verbally as well as through facial and body language and other expressive forms are important moral skills (Narvaez et al., 2001). These are essential components of moral sensitivity as

they help us to *read* other peoples' emotions, which is a precursor to taking those emotions into moral account, and *show* others what we think about them, which is morally salient given the impacts this can have on others. For example, recognising that certain uses of language or certain facial expressions tend to make others upset, scared, or angry is important if you are to consider modifying your language or facial expressions to avoid those negative impacts on others. Similarly, recognising the way that certain situations or people may provoke strong emotions that could hinder your self-control is important to alert you to consider avoiding such contexts or interactions. Likewise, being able to see that someone is upset or in need of help can prompt you to consider whether you should help them, which is something you might not consider doing in real time if you could not first *identify* their emotions. In terms of emotional expression, if we are to make others feel respected and valued, then we may need to *show* that we respect and value them through our speech as well as our bodily and facial expressions when we socially interact with them. More generally, we need to be sensitive to the impacts that our emotional expressions, such as boredom or disgust, can have on others.

Kant has much to say about the importance of the cultivation and expression of our emotions, as well as the inhibition of very strong affects and passions. We can break these down into positive and negative impacts. We shall briefly state these negative and positive impacts here before exploring each in more detail below. The positive impacts are the ability of cultivated emotions to help us to *see* morally relevant features in real time and to *express* morally relevant commitments to others. The negative impacts are the ability of affects and passions to make us *insensitive* to morality, and at the opposite extreme we have the problem of being *oversensitive* to morality by being fantastically virtuous. Together, this will demonstrate the role for sensitivity that the identifying and expressive role of emotions have in Kant's ethics.

Kant argues that we have a duty of 'apathy', which is a duty to try to rid ourselves of 'affects' (i.e., over-powering emotions) and 'passions' (i.e., over-powering desires) (Kant, 1996c, pp. 536–537 [6:407–410]; cf. Anderson, 2008; Denis, 2000; Formosa, 2011, 2017). Kant describes affects as sudden, strong and powerful 'tempests' or feelings that rob us of the capacity for '*reflection* on that feeling' and thus cause us to lose the ability to put affects in context by 'comparing' them 'with the sum of all feelings' (Kant, 2006, pp. 150–152 [7:252–254]). In this way an affect, such as an over-powering feeling of anger, can make us *insensitive* to everything else. It can prevent us from *seeing* morally relevant features of a situation. For example, when we talk of someone who is 'blind with anger' and 'seeing red', we mean (in part) that they are no longer able to *see* their moral context properly because of their extreme anger. Passions also, in their own way, make us insensitive to things besides our passions. For example, the '*passionately* ambitious person' is someone who is so

focused on the improvement of his 'financial position' that he is 'blind' to other ends he cares about, such as the 'pleasure of social intercourse' (Kant, 2006, p. 165 [7:266]). The single mindedness of the passionately ambitious person makes them *insensitive* to the worth of their other valuable ends and blinds them to the value of other persons. Kant's strategy for training ourselves to avoid the insensitivity produced by affects and passions is to draw on the Stoic method of refocusing our attention away from troublesome feelings which has 'the consequence of dulling the intensity of that…feeling' (Kant, 1996f, p. 320 [7:106–07]) and refocusing on our engagement with other enjoyable ends so that we are sensitive to the worth of goods besides our passionately desired ends (Formosa, 2017, pp. 173–186).

The aim of the duty of apathy is primarily negative by avoiding over-powering emotions and desires that make us *insensitive* to the worth of other morally relevant features of the world. But Kant also pays attention to the other extreme of *oversensitivity*, which relies on his distinction between actions that are morally *obligatory*, those that are morally *forbidden*, and those that are morally *permitted* or *indifferent* since they are neither obligatory nor forbidden (Kant, 1996c, p. 337 [6:222-223]). We see this clearly in Kant's discussion of fantastic virtue. The 'fantastically virtuous… allows *nothing to be morally indifferent*' and this 'concern with petty details… would turn the government of virtue into tyranny' (Kant, 1996c, p. 536–537 [6:409]; cf. Baron, 1995, p. 91; Sherman, 1997, pp. 337–338). The inability to see anything as morally indifferent is to be morally oversensitive. This oversensitivity is a problem since it means that we see morality everywhere even when it is not there. This is, in effect, to see things that are 'morally indifferent as if they were not morally indifferent' (Baron, 1995, p. 91). Oversensitivity means failing to be appropriately sensitive to the morally relevant features of a context. Training ourselves out of such oversensitivity requires that we develop virtue and a proper appreciation of the relative worth of things and the absolute worth of persons, as well as an awareness of the way that morality leaves open a space for the exercise of personal discretion and choice within the realm of moral permissibility (Formosa & Sticker, 2019).

