

KANT ON REFLECTION AND VIRTUE

There can be no doubt that Kant thought we should be reflective: we ought to care to make up our own minds about how things are and what is worth doing. Philosophical objections to the Kantian reflective ideal have centred on concerns about the excessive control that the reflective person is supposed to exert over her own mental life, and Kantians who feel the force of these objections have recently drawn attention to Kant's conception of moral virtue as it is developed in his later work, chiefly the *Metaphysics of Morals*. Melissa Merritt's book is a distinctive contribution to this recent turn to virtue in Kant scholarship. Merritt argues that we need a clearer and textually more comprehensive account of what *reflection* is in order not only to understand Kant's account of virtue, but also to appreciate how it effectively rebuts longstanding objections to the Kantian reflective ideal.

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PROOF

To Markos and Eirene

Considered in its complete perfection, virtue is therefore represented not as if a human being possesses virtue but rather as if virtue possesses him; for in the former case it would look as if he still had a choice (for which he would need yet another virtue in order to select virtue before any of the other wares on offer).

Metaphysics of Morals (6:406)

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Some parts of this book overlap with work I have published elsewhere. Some of the material in Chapter 1 is drawn from my 'Varieties of Reflection in Kant's Logic', *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 23 (2015): 478–501, copyright © British Society for the History of Philosophy (BSHP), parts of which are reprinted by permission of Taylor & Francis Ltd, www.tandfonline.com, on behalf of the BSHP. After writing the first draft of the manuscript, I developed the discussion of attention from Chapter 3 together with my colleague Markos Valaris; as a result, there is some overlap between my discussion of Kant's remarks on attention in the *Anthropology* and our discussion of the same passages in our co-authored paper, 'Attention and Synthesis in Kant's Conception of Experience', *Philosophical Quarterly* 67/267 (2017): 571–92, parts of which are reproduced here by permission of Oxford University Press and the Scots Philosophical Association.

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Abbreviations and Conventions for Citing Kant's Works

I Kant's Texts in German

References to the works of Kant, with the exception of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, follow volume and page of the German Academy edition: *Kants Gesammelte Schriften*, edited by the Königlich Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, later the Deutschen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin (Walter de Gruyter (and predecessors), 1902–). I have used both the complete print edition and the electronic edition, which comprises only volumes 1–23 (Berlin: Karsten Worm, 1998) and is available in the Past Masters humanities texts database (Charlottesville, VA: InteLex).

References to the *Critique of Pure Reason* follow the Academy edition, but are cited according to the pagination of the first ('A') and second ('B') editions of 1781 and 1787, respectively. If the cited passage is included in both editions, the citation includes both A and B page references.

When context makes it obvious which text I am referring to, I drop the abbreviation of the title and cite just the Academy volume and page (or A/B pagination in the case of the first *Critique*). I have typically rendered all points of emphasis in Kant's texts with italics, ignoring the difference between bold and *Sperrdruck* as two distinct modes of emphasis found in the Academy edition. Generally, I explicitly remark on emphasis only if I have *altered* Kant's beyond this, so it may be taken for granted that any emphasis in my quotation tracks an emphasis in the original German.

My abbreviations of Kant's works track the German titles, as follows:

A Works Published During Kant's Lifetime

Anth *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht = Anthropology
 from a Pragmatic Point of View* (1798) – Ak. 7

Aufklärung	'Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?' = 'An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?' (1784) – Ak. 8
Beo	<i>Beobachtungen über das Gefühl des Schönen und Erhabenen</i> = <i>Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime</i> (1764) – Ak. 2
G	<i>Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten</i> = <i>Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals</i> (1785) – Ak. 4
KpV	<i>Kritik der praktischen Vernunft</i> = <i>Critique of Practical Reason</i> (1788) – Ak. 5
KrV	<i>Kritik der reinen Vernunft</i> = <i>Critique of Pure Reason</i> (1781/1787) – Ak. 3/Ak.4
KU	<i>Kritik der Urteilskraft</i> = <i>Critique of the Power of Judgment</i> (1790) – Ak. 5
MAM	<i>Muthmaßlicher Anfang der Menschengeschichte</i> = <i>Conjectural Beginning of Human History</i> (1786) – Ak. 8
MS	<i>Die Metaphysik der Sitten</i> = <i>Metaphysics of Morals</i> (1797) – Ak. 6
Rel	<i>Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft</i> = <i>Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason</i> (1793) – Ak. 6
LJ	<i>Logik Jäsche</i> = Kant's lectures on logic, edited by G. B. Jäsche (1800) – Ak. 9
Orientiren	'Was heißt: Sich im Denken orientiren?' = 'What is Orientation in Thinking?' (1786) – Ak. 8
Prol	<i>Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik, die als Wissenschaft wird auftreten können</i> = <i>Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics</i> (1783) – Ak. 4
Päd	<i>Immanuel Kant über Pädagogik</i> = Kant's lectures on pedagogy, edited by Theodor Rink (1803) – Ak. 9
VKK	<i>Versuch über die Krankheiten des Kopfes</i> – Ak. 2

B Nachlass

Notes and Fragments (Reflexionen)

References to Kant's *Reflexionen* have three elements: first, the abbreviated title and reflection number (e.g. RL-2564); second, the estimated date of the remark, in square brackets (according to the suggestions of Adickes noted in the front matter to Ak. 14); and third, the citation according to volume and page in the Academy edition.

- RA *Reflexionen zur Anthropologie* = Kant's handwritten notes on anthropology – Ak. 15
RL *Reflexionen zur Logik* = Kant's handwritten notes on logic – Ak. 16
RMet *Reflexionen zur Metaphysik* = Kant's handwritten notes on metaphysics – Ak. 17–18
RMor *Reflexionen zur Moralphilosophie* = Kant's handwritten notes on moral philosophy – Ak. 19

Unpublished Manuscripts

- EE *Erste Einleitung in die Kritik der Urtheilskraft* = the first introduction to the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, unpublished in Kant's lifetime – Ak. 20
H *Handschrift* = handwritten manuscript of the *Anthropology*, which includes marginal notes and crossed-out passages not in the published text – Ak. 7

Records of Kant's Lectures

On logic (Ak. 24):

- LB *Logik Blomberg* (early 1770s)
LBu *Logik Busolt* (c. 1789)
LD-W *Logik Dobna-Wundlacken* (c. 1792)
LPh *Logik Philippi* (1772)
LPö *Logik Pölitz* (c. 1780)
WL *Wiener Logik* (c. 1780)

On anthropology (Ak. 25):

- ABu *Anthropologie Busolt* (1788–89?)
AColl *Anthropologie Collins* (1772–73)
AMr *Anthropologie Mrongovius* (1784–85)
AParow *Anthropologie Parow* (1772–73)
Menschenkunde *Anthropologie Menschenkunde* (1781–82)

On moral philosophy (Ak. 27):

- MC *Moralphilosophie Collins* (c. mid 1770s; see Naragon 2006)
MV *Moralphilosophie Vigilantius* (early 1790s)

On metaphysics (Ak. 29):

- MetMrong *Metaphysik Mrongovius* (early 1780s)

2 Kant's Texts in Translation

For the most part, translations from Kant's texts are my own, although I consult the translations in the *Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant* (abbreviated CEWIK) when available (and, in the case of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the Norman Kemp Smith translation as well). The series editors of the CEWIK, published by Cambridge University Press, are Paul Guyer and Allen Wood; the editors and translators of given volumes vary. Where I discuss or dispute a point of translation in the text, I indicate the translator in question. However, I do not make a note of every point of departure from the CEWIK translations.

