

ABSTRACT

In chapter III of the *Critique of Practical Reason* (CPR), Kant gives an account of moral feelings. His account is lengthy and thorough, leaving the impression that the topic is important to his theory of morality. Indeed, in the account Kant seems to claim that moral feelings play a crucial role in the determination of the will. However, these facts about his account of moral feelings might seem surprising in light of certain passages in Kant's more studied moral treatise, the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, which seem to disparage the place of feeling in moral theory. The seeming tension between these considerations raises the question of exactly what Kant is claiming in chapter III of the CPR, and of how those claims fit with the strongly rationalist tenor of his moral theory. My aim in this paper is to go some way toward answering these questions.

I begin by setting the section on incentives in the context of the larger flow of argument in the CPR. I argue that several themes evident in the section immediately preceding that on incentives, i.e., the *Typic*, are signals of what lies ahead in the section on incentives—namely, the theme of connecting the noumenal notion of the good with the sensible world of human experience, of guarding against empiricism about practical reason, and of understanding the moral disposition. Next, I elucidate Kant's explicit purpose in the section on incentives—namely, to show the moral law's necessary effect on the human sensibility if it is to be the subjective determining ground of the will—and state briefly the account of the moral feelings he gives as the result of his inquiry. Finally, I argue that Kant had at least three motivations in writing his section on the incentives. First, he aimed to explain how his rationalist account of the determination of the will fits

with the seeming datum of human nature that determination of the will always involves feeling in some way. Second, Kant was motivated to show how the noumenal moral law could have purchase on the sensible world that human beings are part of. Third, Kant's attack on moral enthusiasm near the end of the section on incentives is evidence of his motive to resist empiricism about morality, a motive that connects the section with the Topic before it.

ON MORAL FEELING IN KANT'S SECOND CRITIQUE

In chapter III of the *Critique of Practical Reason* (CPR), Kant gives an account of moral feelings. His account is lengthy and thorough, leaving the impression that the topic is important to his theory of morality. Indeed, in the account Kant seems to claim that moral feelings play a crucial role in the determination of the will. However, these facts about his account of moral feelings might seem surprising in light of certain passages in Kant's more studied moral treatise, the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (GW), which seem to disparage the place of feeling in moral theory.¹ Moreover, at many points in the CPR itself Kant emphasizes that pure practical reason alone—and not pleasurable feeling at an object—is the determining ground of the will in the case of moral willing. The seeming tension between these considerations raises the question of exactly what Kant is claiming in chapter III of the CPR, and of how those claims fit with the strongly rationalist tenor of his moral theory.

My purpose in this paper is to go some way toward answering those questions. Specifically, I will try to explain the central aims and claims of the first part of chapter III of the CPR, i.e., the section titled “On the incentives of pure practical reason,” and I will try to show that Kant's account of moral feeling there is consistent with the rationalist thrust of his moral theory. I will begin by setting the relevant section of chapter III in its

¹ For example, Kant states the following: “For, the pure thought of duty and in general of the moral law, mixed with no foreign addition of empirical inducements, has by way of reason alone...an influence on the human heart so much more powerful than all other incentives, which may be summoned from the empirical field, that reason, in the consciousness of its dignity, despises the latter and can gradually become their master; on the other hand a mixed doctrine of morals, put together from incentives of feeling and inclination and also of rational concepts, must make the mind waver between motives that cannot be brought under any principle, that can lead only contingently to what is good and can very often also lead to what is evil.” (Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, ed. Mary Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), sec. 4:411.)

context within the larger flow of argument in the CPR, specifically chapters I and II. Next, I will try to explain the aims of inquiry Kant sets himself in the section on incentives, and then the account he gives as the result of his inquiry. Finally, I will briefly speculate about Kant's motivations in writing the section on moral feeling.

THE CONTEXT OF KANT'S DISCUSSION OF MORAL FEELINGS

Kant's discussion of moral feelings in chapter III of the CPR is, of course, preceded by chapters I and II. In chapter I Kant distinguishes two ways in which a principle or maxim may determine the will of a human being, i.e., two ways by which a practical principle may bring an agent to an intention to act. First, the object or *matter* of the maxim may determine the agent's will. On this story, the agent takes pleasure in the matter of his maxim, and his will is determined as a result. Given this antecedent and will-determining role of pleasure, Kant refers to maxims that determine the will by their matter as principles of self-love (5:22).² For example, an agent might take pleasure at the thought of vengeance for an insult he suffered, and so adopt the following principle of action: "Let no insult pass unavenged" (5:19). Kant views the arousal of the sensibilities by an object as simply another example of the mechanistic causal order of the world at work (in this instance in the human mind), and thus he thinks that the determination of the will proceeding from such an arousal is not unqualifiedly free.³ Kant observes that principles like the vengeance principle cannot be understood as practical laws, i.e., such maxims

² Kant's thought here seems to be that insofar as the will is determined by an antecedent pleasure at an object, the agent goes after the object for the sake of that pleasure, and so is really in the business of pleasing herself, or "loving" herself.

³ This is not to deny that a will determined by self-love has been determined freely in some sense, on Kant's picture. Rather, it is merely to say that a will determined by self-love has been influenced in its determination by the mechanistic causal order, and so is not as free as it could be, i.e., it is not free all the way down—as Kant thinks a will determined by the moral law is.

could never be “cognized as objective, that is, as holding for the will of every rational being” (5:19).⁴ Put another way, the principle of vengeance, if it were universally adopted by rational beings, would not produce the harmony characteristic of the operation of a natural law; rather, the result would be a disharmonious world in which insults to be avenged would proliferate and the prescribed vengeful actions would not accomplish the purpose to which they would be aimed, namely settling the insulting episode.

Now, suppose an agent took tremendous displeasure at the thought of deceitful promises, and that this displeasure at deceitful promises determined her will to adopt the maxim, “Never make deceitful promises.” In this case, the principle of action *could* be understood as a practical law, i.e., it *would*, if universally instantiated as a principle of action, produce the harmony characteristic of a natural law. However, in this case the fact it could be so understood would be an accident. In other words, because the agent’s displeasure at the *matter* of the maxim—i.e., deceitful promises—would have determined the agent’s will, it would be for her contingent whether her maxim could be cognized as a practical law, since she herself did not cognize it as such. Kant’s view of such a case seems to be that there is no necessary connection between displeasure at a certain matter of action and the possibility of understanding the related maxim as a practical law. People take pleasure and displeasure at the thought of all sorts of objects of action; some principles involving them may be cognized as practical laws and others not. Put another way, it is not a *necessary property* of any object that it be pleasing or displeasing to a person. That an object is pleasing or displeasing might be true for one person and false for

⁴ All parenthetical references are to the CPR unless otherwise specified. All quotations of the CPR are from the translation in Immanuel Kant, *Practical Philosophy*, Mary J. Gregor (trans., ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) pp. 133-271. Quotations from Kant’s *Metaphysics of Morals* (MM) are from the same volume, pp. 363-603.

another, and true for a person at one time, and false for the same person at a different time. Given this variety of pleasures and displeasures instantiated in different people, and the instability of pleasures and displeasures from moment to moment in any given person, my supposed agent might well have taken *pleasure* at the thought of making a deceitful promise, and determined her will accordingly. Thus, her maxim might well have been like the vengeance maxim, i.e., a maxim that cannot be cognized as a practical law.

