NATURE AND FREEDOM

Interviewing PAUL GUYER

by Darlei Dall'Agnol

ethic@ - ***Would you please introduce yourself to the readers of ethic@ and tell us why did you choose to study philosophy and what your main interests in it are?***

Guyer: I am Professor of Philosophy at the University of Pennsylvania, where I have taught for twenty-two years. I studied Philosophy as an undergraduate and graduate student at Harvard University, where I worked with Stanley Cavell, John Rawls and many other people well known at that time and still today. My first job as an assistant Professor was at the University of Pittsburgh and I taught for several years in Chicago before I came to Philadelphia. Did I choose to study Philosophy or did Philosophy choose to have me studying it? I am not sure. I like to say I began to read Philosophy already in High School, which is somehow unusual at the United States since it's not a subject in school. One year the English teacher told us we had to write a report on a book of essays, any book of essays of our choice. We just had to find a book of essays and write a report about it. I was in a bookshop and I came across a very inexpensive paperback edition of *Inquiries concerning the principles of human understanding* by David Hume. I thought *Inquiries* that sounds like essays. This looks like it will work. I bought that book. It cost forty-five cents in those days. I read it and I came in and gave a report about this philosopher who didn't believe in causation. Everybody in the class, I think, including the teacher, thought that not only was he crazy, but that I was crazy too. But I was very intrigued. I knew there had to be something wrong, this couldn't be right. Eventually, I found my way to Kant, as someone who tries to answer this. So, my interest in Kant especially began really with epistemology and from my Bachelor's degree to my Master's degree, I worked primarily on Kant's epistemology. I also began very interested in Kant's aesthetics, in part because my father was a painter, and he was always saying: *What do you think of this latest painting of mine? Do you like it? Is it any good?* I thought it would be good to have some principles by means of which to answers those questions. Of course, what you discover through the study of aesthetics is that there aren't such principles. But I got interested in aesthetics anyway. I was certainly interested in Kant's ethics from early on, but in terms of my own work, in a way that was the last part of Kant that I really started working intensively on. Just to sum up, the center of my work has certainly been Kant and in Kant I worked with his epistemology and his critique of metaphysics, on his aesthetics, on his ethics, on his political philosophy, and in recent years

I've been particularly interested in the way in which those things come together, in how he tries to connect those all.

ethic@ - *What is your recent work in moral philosophy?*

Guyer: It's been primarily on Kant, on political and moral philosophy. I started seriously writing about Kant's moral philosophy about fifteen years ago. I collected the first dozen or so essay that I wrote on moral and political philosophy in my book called *Kant on Freedom, Law and Happiness,* which came out in the year 2000. I've continued since that time to work quite extensively on Kant's moral philosophy. There are a number of questions that interest me in Kant's moral philosophy. I'm interested in the idea of freedom as our fundamental value and how that relates to his metaphysical conception of freedom of the will. And mostly I'm interested in separating those two and arguing that you can accept a considerable amount of his normative conception of freedom without accepting his idea that we have freedom of the will in the metaphysical sense, that we are therefore in fact always free to do the right thing. I don't believe that's true; I don't believe he has an incredible argument for it, but I think that's a separate matter from the normative value of freedom. So, that's one thing I'm very interested in. And I'm very interested in how the concept of normative value of freedom is to be applied. So I'm interested in his both political philosophy that is built around the idea that individual freedom of an action is a fundamental value that is to be preserved by a political system. And I'm interested in all the very many ways, especially in his work beginning around 1790, beginning with the *Critique of Judgment*, in which he tries to explain how this abstract idea of the value of freedom can be realized by flesh and blood creatures like us with our need for sensible representation of ideas, our empirical circumstances. I think he's not the philosopher of pure abstraction that he's often treated as being. The whole last decade of his life was devoted to trying to explain how we human beings can realize these ideals that he has outlined and I think that's a very interesting work. So I've devoted a lot of attention to that. I've written at least six or eight more essays on Kant's moral and political philosophy since *Kant on Freedom, Law and Happiness* in 2000 and I will soon publish another collection of my essays, which will be called *Kant's System of Nature and Freedom*, which will include these essays and which will also include a number of essays that show how Kant attempted to connect his idea of the system of nature, the law-governed way in which we represent nature with the system of morality, which is a subject I find of great interest. A lot of my other recent work has concerned aesthetics and not just in Kant, but in the history of modern aesthetics more broadly and there too I'm quite interested in the theme of the connections between our aesthetic experience and our ethical values. This was a very traditional issue in aesthetics; indeed it was the original issue in aesthetics. Actually that's the issue that Plato raised.