Emotional training also has positive benefits as it is morally important to train ourselves to have the right degree of sensitivity so as to see moral reality around us as it is. As Sherman (1995, pp. 145-146) puts it, "emotions serve as *modes of attention* that help us to track what is morally salient" and thereby sensitise us to the morality of our circumstances in a way that the motivational aspect of the "thought of duty alone" cannot. For Kant, this centres around developing a proper volitional and emotional sensitivity to the dignity of yourself and others. While the *motivational* role of emotions in Kant's ethics (e.g., Kant, 1996c, p. 576 [6:457]), which is important for moral focus, has been widely discussed, the positive role of emotions for sensitivity training is also important in

Kant's ethics. This includes the important role that emotions can play in *alerting* us to the presence of morally relevant features in real time and their role in *expressing* our moral commitments to others (Formosa, 2017). In terms of their alerting function, if I do not, for example, cultivate my feelings of sympathy for others, then I may not *see* in real time that someone is suffering and thus potentially in need of my aid (Sherman, 1997, p. 145). In terms of their expressive function, pro-moral emotions, such as love and sympathy, 'reflect, embody and reinforce important moral commitments' (Denis, 2008, p. 128) and constitute 'the practical expression of taking humanity' to be an end in itself (Denis, 2011, p. 184). For example, when we help someone *with* love and sympathy properly expressed through our voice, facial and body language, then we *show* them that we genuinely care about them and about morality more generally, and that we are sensitive to their worth as persons.

Kant also provides practical advice as to how we can train and educate our emotional sensitivity through appropriate habituation. His discussion of love of human beings is the clearest example of this, where he argues that by habituating yourself to helping others through your actions, you will gradually 'produce [the feeling of] love of them in you' (Kant, 1996c, p. 531 [6:402]). Here the doing, the helping of others, comes first, and the emotional expression or response of love comes second. Similarly, Kant claims that practising cheerfulness through 'frank and unrestrained smiling … gradually leaves a mark within and establishes a *disposition* to cheerfulness, friendliness, and sociability' which approximates 'the virtue of benevolence' (Kant, 2006, p. 164 [7:265]). By helping others through action and expressing cheerfulness in our facial features when doing so we can train ourselves to develop and express a genuine concern for others.

3.2 Taking the perspective of others

Being able to *see* things from the perspectives of others is important if we are to take all the morally relevant facts into account and consider the impacts of our actions and emotional expressions on others (Narvaez et al., 2001). This can also help to develop both empathy *with* others, in the sense of being able to feel what others feel, and sympathy *for* them, in the sense of being able to feel for them (on this distinction between empathy and sympathy see, e.g., Darwall, 1998). Here literature, art and other forms of media can play an important role, as can listening and talking to a diverse range of people. This is particularly important when dealing with those from different cultural backgrounds and traditions, where cultural understanding needs to be developed (Narvaez et al., 2001).

The importance of thinking from the position of others is central to Kant's account of reason, enlightenment, and cognitive development. Kant makes this explicit with the second of his three