The following editions of Kant's work in English translation were consulted:

- Kant, Immanuel. 1992. *Lectures on Logic*, edited by J. Michael Young. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kant, Immanuel. 1996. *Practical Philosophy*, edited by Mary J. Gregor. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kant, Immanuel. 1996. *Religion and Rational Theology*, edited by Allen W. Wood and George di Giovanni. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kant, Immanuel. 1998. *Critique of Pure Reason*, edited by Paul Guyer and Allen Wood. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kant, Immanuel. 2002. *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, edited by Paul Guyer. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kant, Immanuel. 2002. *Theoretical Philosophy after 1781*, edited by Henry Allison and Peter Heath. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kant, Immanuel. 2003 (1929). *Critique of Pure Reason*, translated by Norman Kemp Smith. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kant, Immanuel. 2005. *Notes and Fragments*, edited by Paul Guyer. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kant, Immanuel. 2007. *Anthropology, History, and Education*, edited by Günter Zöllner and Robert B. Loudon. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Introduction

Rethinking the Kantian Reflective Ideal

0.1 The Importance of Reflection

There can be no doubt that Kant thought we should be reflective: we ought to care to make up our own minds about how things are and what is worth doing. The reflective person is not blindly driven on by habitual patterns of thought and desire, by the exigencies of tradition and external authority. She is able to ‘step back’ from all of this and assert herself as the master of her own thought. This is a commonplace Enlightenment ideal: Kant was by no means the first to insist on the importance of thinking for oneself, questioning epistemic authority and standing guard against the insidious power of prejudice.¹

But in Kant, this ideal takes root in a metaphysics that distinguishes the mechanical operations of nature from whatever can be won in the expression of self-determined human reason. Kant understands the great bulk of prejudices (although not, as we will see, the entirety of them) as a tendency towards cognitive passivity, glossing them as the ‘*inclination . . . towards the mechanism of reason rather than towards its spontaneity under laws*’ (LJ 9:76; tracking RL-2527 [early 1770s], 16:406; see also LD-W 24:738).² To make oneself into a properly self-determined cognitive agent – and ultimately into a properly self-determined human being – is an achievement of some kind. When and how is this won? Kant seems to tell us that we must aim for it on the occasion of every judgment. He repeatedly claims that ‘all

¹ Kant and others debated the question of ‘What is enlightenment?’ in the *Berlinische Monatsschrift* and other venues in the 1780s (see Schmidt 1996 and Ciafardone 1990, 321–75 for texts). The topic of enlightenment also figures widely in Kant’s writings, from ethics to anthropology to logic. One of the main sources of his conception of enlightenment is the discussion of prejudice that figured in eighteenth-century logic texts, including G. F. Meier’s (1752) *Auszug aus der Vernunftlehre*, from which Kant lectured over the course of several decades. For historical discussion of enlightenment and the theory of prejudice in the Enlightenment era, see Schneiders (1983); for a focused account of these issues as they figure in Meier and bear on Meier’s influence on Kant, see Pozzo (2005).

² On the methodological issues surrounding working with the record of student notes from Kant’s lectures, and regarding *Logik Jäsche* in particular, see §0.4 of this Introduction.

judgments . . . require a *reflection*' – if not before the judgment, then 'at least following critically after it' (A260–1/B316–7). He speaks even of some such reflection as a matter of 'duty' (A263/B319).³ With this, we can begin to make out that the Kantian reflective ideal might stand in an uncertain relation to moral requirement and virtue.

Many will be inclined to suppose, in light of remarks such as these, that the Kantian reflective ideal is precious, hyper-deliberate and repugnantly moralistic. Versions of this Kantian caricature abound in exegetical and non-exegetical philosophical work, and likewise across work that is both sanguine and sceptical about Kantianism. An example from sceptical quarters provides an apt illustration: '[T]here . . . seems to be something wrong with Kant's ideal of the rational person. This person is always in control. Reason is always holding onto the reins of the soul, ensuring that mental processes are in accord with rational requirements . . . But there is more in life. Being rationally reflective and being rational are not supremely valuable modes of thought and being, but forms of thought and being among others' (Zangwill 2012, 357).

It is no exaggeration to claim that Kant accords supreme value to being rationally reflective. The error does not lie there. But just what this means, and what the ideally reflective person looks like by Kantian lights has been poorly understood. My overarching aim in this book is to show why the supreme value that Kant accords to being reflective does not yield the common caricature, and to develop an alternative account of the Kantian reflective ideal.

0.2 Modelling a Solution

Why has Kant's conception of reflection been poorly understood? One problem is the complexity of the textual record on reflection, which I canvas in Chapter 1: there are various notions of reflection invoked in a range of different contexts, of varying degrees of technical specificity. I am going to set those complications entirely to one side for now, to focus just on the idea that reflection is a kind of 'stepping back' from the immediacy of judgment and action in order to inquire into, and critically assess, its sources or operative principles. There are certain ways of running with this idea that lead to obvious problems.

³ In the *Amphiboly*, Kant says that anyone who wants to judge about things a priori is subject to a 'duty' of 'transcendental reflection'; I give an account of transcendental reflection in Merritt (2015).

Take Kant's claim that all judgments require reflection. If the relevant notion of reflection is some deliberate consideration of the source of one's taking things to be a certain way – and an assessment of whether that source entitles one to judge accordingly – then the requirement seems overly demanding and out of step with what we generally have in mind when we think of what it is for a cognitive state to be justified. As Andrew Chignell puts it, 'Typically . . . the sort of justification we're interested in is a state rather than an activity. A subject's belief that *p* can *be justified*, even if the subject doesn't *do* anything to determine that it is' (2007, 328). Indeed, it is perhaps owing to its apparent implausibility that Kant's claim that *all judgments require reflection* has scarcely figured in the interpretive literature on reflection; and where it is noted (as in Chignell 2007), there seems to be some readiness to pass it off as a slip of the pen.

But Kant's claim is not one-off. It appears not only as cited in both editions of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, but also throughout the various records of Kant's lectures on logic, in his handwritten Nachlass and in *Logik Jäsche*.⁴ It also figures (albeit obliquely) in the *Anthropology*, where Kant claims that 'reflection . . . is required' for any cognition – including sensible experience – because cognitions, one and all, 'rest on judgments' (Anth 7:141). Of course, what Kant might have meant when he claimed that *all judgments require reflection* is a difficult question. The aim of Part I of this book is to address that question in full acknowledgement of the problem just raised. By my lights, the seriousness of the problem comes down to this: if we take the claim that *all judgments require reflection* to lie at the heart of Kant's account of reflection, and if we suppose this reflection to be a deliberately undertaken activity of some kind, then we will be hard pressed to accommodate modes of cognitive activity – modes of knowing – that are perfectly well justified, and quite possibly the expression of a certain cognitive excellence, but that are not deliberate in any direct or interesting way, like sensible experience.⁵

Consider next how a similar set of problems might arise for practical judgment, which in Kant's view is itself a determination of the will, and so properly expresses itself in action. Presumably, most of us act unreflectively much of the time: we just carry on and do what it occurs to us to do. We do

⁴ See also LJ 9:76 ('we cannot and may not judge about anything without *reflecting*') and LB 24:161 (reflection is 'necessary for any judgment'). These claims are complemented by an overarching conception of prejudice as 'judgment without reflection' that figures widely in the lectures and handwritten Nachlass: see LB (24:168 (twice), also 165, 167), LPh (24:547), WL (24:863), RL-2519 [1760s] (16:403), RL-2534 and RL-2536 [both c. 1776–78], where prejudice is judgment that 'precedes reflection' (16:408). Further discussion of these claims follows in Chapter 1.

⁵ McDowell (1994, 2009) is concerned with a problem along these lines.

not step back from the default views that we have about what to do, to consider in each case what its underlying principle is and whether that principle meets some legitimating standard. But this is what the reflective person of Kantian ethics is imagined as doing. This person is widely supposed to have some particular skill at identifying the ‘subjective principles’ – or *maxims* – on which he proposes to act; and he is supposed to be resolute about submitting those principles to the appropriate test. Kantian maxims are commonly interpreted as subjective principles of action specifying, in the first person, to do action of type A in circumstances of type C for end E.⁶ To consider the maxim, the agent not only needs consider what he proposes to himself to do; he must also regard the proposed action as an instance of some action-type, which is linked both to some general description of the circumstances in which actions of that type are warranted or permissible or required, as well as to some general characterisation of the end for which such actions may or ought to be performed. So, our reflective moral agent must recognise himself as being in such circumstances and having adopted such ends as warrant the action in question. Necessary (although not sufficient) warrant for an action lies in its moral permissibility. The special test is supposed to check for precisely that – whether the action, determined as the action that it is in light of its maxim, accords with the requirements of morality. The ideally reflective agent is envisaged as someone who most assiduously tests whether he proposes to act on a maxim whose universal adoption he can coherently will.⁷

There are many problems with this picture of the reflective moral agent. First, it is not clear that one’s maxims can be readily identified, as Kant himself points out on occasion.⁸ Second, the proper scope of this reflective activity is unclear. Surely (common sense protests) I can act well – my

⁶ Kant calls a maxim a ‘subjective principle of action’ (G 4:421n), but what exactly he means by this and how general such a principle must be in order to count as a maxim has been debated and remains a subject of consternation for Kant’s commentators; among the best recent studies of the difficulties of interpreting Kant on maxims is Kitcher (2003). If one takes it that universalisation tests (the so-called ‘CI-procedure’) form the foundation of moral normativity by Kant’s lights, then one will in turn need to commit to a particular view about what the general form of a maxim is. However, I do not assume this view about the foundation of moral normativity in my arguments about Kant on the importance of being reflective. I take maxims to be general practical commitments about what is a reason for doing what; I take it that, for Kant, these commitments are endorsed when we act (whether we step back and explicitly formulate and assess these commitments or not). The maxims that will particularly concern me in the central arguments of this book are the three maxims of healthy understanding, which Kant claims properly govern cognitive conduct.

