The necessity of respect in Kant's moral theory: *the role and ramifications of 'Achtung'*

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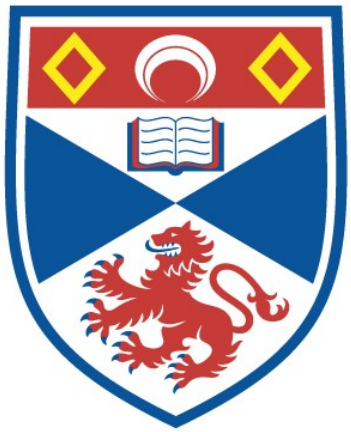

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"My Dear Dora,—In correcting the proofs of "Through the Looking-Glass" (which is to have "An Easter Greeting" inserted at the end), I am reminded that in that letter (I enclose a copy), I had tried to express my thoughts on the very subject we talked about last night—the relation of *laughter* to religious thought. One of the hardest things in the world is to convey a meaning accurately from one mind to another, but the *sort* of meaning I want to convey to other minds is that while the laughter of *joy* is in full harmony with our deeper life, the laughter of amusement should be kept apart from it. The danger is too great of thus learning to look at solemn things in a spirit of *mockery*, and to seek in them opportunities for exercising *wit*. That is the spirit which has spoiled, for me, the beauty of some of the Bible. Surely there is a deep meaning in our prayer, "Give us an heart to love and *dread* Thee." We do not mean *terror*: but a dread that will harmonise with love; "respect" we should call it as towards a human being, "reverence" as towards God and all religious things.

Yours affectionately,

C.L. Dodgson"[1]

[1] Extract from "The Life and Letters of Lewis Carroll (Rev. C.L. Dodgson)", by Stuart Dodgson Collingwood (Cambridge University Press, 2011)

ABSTRACT

Within Kant's moral theory, this at least is clear: without a capacity for a unique type of feeling - respect for the law (*Achtung fürs Gesetz)* - finite and imperfectly rational beings (such as human beings) would find themselves amoral: that is, they would be unable to commit morally valuable actions, and would be significantly restricted in their appreciation of what is morally valuable. For Kant, therefore, respect is *essential* to the very possibility of a morality accessible to and practicable for human beings. In the light of this necessity, I undertake a focused and detailed study of the various conceptions of respect which Kant depicts – namely, respect for law, respect for persons, the moral endowment of respect, and duties of respect. I argue that, for Kant, respect always has a moral ground and that, contrary to what is usually supposed, there is a reading of his philosophy under which his manifold concepts of *Achtung* can be reconciled. I aim to present a coherent picture of the nature, function, and ramifications of Kant's respect in his conception of morality.

SYNOPSIS

Chapter I: The Necessity of Respect to the Possibility of Human Morality

"Duty is the necessity of an action from respect (reverence) for law." *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals (4:400)*

Prior to writing the *Groundwork*, Kant seems to employ the notion of respect merely to denote the observation of norms and regulations. In *Groundwork I*, he infuses this concept of respect with a special motivational attitude; to explain what it means to act for the sake of the law, he introduces the motive of acting 'out of respect for law'. I examine the treatment that Kant gives to his new concept of respect in its role as an indispensable element in the freedom of a rational being to act morally. I highlight its significance as necessary to the concept of duty, and I try to pin down how it is that any instance of our achievement of moral goodness is dependent on this feeling. I also consider Kant's implication that it is through respect alone that our judgements as to what is good or bad can be fully morally sensitive.

Chapter II: The Mechanism of the Moral Incentive

"Respect (reverence) for the moral law is… the sole and also the undoubted moral incentive." *Critique of Practical Reason (5:78)*

The relationship between respect and the law stands in need of clarification, as Kant holds that the law is always prior to respect, and must be the sole and immediate determining ground of the will in any morally valuable action. I make a detailed analysis of how Kant envisages respect to operate as the moral incentive, as described in Chapter III of the *Analytic* of the *Critique of Practical Reason*: I demonstrate that respect is an *effect* of the recognition of moral law on the will which renders our reason fully practical, that is, not only able to legislate the moral law but able to obey it too.

Chapter III: Kant's Notion of Respect for Persons

"Respect is always directed to persons, never to things." *Critique of Practical Reason (5:76)*

In this chapter, I turn to exploring the relationship between respect for the law, and respect for persons. I have described respect for the law as that which motivates the morally valuable action; on the surface of things, respect for a person seems to express a moral kind of appreciation for his or her action, and ultimately for his or her character. I investigate whether there are two different kinds of respect at work here, or whether it is the same feeling (Kant uses the word *Achtung* in both cases).

I turn to an examination of the notion of self-respect, in the hope of establishing its relationship to respect for law: I then compare my findings with Kant's concept of respect for others. I assess the metaphysical priority that Kant envisages between the dignity (or incomparable worth) of a person, and respect for that person, as both concepts are inextricably connected to the potential activity of that person's will to choose a morally valuable action.

Chapter IV: The Moral Predispositions

"There are certain moral endowments such that anyone lacking them could have no duty to acquire them. – They are *moral feeling*, *conscience*, *love* of one's neighbour, and *respect* for oneself (self-esteem)." (*Metaphysics of Morals* 6:399)

The prevailing force of my thesis is to demonstrate that, on Kant's view, imperfectly rational agents can *only* be sensitive to the necessitation of the moral law's command through a capacity for the moral feeling of respect. In this chapter, I question the judiciousness of dismissing what are named as the latter two moral endowments - love of one's neighbour and respect for oneself - as actually duties that have been misplaced in Kant's notes. I argue that there is room for a view that, in order to apply the moral law's command to ourselves and others, we imperfectly rational agents must be in prior possession of the capacity to value others of our kind, and to esteem ourselves as

valuable. I evaluate how such self-esteem relates to respect for law, in preparation for my analysis in the following chapter of the duties that derive from such esteem.

Chapter V: Duties of Respect

"Respect for the law, which in its subjective aspect is called moral feeling, is identical with consciousness of one's duty. This is why showing respect for a human being as a moral being (holding his duty in highest esteem) is also a duty that others have towards him and a right to which he cannot renounce his claim." *The Metaphysics of Morals (6:464)*

I examine the system of duties of respect for oneself and for others, which Kant presents in *The Metaphysics of Morals*. I demonstrate that Kant seems to refine his notion of respect here, for prescribing a duty to *feel* a certain way would be to prescribe the impossible; these duties concern how one must *act*. For example, having respect for oneself involves avoiding servility; respect for others precludes defaming them. I consider the relationship between this respect whose enforcement lies in our control, and the types of respect which he describes in the *Critique of Practical Reason* as a moral incentive and a feeling towards persons.

Ideas for further research: Respect in Contemporary Moral and Political Theory

"There is a deep liberal tradition of thought and feeling that insists it is always possible for us to abstract from …social differences, inequalities, and distinctions, to treat people with the equal respect owed to them." *Kant, Respect and Injustice, p. 1. V. J. Seidler*

As an intention for further research, I propose to step outside of the confines of Kant's moral theory to see if there is any place for Kantian respect within contemporary philosophy. It seems that his concept of respect has often been treated as a basic ingredient in the development of a liberalism in which justice, and the individual's integrity and separateness, are key tenets. I would like to consider whether Kant's respect

has been misunderstood, and whether it is of any use at all in this area: after all, *Achtung* is a moral notion pertaining to character and motivation. My research would examine positions in moral philosophy where the attitude of respect is named as the basic moral principle, and would question whether or not Kant was right to propound respect (i.e. *Achtung*) as being residual in ordinary moral thought. The material in this present thesis could be employed in order to weigh up how much of Kant's conception of respect we should maintain in a coherent theory of moral motivation and judgement.

An Overview: Kant and *Achtung* (Respect or reverence)

In Chapter I, I demonstrate that it is owing to a new development within Kant's thinking that he sees the necessity of *Achtung* in the possibility (or at least, in the practicability) of human morality. In his early lectures on ethics[2], Kant speaks of *Achtung* simply as a type of "esteem" or "observance" of norms, which might account for its popular translation "respect"[3]. There seems to be no necessity attached to the passive stances of holding esteem or respect for something[4]. One might sensibly ask how a concept which has some relation to our notion of *respect* can have the force of necessity. In the *Groundwork*, Kant introduces the concept of autonomy, that is, the freedom to choose to act morally, and he has to provide an explanation as to how moral action can be put into practice: moral action is described as being the enactment of duty, and *Achtung* is named as a necessary component in the definition of duty. Far from being a merely external observance of

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[2] E.g. See Kant's *Lectures on Ethics* (Cambridge University Press, 1997), p107 "To revere God is to regard His law as holy and righteous, to respect it and seek to fulfil it in one's dispositions."

[3] Yet, even as early as 1764, Kant seems to suggest that *Achtung* as a motive contains an inner quality: for example, in '*Observations on the feeling of the beautiful and sublime*', he writes in an ironical tone about the choleric person, who places all value regarding himself and his actions on the basis of appearance. Kant describes that such a man, "With regard to the inner quality and the motivations that the object itself contains...is cold, neither warmed by true benevolence nor moved by respect (*durch Achtung*). His conduct is artificial."(2:223)

[4] Such a notion is referred to in the *Religion* Book 4, 189: "To this end man busies himself with every conceivable formality, designed to indicate how greatly he respects the divine commands, in order that it may not be necessary for him to obey them; and, that his idle wishes may serve also to make good the disobedience of these commands, he cries: "Lord, Lord," so as not to have to "do the will of his heavenly Father." Thus he comes to conceive of the ceremonies, wherein certain means are used to quicken truly practical dispositions, as in themselves means of grace; he even proclaims the belief, that they are such, to be itself an essential part of religion (the common man actually regards it as the whole of religion); and he leaves it to all-gracious Providence to make a better man of him, while he busies himself with piety (a passive respect for the law of God) rather than with virtue (the application of one's own powers in discharging the duty which one respects)--and, after all, it is only the latter, combined with the former, that can give us the idea which one intends by the word godliness (true religious disposition)."

norms and regulations, it is portrayed as a special type of attitude towards the moral law which motivates us to act morally, that is, to act from duty. I argue that because of the active and motivational role that *Achtung* plays, a better translation for it in this sense is *reverence*, and I maintain this translation in my Chapters I and II, where I am primarily discussing *Achtung* for the moral law. My central aim in this chapter is to elucidate upon what Kant means when he says that the only morally valuable action is an action done from duty, and I show that such an action depends directly on this special type of esteem for the moral law, that is, reverence:

"The concept of duty…requires of the action objective accord with the law but requires of the maxim of the action subjective reverence for the law, as the sole way of determining the will by the law." (*CpV* 5:81).

I examine what Kant says about reverence in order to acquire a picture of its nature, how it operates, and its relationship with the moral law. Whilst underlining its complexity, I also try to show that reverence is intended to correspond to something that is rooted in the common man's conception of morality since Kant's aim here is to provide a philosophically respectable version of that very conception. I also highlight the clues that Kant gives us in this foundational work to other roles that this concept will take.

In Chapter II, I focus on examining the mechanism within the human will that Kant envisages whereby reverence for the law facilitates the production of a morally valuable principle. I shall examine the following two seemingly contradictory statements:

"Reverence for the moral law is… the sole and also the undoubted moral incentive…"
(*CpV* 5:78)
"…reverence for the law is not the incentive to morality…"
(*CpV* 5:76)

The central issue seems to me to be that Kant evidently holds that an incentive or motive is required in order for any imperfectly rational being to choose to act morally. What is implied here is that the moral law, without an incentive, would achieve no authority within a being at the mercy of his fears and desires, and that inclination would direct the

choices made by reason. A short step from this claim is the fact that the moral law, devoid of its incentive, is inert as regards prompting human action. On this model, it seems that feelings alone can stir such agents into action. Such an exclusive claim would deprive reason of its practicality, as reason is in itself separate and distinct from feeling. Kant cannot allow anything other than moral law to determine the will, as only an immediate determination of the will by the moral law itself will yield moral worth[5]. Hence it must be shown how the moral law, of itself, can behave as an incentive and how reason of itself can be practical. I argue that within the will of an imperfect being, the moral law never appears without reverence, and it is the closeness of their relationship that enables the reconciliation of the two statements above.

The validation of my argument involves an investigation into the various stages which occur within the will of an individual prior to moral action, with a view to showing that although the capacity to feel reverence is originally present within every will[6], any influence it has within the will is always an effect of the manifestation of the command of the moral law. My analysis is based on Kant's own account, found in Chapter III of the *Analytic* of the *Critique of Practical Reason*, and is set in relief against helpful passages of the *Groundwork*[7] and the *Metaphysics of Morals*[8].

I highlight the manifold ambiguities found within Kant's account of the moral mechanism, and try to weigh up the casualties any such anomaly makes to an endeavour to establish a coherent construction of the moral mechanism. A peripheral discrepancy is the fact that on occasion, Kant speaks as if reverence is interchangeable with moral feeling, which, as I shall discuss, comprises a negative and a positive force; at other points reverence is merely the positive component of that feeling (*CpV* 5:76). The more significant ambiguities, I argue, may be owing to reverence's unique nature as being born of reason and connected to the feelings. For example, he states that reverence is what the moral law must effect in the mind insofar as the latter is an incentive (*CpV* 5:72). Here the moral law seems to be the cause, and reverence the effect. At the same time, Kant names the moral law as the sole object of reverence (*CpV* 5:73). This relation could seem problematic - a cause being the object of its effect. It is not intuitive to think of an effect

[5] *Critique of Practical Reason* 5:71
[6] *The Metaphysics of Morals* 6:400
[7] E.g. *G* 4:403
[8] *MdS* 6:399 onwards.

as being directed at its cause, as this is contrary to the presumed sequence of events. But this in itself highlights the intimate relationship between the moral law and reverence; once the moral law makes its appearance within the will, it *awakens reverence for itself* (*CpV* 5:74).

It certainly is a point of interest as to how reverence, whose source lies in reason, is connected to feeling, as it must be via this connection that it finds its motivating force; Kant himself seems to provide several different accounts, which may point to a development in his thinking, or may simply betray the inscrutability of the relation. In the *Groundwork*, Kant states that in virtue of reverence's derivation from a rational concept (that of the moral law sprung of reason), it is different from other feelings, all of which can be reduced to inclination or fear. But the feeling of reverence itself he calls *analogous* to both inclination and fear. To explain - the object of reverence is the law; insofar as the law imposes itself upon the will whose disposition is in conflict with sensibility, an effect analogous to fear occurs. Insofar as the will itself imposes the law upon itself, an effect analogous to inclination (i.e. the opposite of fear) occurs. The sum of these effects is reverence. How can we talk about one type of feeling (i.e. reverence) in terms of being analogous to another (i.e. fear or inclination), never mind as being analogous to both of two opposing feelings? I consider the possibility that Kant wants to express that reverence shares certain qualities of each; like fear and inclination it can make us act, and in a certain way, as these feelings both have the ability to direct us towards objects. But as stated above, the only object of reverence is the law.

In the *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant seems to step closer to an account of this relation than in his guarded analogy of the *Groundwork*, as he inspects the effects of the recognition of the moral law (in its capacity as *the moral incentive*[9]) on the faculty of feeling, and affirms that these effects are indeed feelings. In its capacity of restricting all inclinations to make way for the law, it "has an effect on feelings and produces the feeling of displeasure" (*CpV* 5:78). Kant argues that whatever diminishes the hindrances to an activity is a furthering of this activity itself[10], and in this latter capacity, Kant announces that "reverence for the moral law must be regarded as…a positive though

[9] I refer to the feeling in question here as 'the moral incentive' rather than as 'reverence', because in this chapter Kant wavers between labelling the whole feeling, or merely the positive side of the feeling, as 'reverence'.
[10] I consider this argument in my Chapter II.

indirect effect of the moral law on feeling" (*CpV* 5:79). I argue that this shift does seem to be coherent: if we are considering the effects of this unique feeling on the faculty of feeling, then an effect (or consequence) of a feeling analogous to fear could be pain. Equally, the effect of a feeling analogous to inclination would be positive. The outcome, however, of this exploration seems to create added difficulties: is reverence itself one feeling, that produces as its effects, two feelings? Or does Kant at this stage hold that there is one special moral feeling, the effect of the moral law, which is composed of a negative and a positive force, reverence naming only the latter? Does it make sense philosophically to divide moral feeling in this way? In my Chapter II, I devote particular attention to these questions, in the hope of clarifying what exactly occurs within the imperfect will, at the manifestation of the moral law.

In Chapter III, I turn to another context in which Kant employs a concept of *Achtung*: that of respect for persons. I translate *Achtung* as 'respect' in this context in order to divest the concept of its previously discussed connotations with moral motivation; although my aim is to explore the relationship between *Achtung* for persons, and *Achtung* for the law, I do not wish to make any presumptions regarding the relation between these two concepts. Whilst I do not insist from the start that the concepts must be entirely alien to one another, I do remind the reader that the sole object of *reverence* is the *law*. Kant avows that respect is always directed to persons and never to things (*CpV* 5:76); I consider this claim alongside what has been established with regard to the essentiality of *Achtung* (reverence) in any imperfect yet morally capable will. The integral role of *Achtung* (reverence) within the will as the moral incentive is in turn that by which the agent frees herself from the pulls of inclination and reaches towards her freedom as the legislator of her own moral actions:

"[the origin of duty[11]]…is nothing other than *personality*, that is, freedom and independence from the mechanism of the whole of nature, regarded nevertheless as also a capacity of a being subject to special laws – namely pure practical laws given by his own reason, so that a person belonging to the sensible world is subject to his own personality insofar as he also belongs to the intelligible world…" (*CpV* 5:87).

[11] I have argued that the origin of duty lies with reverence in the imperfection of the finite will.

I investigate this ultimately significant idea and its relation to Kant's notion of respect for persons. Kant asserts that "Respect is a tribute that we cannot refuse to pay to merit, whether we want to or not" (*CpV* 5:76). He seems to suggest that we have no control (within our reasoning powers) over whether or not we experience respect: and in this regard, respect behaves like a feeling rather than as a rational construct, and thereby curiously it is tied to the part of us that is not in fact free. I argue that any such reaction one has in witnessing an instantiation of moral worth present in a person's action is owing to the object of that respect turning out to be the moral law itself. The potency of the problem with which my thesis is concerned can be underlined as follows: is it in keeping with Kant's moral theory that respect for persons is argued away as respect for law? Or would such a reduction eliminate a crucial element of his moral vision? That is, I show that respect for persons incorporates an additional aspect of human morality: that of the ability to be lawgiving. After all, a respect paid merely to an example of the law really pays no tribute whatsoever to the enactment of duty: if respect for persons were simply and wholly respect for law, then presumably one would unavoidably feel respect for a machine that carried out actions which entirely articulated the law's command. Respect, as a moral attitude towards a person, must surely be appropriated to something more than just the estimation of the form that that person's maxim takes; it must be sensitive to the moral worth within that person's will. This moral worth, as demonstrated in Chapter II is incumbent upon the peculiar disposition of an imperfectly rational being's will: one that is able to both legislate the law and obey the law.

What is of particular concern to my thesis is to draw attention to the conceptual closeness between the various forms of *Achtung* that appear within Kant's moral theory. The overriding force of my Chapter III is contained within the suggestion that the feeling of reverence as the effect of the moral law (a), and the feeling one involuntarily experiences when confronted by the appearance of a moral action (b), whether one's own or that of another, do, under a certain formulation, share a common object – that is, the moral law – but that the one conception of *Achtung* is not interchangeable with the other. The object of *reverence* is always and directly the moral law. The object of *respect* (in the sense of Chapter III) is less easy to settle: loosely speaking, it is the person who decides upon the morally valuable maxim. In keeping with Kant's own words, it is the law whose command the morally valuable action gives an example. I try to show that it is a combination of both of these aspects which is the object of respect: respect for a

person is respect for the law *as given by a person*. What follows is my tentative attempt to set out the relationship between the (a) and (b).

One immediate problem faced by an hypothesis that respect for persons is simply and straightforwardly respect for law is the discrepancy that arises between an attitude of respect for oneself, at one's own moral action, and respect as felt at an example of what one believes to be the enaction of morality in another person. In the first case, we surely would not wish to allow that respect can get it wrong: the moral law will always be the direct cause of it, and our feeling of esteem will always be directed correctly towards its cause: the events are confined to the will, and although moral action is not guaranteed, the feeling of respect is. In the second case, however, we surely could make mistakes; Kant himself concedes that we can never be sure that another's action is merely in accord with duty, or from duty[12]. If respect is exactly the same feeling in both cases, and if it is always an effect of the moral law, then how can it be infallibly caused in the first case, and fallibly caused in the second? Giving this hypothesis some room for development, I suggest the possibility that the obstacle to infallibility lies in the fact that respect for another is mediated by the world of appearances, whereas reverence for the law within one's will is connecting one to the noumenal world. I further suggest that this lack of infallibility mirrors our fallibility as moral agents, who despite reverence acting as an incentive within the will, and despite instances of success in genuine cases of morally good actions, will always be so closely connected to the phenomenal world, and who therefore will always make mistakes.

Yet Kant himself propounds that this idea of personality, which awakens reverence by setting before our eyes the sublimity of our nature in its vocation of automony (*CpV* 5:87), is natural even to the most common reason and is *easily observed* (ibid.). In the light of my worry outlined above, I question whether this ability to correctly observe or respect moral value is particular to one's self-scrutiny, and Kant's own examples, which all involve the question of one's own self-approbation, seem to corroborate this reading. For example, he attributes the event in which a man abstains from an otherwise harmless lie, which could in fact bring about nothing but advantage to everyone, to the avoidance of having to "despise himself secretly in his own eyes". He holds that this inner decision to propagate virtue within the will is itself an effect of reverence (*CpV* 5:88): reverence,

[12] See, for example, *Groundwork* 4:407

as caused by the moral law, can succeed in giving us an insight into our higher vocation as human beings; it can point us in the direction of realising our freedom, and of grasping the opportunity, presented to us by our own pure practical reason, to attempt to step outside of the sensible world of time and appearances towards a state of holiness, tranquillity and complete consummation with morality.

In Chapter IV, I set out a description of what Kant names as the four moral endowments - *moral feeling*, *conscience*, *love* of one's neighbour, and *respect* for oneself (self-esteem). I acknowledge that it is a temptation to regard the latter two concepts as really duties, notes about which have been misplaced or appended to the wrong section. I present an argument for how these latter two concepts can be regarded as moral endowments: whilst moral feeling and conscience enable an imperfectly rational being to be sensitive to, or to feel, the necessitation of the moral law within his will, love for others and respect for self are capacities by which an imperfectly rational agent is able to apply the formal command of the moral law, potent within his will, to persons outside his will – through such predispositions he is somehow drawn to others of his kind, and is able to esteem the worth of persons. I demonstrate that capacities for both love of others and respect for self are necessary in order to balance the application that one makes of the moral law: the presence of both capacities entails that, while one will value others, one will not do so at the expense of one's own vital well being. I discuss the connection of respect for self with respect for law, and suggest that the former is wholly contingent upon the latter.

In Chapter V, I sustain my discussion of self-respect and elucidate how it is that Kant envisages such respect to be the basis for the conditions of action towards oneself that the moral law would endorse. I argue that it is one's ability to respect oneself that enables one to feel the constraint of duty towards others. I build upon my argument regarding the moral predispositions, set out in Chapter IV, illuminating how it is that such dispositions for love and respect direct how we recognise and configure the content of our duties towards ourselves and others. I reinforce the observation that every case of *Achtung* that has been examined can be traced back to our capacity to feel respect for law. Yet, as my thesis reaches its conclusion, I turn to a consideration of that fact that although *Achtung* is necessary to human morality, in that without a capacity for it, humans and imperfectly rational beings would be absolutely incapable of achieving or recognising

moral goodness in action or character, Kant acknowledges that a capacity for *Achtung* alone is not sufficient to ensure respectful relations amongst humankind. That is, within his moral theory, he devises duties of right, the enactment of which can be enforced by external authorities: these duties of right, I suggest, reflect the actions that our capacity for respect *would*, through our lawgiving, entail, were we always mindful of the practicality of our reason and the power of the moral incentive.

CHAPTER I

The Necessity of Respect to the Possibility of Human Morality.

"The moral level on which a human being… stands is respect (reverence) for the law."(*CpV* 5:84)

As a difficult and confounding feature of Kant's moral theory, respect (*Achtung, reverentia*) deserves a painstaking study because it is – in the vaguest of terms – that alone by which finite and imperfectly rational beings such as ourselves can be moral. That is, without the capacity for respect, it would be the case that the supreme principle of morality – that which Kant upholds as entirely objective, necessary, and knowable a priori – would be inert with regard to partly sensuous, partly rational creatures whose reason by default would always first attend to the objects of our desires and aversions. Respect is that which enables us to recognise the supreme value of the moral law in a manner which tempts us to obey this law. In what follows, I aim to demonstrate that respect is an essential feature of morality for human beings, as a necessary condition for even the possibility of duty; as an incentive to choose to act morally; as a mental facility by which one can appreciate moral worth; and as an indication of self-approbation.

A sound analysis of Kant's idea of a 'moral feeling' must be sensitive to an important distinction which both creates and dissolves problems for this enterprise: Kant sometimes speaks of 'moral feeling' as the *capacity for moral feeling*[13], and at other times he uses the same terms to refer to the feeling itself, i.e. that which is yielded from the capacity. This feeling, in turn, is often referred to as *Achtung,* which is usually translated as 'respect' or 'reverence'[14], but at certain points *Achtung* is portrayed as merely part of moral feeling[15], and at other points moral feeling is - remarkably - discussed without any mention of *Achtung*[16]. In *The Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant names four moral endowments[17] which lie at the basis of morality as subjective conditions of receptiveness to the concept

[13] *The Metaphysics of Morals* (6:399)
[14] *Critique of Practical Reason* (5:76)
[15] E.g. *CpV* 5:75
[16] E.g. *MdS* 6:399
[17] These are respectively moral feeling, conscience, love of one's neighbour, and respect for oneself (self-esteem) (*MdS* 6:399)

of duty[18]. He describes them as natural predispositions of the mind which belong to all human beings, and that without these no human being could be put under a moral obligation. I shall argue that it is owing to the first moral endowment which Kant calls moral feeling, that we have this feeling of respect or reverence.

The two significant features of this capacity are that it is *originally*[19] within every human being, and it is a *susceptibility* on the part of free choice to be moved by pure practical reason and its law[20]. This being "moved" is the work of what I referred to above as the *feeling of respect or reverence.* This feeling is "singular" and "peculiar"[21] primarily in virtue of where its capacity is located: its roots lie in pure practical reason, unlike all other feelings whose roots lie in sensibility. Because of its origin, it is knowable a priori and is, as I shall explore, amenable to standing in a necessary connection to other features of reason, such as concepts and laws. But, in spite of its origin, we are not here dealing with *a theoretical capacity for a type of perception directed towards any object*[22], but rather a capacity for a felt response to certain activity within the will: it is because of this that Kant calls respect (reverence) a *feeling* rather than a *sense.* It is in virtue of the unique metaphysical status of respect (reverence) that it stands as the mediator between the moral law and its adoption by a human agent: whilst its source in pure practical reason is shared with the moral law, through its subjectively felt force it can affect the priorities of a flawed and fallible rational being.