'maxims of the common human understanding' (Kant, 2000, p. 174 [5:294]) or maxims that lead 'to wisdom' (Kant, 2006, p. 124 [7:228]). This second maxim, which is combined with the first maxim to think for oneself and the third maxim to think consistently, states that we need to 'think oneself (in communication with human beings) into the place of every *other person*' (Kant, 2006, p. 124 [7:228]). Kant likens this maxim to being 'broad-minded' rather than 'narrow-minded' and it involves freeing ourselves from the 'subjective private conditions' of our judgment to consider matters from 'a universal standpoint (which he can only determine by putting himself into the standpoint of others)' (Kant, 2000, p. 175 [5:295]). Such broad-mindedness arguably depends on *communication* and *dialogue* with diverse others (see, e.g., Kant, 2006, p. 124 [7:228]; cf. O'Neill, 1986, and Bain & Formosa 2020). While the importance of this for Kant's account of theoretical reason has been much discussed (e.g., O'Neill, 1986), less attention has been given to the implications this has for an account of moral sensitivity. After all, it is not only our *theoretical* judgments that we need to test through open dialogue and communication with others, but also our practical *moral* judgments.

It is only by being 'in communication [with diverse other] human beings' that we can start to become sensitive to the diversity of moral perspectives and beliefs that others may have, and thereby expose the potential idiosyncrasies of our own moral views. Part of being genuinely broad-minded is being able to take seriously the perspective of others, while also being willing to take seriously the potential biases and flaws in our own perspectives. Open and respectful *communication* is, Kant stresses, the way that this education of our sensitivity is primarily to occur. Beyond respectful communication with diverse others, Kantians should also consider the importance of exposure to art, literature, and other expressive mediums in furnishing us with insights into different perspectives (Guyer, 2014). Indeed, it is not a mere coincidence that Kant introduces his three maxims for human understanding in the context of his critique of the aesthetic power of judgment. Of course, it is important to acknowledge Kant's own personal failures in this regard in terms of the sexist and racist components of his work that seems to indicate a lack of genuine engagement with the perspectives of women, and people of different cultural and racial backgrounds (for discussion see, e.g., Allais, 2016; Bernasconi, 2002; Kleingeld, 2007, 2019; Varden, 2017). Nonetheless, it is clear that being able to see things from the perspective of others through communication with them is an important capacity that needs to be trained as part of developing our moral sensitivity.

3.3 Caring by connecting to others

To develop concern for others, we need to be able to perceive others as connected to us (Narvaez et al., 2001). This includes being able to relate to others and see connections to them, acting

respectfully toward others, and being able to be a friend. Developing these capacities also requires being able to see ourselves as interdependent on others and as part of a larger community (Narvaez et al., 2001).

While this has a clear motivational component that we might consider to be an element of moral focus (i.e., because we are *motivated* to do things for those we care about), we shall consider it here in the context of moral sensitivity to be about *focusing our attention*, given that we tend to notice or pay more attention to information that we regard as of greater importance to us. Developing concern for others will help to shift how we organise and prioritise the information that we take in, and thereby impact our moral sensitivity. We can see the relevance of this to Kant's discussions of cosmopolitanism (Cavallar, 2014; Kleingeld, 2012), community (Moran, 2012), friendship (Munzel, 1998) and, more directly, love or beneficence for others (Formosa & Sticker, 2019). Rather than explore all these discussions in any detail, it shall suffice for our purposes here to briefly illustrate one case, that of developing a cosmopolitan disposition, as it touches on the other elements and illustrates the more general point about the importance for Kant of caring about and connecting with others.

Kant concludes his *Lectures on Pedagogy* with the imperative that we must 'stress to him [the student] philanthropy towards others and then also [the development of] cosmopolitan dispositions' (Kant, 2007b, p. 485 [9:499]). We need to train ourselves to *take* an 'interest' in what is 'best for the world' (Kant, 2007b, p.485 [9:499]; cf. Hildebrand, 2017) and fully appreciate the dignity of all persons, wherever they are from. In this way we can become *sensitive* to moral violations wherever and to whomever they occur in the world, so that a 'violation of right on *one* place of the earth is felt in *all*' (Kant, 1996d, p. 330 [8:360]). Training ourselves to be connected to others and to care about them, both in terms of their well-being and their equality, and feel violations of moral right wherever they occur, is also central to Kant's idea of being a '*friend of human beings* as such' (Kant, 1996c, p. 587 [6:473]). While Kant explicitly focuses on the motivational benefits of being a friend of human beings in terms of its protection against pride (Kant, 1996c, p. 588 [6:473]), there is also an informational aspect that is relevant to sensitivity. Namely, that a cosmopolitan friend of human beings will be more sensitive than someone who doesn't care about and isn't connected to others at seeing, in real time, violations of the love and respect due to all persons wherever they are in the world. While, of course, much more could be said about this case, this brief illustration suffices for making the broader point about the relevance of caring for others to a Kantian account of moral sensitivity.