The second way in which a maxim can determine the will, according to Kant, is by its *form*. Specifically, if a maxim is cognized as having a form such that it could be instantiated as a harmony-preserving universal principle of action—i.e., if it is understood to have what Kant calls the form of “giving universal law”, or universal law-giving form (5:27)—that cognition about form can, itself, determine the agent’s will. So, for example, if the will of the agent who adopted the maxim, “Never make deceitful promises,” were determined not by her sensible displeasure at deceitful promises, but rather by the cognized form of that maxim, i.e., a form that makes it “*fit for a giving of universal law*” (5:27), then it would not be for her contingent whether her maxim could be cognized as a practical law. Indeed, the fact that her will would be determined, in this case, by the cognized form of universal law-giving instantiated in her maxim necessarily makes it the case that her maxim may be cognized as a practical law, since to cognize a maxim as having universal law-giving form just is to cognize it as a practical law.⁵ Kant observes further that nothing

⁵ It is unclear from Kant’s account whether he thinks maxims like “Let no insult pass unavenged”—which do not *have* the form of universal law-giving—could nevertheless be erroneously cognized as such, and thereby determine the will in this second way. The fact that Kant thinks we always cognize maxims as fit for the giving of universal law—since the principle that we ought to do so is the objective *constitutive* principle of the will (which I will elaborate later in the paper)—supports this thought that our will might be determined by an erroneous cognition about the form of a maxim that does not, in itself, admit of universal law-giving form (like the vengeance principle). However, against this thought is that Kant seems to think the pleasures we take at objects are secretly at work, warring against our cognitions about the form of a maxim, when we cognize the form of a maxim erroneously. If it is, in fact, our pleasure at an object that determines our will in

but human reasoning could represent the mere form of a maxim for cognition (5:28). Thus, Kant says this other formal kind of determining ground for the will is pure practical reason. Now, if human reason can determine the will in this way, then the determining ground of the will in such cases is something other than a mere object of experience, and so it seems that the will is determined in a way *apart* from the mechanistic causal chains that govern the world of experience (5:29). To the extent that the human will can, in this way, be determined by pure practical reason apart from mechanism, Kant understands it as free (5:29).

However, Kant goes further than merely claiming that *it is possible* for the will to be determined in this second way, i.e., by pure practical reason, or by a maxim's fitness for a giving of universal law. Rather, he says that, as a "fact of reason," our will *ought* to be determined by pure practical reason, "as the supreme condition of all maxims" (5:31). In other words, Kant thinks the determination of our will by maxims with universal law-giving form is a categorical imperative. Thus, Kant formulates what he calls the "fundamental law of pure practical reason": "So act that the maxim of your will could always hold at the same time as a principle in a giving of universal law" (5:30). Of this "practical rule" Kant says the following:

The practical rule is therefore unconditional and so is represented a priori as a categorical practical proposition by which the will is objectively determined absolutely and immediately (by the practical rule itself, which accordingly is here a law) (5:31).

Kant's central point here is that reason presses upon us, as rational beings, the unconditional and absolute requirement to act on maxims with universal law-giving form.

such erroneous cases, then it seems that principles like the revenge principle could never determine our will according to their form. I lean toward Kant holding the second view—i.e., that such principles *never* determine our will according to (erroneously cognized) universal law-giving form—though I am not fully convinced.

According to Kant, in becoming conscious of this requirement on our willing, we become conscious of the *moral law* (5:29). On this picture, the moral law is the cause of the fundamental law of practical reason, and of the unconditional and absolute requirement on our willing, and thus is the ultimate determining ground of our will when our will is determined by pure practical reason. In the quote above from 5:31 Kant also states that the practical rule, itself, determines the will *immediately*, i.e., unmediated by anything else such as feeling. Presumably Kant means that the practical rule determines the will in this way when a cognition of the universal law-giving form of a maxim determines the will, since determination of the will by universal law-giving form is required by the higher order practical rule, and thus falls under it in some sense. Finally, Kant claims that this requirement presents itself to us “a priori,” i.e., without any basis in experience of the world. Indeed, as Kant puts it, “pure reason [i.e., reason untainted by empirical conditions of experience], *practical of itself*, is here immediately lawgiving” (5:31). Thus, according to Kant, not only is it *possible* that my cognition of a maxim’s universal law-giving form determine my will, but reason *commands* that my will be determined *only* by maxims of such form. Kant acknowledges the peculiarity of this fact of reason, but nevertheless affirms it as true.

In the first part of chapter II of the CPR, Kant takes up what he calls, “the concept of an object of pure practical reason” (5:57). Up to this point, Kant’s emphasis has been on the requirement of pure practical reason that maxims of action have the *form* of universal law-giving, and that the determining ground of the will thereby be the moral law. However, as noted previously, a maxim has both a form and a *matter*, i.e., an object or end that the action aims to bring about. Thus, even granting Kant’s formal requirement on

maxims, one might fairly ask what the *object* of action will be in a maxim governed by pure practical reason. In the first part of chapter II of the CPR it is Kant's aim to answer this question. Kant begins his answer with the following claim:

The only objects of a practical reason are therefore those of the *good* and the *evil*. For by the first is understood a necessary object of the faculty of desire, by the second, of the faculty of aversion, both, however, in accordance with a principle of reason (5:58).

Here Kant's point is that practical reason directs us to go for objects that fall under the concept of "the good" and to avoid objects that fall under the concept of "the evil," assuming that such objects are within the realm of physical possibility for us.⁶ Thus, in a formal sense, the concepts of "the good" and "the evil" themselves are objects of our willing, either to bring about or to avoid. Kant also notes here that a "principle of reason" governs the notions of "the good" and "the evil," and thereby governs which specific objects fall under the two concepts. Kant elaborates on this point by claiming that the moral law is the basis of the concept of the good (5:63). On this view, then, "the good"—the morally necessary object of the will—amounts to action that satisfies the formal requirement of the moral law, i.e., that the maxim of action have the form of universal law-giving. As Kant puts it, "the action in conformity with it [i.e., the moral law] is in itself good..." (5:62).⁷ Kant is at pains to distinguish his view of the good—on which the moral law is the *basis* of the good—from an alternative view on which the good itself is the most foundational concept, and the moral law—i.e., the principle governing action—is based on the notion of the good. According to Kant, on this alternative view the determining ground

⁶ I will explain Kant's notion of a "faculty of desire," mentioned in the quotation, in due course.