Plato's position is a negative position. He thinks on the whole our aesthetics experience has nothing positive to offer to our moral development, it has only dangers to our moral development. Very few philosophers since have accepted Plato's position and in a certain sense, most of the history of aesthetics is an attempt to respond to Plato's criticism of the moral significance of the arts without giving up what is unique and independent about the arts at the same time. And that certainly was the project in 18th century aesthetics. Kant himself introduced an idea of the disinterestedness in aesthetic judgment, which led many people at the end of the 19th century, it also led the predominant analytical philosophers in the 1950's, 1960's and 1970's, to argue about the autonomy of arts, to argue there's no connection between aesthetics and ethics. Recently within, let's say, the last fifteen years, at least in Anglo-American aesthetics, the idea that there's a connection between the aesthetic experience and the moral experience, that they are no the same, but still there is a connection between them has been very much discussed, sort of as if it were a brand new idea. Of course it's not a brand new idea, it was the predominant idea of the history of aesthetics, but it's been revived after this recent period. I'm interested in that whole subject. One of the things I'm supposed to be doing in the next three years is to write a history of modern aesthetics and one of its main themes certainly will be this connection between ethics and aesthetics.

ethic@ - *What is, in your opinion, Kant's main contributions to moral philosophy which are still worth taking seriously in the twenty first century?*

Guyer: I already suggested that in a sense I think that his main idea is that our most fundamental value is the freedom to set our own goals, or ends, as he calls them. And freedom to act even in the presence of other people who have different goals, in order to realize our goals to the extent that our acting to that end is consistent with others doing so as well. That's the idea that he attempts to work out in moral and political philosophy and I think that's a very important idea. Of course, for Kant, there's a strong connection between the idea of freedom and the idea of acting in accordance with a rule or law and his claim is that freedom both of choice and of action can be achieved only through action in accordance with a law and that therefore the freedom of an individual can in fact be achieved only through the acceptance of laws which play certain constraints in everybody. To many people this seems to be a very confusing position. Many people accept the idea that human freedom or autonomy is a fundamental value but think that's inconsistent with the idea of also accepting universal laws. For example, a well-known interpreter of Kant back in the 1960's and 1970's published a famous book called *In Defense of Anarchy*. Because he thought that the two implications of Kant's idea of autonomy or freedom was simply that each individual gets to do what he wants and that any constraint on the individual is an unfortunate limitation of human freedom. I

think that Kant was more subtle than that and that his notion of autonomy cannot be reduced either to just the idea of individual freedom of choice regardless of what others want or simply regulation according to rules as it were regardless of what you yourself want. I think, in fact, what Kant thought was the following: the two most fundamental threats to the exercise of one's own free choice are, first of all, the unbridled rule of one's own inclinations and secondly, the constraint of oneself by others in the service of the others inclinations. He thought that the only way for any individual to truly achieve freedom, which means freedom from simply being dominated by his own inclinations or by the inclinations of others is for the individual to act in accordance with a rule and for all to act in accordance with a rule, which places some control over inclinations. So that one is not pushed around by one's own inclinations or by anyone else's inclinations. It starts with a certain negative conception of individual freedom in the sense that individual freedom is achieved first by getting some kind of control over one's inclinations, since one's inclinations are a threat to freedom and then he argues that acting in accordance with a rule is the way to get control over one's inclination. But it has to be an intersubjective rule or universal rule because if it's a rule that says that my own inclinations are more important than anyone else's, than you are still being pushed around by your own inclinations. So it's got to be a rule that says somehow that everyone's interest has to be placed in the same plane and then we have to figure out which of our inclinations, my inclinations, your inclinations, others' inclinations could be realized in a consistent way and it's through this that we gain some kind of control over our inclinations and it's through that this freedom is achieved. That was his fundamental idea in moral philosophy; it was expressed in a variety of ways. A challenge for the interpreters of Kant is to connect the different ways in which he expresses this idea, to see what the underlying argument is. But I think that idea is still worth taking seriously. I think also that the leading idea of his political philosophy, that the fundamental political value and goal is equal spheres of freedom of action, it's the external expression of freedom, the external use of our freedom. That's the primary objective of a just political system. I think that continues to be a very important idea. It's an idea, which, on the one hand, places all governments under very strong constraint to use their power to try to maximize the freedom of their citizens, not for other goals. But, in certain ways, it also limits our expectations of governments; we cannot expect that the government can make everybody happy, that making everybody happy is the primary goal of government. For Kant the idea of happiness was much too indeterminate to offer a principle. People want one thing at one time and other thing at other time. "I want this thing"; "you want that thing". If we institute governments to try to make everyone happy all the time, we are just asking for problems, but if we restrict to the goal of government to the institution of the conditions in which individual can have equal freedom, than we