By way of background, Kant declares that in order to achieve moral worth, the will must be determined by nothing other than the moral law, which emanates from pure practical reason; no feeling can be presupposed in order to prompt this determination. He draws a sharp distinction between two types of rationality; that of perfect beings, which is entirely free from any contribution from sensibility, and that of imperfect beings, whose existence is finite and whose practical reason is not perfectly pure; such a creature is "always dependent with regard to what he requires for a complete satisfaction with his condition" (*CpV* 5:84) and therefore can never be entirely free from desires and inclinations, all of which rest on physical causes. In the case of the former, the moral law

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[18] My Chapter IV provides an examination of the moral predispositions and evaluates the individual and combined contributions each predisposition makes to human morality.
[19] ibid. (6:399)
[20] ibid. (6:400)
[21] *Critique of Practical Reason* 5:76
[22] *The Metaphysics of Morals* 6:400

is necessarily its determining ground; in the case of the latter, the law will experience obstacles, and must therefore impose itself by issuing commands, and hence becomes *necessitating*.

I aim to demonstrate that every form of Kant's *Achtung* from that of the *Groundwork* onwards is tied to his conception of moral necessitation. An account of how the moral law can be necessitating for imperfectly rational beings must address three distinct questions: firstly, how is it that the purity of the moral principle can ever be within the reaches of such limited beings as ourselves? That is, what is it about our tarnished, self-seeking reason, that gives us the ability to recognise the necessitation imposed by the command of a law not aligned to any promise of happiness or pleasure? Yet a recognition of necessitation does not yet involve knowledge or understanding regarding what it is that is doing the necessitating. For example, one might be able to recognise the necessitation imposed by an external law, without comprehending anything of the worth or value of that law: I might know, and even to some extent feel, the necessitating force of adhering to a particular law of state – fear and dread of punishment may fuel and enhance that force – yet I might not understand anything of the value of any law which commands me to e.g. tacitly condone decisions made at the highest level of British politics when all justification for such decisions is unavailable to me. Hence the second question is: how is it that an imperfectly rational being, aware of the necessitation of the moral law, can be sensitive to moral value? Even if we can envisage the possibility that an imperfectly rational being can experience the necessitating power of the moral law, and can appreciate its worth, how can that being ever choose to act morally? That third question will be addressed in my Chapter II.

The Crucial Importance of Reverence *in Groundwork, Chapter I*

Kant's solutions to the questions outlined above lie in his conception of duty, the necessity of which turns out to be entirely dependent on our ability to feel *Achtung* for the law: in my examination of *Achtung* for the law, I translate *Achtung* as 'reverence', to mark the departure from a traditional, everyday notion of 'respect'. An account of how the moral law can be necessitating for a human (or imperfectly rational) being is first formulated in Chapter I of the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, where Kant

purports to proceed *analytically* from ordinary rational knowledge of morality to its philosophical counterparts. A swift perusal of these pages will alert one to the fact that reverence is explicitly named in Kant's official definition of duty (*G* 4:400). This clearly marks out reverence as an integral and necessary component of Kant's concept of duty. A lengthy footnote added later by Kant betrays his anxiety that it may seem that he has "merely tried, under cover of the word 'reverence', to take refuge in an obscure feeling"(*G* 4:401)[23] in order to explain how it is that a man might come to do his duty. Since Kant is considering the common man's morality in these pages, I assert that, firstly, Kant envisages reverence to be an unequivocal, though perhaps only intuitively appreciated, part of ordinary morality; and secondly, that when writing this chapter, he mistakenly supposed that reverence would be more naturally and intuitively grasped by his readers than it perhaps originally was. Armed with these conjectures, I intend to demonstrate the significance of reverence in Kant's theory of moral motivation.

As the starting point of his analysis of ordinary rational knowledge, it is not by chance that Kant focuses on the good will, which is later to be understood to mean, by extension, 'good character': the activity of such a will, in terms of the maxims of actions on which it settles, is to turn out to be the workings of morality. What Kant presents as being in keeping with the ordinary man's moral thought can be upheld as a very loaded introduction to Kantian ethics, a claim the acceptance of which will result in the indisputable requirement for reverence within one's moral theory:

"It is impossible to think of anything at all in the world, or indeed even beyond it, that could be considered good without limitation except a good will."(*G* 4:393)

That is, Kant regards moral value to be inextricably tied to an unconditioned value found within the will of any rational being; and that this alone can be the inner worth of a person. What is distinctive about a good will is that it is good "...only because of its volition, that is, it is good in itself" (*G* 4:394). Its goodness is not dependent on whether or not it is fit to bring about some result or other; in virtue of the internal workings of its willing and regardless of any success it has in accomplishing the aims of its maxims or resolved intentions, "...like a jewel, it would still shine by itself, as something that has its

[23] Here I use Paton's translation: "Man könnte mir vorwerfen, als suchte ich hinter dem Worte Achtung nur Zuflucht in einem dunkelen Gefühle, anstatt durch einen Begriff der Vernunft in der Frage deutliche Auskunft zu geben." (*G* 4:401 footnote)

full worth in itself."(ibid.). But this sole, unconditioned good is not a precious gem that can be boxed up and treasured as a keepsake: Kant underlines from the outset that the good will alone is the condition of the contingent goodness of other things. He explains that any other candidate for the good which one might pick out, such as talents of the mind, qualities of temperament, and gifts of fortune, could just as easily turn out to be a bad thing: self-control, for instance, might assist a criminal to carry out a crime more coolly (*G* 4:394). It is only by virtue of their connection to the good will that their conditioned goodness is realised[24]. Even in cases where these contingent goods may seem to be assisting and complementing the good will, Kant insists that they have "no inner unconditional worth" (*G* 4:393). With regard to such contingent goods, the good will "limits the esteem one otherwise rightly has for them and does not permit their being taken as absolutely good"(*G* 4:394).

At this early stage of the *Groundwork*, Kant clearly already has in mind the concepts of self-esteem and esteem for others, and an idea that there is an appropriate limit to these types of esteem. He notes that "an impartial rational spectator can take no delight in seeing the uninterrupted prosperity of a being graced with no feature of a pure and good will..." (*G* 4:393). This draws attention to two very important points: firstly, we are reminded that the human beings with whose morality Kant is concerned are endowed with finite and imperfectly pure wills, perpetually tarnished to varying extents by the default callings of inclinations. Secondly, it seems that Kant is invoking a type of moral assessment which relies on something other than the conscious decision to class a person or her action as morally valuable. That is, the spectator experiences a type of approval which is straightforwardly unavailable when faced with a man devoid of moral worth.

I hold that these preliminary paragraphs in Chapter I not only leave space for the inclusion of reverence in his moral theory, but that they purposefully look forward to its inclusion. Kant's depiction of the good will serves not only to demonstrate what unconditional goodness is, but also sets into relief the picture of the imperfectly rational will, that which does not by nature achieve moral value through its willing, owing to its primary susceptibility to objects of inclination[25]. If the good will alone can embody moral

[24] At this stage, Kant merely states that a good will would correct and adjust the influence of these potentially good things to universal ends.(*G* 4:393)
[25] The terms used to describe the unconditioned nature of the good will are echoed at 4:397-9, where Kant describes an action from duty.

worth, then how ever can a person whose will is inevitably impure be moral? That is, how might a person find herself actively choosing to overlook or undermine her basic sensuous, emotional, and ultimately self-centred needs in favour of being moral? In order to answer this question, Kant firstly has to insist that the very function or vocation of reason "must be to produce a will that is good, not perhaps *as a means* to other purposes, but *good in itself*."(*G* 4:396)[2627]. His next step is to account for how reason might be able to achieve this. He has recourse to revise the terms in which he speaks; he turns to the concept of duty, and illustrates how this concept, if employed in a certain way in each case of possible moral action, can undercut the pulls of inclination and render the activity of willing within the imperfectly rational will akin to that of a perfectly rational will, i.e. a good will:

"We shall set before ourselves the concept of **duty**, which contains that of a good will though under certain subjective limitations and hindrances, which, however, far from concealing it and making it unrecognizable, rather bring it out by contrast and make it shine forth all the more brightly."(*G* 4:397)

The purpose of Kant's scrutiny of the concept of duty is to explain how an imperfectly rational will can transpose a "touch"[28] of goodness into a fleeting instance of consummate moral goodness. I now turn to an examination of his so-called three propositions about duty in order to illustrate the cruciality of the role of reverence in human morality. My discussion pays attention to the emphasis that Kant places on the estimable value of the will that is good. Whilst the moral value of the good will is unconditional and therefore not dependent on anything else for its value, Kant does present it as deserving of our appreciation and esteem. The sustained metaphor of it shining forth like a jewel or gem reinforces the fact that its value is not hidden: it is very much present for us to appreciate (*G* 4:394). I shall consider the ways in which this

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[26] Kant argues for this position by stipulating:
That nature has assigned to each aptitude an end which it best befits.
Reason cannot have happiness as its ultimate end as instinct far better befits it.
Reason is a practical power i.e. it has an influence on the will.
Therefore reason must be intended to produce a will that is good in itself.
[27] An engagement with the faults and merits of this argument outstrips the purposes and scope of my discussion.
[28] Here I have in mind Paton's translation at *G* 4:393 for "kein Zug eines reinen und guten Willens".

element of his thought might also look towards a second sense of *Achtung*, which is brought out more fully in the *Critique of Practical Reason*[29].

Kant's Three Propositions about Duty

It is entirely left up to the reader to extract the first proposition about duty from his words, as Kant does not formally articulate it. This omission could be a playful way of illustrating Kant's belief that the concept of duty is "not so much to be taught as only to be clarified[30]"(*G* 4:397); that said, Kant appears to hold that each of his propositions is simply an elaboration on the preceding point. What interests him first and foremost is the apparent difficulty involved in pinpointing moral value or worth in action: he draws a firm distinction between actions which merely accord with duty, and actions which are done for the sake of duty, in other words, from duty. Only actions of this second kind can ever be called morally good. The difficulty in distinguishing the one type of action from the other is aggravated by the fact that perceptible action might appear to be the same in both cases. Actions which merely accord with duty are not done *from duty*: their ultimate motive can be traced back to either immediate inclination, such as a feeling of sympathy or love, or a mediated self-interest, which might be a principle of prudence, ultimately deriving from one's desire to protect one's happiness. Kant regards the latter type of action as more calculated and therefore rationally wrought: if a shopkeeper regimentedly deals with all of his customers fairly, his action is indeed in accord with duty, but it is highly likely that he holds as his principle that of prudence, as he surely feels no overwhelming love for his customers which is causing him to act. A woman who nurses her dying husband, however, is most probably acting from love and sympathy. If, in the first case, the shopkeeper *is* acting from the maxim of prudence, and if in the second case, the woman *is* driven to act through her sense of sympathy and love, then according to Kant, although their actions surely accord with duty, the maxims of their

[29] An important aim of my thesis is to evaluate whether Kant regards *Achtung* (reverence) for the law, and *Achtung* (respect/ moral appreciation) for persons as different feelings, and if not, the extent to which they overlap. I devote my Chapter III to such considerations.

[30] It is striking that Kant uses the word "aufgeklärt" here ('brought to light'), a cognate of the word for Enlightenment (Aufklärung); this usage seems to acknowledge his position as working with and philosophically reformulating the common notions of morality, and his intended contribution to the Enlightenment.

actions are without moral worth. From this we can extrapolate one commonly favoured guess at Kant's first proposition about duty:

An action is morally good only in the case where it is done from the sake of duty.[31]

But this proposition takes us back to the question of how an imperfectly rational agent can ever shake off the pushes and pulls of the inclinations of his human condition and act solely for the sake of duty. As an example of what such an action might look like, Kant takes a duty that all of us have, and to which we all have an immediate inclination: the preservation of one's life. He then isolates the carrying out of the duty from any immediate inclination, describing a wretched man who, having lost the taste for life through constant hardship and grief, "wishes for death and yet preserves his life without loving it, not from inclination or fear but from duty" (*G* 4:398): his maxim contains genuine moral worth. But though such an example shows us what duty might look like, it does not tell us *how* a man might be moral, that is, where the source of this man's capacity to act from duty would lie: how can we act from duty, when no inclination impels us, and when disinclination stands in our way?

Before answering this pressing question, Kant makes his second proposition which one might regard as a more technical rendering of the conjectured first proposition:

"...an action from duty has its moral worth *not in the purpose* to be attained by it but in the maxim in accordance with which it is decided upon, and therefore does not depend upon the realization of the object of the action but merely upon the *principle of volition* in accordance with which the action is done without regard for any object of the faculty of desire." (*G* 4:399-400)

It has been surmised that the work done by this second proposition is simply to establish that the only maxims to which we can attribute moral worth are those reducible to a principle of "doing one's duty whatever one's duty may be"[32]. Whilst this reading does abstract from all possible objects of the faculty of desire, it fails to capture the proposition's full import: Kant specifically states that the moral worth of an action done

[31] Paton expresses his conviction in this formulation of the first proposition. See his translation of the *Groundwork*, p 19.
[32] Paton's phrasing, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, p.21

from duty is *in* its maxim – moral worth is tied to a quality or a configuration of a maxim, not simply to the maxim itself, removed from its context within the imperfectly rational will. Although in the *Groundwork*, Kant's project is to derive the supreme principle of morality, he does not simply want to tell us what our morality amounts to; he wishes to show us how it is that we can be moral. An acknowledgement of the importance of this latter aim aids an understanding of the third proposition, where the introduction of reverence might be regarded as unexpected and inscrutable by those not conscious of this collateral aim:

"Duty is the necessity of an action from respect [reverence] for law."
(*G* 4:400)[33]

The first remark which must be made is that Kant himself states that this third proposition follows as "a consequence of the two preceding"[34] (ibid.). Now, whilst it would be philosophically irresponsible to try to construe the third proposition as a conclusion of the first two propositions in an analytic manner, not least because a. the first proposition is omitted from the text and b. the words "reverence" and "law" do not appear in the suggested premises, Kant's belief in the intimate relations between the three propositions must be observed. If we assume that the 'inference' involved in moving from the first proposition to the second proposition is that of reconstruing a rough and ready statement about a morally valuable act in a more technical manner, then we might conjecture that Kant's focusing through inference shifts from act to maxim to get closer to the epicentre of moral worth. On this basis, we might sensibly suggest that the third proposition is designed to provide more of an insight into the propagation of this moral worth. It might be a reformulation of the second proposition in new terms which are first and foremost intended to be informative and secondly presumed to be readily comprehensible to the ordinary reader.

So, what does Kant actually say about this proposition? That Kant selects reverence as that upon which first to comment might underline the fact that new diction has been introduced which needs at least some clarification and, to some extent, it alerts the reader that this concept is not to be dismissed as extraneous decoration. It is a matter of some importance to consider how far the reverence named in this proposition can be

[33] "Pflicht ist die Nothwendigkeit einer Handlung aus Achtung fürs Gesetz." (*G* 4:400)
[34] Paton translates "als Folgerung aus beiden vorigen" (G 4:400)

understood as a mere observance of the law[35], and how far it is infused with further attributes – attributes which mark a turning point in Kant's thought regarding the practicality of reason. By writing about reverence in the first person, Kant immediately places reverence within the sphere of experiences available to human beings. As a preliminary point, he appears to draw both an analogy and a disanalogy between reverence and inclination, which is to be picked up again in the *Critique of Practical Reason*:

"For an object as the effect of my proposed action I can indeed have *inclination*, but *never respect [reverence]*, just because it is merely an effect and not an activity of a will." (*G* 4:400)

At the simplest level, Kant is differentiating the very activity of a will i.e. the willing of a maxim, from a possible intentional object of that will, i.e. that which the will aims at achieving. The next step in his argument is simply an alignment of reverence with a certain activity of the will, and inclination with an intentional object of the will. He makes it very clear that an agent can never have reverence for anything but this particular activity of the will, and strengthens this insistence by saying that I can never have reverence for any inclination found in myself or any other, although I can easily have (a non-moral) approval or love for such inclinations. Here we might bring to mind the love of the woman for her dying husband whose action merely accords with duty but is not in fact from duty. Kant is wanting to say that we can feel strong approval for her action, and we could wish that everyone in such circumstances would behave similarly, but that we can never have reverence for such an action. Hence a disanalogy between inclination and reverence is to be found in their respective objects. An analogy, to accompany the disanalogy, seems to lie in the fact that reverence does operate like a feeling, in that it is experienced not as a matter of choice or deliberation; it is experienced or *felt* solely as an effect on the will of an imperfectly rational being, where its unique cause is present: this is corroborated by Kant's referral to reverence as a feeling in the footnote (to which I shall turn shortly). To formulate his point in positive terms, Kant writes:

"Only what is connected with my will merely as ground and never as effect, what does not serve my inclination but outweighs it or at least excludes it altogether from calculations in making a choice – hence the mere law for itself – can be an object of respect [reverence] and so a command." (*G* 4:400)

[35] In its non-philosophical usage, the term "*Achtung*" means 'attention, care, heed, consideration'.

Here, it might be argued, Kant appears to suggest the causal role that reverence plays in rendering the moral law necessitating upon an imperfectly rational will. He first strips away any misconceptions one might have about what exactly the sole object of reverence is: the law is joined to the will solely as a determining ground of an action, and is never an effect of or slave to any feeling or inclination: it ignores or overrides their pulls[36]. As the bare law ready to ground maxims for its own sake, Kant says, it "can be an object of respect [reverence] and *so* a command." (Ibidem - my italics) The German word employed to express this connection is "*hiemit*"[37], an old fashioned word for "hiermit", an adverb meaning "so" or "thereby": Kant seems to be saying that insofar as the law can be an object of reverence for an imperfectly rational being, it is a command for that being.

It is through such a reading that one can make sense of the third proposition. Kant has already stated that the concept of duty contains that of a good will under certain subjective limitations and hindrances (*G* 4:397). The good will, that is, pure practical reason, would necessarily legislate the moral law. But the will of an imperfectly rational, finite being, is not pure: it is not thoroughly good, yet it has the potential to determine maxims of actions that are sprung from its goodness. Kant must explain what the conditions of this potential are – how can an impure reason be practical? At this stage, he seems to be saying that it is because the possessor of an imperfectly pure reason can experience respect for the moral law, that the law is acknowledged by such a being as a command – as necessitating. The law is necessary for the perfectly rational, and necessitating for the imperfectly rational. The necessity of the moral law is experienced by an imperfectly rational being through reverence, and that which is necessitated is called *duty*.

Quite straightforwardly, Kant is not depicting reverence as a feeling that behaves something like approval which is directed towards a law. By regarding it as something like mere approval, one would make the same mistake as one might unintentionally make by translating *Achtung fürs Gesetz* as "respect for the law": one forces *Achtung* into a rather passive, inert role, where it actively achieves nothing but looks with positivity upon a

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[36] This description looks towards the mechanism of the moral incentive, detailed in my Chapter II.
[37] "...mithin das bloße Gesetz für sich kann ein Gegenstand der Achtung und hiemit ein Gebot sein." (*G* 400)

commanding law. On the contrary, in the third proposition, Kant explicitly links reverence to action: the law would never make its prescriptions on an imperfectly rational will without that will's capacity for reverence. Without such a capacity, imperfectly rational beings would be unable to recognise their duty and to obey the moral law. What is more, if reverence were not an essential component in moral action, then it would not appear in the third proposition. Kant could have simply stated that "Duty is the necessity of acting for the sake of the law". He sees reverence as playing an integral role in enabling one to act for the sake of the law, and in the light of this, the implications and ramifications of its primary role in moral action should not be overlooked.

Returning to the passage at hand: Kant himself makes the link (which I found useful to pre-empt) explicit when he states that it is an action done from duty alone which sets aside every influence of inclination and every object of the will. He therefore surmises that in such a case "...there is left for the will nothing that could determine it except objectively the *law* and subjectively *pure respect* [*reverence*] for this practical law, and so the maxim of complying with such a law even if it infringes upon all my inclinations." (*G* 4:401). It is to this point that Kant later adds an extensive footnote, to which I shall shortly turn. A consideration of what we can understand from Kant's account, prior to the appendage of the footnote, is of some interest: it could be that what Kant originally left unsaid seemed to him to be plainly obvious; or perhaps, less optimistically, he had not the intellectual means at that point to make clear exactly what he had in mind.

In the first chapter of the *Groundwork*, Kant does make it very clear that all genuine moral worth is to be found solely within the will. In a will that is not by nature perfectly pure and good, it is in the very determination of this will where the possibility of moral worth lies. To be morally valuable, the maxim determined upon by the will must be grounded in obedience to the moral law, and thereby far removed from the calls of inclination. In order for such an imperfect will to achieve this type of determination, the existence of what will turn out to be an objective, necessary and a priori knowable moral law is necessary but not sufficient: from the agent's point of view, it is somehow through the presence or invocation of reverence within the will that it is put in a position to overcome or outdo the pulls of inclination, and, at the same time, to recognise that duty is necessitating. It could further be argued that from the main body of text alone, one could perhaps work out that reverence is intended to be born of reason, as Kant attaches

the adjective "pure" to it, which surely reminds us of pure reason; and he makes it very clear that duty, reverence and the law are all encapsulated within the activity of the will, which of course is practical reason. From this consideration of the text prior to the adding of the footnote, we see that Kant, from the offset, regards reverence as being that by which the moral law is recognised as a command by the imperfectly rational will, and at the same time, that by which such a will can disregard and overcome the pulls of inclination, in an effort to obey the moral law. A point of puzzlement might be lodged if one questions how on earth the third proposition about duty can possibly represent the common man's morality. That is, what made Kant assume that he was writing about elements of morality with which his readers would be familiar? This is a point I turn to in my Chapter IV, where I examine Kant's 'Moral Predispositions'.

It is evident that Kant acknowledged that his third proposition was not entirely accessible to his readers, as he added an extensive footnote (appended to *G* 4:401). He addresses a possible objection to his third proposition: that he "only [seeks] refuge, behind the word *respect* [*reverence*], in an obscure feeling, instead of distinctly resolving the question by means of a concept of reason."[38] From these words it can be reaped that Kant's introduction of reverence to his moral theory is a response to a *question*: but what is this question? It seems to me that this entire chapter is concerned with the question of how a finitely rational will can be good - that is, how our reason can fulfil its function and produce a will that is good in itself. Through doing one's duty, Kant first answers, but this is too vague: he needs to clarify the concept of duty, and within this concept he pinpoints that by which an agent can experience the necessitation of duty: a force by which the imperfectly rational will can turn from the objects of its desires and *choose* to act for the sake of the moral law. This force, he calls reverence. He meets his envisaged objection with diplomacy: he acknowledges that this force *is* a feeling but that it does not find its roots in sensibility. Rather, it is "*self-wrought* by means of a rational concept" (ibid.). This unique status might indeed render it obscure, in the sense that it is different from other feelings, all of which can be reduced to inclination or fear (ibid.), but in turn it qualifies reverence to be a metaphysically acceptable force to enable a morally valuable determination within the will.

[38] *G* 4:401

Kant sees it fit to explain in some detail what happens when an agent is confronted by the moral law: again, he speaks from the perspective of the first person, as if choosing the most effective manner to communicate the subjective aspect of such a determination of the will. He states that "What I cognize immediately as a law for me I cognize with respect [reverence], which signifies merely consciousness of the subordination of my will to a law without the mediation of other influences on my sense." (ibid). This statement could be taken as evidence that reverence is merely an epiphenomenal feeling, much like the passive type of approval which I outlined above, which accompanies moral action but contributes nothing to its generation: a feeling, at whose instance we can pinpoint the presence of that of which it is a byproduct. Is Kant saying that my recognition of the moral law is one thing, and that reverence is another? Or is he saying that my recognition is, in some sense, reverential? The fact that he offers a restatement of the cognitive state in question in terms of being "consciousness of the subordination of my will to a law" does seem to suggest that reverence is what is experienced from the subject's point of view when the moral law makes its appearance within the will. This seems all the more evident in the next sentence:

"Immediate determination of the will by means of the law and consciousness of this is called 'respect' ['reverence'], so that this is regarded as the *effect* of the law on the subject, and not as the *cause* of the law."(ibid)

In Chapter III of the *Analytic* of the *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant describes reverence, in its role as the moral incentive, both in terms of being consciousness of the moral law within the will and the effect of the law on the subject. The question is, did Kant see reverence as such an incentive in the *Groundwork*? I think he did. In his third proposition he describes duty as being the necessity to *act out of reverence* for the law. When we speak of acting out of, say, kindness, we mean that kindness is that which made us act. On being asked why I forgave someone who had wronged me, I might reply that I was acting out of mercy: by that, I mean that mercy, or a consciousness of a capacity within me for mercy, made me act. And if something is the spring of my action, then in Kant's terms, it is my incentive. Thus in his footnote, Kant appears to be simply providing a further explanation of what he already had in mind. His description of reverence being the effect of the law on the subject further highlights how his conception of the morally

fruitful determination of the imperfect will works: the law determines the will objectively, and reverence, as the effect of the law on the will, determines the will subjectively.

What seems to happen in this footnote is that Kant tries to summarise what requires a much broader treatment. He focuses on the object of reverence, that is, the moral law, and our two-pronged relationship to it. On the one hand, the law is necessary in itself and we are held subject to it. In this regard, our desires, inclinations – all of which Kant regards as adding up to our self-love - are insignificant. On the other hand, we impose this moral law on ourselves and in this regard it is a consequence of our will. Kant holds reverence to be "properly the representation of a worth that infringes upon my self-love" (ibid.). That is, reverence has a bifurcated relationship to its object, the moral law. With regard to the law's necessity and demolition of self-love, the reverence effected by the law within the agent's will is analogous to fear. With regard to that agent's self-imposing of the moral law, the reverence effected is analogous to inclination. The idea we can extract of what reverence actually is might seem to be something very mysterious: a rationally wrought feeling, that has two elements neither of which can be directly pinpointed but which have their respective analogies in opposing pathological feelings – fear and inclination. Careful consideration and a reminder that Kant still has in mind the morality of the ordinary man might lead one to step back from the complexity and to imagine a case where we experience a paradoxical feeling: this is not too difficult to envisage. The thought of an exciting but daunting task ahead might fill us with both awe and dread. Something majestic but unavailable to our complete understanding, such as the idea of God, might lead us to say it is "fearful" and by this we mean we feel not merely fear but an admiring fear. And so with the determination of the imperfectly rational will by the moral law, our practical reason is affected by this unique feeling, reverence, which cannot straightforwardly be described in terms of any other feeling.

What seems to me to demand a rigorous study of how Kant envisages *Achtung* to fit into his moral theory is that he leaves two further remarks at the end of this very footnote, which appear to point to possible significant and under-examined ramifications of what I have argued is a crucial feature of his moral philosophy. Kant informs us that "Any respect for a person is properly only respect for the law (of integrity and so forth) of

which he gives us an example"[39] (*G* 4:401 footnote). This comment could look back to the comment Kant made at the beginning of Chapter I that a rational and impartial spectator *can never feel approval* at the prosperity of a being whose will never possesses any moral worth; certainly it would be impossible to feel respect or reverence for someone who never does his duty and thereby harvests no goodness of will. I shall examine the notion of respect for persons, and its relation to reverence for the law, in my Chapter III. It is unlikely that Kant is referring to an entirely different concept called *Achtung*, as in his final remark, Kant returns to the idea of reverence for the law: "All so-called moral *interest* consists simply in *respect* [*reverence*] for the law"[40](ibid.). I take this to be an affirmation that even in the *Groundwork* Kant has reverence in mind as the means by which morality makes itself its own incentive.