⁷ At first—and in light of the relatively abstract discussion of "the good" at this point in the CPR—it might seem that Kant's notion of the concept of an object of pure practical reason is very thin and abstract. However, if coupled with the substantive obligatory ends Kant articulates in the MM (6:395-398) and gestures at in the GW (e.g., 4:423 and 4:430)—i.e., the ends of self-perfection and the happiness of others—Kant's notion of the good is in fact thicker than it first appears, even though it includes only ends "that it can be a universal law for everyone to have" (MM 6:395).

of the will would be not the moral law, but rather pleasure at purportedly good objects, in which case the principle of action could not be cognized as a practical law, and so would simply amount to yet another principle of self-love. Thus, if the moral law is to remain the determining ground of the will—as reason requires, according to Kant—then the concept of the good must derive from it, and not vice versa.

Having completed his discussion of “the good,” Kant moves on in the second part of chapter II to discuss *judgment* according to pure practical reason in a section called “Of the typic of pure practical judgment” (“the Typic” for short). The Typic is the section that directly precedes Kant’s discussion of moral feelings, and so provides the most immediate bridge to that discussion. In the Typic, Kant raises and solves a problem implied by his prior discussion of the concept of the good. Of course, the *concept* of the good, though it is the formal object of rational willing, is never the actual object of a subject’s principle of action, or maxim. Rather, the object that a rational subject wills is a *specific concrete action* that falls under the concept of the good—and thus under the principle that governs “the good”—and whether an action falls under it is a matter of practical judgment (5:67). Kant reminds us that the principle at the basis of “the good” is a principle of pure practical reason, having its source in the noumenal moral law, and determines the will independent of all empirical experience. However, a problem arises when we consider that all cases of concrete action that we might wish to judge “can be only empirical, that is, belong to experience and nature” (5:68). If concrete actions are specific events in nature, how could we possibly judge whether any such action falls under “the supersensible idea of the morally good”? In other words, it looks like there might be no point of contact between

the concept of the good, which owes nothing to empirical experience, and the concrete empirical cases of action that the concept is supposed to sort.

Kant's solution to this problem is to propose an analogy for, or *type* of,⁸ the moral law (which grounds "the good")—namely, natural law—as a heuristic for judging the maxims or principles of concrete actions. Kant's thought here seems to be that although we can know little of the noumenal moral law in itself, we at least know *that it is a law*, and thus that it has "the *form of lawfulness* in general..." (5:70, emphasis original). What Kant means by the "form of lawfulness" is (at least) that the principle having the form is universal, i.e., it applies to or governs everything within its domain (in the case of the moral law, rational beings, including humans), and its operation produces harmony of a certain sort, as suggested previously. Therefore, Kant's proposal is that we adopt the following approach to moral judgment of action: "ask yourself whether, if the action you propose were to take place by a law of the nature of which you were yourself a part, you could indeed regard it as possible through your will" (5:69). Put another way, we are to consider whether our maxim would produce a harmony of purposes if it were a law governing the activity of rational creatures—as the case of avoiding lying promises *did*, and as the case of avenging insults *did not*. Barbara Herman has helpfully characterized the relation between the moral law and its natural law type as similar to the relation between real physical terrain and a map of that terrain: the type of natural law helps us to navigate the moral space—i.e., to make correct moral judgments—just as a map helps us navigate physical terrain.⁹ Importantly, the type of natural law—as a type—does not allow

⁸ Hence the title of the section, i.e., the "Typic".

⁹ Barbara Herman, "Reasoning to Obligation," *Inquiry* 49, No. 1 (February 2006): 54.

us to grasp the moral law in all of its positive character; rather, it only allows us to rule out certain maxims as “morally impossible” (5:70).

Kant concludes the Typic with the claim that his solution to the problem he raised “guards against empiricism of practical reason, which places the practical concepts of good and evil merely in experiential consequences (so-called happiness)...” (5:70).¹⁰ The view Kant thinks he has fended off is that on which actions are judged good or evil according to the “happiness” they produce, and on which the will is determined according to principles of self-love (i.e., by pleasure or displeasure at objects of action). While Kant admits that the “endless useful consequences” of self-loving action, i.e., happiness, can serve as a “quite suitable type” (or indicator) of what is morally good—as long as the will also accidentally assumes universal law-giving form (as in my earlier case of the agent displeased by deceiving promises)—Kant denies that happiness is identical with the morally good, and thus sets his view apart from “empiricism of practical reason” (5:70). Further, Kant maintains that his use of natural law as a type of the moral law (which grounds the notion of the good) does nothing to compromise the strictly rationalist account of the good he gave previously, since in that use he only draws on the notion of the “form of lawfulness in general,” a notion that “pure reason can also think for itself” (5:71). Insofar as his account remains strictly rationalist, his account cannot be characterized as empiricist. Kant views it as very important that his account of moral judgment staves off empiricism since empiricism

destroys at its roots the morality of dispositions (in which, and not merely in actions, consists the high worth that humanity can and ought to procure for itself through morality), and substitutes for it something quite different, namely in place of duty an empirical interest, with which the inclinations generally are secretly leagued (5:71).

¹⁰ Kant also thinks his solution guards against a certain kind of theistic mysticism, though I will not explicate that nuance here since it is not the point Kant is most concerned to make.

Thus, Kant finishes the Typic with a comment on that which “the high worth” of humanity consists in when instantiated—namely, certain moral dispositions in the agent—and a worry (for now at bay) about the implications of empiricist moral theories for such dispositions, and thus for the moral worth of human beings. As I will suggest shortly, this stopping point in the Typic offers us a hint as to Kant’s aims in the section immediately following in chapter III, “On the incentives of pure practical reason”. Indeed, if the Typic is any indication, we might expect chapter III to take up the topic of moral dispositions, to continue the defense of Kant’s view against empiricism, and perhaps also to continue building bridges between the noumenal world of the moral law and the natural world in which humans act.

KANT’S EXPLICIT PURPOSES IN THE SECTION ON INCENTIVES

Kant opens the section on incentives with a paragraph focused on the moral worth of actions, a topic he alluded to (as noted) in the closing sentences of the Typic. His first aim is to distinguish between two kinds of actions, both of which conform (in their maxims) with the moral law: 1) those which fulfill the “spirit” of the moral law, are “morally good” in an unqualified sense, and thereby “contain” morality; and 2) those which fulfill merely the “letter” of the law, are morally good only in a qualified way, and thereby contain mere “legality” (5:71-72). (There is of course a third category of actions whose maxims do not conform to the law, but these are not in view in this first paragraph.)