⁷ Brewer (2000, 2002) queries this picture of the reflective moral agent, and considers whether Kant offers the resources to reject it; however, his conclusions are ambivalent.

⁸ O’Neill (1998) emphasises this, citing a memorable remark from *Religion*: ‘we cannot observe maxims, we cannot do so unproblematically even in ourselves’ (6:20). The lesson she (rightly, in my view) aims to draw from this is that the cultivation of virtue doesn’t rest chiefly on introspection and

actions can be perfectly well warranted, and quite possibly even morally *good* – without going through all of this. Third, there is generally no time to cogitate in this way – to step back from the immediacy of action to identify one’s maxim and perform an assessment of its universalisability. Further, in many situations, surely the *right* action, the morally worthy action, will be one that issues as an immediate response to one’s simply seeing one’s situation in a certain way. These are familiar objections to what is presumed to be the Kantian reflective ideal in ethics. Critics of Kant who lodge these objections very often embrace some form of virtue ethics, and contemporary Kantians who acknowledge the force of these objections have argued that the resources to address them can be drawn from later developments in Kant’s ethics, particularly his account of virtue in the *Metaphysics of Morals*.⁹

The turn to virtue among Kantians is part of a larger philosophical trend. In the past half-century or so, there has been a resurgence of interest in the concept of virtue in ethics and epistemology.¹⁰ In both cases, the movement can be described as a broadening of view from isolated episodes of action or belief to the character of the agent who acts or takes things to be a certain way. This broadened view calls for us to recognise that a comprehensive range of capacities and dispositions – including capacities of attention, perception, feeling and desire – is integral to a general outlook oriented towards the relevant moral or epistemic goods. Now, there are many reasons why philosophers have found inquiry along these lines worth pursuing. But within broadly rationalist quarters – where what makes character good or virtuous is that it is appropriately governed by rational principle – making virtue central conceivably provides a kind of buffer against the caricature, at least in its moral guise.

This is because the entire range of capacities and dispositions proper to virtue will be conceived as shaped – or made what they are – by reason. Reason infuses the whole package, which includes capacities that are passive in their operation, such as perception and feeling. The exercise of such

the self-ascription of maxims. Cf. Grenberg (2005, 49–51, 62–64, 97–103), who argues that O’Neill overstates the opacity point, and suggests that moral reflection centrally involves attentiveness to one’s own inner life. While many of Grenberg’s criticisms of O’Neill are apt, I argue in this book that reflection – and hence, in turn, specifically *moral* reflection – cannot chiefly be an introspective activity understood along such lines.

⁹ This approach to Kantian ethics has gathered considerable steam in recent years; consider e.g. two recent edited collections devoted to the issue (Betzler 2008; Jost and Wuerth 2011).

¹⁰ In ethics, the seminal text is Anscombe (1958). Attention to virtue in epistemology came considerably later – beginning with some of the papers collected in Sosa (1991). Not until Montmarquet (1993) and Zagzebski (1996) was virtue epistemology pursued from cues borrowed from virtue ethics, however.

capacities can be recognised as proper to virtue and, as such, no less an expression of the self-determination proper to a rational being than overt efforts of deliberation and inquiry. The virtuous person will not be pictured as excessively deliberate about meeting moral requirement, because it will be recognised that much of the moral work will already be done simply by seeing one's situation in the right light.¹¹

I am sanguine about taking a virtue-focused approach to Kant, as my work in this book will attest. But the approach comes with certain risks – not least the danger of making Kant's critical philosophy, arguably the high-water mark of the Enlightenment ethos, into something that it is not. Much contemporary work on virtue draws on Aristotle, but there is little reason to think that Kant thought especially long or hard about him; in fact, Kant's conception of virtue draws more from the Socratic tradition developed by the Stoics, which has exerted relatively little influence over contemporary discussion of virtue.¹² So, we need to be careful about the philosophical assumptions driving any virtue-focused approach to Kant.

Further, while the recent focus of scholarly attention on Kant's conception of moral virtue might help to dismiss the caricature of the reflective moral agent, it is not clear whether (or how) it can address the problems ensuing from the *general* importance that Kant places on being reflective. Consider again Kant's claim that 'all judgments require reflection'. How

¹¹ This broadly rationalist tradition of virtue ethics draws typically from Aristotle; an important example is McDowell (1979). Herman (1993, 2007) develops a compelling Kantian account of virtue along these (broadly Aristotelian) lines. It should be noted that the development of broadly rationalist virtue ethics has not been uniformly neo-Aristotelian. Murdoch (1971, 36) argues that 'the exercise of our freedom is a small piecemeal business which goes on all the time' through the exercise of attending properly to persons; she presents her position as Platonic in spirit (and, it should be noted, McDowell 1979 suggests it as an influence). Although Murdoch's essays in that volume attack then-contemporary (i.e., mid-twentieth century) Kantianism, she is consistently careful to distinguish her target from Kant himself; indeed, despite superficial appearances otherwise, her own variety of moral rationalism is not so far from Kant by my lights (see Merritt 2017b). Reading Murdoch has influenced my project here to some extent, although I have not attempted to work with Murdoch's writings directly in what follows, and I won't make an explicit case for the closeness that I find. Grenberg (2013, 292) also notes Murdoch as an influence on her work on Kant's conception of virtue, but takes the *attention* required to live well to be directed at the goings-on of one's own inner life (2013, 24 and 159–86), which I think misses the spirit of Murdoch's distinctive notion of attention – although I cannot argue this point here.

¹² Grenberg (2005, 49–51) notes some of the distorting effects of taking cues from Aristotle when interpreting Kant's conception of virtue. While I agree with her remarks that some of the key differences between Kant and the Stoics on virtue turn on differing views of human nature (see Grenberg, 2005, 20–2), I also think that Kant draws more from Stoic ethics than she realises. See Sherman (1997, 99–120) for the beginnings of an account of the relevance of the Stoics for Kant's conception of virtue – although ultimately, she takes Kant to be more deeply allied with Aristotle. I do not track the influence of the Stoics on Kant in this book, but aim to develop this line of inquiry in future work.

might the common complaint that this requirement is overly demanding play out in the practical case? We can find an example in a recent debate between Martin Sticker (2015) and Ido Geiger (2015). For Sticker, universalisation tests are the foundation of moral normativity, and implicitly the fundamental exercise of moral reflection by Kant's lights. Sticker considers the worry that Kant may have an overly demanding view of moral reflection, which he aims to assuage with the suggestion that we need run the test on a maxim only once – after that, we can simply act on the maxim without again stepping back in this way (2015, 982). Geiger replies that Sticker's proposal effectively waives the requirement to be reflective, at least for the most part; what we should do instead, Geiger suggests, is 'make reflection less demanding' (2015, 993–4).

The spirit of Geiger's rejoinder may simply be to point out that by Kant's lights, a life that is lived well can only be reflective through and through – and not solely when we submit maxims to universalisation tests. That, I would endorse. But I cannot accept the assumption that such a picture of a reflective life should show reflection to be less demanding than the maxim-universalising view. For if we interpret Kant's claim that *all judgments require reflection* as calling for stepping back on the occasion of every judgment, and then balk at the implausibility of this, we will have already conceded too much to a picture of the Kantian reflective ideal that I aim to reject: we will assume that the requirement is overly demanding, when we should worry that the interpretation of the demand has gone awry.¹³ There is important foundational work to be done on what Kant takes *reflection* to be – in general terms – so that we might, down the road, arrive at a more stable and compelling account of its role in moral life. My arguments in this book follow that trajectory.