3.4 Working with interpersonal and group differences

To properly understand moral contexts, we need to be able to understand and interpret interpersonal and group differences and be able to function in a variety of cultural contexts (Narvaez et al., 2001). Part of interpreting a moral situation is being able to interpret how others see it. Some degree of interpretation and cultural understanding is important for being able to do that, especially in modern multicultural societies. This requires developing multicultural skills', such as gaining an understanding and appreciation of other cultures, and being flexible in following different cultural norms where appropriate to demonstrate respect for others (Narvaez et al., 2001, p. 44).

This capacity builds upon the previous two of taking the perspective of others through communication and cultivating concern for others through developing a cosmopolitan disposition. Both of these capacities require the ability to understand and appreciate the perspectives of those who are different within our culture and across other cultures. Of course, a focus on the moral sensitivity capacities needed to operate effectively in a modern multicultural society is, obviously enough, not a topic that was on Kant's philosophical radar (although Kant's account of dignity is an important part of the modern discussion of multiculturalism; see e.g., Taylor, 1994). Even so, there are relevant resources for this capacity in Kant's work. For example, Kant is sensitive to interpersonal and group differences when he notes that 'different forms of respect' may need to be shown to others depending on 'differences of age, sex, birth… or even rank', to which we could add culture and religion (Kant, 1996c, p. 583 [6:468]). Treating others in respectful ways can often require taking seriously their cultural practices and perspectives, and that in turn requires being sensitive to what those are. Further, Kant's emphasis on the 'virtues of social intercourse' (Kant, 1996c, p. 588 [6:473]), or what we might now call the '*conversational virtues*' (Bakhurst, 2018, p. 686), and his related discussions of the moral importance of politeness (Frierson, 2005) and 'toleration' (Bain & Formosa, 2020), are all relevant for developing this capacity. The virtues of social intercourse that Kant outlines include 'agreeableness, tolerance, mutual love and respect' as well as '*affability*, *sociability*, *courtesy*, *hospitality*, and *gentleness* (in disagreeing without quarrelling)' (Kant, 1996c, p. 588 [6:473]. These are all important social skills and character traits for dealing with interpersonal and group differences sensitively. For Kant, when we exhibit these social virtues we 'bind others' by encouraging them to act in a similar fashion, and thereby help to 'promote a virtuous [and cosmopolitan] disposition' in ourselves and others (Kant, 1996c, p. 588 [6:474]). Being skilled at disagreeing without quarrelling, and approaching others in a spirit of agreeableness, tolerance, open-mindedness, mutual love, and respect is a solid basis on which to generate genuine engagement with interpersonal and group differences. This in turn also helps to underwrite the work

of effectively communicating with others that is needed for thinking into their different perspectives.

3.5 Preventing social bias

Another important aspect of moral sensitivity is controlling social bias, whether implicit or explicit, through being aware of it and taking steps to minimise or prevent it at the individual, social and structural levels (Narvaez et al., 2001). Being sensitive to the presence of implicit (e.g., through unconscious automatic associations) and explicit (e.g., through conscious racism) bias in our decisions and latent within the social structures and decision algorithms that permeate our lives is an essential moral capacity. For example, being aware of implicit automatic associations that we may have between 'white' and 'good' and between 'men' and 'work', and the strategy of conscious exposure to counter-stereotypical associations to challenge these (e.g., through images or stories of successful black women), is important to ensure bias does not distort our sensitivity to morally relevant (and irrelevant) features of a decision or context (Brownstein, 2019; Dasgupta, 2013).