To elucidate this distinction between “moral” and “legal” actions, Kant introduces the notion of an “incentive”, i.e., “the subjective determining ground of the will of a being whose reason does not by its nature necessarily conform with the objective [i.e., moral]

law” (5:72). By ‘subjective determining ground of the will’, Kant means the consideration that fixes the *particular* agent or subject on a *particular* intention to act. By adding the qualifier, “...of a being whose reason does not by its nature necessarily conform with the objective law”, Kant means to specify that he is talking about humans (whose practical cognition or willing may take forms that stray from the form of the law), and not God (whose practical reasoning or willing necessarily conforms to the law). For humans, Kant says, their incentive is always, and “can never be anything other than the moral law” (5:72). Kant’s point here is that the moral law—i.e., the “objective determining ground of the will”—is the true or *proper* determinant of the will, i.e., it is that which *ought* to govern the activity of the will, and so it is proper to it. The moral law ought to govern the activity of the will in this way since it imposes a requirement of reason, and the requirements of reason (e.g., the law of modus ponens) are incumbent upon every rational being. Put another way, Kant thinks the fundamental law of practical reason, i.e., the categorical imperative (a representation of the moral law), is the *constitutive* principle or law of the will (GW 4:446-447), and thus that people *always* act according to a representation of the moral law, i.e., the categorical imperative. Now, people do not always end up willing in accord with the categorical imperative because their representations of the moral law and maxims get distorted for various reasons—e.g., bad reasoning, interference from pleasures or displeasures, etc.; after all Kant is talking here about beings “whose reason does not by its nature necessarily conform with the objective law.” Nevertheless, Kant still maintains that the subjective determining ground of the human will—i.e., its incentive—can “never be anything other than the moral law.” As the constitutive principle of the human will, the moral law is its *necessary* subjective determining ground.

With this concept of an incentive in place, Kant returns to the central distinction he is trying to make in the first paragraph between actions that have moral worth, and those that do not. He claims that if an action is to have moral worth, “the objective determining ground must always and quite alone be also the subjectively sufficient determining ground of action” (5:72). In other words, the objective determining ground of the will—i.e., the moral law—must be the *sole* incentive if an action is to be morally worthy. He also states that this objective ground must determine the will *immediately*, i.e., without the help of any mediating feeling (5:71). With these claims, Kant envisions the possibility that in some cases the will may have more than one incentive. As noted above, the moral law is the *necessary* incentive of the human will (as its constitutive principle), and so is present in all cases of willing. However, in certain cases there may be a further incentive, i.e., a feeling of pleasure or displeasure,¹¹ which may “cooperate *alongside* the moral law” (5:72), thereby becoming an additional “means” of determining the will. In such cases, the moral law would not be the “subjectively sufficient determining ground of action,” since the assistance of feeling would be required, and so the action would not be morally worthy. Only cases of action in which the moral law *alone* is the sufficient incentive are morally worthy.

Still in the first paragraph, Kant suggests that the discussion of incentives to follow may be understood as a discussion of *dispositions*, a topic with which he was concerned at

¹¹ In MM Kant also characterizes feeling as “the *capacity* for having pleasure or displeasure in a representation” (MM 6:211, emphasis added). However, since his usage of ‘feeling’ in the CPR seems to pick out pleasures and displeasures themselves (e.g., 5:73) I will generally adopt that meaning here. Kant thinks pleasure and displeasure can be explained only as basic relations that a subject bears to representations of objects (MM 6:212), i.e., perhaps as basic attractions and aversions. It is also crucial to note that the notions of “pleasure” and “displeasure” are primarily functional terms that range more widely than our ordinary (Humean) sense of the terms. Kant’s discussion at MM 6:212-213 suggests his frustration at the limitations of the ordinary concepts of “pleasure” and “displeasure”, and illustrates his attempt to broaden the notions.

the conclusion of the Typic. Kant contrasts the case of an action that conforms outwardly with the moral law—i.e., that has universal law-giving form—but whose incentive is related to feeling (e.g., my prior example of the agent displeased with lying promises), with the case of an action done “*for the sake of the law*” alone, i.e., an action whose sole incentive is the moral law (5:71, emphasis original). As noted previously, Kant says the first case fulfills the “letter” of the law and contains “legality” while the second case also fulfills the “spirit” of the law, and contains “morality”, i.e., it is morally worthy (5:72). In a footnote Kant suggests that by the locution of “spirit” he means to refer to the *disposition* with which an action is done: an action that fulfills the spirit of the law is done for the sake of the law, and thereby exhibits a morally worthy disposition. However, given that Kant’s distinction between “letter” and “spirit” of the law also simply picks out the differing incentives involved in the two cases of action—i.e., pleasure at an object in the first case, and the moral law alone in the second case—it is clear that when Kant talks about incentives he is talking about dispositions. This fact connects the entire discussion of incentives in chapter III with Kant’s concluding remarks in the Typic about empiricism’s destructive effect on the moral character of dispositions. Thus, from the opening paragraph it seems that Kant’s purposes in the section on incentives will include further explanation of the moral dispositions he pointed to at the conclusion of the Typic, and the distinguishing of them from the morally destructive dispositions of empiricism, the view he repelled in the Typic.

Kant explicitly confirms the first of these purposes in the second paragraph of chapter III. He summarizes his aims for the section on incentives as follows:

So nothing further remains than [A] to determine carefully in what way the moral law becomes the incentive and, [B] inasmuch as it is, what happens to the human faculty of desire as an effect of that determining ground upon it. [C] For, how a law can be of itself

and immediately a determining ground of the will (though this is what is essential in all morality) is for human reason an insoluble problem and identical with that of how a free will is possible. [D] What we shall have to show a priori is, therefore, not the ground from which the moral law in itself supplies an incentive but rather what it effects (or, to put it better, must effect) in the mind insofar as it is an incentive (5:72, enumerative letters added).