have a manageable project. Now, Kant draws an extremely rigid distinction between the provision of freedom, on the one hand, and the provision of happiness, on the other hand. A distinction may be too rigid, for there are various ways in which we think that government should be in the business of providing at least basic means for the satisfaction of human needs, and therefore, for happiness. Kant also thinks of freedom in a rather abstract way, so for example, he doesn't think about the public support for the development of the capabilities that we may need in order to be able to exercise our freedom to an equal degree. That's something which certain recent philosophers such as Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum have written about. I think that's probably an important addition to Kant's philosophy. Kant, as I said, thinks that we can have a quality of freedom in the abstract, and he doesn't worry that much about the concrete means and capabilities that individuals need in order to make useful the freedom that they have and we probably have to add something like that to his political philosophy to get a really satisfactory political philosophy. But still, I think that the idea that the institution and maintenance of an equally maximum spheres of action is a good way to think about the goals of our political organization. So I think that is still worth taking seriously in the 21st Century.

ethic@ - *Which are the main problems of Kant's ethics in the bicentenary of his death?*

Guyer: We have been celebrating the bicentenary of his death all over the world for this year and many people have been going to many countries this year and next year will be a quiet year, as we will recover. Well, I think the main problems are, first of all, problems of interpretation, clarifying what Kant really meant in a way that brings out the fundamental normative value of freedom in both his ethics and his political philosophy. Secondly, problems of argumentation. For all his love of argument and philosophical systematicity and technicality, I don't think that Kant really made a terribly clear argument for his principle that freedom is our fundamental norm. So there's the problem of elucidating from his texts something that looks like a convincing argument for this claim or reconciling ourselves to the idea that perhaps, at the most fundamental level, you can't have a deductive argument for a fundamental normative claim, otherwise it's not fundamental. There has to be a starting point, I mean, in a way to use language that Hume made popular and that it was also popular in moral philosophy some years ago, ultimately you cannot derive an ought from an is. There is no kind of metaphysical argumentation that will lead to its most fundamental norm. So, we may just have to reconcile ourselves to the fact that what philosophy can do is get us to see, in a variety of kinds of context that whatever we may initially think, it is, in fact, our freedom that we value, and then get us to think through consistently what the implications and consequences of that are. And that of course, I think, does raise a genuine problem for Kant's moral philosophy, which is the

following problem: I think that many people, certainly many people from shall we say the Atlantic cultures, specially the cultures ultimately influenced by Greek antiquity do find the idea of freedom of choice profoundly attractive. Many people that come from this background value the ability to make their own choices extremely highly and value the preservation of that ability more highly than the real satisfaction or realization of any particular goal that they may set for themselves. But I don't know exactly if that is a characteristic of some other cultures, that's not so clear, and it's not so clear that in even called Western cultures, Western civilization, even among people who may give lip service to this ideal, that every individual lives his life in that way. Many individuals actually find the prospect of making free choices somehow terrifying and seek for ways to escape from that burden and that's one of the things that keep psychoanalysts busy. So, I think that there are certainly question about whether *everyone* will accept this Kantian idea that freedom itself is our most fundamental norm. That needs exploration. And then thirdly, of course, there are questions or problems about implementation and figuring out what it actually means in the various contexts of our actual lives to make freedom our fundamental value. I think that Kant himself understood that this was a question that brought in empirical considerations, that it is one thing to talk about the value of freedom in the abstract and the value of freedom for all rational beings, and then it's a further thing to talk about what that implies for creatures like us, in our conditions, which means creatures whose rationality is embodied, and whose ability to use their rationality depend on their bodily condition and on their bodily health. Another feature of our empirical condition which affects what the implementation of the abstract idea of freedom is, is the fact that we live on a finite planet with finite resources and often find ourselves in conditions of competition with each other for the use and control of these resources. Once we start bringing in empirical considerations like that, extremely fundamental empirical considerations, not highly particularized ones and not very controversial ones, but still empirical, than of course, we see, that the actual implementation of the value of freedom in the abstract has to take particular forms and, of course, these empirical circumstances can change to certain degrees. The dependence of human rationality upon the health of human body isn't something that changes very much, but still perhaps even as we learn more about neuroscience and so on and so forth, there may be things about that relation that we can discover that weren't known in Kant's time. Certainly the relations of the human population to the available resources on the Earth are things that do change and the changes in those things have to be taken into account in our politics. So, the duties of the government, the obligation of the government with regard to the fair distribution of resources is not something that could be settled once and for all. In the United States, for example, in 1789 or in other countries at some fixed date when their Constitutions occurred, these are things