As with the contemporary emphasis on multiculturalism, the discovery of the importance of implicit bias postdates Kant, and thus we cannot expect to find any direct consideration of the issue in his work. Further, one could reasonably raise concerns about Kant's own biases, as we have seen above in mentioning criticisms of sexist and racist elements in Kant's work. Nonetheless, there are some resources in Kant's work that are useful in this context. For example, we might attempt to read Kant's well-known claim about the respect he is reluctantly forced to feel 'before a humble common man in whom I perceive uprightness of character' as an attempt to deal with (in this case) his own class-based biases. Kant states that before such a man his '*spirit bows*', even though he holds his 'head ever so high' to ensure that the humble man does not 'overlook' his 'superior [social] position' (Kant, 1996a, p. 202 [5:77]; cf. Merritt, 2012, pp. 44-45). While Kant uses this example to illustrate his claim that '*Respect* is a *tribute* that we cannot refuse to pay to merit' (Kant, 1996a, p. 202 [5:77]), we can also (in part) read it as an attempt by Kant to counteract his implicit association of 'humble, common man' with 'moral inferiority' through a counter–stereotypical example.

More generally, Kant's emphasis on the cultivation of virtue through the creation of moral communities can also help to promote the socialisation of people who 'learn to *see* [emphasis added] themselves and others as having an absolute commanding value as persons with equal status dignity' (Formosa, 2017, p. 204). Learning to *see* and *perceive* each person as the possessor of dignity, no matter how humble they are and no matter their race, age, cultural background, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or gender, clearly helps to challenge any explicit bias and *could* help to lessen any implicit bias through counteracting negative automatic associations that we may have. Further,

Kant's emphasis on the importance of the creation of 'a society in accordance with, and for the sake of, the laws of virtues' (Kant, 1996b, p. 129 [6:93–94]) in which *everyone* is treated with dignity and respect, will help to create the sort of positive social interactions with 'members of stereotyped groups' that can help to counteract implicit bias (Dasgupta, 2013, p. 247). By treating diverse others respectfully and engaging with them in positive ways we can start to tackle any biases that may be distorting our moral sensitivity.

3.6 Generating interpretations and options

Being able to generate both a range of interpretations of a situation or event and a range of options for actions is critical for moral sensitivity (Narvaez et al., 2001). This capacity has two parts: identifying interpretations of a situation and generating action options. When interpreting a situation and the conduct of others we need to be aware of the Fundamental Attribution Error whereby we overestimate the importance of a person's dispositions and underestimate the impact of their situation in determining their behaviour (Sabini et al., 2001; Sabini & Silver, 2005). In this way, we can avoid interpreting the behaviour of others as maliciously motivated when their situation, which may be out of their control, could be having more of an impact on their behaviour than we credit it with having (Morton, 2004).

The first of these skills (i.e., identifying interpretations) builds on the earlier capacities of being able to take the perspective of others and understanding interpersonal and cultural differences. Kant elaborates this capacity further, in a moral context, through his discussion of the vice of defamation (Kant, 1996c, p. 582 [6:466]). There Kant writes not only of the vice of taking 'malicious pleasure in exposing the faults of others', but also of the duty of virtue to 'throw the veil of philanthropy over' the actions on others by 'softening our judgments' of them (Kant, 1996c, p. 582 [6:466]; cf. Bain & Formosa, 2020). By being virtuously disposed to put the actions of others in a good moral light and by avoiding '*wanton faultfinding* and *mockery*', we can help to encourage others to strive to deserve the respect that we give them (Kant, 1996c, p. 582 [6:466-67]). Here sensitivity requires that we make ourselves open to seeing and interpreting the actions of others in the best possible moral light by throwing a 'veil of philanthropy' over their actions, and this requires both being able to see things from their point of view and being aware of the impact of their situation on their actions. This requires the development of a generosity in our interpretations of others' conduct and a willingness to give them the benefit of the doubt. This doesn't mean that we must *always* give others the benefit of the doubt, but we should try to become disposed to doing so where possible.