Reverence for the Law

Having, in some sense, constructed a definition of duty, Kant steps back from mere subjective considerations and asks what kind of a law this can be, "the representation of which must determine the will, even without regard for the effect expected from it, in order for the will to be called good absolutely and without limitation[.]"(*G* 4:402) What he is really asking is what kind of law it is that commands that under all circumstances we imperfectly rational beings do our duty. His answer comprises the first formulation of the supreme principle of morality:

"I ought never to act except in such a way that I could also will that my maxim should become a universal law."(*G* 4:402)

To remind us that this discovery of the supreme principle of morality is in keeping with ordinary moral thought, Kant asserts that common human reason agrees completely with the results of applying this formulation in its practical appraisals.[41] What stands in need of distilling as an overlooked element of Kant's picture of common human reason is his

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[39] "Alle *Achtung* für eine Person ist eigentlich nur *Achtung* fürs Gesetz (der Rechtschaffenheit etc.), wovon jene uns das Beispiel giebt." (*G* 4:401 footnote – my italics)
[40] Alles moralische so genannte Interesse besteht lediglich in der *Achtung* fürs Gesetz. (Ibidem – my italics)
[41] "Common human reason also agrees completely with this in its practical appraisals and always has this principle before its eyes." (*G* 4:402)

underlying suggestion that reverence is the means by which humans are able to appraise the morally good. His first demonstration of the way in which one can use his formal principle of morality to work out whether or not one's action contains moral worth considers the case where one is tempted to make a lying promise. Kant explains that an *infallible* method to answer the question of whether a lying promise is in conformity with duty is to ask myself:

"...would I indeed be content that my maxim (to get myself out of difficulties by a false promise) should hold as a universal law (for myself as well as for others)?"(*G* 4:403)

It is of great interest that Kant so readily incorporates here the notion of *contentment* into a question pertaining to moral expediency, and we may recall his earlier comment that in its practical use, reason - as opposed to having as its aim the production of happiness, is "capable only of its own kind of satisfaction, namely from fulfilling an end which in turn only reason determines, even if this should be combined with many infringements upon the ends of inclination." (*G* 4:396) What is this contentment? It is surely a type of esteem that arises from reason itself. To go on - here, Kant says, such a mental exercise brings it about that "…I soon become aware that I could will the lie, but by no means a universal law to lie…". (*G* 4:403) Now it seems to me that the content of this awareness is simply the deduction of the result of the universality of such a law: there would therefore be no promises successfully made at all because any purported promise would be aimed at a world of persons all too familiar with false promises[42]. But from the language which Kant uses, it seems that from the agent's perspective, a little more goes on than simply finding oneself in a position to be able to will a certain deed universally without creating contradictions within either the will or the world: this ability to be able to will a certain deed universally is described in terms of being "content" to do so, and becoming "aware" of being able to do so. In applying the test of whether or not my maxim can be universalised in such a way, it seems to be the case that there is always a clearcut "yes" or "no" answer. In the instances where the maxim can be universalised, the agent suddenly finds himself considering a deed that is either permissible, in that it does not contravene one's duty, or a deed that can be done from duty. In the instances where the maxim cannot be universalised, the deed being considered opposes duty. Kant seems to have in

[42] Here I overlook the manifold arguments against the notion that the universalisation of a lying promise would entail a contradiction within the world such that the concept of a promise is undermined; such discourse steps outside of the realm of this thesis' focus.

mind that a type of contentment may accompany the morally good actions, and be lacking towards actions which are contrary to duty.

Could a type of moral feeling accompany our moral judgements in a way that assists our consciousness of their rightness or wrongness? Kant holds that "I do not…[]...need any penetrating acuteness to see what I have to do in order that my volition be morally good"(*G* 4:403). It might reasonably be asked how it is that Kant regards us imperfectly rational beings as equipped to *so easily see* what is morally good. In the case of a person testing the universality of what would in fact be a morally good action, that person would attempt to will the action. Because, in this case, its maxim can fit as a principle into a possible giving of universal law, then the very mental activity of willing this maxim in such a manner may, Kant declares, "forces from me immediate respect [reverence]"(*G* 4:403). This feeling of reverence for the law may be that by which a person is rendered aware of moral worth. In the cases of a merely permissible action, and an action contrary to duty, such reverence for the law will be missing. At an action that passes the morality test as 'permissible', one might find oneself able to be content with it, in the ordinary sense of the word. At the consideration of an action contrary to duty, it must be a moral kind of contentment that an agent is *unable* to feel: after all, it is obvious that a thief might feel satisfaction at the success of his robbery, or that a liar gloats contentedly at the gullibility of the one he has fooled. Similarly it is surely a sensitivity towards moral value that the impartial spectator feels at the very beginning of the Groundwork, where, he can "take no delight"[43] in the good fortune of one perpetually devoid of moral worth.

The Twofold Significance of Reverence for the Moral Law

The inescapable and central part that reverence plays in Kant's moral philosophy, as set up in his *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, has now been suggested; whilst Kant presumes that the ordinary man will be readily acquainted with the notion of reverence, he admits that much philosophical work remains to be done:

"Although I do not yet see what this respect [reverence] is based upon (this the philosopher must investigate), I at least understand that it is an estimation of a worth that

[43] *G* 4:393

far outweighs any worth of what is recommended by inclination, and that the necessity of my action from *pure* respect [reverence] for the practical law is what constitutes duty, to which every other motive must give way because it is the condition of a worth of a will good *in itself*, the worth of which surpasses all else."(*G* 4:403)

It is a source of bafflement and perhaps some amusement that, in spite of leaving the basis of *Achtung* for the philosopher, Kant attributes what seems like a deep and philosophical understanding of reverence to the ordinary man: perhaps what he says seems more convoluted than it really is because he is trying to put into words something that we all take for granted and rarely have need to analyse. Setting aside the question of *what this reverence is based upon* as being one for the philosopher, Kant highlights certain features of reverence which he regards as readily available to the common man's understanding, the first of which has been a concern of this chapter:

1. Reverence is an *estimation of a worth* that outweighs the worth of any object of inclination.

It is perhaps important to note that within the body of the actual original text of the *Groundwork*, Kant does not refer to reverence as a *feeling*, he merely compares it to inclination. It is within the accompanying footnote at *G* 4:401 that he first describes reverence as a feeling, rooted in rationality and knowable a priori. Here he also refers to reverence as a *consciousness* of the immediate determination of the will by the moral law: reverence is the effect of a law on the subject, and we may see that, at least in part, this effect entails an estimation of the law's supreme worth by the subject experiencing the reverence. This estimation is always directed at the worth of the moral law, whether it is the representation of the law within one's own will or in an action of another which appears to be born of such a determination. That being so, an estimation of worth is not all the work that reverence does – this very estimation somehow provides a motive for moral action, and this is the second feature I shall discuss:

2. Reverence is the only motive from which we can act if we are to do our duty, which is condition of a will that is good in itself.

This role is really a restatement of Kant's third proposition, which highlights that reverence is a crucial component of the concept of duty, that is, the only means by which imperfectly rational beings can experience the necessitation of the moral law, and thereby realise or possess moral worth. A question which pervades the remaining chapters of this thesis is the scope and limits of Kant's various conceptions of *Achtung*. So far, I have pinpointed two aspects of what I have presented as one conception of reverence (1 and 2). I attempt to demonstrate that it is an answer to what Kant sees as the philosopher's question that can clarify how we can best sort out the medley of notions of Achtung that Kant introduces as elements of human morality: on bringing to the light that which reverence is based upon, its ramifications can be clearly demarcated. This question can be addressed by an incisive examination of how reverence is supposed to motivate the morally valuable act, and to this I shall now turn in Chapter II.

CHAPTER II

The Mechanism of the Moral Incentive: Reverence in Action

"Pure reason is practical of itself alone and gives (to the human being) a universal law which we call the *moral law*." (*Critique of Practical Reason* 5:31 Corollary)

In this chapter, I argue that the practicality of the reason within a finite being is inextricably dependent upon Kant's notion of reverence. I make the assumption that practicality does not merely involve the ability to issue laws; for reason to be practical, it must have the ability to obey the laws that it issues, that is, to settle on maxims of action that are completely grounded in the law itself. I hold that it is through the presence of reverence alone within the will that a finite being is rendered able to obey the command of the moral law. That is, reverence in its intimate relation to the moral law within the imperfect will does not serve for grounding the objective moral law itself but, rather, it serves as an incentive to making this law its maxim.

An examination of Kant's conception of the human will reveals the central problem presented to the argument for the possibility of the practicality of reason, in the sense in which I interpret it. On the one hand, Kant states, "[t]he human being is a being with needs, insofar as he belongs to the sensible world, and to this extent his reason certainly has a commission from the side of his sensibility which it cannot refuse, to attend to its interest and to form practical maxims with a view to happiness…"(*CpV* 5:61). So desires and fears, and lesser 'unfelt' inclinations which stem from pathological promptings, are apt to stir the human will into activity, causing it to settle upon maxims of action which will gratify them[44]. On the other hand, the human being is in possession of a reason which has a "higher purpose" (*CpV* 5:62), insofar as he belongs to the noumenal world: the moral law can determine the will immediately; in virtue of this activity the will is free from the nexus of cause and effect in nature and the agent is ready to act morally[45]. But whilst it is straightforward to isolate the 'interest', evoked by desires and fears, which

[44] Kant holds that although to be happy is necessarily the demand of every rational but finite being, it is impossible to regard this inevitable quest for happiness as law, "...since a law, as objective, must contain the *very same determining ground* of the will in all cases and for all human beings." (*CpV* 5:25)
[45] Kant calls this freedom autonomy of the will. (*CpV* 5:33)

nudges the will into settling upon maxims which will quench or ease the aforementioned desires and fears, it is a pressing question as to whence the interest for opting for moral principles derives. What motivates us to be moral, on Kant's view? Not only does it seem that we are looking for an account of an interest that morality presents, but it must be an interest that somehow outweighs the more obvious seduction of the senses. Kant himself acknowledges this problem as very important and standing in need of an answer. The main issue seems to be that the requirement for morality itself rules out the possibility of there being any other factor at work determining the will:

"What is essential to any moral worth of actions is *that the moral law determine the will immediately*."[46] (*CpV* 5:71).

This opening line to Chapter III of the *Analytic* of the *Critique of Practical Reason* is fundamental to Kant's doctrine: I will try to demonstrate that this thesis is corroborated rather than contradicted by Kant's introduction of a "moral feeling" which aids the determination of the will. I argue that the appearance of reverence (*Achtung*) both in the *Groundwork* 4:401 and in this chapter, where Kant focuses on how one can be moral, is neither merely incidental nor an escape from the question of how the moral law of itself can cause action. Kant postulates that the moral law - that objective, necessary, a priori form of the ultimate practical principle - must itself ground the will *immediately*, that is, without any intervening influence making a contribution to the decision of the will which would thereby jeopardise the complete and exclusive consummation of the moral law with the will. This notion of immediacy is not temporal, as the noumenal aspect of the will is said by Kant to stand outside time and space (according to transcendental freedom of the will, we are the uncaused causes of our own actions (*CpV* 5:50)). The requirement that the moral law determine the will immediately in order for it to accrue moral worth in its maxim is a more technical rendering of Kant's notion that only an action done from the motive of, or for the sake of, duty has moral worth (*G* 4:398 onwards). So, just as Kant avows that actions merely done in conformity with duty - but not from duty - have no inner worth (*G* 4:397), that is, are not morally good, equally it may be stated that any determination of the will which takes place only *conformably* with the moral law and in a

[46] It may seem odd that Kant is directing his attention to the moral worth of *actions*, rather than of one's subjective maxims: one need only turn to *CpV* 5:60 to ascertain that Kant holds that "…if anything is to be [morally] good or evil absolutely…it would be only the way of acting, the maxim of the will, and consequently the acting person himself…".

mediated fashion will be devoid of moral worth. Another way of putting this might be that in the case of such a *legal* but morally inert action, the moral law is the objective determining ground of the will but not the subjective determining ground of the will. Kant specifically mentions the case where "a feeling, of what ever kind"(*CpV* 5:71) needs to be presupposed in order for the law to become a sufficient determining ground of the will. Thus, from the offset, Kant appears to rule out the possibility of a feeling acting as any kind of motivation for the decision to be moral.

It is because of this that it may be argued that Kant's account of moral motivation is helplessly self-contradictory, as he does appear to invoke a forbidden motivating force in order to set morality in motion. Kant himself states in the next paragraph that the task of explaining "...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."(*CpV* 5:72). This acknowledged insolubility could lead one to assert that Kant brazenly attempts the impossible in further opening up the question regarding the determination of the will in the case of morality, and that this leads him along a tortuous path of contradiction and defeat. But what one should take from Kant's words is that, for his moral theory, the immediacy of the determination of the will by the moral law is *essential*: the emphasis placed on this word through its repeated usage stresses the fact that this is not an incidental feature of his philosophy, or something on which nothing else hangs: its essentiality should ward one away from the temptation to dismissively judge that, in dealing with an insoluble problem, Kant simply "seeks refuge" [47] in the concoction of an impenetrable and obfuscated feeling, as a result of finding himself unequipped to work out or explain what is really going on within the will. Such a dismissal would disregard one of the key tenets of Kant's vision of morality: we must take it as a fact that Kant consistently holds that the moral law itself *somehow* does all of the work in grounding the will in the case of a morally valuable determination.

It might be objected at this point that the enquiry into the moral incentive should end here, with the vague notion that the moral law is able to do all the work necessary to ground the will in a morally fertile manner: those who object to the coherence of Kant's Chapter III of the *Analytic* would advise one to quit whilst one is ahead. Yet Kant insists

[47] *Groundwork* 4:401, footnote

that we can improve upon this very general assertion. Very importantly, he insists that the insoluble problem for the human mind is the pinpointing of the *ground* from which the moral law in itself supplies an incentive: this is the issue which is identical to the problem of how a free will is possible[48]. And about that possibility, Kant has very specific views, which are summed up succinctly by an earlier statement at *CpV* 5:47: "…all human insight is at an end as soon as we have arrived at basic powers or basic faculties." That is, we cannot be immediately conscious of freedom, since our first concept of it is negative (i.e. complete independence from the natural law of appearances and their causality); what is more, we cannot reach it by drawing conclusions from the world of experience, since experience allows us to take in merely that which is offered by the world of appearances – and, the mechanism of nature is, as Kant says, the opposite of freedom (see *CpV* 5:29). The human mind's incapacity to cognise, that is, grasp and thoroughly comprehend, the possibility of freedom will be highlighted later, with regard to the fact that kind of respect is named as the proper esteem for this possibility. Hence, Kant intends us to examine what happens *given* that a free will is possible: that is, what happens given that the moral law itself can and does act as an incentive to morality.

So it seems that we set out with two stipulations that we must leave lodged in place before analysing Kant's account of the moral incentive:

1. That a free will is possible[49]
2. That the moral law is, amongst its other functions, an incentive to morality

Kant's theory of moral motivation is built upon these stipulations, and any attempt to shatter the consistency of his account by dislodging these stipulations would undermine a study of Kant's notion of *Achtung*: we must allow these stipulations to stand, and see as our task the feat of explaining how Kant envisages *Achtung* as contributing to these features of his moral philosophy.

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[48] I consider some possible ways to approach this question in my Chapter IV, which examines the Moral Predispositions.

[49] See *CpV* 5:29, Problem II, The Reciprocity Thesis, whereby Kant argues that freedom and the unconditional practical law reciprocally *point to* each other; *CpV* 5:43 "the moral law…provides a fact absolutely inexplicable from any data of the sensible world and from the whole compass of our theoretical use of reason"; and *CpV* 5:31, where Kant states that "Consciousness of this fundamental law may be called a fact of reason because one cannot reason it out from antecedent data of reason, for example, from consciousness of freedom (since this is not antecedently given to us)". (See also *CpV* 5:55.) Interestingly, Kant notes that "...as a positive concept, an intellectual intuition would be required, which certainly cannot be assumed here" (*CpV* 5:31): Kant's metaphysics reach above and beyond human comprehension in their implications.

A highly important implication of these two stipulations is the notion that Kant is seeking an incentive to making one's maxim moral, and not an incentive to invite the moral law into the will. Kant, in the *Second Critique*, is asserting that reason is, of itself, practical, that is, it can cause us to act - and not only this, but that it can cause us to act morally. It seems, however, that not only does he have to invoke an incentive to render pure reason practical, but that, because of his own restrictions on what can contribute to morality, the only incentive available to morality is morality itself. This may appear to be of no help to him, as the moral law derives from pure practical reason, which is that which requires the spring of action. So he develops the notion of a special type of feeling, whose roots lie in rationality, which has the power to cause one to spring into action. But the problem is, because of his stipulations, this feeling cannot precede the representation of the moral law. Not only that, but it cannot be anything other than the effect of the moral law on the will, otherwise the moral law would not determine the will immediately. Thus it must be the case that the moral law will of its own accord makes itself manifest within the will of a finite being; in this sense, there is no incentive to morality before the representation of the moral law appears. That is, the agent - or his or her reason - is not prompted by anything to receive the moral law into his or her consideration. It is only at the appearance of the moral law that its capacity as incentive is brought to fruition, and a spring for action is presented to the agent.

This observation narrows the arena for the operation of that feeling which will turn out to be *Achtung* or *reverentia*. In its manifestation as a feeling (rather than as a mere capacity), Kant holds that it neither precedes the appearance of the moral law within the will, nor occurs after an action is committed[50]: that is, it neither grounds the moral law itself nor serves for judging[51] actions: it is entirely consummate with the moral activity within the will (*CpV* 5:76). It is with this in mind that the seemingly contradictory nature of the following three statements must be considered.

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[50] This point is picked up on in my Chapter III, where I consider reverence or respect directed at persons and actions, seeing these in terms of being extensions of the determinations of the will itself.

[51] At *CpV* 5:76, Kant says of moral feeling: "Es dient nicht zu Beurtheilung der Handlungen...". Whilst 'Beurtheilung' is translated by Mary Gregor as 'appraisal', 'judgement' or 'evaluation' is a more accurate rendering of the sense. As I go on to argue, moral feeling does not *contain* a judgement but it can assist in rendering us able to perceive e.g. the presence of moral worth, and thereby to make an informed judgement.

1. "…respect [reverence] for the law is not the incentive to morality; instead it is morality itself…" (*CpV* 5:76)

2. "This feeling (under the name of moral feeling)…[serves] only as an incentive to make this [objective moral] law its maxim." (*CpV* 5:76)

3. "Respect [reverence] for the moral law is therefore the sole and also the undoubted moral incentive…"(*CpV* 5:78)

Kant himself recognises that an *elater animi* (an incentive, or spring of action) is required as (at least part of) the subjective determining ground of the will of a being whose reason does not by its nature necessarily conform with the objective law. As he describes at *CpV* 5:79, the three concepts of an incentive, an interest, and a maxim, are applicable only to finite beings, because "...they all presuppose a limitation of the nature of a being, in that the subjective constitution of its choice does not of itself accord with the objective law of a practical reason; they presuppose a need to be impelled to activity by something because an internal obstacle is opposed to it".[52](ibidem) This explanation highlights the fact that we are considering how it is that a rational agent, who is subject to the pulls and coaxing of his sensibility, comes to *choose* a morally potent principle of action. What is more, it seems to be suggested that it is the very presence of the influence of sensibility, that is, of potential internal obstacles, that renders the will in need of an incentive to morality. It is perhaps implied that the human will, without the invasion of inclination, has the potential for moral perfection: in spite of a human's finitude in terms of lifespan, our will could behave like a divine will, if all obstacles were either absent to begin with, or completely erased. And it is on this very basis that Kant argues for the practicability of the elevation of finite beings from the phenomenal to the noumenal realm: although our wills are impure, their impurity presupposes an underlying purity that has been tainted, and which can be occasionally distilled through attention to morality.

In the light of these considerations, it may be surmised that a construction of moral motivation, on the Kantian model, would work as follows:

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[52] At *CpV* 5:32, Kant clearly explains that the law has the form of an imperative for finite beings, who are capable of settling on maxims which conflict with the moral law.

A finite being, such as the author or reader of this thesis, is in possession of a will, which in some sense is the embodiment of practical reason, i.e. reason by which we decide on courses of action. Because of our embodiment in the natural world of cause and effect we are subject to our sensibility, i.e. desires and fears - and all emotions, felt and unfelt, which are ramifications thereof; such impulses of sensibility encroach upon the purity of our practical reason, and because of their potency, they take precedence within the will and seem to be the default grounds upon which determinations of the will are made. That is, the finite being, when making a conscious decision, from his subjective point of view feels the pulls of his emotions and naturally feels driven to satisfy them. If morality is its own incentive and must determine the will immediately, then presumably it should be both apt to 1. override the impulses of emotion, and 2. to show itself somehow as more choiceworthy to the will. Furthermore, since any moral activity of the will raises the finite being to the noumenal realm, it seems necessary that this effect that the moral law has on the will, adjoined to that which is solely a priori knowable, may not be amenable to the constraints of time and space: hence, it might neither be that one effect (1 or 2) is followed by the next (1 or 2), nor that the effects (1 and 2) stand in contemporaneity. From this we see just what Kant might want the moral law, as incentive, to achieve, and the prospective difficulties awaiting any attempt to describe what happens within a will that is both connected to the a priori and the a posteriori[53].

As we have seen, from the requirement that, in the case of moral worth, the moral law determine the will immediately, and the fact that a finite being's will, unlike the divine will, requires a spring of action, Kant deduces that "...the incentive of the human will (and of the will of every created rational being) can never be anything other than the moral law" (*CpV* 5:72). This presents the dilemma that the moral law, in order to effect a morally valuable principle, must be both the objective determining ground and the subjectively sufficient determining ground of action (ibidem). Here it must be noted that there is no mention of any feeling acting as an incentive: even the language Kant uses reinforces the notion that morality is the incentive. What he is interested in is the endeavour "...to determine carefully in what way the moral law becomes the incentive" (ibidem). He does, however, make subsequent reference to the possibility of a feeling,

[53] Such difficulties are foreseen as early as when Kant wrote the Groundwork, as he states "...the will stands between its a priori principle, which is formal, and its a posteriori incentive, which is material, as at a crossroads; and since it must still be determined by something, it must be determined by the formal principle of volition as such when an action is done from duty, where every material principle has been withdrawn from it." (*G* 4:400)

suggesting that this may involve examining "...what happens to the human faculty of desire as an effect of that determining ground upon it" (ibidem). It must be observed that Kant is hinting at the fact that any feeling involved in the moral process will be an effect of the moral law itself. Kant is often accused of being a philosopher too intellectual (or 'intellectualist') in that he places so much emphasis on rationality and disregards feeling; yet, as my thesis demonstrates, his writings show that he is hugely sensitive to the power and importance of emotions for the imperfectly rational being; as far as morality is concerned, Kant fully accepts that it is a *kind of feeling* that helps us appreciate moral worth and act morally. A Kantian account of the ability of finite beings to choose morality over the satisfaction of their inclinations is not one that needs to exclude the significance and functions of emotion and inclination.

So it seems that in the instance of any morally good action, the function of the moral law within an imperfectly rational will can be described from two different angles[54]:

1. To determine the will solely and immediately, both objectively and subjectively.
2. To act as its own incentive in order to bring about this immediate subjective determination of the will.

How does Kant envisage this to work? In order to determine the will solely and immediately, and for the will to be, at that instance, free, the moral law must, on the one hand, be segregated from any cooperating sensible impulses which may slip into precedence as determining grounds of the will; and, on the other hand, the law must infringe upon all inclinations insofar as they could oppose it. Even with regard to this infringement, or to the breaking off of any potential opposing inclinations, Kant sees the moral law as playing out its role as an incentive, in preparing the way for the enforcement or embracing of itself within the will:

"So far, then, the effect of the moral law as incentive is only negative, and as such this incentive can be cognized a priori." (*CpV* 5:72)

[54] Kant himself expresses the indispensable need for the function of an incentive at *CpV* 5:72: "What we shall have to show a priori is…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".

What does Kant mean by this? In what sense is the rejection (*Abweisung*[55]) of all inclinations *only negative*[56]? And why is it that in this negative capacity the incentive can be cognised a priori? After all, the effect of the law here is described in pathological terms, and such terms correspond to the world of experience whose feelings cannot be transferred or transmogrified into the realm of a priori rational deduction.[57] Kant explains that each and every sensible impulse and all inclination is based on feeling; this seems fair if we observe a spectrum of feelings ranging from raw, base hungers to quite calculating (perhaps *higher*) desires for things we really do not need at all but which would contribute to our self-satisfaction. He further argues that the negative effect on feeling, that is, this infringement of inclinations, is itself feeling. He calls this necessarily so and argues that its necessity is knowable a priori (*CpV* 5:74). But is this connection so? Certainly, if one has a desire and something precludes that desire from being fulfilled, one will feel at best a sense of longing and at worst a pain. Likewise, if one has a pain, and an accompanying desire for its cure is not fulfilled, then of course it will continue to ache. In these senses the lack of satisfaction of the inclinations will be painful or undesirable. Here we seem to be considering pleasures and pains in the Platonic sense, where they refer to desires for or aversions to things, such as food, entertainment, or surgery, which can be corrected on the model of emptying and refilling (see, say, *Philebus* (34e-35a)[58]). Thus it looks like Kant has in mind the case where the moral law leaves these impulses still active and throbbing: they are not cut off in the sense that they are extinguished - they are merely set aside and left unfulfilled.

One might wonder why Kant labels these effects of the moral law as 'only negative': is it that they merely involve the attempt of the dismissal of the sensible, pathological forces presenting themselves to the will, and such a thwarting of the inclinations, or stopping

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[55] *CpV* 5:72
[56] "nur negativ" *CpV* 5:72
[57] See *CpV* 5:58 for the argument that neither pleasure nor displeasure can of themselves be connected a priori with any representation of an object. Mere feeling is restricted to individual subjects and their receptivity in the natural world of cause and effect.
[58] "SOCRATES: Do we mean anything when we say 'a man thirsts'?
PROTARCHUS: Yes.
SOCRATES: We mean to say that he 'is empty'?
PROTARCHUS: Of course.
SOCRATES: And is not thirst desire?
PROTARCHUS: Yes, of drink.
SOCRATES: Would you say of drink, or of replenishment with drink?
PROTARCHUS: I should say, of replenishment with drink.
SOCRATES: Then he who is empty desires, as would appear, the opposite of what he experiences; for he is empty and desires to be full?
PROTARCHUS: Clearly so." (Plato's *Philebus 34e-35a*)

them in their tracks, is *negating*, rather than, say, *encouraging* (to them)? Notably, no positive conception of the law's effect on the will has been portrayed just yet; in its capacity of trying to stop or prevent the occurrence of certain activity within the will, the moral law is not yet described as revealing its full splendour or power, hence the qualification of *only* is applied to the adjective 'negative'. Kant could, on a narrow reading, be interpreted as calling such effects negative because they are simply the collateral and inevitable damage caused, as a byproduct, by a law that is forging forward towards a far more creative and positive goal, i.e. the settling on a morally valuable principle; but this notion undermines the importance that Kant ascribes to these negative effects of the moral law on the agent: in his moral theory, Kant envisages an agent who is faced with a real choice – whether to opt for morality or for the satisfaction of his or her desires: in order to act for the sake of duty alone, we must undergo a process where we feel the pushes and pulls of our pleasures and pains, yet we actively *choose* to ignore these and direct our attention towards the moral law. The pain caused by the law, as outlined above, is not merely a byproduct of the quest for morality; it is actively and intentionally caused by the manifestation of the moral law within the will, perhaps as the first aspect of a mechanism to test the capacity for moral strength of the person whose will it is.

This observation may also help to account for the problems of weakness of the will which Kant's theory faces: in spite of being confronted by the moral law, we may still choose not to be moral. At this first (though not temporally so) stage of the moral law determining the rational being's will, it seems possible that the rational being may still give in to his feelings. And this does not seem unlikely considering that the moral law may be effectively amplifying the pain already felt. In fact, at this stage it may seem natural to question why a sensible human being would ignore his pain and embrace the moral law, given the urgency of that powerful emotion called pain. That said, Kant is to propound the negative and positive effects of the moral law as inextricably bound together, linked outside of time: although he describes the negative effects prior to the positive effects, stressing that the former in some way facilitate the latter, he does not wish us to see the former as temporally antecedent to the latter. It seems to be conveyed that they are to each other as two sides to the same coin; I reach to an example involving a noun rather than a verb here because *things* are perhaps more easily imagined outside of time than *actions*, *processes* or *events*. The discovery of an example of change devoid of temporal considerations may seem to us inconceivable, but the moral law itself is

described as operating in two different ways to bring about change within the will *atemporally*. With this inextricable link in mind, it now seems necessary to question how at this stage an agent could indeed give in to his or her inclinations and renounce the moral law: after all, the positive effects come hand in hand with the negative effects. Whilst the pain in isolation may well be more than strong enough to ward him or her off the course of duty, it is not experienced in isolation: the positive effects of the moral law are also already at work.