The aim stated in [A], “to determine carefully in what way the moral law becomes the incentive,” might seem problematic on first reading, since, in the very next sentence, [C], it seems that Kant has called [A]—i.e., the task of determining how a law (the moral law) can be the incentive, or the (subjective) determining ground of the will—an insoluble problem identical to the problem of free will. However, a more careful reading suggests that Kant is actually *distinguishing* the aim in [A] from the “insoluble problem”. The final sentence of the paragraph, [D], helps to see this point. There Kant clearly distinguishes what he will *not* do—which, presumably, is to solve the insoluble problem just noted—from what he *will* do—which, presumably, picks out the tasks he outlines in [A] and [B]. If this reading is correct, then the insoluble problem Kant will *not* pursue is “to show a priori...the ground from which the moral law in itself supplies an incentive...” Such a task would indeed be impossible to complete—and so would constitute an insoluble problem—since to give an explanation of “the ground from which the moral law *in itself* supplies an incentive” (emphasis added) would be (in part) to give a complete account of the moral law *in itself*, which is impossible since it lies on the noumenal side of the metaphysical divide between noumena (things in themselves) and phenomena (the effects of noumena to which humans have cognitive access). Moreover, the impossibility of this task seems identical to the impossibility of solving the problem of free will, insofar as Kant thinks “a free will and a will under moral laws are one and the same” (GW 4:447). In other words, to understand “the ground from which the moral law in itself supplies an incentive,” just is

to understand “a will under [or operating according to] moral laws,” which just is to understand “a free will.” No matter which way one puts the task of inquiry here, the way is blocked, according to Kant, by the same metaphysical divide that makes us unable to explain the moral law in itself.

What then *is* Kant’s aim of inquiry, i.e., what exactly does he mean by [A], “to determine carefully the way the moral law becomes the incentive...”? The second part of [D] tells us: “What we shall have to show a priori is...what it [i.e., the moral law] effects (or, to put it better, must effect) in the mind insofar as it is an incentive.” Given that the first part of [D] seems to be an explanation of the insoluble task Kant lays out in [C], it is natural to read the second part of [D] as an explanation of the task he sets in [A], and perhaps also in [B]. Thus, Kant’s aim seems to be to inquire, in an a priori way, into the phenomenal effects in the human mind caused by the moral law as ground of the will. Although the cause or source of these effects—the moral law—remains mysteriously shrouded as noumenon, its effects in the mind of the subject are part of the phenomenal world that we do have cognitive access to, and so they are legitimate targets of inquiry. This reading of Kant’s aim fits nicely with the thought, from paragraph 1, that Kant’s aim would be to further explain the moral dispositions, i.e., the subject’s mental activity that constitutes the moral law’s being the subjective determining ground of the will, or incentive. This reading of Kant’s explicit aim for the section on incentives also fits nicely with [B] insofar as an account of “what happens to the human faculty of desire as an effect of that determining ground [i.e., the moral law] upon it,” just is an account of the effect of the moral law as determining ground on the mind, i.e., on a mental faculty.

But, what exactly is the faculty of desire, according to Kant? He describes it as “the faculty to be, by means of one’s representations, the cause of the objects of these representations” (MM 6:211).¹² Here Kant makes use of the fact that we are creatures that generate, in our minds, representations of objects in the world. He also notices that humans are capable of causing or bringing about the objects of which they generate mental representations. He then claims that the faculty of desire is the faculty by which humans cause or bring about the objects that they represent mentally to themselves, and that this faculty brings about such objects by means of the mental representations themselves. It is this faculty, then, that Kant thinks is affected in some way when the moral law functions as an incentive. If so, there must be a connection between the faculty of desire and the will.

But what is that connection? Kant explains it thus:

The faculty of desire whose inner determining ground...lies within the subject’s reason is called the *will*. The will is therefore the faculty of desire considered not so much in relation to action (as choice is) but rather in relation to the ground determining choice to action. (MM 6:213).

Kant’s first point here seems to be that the will just is the faculty of desire operating in a particular mode. Specifically, when the “inner determining ground” of the faculty of desire is reasoning—i.e., when that which determines the faculty is reasoning *within* the subject’s mind, and is not some external object at which the subject takes pleasure—then the operation of the faculty of desire *just is* an operation of the sub-faculty of the will.

Kant’s second point is that the operation of the will does not issue in action—as the faculty of desire does when considered in a broader mode of operation Kant calls “choice”—but

¹² It is important to note that Kant’s use of “faculty” language does not imply that he thinks faculties are actual mental entities; rather, he views faculties as purely functional, i.e., as things having inputs and outputs. Talking about faculties is just a way for Kant to talk about whatever it is that performs the relevant function.

rather issues in “the ground determining choice to action,” which I take to mean something like an intention, i.e., the input that sets the faculty of desire as choice in motion.

Thus, based on the first two paragraphs, Kant’s stated aim in the section on incentives seems to be to investigate the effects caused in the human mind by the moral law in its role as subjective determining ground of the will. Put another way, Kant aims to explain the moral disposition. Given this explicit aim of inquiry, I will now try to explain the account Kant gives of the moral feelings as the result of his inquiry.

KANT ON MORAL FEELINGS

Kant begins his account of the moral law’s effect on the mind in the third paragraph of chapter III. He starts by emphasizing that if the moral law is to be the incentive, then it must be the *sole* determinant of the will. He explains that insofar as the law is the sole determinant of the will, the will is free, and thus is determined “not only without the cooperation of sensible impulses but even with the rejection of all of them and with infringement upon all inclinations insofar as they could be opposed to the law.” Here Kant makes three claims about the will’s subjective determination by the moral law: 1) it is determined completely without cooperation of any *sensible impulses*; 2) its determination involves the *rejection* of all such impulses; and 3) its determination involves infringement upon any *inclinations* that oppose the law. But, what does Kant mean by “sensible impulses” and “inclinations”? The notion of a sensible impulse seems to pick out pleasure or displeasure at an object of the senses. An inclination, on the other hand, is a habitual desire of a particular kind (MM 6:212). According to Kant, there are two kinds of

pleasure¹³: one kind that is necessarily connected with desire for an object—“practical pleasure”—and one kind that is not necessarily connected with desire for an object—“inactive delight” (MM 6:212, 211). Practical pleasures may be distinguished further into two kinds: one kind that precedes and causes the determination of the faculty of desire—which determination, in this case, Kant refers to as “*desire* in the narrow sense” (MM 6:212, emphasis original)—and one kind that follows, and is an *effect* of, the determination of the faculty of desire by pure reason (i.e., by the moral law). An inclination, then, is a habitual desire “in the narrow sense.” In other words, an inclination is the habitual disposition of the faculty of desire to be determined by a preceding pleasure taken in a particular object. Thus, for Kant, “all inclination and every sensible impulse is based on feeling,” since, as noted previously, feeling is pleasure or displeasure (or the capacity for them) (CPR 5:72). So, when the moral law is the incentive Kant claims that the determination of the will occurs without the cooperation of, and with the rejection of, sensible impulses. In other words, the pleasures or displeasures people take in objects are rejected as having any role in determining the will in such cases. Furthermore, any habitual dispositions of the faculty of desire to be determined by such pleasures or displeasures are frustrated, which I take to mean that they are not allowed to take what would be their course of determining the faculty of desire; rather, the faculty of desire is determined in some other way.

