

NEW APPROACHES OF KANTIAN MORALS

The problem of happiness in Kant's «system», is a crucial one, since it reveals a close relation with the main moral «entity», namely the moral law¹. Between these two extremes there is a large variety of theoretical forms and situations where happiness is included in the «practical» works, taking into consideration (the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, the *Critique of Practical Reason* and the *Metaphysics of Morals*). From the very beginning, i. e. in the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, an incompatibility of principle separates happiness and moral law, since they belong to different domains, subject to different legislations, respectively nature legislated by the laws of nature, and morality legislated by the law of freedom. Together with this first attitude, Kant identifies happiness with a *natural tendency* of human being. This *natural* characteristic appears as subordinated to the variations produced by the incidence of external factors that make happiness unable to join to the *a priori* conceptual framework of this task. As such, it will be regarded no more than an *empirical concept*, issued from the experience the domain of nature makes possible. Thus, it is opposed to the firmness of moral law, as being included in the sphere of *impulses* and *inclinations* which sums up the sensible determinants of human being. To happiness importance is attached when it is deemed to participate in the *normal* condition the human being has to attain, in order to be able to tend to the *exceptional* condition claimed by the ideality of moral law. As such, happiness appears as an *indirect duty*. Another theoretical progress happiness attains in this critical work comes together with its drawing near the framework of the *a priori* concepts, where it is regarded as an *a priori* purpose of human being. This kind of purpose will be no more subject to variations of personal experience, since it appears as a *general idea* or as a *principle* expressed by *moral law*.

The relation between happiness and moral law is strengthened throughout the *Critique of Practical Reason*, which continues the process of unifying the diverse theoretical forms admitted by happiness. The latter appears here as a *general idea* which is able to enrich the human being through the state of an equilibrium favourable to the fulfilment of duty. Consequently happiness will be regarded as a *special kind of duty*, able to attain a *special kind of good*. It will of course be not *the* moral good, which is an *a priori* concept, focusing on a moral purpose; happiness developed at a natural level could be embedded just in a *relative good*, trying to put in agreement *life* with *morals*. Being dependent in a large measure on life, happiness will cause some breaks to Kant's idealistic conceptual framework, that appear as tendencies to *existentialism* and to *philosophy of life*, through

1. Πβ. Rodica CROITORU, *Fericire și lege morală la Kant (Happiness and Moral Law in Kant)*, Bucharest, BIC ALL Publishing House, 2008, 190 pp., ISBN 978-973-571-862-6.



which happiness will be defined as a *contentment of human being with its whole existence*.

In the *Metaphysics of Morals* the natural tendency towards happiness joins the general *teleological* view of this work, where happiness becomes the means through which morality allows us to remove obstacles, in order to realize the whole rational *purpose* of morals, which is the *moral good*. In this way it comes near to the central idea of this work, which is the *purpose-duty* which is manifested in the *perfection* of the self and the *happiness of the other*. But the most beautiful theoretical cover Kant gives to happiness is *love*. Love is defined, in the present teleological view, as *assuming the purposes of the other one*. We do actively manifest the special feeling of love when we turn the existential purposes of the other one to our own purposes. The relation of *love* with *happiness* comes to its fulfilment when rethinking it in accordance with the prime being. If God asks the human being to love his fellow man, it follows that love is a cohesive factor of human life and an important factor of Creation as well. If God have had such a purpose when creating the world, it is supposed that the love he manifested towards men was directed to their happiness. Enjoying of such an ascendance, happiness could have been given to the human being as a *duty towards himself*. What is of importance in order to delimit the theoretical status of happiness followed in the extremely significant work of Rodica Croitoru, which opens new ways of interpretation of the Kantian system, is the fact that, through successive intermediate stages from the *natural* level where it initially was inserted it to the *moral* level, due to a constant reference to leads moral law.

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