The central problem here seems to rest on an implication raised by a question I posed above[59], concerning the fact that the pain caused by the moral law is, in Kant's view, to some extent appreciable a priori:

"...here we have the first and perhaps 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." (*CpV* 5:73)

I previously asked why it is that the negative effect of the moral law should be regarded by Kant to be cognisable a priori, when this effect appears to be ostensibly a feeling of pain, on the one hand caused by the moral law, but on the other hand deriving from, or gaining its quality as *pain* from, original pleasures and pains based in the faculty of desire. My surprise was based on the fact that Kant has consistently argued that pleasures and pains are categorically not available to a priori thought, as they are essentially experiences belonging to the world of appearances[60]. What it is crucial to first point out is that Kant repeatedly refers to the *incentive*, that is the moral law, as that which is cognised a priori ("…as such this incentive can be cognized a priori"(CpV *5:72*); "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"(*CpV* 5:73)). Here it must be remarked that the incentive has a positive effect too, to which I shall soon turn, which in the light of this must be cognisable a priori too. There is nothing extraordinary about the moral law's aptitude for being cognisable a priori: that it is objective, universal, and knowable a priori is a central tenet of Kant's philosophy. It is the moral law in its capacity as incentive which provokes the question, which I shall phrase more clearly: how

[59] See my page 32.
[60] As above, see *CpV* 5:58.

can it be that in the case of the moral law as incentive, we can determine a priori, that is, from concepts, the impact of the moral law's manifestation within the will on *feeling*?

Kant stamps this puzzle with the mark of uniqueness by saying of it that it is "the first and perhaps only case"[61] in which this is so. But how should this exception be understood? Why is it necessary here for Kant to observe a deviation from his standard view?[62] One may find it useful to recall Kant's dual aspect view of the human will as a means of clarification. Very simply - the will of a finite being is a faculty which is by default subject and susceptible to the pulls, tugs and pushes of that being's sensible condition for the entirety of that being's life. It is, it seems, only in the case of morality that an alternative to the appeasement and satisfaction of one's inclinations is viable: the freedom pointed to by morality consists in that finite being's ability to use reason to revise his or her intentions. That is, as soon as the scope for moral value becomes part of the picture, the opportunity to raise oneself above the appearances of the mechanism of nature and into a transcendental realm, where one can a. take full responsibility for one's actions and b. realise or possess moral worth, becomes available. Now, where an opportunity to act morally arises, the human will faces a choice between the fulfilment of desire, and the pursual of morality: although the agent's default condition rests on the satisfaction of inclination[63], as soon as the moral law manifests itself in the will, the human will's status is unsettled. There is suddenly the option for it to be practical of its own accord - for it to be practical, pure (i.e. independent of all inclination), and free. It could be argued that it is the case that the very manifestation of the moral law within the human will has another, fleeting but significant effect: it renders the will at that instance neither fully participant within the world of appearances, nor fully transcendentally free. Indeed, until the agent has got to the point where he or she confronts *Willkür*[64] and makes his or her choice, it could be that the will is for that (atemporal) duration trapped between the two possibilities it faces. On this view, it may be argued that it is the case that the negative and positive effects of the moral law on the will occur neither entirely within time, nor entirely without of time: such a position, though curious, might enable us to give marginal credence to the fact that the effects do seem intuitively to have some

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[61] *CpV* 5:73

[62] See discussion in Guevara (2000) for problems with this, namely his assumption that the negative and positive effects of the moral law on the will are separate and distinct and therefore there must be two cases in which we can make this a priori determination.

[63] "…self-love…[is] natural and active in us even prior to the moral law…".(*CpV* 5:73)

[64] The will in its elective role as the faculty of choice, as opposed to *Wille*, i.e. the will in its lawgiving capacity.

kind of sequential ordering, which is difficult to imagine without some inkling of the notion of time.

Such a move would enable us to allow an agent to back out of morality because of the pain he is experiencing (insofar as he is part of the experiential world) perhaps before the full extent of the positive effects of the moral law on the will take their course. This would be greatly useful as it would be hugely unsatisfactory to stipulate that the positive effects of the law (still to discuss) are always strong enough to override the pain of the negative effects of the law but are not so strong as to always guarantee the choice of moral action. Surely it would be more satisfactory to attribute lack of morality to the presence and unavoidable leaning towards quenching pain, rather than to the sheer weakness of the positive effects of morality. Finally, the view I have outlined above might make some inroads towards explaining how a priori thought can in this one, unique instance have a relation to the pleasures and pains of the world of experience: since the will is at this very juncture in a limbo between both worlds, it may be regarded as a force which in some sense connects the two worlds. Insofar as the will is still part of the phenomenal world, an infringement upon the satisfaction of the inclinations causes pain. Insofar as the will as practical reason is part of the noumenal world, the necessity of this relationship between the original pain and the exacerbated pain can be seen (*CpV* 5:74). Working along these lines, it seems possible to conceive of the relation of a priori thought to the necessity of a feeling (and even a feeling that has some roots in, or connection to, sensibility).

In Kant's view, the satisfaction of all the inclinations[65] together is often called happiness (and because of the absolute impossibility of devising universal rules regarding the achievement of happiness, the moral good is far removed from this view of happiness). What is more, Kant holds that a finite being's attitude towards the sum of his inclinations and their importance can take either one of two forms. Firstly, as described at *CpV* 5:73, it may comprise self-love (*Eigenliebe* or *Philautia*), which amounts to a "predominant *benevolence* towards oneself". Secondly, it may take the form of self-conceit (*Eigendünkel* or *Arrogantia*), which is an arrogant satisfaction with oneself. As Kant outlines at *CpV* 5:74, "...we find our pathologically determinable self, even though it is quite unfit to give universal law through its maxims, nevertheless striving antecedently to make its claims

[65] See *CpV* 5:118: "Inclination is both blind and servile, whether it is kindly or not...".

primary and originally valid, just as if it constituted our entire self". Kant sees it fit to explain that pure practical reason[66], doubtless through its lawgiving, merely "infringes upon"[67] self-love: self-love is a normal and healthy attitude of a finite being who, prior to the epiphany of the attempted legislation of the moral law within his will, moderately appeases and gratifies his inclinations and impulses, with a view to rendering his physical self harmonious and contented. The moral law simply sets aside any inclinations which may impinge upon its success in determining the will, but allows most of what constitutes self-love to remain, as self-love is to an extent necessary for a finite being's survival. On the other hand, pure practical reason "*strikes down* self-conceit altogether, since all claims to esteem for oneself that precede accord with the moral law are null and quite unwarranted..." (*CpV* 5:73). That is, the moral law finds intolerable the attitude of a finite being that tries to uphold the satisfaction of the system of the inclinations as the ultimate unconditional principle on which an agent should act.

As Kant avows at *CpV* 5:37, "To satisfy the categorical command of morality is within everyone's power at all times; to satisfy the empirically conditioned precept of happiness is but seldom possible and is far from being possible for everyone even with respect to only a single purpose." Here Kant is saying that we all have the ability to be moral, by obeying the moral law; he is also underlining the fact that the attempt to be moral is more likely to succeed than the attempt to secure one's own happiness, which will be different in the case of each individual and will always be contingent upon both physical power and an ever changing flux of eternal variables. What is more, at *CpV* 5:35, in Remark II, Kant stresses that "The direct opposite of the principle of morality is the principle of *one's own* happiness...", insisting by way of two convincing examples[68] that

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[66] (A detailed account of the activity of the will is required. The human will comprises practical reason which is a mixture of pure and impure. Would it be fair to say that Kant speaks here of the activity of pure practical reason to enable him to describe a success story, perhaps, of the immediate determining of the will by the moral law alone? Can pure practical reason fail? Is it not practical reason that is primarily impure that is susceptible to failure in this endeavour? Does this not prescribe the need for an account of what happens in the case where the moral law does not succeed in determining the will, in spite of its efforts? Would this consist of the pure part of practical reason self-legislating the moral law, only to come into contact with an impure part of practical reason which will not allow the principle to be taken up by the agent? Does this entail that the moral law is present and legislating in all partially impure wills, and its effect as incentive can either work or not work? In this case, immorality would be equivalent to weakness of the will. Law-> Incentive->Choice-> Act/Not Act)

[67] *CpV* 5:73

[68] The first example depicts an acquaintance trying to justify his having given false testimony by appealing to the duty of his own happiness and describing all the material advantages that the false testimony brought to him. The second example depicts a man being recommended as a steward on the basis of his opportunism and ability to use other people's money and goods secretly in order to further his own ends.

even the most common eye can easily discern this distinction. But is it so very straightforward to be moral? Would not a will that has been tainted by the operation of self-conceit experience so much pain by the negative effects of the moral law, that it finds itself too weak to embrace morality? How is it that the moral law would make an appearance within the will of a person fervently consumed by self-conceit?[69] It must be the case that from one person to another the state of each respective will varies, just as we might say that one person is more likely to be moral than another, on the basis that he or she is habitually moral or immoral. But at the simplest level, Kant is arguing that the pure practical reason present within every finite rational being has the ability to set in line or overcome at least the inclinations which stand directly in its way, and it is only the concession of the possibility of this achievement that he needs in order to continue with his account of moral motivation: "...the moral law unavoidably humiliates every human being when he compares with it the sensible propensity of his nature"(*CpV* 5:74). This inevitable humiliation reminds us of the human being's inextricable position in belonging to both the phenomenal and the noumenal worlds, and the tension that this poses within the will.

Having set in place what he calls the negative effect of the moral law as incentive, Kant goes on to explain that this law is still something positive, i.e. it is "the form of an intellectual causality, that is, of freedom..." (*CpV* 5:73). He argues that "...inasmuch as it even *strikes down* self-conceit, that is, humiliates it, it is an object of the greatest *respect* [*reverence*] and so too the ground of a positive feeling that is not of empirical origin and is cognized a priori"(*CpV* 5:73). It is important to note here that Kant is outlining the effect that the moral law has on the will in the process of attempting to determine it. It does seem as if the negative effect on the will occurs prior to the positive effect, and perhaps (an appearance of) partial temporal ordering may be allowed in this process as, at the very least, the *negative* emotions derive from the sensible world which of course is subject to time. It may seem that the relationship between the negative and the positive effects of the law on the will is one of immediate balancing: just as the law brings about pain at the thwarted impulses within the faculty of desire, so the law brings about this

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In both cases, Kant suggests, the common man would either laugh incredulously or be disgusted at what is an obvious parade of self-conceit rather than morality. (*CpV* 5:35)

[69] See *Groundwork* 4:454: "There is no one – not even the most hardened scoundrel, if only he is otherwise accustomed to use reason – who, when one sets before him examples of honesty of purpose…does not wish that he might also be so disposed." At *CpV* 5:75, Kant refers to the 'illusion' of self-conceit, the implication being that once the illusion is removed, the capacity for morality is uncovered.

curious feeling called reverence. Is it the case that if the pain outweighs the positive feeling, then the agent will opt to satisfy his or her inclinations? And conversely, if the positive feeling outdoes the negative in force, will morality be pursued? Certainly at *CpV* 5:75-6, Kant seems to suggest that the positive effects will always outweigh the negative:

"…the hindrance to pure practical reason is lessened and the representation of the superiority of its objective law to the impulses of sensibility is produced and hence, by removal of the counterweight, the relative weightiness of the law…in the judgement of reason."

What about when the magnitude of each feeling produced (i.e. the negative feeling and the positive feeling) is equal: would that not place the agent in a quandary? Would Kant accept that such (subjectively felt) moral quandaries can take place? Does one feeling follow the other or are the two feelings experienced by the finite agent with a semblance of synchronicity? What must be extracted from Kant's description is that the moral law is both the cause of and the object of reverence. Its infringement upon the sensibilities causes a pain which derives ultimately from the sensibility: however, its positive effect on reason derives from and is directed at itself. Both the negative and the positive effect somehow constitute the moral law's power as an incentive to morality.

It seems that we have a collection of guises that the moral law has the aptitude to adopt: or perhaps it has a number of features, the sum of which constitutes its whole. It is the product of pure practical reason, and in that sense it is pure practical reason in its law-giving form. It is the incentive to the adoption of a morally valuable maxim, that is, it is its own incentive. Furthermore the incentive to morality is also described as being the effect(s) of the moral law on the will. Most importantly - and what is, perhaps, the embodiment of all these guises - the moral law is the form of an intellectual causality, namely of freedom. It might be fair to say that Kant would infuse my use of the verb "to be" with necessity, stipulating that the moral law *must be* all of these things. It is no coincidence that at the point where Kant starts to talk about the positive effect of the moral law on the will, he reaches to the idea of freedom: indeed, his examination of the moral incentive must be examined as part of his explanation of the autonomy of the will. In *Theorem IV* at *CpV* 5:33, Kant states that "Autonomy of the will is the sole principle of all moral laws and of duties in keeping with them...". By way of explanation, he

proffers a twofold image of transcendental freedom which one cannot help but remember when reading Chapter III of the *Analytic*. He states that the sole principle of morality consists, on the one hand, in independence from all matter of the law (*CpV* 5:33), and that this is freedom in the negative sense. This surely is achieved through the moral law's attempt to ensure that the will disregards any objects which may fulfil the desires pressing upon it, rendering it primed for the positive effect of the moral law. On the other hand, the sole principle of morality also consists "...in the determination of choice through the mere form of giving universal law that a maxim must be capable of"(*CpV* 5:33): this lawgiving of its own is freedom in the positive sense, and the positive effect of the moral law on the will has this activity as its object.

"...respect [reverence] (*Achtung*) for the moral law is a feeling that is produced by an intellectual ground, and this feeling is the only one that we can cognize completely a priori and the necessity of which we can have insight into." (*CpV* 5:73).

Thus it seems that at this point Kant calls the *positive* effect of the moral law on the will *Achtung*, and it is yet to be considered exactly how this feeling relates to or coexists with the aforementioned negative effect. Kant explicitly states that this feeling is the only one we can cognise *completely a priori*[70]: the qualification of 'completely' suggests that, whilst the negative effect of the law on the will could, as explained above, have some relation to a priori thought because of its intermediary status within the dual aspect view, the positive effect derives solely from the moral law itself and hence enjoys complete independence and freedom from the world of appearances, thus being entirely appreciable a priori.

At *CpV* 5:74, Kant provides some elucidation of why he thinks we can see a priori the effect of the moral law:

"Now, all that is found in self-love belongs to inclination, while all inclination rests on feeling, so that what infringes upon all the inclinations in self-love has, just by this, a necessary influence on feeling; thus we conceive how it is possible to see a priori that the moral law can exercise an effect on feeling, inasmuch as it excludes the inclinations and the propensity to make them the supreme practical condition…[]...- an effect which on

[70] "völlig a priori erkennen" (*CpV* 5:73)

the one side is merely *negative* but on the other side, and indeed with respect to the restricting ground of pure practical reason, is *positive*; and for this no special kind of feeling need be assumed, under the name of a practical or moral feeling preceding the moral law and serving its basis".

It might be argued that what is so remarkable about the final clause of this paragraph is that Kant seems to talk in a circular fashion: that is, he appears to be insisting that no special kind of feeling needs to be assumed in order to explain the moral law's effect, yet he tags the qualification that he is actually talking about a feeling that *precedes* the moral law. A sense of frustration might come over one: we accept readily that in the case of morality there is no feeling that takes priority over the force of the moral law on the will; such a case would be one of heteronomy, and, for Kant, it is autonomy that is the sole principle of all moral laws. We want to know what this curious feeling is that assists in rendering the will actively practical.

Kant's account of this two-sided effect of the moral law is convoluted. So far, it has proved very challenging to extract from his account whether there are two individual feelings involved which are inextricably linked, or whether there is simply one feeling which has these two very different features. On the one hand, he states that "...this feeling… is indeed called humiliation (intellectual contempt); but in relation to its positive ground, the law, it is at the same time called respect [reverence] for the law;" (*CpV* 5:75). But, on the other hand, within the same sentence he goes on to say "…there is indeed no feeling for this law, but inasmuch as it moves resistance out of the way, in the judgement of reason this removal of a hindrance is esteemed equivalent to a positive furthering of its causality". What does he mean that there is "no feeling for this law"? After all, at *CpV* 5:73, reverence is described as a positive *feeling* that is not of empirical origin, is cognised a priori, and whose ground is the law. And later, at *CpV* 5:79 he reaffirms this. Even more confusingly, in the following sentence of *CpV* 5:75, Kant seems to backtrack once again, declaring that "Because of this [positive furthering of its causality], this feeling can now also be called a feeling of respect [reverence] for the moral law, while on both grounds together it can be called *moral feeling*".

What is perhaps worth noting is that within this chapter Kant seems to look beyond a clinical dissection of the process of the determination of the will by the law to consider

the broader picture of *the effect of the consciousness of the moral law* on a rational subject, that person in virtue of whose existence pure practical reason can be the supreme lawgiver. On becoming conscious of the moral law within his or her will, this person will experience a very strange feeling, which comprises a mixture of what seems like pain and awe - a mixture, the differentiation of whose parts would require a delicacy of discernment that is likely to be unavailable to most finite beings. At this experiential level, regarding reverence as a unique "feeling of a rational subject affected by inclinations"(*CpV* 5:73), it is the effect that this feeling has on the person that is of interest, that is, whether it will prompt the agent to choose to act morally or not. I hold that it is when Kant is discussing the consciousness of the moral law within a potentially morally free agent that he wavers between alternatives as to how to describe the experience of this moral feeling: he repeatedly suggests "it can be called…"[71] e.g. *a moral feeling* or *reverence* for the law. This is most likely owing to the fact that it would be an act of oversimplification to distil the negative from the positive aspects of the effect of the moral law on the will, when they are so closely bound up together, and when the agent experiences them as if they were one.

That is, I hold that when Kant makes reference to the effect of *consciousness of the moral law* at *CpV* 5:75, he is employing another manner in which to describe the effect of the moral law on the will as an incentive. The use of the notion of consciousness accommodates further his account of how it seems, or what it feels like, to the imperfectly rational agent when the moral law makes its advent. And so it seems that Kant is interested in the effect of the moral law on the will at two levels:

1. What it achieves in terms of changing the dynamic or make-up of the will: "(..in the judgement of reason) this removal of a hindrance is esteemed equivalent to a positive furthering of its causality.." (*CpV* 5:75)

2. What feelings or dispositions it evokes within the agent in doing so, i.e. the combination of the negative effect (that is, the humiliation) caused by the removal of a hindrance and the accompanying positive effect (that is, the esteem) for the furthering of the law's causality.

[71] E.g. *CpV* 5:75 onwards.

The relationship between these two aspects of the effect of the moral law described in (1) above is of some interest. It seems that Kant would like the removal of the hindrance to the law to translate, almost, into a positive furthering of its causality. What must be remembered in order to grasp this relation is that the law is already active prior to the removal of the hindrance (indeed, it is the hindered will itself that is legislating); this removal, rather than causing the assumption of the moral law by the will, enables the possibility of a morally valuable determination to occur, given that the law was already at work. It is something like untying a tight collar in order to facilitate one's breathing - breathing was already happening, but it was hindered. Indeed, the very word 'hindrance' suggests a barrier that was getting in the way of something that was already happening. The moral incentive, therefore, does not *cause* the activity or causality of the moral law, it simply opens the possibility for the complete course of its causality i.e. the determination of a morally valuable maxim.

The feelings or dispositions allegedly evoked by the moral law, described in (2), appear to be in fact effects of the effect that the moral law has on the will i.e. secondary effects of the law. The negative feeling is an effect of the destructive behaviour of the law, and the positive feeling is an effect of the furthering of the causality of the law. What is more, these feelings, though referred to collectively by Kant as *moral feeling*[72], do not seem to be so closely and inextricably bound as the primary effects of the law on the will. Whilst the direct or primary effects come hand-in-hand, the secondary effects seem to behave very differently. Though they are both stirred up by the moral law, the negative feelings have their roots in sensibility, and the positive feeling has a non-empirical origin, emanating from within the will. Another point of contrast is that, whilst the removal of hindrances to the moral law is, in itself, regarded by Kant as a furthering of its causality, the evocation of the negative feeling of breaking off inclinations itself is not that which entails the epiphany of a positive feeling: the prospect of the positive causality is that which causes this esteem. It could be argued that the pain caused as an effect of the moral law's impact on the will must be separate and distinct from reverence for the law, as this pain or discomfort is often too acute for the finite agent to bear, and he regularly chooses to ignore the highly estimable moral law to satisfy his emotions.

[72] *CpV* 5:75

Is this right? Kant argues at *CpV* 5:74 that "[i]f something represented *as a determining ground of our will* humiliates us in our self-consciousness, it awakens *respect* [*reverence*] for itself insofar as it is positive and a determining ground". What must be observed from this statement is the fact that all Kant requires is that the negative side of the effects of the moral law merely *awakens*[73] reverence. This carries several implications. Firstly, to wake up X within the will must suggest that in some sense X's potential is already present in the will. This fits in with what Kant has said about reverence being caused by and directed at the moral law, which emanates from pure practical reason itself and is therefore already lurking within the will. Secondly, the very achievement of having woken up X does suggest that X is in some sense animate: although Kant is using figurative language, he is deliberately inculcating the idea that reverence is not an inert feeling: it is a candidate for a force that could be acted upon i.e. an incentive. This language, however, says nothing about whether or not reverence is going to take an active role – X could well be woken up and yet remain in a state of dozing slumber. And this leaves open again the possibility that the rational agent will not eventually choose to act upon the moral law. Hence, it might be argued that when Kant talks about *moral feeling*, he is talking about the combination of two opposing feelings, the negative one of which is most likely to be felt and bemoaned by its experiencer, the positive one of which may be detected less acutely. And this does seem reasonable, as all too often it seems that agents opt to satisfy their inclinations rather than do what we may deem to be moral, because their emotions are too overwhelming or point to the easy way out. But the positive feeling is, it seems, always going to be in some way present as a secondary effect of the moral law, and its essential purpose is described as follows:

"And so respect [reverence] for the law is not the incentive to morality; instead it is morality itself subjectively considered as an incentive inasmuch as pure practical reason, by rejecting all the claims of self-love in opposition with its own supplies authority to the law, which now alone has influence." (*CpV* 5:76)

What Kant wishes us to extract from his description of the epiphany of *moral feeling* within the will of a finite rational being is that the moral law functions at two levels. First and foremost, the moral law is a formal determining ground of action, providing objective, or practical laws that hold for the will of every rational being (*CpV* 5:19). But it

[73] "erweckt" (*CpV* 5:74)

is also a subjective determining ground "- that is, an incentive - to [moral] action 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" (*CpV* 5:75). It is because of the very combination of these two functions that the moral law can determine the will *immediately*. But even at *CpV* 5:75, Kant's words betray a lack of certainty that he has described adequately how the moral law can be its own incentive. Perhaps it worries him that the moral law seems to work so closely (albeit against) the pulls of sensibility. He emphasises the fact that there is no *antecedent* feeling in the subject that would be attuned to morality (ibidem)[74]; the feeling that does the work in the moral law's capacity as an incentive is the effect of the moral law. Furthermore, at this point, he stresses his belief that "...the incentive of the moral disposition must be free from any sensible condition"(ibidem). But is the moral incentive free in this way? Even Kant has to concede in the next line that *sensible feeling… is indeed the condition of that feeling that we call reverence* (even in spite of its unique origin), and as outlined above, reverence constitutes either a feature of, or the whole of, the effect of the moral law on the will, which in turn has been argued to be the moral incentive for imperfectly rational beings.

In order to straighten out this apparent paradox, certain distinctions may be of use. Firstly, with regard to moral feeling or reverence, we must distinguish its source, its cause and its conditions (i.e. what it depends on). Kant consistently holds that the cause determining reverence lies in pure practical reason (*CpV* 5:75), and because of this, moral feeling cannot be understood as *pathologically* effected but rather as *practically* effected. This aforementioned cause is, of course, the representation of the moral law within the will, which has its twofold effect, as I have described. As far as Kant's differentiation between the pathological and the practical goes, what must be noted is that the finite beings to whom the moral law issues its commands are all necessarily subject to inclination, and inclination in our natural and primary condition is always trying to get reason to collaborate with it and procure the objects of its desires[75]. That is, inclination and reason will always be found together, whether in alliance or opposition. It is because of this necessary relation that inclination is a condition for reverence for the moral law: without the initial, default tugs of inclination, there would be no requirement for an

[74] Any such feeling would result in an action devoid of moral worth, even if the action conforms to the moral law. See Theorem I, *CpV* 5:21.
[75] See *CpV* 5:20: "In practical cognition…the principles that one makes for oneself are not yet laws to which one is unavoidably subject, because reason, in the practical, has to do with the subject, namely with his faculty of desire, which by its special constitution can make various adjustments to the rule."

incentive to morality and therefore no requirement for *moral feeling*: a holy will requires no commands, and necessarily follows objective laws. Kant makes this very clear when he states that reverence presupposes both the sensibility and finitude of those on whom the moral law is imposing itself; indeed, reverence *requires* obstacles to practical reason in order to be brought to fruition (*CpV* 5:76). It can thus be understood that morality itself is the incentive to morality, in virtue of a. the presence of the capacity for reverence within an imperfect will and b. the moral law's ability to cause the ebullition of this feeling of reverence whose roots lie in a priori reason.

The central aim of this chapter was to showcase the essentiality of reverence to the possibility of the achievement of moral worth within the will of a finite and imperfectly rational being. Through my exploration of the function of reverence, I hope to have highlighted the significant role it plays in enabling the possibility of the practicality of reason; without reverence, Kant's moral theory would fail to pertain to the morals of men, and the supreme practical principle of the moral law would be out of our grasp. The capacity to feel reverence is that which enables a channel between our limited, tarnished, imperfect will and the purity of a principle whose complete adoption alone can possess moral value. It is by virtue of this fact that I hold reverence to be a crucial aspect of Kant's moral theory; its unavoidable importance brings with it a pressing need for the pursuit of an investigation into the ramifications of Kant's notion of *Achtung* within his moral theory.

CHAPTER III

Kant's Notion of Respect for Persons

In both the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* and *the Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant seems to employ the notion of "respect for persons" as a moral attitude adopted by a rational being towards himself, or others. What is most striking about this notion is that, although it has been historically treated as a concept of a feeling separate and distinct from Kant's "respect for law"[76], not only does it share the moral motive's name - *Achtung* - but the respect that one feels towards a person can be shown in some sense to mirror the effects that respect for law has on one's will[77]. In order to assess its role in human morality, it must be established what this respect for persons is, to whom exactly it is or should be directed, or from what it is or should be elicited. The association between *any* conception of Kant's respect and persons hinges on morality and moral worth, but the enterprise to reconcile the concepts as one, or to explain respect for persons in terms of respect for law (or vice versa), is immediately vulnerable to an impasse: on the one hand, respect is that which enables an imperfectly rational being to act morally, i.e. to have moral worth, and it is through the possibility of such an action that, for example, a human being can rightly be called a person: thus respect appears to be a necessary condition of, and therefore prior to, his personality. On the other hand, moral worth, or at the very least, the potential for moral worth, is that alone to which respect is due: thus personality appears to be the object of, and therefore prior to (and not caused by), the feeling of respect.