Thus far in the story Kant characterizes the effect of the moral law in its role as incentive as merely negative, and he claims that in this negative role the law as incentive may be cognized a priori (5:72). In characterizing the role of the law as incentive as

¹³ Displeasure is also in view. However, I will just give the story about pleasure for simplicity.

negative, Kant seems to mean that he has only told us how the moral law as incentive blocks or frustrates certain deliverances of feeling—i.e., sensible impulses and inclinations—and not what it produces in any positive sense. But how can the character of the law as incentive be cognized a priori? Kant explains in subsequent sentences:

For, all inclination and every sensible impulse is based on feeling, and the negative effect on feeling (by the infringement upon the inclinations that takes place) is itself feeling. Hence we can see a priori that the moral law, as the determining ground of the will, must by thwarting all our inclinations produce a feeling that can be called pain; and here we have the first and perhaps the only case in which we can determine a priori from concepts the relation of a cognition (here the cognition of a pure practical reason) to the feeling of pleasure or displeasure (5:72-73).

Kant's thought here seems to be that the law's effect of thwarting the deliverances of feeling—whether sensory impulses or inclinations—produces (or is itself) a further feeling, namely pain or displeasure, and that this production of feeling is a special case in which we can understand, a priori, the relation between a cognition (i.e., of the moral law) and a feeling (i.e., pain).

Given Kant's account, one might worry about his claim that our understanding of the painful effect of the law may be gained *a priori*. According to Kant, when the moral law is the incentive any sensible impulses and inclinations in play are not satisfied. In other words, such deliverances of feeling do not result in an intention to secure the object in which the agent took pleasure. On my reading, that is what Kant means when he claims that the moral law rejects and infringes upon such impulses and inclinations: they are not allowed to determine the will. But, one might worry that nothing in that story *necessarily entails* that an ordinary negative feeling—pain—is produced. While it seems plausible enough that we would feel pain at the thwarting of our impulses or inclinations, the plausibility of this account seems to depend on my *experience* of having frustrated desires or feelings, and not merely on the concepts in play, and so it seems hard to understand why

Kant thinks our understanding of the pain is a priori. The answer to this puzzle may be that by calling our understanding of the law's painful effect "*a priori*," Kant does *not* mean to say that our understanding of it relies on no experiential knowledge *whatsoever*. Indeed, Kant would almost certainly grant that our knowledge of the law's painful effect will require us to have some experience of what it feels like to have our desires thwarted or frustrated. However, he might still claim that we need no experience of desires thwarted *by moral requirements* in order to posit the special pain produced when the moral law rejects and infringes upon our impulses and inclinations. Rather, our background experience of thwarted desires in other settings is enough for us to posit *a priori* that the moral law produces pain in moral cases.

Kant elaborates on the nature of the inclinations struck down by the moral law as incentive. According to Kant, a person's total collection of inclinations considered together is "self-regard," i.e., a bundle of habitual desires grounded in pleasure or displeasure at various objects. Kant then claims that this collection of inclinations may "be brought into a tolerable system"—i.e., they may be systematized such that most of them are satisfiable. The satisfaction of this collection of inclinations Kant refers to as "happiness." Kant claims that self-regard admits of two kinds, "self-love" and "self-conceit." Self-love is instantiated when the collection of one's inclinations amounts to a prevailing benevolence toward oneself. Kant thinks that the moral law "merely *infringes upon*" self-love when it functions as the incentive. In the form constrained by the moral law self-love may be referred to as "rational self-love." Self-conceit is instantiated when one explicitly makes self-love one's first practical principle, i.e., the principle that governs all of one's willing. As Kant puts it, "if self-love makes itself lawgiving and the

unconditional practical principle, it can be called self-conceit” (5:74). (Think here of Meryl Streep’s character in *The Devil Wears Prada*.) Kant claims that self-conceit is “weakened,” “struck down,” and “humiliated” by the moral law as incentive.

In addition to the pain or displeasure effected by the moral law as incentive, Kant explains that it produces a feeling of *respect*. According to Kant, the moral law does not merely have negative effects—i.e., rejecting and infringing upon sensible impulses and inclinations; rather, it has a positive effect too, insofar as it is something positive in itself, namely “the form of an intellectual causality, that is, of freedom.” But, what does Kant mean here? On Kant’s account, the will is an intellectual causality. But, the will is also, according to Kant, practical reasoning, i.e., reasoning about what to do. If the moral law is functioning as incentive—i.e., as the subjective determining ground of the will—then the moral law gives the relevant form or shape to this reasoning. In other words, the moral law is ultimately responsible for the universal law-giving form of the maxim that the person wills, and so the law may be said to be the form of the intellectual causality called the will. Therefore, the moral law is something positive (albeit highly abstract), i.e., the form of reasoning, when it functions as incentive. Kant thinks the fact that the moral law is something positive in itself makes it an object of respect when it weakens or strikes down self-regard, thereby making it the ground of a positive feeling—i.e., respect—that does not result from a sensible source, and that may be cognized a priori. Speaking as he did of the pain brought about by the moral law as incentive, Kant claims that respect is the only feeling “that we can cognize completely a priori and the necessity of which we can have insight into” (5:73). Here, as in the case of pain, in claiming that our understanding of respect is *a priori*, I take Kant to be drawing on our general experience of cases outside the

moral domain in which we our desires are chastened or corrected by someone we acknowledge as an authority (e.g., a policeman, or a parent), in which we feel a sense of respect for that authoritative figure. Given such cases, we can infer *a priori* that the moral law, in striking down our self-regard, produces a positive feeling of respect.

But how are the feelings of pain/humiliation and respect related? According to Kant they are, in fact, one feeling considered from two different perspectives (5:75). The negative effect of the law on feeling may be viewed as the effect of “consciousness of the moral law”, and thus in relation to “the subject of pure practical reason as the supreme lawgiver...” Here the effect of the law is considered from the perspective of the subject; the subject affected by inclinations is conscious of the law, and this consciousness of the law brings about a restriction on the inclinations. Considered from this perspective, and in this relation to the subject (the owner of the inclinations), the effect is humiliation.

However, Kant claims that the effect of the law can be considered from another vantage point: “in relation to its positive ground, the law, it is at the same time called respect for the law.” Thus, if the effect of the law is considered not in its relation to the subject, but rather in the relation to its ground—the law, or pure practical reason—it is called respect. From the preceding quotation it is clear that the very same effect of the law may be called humiliation or respect, depending on which relation is considered. Kant adds that insofar as the effect of the law is to remove hindrances to the determination of the will by pure reason, reason views the effect of the law as “a positive furthering of its [i.e., reason’s] causality,” and so as “a feeling of respect for the moral law.”