that constantly need to be revisited and adjusted as our empirical circumstances evolve. So that's an ongoing problem for the implementation of Kant philosophy, but it's certainly is not a problem of which Kant himself was unaware. On the contrary, when he talks about the metaphysical principles of justice, what he means precisely is the principles that we get when we apply the completely abstract moral principle of the value of freedom to the empirical conditions of our existence, and that's something that's always going to involve changes, revision, reflection, and so forth.

ethic@ - One problem in Kant´s ethics seems to be that his conception of nature, based on a Newtonian physics, is overwhelmingly deterministic. Thus, he needs to postulate a free self outside the world to make morality possible. Nowadays, however, in physics, in genetics, we came to accept a different view of nature. Don't you think that Kant´s metaphysics of morals is jeopardized by a misleading view about nature?

Guyer: You have just asked me about the fact that Kant's conception of nature is so overwhelmingly causal or deterministic that it drives him into a metaphysical concept of freedom because he sees freedom as something that cannot take place within nature, but can only happen outside nature. I, as an interpreter, but also as a reconstructer of Kant's philosophy, want to separate his metaphysical conception of free will from his normative conception of freedom. What do I have in mind? Well, I don't want to reject the deterministic view of nature. Some people have tried to do that. There are some well-known arguments where people use the Heisenberg´s uncertainty principle, from quantum mechanics or Gödel´s incompleteness theorem, to argue that nature isn't really deterministic after all. I don't find those kinds of arguments very helpful. Gödel wrote for a very specialized context, number theory, those results do not automatically apply elsewhere. The Heisenberg uncertainty principle, as best as I understand it, implies to microscopic phenomena and it doesn't really affect the reliability of the laws of nature on the macroscopic level. I don't think those are very helpful ways to think about freedom. I think that a more helpful way that it's possible in spite of the fact that nature is governed by causal laws, is indeed by the use of casual laws, that is, through the knowledge of the casual laws to make use of the mechanisms that they afford us to find ways to gain greater control of ourselves, greater control of our inclinations and to live more in accordance with a certain kind of ideal. We can find ways which are consistent with the laws of nature to make our lives approximate, if not exactly equal, the way they would be if we were rational creatures who were somehow independent of nature. And in certain moments, in his Anthropology writings and in his Lectures on Ethics to his students, who were not, on the whole, to become philosophy professors, but who were to become lawyers and doctors and clergymen in the late 18th century Prussia, Kant

emphasizes often the empirical means by which we can gain control over our inclinations, by which we gain control over our anti-social impulses; empirical means by which we can learn how to live together as if we were rational beings, and he often speaks of means that nature affords us to live like rational beings, and then it´s up to us to choose to use those means that nature affords us to live like rational beings. And that is something that, to a certain extent, is possible within nature rather than somewhat outside of nature. One has to realize that there may be limits to our success in living as rational creatures, that we may be more rational in some moments of our lives than others. That some individuals may be able to gain more rational control over their behaviors than others can, that there are some individuals that end up living further from the ideal of living as rational beings than others and that we have to find various ways to accommodate this. We have to accommodate this through our penal system in the worst cases, but also through our educational systems, through our social systems and so on. And there is a way through which Kant also says that an aesthetic experience may help us to realize our rational goals.

ethic@ - *In your book* Kant and the Experience of Freedom *you tried to show that moral sentiments play an important role in Kant's ethics. The question is: are moral sentiments motives for acting or they must be cultivated out the motive of duty itself?*