In order to make sense of, or to override, this apparent paradox, one might decide that it is obvious that Kant envisages two completely different kinds of respect: *respect as an incentive* to moral action – i.e. a feeling by means of which a human being can attain his personality; and *respect for persons* – i.e. a feeling towards those who demonstrate their personality. But then the question is triggered: if these are two separate and distinct

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[76] In this chapter, I purposefully translate *Achtung fürs Gesetz* as 'respect for the law' to highlight the fact that Kant employs the same term to describe both the moral incentive and respect for persons, leaving open the possibility of a proximity or union between the two concepts.

[77] Gary Banham approaches a unified account of Kant's respect by stating: "Kantian respect involves a legitimate inter-relation between persons and the law..." ('Kantian Respect' (2008), p.12). I strengthen this approach, with an account of the conditions of such an 'inter-relation'.

concepts, then how are they related to each other, and why does Kant so often appear to conflate them?[78] In this chapter, I examine what the attitude of respect for persons comprises, without presuming that Kant has in mind a concept completely alien to that of respect as an incentive to moral action. I start by investigating the differentiation in Kant's theory between a respect for persons as a simple recognition of moral worth, and a respect as an appraisal of a demonstration of moral worth[79], arguing that the former is, in some sense, an anticipation of the latter. I conclude that both types of respect for persons have an intimate conceptual link to that feeling which renders one conscious of a motivating ground to act morally. Such a conclusion only helps to reinforce my contention that *Achtung* is, for Kant, a key concept in every extension of human morality: respect is always, under all circumstances, a *reaction* to the moral law.

We may be tempted to assume that by the notion of "respect for persons", Kant simply wishes to propound the thesis that all persons deserve respect from each other, and that this involves treating others as having – in some sense - equal status to oneself; this may require simply refraining from infringing on the personal enterprises of others as far as possible, or it may require actively trying to help others sustain themselves in a state of, perhaps, well being or contentment. We may then invoke the second formulation of the Categorical Imperative as evidence for either thesis:

"So act that you use humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means."[80] (*G* 4:429).

Whilst it is surely the case that this rendering of the supreme principle of morality ultimately entails the principle of a duty of respect to all persons[81], it must be noted that

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[78] As I go on to illustrate, Kant embeds his discussion of respect for persons within his chapter on the incentives of pure practical reason (*CpV* 5:71-89), and appears therein to refer to *Achtung* as the same feeling, whether felt towards persons or the law.

[79] Stephen Darwall argues that there are two different kinds of respect – that of recognition of some feature or fact about an object that deserves respect, and that of a positive appraisal for perhaps the virtue of a person, or another sort of achievement. (Darwall, S. 'Two Kinds of Respect', *Ethics 88* (1977), 36-49). Whilst, as I show, Kant does pick out two such different notions of respect, I question whether they are so far removed from each other as has previously been assumed.

[80] This understanding of Kant's respect has contributed to the rise of a whole host of theories of liberty, justice and impartiality in the socio-political sphere e.g. Rawls' "A Theory of Justice" (Harvard University Press, 1971) and Nozick's "Anarchy, State and Utopia" (1974). An argument for the conceptual closeness of duties of respect and respect for persons aims to demonstrate that both concepts are grounded in *morality*: this may affect or undermine the justification of seeking the roots of modern day liberalism in Kant's notion of respect.

the concept of respect is not explicitly named in this formulation[82]. In Kant's moral philosophy, it does appear that a firm - perhaps gapingly wide - distinction is made between consciously treating others with respect as a duty, that is, adopting respect for others as a moral principle, and having, or experiencing, respect for persons[83]. Whilst it is the primarily the latter notion to which I devote attention in this chapter, one aim of my discussion is to lay the foundations for the construction of a picture of how Kant would wish the relationship between these two types of respect to be understood.

An underlying worry which pervades this chapter is the question of whether Kant's notion of respect for persons is practicable. In the Preface to the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant declares his aim to be to work out a pure moral philosophy, completely cleansed of everything empirical: he holds that a moral law, as a ground of obligation, must carry with it absolute necessity, and this means it holds not only for human beings but for all rational beings[84]. This entails that the ground of obligation "...must not be sought in the nature of the human being or in the circumstances of the world in which he is placed, but a priori simply in concepts of pure reason" (*G* 4:389). This departure from a consideration of a morality limited to humans and their world heralds the attribution of universality and necessity to the moral law, and defines morality itself as a specific activity within the pure will of a rational being[85]. That is, moral worth is only ever to be produced within the will of a rational being. The result of this seems to be that when we speak of a moral action, we are actually referring to the maxim decided upon by the agent and recognising its moral worth. A problem with such a clarification is the fact that we can never have insight into the ordering of motives governing the maxim of anyone else's will, and it is likely that our own introspection would on occasion fail to give us an accurate or reliable analysis of our own maxims: hence our judgements pertaining to the true motives of any action are bound to be prone to error, and our feeling of respect as an appraisal of action will be fallible.

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[81] This is acknowledged repeatedly by Kant, e.g."Every human being has a legitimate claim to respect [*Achtung*] from his fellow human beings and is in turn bound to respect every other." (*The Metaphysics of Morals* 6:462) I turn to such matters in my Chapter V.

[82] As Dennis Klimchuk (2003) points out, in the Doctrine of Virtue (*MdS* 6:462), duties of respect turn out to be one of two kinds of duties of virtue owed towards others and can therefore be regarded as a subset of morality, rather than morality itself. I examine such duties in my Chapter V.

[83] This distinction may disappear once we start to call others "persons" in Kant's technical sense of the word and with it may disappear the sense of respect on which neo-Kantians base their liberalism.

[84] *G* 4:389

[85] I present an interpretation of how Kant envisages this to be the case in my Chapter II.

As an antidote to the contention posed by the fallibility of any respect or esteem as a response to the moral worth of actions, I examine Kant's suggestions of advantages to human morality as a whole that the capacity for such a feeling might offer, such as the educational role that the experience of respect at even fictional moral deeds plays in encouraging a taste for morality in the young and unwise. Whilst, as I argued in Chapter II, Kant's metaphysics regarding morality renders the inclusion of respect (*Achtung*), as an incentive or motivating force within the imperfect will of a finite rational being, absolutely essential to even the possibility of that will's settling on a moral principle, I turn to an assessment of whether such a metaphysics could accommodate the application of that peculiarly moral respect elsewhere. That is, I consider a reading of Kant's moral theory, under which a moral agent's own capacity for respect for the law is brought to his consciousness as he makes certain morally sensitive judgements about himself, other beings, his own moral actions, and those of others – that is, judgements based on observations only possible through the medium of experience, and which therefore transgress the bounds of pure moral philosophy.

Personality, dignity, and two modes of respect

In Section II of the *Groundwork*, as preparation for his second main formulation of the Categorical Imperative, Kant stipulates that "*rational nature exists as an end in itself*." (*G* 4:428) A being that can be regarded as an 'end in itself' has an absolute value, that is, it contains a good will[86] – even if, in its human embodiment, it is besmirched by impurities. Kant explains that "morality is the condition under which alone a rational being can be an end in itself, since only through this is it possible to be a lawgiving member in the kingdom of ends."(*G* 4:435) Rational beings are morally free, and imperfectly rational beings have the potential for moral freedom, through which they are responsible for their actions and affirm their worth; that is, through acting morally, imperfectly rational beings render their wills (albeit temporarily) good:

"*Moral* personality is therefore nothing other than the freedom of a rational being under moral laws (whereas psychological personality is merely the ability to be conscious of one's identity in different conditions of one's existence)." (*MdS* 6:223)

[86] As described in the first chapter of the *Groundwork*, i.e. (*G* 4:393-7)

It is on the basis of this potential to attain one's *personality* - or as Kant also calls it, one's *humanity*[87] - that human beings are to regard themselves and be regarded by others as ends-in-themselves, and therefore to possess an unconditional and intrinsic worth, elevated above any price or currency, which Kant calls 'dignity[88]'. The encapsulation of such worth places such a being in a possible community of other equally valuable agents[89], and entails a demand that each is always treated in such a way as to uphold and observe its unconditional goodness. In contrast, beings which function solely according to the operation of natural laws, or which do not possess a morally fertile reason - for example, animals, birds, variously impaired human beings, and anthropomorphised machines[90] - in Kant's eyes merely have a relative worth, that is, a *price*, and they are called *things*. Whatever has a *price* can be substituted or exchanged for something else as its equivalent (*G* 4:434). Because of a thing's relative and conditional value, it may be used *simply as a means* to other purposes[91]. A 'thing' has no potential for moral freedom: its lack of practical reason and consequent inability to legislate the moral law entails that it is not a being with rights that must be fulfilled by the duties owed to it. What is more, because of its lack of freedom, no action can be imputed to it: 'things' are far removed from the realm of moral responsibility (*MdS* 6:223).

Crucial to my discussion is clarification of the fact that, whilst one may, by shorthand, refer to the dignity of persons, it is properly the *lawgiving* unique to personality to which Kant attributes dignity:

"For, nothing can have a worth other than that which the law determines for it. But the lawgiving itself, which determines all worth, must for that very reason have a dignity, that is, an unconditional, incomparable worth…" (*G* 4:436).

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87 E.g. (*CpV* 5:87-8)
88 "Also ist Sittlichkeit und die Menschheit, so fern sie derselben fähig ist, dasjenige, was allein Würde hat." "...morality, and humanity insofar as it is capable of morality, is that which alone has dignity." (*G* 4:435)
89 I.e. in a 'kingdom of ends', e.g. (*G* 4:435)
90 Here I refrain from debating the fairness of calling a human being with impaired practical reason, such as a baby, or a mentally unstable adult, a *thing*: my intention is to simply outline Kant's criteria for *persons* and *things*.
91 This must be done in a morally responsible manner: e.g. I would abuse and contravene duties to myself, by treating an animal badly on the basis that it is a mere thing, as I would be habituating my character to cruelty.

Here, it may be interpreted, Kant provides two aspects of morality to which we can correctly attribute moral worth, the first simply being an image or instantiation of the second. Firstly, moral worth can be attributed to an action, which is properly an attribution of worth to a maxim which has been directly grounded in the moral law. Secondly, we can attribute moral worth to the very lawgiving by which such a grounding takes place. Hence, where we speak of the moral goodness of an action, we are properly making reference to the purity of the agent's motive, and only thereby to the dignity of the agent. This clarification regarding the attribution of moral worth will be pivotal in working out how respect for persons relates to respect for law. It might reasonably be asked whether it is the *activity of* or *the capacity for* lawgiving which is said to have a dignity. If we define the will's capacity for lawgiving as its *freedom*, then we must remember that Kant holds that "...freedom and the will's own lawgiving are both autonomy and hence reciprocal concepts, and for this very reason one cannot be used to explain the other..." (*G* 4:450). Setting aside Kant's argument for how we can make sense of this apparent circle[92], it must simply be noted that:

"Autonomy is therefore the ground of the dignity of human nature and of every rational nature." (*G* 4:436)

How can a mere human being, or rational being, the imperfection of whose will lures him to view other beings and objects in the first place in terms of what *use* or *means* they might be to him, conceive of an unconditional worth, that is, of that boundless degree of value, called dignity, that is consummate with an end-in-itself? By what capacity is such a being able to appreciate or estimate the kind of worth that is not measurable in such worldly terms as utility or promised pleasure? As early as in the *Groundwork*, Kant firmly announces:

"...the word *respect*[93] alone provides a becoming expression for the estimate of it that a rational being must give." (*G* 4:436)

In what form can we present this worth, in order for it to be available to our understanding and esteem? How is it that we envisage this worth, which respect alone

[92] See *G* 4:450 and *G* 4:453.
[93] "...das Wort Achtung allein..." (*G* 4:436)

can estimate? One approach, in common parlance, that Kant suggests, is that we can reflect on such a worth in terms of its holiness:

"The moral law is *holy* (inviolable). A human being is indeed unholy enough but the *humanity* in his person must be holy to him." (*CpV* 5:87)

Hence to be able to "...[maintain] humanity in its proper dignity..."[94], one must be able to regard one's humanity as holy. Just as we have in us the ability to adopt a certain appropriate religious attitude towards what we regard as sacred and hallowed – such as reverence for God, perhaps - so Kant pinpoints the capacity, in beings whose wills are subject to the default pulls of inclination yet able to achieve moral freedom, for a certain type of regard for their humanity:

"...a human being, as belonging to both worlds, must regard his own nature in reference to his second and highest vocation only with reverence (*mit Verehrung*), and its laws with the highest respect (*mit der höchsten Achtung*)." (*CpV* 5:87)

It is instructive to note that in this description of how a human being must regard his own nature, Kant differentiates two objects: the vocation, i.e. the *personality*, of his nature, and the *laws* tied to that vocation. The appropriate regard for personality is named here as a type of 'honour', or - as Mary Gregor translates "*Verehrung*" - 'reverence'. "*Achtung*" is named as the appropriate response to the moral law, by which one achieves one's personality. And it is with this distinction in mind that we may infer the implication of Kant's statement that rational nature "...limits all choice (and is an object of respect[95])." (*G* 4:428) We might argue that it is the *laws* of rational nature that are the object of respect, and that the personality encompassed by rational nature should be regarded with an esteem or honour. On such a reading, we could maintain that *personality* and *dignity* are directly connected – that is, personality through its lawgiving provides the grounds for dignity; and that respect (*Achtung*) is only indirectly connected to these concepts, as it is directly a response to the moral law, whose activity is in itself a ground for personality. Hence lawgiving is that which entails dignity, but lawgiving is properly the activity of the moral law within practical reason, and the moral law is the true object of respect. With this in mind, we lay the foundation for the argument that it *is* a capacity for respect that

[94] (*CpV* 5:88)
[95] "...(und ein Gegenstand der Achtung ist.)" (*G* 4:428)

enables us to appreciate and esteem what is holy in a person, but respect directed at a presumed *person* is specifically directed at the moral law that the person must encompass.

Setting aside any flagrant complaints or issues that might beset one regarding calling a human being whose moral capacities are damaged or disabled - or even one's favourite household pet - *a thing*, let us return to the fact that, on Kant's view, whilst human beings have a moral personality and therefore a dignity, it is only through moral action that they *achieve* their personality: it is an aspect of themselves that can only be accessed through lawgiving[96]. Yet the 'Formula of Humanity as an end-in-itself' commands that one treats oneself and other human beings *as an end, never merely as a means*[97]; that is, one should not wait for (oneself or) others to reveal their personality and inner worth before treating them in a way that acknowledges and abides by that worth: one should work on the assumption that each and every human being is an end-in-itself or an embodiment of dignity. Indeed, others may never reveal their personality to us: our duty towards them is commanded by a law which holds as necessary, universal, and knowable a priori, therefore standing outside of the contingency of experience. Hence, Kant sets out two ways in which we can ascribe personality to a human being (or other imperfectly rational being). On the one hand, it is a requirement of duty to *presume* the dignity of those who seem to be sensible or likely candidates for moral personality, and as soon as a being is so demarcated as possessing dignity, to limit our actions towards that being in a way that recognises latent unconditional worth. Yet, on the other hand, Kant argues, we are able to *judge* (albeit fallibly) that we ourselves and others possess dignity and personality, by bearing witness to moral action, and experiencing a certain morally sensitive response to it.

That personality and its accompanying dignity can be ascribed to a being in these two different ways helps to explain what I shall call Kant's two *modes* of having respect for an imperfectly rational being. The first *mode* simply denotes the morally required response to whom we *presume*[98] to be a person. Kant encourages us to make a presumption about all human beings: "...I say that the human being and in general every rational being *exists* as an end in itself"[99]. Because we are presuming that a human being is an end in itself, we

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[96] See e.g. *CpV* 5:87.
[97] (*G* 4:429)
[98] By 'presume', I mean to suppose that something is the case without the advance provision or promise of empirical evidence.
[99] (*G* 4:428)

must, on the basis of the argument above, regard him or her as being lawgiving and therefore the embodiment of the moral law – the specific object of respect: we must therefore adopt an attitude of respect for that person, and this respect, Kant says, is *for a mere idea*: "And just in this lies the paradox that the mere dignity of humanity as rational nature, without any other end or advantage to be attained by it – hence *respect for a mere idea*[100] – is yet to serve as an inflexible precept of the will..." (*G* 4:439). (I return to this first mode of respect later in my discussion.) The second *mode* of having respect for an imperfectly rational being is that of *feeling respect* for a person. Where we *witness* what we judge to be an example of moral goodness, that is, in effect, an achievement of personality – whether in ourselves or others - we *feel* respect for the person acting.

Respect for persons as an involuntary feeling

"*Respect* is always directed only to persons, never to things" (*CpV* 5:76).

Whilst what I called the first mode of respect for a person comprises an *attitude* towards oneself or others *deliberately adopted* and based on a presumption, required by duty, about that being's intrinsic worth, the second mode of having respect for a person comprises the experience of a *feeling* caused at the witnessing of his or her apparent moral action. Focusing now on this second mode, I aim to highlight that just as respect for law, as examined in my previous chapters, is inextricably linked to the moral law and one's consciousness of it, so respect as a *feeling* towards persons must be understood as linked - although indirectly - to the part of a human being or other rational agent through which he is truly a person; that is, I demonstrate that, as a response to the perceived observation of the causality of the moral law, a human being's involuntary reaction to the appearance of moral action - *respect for persons* - can ultimately be traced to his inbuilt ability to appreciate the moral law.

In my Chapter I, I suggested that as early as the first paragraph of *Groundwork I*, Kant hints at a faculty that we as moral agents have for appraising what is and what is not morally good, in ourselves and in others, and that it might be inferred that this presages the introduction of an attitude of *respect*, not directly for the moral law, but towards

[100] "...die Achtung für eine bloße Idee..." (*G* 4:439)

actions or their agents. That Kant reaches to the image of "an impartial rational spectator"[101] who "...*can take no delight*[102] in the uninterrupted prosperity of a being graced with no feature of a pure and good will..."(*G* 4:393) (my italics) immediately brings into play the possibility of a rightful or appropriate *moral attitude* that agent can hold towards another: from the offset, Kant depicts moral action and its worth, far from being entirely inaccessible to the observation of others, as being – in some sense – obvious and as stimulating a specific response. Furthermore, as I went on to outline, Kant holds that qualities of the mind and temperament, which may appear conducive to the work of a good will, such as sound judgement and self-control, have "no inner unconditional worth but always presuppose a good will, which limits the *esteem* one otherwise rightly has for them and does not permit their being taken as absolutely good" (*G* 4:394).

An implication of this example of the impartial rational spectator's reaction may foretell that Kant has in mind a certain type of esteem available to this spectator that can only be elicited by the appearance of the underlying presence of a good will. Indeed, the spectator's reaction *is* commensurate with the perceived lack of moral worth of the prospering being whom he observes; and it is implied that, had the prospering being possessed a trace of a good will, the spectator would have felt some delight. What is more, it can further be argued that a reaction to moral worth need not merely pertain to the actions of others – it may pertain to one's own action. As I touched upon in Chapter I, Kant makes a remark that reason, in its production of moral worth, "...*is capable only of its own kind of satisfaction*, namely from fulfilling an end which in turn only reason determines, even if this should be combined with many infringements upon the ends of inclination" (*G* 4:396)(my italics). This allusion to a satisfaction, born of reason as a reaction to its own achievement of moral worth, may turn out to be a type of self-esteem or self-respect[103]: how the very activity of the will relates to the prompting of respect for persons is a concern of what follows.

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[101] "ein vernünftiger unparteiischer Zuschauer" (*G* 4:393). It could be argued that Kant's reference to this impartial rational spectator is simply an attempt to engage the attention of moral sense theorists. Whilst he ultimately seeks to undermine the moral sense theorists, who determine what is good or evil only by its immediate relation to feeling (and thus uphold the heteronomy of practical reason), here he does seem to suggest that such a spectator's reaction would correspond to the moral status of the person who was being observed.

[102] "...nimmermehr ein Wohlgefallen haben kann...". Note that Kant does not say that this impartial rational spectators *takes no delight* or *may take no delight*: that he *can take no delight* might suggest that it would be impossible for him to do so.

[103] This 'satisfaction' is admittedly mysterious: its relevance here is owing to the fact that it is reminiscent both of respect for law, in that it is born of reason and yet reminiscent of a state of the emotions, and of respect for persons, in that it is a kind of esteem whose object is moral worth.

These early pictures might indicate or at least augur the existence of a rightful esteem held for the unconditioned good, and thus can fruitfully be compared with Kant's description of respect for persons in Chapter III of the *Analytic* of the *Second Critique*. He remarks that "A human being can… be an object of my love, fear, or admiration even to amazement and yet not be an object of respect. His jocular humor, his courage and strength, the power he has by his rank among others, could inspire me with feelings of this kind even though an inner respect toward him is lacking." (*CpV* 5:76) Kant's attitude of respect here is not directed towards any non-moral feats of achievement, or outstanding behaviour, nor to any particular non-moral qualities or strengths of any human being. It has a particular object, and where that object is lacking, so too respect is lacking. It is this involuntary and *felt* reaction, in the form of an esteem, that I described as the second *mode* of having respect for persons: Kant has in mind a facility possessed by imperfectly rational beings for experiencing a moral kind of esteem at an action ostensibly (yet possibly not) underpinned by the unconditional worth of a good will. Such a mechanism of reacting to moral actions may capture the type of estimation that Kant has in mind when he describes a moral judgement whereby the concept of good will "...always takes first place in estimating the total worth of our actions and constitutes the condition of all the rest" (*G* 4:397). Indeed, I argue that the concept of respect for persons requires the presence of (at least an imperfectly) good will in both the one who feels respect, and the one to which respect is directed.

Kant illustrates this moral attitude, and its object, by quoting Bernard de Fontenelle who said "*I bow before an eminent man, but my spirit does not bow.*" (*CpV* 5:76) A man's eminence in isolation is morally irrelevant – he could be eminent because of past misdeamours, as well as for the noblest of deeds, hence this quality is not an object which elicits the moral attitude of respect, which Kant here describes in terms of the metaphorical bowing of one's spirit. He adds that if he perceives uprightness of character in a humble man, that is, a moral worth instantiated by moral action within the will, then "*my spirit bows*, whether I want it or whether I do not"; this occurs even if at the very same time he holds his head up "ever so high" to maintain his superior position socially.

Two points here are of interest. Firstly, Kant declares that respect for a person, comprising a response - such as one's spirit bowing - at the another's uprightness of

character, or goodness in deed, is a "tribute"[104] which "we cannot refuse to pay" (*CpV* 5:77). Whilst we may need to employ our judgement to pick out examples of moral action, as soon as we recognise (or think we recognise) an action betraying a goodness of will as its ground, it is not a matter of choice as to whether or not we experience respect for its agent. One might wonder why Kant describes a feeling of respect at another's action as a "*tribute*" to moral merit: such language seems to carry overtones that this reaction is a service or payment in return for what has been earned – perhaps it even carries religious connotations, the term evoking the notion of praise and worship for a deserving God. The use of the concept of a tribute reinforces that respect has an object, and is bestowed upon that object: it also may help to imply that the object, in some way, gives rise to what is given in tribute, just as, for example, God's goodness is supposed to precede the worship and prayer directed to him. The second point, returning to such respect for persons, is that when we do experience this involuntary feeling, it is a matter of choice as to whether or not we show that respect, or act upon that respect: "we may indeed withhold it…outwardly but we still cannot help feeling it inwardly" (*CpV* 5:77). That respect for persons presents us with such a dilemma – the question of whether we show or hide our respect – demonstrates that this attitude is a springboard for choice, and perhaps even for action.

Degrees of respect and the absolute value of dignity

Quite surprisingly, it seems, Kant's notion of 'respect for persons', far from being one of adopting equal treatment and impartiality towards all our fellow human beings, is more of a moral attitude that is contingent upon the presumed[105] presence of the obedience to the command of the moral law and therefore upon the presumed achievement of moral worth within one's own will or that of another rational being[106]. Because of this, it is clear that the respect one feels for a person can vary in agreement with the frequency with

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[104] "Achtung ist ein Tribut, den wir dem Verdienste nicht verweigern können, wir mögen wollen oder nicht..." (*CpV* 5:77)

[105] We may easily be mistaken about the moral worth of our own maxim, or that formulated by another person.

[106] I therefore do not take this as the type of 'ethical respect' described by Andrews Reath (2006, p.13) which is justified simply by one's possession of certain rational and moral capabilities and not by anything in particular that one has done with them. Whilst it is certainly not the particulars of one's moral action that renders one an object of respect, nor is it simply one's capacity for being moral: it is rather one's legislation of the moral law and thereby one's moral action that renders one a genuine object of respect.

which that person acts morally. But it must be asked whether we can read into Kant's argument that the *degree* of respect one might experience for a person can differ. If it can be shown to differ, and because we have no control over feeling respect at our judgement that an action is good, then this must suggest that from the observation of one apparently good action to another, one makes distinctions in the degree of goodness displayed. Yet this would entail that the direct object of respect for persons is something that can vary - that is, something measurable. *Prima facie*, respect for persons does seem to admit of degrees. For instance, Kant describes feeling respect for a humble man, when he perceives in him "...uprightness of character in a higher degree than I am aware of in myself' (*CpV* 5:77). But is it implied here that Kant feels a more intense respect for that man than for himself because that man displays the achievement of a greater *degree* of goodness? Surely the thought that someone contains a greater degree of goodness would lead to a conclusion that this man possesses *more dignity*?[107] A reading whereby a difference in the degree of respect felt towards a person hinges on the degree of dignity which they espouse would surely have the bizarre consequence that we are to admit of degrees of persons. In horror at such a consequence, and remembering that dignity is beyond all measure because it is beyond all worth, we might return to the view that, in our observation of an agent's action, we either feel respect for a person, or we do not, and this simply depends on the manifestation of the moral law by an action exemplifying it.

It is through such an understanding of Kant's respect that we can make sense of his claim that "By a lie a human being throws away and, as it were[108], annihilates his dignity" (*MdS* 6:429). Kant qualifies the description of the throwing away of one's dignity with the adverb "*gleichsam*" or "as it were", to reinforce the subjunctive mood of this statement. That is, a human being always contains an underlying potential for personality, that is, an ability to be lawgiving and moral: this can never be removed or instilled by action. What can be removed or instilled is the achievement of personality: it is through doing one's duty that one reaches such moral sublimity and dignity, yet such an achievement can only ever consist in a transient connection with one's higher self. Kant often reminds us that "Virtue is always *in progress* and yet always starts *from the beginning*"

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[107] Kant does seem to admit of degrees of virtue, i.e. when he describes a "moderately honourable man" at *CpV* 5:88; yet - as already discussed - he defines dignity as an "unconditional incomparable worth" (*G* 4:436). I go on to discuss the implications of these points.

[108] "*gleichsam*" (*MdS* 6:429)

(*MdS* 6:409): a human being, for example, can never permanently redeem his imperfectly rational will, as its imperfections are due to that being's default connection to the impulses of his inclinations, and to the finitude of his will. Every time he exerts his freedom to act morally, he is once again starting afresh in briefly acting *as a person*, rendering his practical reason temporarily pure by legislating and obeying the moral law which is the rightful object of respect.

The fallibility of respect for persons

Thus it is the case that I may or may not feel respect for someone, depending on his or her current moral status. It seems risky, however, to ally what is a peculiarly moral attitude with our perception of what we judge to be moral. After all, in his elucidation of what it is to act from duty, Kant avows that "…it is absolutely impossible by means of experience to make out with complete certainty a single case in which the maxim of an action otherwise in conformity with duty rested simply on moral grounds and on the representation of one's duty." (*G* 4:407) In the light of this impossibility to differentiate an act that is done for the sake of the law from an action simply in conformity with what the law prescribes, it seems that if respect is a tribute that one cannot refuse to pay to moral merit then, one might argue, *either* the attitude of respect can override this impossibility somehow (perhaps by being analogous to an instinct that responds to morality alone) *or* that this notion of respect for persons is fallible: although the object of respect is always the law of which a person gives an example, because of the mediation of respect through experience, we may make mistakes when judging what is, and what is not, an action done for the sake of the law.