We might clarify Kant’s ideas here by radically personifying the activity of reason and the activity of inclinations in a case in which there is conflict between them. Suppose,

in such a case, the inclinations drive to determine the will in a certain contra-moral direction (e.g., an inclination toward avenging insults). From their perspective, the moral law is a killjoy: it frustrates their purposes, and so the effect of the law is viewed by them as negative, i.e., as pain or humiliation. However, in such a case reason is driving to determine the will in a moral direction. From the perspective of reason, the affective effect of the moral law is to remove obstacles to willing in accord with it. Thus, the effect of the law is viewed positively by reason, since it is something that furthers reason's purposes. Thus, Kant calls the effect respect. Ultimately, 'pain' and 'respect' are just different names for the single affective effect of the law that Kant calls "moral feeling".

Importantly, Kant emphasizes that respect for the law—i.e., the moral feeling—is not the incentive, or subjective determining ground, of the will in the case of moral willing (5:76); rather, the law itself is. He says that the representation of the law constrains the influence of self-love and self-conceit, and thereby removes the hindrance to the law's effectively determining the will. This removal amounts to representing the law as superior to the "impulses of sensibility". Thus, it is the moral law itself that is the subjective ground of the will, not respect/humiliation. Respect/humiliation is the affective *effect* of the influence of the law, and so it is the law that is the ground of the determination of the will. Put another way, the causal chain by which the will is determined begins with the law, a deliverance of pure practical reason, and so the law alone is the determining ground of the will. Kant emphasizes this point about the place of the moral law in the causal chain leading to determination of the will when he states that there is "no *antecedent* feeling in the subject that would be attuned to morality" (5:75; cf. 5:80). He wants to be clear that

moral feeling does not precede, but rather follows (or *is*), the influence of the moral law, as an effect.

However, the following quotation makes Kant's picture of the moral incentive less clear: "Respect for the moral law is therefore the sole and also the undoubted moral incentive" (5:78). Here Kant seems to claim that *respect* for the moral law is the moral incentive—i.e., the subjective determining ground of the will. How does this claim fit together with the claim just noted at 5:76 that "respect for the law is *not* the incentive to morality" (emphasis added)? Indeed, from the beginning of chapter III it has seemed that Kant's central point was that the moral incentive was the *moral law itself*, not moral feeling. Thus, the quotation at 5:78 seems puzzling.

Although Kant could be clearer in this regard, it seems that his meaning in 5:78 is that respect for the moral law is the moral incentive—i.e., the subjective determining ground of moral willing—in only a *qualified* sense. What seems to be a concluding topic sentence that parallels (and therefore explains) the puzzling quotation from 5:78 suggests this point. Kant writes,

Therefore respect for the moral law must be regarded as also a positive though indirect effect of the moral law on feeling insofar as the law weakens the hindering influence of the inclinations by humiliating self-conceit, and must therefore be regarded as a subjective ground of activity—that is, as the incentive to compliance with the law—and as the ground for maxims of a course of life in conformity with it (5:79).

Here Kant's focus is the moral law's effect of removing hindrances—i.e., inclinations—to its activity of determining the will of a particular person. The enabling effect, as I have noted previously, just is the moral feeling, i.e., humiliation/respect. Kant says that *as such an effect* respect for the moral law must be "regarded as a subjective ground of activity—that is, as the incentive to compliance with the law." Kant's point seems to be that insofar as respect is the removal of obstacles to the law's will-determining work, it makes that

work possible, and so, in this narrow sense of enabling the law's work, the feeling of respect must be understood as a ground, or causal origin, of the determination of the will in accordance with the moral law. Put more crudely, we might think of the obstacle-removing role of respect as a condition of the law's will-determining work—and so in this sense a subjective determining ground of the will, i.e., an incentive—but not as a sufficient condition for that work, since the other activity of the moral law (e.g., binding our cognition according to the fact of reason, shaping the form of our maxim, etc.) is still required. Indeed, we might still call the moral law itself “the subjectively sufficient determining ground of action” (5:72) insofar as moral feeling is the subjective mental effect of the moral law, and so the moral law is responsible for it also. In other words, if the moral law is at work in the practical cognition of an agent—as it is for all people on Kant's view—then the enabling effect of the law on the agent's sensibility must, necessarily, be produced, and so the activity of the moral law itself is sufficient for the determination of the will of a particular subject. Thus, when Kant calls respect “the sole and also the undoubted moral incentive” in 5:78, he seems to use ‘incentive’ in a limited, qualified sense to pick out the narrow but necessary role played by respect in removing obstacles to the law's will-determining work. However, pointing to this role is still consistent with Kant's more comprehensive claim that the moral law itself is the moral incentive, and thus that “respect for the law is not the incentive to morality” (5:76) in this more all-encompassing sense.

KANT'S MOTIVATIONS IN THE INCENTIVES SECTION

In this final section of the paper I will speculate briefly on Kant's motivations for writing the section on incentives. First, Kant seems to have been motivated to explain how his rationalist theory fits with what he takes to be a basic datum of human nature, namely that the determination of the will of a particular subject involves feeling in some way. There are many points at which Kant shows his awareness of this basic datum. For example, at CPR 5:75 Kant states that the moral law is the incentive of the will "inasmuch as it has influence on the sensibility of the subject and effects a feeling conducive to the influence of the law upon the will." Kant's first thought here seems to be that feeling must be affected in some way by whatever is the subjective determining ground of the will. In other words, the law cannot be the subjective determining ground of the will (i.e., the incentive) without some effect on feeling or sensibility. Moreover, when he says that for the law to be an incentive, it must bring about a feeling "conducive to the influence of the law upon the will," his point seems to be that the will of a particular subject will not be determined without some influence on feeling. So, the law must have an effect on feeling if it is to amount to the subjective determining ground of the will, and Kant's section on incentives seems responsive to this fact. Similarly, in the *Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant states that "pleasure or displeasure...is always connected with desire or aversion" (MM 6:211). In other words, Kant thinks that whenever the faculty of desire is determined—i.e., whenever a desire or aversion is formed—a feeling of pleasure or displeasure is connected in some way. But, insofar as the determination of the will just is the determination of the faculty of desire in a certain mode—i.e., by reasoning—the implication is that the determination of the will always involves feeling in some way. Of course, the reason Kant

might feel a need to explain how this datum about feeling fits with his moral theory is that he so strongly emphasizes that the moral law, or pure practical reason, alone is the determining ground of the will—i.e., the motive (cf. CPR 5:86)—in the case of moral willing. Indeed, he is often at pains to exclude feeling from his story of moral motivation, and so if it is a datum of human nature that feeling is always connected with the determination of the will, his rationalist theory raises the question of where feeling fits. Thus, one of Kant's motivations for writing the section on incentives might be understood as saving the affective phenomena that are natural to human willing from the seeming threat of his strongly rationalist moral theory.