Guyer: Here I believe that Kant´s view is that sentiments by themselves are never motives for action. The motivation for act for Kant consists in the choice of one fundamental maxim of action. And that fundamental maxim is either to do what our inclinations and sentiments suggest, if that is consistent with morality, or to do what they suggest out of self-love whether or not they are consistent with morality. Those are our two choices and if you set things up that way, then the sentiments as such, let's use that as a general term for naturally occurring impulses to action, are never the motives for action. They are more like suggestions for actions, possible occasions of actions or partial reasons for actions, which we will act upon depending on what our fundamental principle is. Our fundamental principle may tell us that certain kinds of sentiments generally lead us to a more moral desirably direction, and we should therefore cultivate those sentiments. Other sentiments generally don't, and we should try to restrain or suppress those sentiments. Certainly, certain sentiments like the sentiment of sympathy towards the suffering of others are things that Kant thinks that should be cultivated because, on the whole, they will lead us at the concrete level of action at the direction that morality requires. But, one thing that is quite interesting when Kant talks about this, which he does talk about, particularly in the *Doctrine of Virtue* of the *Metaphysics of Morals* from 1797, he says we only have a conditional duty to develop and cultivate certain sympathy. I think that what he means by a conditional duty is a conditional because in many contexts, acting on these sentiments,

is a condition for realizing the moral goal. Acting on these sentiments is the means through which we, human beings, can realize these moral goals. So, to cultivate those sentiments in order to have them available to use is, in fact, the condition to our successful moral action. But the duty to act on and cultivate those sentiments is only conditional also in the sense that it must always be constrained by the moral law, it is always subject to the condition of compliance to the moral law. What he has in mind is that any sentiment, no matter how generally beneficent it is, might in certain contexts lead us to certain action that are inappropriate or inconsistent with the moral law. So, we have to check whether the action to which those sentiments would impel us is, in fact, consistent with our moral obligations, even if that's almost always, the case. He says also, in the Doctrine of Virtue, quite interestingly, and this is an allusion to Aristotle, that virtue can't become a habit. Why it cannot become a habit? Aristotle thought that the most important thing was to make virtue a habit. It cannot become a habit because a habit is something, which leads us sort of morally automatically to act in a certain way, leads us to be able to act in a certain way without thinking. Kant doesn't think that's a good model for morality because in morality, a certain sentiment might lead you to act in the right way nine times out of ten, or ninety-nine times out of one hundred, but still there's no guarantee that will lead you to act in the right way. You have to raise the question: "Is this an occasion in which I should act on this sentiment or not?" Barbara Hermann on her book "*The Practice of Judgment*", gives a very famous example of this. Suppose you are a person generally feeling a sympathy sentiment. As soon as you see someone struggling, your first impulse is always to give them a hand, to help them out. You see somebody struggling to lift an extremely heavy package, and you want to help. Well, most of the time, that's a perfectly good thing to do, it's certainly almost always consistent with morality and maybe sometimes it's even obligatory, when, for instance, there's nobody else to help this person. But there will be situations in which it might not be consistent with morality, as for example, when the person is a robber, and the heavy object is a sculpture that he has just stolen from the museum, and he's trying to get it out from the back door of the museum. Well, then, of course, your benevolent sentiment to help needs to be checked by the moral imperative that applies to the situation. But that's a very gripping illustration that explains what Kant has in mind when he says that we have a conditional duty, but only a conditional duty, to cultivate and act upon our moral sentiments.

ethic@ - *The current American scholarship in Kant's ethics seems to be much concerned in bringing it closer to our common morality, to our moral sentiments, to emotions and not only our reason. Do you think that this avoids Kant's moral absolutism and his rigorism?*

Guyer: Quite a few different people have been involved with it and have written about it.