0.3 Précis

In Chapter 1, I begin by drawing a distinction between constitutive and normative requirements to reflect. It is partly constitutive of what it is to possess a rational mind that one has an at least tacit handle on oneself as the source of a point of view on how things are or what is worth doing. We cannot think at all without this; this self-consciousness – or *reflection*, I argue – is a constitutive requirement on thought. Reflection in this sense needs to be distinguished from the consideration of whether one has reason to take it that p or to ϕ : such questions can be settled in judgment, but there

¹³ I thank Bridget Clarke for pressing me to clarify my point along these lines.

is a subjective orientation to such thinking that consists in taking a certain interest in oneself as the one who settles the question. I argue that this is the sense of reflection Kant has in mind when he claims that *all judgments require reflection*. As we learn through close examination of Kant's views on prejudice, his idea is not that it is impossible to make use of one's cognitive capacities at all without this reflection, but only that it is impossible to do so *well*. That is why reflection, in this sense, is a normative requirement on judgment.

However, the account I offer of the normative requirement to reflect in Chapter 1 is only preliminary, as it does not provide ready resources to meet the objection, already raised in this Introduction, that it is overly demanding (or, rather, makes the wrong demands). In Chapter 2, I suggest that Kant offers a more nuanced account of the requirement in question when he formulates three 'maxims' of 'healthy human understanding' in some of his later work. One of my aims is to show that the requirement issued in the claim that *all judgments require reflection* is both normative (we cannot make *good use* of our cognitive capacities without it) and yet need not be conceived as a deliberately undertaken activity of some kind. To that end, I argue that reflection, in this sense, is internal to sound judgment: it is nothing separate from considering the objective cognitive question *in the right spirit*, or *with the right frame of mind*. This is how I argue that the requirement to reflect in this sense lodges at the level of character, rather than piecemeal on the occasion of each and every act of judgment.

In Chapter 3, I take on questions about the relation between the constitutive and normative requirements to reflect, arguing that as soon as the first is met (and thus, there is genuine thought), the latter must be met *to some degree* as well. My aim here is to clarify what is basic to cognitive agency by Kant's lights. I do this by looking into Kant's remarks about perception, attention and experience in the *Anthropology* and in related passages of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. I argue that experience requires attention by Kant's lights; this in turn allows us to understand how the enjoyment of experience is an engagement of cognitive agency, despite its putatively passive character. From this, we can begin to understand how, by Kant's lights, sensible experience is in principle no less the expression of our rational self-determination than overt efforts of deliberation and the like. This concludes Part I, which focuses on the interpretation of Kant on reflection.

The account of the normative requirement to reflect in Part I raises questions about the relation between cognitive and moral character. In Part II, I argue for the thesis that moral virtue is a specification of general cognitive

virtue, and that general cognitive virtue is nothing other than the notion of healthy understanding discussed in Chapter 2: I call this the *specification thesis*.¹⁴ The specification thesis presupposes a certain conception of reason: namely, that reason is at bottom a cognitive capacity, albeit one admitting of distinct theoretical and practical employments. However, some Kantians think that only the theoretical exercise of reason is genuinely cognitive, and assume that when Kant speaks of ‘practical cognition’ – as he often does – the cognition in question does not share anything basic, qua cognition, with theoretical cognition. I disagree: the textual evidence, as I see it, overwhelmingly supports the ascription of the former view to Kant. Since this remains a contested issue among Kantians, and since the specification thesis might seem to some to run afoul of Kant’s remarks about the ‘primacy of practical reason’, Chapter 4 adduces the textual evidence for the conception of reason I attribute to Kant, and explains why my thesis does not get into trouble over the ‘primacy of practical reason’. This sets the stage for Chapter 5, which argues for the specification thesis. There, I argue that healthy understanding is a conception of good cognitive *character*, which I then locate in relation to good moral character through the account of virtue in the *Metaphysics of Morals*. This work underwrites the project that occupies me for the final two chapters, which is to elaborate on the cognitive basis of moral virtue by Kant’s lights.

In Chapter 6, I examine Kant’s qualified endorsement of the idea that moral virtue may be a certain sort of skill (*Metaphysics of Morals* 6:383–4). Exploring the historical context of this remark, and carefully working out its philosophical implications, allows me to begin to make clearer and more determinate sense of the cognitive basis of moral virtue. This is also where my alternative sketch of the Kantian reflective ideal begins to take shape, firmly planted at considerable distance from its widely peddled caricature. Chapter 7 elaborates on the cognitivist implications of the skill model of

¹⁴ ‘Cognitive virtue’ is not a term Kant himself used, and so I should set out with at least a rough and ready account of what I do and do not mean by it. I have chosen not to use the terms most widely in use in contemporary virtue epistemology: ‘intellectual virtue’ and ‘epistemic virtue’. What is meant by these of course varies from theory to theory, but there are two assumptions that may be explicitly or implicitly bound up with their use – or interpretation – in contemporary circles. One is the common assumption that knowing is essentially or exclusively theoretical (i.e. concerns natural or historical facts); the other is the somewhat less common assumption that knowledge is essentially realised only in the explicit grasp of claims and principles. Kant himself assumed neither. As to the first, see Chapter 4. As to the second, we will see that Kant considers at some length modes of knowledge that are possible without explicit grasp of the principles that makes the knowledge in question possible (Chapters 2 and 6). So, I have chosen to speak of ‘cognitive’ virtue to distance myself from either assumption, regardless of the extent to which they may or may not be operative in any given contemporary conception of intellectual or epistemic virtue.

moral virtue, and demonstrates how this model plays out at greater length in the Doctrine of Virtue of the *Metaphysics of Morals*.

o.4 Comments on Methodology

One of my motivations for working on Kant's conception of reflection is to reconstruct Kantian commitments about mental agency. There is a tendency among commentators, when giving an account of the core arguments of Kant's critical philosophy – above all in the *Critique of Pure Reason* – to craft explanations of cognitive activity in terms of what faculty contributes what to the production of knowledge. But it seems to me that we should never lose sight of the fact that it is a *person* who knows, believes, perceives, is inclined to think one thing, judges another. Although there is a place for considering how Kant assigns various cognitive tasks to various cognitive faculties, in my view the core arguments of Kant's critical philosophy should be interpreted in a manner that tethers these arguments to a ground-level view of our cognitive lives, and the nature and scope of the agency that we have in them. In this book, I am mostly interested in the ground-level view; and to maintain some kind of focus on it, it will be necessary to take the results of the core arguments of the critical philosophy more or less for granted. Thus, I will have little or nothing to say about how Kant arrives at the particular set of principles he claims are constitutive of human reason in its theoretical employment, nor about how he stands to claim that the categorical imperative is constitutive of human reason in its practical employment. I am interested, rather, in what follows about the agency of creatures who are so constituted, in some sense, by nature.

Much of my work in this book connects the dots between claims Kant made in various places and in disparate contexts in order to work out his commitments on the topics of interest: reflection and cognitive virtue. This interpretive work takes place where various lines of philosophical inquiry converge – particularly in Kant's ethics, anthropology and logic. While my discussion has roots in Kant's critical-period works, it is mostly in his later works – chiefly the *Metaphysics of Morals* (1797) and *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* (1798) – where the key ideas that I am concerned with are developed. I have also found Kant's handwritten Nachlass and the records of notes from his lectures on these subjects to be helpful in this reconstructive work. My principles in working with such materials are as follows. First, while there are a few places where I consider at some length this or that remark from the handwritten Nachlass, my intention is that this should only corroborate a picture that rests on an interpretation of the

texts Kant wrote and prepared for publication himself. Second, since the handwritten notes – collected in volumes 15 through 19 of the Academy edition as *Reflexionen* on various topics (anthropology, logic, metaphysics and moral philosophy, respectively) – came from Kant’s own pen, I tend to accord them a somewhat higher status, as a source for working out Kant’s views on a given matter, than the student notes from his lectures on these topics. For we in fact know relatively little about how the lecture notes originated; and in many cases, the notes were likely taken by professional note-takers who may not themselves have had any first-hand understanding of the topics being discussed.¹⁵ This is not to say that the lecture notes cannot inform an interpretation of Kant, only that we should be careful about how we put them to use: they need to fill out and corroborate a picture that is formed by close study of the works that Kant wrote himself, and ideally also saw to publication.