A second related motivation Kant seems to have had in writing the section on incentives is to connect the noumenal with the phenomenal, or at least to show how such a connection is possible. Since Kant puts the moral law in the noumenal realm of things as they are in themselves—i.e., outside the phenomenal realm that humans have ordinary cognition of—it seems hard, at first, to understand how the moral law might get any purchase on the will of a particular human being. Thus, Kant seems to feel compelled to tell us at what point the noumenal moral law makes contact with us, and particularly with our sensibilities, which, as noted, Kant views as inextricably involved in the determination of our wills. There are several points of evidence for this motivation in the section on incentives. First, as noted in the discussion of Kant's explicit purposes in the section, Kant mentions the “insoluble problem” of explaining “how a law can be of itself and immediately a determining ground of the will,” and calls it identical to the problem of free will (5:72). While Kant says he cannot solve this problem, what he does is to show the effect that the moral law must have if we assume it is the determining ground of the will.

In other words, he shows how the subjective effect on sensibility is possible (indeed, necessary) if the law is taken to be the determining ground of the will. Put another way, we might understand Kant's project here as articulating a kind of compatibilism, i.e., showing that an effect on human sensibility is compatible with the noumenal moral law as subjective determining ground of the will.

The concluding paragraph of the section on incentives also supports the thought that Kant is motivated to show how the determination of our will by the noumenal law is compatible with an effect on our sensibility. There he writes,

This is how the genuine moral incentive of pure practical reason is constituted; it is nothing other than the pure moral law itself insofar as it lets us discover the sublimity of our own supersensible existence and subjectively effects respect for their higher vocation in human beings, who are at the same time conscious of their sensible existence and of the dependence, connected with it, on their pathologically affected nature (5:88).

Kant's thought here is that the moral law, i.e., the "genuine moral incentive", points us to our nature as creatures that straddle the noumenal and phenomenal realms. It points us toward our nature as creatures that are capable of willing free of the mechanistic necessity of natural law, and at the same time toward our nature as "pathologically affected," i.e., as inhabiting the natural, empirical realm. Thus, Kant's story about incentives is yet another of his bridging stories, designed to show the compatibility of the noumenal and phenomenal realms.¹⁴

Indeed, this compatibilist motivation seems even clearer if we consider the compatibilist motivations Kant exhibits in the sections immediately preceding and following the section on incentives. As I noted, in the *Typic* Kant's aim is to show how

¹⁴ The following quotation also suggests that the noumenal-phenomenal divide is on Kant's mind in the incentives section: "There is something so singular in the boundless esteem for the pure moral law stripped of all advantage...that one cannot wonder at finding this influence of a mere intellectual idea on feeling quite impenetrable for speculative reason and at having to be satisfied that one can yet see a priori this much: that such a feeling is inseparably connected with the representation of the moral law in every finite rational being" (5:79-80).

human judgment in the empirical realm is compatible with a concept of the good that owes nothing to the empirical realm, but that has its basis in the noumenal moral law. Similarly, the section that follows that on incentives—namely, the “Critical Elucidation of the Analytic of Pure Practical Reason”—is focused on a compatibilist solution to the problem of free will. Thus, given that the section on incentives is sandwiched between sections with clear compatibilist motivations, it is unsurprising that it suggests similar motivations.

Finally, Kant also seems motivated, in the section on incentives, to push back the threat of moral empiricism. This motivation is particularly evident in his attack on moral enthusiasm. The view he attacks is one on which the outward actions of the agent conform with the moral law, but on which such actions are not done for the sake of the moral law, but rather are done out of a certain delight or enthusiasm for moral actions themselves (5:84). Kant has several criticisms of the view, but perhaps most central is his charge that holders of it “locate the incentive pathologically (in sympathy or self-love)...” In other words, Kant thinks the subjective determining ground of the will for moral enthusiasts is pleasure at an object. Thus, the position is essentially empirical; the determining ground of the will is a sensible impulse or inclination, and is not the moral law alone. Thus, particularly later in the section on incentives, Kant’s story seems intended to counter a certain brand of empiricism, namely moral enthusiasm. Read this way, his story about incentives may be understood as an effort to distinguish the right kind of moral feeling—namely, a priori humiliation and respect—from the wrong kind—a posteriori sensible impulses and inclinations. That Kant is motivated to counter empiricism is further supported by the parallel with the concluding sentences of the *Typic*, where, as I noted, Kant was interested to guard against empiricist views of practical judgment. Thus, a third

motivation Kant seems to have in the section on incentives is to continue his campaign against empiricism about morality.

CONCLUSION

I have had several aims in this paper. First, I purposed to set Kant's section on incentives in the context of the larger flow of argument in the CPR. In particular, I briefly sketched the aspects of Kant's work in chapters I and II that bear most directly on the section on incentives, with a specific focus on the Typic which immediately precedes the section on incentives. I suggested that several themes evident in the Typic—namely, connecting the noumenal notion of the good with the sensible world of human experience, guarding against empiricism, and understanding the moral disposition—are signals of what lies ahead in the section on incentives.

Second, I aimed to elucidate Kant's explicit purposes in the section on incentives, and to state briefly the account of the moral feelings he gives as the result of his inquiry. From the first two paragraphs of chapter III I concluded that Kant's explicit purpose in the section on incentives is to show the moral law's necessary effect on the human sensibility if it is to be the subjective determining ground of the will. I also suggested that Kant views this same aim as an attempt to explicate the nature of the moral disposition, upon which the worth of action and humanity itself turns. Next I tried to fill out the account of the moral feelings that Kant gives in pursuit of this aim. Specifically, I explained Kant's view that the moral law strikes down all potentially motivating pleasures—i.e., prevents them from determining the will of the subject—thereby producing a sensible effect Kant variously refers to as humiliation, respect for the moral law, and the moral feeling. According to

Kant, this striking down of sensible impulses and inclinations removes the obstacles to moral willing, thereby enabling the moral law to become the subjective determining ground of the will, or the incentive, i.e., that which determines the will of a particular person to a course of action.

Third, and finally, I speculated that Kant had at least three motivations in writing his section on the incentives. First, Kant seemed motivated to explain how his rationalist account of the determination of the will fits with the seeming datum of human nature that determination of the will always involves feeling in some way. Second, I suggested that Kant was motivated to show how the noumenal moral law could have purchase on the sensible world that human beings are part of. Viewed this way, Kant was motivated to bridge the noumenal and phenomenal worlds, just as he aimed to do in the *Typic* and the “Critical Elucidation,” which immediately precede and follow the section on incentives, respectively. Third, I suggested that Kant’s attack on moral enthusiasm near the end of the section on incentives is evidence of his motive to resist empiricism about morality, a motive that connects the section with the *Typic* before it.