If we accept the notion of respect for persons that I have offered, and if we grant this insurmountable obstacle that experience and the outside world places between such respect and its true object, then we might decide to restrict respect for persons to self-respect. After all, self-respect would not need to step outside of the bounds of the agent's own reasoning powers and would surely dodge these obstacles: indeed, of self-respect, Kant says that the law within a human being "unavoidably forces from him *respect* for his own being" (*MdS* 6:403). Kant provides several examples of self-respect: he expounds "Has not every even moderately honorable man sometimes found that he has

abstained from an otherwise harmless lie by which he could either have extricated himself from a troublesome affair or even procured some advantage for a beloved and deserving friend, *solely in order not to have to despise himself secretly in his own eyes*?" (*CpV* 5:88)(my italics) It seems to be the case that in refraining from acting contrary to duty, and in overcoming the temptations to transgress duty, even when no one else would ever know that one had acted morally or not, one experiences a moral attitude towards one's action to which a moral importance and choiceworthiness is attached. And such an esteem is dependent on a man's knowledge that he is upholding an example of the moral law. But, once again, Kant is pessimistic about even the possibility of such an accurate appraisal of one's own motives:

"It is indeed sometimes the case that with the keenest self-examination we find nothing besides the moral ground of duty that could have been powerful enough to move us to this or that good action and to so great a sacrifice; but from this it cannot be inferred with certainty that no covert impulse of self-love, under the mere pretence of that idea, was not actually the real determining cause of the will". (*G* 4:407)

The supposed limits to the educational role of "respect for persons"

So where does this leave us? If we can never be certain about the exact ordering of motives in the maxims of our will or the will of another, then what is the philosophical significance or import of the sort of respect for ourselves or others that Kant refers to as a tribute we cannot refuse to pay? What is the role of respect for persons, if it is not to appraise a being's moral action and to affirm their underlying personality? Any hope that we possess a faculty for a kind of moral sense or perception towards ourselves and others that is *directly* sensitive to the achievement of moral worth, on which one can rely in order to make or justify our moral judgements, or to which we might appeal in order to work out what duty requires, is guaranteed to encounter the problem about which Kant warns us at the beginning of the *Groundwork*: as soon as we start to mix empirical observations which strictly belong to practical anthropology with the pure part of philosophy on which his moral theory is based, we will meet with confusion and corruption[109]. We must never lose sight of Kant's central doctrine that reason, by itself,

[109] *G* 4:390

and independently of all appearances commands what ought to be done. This fact brings with it the consequence that reason commands "...actions of which the world has perhaps so far given no example, and whose very *practicability* might be very much doubted by one who bases everything on experience..." (*G* 4:408). Therefore it cannot be held that it is through a feeling of respect based on the observation of moral action that we can ground our moral knowledge and work out what the moral law commands.

As a first step towards an argument which could redeem Kant's respect for persons as a useful aspect of his moral philosophy, we might relinquish the very need for a capacity within imperfectly rational beings for an infallible sensitivity towards the moral goodness of one's own actions or those of others, and argue that, although respect for persons might not show us what morality constitutes, or the practicability of the sum of moral action, it might act as an inspiration for us to try to be moral. Indeed, Kant celebrates the educational power that can be attained through our capacity to feel respect for persons. He suggests that "...frequent practice in knowing good conduct in all its purity and approving it [or]…marking with regret or contempt the least deviation from it…will leave behind a lasting impression of esteem on the one hand and disgust on the other, which by mere habituation, repeatedly looking on such actions as deserving approval or censure, would make a good foundation for uprightness in the future conduct of life" (*CpV* 5:154). Such a role of respect appears to be useful regardless of the fallibility of respect for persons, and its limitations in showing us which moral actions are possible.

Notably, although Kant speaks of this exercise in *knowing* good conduct - as if he were talking about the contemplation of actual actions in the real world - he has in mind the practice of examining examples of actions from duty in histories and biographies. Even with regard to these examples, Kant is conscious of the possibility of the misrepresentation of the truthful ordering of an agent's motives, yet he steers us to the belief that such an accuracy is unnecessary to the purpose of respect, stating "…if the truthfulness of all examples were disputed and the purity of all human virtue denied, human virtue might in the end be held as a mere phantom, and so all striving toward it would be deprecated as vain affectation and delusive self-conceit." (*CpV* 5:154) Hence, in this educational role, the capacity for respect for persons need not be stirred or stimulated by examples of moral action which are grounded in fact - the examples can be merely fictional; what matters is that they arouse in us an esteem for moral action.

What is illuminated through this preliminary sketch of the educational role of respect for persons is that its proper object is not to be found in experience: I now turn to a consideration that, while examples of moral actions trigger what Kant calls 'respect for persons', our ability to feel respect at an example of the law is owing to the same capacity by which we feel respect for law. That is, we cannot contemplate any example of the moral law (whether or not the action through which the example is demonstrated is truly done *from duty*) without a prior faculty for consciousness of the moral law within our own will. As soon as we access this consciousness of the moral law, we inevitably feel the effect of the law on the will – we feel respect for law. We therefore somehow project or apply this respect to the example of the law which we observe in another. Furthermore, this feeling of respect for law, in turn, makes us aware of the practicality of our own reason, and it is in this regard that moral judgements about other persons can inspire in us an awareness of a motive to act morally.

Respect for Persons and its Relation to Respect for Law: the motivating power of Kant's 'Achtung'

"Any respect for a person is properly only respect for the law (of integrity and so forth) of which he gives us an example." (*G* fn 4:401)

"This respect, then, which we show to such a person (strictly speaking to the law that his example holds before us) is not mere admiration..." (*CpV* 5:78)

The two statements above appear to preclude any entitlement to hail respect for the law and respect for persons as completely alien concepts. Their force does not seem to be that, on Kant's view, if one respects the law, then automatically one respects persons (although this entailment may hold). He seems to be claiming that we may adopt a moral attitude called respect towards a person, but on close inspection, this respect will always turn out to be a moral regard for the moral law and its causality. I argue that, in fact, respect for persons, as a feeling based on a judgement that a person's action is morally good, is an attitude which - although *ostensibly* directed towards a person, and *more precisely* whose object is the law exemplified by that person's action - is ultimately elicited by the

capacity of one's own will to generate its own goodness: and that, because of this, respect for persons is linked to one's ability to feel respect for the law.

A way of demonstrating this link is, I suggest, through a more basic reading of the educational role of Kant's respect for persons. This role, I hold, is hinted upon in Kant's ready affirmation that the fallibility of a moral respect felt for a person is irrelevant to its function. He writes:

"...since in human beings all good is defective, the law made intuitive by an example[110] still strikes down my pride, the standard being furnished by the man I see before me whose impurity, such as it may be, is not so well known to me as is my own who therefore appears to me in a purer light." (*CpV* 5:77)

What is made very clear here is that respect for a person does not hinge on any *actual* achievement of moral worth: in respecting John for helping an old lady out on his day off, I need not be right about John's true motives. His action and my judgement about it have a *morally educating effect* or *influence* on me regardless of whether he actually turns out to be ruthlessly legacy hunting. It can be illustrated that respect for persons comprises a moral attitude effected by the appearance of the *workings* of morality, whether in one's own will or that of another. Kant sets out to explain why it is that his spirit bows when he encounters uprightness of character in another, especially if he himself is aware of a lack of such uprightness in himself. He explains, "His example holds before me a law that strikes down my self-conceit when I compare it with my conduct[111], and I see observance of that law and hence its *practicability* proved before me in fact[112]" (*CpV* 5:77). These words directly parallel Kant's account of the mechanism of the moral incentive, as set out in my Chapter II. Within the will of an imperfectly rational agent, Kant describes that the moral law "...*strikes down* self-conceit altogether" (*CpV* 5:73). Where self-love is described by Kant as being a predominant regard for oneself, that is, a propensity to satisfy one's inclinations and desires, self-conceit is an extreme arrogance where self-love makes itself lawgiving and poses as the unconditional practical principle. This parallel

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[110] "...das Gesetz, durch ein Beispiel anschaulich gemacht.." (*CpV* 5:77) Gregor translates "*anschaulich*" as "intuitive" which might invite a reading whereby there is available to us a sense that can *intuit* the law. A less misleading translation, I suggest, would run: "The law made *manifest* by an example..."

[111] Kant qualifies this statement with the fact that even if I am aware of a similar degree of uprightness in myself. "...the respect remains (die Achtung bleibt doch)". (*CpV* 5:77)

[112] "durch die That" can be translated more helpfully as "through the deed". (*CpV* 5:77)

between respect for persons and respect for law is so strong that Kant appears explicitly to refer to this feeling *as the same* in both cases. He writes:

"*So little* is respect a feeling of *pleasure* that we give way to it only reluctantly with regard to a human being. We try to discover something that could lighten the burden of it for us, some fault in him to compensate us for the humiliation that comes upon us through such an example...[...] ...Even the moral law itself in its *solemn majesty* is exposed to this striving to resist respect for it." (*CpV* 5:77)

It is undeniable that here Kant's concepts of the feeling of respect for law and that of respect for persons converge: on the one hand, the feeling of respect can be experienced "with regard to a human being"[113], that is, owing to his example of the moral law, and on the other hand, this feeling can be experienced directly for the law. The experience of this feeling, whether stimulated by an example of the law, or by the law within one's own will, is not a matter of choice, and owing to the humiliation it causes, our first reaction is to strive against it. In spite of this clear indication of a convergence between respect for law and respect for persons, a significant difference does obtain between them. Respect for law is a reaction to the moral law, when one is in the process of settling on a maxim pertaining to a possible moral action: respect is *immediately* felt and directly caused by the law as its effect on the will as the moral incentive. Respect for persons is a feeling experienced at the observation of supposed moral actions: a judgement regarding the goodness of an action brings with it a consciousness of the form of the moral law. In order to recognise what one deems to be an example of the moral law in action, one must be able to conceive of the moral law within one's own will: a consciousness of the moral law within one's own will is not possible without an accompanying consciousness of one's capacity to be lawgiving. Such consciousness consists in respect for law[114]. Hence the feeling of respect for a person has its roots in the practicality of one's own reason, and the respect that is felt at the consideration of the moral law, and then projected onto the person who exemplifies this law in action.

On this reading, respect for persons is a feeling of esteem that is grounded in our capacity to be conscious of the moral law: whilst the feeling stems from the same

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113 "...in Ansehung eines Menschen..." (*CpV* 5:77)

114 "As the effect of consciousness of the moral law...[]... this feeling...in relation to its positive ground, the law,...is at the same time called respect for the law." (*CpV* 5:75)

capacity in both of its forms, the implications of the fact that it can be *directly* stimulated by the moral law within the will, or *indirectly* stimulated by the observation of a person must be highlighted. In both the case of respect for another's uprightness of character, and respect as an incentive within one's own will, this attitude seems to make its experiencer aware of his own ability to perform a moral action. The primary step of its influence seems to be the same in both cases: *the correction of the false claims of self-conceit occurs*[115]. One could, however, argue that the proof of the practicability of the moral action is different in form – that whilst in the case of observing an example of a moral action, one simply sees that the deed, at least in conformity with duty, would be achievable in practice, when respect for the law is at work as an incentive within one's will, one somehow *senses* and becomes aware of one's ability to decide on a maxim for the sake of duty:

"...once one has laid self-conceit aside and allowed practical influence to that respect[116], one can in turn never get enough of contemplating the majesty of this law, and the soul believes itself elevated in proportion as it sees the holy elevated above itself and its frail nature." (*CpV* 5:77)

On this narrow reading, respect for persons would merely produce, as an effect of its influence, an awareness that I can perform an action that conforms with morality – in effect, merely that I can mimic the outward appearance of moral action. But Kant's notion of respect for persons is not a feeling which we experience as perhaps a pleasurable recognition that a morally permissible action is possible, or a passing esteem for a man who appears to have acted morally: respect for persons contains a motivating power. Kant goes so far as to say that the witness of a truly moral action may be raised "from mere approval to admiration, from that to amazement, and finally to the greatest veneration[117] and a lively wish that he himself could be such a man" (*CpV* 5:156). The word used for "veneration" – "Verehrung" echoes the term Kant uses for the appropriate human attitude towards one's higher vocation. This is a term used for an

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[115] Andrews Reath (2006) argues that respect, in striking down self-conceit, effects a devaluing not just of particular desires, but of a part of one's person. This is not the case: respect deters one from placing absolute value on the part of oneself that is connected to nature, by encouraging one to access the absolute value of personality, i.e. dignity, through moral action.
[116] "...jener Achtung praktischen Einfluß verstattet hat..." (*CpV* 5:77)
[117] "...endlich bis zur größten Verehrung..." (*CpV* 5:156)

attitude that Kant envisages as accompanying a feeling of respect for the laws that are tied to one's personality.

As a moral attitude, respect for persons has its roots in our ability to feel esteem for the moral law. Having judged that an action is morally good, I feel respect for the agent owing to what I imagine to be the presence of the moral motive at work in that agent:

"All the admiration, and even the endeavor to resemble this character, here rests wholly on the purity of the moral principle...[] ..[I]n that admired action, if the motive from which it was done was esteem for one's duty, then it is just this respect for the law[118] that straightaway has the greatest force on the mind of a spectator..." (*CpV* 5:156-6)

If we acknowledge Kant's clear statement here that the judgement *that a person's motive was respect for the law* can, in some way, exert a force on the mind of a *spectator*, then we draw closer to establishing the proper relationship between respect for law and respect for persons. In the 'Doctrine of Method'[119] of the *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant writes of two closely bound up aspects of the function of the pure moral motive: firstly, it is the only motive that can *ground a character*, that is, it is through respect alone that an impure will can determine maxims as if it were purely practical. Secondly, this motive "...teaches the human being to feel his own dignity - gives his mind power, unexpected even by himself, to tear himself away from all sensible attachments so far as they want to rule over him and to find a rich compensation for the sacrifice he makes in the independence of his rational nature and the greatness of soul to which he sees that he is called." (*CpV* 5:152) Hence respect for law within an imperfectly rational will not only enables a human being to *act* from duty, but it somehow encourages that being to *feel his own dignity*, that is, to feel the unconditional worth of that aspect of him that is lawgiving.

As Kant writes in a footnote, "If one examines accurately the concept of respect for persons...one becomes aware that it always rests on a consciousness of a duty which an example holds before us, and that, accordingly, respect can never have any but a moral ground..." (*CpV* 5:81) Hence it becomes apparent that when Kant describes that moral actions, such as fidelity in promises and benevolence for the sake of duty "present the

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[118] "...diese Achtung fürs Gesetz..." (*CpV* (5:157)
[119] (*CpV* 5:151-163)

will that practises them as the object of an immediate respect[120]" (*G* 4:435), he means that the person containing this will is demonstrating a law, the consciousness of which is for us immediately an object of respect. The conceptual connection between respect for law and respect for persons is at last clear: *Achtung* is a feeling *always caused by the moral law* and by which we imperfectly rational beings are conscious of the causality of our will, and thereby of the dignity of our own personality. When one makes a judgement that a person has acted morally, one allows the example of the moral law into one's consciousness. This arouses a feeling of respect for law. We then project the force of feeling of respect for law onto that person who stimulated our recognition of the moral law in the first place. Through this experience of feeling respect for law, we cannot help but be reminded of our own causality as moral beings. It is in this that *respect for a person* is a feeling that embodies a motivating power:

"We have ...shown above how neither fear nor inclination but simply respect for the law is that incentive which can give actions a moral worth. Our own will insofar as it would act under the condition of a possible giving of universal law through its maxims – this will possible for us in idea – is the proper object of respect; and the dignity of humanity consists just in this capacity to give universal law, though with the condition of also being itself subject to this very lawgiving." (*G* 4:440)

To sum up: it is no accident that Kant briefly discusses respect for persons in the midst of his detailed account of respect within the will as the moral incentive in Chapter III of the *Analytic* of the *Second Critique*. A respect for persons understood as a moral feeling, based on a judgement about a moral action, is directed *at* a human being but is properly elicited by one's consciousness of the moral law[121].

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[120] "...als Gegenstand einer unmittelbaren Achtung dar..." (*G* 4:435)

[121] I presented an early version of this chapter at the One-Day Kant Conference at the Department of History and Philosophy of Science, University of Cambridge, 1 May 2009.

CHAPTER IV

The Moral Predispositions

Introductory remarks about duty and its interdependent relationship with respect.

Kant's vision of duty could be said to be prismatic. That is, though it has a central core, its extension is many faceted, and its characteristics can only be viewed discretely[122] through these facets, just as a light shone through a prism only reveals one impression of an object set within it. Yet at whichever angle of duty one chooses to focus - whether at its abstraction, its application, its reception or its particulars - one soon stumbles upon a concept named *Achtung*, a word used to subsume features of a number of individual elements involved in human morality. Whilst in the case of duty, it is assumed that there is one overarching, all-encompassing notion, from which all subsidiary notions are ultimately derived, the question as to whether or not there is a fundamental concept to which each manifestation called *Achtung* can be traced has yet to be fully examined and satisfied with an answer.

It has, over the years, been readily assumed that the term is simply a homonym, the exact same word being used to denote a series of different things. One justification of this view lies in the argument that Kant's provision of a selection of Latin terms to denote the different roles of *Achtung*[123] entails that he is dealing with concepts which are separate and distinct. Yet, even a cursory examination of Kant's handling of respect or reverence (*Achtung),* whether in the context of moral motivation, of its form as an attitude towards others, or as a requirement of a certain treatment of persons, reveals that these concepts are far from alien to each other, and are often interchanged by Kant in a surprising manner: Kant's notion of duty is suffused with notions of respect, whose entanglement

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[122] That is, there seem to be a number of fixed perspectives through which we can examine the concept of duty, i.e. from the point of view of its propositions, its subjects, their predispositions, its objects, their rights, its mechanism, and its particular instances. Each of these aspects can be examined in a manner that to a certain extent is individually distinct from the others. Therefore, to form a unified vision of Kant's notion of duty would require a mental exercise much like trying to hold in one's mind at the same time a vision of all angles of an object set within a many-sided prism.

[123] Kant writes of '*reverentia*' when describing one's feeling for the moral law within himself (*MdS* 6:402), and of '*observantia aliis praestanda*' to denote duties of respect (*MdS* 6:452).

and befuddlement points to a possibility that its philosophical reaches have been obscured.

Nowhere is Kant's flexibility in the use of the term *Achtung* more apparent than in his *Metaphysics of Morals*, where respect appears in manifold guises - as a prerequisite to duty, the incentive to duty, the basis of certain duties, and the actual requirement necessitated by these duties. In Chapters IV and V, I unravel the various facets of duty and their accompanying notions of respect, starting with the subjective conditions within the will, moving on to the duties of self-respect, and then to duties of respect for others. I try to show that these notions of respect may share common roots just as the many facets of duty point to a central concept. As a concluding section, I examine another type of respect present in Kant's philosophy that is effected through duties of right, a respect which is never referred to as *Achtung* and which has different conceptual roots from it. I argue that the depiction of this alternative type of respect throws the possibility of the shared ancestry of all forms of Kant's *Achtung* into relief.

The puzzle of Kant's moral endowments; duty and respect within the will

Duty, for Kant, is tied to a particular type of rational being, one that is 'unholy enough[124]' to break the moral law, yet who recognises its authority. In all cases of duty, such beings are involved, either as agents, potential agents, recipients or deserving causes, and we can examine duty through its relation to these beings. The essence of duty is captured in the *Groundwork* when Kant states that the concept of duty contains that of a good will under certain subjective limitations and hindrances[125]: any morally good action born of an impure or imperfect will thus manifests itself through duty. As I outlined in Chapter II, this manifestation of goodness through duty is motivated solely through the effect of the moral law on the will, that is, through a feeling of reverence or respect (*Achtung*)[126]. The intricate mechanism of the moral incentive - that is, how one can ever be motivated to do one's duty – relies, in its subjective aspect, on a set of predispositions of the mind of such an imperfectly rational being, which Kant calls 'moral endowments' (*MdS* 6:399): these are moral feeling (*das moralische Gefühl*), conscience (*das Gewissen*), love of one's

[124] See *Metaphysics of Morals* 6:379
[125] *Groundwork of the Metaphyics of Morals* 4:397
[126] See e.g. *Critique of Practical Reason* 5:73

neighbour (*die Liebe des Nächsten*), and respect for oneself (*Achtung für sich selbst*). Here it should not pass unnoticed that two possible candidates for the title of *moral respect* appear, firstly as the capacity of moral feeling[127], and secondly as a required attitude towards oneself, and yet it is to the latter conception that the term *Achtung* is explicitly applied[128].

This metaphysical closeness of two apparently different types of respect presents a puzzle: moral feeling and conscience appear to be capacities for receiving and responding to the moral law's command in a certain manner, yet love of one's neighbour and respect for oneself are later named as specific duties to others and to the self[129] – because of this, it seems natural to wish to bracket the latter two so-called moral prerequisites, and to stamp upon them the brand of a completely different category. But on a careful reading, it transpires that Kant really is pointing to two more moral capacities: an 'aptitude' (*Fertigkeit*) (*MdS* 6:402) of the inclination to beneficence, and a susceptibility to a feeling of respect '(which is of a special kind) [and which] is the basis of certain duties'(*MdS* 6:403). When discussing this latter capacity, Kant indulges in an interchanging between concepts which, it could be argued, may simply be owing to a haphazard putting together of notes, or, as I consider, may betray an assumption that the reader has grasped a connection between the concepts which is in fact in need of clarification. That is, within the same section on this fourth moral endowment, Kant refers to respect in its absoluteness, respect for one's own being, and respect for the law within oneself[130]: I analyse the possible distinctions and overlaps between these conceptions, and point out the philosophical differences incurred by each reading. I shall go on to try to establish how it is that Kant intends us to understand the relationship between these two latter endowments, and the duties of love and respect that are their namesakes.

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[127] *Achtung* is frequently referred to by Kant by the term 'moral feeling'. See e.g. *Critique of Practical Reason* (5:76): "Dieses Gefühl (unter dem Namen des moralischen) ist also lediglich durch Vernunft bewirkt."
[128] Such a description of the elements involved in a subjective presentation of the law's effect befits a section devoted to an aesthetic of morals.
[129] I explain and discuss these duties of love and respect in Chapter V (For Kant's account of them, see e.g. *Metaphysics of Morals* 6:421-, and 6:448-, onwards).
[130] Ibidem. (6:402-3)

There can be no duty to acquire moral predispositions

The will that is capable of duty (such as a human will, or that of another imperfectly rational being) is a will that is endowed with a number of predispositions antecedent to the reception of the concept of duty, which preside on the part of feeling. These aesthetic preliminary concepts immediately demonstrate Kant's sensitivity towards the constitution of the mind of a human being – far from obliterating man's capacities for feeling from his picture of the workings of morality[131], Kant places several of them at the basis of morality[132], and holds that it is by virtue of them that a human being can be put under obligation. Here Kant is concerned with morality in its subjective aspect, i.e. how duty affects the mind of a certain type of finite rational being, rather than morality in its objective aspect, which, by definition, does not take into account the medium through which it is received. Kant places great emphasis on the absurdity of thinking that it could be a duty for anyone to have these dispositions: they are metaphysically prior to duty, in that every human being has these predispositions in him originally[133], and therefore without them there could be no duties whatsoever[134].

In this chapter, I demonstrate that the moral predispositions not only enable the reception of the necessitating power of duty but also provide the subjective conditions needed to apply the formal command of the moral law to ourselves and others in the form of many individual duties. Our ability (as imperfectly rational beings) to act on the basis of our decisions (as opposed to sheer random or involuntary behaviour such as instinctive reactions) is restricted by our psychological makeup – for example, the range of desires we can feel, the range of choices we can make, the range of future aims we can have, are each limited by the finitude of our nature, experience, intelligence and imagination. Likewise, for Kant, our ability to act with moral freedom depends upon the presence of certain moral endowments, and specific moral actions – that is, duties - may even reflect the configuration of these endowments. For finitely rational beings, the

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131 Much evidence for the view that Kant divests the importance of feeling from human morality can be compiled: e.g. one need only look to Kant's words "Inclination is blind and servile, whether it is kindly or not; and when morality is in question, reason must not play the part of mere guardian to inclination but, disregarding it altogether, must attend solely to its own interest as pure practical reason" (*CpV* 5:118)
132 *Metaphysics of Morals* 6:399
133 Ibidem. (6:399)
134 For Kant, freedom and unconditional practical law reciprocally point to each other (*Critique of Practical Reason* 5:29). Hence there can be no duty that is outside of one's powers: it is a feature of duty that we are able to do it.

unconditional moral law's command takes its shape in the form of particular duties, the content of which must be worked out by us, at least partly through our capacity to see a connection between the unconditional, formal command of the moral law, and ourselves and others. Any specific duty contains within it the quality of being *practicable* for a human being[135], yet an action's practicability must involve the possibility that we can work out what duty requires us to do. We must have the means to regard ourselves and others as *ends* - or as beings who possess an absolute worth, and who are therefore that to which the command of the moral law applies. I suggest that the moral endowments must be understood as providing our subjective aspect – that is, what we are able to think and feel - with such a means. By regarding the moral endowments as providing the foundations whereby we can both experience the necessitating power of duty and apply its command outside of the bounds of the will - that is, to recognise our proper ends - I suggest that an answer to the puzzle of the moral endowments presents itself. I set out an interpretation whereby the capacities for 'love of one's neighbour' and 'self-esteem' are essential to morality amongst human beings.

Moral feeling (Das moralische Gefühl)

Kant provides two different formulations of this capacity, the first being refined and clarified by the second. It should be noted that 'feeling' as a capacity stands to specific feelings in the same way as e.g. the capacity of sight relates to seeing, and taste relates to tasting. Kant begins by declaring that moral feeling is "the susceptibility to feel pleasure or displeasure merely from being aware that our actions are consistent with or contrary to the law of duty"(*MdS* 6:399). He describes that within the process of determining a choice as to an action, pleasure or displeasure stand in relation to the subjective determination of the will in a philosophically relevant way. Whenever feeling precedes the representation of the moral law, and recommends a deed to us, that feeling is pathological[136]. Whenever pleasure or displeasure follows upon the representation of the law, that feeling is moral (*MdS* 6:399). Such a capacity, under this definition, could be understood to yield feelings which are epiphenomena of duty – a particular type of

[135] In discussing the practicability of various duties, it is the ability to achieve goodness through the willing to commit a certain action, rather than the ability to carry out the action through e.g. physical strength that is under examination.
[136] By 'pathological', Kant means 'of empirical origin'.

pleasure which accompanies its presence in a non-efficacious manner, or a particular type of displeasure which accompanies its absence in a similar non-efficacious manner. Such feelings, on this view, would not help to effect duty's course but they may help us to approve of actions in line with duty, and to disapprove of actions contrary to duty.

But such feelings do help us to do our duty, and Kant's second description of the first moral predisposition clearly points to this: he defines it as a "susceptibility on the part of free choice to be moved by pure practical reason (and its law)"(*MdS* 6:399) [137]. This sounds far more like the capacity for moral feeling in its role as the moral incentive – a susceptibility on the part of the will to react to the presence of the law with a curious mixture of fear and awe, i.e. to experience respect, which can prompt one to act: yet the word *Achtung* is missing from this section. Thus the same moral endowment can, once the moral law appears within the will, enable feelings which are moral in two senses; firstly they are feelings which are sensitive to morally valuable determinations of the will, and secondly they can stir an agent to choose to act morally. This dual function of moral feeling is summed up by Kant's statement that "any consciousness of obligation depends upon moral feeling to make us aware of the constraint present in the thought of duty" (*MdS* 6:399). As our thoughts contemplate a possible action and as the moral law manifests itself within the will, moral feeling catches upon the necessitation contained within duty and makes this necessitation felt[138].