Special concerns hold for the *Jäsche Logic*, which (perhaps owing to its placement in the subset of volumes in the Academy edition devoted to works published in Kant’s lifetime) is often treated by commentators as if it were on par with works Kant wrote himself and saw to publication. Towards the end of his life, Kant commissioned Gottlob Benjamin Jäsche to draw up a text of his logic lectures; to this end, he provided Jäsche with his own heavily annotated copy of the logic textbook from which he had lectured over many decades, Georg Friedrich Meier’s *Auszug aus der Vernunftlehre*. Kant’s notes were written in the margins and between the lines of the text itself, and on interleaving pieces of paper; they are collected as *Reflexionen zur Logik* in volume 16 of the Academy edition. To generate his text, Jäsche can only have interpolated from those notes, and probably also from copies of lecture notes in circulation in Königsberg at the time. There is, further, no evidence that Kant approved the text that Jäsche came up with.¹⁶ So even though Kant commissioned the *Jäsche Logic*, and even though it was published in his lifetime, we have good reason to handle it cautiously. When working with it, I typically begin by checking to see if the remark that I am interested in can be traced directly to Kant’s handwritten notes, and cite both in conjunction when such correspondence can be found (noting that the relevant passage in *Jäsche* ‘tracks’ a given *Reflexion*). Then, at least, I know that the remark is not merely Jäsche’s interpolation.

¹⁵ For documentation of some of these issues, see Naragon (2006) and Boswell (1988). For a proposal on how to work with the lecture notes on logic, see Lu-Adler (2015).

¹⁶ As Young (1992, xvi–xviii) and Naragon (2006) both point out. Something similar holds for Friedrich Theodor Rink’s compilation of Kant’s *Lectures on Pedagogy* (Päd) – although in that case, we know even less, since we don’t have the handwritten notes that Kant supplied to Rink.

PART I

Reflection

Like most people, she naturally believed that what she had not experienced was either non-existent or of no importance. Who ever heard an egoist admit to ignorance?

Zoe, in Elizabeth Harrower's *In Certain Circles*
(Harrower 2014, 166)

CHAPTER I

Kant on the Requirement to Reflect

1.1 Preliminaries

My aim in this chapter is to show that Kant distinguishes between constitutive and normative requirements to reflect. This distinction has not been much noted in the interpretive literature on Kant. This is because the constitutive requirement that I have in mind principally goes under another name (pure apperception), and the normative requirement that I have in mind has been overlooked altogether. *Prima facie* grounds for pursuing my thesis can be found in Kant's distinctive, and well known, version of the cogito: 'The *I think* must be *able* to accompany all of my representations' (B131–2). Intuitively, this is a claim about the basic nature of a rational mind: namely, that a rational mind, or rather the possessor of such a mind, is necessarily capable of stepping back from its own representations in order to recognise them *as* its own. What it doesn't tell us is when and how this reflective capacity is to be engaged, and to what end. We uncover a normative requirement to reflect when we consider those issues. Kant's account of a normative requirement to reflect can be found where the concerns of epistemology, logic, ethics and anthropology intersect in his later work. My aim in the next two chapters is to uncover that account, and to situate it within an extended family of conceptions of reflection.

Let me first give some indication of the complexity of the textual record on reflection (*Überlegung*, *Reflexion*).¹ Kant sometimes speaks of reflection as (a) the activity of thinking quite generally,² or as (b) the self-consciousness that is internal to the activity of thinking or that makes it 'possible'. This, as I will argue, is the notion of reflection as partly constitutive of the rational mind. To reflect in this sense is to have some (typically

¹ Kant consistently glosses the German *Überlegung* (and cognates) either with the Latin *reflexio* or the Latinate *Reflexion*: see e.g. A260/B316, LJ 9:94, Anth 7:139 and 141, RA-650 [1769–70] (15:287) – strongly suggesting that he regards the two terms as interchangeable. According to Liedtke (1966, 208), the translation of the Latin *reflexio* with the German *Überlegung* can be traced to Baumgarten.

² See RA-425 [1776–78] (15:171), and implicitly Prol (4:288). This usage is rare.

tacit) handle on oneself as the source of a point of view on how things are or what is worth doing. We can't think at all without this; and, thus, reflection in this sense is partly constitutive of rational thought. More widely discussed among Kant scholars is his suggestion that reflection might be (c) some mental operation by which concepts, or general representations, are possible. I will argue that this conception of reflection is only notionally distinguishable from reflection in sense (b), and indeed that senses (a)–(c) are all variants of the constitutive notion of reflection. Now, as I noted in the Introduction, Kant repeatedly claims that (d) *all judgments require reflection*: and here, as I will explain, reflection figures as a normative requirement on judgment, since it is a requirement that one must meet if one is to make *good use* of one's cognitive capacities. My task in this chapter is to distinguish the constitutive requirement to reflect as it figures in (a)–(c) from the normative requirement to reflect that figures in (d).³

1.2 Drawing the Distinction: Two Notions of Reflection

Although the distinction between constitutive and normative requirements to reflect is largely overlooked by Kant's exegetical commentators, it figures in recent neo-Kantian work in philosophy of action and mind, particularly that of Christine Korsgaard. Since I think Korsgaard gets something deeply right about Kant's conception of reflection – something that exegetical commentators tend to miss – I want to begin by setting that out, before bringing out her work's potentially instructive ambiguities. Go back, then, to the Kantian cogito: 'The *I think* must be *able* to accompany all of my representations.'⁴ The remark might be read as simply saying that a rational intelligence is necessarily capable of representing with some awareness that it is doing so. While that may be true, such a rendering fails to take

³ This does not exhaust the ways in which Kant appeals to reflection. In the ethical works, reflection figures in cognates, where it suggests (e) a considered endorsement of practical principles and ends. This appeal to reflection is obscured in standard English translations, which, for understandable reasons, have Kant speaking of 'considered' (rather than 'reflected' or 'reflected upon') maxims and principles (*überlegte Maximen*, KpV 5:118; *überlegte Grundsätze*, MS 6:383–4), and of virtue as resting on a 'considered' resolution of some kind (*überlegter Vorsatz*, MS 6:380; *überlegte Entschließung*, MS 6:409). I will mostly consider these remarks in Chapters 6 and 7, but I will have something to say in passing here about KpV 5:118.

There are also, of course, (f) the special 'reflective' judgments at issue in the *Critique of Judgment*. I will not attempt to consider how such judgments might figure in the map of reflection provided here; but, *prima facie*, I see no reason to assume that these judgments can be *identified* with reflection, as is widely assumed (Allison 2001 is representative of this tendency). I would rather take it that these judgments somehow render thematic the essentially reflective nature of the rational mind, but I won't argue the point here.

⁴ Explicitly invoked by Korsgaard (2009, 18).

the full measure of the principle's formulation in the first-person singular. When we take this duly into account, Korsgaard has suggested, we will be able to appreciate the broadly practical significance of Kant's principle. It can be admitted as a plain fact about how a rational intelligence *is*, that it can stand at some distance from its own representations. But this fact gives rise to a problem – the inherently first-personal problem of needing reasons to believe and to act – and, it seems, an imperative to address that problem. 'The reflective mind cannot settle for perception and desire, not just as such. It needs a *reason*. Otherwise, at least as long as it reflects, it cannot commit itself or go forward' (Korsgaard 1996, 93). Reflective distance allows us to view our representations as mere proposals about how things are and what to do – and, viewing them thus, to endorse or reject them accordingly.

Let me make clear what I find insightful about this. Korsgaard suggests that there is a master inference at work, that a fact about the reflective structure of the rational mind has broadly practical implications. Further, she suggests that reflection is internal to judgment. In other words, the objective orientation of thought is always implicitly subjective as well: what to make of one's own cognitive and conative constitution remains a live question, one that is determined, continually, by what one admits as reasons for belief and for action.⁵

Yet, the account is vague about the nature and scope of the requirement to reflect. Consider Korsgaard's ambiguous proviso that a rational mind 'cannot commit itself or move forward' without endorsing some of its perceptions and desires as *reasons* for belief and action, 'at least as long as it reflects' (1996, 93). It is in virtue of the reflective nature of our minds that we are *such as can reflect*; but that tells us nothing about when (how long, how often) we must reflect. The answer to that question, moreover, is not neatly separable from what we might say about the nature of that 'must'. If the answer were that we could not judge or act at all without reflecting, then we would be reflecting as long as we were judging and acting, and reflection would be partly constitutive of those activities. But if the answer

⁵ Does Korsgaard suppose that reflective endorsement answers the 'need' of a rational mind for reasons by *giving* it reasons that it (or its possessor) would not otherwise have? Or is reflective endorsement, in her view, a matter of *recognising* the reasons that one has anyway, regardless of whether one appreciates these reasons and endorses them? It is widely supposed that Korsgaard is a voluntarist about reflective endorsement, and thus takes the first view (see e.g. Larmore 2008, 112–22 and Wood 2008, 106–22). I think this may be an interpretive mistake (but if it is, it is one which Korsgaard seems to invite); however, that is an issue for Korsgaard exegesis, which I will not take on here. I mention it because it is relevant to the question of what to make of the Kantian reflective ideal: whether the self-determination at issue rests on a voluntarist foundation or whether it is to be won through knowing, broadly construed. I will be arguing for the latter.

were that we could judge and act without reflecting, only we could not do so *well*, then the requirement to reflect would be normative in some sense. These sorts of answers about the nature of the requirement again do not swing independently of the question about the scope of the requirement, because they entail conclusions about when reflection is either (out of sheer necessity) going on or ought to be going on.