The second of these skills (i.e., generating action options) requires an ability both to think imaginatively of different action options and to understand that doing the right thing in tough situations is morally possible. The use of examples is important for the development of both abilities. Kant emphasises the pedagogical importance of teaching children 'the duties that they have to fulfil as much as possible by examples' (Kant, 2007b, p. 475 [9:488]; cf. Guyer, 2014). Kant stresses this point most often by showing how examples can demonstrate the possibility of moral worth (for an account of moral worth see, e.g., Herman, 1993). We see this clearly in an 'example' which Kant takes from Juvenal, that of being able to resist the demands of a tyrant to perjure yourself on pain of suffering torture and death, that he uses to illustrate that the moral incentive of respect for the law can be practical in even the toughest situations (Kant, 1996a, pp. 266–67 [5:158–59]). Such an example vividly demonstrates the possibility of acting morally in even extreme situations and thereby helps us to see morality as a genuine action option even in such tough cases. Historical or fictional examples can also be used to improve our sensitivity to seeing the broader range of action options that are available to us, beyond the obvious, through case studies of those who have used imagination and creativity to see novel moral solutions in complex situations (for more on this see e.g., Guyer, 2014).

3.7 Identifying the consequences of actions and options

The final skill we consider here is being able to identify the consequences of different actions and options, both in the shorter and longer term and both for oneself and others. This involves learning from the past and being able to predict the future, as well as being able to consider the perspectives of others so as to take into account the full range of consequences (Narvaez et al., 2001).

We can see Kant's focus on the consequences of choices in his consideration of the downstream moral impacts of actions. Being aware of these impacts is important for moral sensitivity, so that we can properly consider the ethical consequences of different action options. There are many examples in Kant's work of his focus on such consequences, including the above-mentioned cases of the positive downstream impacts of politeness on the development of virtue (Kant, 1996c, p. 588 [6:474]) and of acting beneficently on the cultivation of feelings of love (Kant, 1996c, p. 531 [6:402]), as well as the negative downstream impacts that intentionally spreading stories that casts humanity in a poor moral light can have on dulling respect and moral feeling (Kant, 1996c, p. 582 [4:466]). However, perhaps the most interesting example of this is Kant's discussion of the complex connection between ingratitude and beneficence. Kant notes that we must be very sensitive in how we go about helping others and we must 'carefully avoid any appearance of intending' to create obligations in others when we help them as this 'always humbles the other' in

their own eyes. Instead, we should try to show that we are 'honoured by' the other's acceptance of our help (Kant, 1996c, p. 572 [6:453]). If we do not help others sensitively, then this could have the negative consequences of lowering their self-respect and self-esteem, which could in turn encourage their development of the vice of ingratitude due to their feeling that they have been placed in an 'inferior position' of dependency on a benefactor (Kant, 1996c, p. 577 [6:459]). Generalising from this example, it is clear that for Kant proper sensitivity to the potential impacts of our actions on others, along with a clear understanding of the various downstream impacts of our actions on others and society more generally, is an essential moral capacity to cultivate. Of course, while the consequences of our actions can still be unpredictable despite our best efforts, we can get better overall at foreseeing, and thus being sensitive to, the likely consequences of our actions and their impacts on others. Further, drawing on previously discussed capacities, considering a broad range of examples and adopting the perspectives of diverse others are also important tools for broadening our understanding of the consequences of our actions and thereby training our moral sensitivity.

4. Conclusion

Dividing moral pedagogy into four components, with numerous interrelated and overlapping skills, dispositions, and capacities, is a useful theoretical lens for identifying conceptual resources in Kant's work for constructing a contemporary account of moral education. In this paper we focused on the cultivation and training of moral sensitivity. While Kant does not explicitly focus in detail on moral sensitivity, by breaking sensitivity down into seven distinct capacities, we were able to identify a wealth of resources in Kant's works from which we can construct an account of moral sensitivity education that is compatible with, and directly draws on, his underlying moral theory. These capacities include (Narvaez et al., 2001): 1) Reading and expressing emotion; 2) Adopting the perspectives of others; 3) Caring for and connecting with others; 4) Understanding interpersonal and group differences; 5) Preventing social bias; 6) Generating interpretations and options; and 7) Identifying the consequences of actions. In exploring these capacities, we show here how we can combine several distinct and seemingly unrelated discussions in Kant's works under the broader rubric of moral sensitivity, and thereby help us to develop a richer and more nuanced understanding of the scope of resources in Kant's work for the development of a more complete account of moral education. In doing so, we also challenge traditional readings of Kant that have under emphasised the importance of this element in his work.

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