Conscience (Das Gewissen)

It must be observed that Kant envisages the moral endowments as *collectively* rendering a certain type of imperfectly rational being able to be put under obligation. Thus, the capacity for moral feeling alone would not be sufficient for the subjective receptivity of duty. Where moral feeling can make the constraining power of duty *felt*, conscience, Kant says, "is practical reason holding the human being's duty before him for his acquittal or condemnation in every case that comes under a law" (*MdS* 6:400). Conscience, it seems,

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[137] "...[sondern] Empfänglichkeit der freien Willkür für die Bewegung derselben durch praktische reine Vernunft (und ihr Gesetz), und das ist es, was wir das moralische Gefühl nennen." (*MdS* 6:399)

[138] Furthermore, Kant notes that moral feeling "can be cultivated and strengthened through wonder at its unscrutable source". "es zu cultiviren und selbst durch die Bewunderung seines unerforschlichen Ursprungs zu verstärken" (*MdS* 6:400) The 'unscrutable source' might sensibly be regarded as the practicality of reason, that is, its lawgiving.

works together with moral feeling to render a human being conscious of what he ought, or ought not, to do. Kant states, of conscience:

"Seine Beziehung also ist nicht die auf ein Object, sondern blos aufs Subject (das moralische Gefühl durch ihren Act zu afficiren);" (*MdS* 6:400)
"Its relation is thus not to an object but simply to the subject (to affect moral feeling through its act);" (my translation)

What an English translation may leave unhighlighted is that it is *conscience's* act that is here conceived of as affecting[139] moral feeling. Conscience enables us to recognise duties – it is a power of judgement - and its judgement arouses moral feeling. So, in a sense, conscience seems to be a more primary moral endowment than moral feeling, and this is made explicit at *MdS* 6:407, where Kant refers to conscience as the condition of all duties: "...(so wie oben die Lehre vom Gewissen als Bedingung aller Pflicht überhaupt)" (ibidem). Kant stresses that this recognition is not itself a choice or a duty: it is an 'unavoidable fact' (*MdS* 6:400) (*eine unausbleibliche Thatsache*). It is worth remarking that not only is a conscience originally within each and every human being, but a conscience cannot err: "ein irrendes Gewissen ein Unding sei"[140] (*MdS* 6:401). Whilst an agent can make mistakes with regard to whether or not a particular action is a duty, he cannot be mistaken as to whether or not he has listened to and heeded the ever-present judgement of his conscience. This claim suggests that conscience infallibly speaks, and recommends duties through moral feeling; whilst the agent is always able to attend to the voice of conscience, his ability to transfer the recommendations of duty to particular actions is fallible. This is the process of working out one's duties, by receiving concepts of duty in the will by virtue of the abilities endowed upon us by our moral dispositions, and finding the object, matter or content of the obligation. Thus far, conscience, as a predisposition, entails an agent's reflex response to whether or not a certain maxim or action classes as duty, and moral feeling accompanies this response in a felt and stirring manner. Although these predispositions are regarded by Kant as necessary to our receptivity towards the concept of duty, neither look towards its matter, or reveal how it is that a subjective response to an abstract concept can put us under obligation to ourselves or to others.

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[139] Whilst the moral law *effects* moral feeling, in that it causes moral feeling, conscience *affects* it, in that it steers its course.
[140] "...an erring conscience is an absurdity." (*MdS* 6:401)

The need for further moral endowments

Therefore, to explain how it is that an imperfectly rational being can be put under moral obligation, an account of the predispositions of moral feeling and conscience alone is not sufficient, as both of these concern receptivity to duty in its formal sense, that is, regardless of its objects. There must be propensities or capacities particular to such beings that can transpose the formal shell of duty, on its impact with the will, into particular obligations. In other words, there must be predispositions within the human mind, that can transmogrify an abstract concept of morality into human morality[141]. The requirement for such predispositions – abilities for relations towards oneself and others - may shed light on the function of the latter two moral endowments. It is noteworthy that even in 1764, thirty-five years before the publication of the *Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant already had an inkling that such predispositions exist in us. He writes:

"In recognition of the weakness of human nature and the little power that the universal moral feeling exercises over most hearts, providence has placed such *helpful drives* in us as supplements for virtue, which move to some to beautiful actions even without principles whilst at the same time being able to give others, who are ruled by these principles, a greater impetus and a stronger impulse thereto." (*Observations on the feeling of the beautiful and sublime* 2:217)

Love of human beings (Von der Menschenliebe)

In his accounts of moral feeling and conscience, Kant states that these endowments are within a human being originally (*ursprünglich*[142]), and that therefore it would be paradoxical to regard them as duties. When introducing love of human beings as the third moral endowment, Kant quickly makes the point that to have a duty to love would be an absurdity (*ein Unding*[143]). Rather than attributing this absurdity to the originality of this capacity for love within the human will – as we might expect, on the model of the previous endowments – Kant turns to conditions of the *feeling* of love itself, that which

[141] By 'human morality' I do not imply a relativism: I mean a morality accessible and available to humans in terms of their understanding, appraisal and ability to achieve moral goodness.
[142] See *MdS* 6:399, 6:400
[143] See *MdS* 6:401

he later describes as a direct 'delight', *Liebe des Wohlgefallens* (*amor complacentiae*). He argues that because this feeling of love is an affective element, that is, it is "joined immediately to the representation of an object's existence[144]", I cannot love because I will to, and because of this I could not be constrained to love (*MdS* 6:401)[145]. Such love appears to be entirely without the realm of duty as it cannot be controlled by one's ability to decide upon maxims; it is simply a reflex reaction on the part of feeling to an idea presented to the mind. Duty necessarily involves necessitation, and emotive love does not: therefore Kant stresses "What is done from constraint... is not done from love." (ibidem)

He then sidesteps to the consideration of a type of love which can be subject to a law of duty – benevolence (*amor benevolentiae*) – an attitude, within our mental control, which involves adopting good will towards others. It appears that the two types of love – *amor complacentiae* and *amor benevolentia* – are mutually exclusive, as Kant states that "benevolence always remains a duty, even toward a misanthropist, whom one cannot indeed love but to whom one can still do good" (*MdS* 6:402)[146]. What is underlined here is that duty towards others cannot and does not depend on our particular love or approval of them. In fact, Kant emphasises the fact that even if one had to concede that our species "is not particularly lovable" (ibidem), such a fact would not diminish the necessity of the duty: if our duties towards others did depend on our directly felt high regard for them, then it would only be the saintly few who did incur our good deeds and intentions. But, as I shall go on to demonstrate, what is not excluded from this picture is that duties do depend on an original predisposition for a positive attitude[147] towards those of our species, regardless of particulars: a propensity for directing our attention towards others in such a way that helps us to be aware of or to understand the significance of their existence, as embodying absolute worth; the capacity for such a response to others is neither a directly felt love, nor merely a benevolence which we

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144 Ibidem 6:402

145 Kant makes the same point earlier, in the *Critique of Practical Reason* at 5:83, where he says that "it is not within the power of any human being to love someone merely on command."

146 The word translated as 'indeed' is *freilich*, which could also be translated as 'certainly' or 'for sure': such terms more effectively accentuate the impossibility of directly loving such a man.

147 At this stage, I use this term very vaguely: I hope that an account of this positive attitude or natural inclination towards other human beings will explain why Kant holds that hatred towards other human beings is hateful, even in the case where it is simply instantiated through one's avoidance of all others. (Ibidem 6:402) I also suggest that by paying due attention to Kant's idea that kind of love is a prerequisite of duty, one might be able counter the view that 'respect' as the sole moral motive renders Kant's moral philosophy difficult or *unnatural* for human beings: for an account of how Kant's virtue is *unnatural* where, for example, Hume's includes what is *natural* to us, see Korsgaard, Christine. 'Natural Motives and the Motive of Duty: Hume and Kant on Our Duties to Others' (forthcoming).

might – against our inclination and base wishes - forcibly adopt in order to fulfil the command of duty.

The introduction of benevolence, as a form of love that *is* within our control, as opposed to emotive love, might seem to be, as a concept, no help whatsoever in pinning down the role and meaning of 'love of other human beings' as a moral predisposition. It could be conjectured that the apparent incongruence of this passage is owing to an error made in the compiling of Kant's notes – the haphazard patching together of various paragraphs on love, which do not in fact relate to each other. But, even if this is so, it cannot be denied that Kant does explicitly name 'love of one's neighbour' (*MdS* 6:399) as a moral endowment in its own right: that it has a role as a subjective condition of duty should not be dismissed or ignored. For this reason, it must be considered whether there is present in these passages a sidelong glance at what this moral endowment could constitute. Such a glance may be traceable in Kant's discussion of beneficence[148].

When he sets out to explain what the command "you ought to *love* your neighbour as yourself"[149] really means, he echoes the name of the third moral endowment, which Kant employs in his introductory paragraph regarding these predispositions: *Liebe des Nächsten*[150]. He notes that if someone practises the duty of beneficence often, "he eventually comes actually to love the person he has helped" (*MdS* 6:402). In the light of this, Kant argues that the Golden Rule does not command that one should firstly love one's neighbour, and only afterwards *by means of this love* do good to him (ibidem). Instead, he holds that the doing good precedes and produces the love[151]. Hence the love felt towards others is mediated by duty: it is not a direct delight[152] in an object, but a

[148] Beneficence (*das Wohltun*) and benevolence (*das Wohlwollen*) are clearly distinguished by Kant at *MdS* 6:452, in his division of duties of love.
[149] This is the so-called 'Golden Rule', also referred to at *CpV* 5:83, possibly known to Kant through e.g. Luke 10:25-28, of the *New Testament*, where the commands of God's law are repeated to Jesus by a lawyer: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself." When the lawyer asks Jesus just who his neighbour is, Jesus tells the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:29-37), where the good Samaritan gains the status of being a victim's *neighbour* through the kindness he shows to him; the priest and the Levite who pass the victim by on the other side of the road are not his neighbours.
[150] Kant uses this term in his list of the moral endowments at *MdS* 6:399, then echoes it in his passage on 'Love of human beings' at *MdS* 6:402.
[151] I.e. "...do good to your fellow human beings, and your beneficence will produce love of them in you..." (*MdS* 6:402)
[152] Such a direct delight is referred to by Kant as '*Liebe des Wohlgefallens* (*amor complacentiae*)' (ibidem)

regard developed towards a person whom one has helped[153]. How can a capacity for love of this sort be a moral endowment? On remembering that a moral endowment is that by virtue of which one can be put under obligation, this type of love seems to be entirely of the wrong type: after all, we have just stated that it is a love that is produced by doing good, and therefore not a love that precedes and helps to produce the good action i.e. a prerequisite of duty. At best, this type of love seems to be a byproduct of duty. But then, having described the causal priority of *doing good* over *feeling love*, Kant adds the parenthetical remark that an agent's beneficence will produce in him a love of the one he helps "as an aptitude of the inclination to beneficence in general" (*MdS* 6:402)[154].

There now appears to be a circularity present within this account of duty, which appears to contrapose the causal priority between beneficence and love, which seemed so clear earlier on in this section, (i.e. the first bulleted point below); the fact that the true relations between the two have not yet been fully established leaves open the possibility that Kant may, after all, be describing a moral endowment:

1. Beneficence towards others will produce love of them in you.
2. Love of others is an *aptitude* of the inclination to beneficence in general.

It should first be noted that the second statement, if presented in the absence of the first, could easily be conceived as an account of a moral endowment – a natural susceptibility that a human being has for a certain type of favourable regard towards others, which, when the moral law appears within the will, helps to build its command into particular duties towards others. What should next be noted is that there is an ambiguity in Kant's language regarding beneficence. Kant states "*Wohlthun ist Pflicht*" (*MdS* 6:402), and this is usually translated as "Beneficence is a duty"[155]. The indefinite article "eine" is missing here, but this in itself is unremarkable; many cases can be found where Kant speaks of

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[153] This seems to contrast with Kant's earlier statement, at *CpV* 5:83, that "to love one's neighbour means to practice all duties towards him gladly": "*den Nächsten lieben, heißt, alle Pflicht gegen ihn gerne ausüben"*. The adverb '*gerne*' accompanies the verb '*ausüben*': the liking or regard is attached to the *doing of one's duty* to another, not to that other person. I offer a resolution to this discrepancy later in this section. It should be noted that in the passage from which this quotation was excerpted, Kant makes it very clear that a command to love one's neighbour in such a way would be contradictory; that is, duty, by definition, involves inner necessitation and self-constraint. A command to do one's duties always gladly reduces to a command for an imperfectly rational being to be perfect, which is an outright impossibility. So, he refines his explication of the Golden Rule: one should strive to do one's duties from a glad disposition.

[154] "...thue deinem Nebenmenschen wohl, und dieses Wohlthun wird Menschenliebe (als Fertigkeit der Neigung zum Wohlthun überhaupt) in dir bewirken!" (*MdS* 6:402)

[155] Mary Gregor translates the statement in this way.

individual duties without supplying the indefinite article, for example, when he names one's own happiness as an indirect duty in the *Groundwork*: "*Seine eigene Glückseligkeit sichern, ist Pflicht (wenigstens indirect)...*" (*G* 4:399)[156]. That said, what is duty, if it is not a goodness present in action? If we take Kant's words in this particular passage to mean, not that beneficence here is one of manifold particular duties[157], but that beneficence is the action of doing good to any human being, that is, Duty itself in its relation towards others, then an interpretation reveals itself to us, which could unpick the ostensible circularity of Kant's account of love for others, and point to an explanation of how this love could be conceived as a moral capacity.

The appearance of the word *Fertigkeit* (aptitude) may point to the fact that Kant is here describing a moral endowment: *fertig* means 'ready' or 'finished', and its cognate *Fertigkeit* can mean 'skill' or 'aptitude' – i.e. the quality of being fit for a purpose, or the ability to carry out a purpose. This reading would entail that the third moral endowment could comprise the quality present within the imperfectly rational being's mind of being fit to carry out the purpose of beneficence, where beneficence is here regarded as an umbrella term for 'doing good'. But there is a stronger reading of what this aptitude is fit for. Put the case: it may be that we have a predisposition which can inculcate a certain type of positive attitude towards others, which lies on the part of feeling. Whilst the final object of this attitude is other human beings, its object is always properly mediated through duty. That is, without the appearance of the moral law within the will, this predisposition would remain latent, redundant, or entirely misplaced: the facilitation of its potential moral regard can only occur under laws, i.e. through duty[158]. Likewise, without this predisposition of the mind of an imperfectly rational being, the moral law's command might not be communicable to such a being: a formal law might issue commands which were, from the agent's point of view, bereft of matter or at least lacking a direction in which to find its objects.

It is a capacity of this type that I wish to consider as Kant's third moral endowment: that, for example, human beings have within them an aptitude for a kind of love, or positive

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156 "To assure one's own happiness is a duty (at least indirectly)...". (*G* 4:399)

157 Kant goes on to describe the particular duty of beneficence as that of "making the well-being and happiness of others my *end*." (*MdS* 6:451)

158 Such an interpretation is defended by Kants words at *CpV* 5:82: "It is very beautiful to do good to human beings from love for them and from sympathetic benevolence, or to be just from love of order; but this is not yet the genuine moral maxim of our conduct..."

regard, for others, which on meeting the formal command of the moral law, somehow enables them to acknowledge that the moral law's commands extend to our treatment of others; that there are duties towards others. Such an understanding captures the philosophical significance of point (2) above – that love of others is an aptitude of the inclination to beneficence in general. But, on this reading, how can points (1) and (2) be reconciled? If such love is a predisposition to the receptivity of duty, how can it be merely an effect of beneficence? Here a parallel with the first moral endowment, moral feeling, is helpful: moral feeling, although as a capacity, lies prior to duty, but as an actuated feeling, it follows upon duty – even if an agent has to feel it in order to appreciate what is duty and what is not duty. Since this is so, why should it not be the case that love of others, as a capacity, lies prior to duty, but as an actuated feeling follows upon its heels?

On this understanding, love of others would be a capacity for the receptivity of duty, in that it assists in rendering a human being able to put himself under obligations to others, but in its actuation as a feeling, it is only ever *felt* as a response to putting oneself under obligation to others, and as a result of the continued practice of putting oneself under obligation to others at that[159]. Therefore statement (1) does not give a full account of this feeling of love of human beings: this feeling is indeed experientially *felt* towards a human being because of one's action of beneficence towards that human being. But it is the capacity that one human being has for adopting a certain positive attitude towards another, that, through the workings of duty, ultimately gives rise to this feeling. So, beneficence is said to produce the feeling of love, in so far as beneficence is duty in action towards others, and any duty towards others is dependent, at least in part[160]on a capacity for a certain type of favourable or positive attitude towards others of the same species, which he calls love[161]. That the feeling which is produced, in its experiential relations, appears to be attached to the other person, not to the duty itself, reinforces the fact that its underlying capacity is one which conjoins the constraint of duty with the consideration of others. Therefore this particular type of moral feeling (i.e. the third

[159] This interpretation may be contrasted with Kant's words at CpV 5:83: "...the command [to love one's neighbour] that makes this a rule cannot command us to have this disposition in dutiful actions but only to strive for it."
[160] Again, it must be recalled that Kant envisages all four moral endowments as being necessary to human morality.
[161] My analysis of the particular duties of love may provide further elucidation of the exact role of the third moral endowment, especially as opposed to the role of respect. See my Chapter V.

endowment) is distinct from *moral feeling* (i.e. the first endowment), because it necessarily involves a relation to others.

An immediate response to this construction of the third moral endowment might be: whether or not I eventually come to love the person whom I am helping, surely it would be more likely that he would eventually come to love me?[162] In addition, if that is so, when one is on the receiving end of dutiful actions, would one not be more likely to see the good in others, and in doing so, access any predisposition for the love of fellow human beings? It seems obvious that a person is quite likely to come to love his benefactor, and that this love is in some way caused or activated by beneficence. But it is equally likely that his love might not be derived from any moral disposition or sensitivity: he might simply love the beneficence because it brings him comfort and pleasure, and he may thus project this love onto the giving hand and its owner. So, it seems to be the case that love felt merely as a response to another's beneficence is not yet a morally sensitive regard. A predisposition for love of human beings may draw us towards the consideration of others of our kind in our attempt to reach out into the world and adopt ends for our action. This type of natural inclination towards our own kind is not yet sufficient in rendering us imperfectly rational beings able to judge, esteem and protect the dignity of ourselves and others. Indeed, love of one's neighbour, coupled with moral feeling and conscience, might distort one's judgement as to the command of the moral law: it might, for instance, create an imbalance within one's moral compass whereby one puts the needs of others above one's own needs, and which could lead to the destruction of one's own being. There is, therefore, a need for a fourth moral endowment, by which one is able, when confronted with the practicality of one's reason, to fully grasp the moral level on which one human being stands in relation to another[163]. It could be argued that this aspect of morality was foreshadowed in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, where Kant states, "Human beings themselves can acquire love by beneficence, but by it alone they can never acquire respect, so that the greatest beneficence procures them honour only when it is exercised in accordance with worthiness" (*CpV* 5:131)[164].

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[162] I return to this question in Chapter V with regard to the duty of gratitude as derived from or as a reaction to duties of love.

[163] My diction here is resonant of Kant's declaration at *CpV* 5:84: "The moral level on which a human being...stands is respect for the moral law".

[164] The German text runs as follows (my italics): "Selbst Menschen können sich durch Wohlthun zwar Liebe, aber dadurch allein niemals *Achtung* erwerben, so daß die größte Wohlthätigkeit ihnen nur dadurch Ehre macht, daß sie nach Würdigkeit ausgeübt wird." (*CpV* 5:131)

Respect (Von der Achtung)

In his list of moral endowments (*MdS* 6:399), Kant refers to the fourth as both respect for oneself and self-esteem (*Achtung für sich selbst* and *Selbstschätzung*). But just as in the case of the third moral endowment, Kant appears to overlook the promise of giving an account of a capacity, and instead focuses on an affective feeling, *reverentia*[165], 'a feeling of a special kind' (*MdS* 6:402). Its function, not immediately obvious as any type of self-respect, but clearly as the effect of the moral law within the will is quickly established; it cannot be a duty to bring about or promote respect (as if it were merely a judgement about an object[166]), as it is by virtue of the feeling of respect that any duty is represented to our consciousness: "such a duty, regarded as a duty, could be represented to us only through the *respect* we have for it[167]." A difference between the initial accounts of love and respect can be pinpointed: whilst affective love is first described as untenable as a duty because it is a feeling and therefore not amenable to constraint, respect is described as untenable as a duty not merely because it is a feeling but – more importantly - because it is a precondition of any duty. So, where the account of function of love as a moral predisposition seems to be buried in obfuscation, here the function of a capacity for the feeling of respect is clearly acknowledged.

What does not seem so obvious is the reason for which Kant is here discussing *Achtung* in terms of moral feeling (i.e. the remit of the first moral endowment), rather than in terms of the promised respect for oneself or self-esteem. Again, this discrepancy could simply be owing to the mixing up of notes. Or, one could try to argue that, since the word *Achtung* is absent from the section on moral feeling, it is a misconception to include it under that umbrella term, as it is in its absolution a moral predisposition in its own right, with a role that can be distilled from within the combined role of moral feeling. Either construal could be mistaken; I suggest that it seems likely that the second two

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165 For an account for respect for the law as the moral incentive (Triebfeder), see *Critique of Practical Reason*, Chapter III, 5:71-89, and my Chapter II.

166There seems to be an ambiguity borne by the translation at *MdS* 6:402: Kant states: "Respect (*reverentia*) is... a feeling of a special kind, not a judgement about an object that it would be a duty to bring about or promote". The last half of this sentence reads in the original "...nicht ein Urtheil über einen Gegenstand, den zu bewirken oder zu befördern es eine Pflicht gäbe." The translation leaves it unspecified as to whether the relative pronoun (in German - 'den', in English 'that') attaches to the *judgement* or the *object*. The former must be the case: Kant is at once dismissing two notions: that respect is a judgement, and that *such a judgement is in itself duty*. The alternative reading - that respect is not a judgement about which objects it is a duty to bring about or promote - would do no work in demonstrating that respect is a precondition of any duty.

167 *MdS* 6:402

moral endowments concern our capacity for specific moral feelings, both of which are inextricably linked to duty, and which could have been included as subcategories under the heading of the first endowment but for the fact that they relate to two different aspects of our capacity for being affected by duty: that we can be put under obligation to others, and to ourselves. It could therefore be no coincidence that Kant goes on to systematise duties to others and to ourselves with constant reference to these feelings of love and respect. It is certainly the case that Kant's words about self-respect do seem to follow from his preceding words about *Achtung*:

"Accordingly it is not correct to say that a human being has a *duty of self-esteem*; it must rather be said that the law within him unavoidably forces from him respect for his own being [*das Gesetz in ihm zwingt ihm unvermeidlich Achtung für sein eigenes Wesen ab*], and this feeling (which is of a special kind) is the basis of certain duties, that is, of certain actions that are consistent with his duty to himself." (*Metaphysics of Morals* 6:402-3)

The language here clearly points to a predisposition "within" a human being, specifically for a feeling of respect for himself, which the impact of the moral law "forces *from him*", i.e. the human being must have the capacity for such respect in order for the law to be able to have this effect. This is not a predisposition buried within a being that may lie unresponsive or tardy on reception of the moral law: the violence of the verb "*zwingt*" ("forces") and the adverb "*unvermeidlich*"("unavoidably") underlines the being's helplessness in the face of the command of the law. The inevitability of this receptivity on the part of feeling to the moral law echoes the description of the 'fact'[168] of conscience, which speaks "*unwillkürlich*[169]" and unavoidably "*unvermeidlich*"[170]. That respect for the self functions this way might be regarded as evidence that it too arises from a moral endowment.

If we are to hold that a capacity for this feeling of respect for the self *is* a moral endowment, then it is appropriate that we note that the feeling arising through this moral capacity is unlike the feeling arising from the capacity for love, in that the former is an immediately felt effect of duty on the will, whereas the latter is merely eventually felt "endlich" (*MdS* 6:402). If a moral endowment is a necessary precondition of duty, then it

[168] Ibidem 6:400
[169] i.e. 'involuntarily'
[170] Ibidem 6:401

might be observed that our capacity for love must have a function primary to that of a mere eventual feeling that we are able to feel.

Kant reaches to the same precondition argument, which he used to highlight the fact that respect (*reverentia*) for the law cannot itself be a duty, and, in this, it could be argued that he demonstrates the metaphysical convergence of *Achtung* for the law, and *Achtung* for oneself:

"It cannot be said that he *has* a duty of respect toward himself, for he must have respect for the law within himself in order even to think of any duty whatsoever." (*MdS* 6:402)

What seems to be apparent from this statement is that Kant intends us to understand the notions of respect present in *respect for oneself* and *respect for the law* as the same[171] unavoidable effects of the moral law, and because of this there can be no duty to have this type of respect. The argument, regarding this particular capacity for a feeling essential for human morality, seems to run as follows:

1. There is a precondition present within a human being, without which one would not be able conceive of duty
2. That precondition is the ability to feel respect for the moral law
3. Through this feeling, the human being recognises that the moral law is within himself, and feels its necessitation
4. Respect for oneself is a result of respect for the law-within-oneself
5. Therefore there cannot be a duty of respect towards oneself

By step 4, we are reminded of Kant's notion that "Any respect for a person is properly only respect for the law...of which he gives us an example." (*G* 4:401 footnote)[172]. If we grant that the moral law effects the feeling of respect whose object is the law itself, and whose indirect object is the person containing the law, then the conclusion that there can be no such duty to have this feeling follows[173]. But why should self-esteem or respect for oneself be an extension of the respect effected by the law? A clue could lie in the concept

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[171] This may be why he attributes the quality of being "of a special kind" "*eigener Art*" to each case. (*MdS* 6:402-3)
[172] My Chapter III elucidates the import of this point.
[173] I turn to an analysis of this argument in Chapter V.

of a moral predisposition. That we have a predisposition for an esteem for ourselves which is caused by the moral law within ourselves is a necessary endowment which enables us to work out what our duties to ourselves and others constitute: without a predisposition for such an esteem, we might be unable to appreciate our own dignity - a worth which is entailed by the practicality of our reason and its laws - and such a lack of appreciation would mean that we would be at a loss as to how we can treat ourselves in a morally sensitive manner. Such an inability would have the consequence that we may not be appropriately disposed to treat others in such a manner, in spite of our capacity for an inclination of a positive attitude towards them that can come under the governance of duty. Whilst I have argued that our predisposition for a morally sensitive self-esteem or respect helps to *balance* the reaction that the moral law has on our predisposition for love of one's neighbour, it could be held that, in some sense our capacity for self-respect must be primary to our capacity for such love[174]. With this in mind, I now turn to an analysis of the duties of love and respect, where such a discussion of metaphysical priority gains more philosophical force.