Now, the idea that the requirement to reflect might be *constitutive* of judging and acting seems to be blocked by the apparent fact that we can judge and act without ever putting ourselves, or finding ourselves, at the sort of reflective distance that Korsgaard has in mind. If we commit ourselves directly in judging and acting, then reflection might not be even partly constitutive of those activities, since reflecting will not be what commits us to a view about how things are or what is worth doing. We're already committed. The Kantian idea that Korsgaard draws upon here is that any analysis of what it is to commit oneself through judging or acting directly always uncovers some *implicit endorsement* of a view about what one has reason to believe or to do. Suppose my five-year-old daughter, Eirene, is struggling to tie her shoes. As long as she is trying to tie her shoes, even if she can't quite, then we say (à la Korsgaard) that she is endorsing an impulse or a desire of some kind: she allows the impulse to tie her shoes to be operative in her, which commits her to the view that tying her shoes is worth doing.

Before we complain that this grossly distorts the reflective capacities of young children, let's propose a distinction. Suppose that there is one sense of reflection that, as it were, goes on by default whenever anyone does anything – or has a view about how things are – at all. One 'reflects' in this sense simply by having some tacit handle on oneself as the source of a point of view. Call this **reflection-c** – since, as we will see, on Kant's view it is constitutive of the thinking of a rational being. It may need to be distinguished from – and complemented by – some souped-up variety of reflection that does not obtain by default, and which the ordinary five-year-old seems only barely capable of. This is the reflection that Eirene would go in for if, in the midst of her efforts, she were to stop and ask herself: 'Why bother?' Reflection in this sense belongs to the *deliberate consideration* of whether one has reason to ϕ or to take it that p . The objective question here is whether p or whether it is good, or would be good, to ϕ ; the subjective orientation of such thinking consists in recognising that one addresses the question to oneself. It is not a merely tacit recognition of oneself as the source of a point of view on how things are or ought to be, but rather involves caring about how one's point of view is constituted. If we ought to care how

that point of view is constituted – even though it will be constituted in some way or another regardless of whether or not we care – then we will have identified a normative requirement to reflect. Call it **reflection-n**. My next task is to demonstrate Kant’s commitment to this distinction between reflection-c and reflection-n.

Let me outline how I will proceed. In §1.3, I present a puzzle about reflection that arises in Kant’s discussion of affect and passion as distinct modes of reflective failure. Prima facie, any resolution to the puzzle would call for there to be two senses of reflection in play – reflection-c and reflection-n. In order for us to resolve it, we will need to understand how Kant distinguishes reflection-c and reflection-n; as we will see in §1.4, his distinction in this regard maps on to the distinction that he draws between ‘pure’ and ‘applied’ modes of logic: pure logic has reflection-c in its sights, while applied logic has reflection-n. What we learn about the distinction between reflection-c and reflection-n in this context will then be brought back to bear on the interpretive puzzle about affect and passion as distinct modes of reflective failure in §1.5. Although this approach will have us switching between two considerably different corners of Kant’s corpus, it stands to reveal that Kant has a unified and coherent conception of reflection – or, at least, that a close family of ideas is at work across a wide range of contexts.

1.3 A Puzzle about Reflection

Kant discusses affect and passion at length in the *Anthropology* (7:251ff.), and makes many of the same points in his discussion of the self-mastery required for virtue in the *Metaphysics of Morals* (6:407–9) and of the sublime in the *Critique of Judgment* (5:272–5). I will draw on all three of these sources here, although my focus will be on the *Anthropology* account.⁶ Many commentators who have addressed these passages have taken note of Kant’s remarks about reflection in this context; however, there has been little attempt to work out what account of reflection is implied in these remarks, or to assess its relation to Kant’s remarks on reflection in other contexts, chiefly in logic.⁷ Such an approach has therefore done little to advance our understanding of what reflection is by Kant’s lights. With that

⁶ I examine the MS account of affect more closely in Chapter 7. On affect and passion, see also the following stretches of the student notes on Kant’s lectures on anthropology from the critical period: *Menschenkunde* (25:1115–25), *AMr* (25:1353–6), *ABu* (25:1519–27).

⁷ See e.g. Denis (2000), Frierson (2003), Formosa (2011) and Hare (2011) – where there is little effort to explain just what the ‘reflection’ is that is missing. Frierson (2014) does, however, provide an account: he effectively takes reflection to be deliberation, and holds that affect suspends the capacity to deliberate entirely (although momentarily), whereas passion involves deliberation or practical thinking but

in mind, I shall begin not by turning immediately to the logic – where *reflection* plainly figures as a technical term of sorts – but by looking at what Kant suggests about the role of reflection in the emotional and desiderative life of a human being when he points to affect and passion as distinct modes of reflective failure.

In this context, Kant presents reflection (*Überlegung*) as ‘the rational representation [Vernunftvorstellung] of whether one should give oneself up’ to a certain feeling, or instead ‘refuse it’ (Anth 7:251). He then attempts to illustrate this, at least indirectly, with an example of a rich man who is thrown into an ‘affected state’ when his servant clumsily breaks a precious crystal goblet. What distinguishes *affect* from other modes of feeling, Kant explains, is not so much its qualitative intensity – although affects do indeed tend to be ‘stormy’ (Anth 7:265, KU 5:272n; cf. MS 6:408) – but rather ‘the lack of reflection’ involved (Anth 7:254). To suffer an affect is to be thrown into a state of mind in which one is momentarily unable to reflect (Anth 7:251; MS 6:407; KU 5:272). As we will see, what Kant evidently has in mind here is reflection-c: affect involves losing even that self-consciousness that is implicit inasmuch as one judges or acts intentionally at all.⁸ If so, then Kant already says too much when he claims that his unreflecting rich man ‘gives himself over completely to this one feeling of pain’ (Anth 7:254). For if affect momentarily suspends the capacity to reflect-c, it should not leave the rich man the resources to *give himself* over in one way or another at all: rather, it must be that he *so finds himself*.

How is affect different from passion? The first thing to note is Kant’s claim that passion is compatible with ‘the calmest reflection’ (Anth 7:265).⁹ The second is that the difference can be tracked by locating affect with our capacity for *feeling*, and passion with the ‘faculty of desire’ (KU 5:272n; Anth 7:252; MS 6:408–09). Passion is therefore an expression of a person’s views about what is worth having, or going for, or doing – or, for that matter, rejecting or avoiding. ‘The calm with which one gives oneself up [to passion] permits reflection and allows the mind to form principles on it’ (MS 6:408; see also Anth 7:265). This is why Kant goes on to claim that passion ‘always presupposes a maxim on the part of the subject’ (Anth

without a consideration of the value of the maxims on which one acts from prudential and moral points of view (2014, 231). While there is something right in this (affect does suspend, among other things, the capacity to deliberate), I object to Frierson’s assumption that reflection (of any sort) *is* deliberation. One of my overarching aims in this book is naturally to present an alternative account.

⁸ By extension, it must also suspend the capacity to reflect-n; but Kant’s *point*, when he says that affect lacks reflection, is that it lacks even reflection-c.

⁹ Kant also says that affects are ‘stormy and unpremeditated’ whereas passions are sustained and considered [überlegt]’ (KU 5:272n).

7:266): to be driven by a passion is to be committed to a view of what is worth doing, on what grounds, and for what end.