Nancy Sherman has written about it, Barbara Hermann and other people. I think it's important and it should be consistent with Kant's moral philosophy and as I was just suggesting, it is actually part of Kant's moral philosophy. Kant realizes that human beings are not purely rational creatures, that they operate through sentiments and inclinations of various kinds and what they need to do in order to act successfully, is to act on sentiments and cultivate sentiments that are consistent with the moral law, rather than just acting on your sentiment without thinking about the moral law. So, on the one hand, the role of sentiments in the actual explanation of human action has to be considered and indeed it was considered by Kant himself, on the other hand, I don't quite think that takes it away from, let's call his moral absolutism, to use your term, because you still have in principle to check whether a proposed course of action is consistent with the moral law. In practice, many times, we do that reflectively. That doesn't mean we have to sort of stop and think five minutes before we act as Bernard Williams sometimes thought. But, in principle, we always have to be prepared to raise the question of whether one course of action is consistent with the moral law. So, his position certainly remains absolutist in the sense that the moral law is always to be our governing principle and that we should act and cultivate sentiments only to the extent that is consistent on the moral law but also required by acting on the moral law, in the actual circumstances of human existence. Now, I don't think that's identical to what sometimes is called Kant's rigorism. When people use this expression, I think that they mean that you should never tell a lie or you should always respect human beings, to which there can never be exceptions. Now Kant himself writes that even if a murderer knocks on your door and asks whether his intended victim is in your house, you should not lie to that guy. If you can avoid maybe giving him any answer at all, you can do that. But you shouldn't say anything false. This seem an absurdly rigorist kind of principle to many interpreters. I believe they rightly find it so. You might well respond to Kant. "Look Kant, on the whole, the principle that you should not tell a lie Is a very sound moral principle. But an even higher value than telling the truth is to save an innocent life. Then you should be allowed to tell a lie if that's the only way to do that. So you might want to reformulate the principle, Professor Kant. And you might say you should never tell a lie unless that's the only way to save an innocent life." We might be tempted to say that in response to Kant. But notice that even if you say that, we're not giving up the ideal that moral principles are universalizable. The principle that you should never tell a lie except when that is absolutely necessary to save a life, that itself is an universalizable principle, that's a principle that should be applied by anyone in the appropriate circumstances. So I think the lesson that we need to draw from this is that our moral principles need to reflect particular kinds of circumstances and what they tell us to do in certain kinds of circumstances might be different from what they tell us to do in other kind of circumstances. What they tell

us to do when the life of an innocent person is at risk may be different from what they tell us when no such thing is at risk. But even so, even when these principles are more adjusted to the circumstances, they will still be universal principles, and they will be valued by anyone who finds himself in such circumstances, and in that sense, the idea that the moral principles should be univeralizable still reigns supreme

ethic@ - *Last week, in Rio, you discussed Kantian Perspectivism and the relation between Kant and Nietzsche's philosophies. What are, in your view, the major similarities and differences between the two?*

Guyer: What I argued there was the following: Kant is sometimes thought to have introduced perspectivism before Nietzsche with his fundamental distinction between appearances and things in themselves and with the idea that we have two standpoints in morality, which, in turn, allows us to separate the theoretical and the practical because one concerns the phenomena, and the other, the noumenal; and that's the source of perspectivism. I don't think that really is the source of perspectivism because Kant argues in a sense that there's nothing optional for us in the choice of these two standpoints. And perspectivism, to me at least, always involves the idea that there is something optional in the way we see the world, in the way we act on the world. Rather, what I argued in that talk is that Kant's philosophy can be understood as perspectivism within limits. So, for example, in the theoretical and scientific case, there are certain very fundamental principles about the space, time and causal structure of nature, which according to Kant, we impose upon our experience and he is not perspectivistic about that. He thinks every human being must think in that way about those matters. But, that framework is very far from giving us the details of natural science in all its empirical form, and he recognizes that in attempting to realize natural science in detail, there will be many features of perspectivism. Many of the same features that perspectivists talk they have found in Nietzsche: that our science will always be a science of our particular time; that its theories will be limited to what is available at that time; that it will never be complete; that we will never know what goes on in every corner of the universe; that the empirical content of our natural science will always be subject to our vision; that the idea of a complete system of natural science is only a regulative ideal. These things Kant recognizes. Likewise, his model of a practical science that works within the a priori framework of our structure of experience has certain perspectivists elements in it. Of course, in this sense, I argue that his moral philosophy is not perspectivist. The Categorical Imperative, that we should act on universalizable principles, is valid for every one and it's pretty hard to see that as perspectivist. But, when you work out the details of his moral philosophy, what it actually tells you is that you should respect each person as an end in herself, as someone who gets to set his own ends and that the whole point of the Categorical Imperative is to establish the

frameworks within which individuals may choose to pursue their different ends, in a way that is consistent with others doing the same thing. So, that's again a form of perspectivism about ways of life within an universal framework. And that's roughly what I argued in that other paper.

ethic@ - *Kant's texts that deal with what's being called his* impure ethics *are sometimes distrusted. Even though he tells us in the* Groundwork *that the empirical study of man is the second part of morals, this other side seems sometimes to be neglected by scholars. What is, in your view, the importance of texts like the* Anthropology in a pragmatic point of view *and* the Pedagogy?