So there is some sense in which affect lacks reflection, and passion involves – indeed, as some of the preceding remarks seem to suggest, even *requires* – reflection. However, at the same time, Kant suggests that both are modes of reflective failure. For it is a striking feature of the *Anthropology* account that affect and passion are presented, each in its turn, as a kind of *blindness* (7:253, 7:266). I will examine these remarks in full once we learn more about how Kant distinguishes reflection-c and reflection-n in logic. At this point, we can assume that Kant is speaking metaphorically: someone who succumbs to affect, or is caught up in the throes of passion, does not literally lose visual capacity. The idea is rather that these are states where one fails to notice something one ought to notice. Someone who is blind in this metaphorical way needs to look again, consider a situation – or perhaps an entire past history – in a new light. And this means, in a common-sense way, that such a person ought to *reflect*. Now, ultimately I will provide more of an interpretation of Kant's claims about the blindness of affect and passion, as the blindness is not quite the same in each case. But the common-sense connection between metaphorical blindness and reflective failure provides enough to go on to see that there is a puzzle here: If affect and passion are both modes of reflective failure, then how can Kant say that affect lacks reflection, while passion is compatible with – and may even require – reflection? The solution must be that Kant draws on different notions of reflection. Affect lacks reflection altogether: it is a momentary madness, whereby one loses one's grip on oneself as the source of a point of view on how things are and what is worth doing. Affect lacks reflection-c, and a fortiori lacks reflection-n. But passion involves reflection-c: a passionate person takes a point of view on how things are and what is worth doing. Yet, affect and passion are alike modes of reflective failure, since they render one blind to what one needs to pay attention to in order to see one's situation aright. And this, ultimately, needs to be understood in terms of the normative requirement to reflect.

1.4 Constitutive and Normative Requirements to Reflect as Distinguished in Logic

The distinction that I have been sketching between constitutive and normative requirements to reflect is clearly demarcated in Kant's logic: for, this distinction tracks the distinction that Kant draws between 'pure' and 'applied' logic. So, I will begin with a few words about Kant's conception

of logic, focusing on how he draws that division (§1.4.1). I will then identify the conception of reflection that figures in pure general logic, showing it to be a constitutive requirement on thought (§1.4.2). The normative requirement to reflect is expressed in Kant's repeated claim that *all judgments require reflection*: I will explain how this counts as a normative requirement on judgment, and provide a preliminary interpretation of this claim (§1.4.3).¹⁰

1.4.1 *Logic: Pure and Applied, Domain-Independent and Domain-Relative*

Kant elaborates on his conception of logic when he introduces his readers to the project of 'transcendental logic' that will occupy him for the vast bulk of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Logic is 'the science of the rules of the understanding in general' (A52/B76); it is concerned with the necessary rules of thought. Kant first points out that logic can be distinguished depending on whether it is concerned with 'the general, or the special, employment of the understanding' (A52/B76). General logic is concerned with the necessary rules of thought as such, and so it abstracts from any consideration of what our thought might be about (A52/B76–7; cf. G 4:387). General logic is, as I will say, *domain-independent*. 'The logic of the special employment of the understanding' does not make this abstraction; it 'contains the rules for thinking correctly about a certain kind of objects' (A52/B76). With this, Kant points to *domain-relative* logic. The transcendental logic that Kant aims to pursue in the *Critique of Pure Reason* is domain-relative: it is chiefly concerned with the necessary rules for thought about phenomenal objects, or objects in the domain of nature.¹¹ Kant also distinguishes between pure and applied logic. Thus, he maps logical inquiry along two axes: a logic can be either pure or applied, and either general or domain-relative. (Table 1 shows these two axes.)

In principle, this yields four modes of logical inquiry: pure general logic, pure domain-relative logic, applied general logic and applied domain-relative logic. I will be mostly concerned with the division between pure and applied logic here, since that is what enables us to pick out distinct constitutive and normative requirements to reflect. To distinguish pure from applied logic, Kant says that pure logic abstracts entirely

¹⁰ The discussion in §1.4 is drawn from Merritt (2015), 'Varieties of Reflection in Kant's Logic', *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* copyright © BSHP, reprinted by permission of Taylor & Francis Ltd, www.tandfonline.com on behalf of BSHP.

¹¹ Cf. Tolley (2012) for a contrasting (and, I think, far more controversial) position denying the domain-relative status of transcendental logic.

from all empirical conditions under which our understanding is exercised [ausgeübt], e.g. from the influence of the senses, the play of imagination, the force of habit and inclination, etc., and so from all sources of prejudice. (A53/B77)

By abstracting entirely from all empirical conditions under which our cognitive capacities are put to use, pure logic sets to one side certain facts about human psychology that make us liable not to make good use of our cognitive capacities. Thus, applied logic deals with the broadly practical *problem* of how to make good use of our cognitive capacities: I will consider it in §I.4.3. Pure logic sets this problem entirely to one side. Pure logic deals with *constitutive* requirements on thought: that without which there could be no employment of the understanding – no thinking – at all. Thus, Kant remarks that *pure* general logic ‘contains the absolutely necessary rules of thought, without which there could be no employment of the understanding’ (A52/B76).¹² By contrast, applied logic is concerned with *normative* requirements on thought, or with what is necessary to make good use of our cognitive capacities.¹³

Kant continues by likening the division between pure and applied logic to the division between ‘pure ethics’ and a ‘doctrine of virtue’. Pure ethics

¹² This remark is one half of a sentence in which Kant accounts for what pure general logic is. Kant, I am arguing, maps logical inquiry along two axes: pure versus applied, and general versus domain-relative. Pure general logic is plotted along both: it is pure and it is general. The remark I have just quoted in the main text glosses its *purity*; Kant continues, glossing its *generality*: ‘it treats of understanding without any regard for the difference of the objects to which the understanding may be directed’ (A52/B76). Here, we are concerned just with the distinction between pure and applied logic – the horizontal axis of Table 1. That is why I have relegated this complication to a footnote. I provide a more extensive account of Kant’s mapping logical inquiry along these two axes in Merritt (2015).

¹³ Tolley (2006) argues against the prevailing view that Kant takes logic to be a ‘normative’ science – a view that he notes is based almost entirely on LJ (9:13–16) and argues is at odds with a range of Kant’s other views. (I would add that I have been unable to trace LJ (9:13–16) to Kant’s handwritten notes on logic, which might place it under further suspicion.) Tolley does not draw attention to the distinction between pure and applied general logic; his remarks mostly assume that logic is pure, not applied. On Tolley’s terms, a being that is subject to a normative law ‘must both be able to succeed *and be able to fail* to act (or be) in accordance with the law’ (2006, 375). What I would add to this is that such a possibility comes into view with *applied* logic.

But surely there is some sense in which pure logic should be deemed ‘normative’: after all, Kant speaks of logic (evidently meaning pure general logic) as a ‘canon’ for the ‘correct use’ of cognitive capacities (A796/B824; RL-1571 [early to middle 1750s] 16:8; RL-1579 [1760s] 16:18; RL-2173 [late 1770s] 16:258; cf. A132/B171). What does it mean to say that logic is a canon for correct use? Consider that there is something like a canon (a set of rules) for permissible moves in chess; someone who makes a canon-violating move is doing *something else* with the pieces – something other than playing chess. Something similar might be said of one who violates a rule in the canon of pure general logic: he is not, in this instance, (e.g.) inferring at all. So we might say that a canon is ‘normative’ because it regulates practice by ruling things out of bounds, as non-thought and non-chess; but this is not the sense I have in mind here, which aligns with Tolley (2006) as well.

provides an account of the principles constitutive of any determination of the good, whereas a doctrine of virtue ‘considers these laws under the hindrances of the feelings, inclinations, and passions to which human beings are more or less subject’ (A55/B79; see also G 4:410n). Where this comparison breaks down, of course, is that ethics is a domain-relative inquiry, and *general* logic is not.¹⁴ But no matter: for, at present, we are concerned just with Kant’s distinction between pure and applied logic. Pure logic is concerned with the constitutive requirements on thought; and pure ethics is likewise concerned with the constitutive requirements on practical thought about the good. Applied logic is concerned with the normative requirements on making good use of our cognitive capacities, taking full account of the human liability not to do so; and a ‘doctrine of virtue’, as Kant sketches it here, is similarly concerned with the determination of the good in the face of the normal human liability not to move sure-footedly on this.¹⁵

Having distinguished between pure and applied logic, my next aim is to identify senses of reflection proper to each. In §1.4.2, I will argue that pure logic is concerned with reflection-c, which is most basically pure apperception. In §1.4.3, I will show that applied logic is concerned with reflection-n, and in that context will offer a provisional interpretation of the claim that *all judgments require reflection*.

1.4.2 Reflection-c in Pure Logic

Pure logic deals with constitutively necessary principles and sources of thought; so, to identify the reflection that belongs under the scope of pure logic, we will need to begin by considering what thought is. Kant says that some animals can compare and associate representations, but they do not think.¹⁶ Kant generally speaks of thinking as the activity of the intellect or understanding (broadly construed); and he takes this activity to involve

¹⁴ That ethics and logic differ in this way is made quite explicit at G (4:387).

¹⁵ Note that the transition from pure ethics to the doctrine of virtue, and likewise from pure to applied logic, does not amount to a change of subject: it is not as if the moral law becomes irrelevant in the doctrine of virtue, or the law of non-contradiction irrelevant in applied logic. The ‘applied’ inquiries consider the same principles, only with certain facts about the human condition now brought clearly into view. Yet, *for that very reason*, additional principles that have no place on the left will become special foci of concern in the ‘applied’ inquiries – the three maxims of healthy understanding will provide an example of this later. Thanks to Mark Alznauer for prompting this clarification.

¹⁶ Anth §1 (7:127); LJ (9:64–5); LD-W (24:702); MetMrong (29:888).

general representations – concepts, fundamentally.¹⁷ Thus, we think whenever we conceive a general representation (a concept), and in turn whenever we employ a concept as the determination of some other representation (i.e. judge), and finally whenever we consider the entailment and exclusion relations among given judgments (i.e. infer). So, all thinking, it seems, depends on concepts.

Is there any claim in the offing that concepts depend on some activity or operation of the mind that could be called ‘reflection’? If so, then that would be a conception of reflection that naturally figures within the ambit of pure general logic. Most recent accounts of Kant on reflection are anchored in a passage from *Logik Jäsche* that claims that the source of concepts ‘as to their form’ – i.e. as to their mere generality, irrespective of content – consists in three ‘logical acts of understanding [logische Verstandes-Actus]’:

- (1) *comparison* [*Comparison*], i.e. the comparison [Vergleichung] of representations among one another in relation to the unity of consciousness;
- (2) *reflection* [*Reflexion*], i.e. the reflection as to how various representations can be conceived in one consciousness [Überlegung . . . wie verschiedene Vorstellungen in Einem Bewußtsein begriffen sein können]; and finally
- (3) *abstraction* [*Abstraction*], or the separation [Absonderung] of everything else in which the given representations differ (LJ 9:94).

The passage is billed as an account of the ‘logical origin’ of concepts. Since this account belongs under the banner of *general* logic, it abstracts entirely from what thought might be about. There can be nothing left for such an account to concern except the mental activity in virtue of which it is possible to represent with the form of generality at all. That is why the text indicates that general logic can consider concepts ‘only *subjectively*’ (LJ 9:94): it claims that concepts are possible through a certain mental activity.¹⁸ These three mental operations, the text claims, ‘constitute [ausmachen] a concept’ (LJ 9:93).

¹⁷ An exception might be the aesthetic judgment of reflection, a non-cognitive mode of judgment that nevertheless exercises the ‘faculty of concepts’ but without employing any particular concept. However, as already noted, I am bracketing this type of judgment for present purposes.

¹⁸ Longuenesse (1998, 5–6) and Smit (1999, 209–10) both note that while we today tend to assume that talk of mental operations has no place in pure logic, early modern logicians did not.

Let me pause to acknowledge the received view about what reflection is for Kant. Most commentators focus on this passage about the three mental acts (comparison, reflection, abstraction), together with the example that Jäsche appended about looking at a spruce, a willow and a linden and forming the concept *tree* (LJ 9:94–95). Many have taken note of the circularity of this account; I argue at length elsewhere (Merritt 2015) that we should be wary of supposing that Kant means to put on offer an account of the generation of concepts from non-conceptual materials, and that the spruce–willow–linden example (which cannot be traced to Kant’s handwritten notes) should not have canonical status in our interpretation of what Kant means by ‘reflection’. By contrast, the ‘three mental acts’ passage just quoted, with the attendant suggestion that they are the mental operations required to represent with the form of generality at all, can be traced nearly verbatim to RL-2876 [c. 1776–78 or c. 1778–83] (16:555). Now, it would distract from the present line of thought to rehearse my arguments against the widespread view that reflection for Kant *just is* some mental operation involved in the *generation* of concepts from non-conceptual materials. What I will take on board here is rather the idea that *one* sense of reflection, for Kant, is a certain mental operation required to *grasp* a concept – i.e., to represent with the form of generality at all. My immediate aim now is to show why this counts as a mode of reflection-c.¹⁹

The ‘three mental acts’ passage points to a kind of reflection that figures as a constitutive requirement on thinking. But what exactly is this requirement? The passage glosses reflection as the recognition of some basis for unifying mental contents into a single thought. This activity presupposes some comparison of representations, disregarding features in which they differ. To recognise both that the book is green and that the cup is as well is to represent them both through one and the same rule – even though, in

¹⁹ Like most commentators, Frierson (2014, 103–4) takes it that the reflection mentioned in the three mental acts passage (LJ 9:93–4) is a certain mental operation involved in the *generation* of concepts from non-conceptual materials, and accordingly draws on the spruce–willow–linden example that follows in Jäsche’s compilation. However, he departs from the received view in taking this notion of reflection to point to a *normative* requirement on concept formation. Kant, on Frierson’s reading, is not there making a claim about ‘how people in fact arrive at concepts, but how one *should* arrive at concepts’ (2014, 104). But it is puzzling how this suggestion could accord with Kant’s claim that the three mental acts *constitute* what it is to represent with the form of generality at all. Thus, even if one’s concepts are badly formed – although Frierson doesn’t spell out how to think about this – thinking them at all should still involve the three mental acts, according to Kant. (By my lights, the background problem here is that Frierson does not take account of Kant’s distinction between pure and applied logic; so, when he goes on to suggest that the normative ideal of concept formation is nothing other than ‘healthy understanding’, he has crossed from pure logic, which deals with constitutive requirements on thought, to applied logic, which deals with normative requirements on judgment – without clearly appreciating the difference.)

their particularity, they might be quite different shades of green. To do this is to grasp a rule that can govern the determination of indefinitely many other representations. If the same thing is thought in all of these determinations, then there is a sense in which one and the same 'consciousness' unifies them. Representations, moreover, are unified only in thinking them; they are not unified, as it were, under their own steam. Therefore, the appreciation of how various representations can be grasped in one and the same consciousness (to 'reflect', as it is put here) entails, as part of this, the thinking subject's at least tacit handle on himself as the source of this unity.

At the outset of this chapter, I briefly took account of the complexity of Kant's textual record on reflection. I noted that Kant sometimes speaks of reflection as (a) the activity of thinking generally, and sometimes (b) as the self-consciousness that is internal to the activity of thinking or that makes it 'possible'. Further, there is the bit of the textual record that we have just considered here where reflection is (c) some mental operation by which concepts are possible. Under (a), the activity of the intellect is conceived in the highly general terms by which it is distinguished from sensibility. We see this when Kant claims that the intellect, viewed in distinction from sensibility, 'only reflects' (Prol 4:288): that is, it does not receive representations, but only unifies them to some determinate content, such as can figure in judgment. That is tantamount to how I have just presented reflection as it figures under (c).

That leaves item (b), that reflection can refer to the self-consciousness that is internal to thinking. Reflection, in this sense, would be nothing other than pure apperception. The textual evidence for this claim comes from the *Anthropology* (7:134n). Kant speaks there of an 'inner activity' by which 'a concept (a thought) becomes possible' and calls that 'reflection' – which straightforwardly accords with sense (c). He also claims there that pure apperception is the self-consciousness 'of reflection [der Reflexion]': it is the consciousness of 'the "I" as *subject* of thinking (in logic)' (7:134n). This remark does not unambiguously entail an identity between reflection and pure apperception: it arguably leaves open the possibility that Kant means to distinguish between the mental activity of reflection and the thinking subject's (separate) consciousness of this mental activity; on this reading, he would be calling the latter 'pure apperception' and distinguishing it from the former, which would remain 'reflection'. But this reading fails to recognise the implications of the account of reflection reported in the 'three mental acts' passage: namely, that 'reflection' as to how various representations can be unified in a single consciousness must always