Guyer: This is something I was talking about in response to the other set of questions. I think that to some extent I have already answered the question. But I think that these writings are very important because, well, in a way, just as I was saying with regard to perspectivism, Kant proceeds in two steps. First, he analyzes what are the most fundamental principles of human reason, whether we are talking about theoretical reason or practical reason, and then he considers how we implement those fundamental principles. In the case of metaphysical principles, we need to know various aspects about human nature and the natural conditions of human existence in order to see how the principles are to be implemented. So, as I said before, we need to understand that the state of our mind is affected by the state of our body, that we have bodily needs that can only be satisfied by the use of external objects, and so forth. These are topics he brings up in the *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, and then we have to understand what the implications of this implementation of our moral and political principles are, in light of these empirical facts, and that is, as I said before, that's a project which Kant himself began. The *Pedagogy* is important for Kant's ethics because there Kant makes it clear that although in one sense, of course, the fundamental principle of metaphysics is supposed to be accessible to every human being, in the actual process of human maturation, humans need the help each other in order to become fully conscious of these principles. In particular, younger human beings need the help of moral mature human beings, they need moral education, and that's the central focus of Kant's theory of education. And that also relates to other things we were talking about before. Kant often talks of the freedom of the will as something that we just have, but in any meaningful sense, freedom of will is something that has to be developed, we have to learn how to be in control of our impulses and that's something that children do as they grow up with the help of others and that some do better than others and that's part of education as well, a central part of education, as far as Kant is concerned. And then of course, there is the Anthropology point that we don't leave all these problems behind us with our childhood and even as adults we need interaction with others and the support

of others to realize our moral potential. We need others' discussion to remind us what would be right and would be wrong even if, in the abstract, we know them. We need the support of others to maintain our resolve to do what is right in many kinds of circumstances and that is something that Kant talks about, not as extensively as he might have had, but certainly hits at it at the *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone* of 1793, where he talks about the need for an ethical community, this is, a community where people will support each other in being social rather than anti-social, where they support each other rather than be competitive with each other, and all this sort of things. So, I think this side of Kant's work is extremely important.

ethic@ - *What do you think of the approaches to moral philosophy which use "devices of representation" to reconstruct Kant's ethics such as Rawls´ theory of justice?*

Guyer: I am not such an expert on these contemporary forms of Kantianism as I think I should be, but I think that these can be quite useful. I think, for example, that Rawls' idea of the original position is a way through which we think what our principles of justice would be, which leads us to giving priority to the principle of liberty over the principle of equality of resources. I think that can be a very good way to bring out more concretely what the consequences of Kant's fundamental norms are, but, at the same time, they have to be used in conjunction with the fundamental normative principle of freedom and a recognition of the fundamentality of that principle. That's something that Rawls was very clear about in the *Theory of Justice*, while in his later writings, most famously *Political Liberalism*, he tried to separate the decision-procedure for coming up with principles of justice from some sort of really fundamental morals in mankind. This was not unmotivated on any means; he did that in recognition that people's comprehensive morals differ. Religiously inspired people may have a different fundamental conception of the source of value than that of secular people and of people from different religious. And yet these people have to find a way to live together with each other. So, he introduces the principles of justice as a way simply to give people a device, a *modus operandi* in order to get along with each other without the same fundamental moral principles. But, I'm not convinced that that works, and if you really want to get people to accept common principles of governance we may have to work to make them accept some fundamental moral principles as well. For example, that despite the differences between this religious beliefs, they still value freedom of individual choice and that they are in fact committed to building a polity that will allow them to retain that individual freedom of choice. And, in some cases, freedom of choice is to live a religious life; in other cases, freedom of choice is to live a secular life, but they all agree upon the fundamental value of freedom of choice. Of course not every religious person can be brought up to accept that, some religious people think that the

salvation of other people's souls is their business, and that they should be in the position to tell other people how to live. But hopefully those are not the majority.

ethic@ - *Thanks for this very interesting interview.*

Transcribed by Sofia Helena Gollnick Ferreira