[174] For the view that love, not as a duty but as a passion, is based on respect and essential to ethics, see Marguerita La Caze's 'Love, That Indispensable Supplement: Irigaray and Kant on Love and Respect', *Hypatia Vol. 20* (2005)

CHAPTER V

Duties of Respect: Self-respect and the respect owed to others

Kant's delineation of duties of love and respect is placed within his doctrine of virtue. Unlike his doctrine of right, which concerns itself merely with the formal condition of outer freedom[175], and its possibility through external constraint, his doctrine of virtue concerns inner freedom, and its possibility through self-constraint; it proffers *ends* which it is a duty to have, that is, objects which we are under obligation to choose: since "only I myself can *make* something my end" (*MdS* 6:381), that is, because only I can override the impulses and stirrings of inclination and aversion through my own will power, the adoption of such ends is possible only through self-constraint. The elements that make up the concept of a duty of virtue are the law, the capacity to fulfil the law, the will which can exert self-constraint in making its maxims, and an end of pure practical reason[176]. Whilst Kant names "that virtue be its own end... and its own reward" (*MdS* 6:396) as the highest, unconditional end of pure practical reason that is a duty, the two specific 'ends that are also duties' (*MdS* 6:386) are named as 'one's own perfection' and 'the happiness of others', which concern duties to the self and duties to others respectively.

But because such ends are possible only through self-constraint, Kant says that it is inaccurate to hold that a human being has a duty of self-esteem (or self-respect)[177], as "...the law within him unavoidably forces from him respect [*Achtung*] for his own being...[178]". It cannot be a duty to have respect for oneself, as while the concept of duty contains that of necessitation, the moral law *automatically* effects respect for that human being in whom it is inherent. That the law necessarily invokes self-respect might seem puzzling in the light of Kant's account of how it is that a human being can act morally - he writes; "freedom, the causality of which is determinable only through the law, consists just in this: that it restricts all inclination, and consequently the *esteem of the person himself*, to

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175 *Metaphysics of Morals* 6:380
176 *MdS* 6:396
177 "Selbst-Schätzung" (*MdS* 6:403)
178 *MdS* 6:403

the condition of compliance with its pure law." (my italics) (*CpV* 5:78)[179]. In its role as the moral incentive, from the point of view of the agent, the moral law is said to restrict the scope of self-love and to strike down self-conceit[180], in order to render the agent able to appreciate the motivating worth of the law through a feeling of respect. That is, the *self* and its own esteem present a hindrance to the law, and the respect produced by the law has the law as its object – not the self. Already it is apparent that any self-esteem caused by the moral law is far removed from the self-esteem born of or grounded in inclination.

The importance of underpinning the nature of this morally grounded self-esteem, for which we can have no duty to acquire, has a bearing on the urgency of the task of working out how human morality works for Kant. That is, Kant holds that "...this feeling [of self-respect](which is of a certain kind) is the basis of certain duties, that is, of certain actions that are consistent with his duty to himself." (*MdS* 6:403) If we consider that, in Kant's vision, were there no duties to the self "then there would be no duties whatsoever, and so no external duties either" (*MdS* 6:417), an account of this self-respect which is 'basis' for at least *some* duties to the self seems quite pressing. That is, if, for example, it emerges that self-respect is the basis for *all* duties to the self, then self-respect would indirectly be responsible for the possibility of all duties. If it is the basis for merely some duties to the self, then it may still contribute to the ability of that person of putting himself under obligation to others. Kant holds that a human being can recognise that he is under obligation *to* others only insofar as he "at the same time [puts himself] under obligation" (*MdS* 6:417); the conditions under which a human being can put himself under obligation must therefore be established before duties to others can be explained. A human being, on Kant's view, has duties *only* to himself and to other human beings because "...duty to any subject is moral constraint by that subject's will" (*MdS* 6:442).

My quest in this chapter is to unwrap the metaphysical relationship between the aforementioned morally grounded self-esteem and duties to the self; that is, I try to show how this type of self-esteem contributes to one's awareness of the moral constraint placed on an agent's own will. I then turn to the relationship between duties to the self and duties to others, and consider that the acknowledgement of moral constraint

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[179] "Freiheit, deren Causalität blos durchs Gesetz bestimmbar ist, besteht aber eben darin, daß sie alle Neigungen, mithin die Schätzung der Person selbst auf die Bedingung der Befolgung ihres reinen Gesetzes einschränkt." (*CpV* 5:78)
[180] See *CpV* 5:73.

between self and others relies on an ability to recognise one's own worth, and to attribute that same worth to others. As a more ambitious feat, I hope to demonstrate that Kant's notion of respect as the moral incentive shares its roots with the respect which is a duty.

Self-respect

A picture of morally grounded self-respect must be evoked before the examination of duties to the self and the manner by which they are (or may be) rooted in such self-respect can be embarked upon. The first type of respect effected by the moral law, which we considered in Chapter II, was respect *for the law*, a complex feeling caused by a human being's consciousness of his duty, whose sole object is the majesty of the moral law. Now under consideration is respect *for the self*, a feeling also effected by the moral law but whose object is the self. For the moment, we shall set aside the issue of how these two types of respect relate to each other, beyond their shared cause, the moral law. What must first be explained is how this latter kind of respect is also a kind of response to moral worth, which hinges upon a certain condition or aspect of a human being. What then requires investigation is how it comes about that this respect is the basis for certain duties towards the self; why is it not the very condition for which respect is felt that is the basis for those duties?

It seems to me that Kant's notion of the origin of duty sets these details into relief. A perfect rationality (of a being such as an angel) would necessarily always legislate the moral law. If duty is the name given to a human being's relation to the moral law[181] - that of an imperfectly rational will standing under the necessitating force of an unconditionally binding universal law – and if, through duty, a human being can effectively displace the imperfection of his will and act, in some way, as if momentarily rationally perfect, then an account of the origin of duty could be said to be an account of a human being's underlying potentially perfect rationality.

In his apostrophe to Duty in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant exclaims:

[181] See *CpV* 5:82 .

"*Duty*!...[]...what origin is there worthy of you, and where is to be found the root of your noble descent which proudly rejects all kinship with the inclinations, descent from which is the indispensable condition of that worth which human beings alone can give themselves?" (*CpV* 5:86)

With rhetorical flourish, Kant transposes a question which delves to the extremities of the metaphysics of human morality into a question of lineage and ancestry. Its answer reveals that aspect of a human being by which he can be morally good; if the concept of duty contains that of a good will under certain subjective limitations and hindrances[182], then the origin of duty is that aspect of such an imperfect will that is metaphysically prior to its imperfections; a capacity at the very core of the type of a practical reason lodged within a finite and imperfectly rational being;

"It is nothing other than *personality*, that is, freedom and independence from the mechanics of the whole of nature, regarded nevertheless as also a capacity of a being subject to special laws – namely pure practical laws given by his own reason, so that a person as belonging to the sensible world is subject to his own personality insofar as he also belongs to the intelligible world; for, it is then not to be wondered at that a human being, as belonging to both words, must regard his own nature in reference to his second and highest vocation only with reverence, and its laws with the highest respect."[183] (*CpV* 5:87)

A type of esteem for the self, not rooted in inclination or tied to the natural laws of the sensible world, is alluded to here, and its intimacy with respect for the law is evident. It is in virtue of one's 'personality' (or 'humanity') – i.e. the very ability to divest oneself, through the consummation of the moral law's command with one's own lawgiving, of the hampering pushes and pulls of natural impulse and inclination in order to choose to act from duty – that a human being must hold himself in high esteem. As a rational animal within the system of nature, and subject to its laws, the human being (*homo phaenomenon*) has what Kant calls an 'extrinsic value'[184] because of his usefulness – he is

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[182] See *G* 4:397.
[183] "...da es denn nicht zu verwundern ist, wenn der Mensch, als zu beiden Welten gehörig, sein eigenes Wesen in Beziehung auf seine zweite und höchste Bestimmung nicht anders als mit Verehrung und die Gesetze derselben mit der höchsten Achtung betrachten muß." (*CpV* 5:87)
[184] *MdS* 6:434

capable of setting himself ends, and so he may be of more use to another man than, for example, a pig or a sheep. But regarded as a *person*, that is, one endowed with pure practical reason, as the subject of the moral law by virtue of the freedom of his autonomy[185] (*homo noumenon*), "he is not to be valued merely as a means to the ends of others or even to his own ends, but as an end in itself, that is, he possesses a *dignity* (an absolute inner worth)..." (*MdS* 6:435). A grasp of Kant's vision of personality, and the absolute inner worth to which it points, is essential to any account of duty: it is the fact that every human being contains such personality (or humanity), that "every will, even every person's own will directed towards himself, is restricted to the condition of agreement with the autonomy of the rational being" (*CpV* 5:87). As I noted earlier, Kant holds that "duty to any subject is moral constraint by that subject's will" (*MdS* 6:442); it seems that this moral constraint is, in effect, a demand that each person is regarded and treated as an embodiment of Kantian *personality*: duty, therefore, is by its very concept sensitive to the higher vocation of all of its ends.

It is the question of how duty in its formal sense is transmogrified into particular duties to certain beings that is at the heart of this investigation. How is it that *personality*, as duty's origin, entails not only that I should refrain from mutilating or killing myself, but that I should refrain from ridiculing a friend, or lusting after a neighbour? How can an aspect of the self which is contextualised to a world about which we can know nothing[186], be the very basis of certain (if not all) duties to the self? What is the causal connection? A first point to make is that the value or worth of the self, contained in this capacity of humanity or personality, is appreciable only through respect. As early as in the *Groundwork*, Kant stresses that within an imperfectly rational being, autonomy is metaphysically prior to the absolute value of dignity, which in turn is metaphysically prior to respect:

"...the lawgiving itself, which determines all worth, must for that very reason have a dignity, that is, an unconditional, incomparable worth; and the word *respect* alone provides a becoming expression for the estimate of it that a rational being must give." (*G* 4:436)

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[185] *CpV* 5:87

[186] Kant says, for example, "...of all the intelligible world absolutely nothing [is cognized] except freedom (by means of the moral law), and even this only insofar as it is a presupposition inseparable from that law..." (*CpV* 5:70)

Whilst, as we established in Chapter II, it is solely through the feeling of respect for the law that a human being can appreciate the motivating force of the law (and, in effect, act morally), here it *appears* to be the case that we are dealing with a type of respect that is distinct and even fundamental to this[187]; respect for the self is ultimately a respect for the *capacity* one has of lawgiving, without which the law and its incentive would have no hold within a human being. It is, it seems, a feeling not dependent on the actual activity of the law within the will – in the way that respect for the law occurs only when the law's potency is stirred by the contemplation of action – instead, respect for the self is a regard built into a human being's moral make-up. It may be that its lightness or intensity as a feeling can change, depending, for instance, on whether or not a human being acts in consistency with or contrary to that respect. But, I hold, respect for the self is present, at least in a minimally *felt* sense, in all human beings, as a consequence of the presence of the moral law, and as a constant reminder of one's moral potential:

"...from our capacity for internal lawgiving and from the (natural) human being's feeling himself compelled to revere the (moral) human being within his person, at the same time there comes an *exaltation* of the highest self-esteem, the feeling of his inner worth (*valor*), in terms of which he is above any price (*pretium*)..." (*MdS* 6:436)

The key feature of a duty of virtue is that it lays down an *end* which one ought to make one's own – a moral end whose taking up will propagate moral good. Hence it can be assumed that duties to the self involve ultimately regarding oneself as an end-in-oneself, that is, possessing an absolute inner worth, and duties to others similarly involve regarding those persons as ends-in-themselves, equally possessing absolute inner worth. It is how these *ends* place moral constraint[188] on a subject's will that requires explanation. Duty *to* a person, that is, moral constraint imposed by that person's will, can be shown to be, in effect, an action required from respect for that person's dignity. But whilst dignity is upheld as an unconditional, absolute worth present in each and every such being, respect as an estimate of that worth seems to take two different forms. In the case of one's own reaction to one's dignity, Kant regards the feeling of respect as standing in an immediate causal relationship to dignity: one's "inalienable dignity (*dignitas interna*)...

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[187] This is a matter to which I return later in the chapter.

[188] Here we consider ends from a practical point of view. "...we cannot present *theoretically* freedom as a *noumenon*, that is, freedom regarded as the ability of a human being merely as an intelligence, and show how it can *exercise constraint* upon his sensible choice; we cannot therefore present freedom as a positive property." (*MdS* 6:226)

instills in him respect for himself (*reverentia*)" (*MdS* 6:436). Because of the immediacy of this type of respect, there can properly be no duties of respect to the self, but merely actions that are consistent with or rooted in one's respect for oneself. Clearly, just as one can deviate from actions recommended by respect for the law, so one can deviate by actions recommended by respect for the self; hence, duties to the self, i.e. actions whereby one ought to make oneself one's end, are possible.

As far as one's own dignity concerns other people, Kant states that by it, a human being "exacts respect for himself from all other rational beings in the world."(*MdS* 6:435)[189] That is, respect from other people is not an automated effect of their will towards one's own; but by virtue of the worthiness my will has of respect, I demand it from everyone else; respect for others turns out to be a moral requirement regarding the attitude one being *should* adopt towards another. It is this type of respect that is the content of duties of respect, whereby a person ought to make another person his end. Yet, whilst dignity is described across all cases as 'inalienable' or 'immovable' ("*unverlierbare*"), respect (at least that which is demanded from others, it seems) can be forfeited: Kant states that "[h]umanity in his person is the object of the respect which he can demand from every other human being, but which he must also not forfeit"(*MdS* 6:435)[190]. Hence it seems that not only does a human being have a duty to himself to act in consistence with his own self-respect, but in doing so, he is sustaining his right to demand respect from others; should he forfeit his own self-respect, the respect owed by others may be similarly forfeited.

So it seems that certain connections between self-respect, duty to the self, and duty to others can be highlighted:

1. An estimation of one's own absolute inner worth (dignity) through self-respect (or esteem) is necessary in order to be able to act in a manner consistent with that self-respect i.e. through duty to the self.
2. Duty to the self is the moral demand that one upholds oneself as an end-in-oneself.

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[189] "...er besitzt eine Würde (einen absoluten innern Werth), wodurch er allen andern vernünftigen Weltwesen Achtung für ihn abnöthigt..." (*MdS* 6:435)

[190] "...deren er aber auch sich nicht verlustig machen muß." (*MdS* 6:435)

3. An awareness of one's own inner worth (dignity) through such an estimation (respect) gives one the right to demand the same kind of estimation, i.e. respect, from others.
4. Such a demand for an estimation of one's inner worth, i.e. respect for dignity, entails that others ought to regard one as an end-in-oneself.
5. To regard a person (A) as an end-in-itself entails that the will of that person (A) places constraint upon the other person (B) - i.e. person (B) finds that he has duties to person (A)
6. Person (B) similarly has duties to himself (as outlined in 1), which lead him to having a right to respect from person (A)

An immediate problem with this construction of Kant's view pertaining to how self-respect is the basis for at least certain duties to the self, where duties to the self are metaphysically prior to duties to others, is the conflation of right and virtue. The duties whereby one ought to make oneself and others one's end are dealt with by Kant in the realm of duties of virtue, and such duties are properly imperfect/ wide duties. Yet the language of 'right' suggests that these are perfect duties. What must be appreciated is that the defining mark of a duty of virtue is that it is only subject to internal constraint; that the duty is owed to a person can be a perfect requirement.

Perfect duties to the self

Before setting out the set of particular duties which comprise the overarching concept of duty to the self, Kant first turns to disentangling a potential contradiction involved in the concept of a duty to the self – that which arises, "[i]f the I *that imposes the obligation* is taken in the same sense as the I that is *put under obligation*", with its paradoxical consequences such as of the binding *I* being able to release the bound *I*. He explains that "the subject which is bound, as well as the subject which binds, is always the human being only" (*MdS* 6:419), but that consciousness of a duty to oneself involves a human being viewing himself under two aspects; firstly, as a human being, a thinking member of an animal

species (*homo phaenomenon*), and secondly, as an intelligible being (*homo noumenon*). It is only under the latter aspect of *personality* that a human being can be conceived of as being put under obligation at all, and – as Kant adds – "under obligation to himself (to the humanity[191] in his own person)" (*MdS* 6:418). These obligations, as I shall detail, are variously due to both aspects of oneself, but they are ultimately concerned with the preservation and cultivation of one's moral self.

So, it could be argued that the *I* that is put under obligation is always one's moral self, but there are two ways of understanding the *I* that imposes obligation. If the being that imposes an obligation is taken to be that being to whom an obligation is owed, then one might hold that it is always one's moral self that is owed dutiful treatment, often through good treatment of one's animal self, and that this explains the need to view a human being under two aspects to grasp the concept of a duty to the self. But, since the law, by which a human being perceives himself as being under obligation, is that which is legislated by his own practical reason he, as a moral being, could be said to be actively imposing the obligation. But then it seems that we are committing the fallacy highlighted above, taking the *I* that imposes the obligation *in the same sense* as the *I* that is put under obligation: that *I* is one's moral self. What is not included in this alternative reading, is that the obligation imposed is *to oneself*: a human being may well impose a duty on himself through his freedom, but in this he is *lawgiving* rather than *lawmaking*: a human being cannot invent morality, or haphazardly direct duties towards any objects, animals, or persons as his fancy takes it. That there are duties *to* the self holds prior to any actual active lawgiving done on the subject's part; that is, the self stands under a certain relation to the moral law, which necessitates duties towards it.

Kant systematises a series of negative (and therefore perfect) duties that a human being has to himself, firstly regarding man as an animal being, and secondly regarding man as a moral being. These are perfect duties because their sole and inescapable aim is to safeguard the *right* of humanity in one's own person[192], but they are duties of virtue, rather than merely of right, because they involve self-constraint, which is required to

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[191]'Humanity' here is taken to refer to human nature in its highest vocation. See e.g. *CpV* 5:88 "When an upright man is in the greatest distress, which he could have avoided if he could only have disregarded duty, is he not sustained by the consciousness that he has maintained humanity in its proper dignity in his own person and honoured it, that he has no cause to shame himself in his own eyes and dread the inward view of self-examination?"

[192] See *Introduction to the doctrine of right* (*MdS* 6:240)

make that right of humanity one's end. The first violation of duty to oneself *as an animal being* is named as the crime of killing oneself (*MdS* 6:422); though this is directly a duty to oneself as an animal being, the preservation of one's natural capacities is necessary for the preservation of one's moral capacities. Kant argues that "...disposing of oneself as a mere means to some discretionary end is debasing humanity in one's person (*homo noumenon*) to which the human being (*homo phaenomenon*) was... entrusted for preservation." (*MdS* 6:423) Suicide and self-mutilation are strictly contrary to duty to oneself because they terminate one's moral personality, and the human being in whom it dwelt; such crimes demonstrate a disregard of the respect due to one's capacity as a moral being, to one's obligations which stem from this, and to the person who possesses this capacity; it is interesting that Kant here refrains from alluding to respect.

The second violation of a duty to the self is the defiling of oneself by lust. Kant describes this violation as a "*defiling* (not merely a debasing)[193] of the humanity in [one's] own person". In the case of a human being directing his sexual attributes to satisfy a mere animal impulse, without a regard for the preservation of the species, Kant states that this being throws away his personality. Worse still, in the case where a human being "debases [himself] beneath the beasts" (*MdS* 6:425) through unnatural lust[194], Kant claims that the disposition involved on the agent's part is more contemptible than that of the disposition of a man who commits suicide. He explains that "murdering oneself requires courage, and in this disposition there is still always room for respect for the humanity in one's person" (ibidem) whereas in the case of unnatural lust, a human being renders himself not just an object of animal inclination but at the same time "a thing that is contrary to nature,... a loathsome object" (ibidem): so exercised is Kant about the abominability of this crime, that he declares that unnatural lust deprives a human being "of all respect for himself" (ibidem).

From these two duties of omission alone, a number of features of a duty or action consistent with respect for oneself can be highlighted. In the first place, although both ostensibly concern the treatment of oneself as an animal being, the indirect effects such treatment has on one's moral standing seem to be underpinning each duty. That is, each duty to one's animal self seems ultimately to be concerned with preserving respect for

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[193] "eine Schändung (nicht bloß Abwürdigung)..."(*MdS* 6:424)

[194] Kant qualifies 'unnatural lust' as a desire which is aroused through imagining an object, and which is therefore a desire contrary to nature's end.

one's humanity, personality, or moral self. The third strict duty to oneself, that of not stupefying oneself with the excessive use of food and wine (*MdS* 6:427), could be understood similarly to forbid reducing oneself to a purely animal level, thereby impairing our ability to use our capacities with intelligence and skill.

What is more, it seems that one's humanity can be violated to varying degrees, for as we have seen, it can be debased, surrendered, or defiled to the highest degree; where it is merely debased, as in the case of suicide, there is still room for respect for one's humanity in his disposition, even if the agent's cause is unjust. Where one's actions belie a *perversion* rather than merely a *disregarding* of what is in line with the self-esteem that one's dignity calls for, Kant declares that one denies oneself of any self-respect. From what he says elsewhere, however, we see that this is an impassioned exaggeration: Kant states that the censure of vice "...must never break out into complete contempt and denial of any moral worth to a vicious being; for on this supposition he could never be improved, and this is not consistent with the idea of a *human being*, who as such (as a moral being) can never lose entirely his predisposition to the good." (*MdS* 6:463)

From this it can be inferred that respect for oneself is not a permanent state of being unavoidably bombarded with the glowing effects of a latent moral law – instead it is an awareness, perhaps something analogous to an instinct, that we possess an absolute worth which is ever deserving of care and good treatment. It seems that one's regard for one's humanity is *demonstrable* through the execution of these duties to the self, all of which so far have been perfect duties towards the animal encasement of one's personality.

Having outlined these strict duties to oneself as an animal being, Kant turns to the human being's duty to himself *merely as a moral being (MdS* 6:429). It might be noted that the previous cluster of duties were not predicated with the term 'merely'; perhaps Kant means to suggest that we should never regard ourselves solely under the aspect of an animal being. Where contravention of perfect duties to one's animal self has *repercussions* of debasing or defiling one's humanity, the contravention of perfect duties to one's moral self entails the *direct* violation of one's humanity.

Quite dramatically – and perhaps to our surprise - Kant names the greatest *violation* of duty to oneself as a moral being as that of lying (*MdS* 6:429-31). It seems that the act of lying is most acutely a violation of duty to the self as a moral being, not merely because one can lie to others, but because one can also lie to oneself. Kant is here not concerned with the harm that can be delivered upon others because of the mendacity I might indulge in, nor merely the harm that could come to myself – such harm as a consequence of lying would merely point out that lying can conflict with one's maxim of prudence. He explains that someone who does not believe what he tells another has "even less worth than if he were a mere thing" (*MdS* 6:429), for at least a thing could be useful. Just as in the case of unnatural lust, Kant places great emphasis on the moral perversion involved in any deliberate opposition to the natural purposiveness of one's capacity to communicate one's thoughts. Through a lie, Kant says, a speaker renounces his personality, becomes a deceptive appearance of a human being, annihilates the dignity in his own person, and makes himself contemptible in his own eyes (*MdS* 6:429). What Kant seems to be envisaging is that in the act of articulating a deliberate falsehood, a human being actively denies himself his personality. He explains that:

"The human being as a moral being (*homo noumenon*) cannot use himself as a natural being (*homo phaenomenon*) as a mere means (a speaking machine), as if his natural being were not bound to the inner end (of communicating thoughts) but is bound to the condition of using himself as a natural being in agreement with the declaration... of his moral being and is under obligation to himself to truthfulness." (*MdS* 6:430)

Here we see the conceptual structure of a duty to the self in all its complexity. It seems that insofar as a human being is a *person*, he would always treat his natural self in a manner befitting that personality, as he would regard his natural self to be "bound to the inner end" of personality, i.e. his natural self would be, as far as possible, a function of his personality. That is, were he rationally perfect but embodied in, perhaps, a body very similar to that of a human being but with no ties to the sensible world beyond an existence, his natural human self would simply be an articulation of his personality, through words and deeds. Since, however, a human being in his wholeness is connected both to the sensible and the intelligible world, being torn between the calls of inclination and the call of duty, he has a choice as to whether he squanders his freedom, and knowingly reducing himself to a mere rational animal, makes use of his natural self as a

dispensable means to his various selfish ends, or whether he accesses his freedom and makes choices which treat his natural self as an extension of his personality.

The temptation posed by a possible lie to oneself illustrates the sharp difference between the two courses of action. If a human being inspects his own beliefs and finds that he simply does not believe in God, that human being finds that he is still able to inwardly declare that he does believe in God, and is tempted to do so just in case God does exist after all and is awaiting his prayer in return for his beneficence. The act of blotting out the voice of his true belief, and substituting it with falsity within his very self, is one way that one may oppose the self-respect issued by one's dignity. Why such an act is called an 'inner lie' is because one's personality would always, by virtue of its purity, tell the truth, and the self-respect it issues demands truthfulness from the imperfectly rational reason which it imbues. That is, truthfulness would be consistent with the human being's respect for his moral self. By choosing not to abide by this truthfulness, for which the human being feels a constraint in his own will, he is lying to himself – to another part of himself, his moral potential – and is thereby transgressing a duty to the self. In the act of telling a lie to another person, a human being uses that person merely as a means to his end, but could still, in his own disposition firmly believe in what is truthful and disbelieve in what is false. In the act of lying *to himself*, a human being leaves 'no room in his disposition'[195] for respect for his own dignity and potential truthfulness, and therefore "violates"[196] his own personality. It may be that self-respect is not explicitly mentioned in this section because by contravening 'the highest principle of truthfulness', a human being pays no heed to any feeling that might remind him of his dignity; the violation of one's dignity involves the deliberate overriding of any self-respect, and the rooting of oneself to the sensible world.

As a second vice opposed to one's duty to oneself merely as a moral being, Kant names avarice, which he defines as "restricting *one's own* enjoyment of the means to good living so narrowly as to leave one's own true needs unsatisfied" (*MdS* 6:432). Whilst the force of the previous vice is clear – that of rendering oneself untrue to one's moral self - the abhorrence of this vice seems less obvious. If we recall that a duty of virtue to the self requires that *I ought to make myself my end*, then a principle of depriving myself of the necessities and comforts for my well-being and enjoyment can be seen to be contrary to

[195] To use the metaphor employed by Kant at *MdS* 6:425
[196] See *MdS* 6:429.

such a duty; by such actions, I make some state of material affairs, such as wealth or righteous poverty, my end. Again, it can be demonstrated that any principle of this brand of avarice pays no heed to the self-respect issued by the aspect of one's moral self; action rooted in this self-respect would involve ensuring that the whole human being was preserved and nurtured so as to be well-disposed towards acting morally. This would surely include the sustenance of physical and mental well-being. Any principle that contravenes the fulfilment of these needs actively displaces the preservation of one's very capacity to be moral, treating it as less important, than, say, the hoarding of money, or the self-righteous appearance of excessive thrift. Hence the vice of avarice involves actions which shun the import of one's respect for one's moral self, elevating the material goods of the sensible world to the heights of being his ends; through avarice, a human being belittles his natural self by completely disregarding his moral self and working towards ends directly contrary to actions in line with respect for his moral self.

What is distinctive about lying and avarice is that neither vice requires even the existence of other people; I can lie to myself without ever speaking to any one else, and I can deprive myself of essentials and comforts, without needing to know anyone else - in fact, having no friends or acquaintances could contribute to this principle of deprivation. The third vice Kant illustrates, as contrary to one's perfect duty to one's moral self, is that of false servility: and this vice does depend on the presence of other people for its fruition. It is in the discussion of this vice that Kant makes absolutely explicit the cruciality of self-respect in any duty of a human being to the self:

"Since he must regard himself not only as a person generally but also as a *human being*, that is, as a person who has duties his own reason lays upon him, his insignificance as a *human animal* may not infringe upon his consciousness of his dignity as a *rational human being*, and he should not disavow the moral self-esteem[197] of such a being, that is, he should pursue his end, which is in itself a duty, not abjectly, not in a *servile spirit* (*animo servili*) as if he were seeking a favour, not disavowing his dignity, but always with consciousness of his sublime moral predisposition (which is already contained in the concept of virtue). And this self-esteem[198] is a duty of the human being to himself." (*MdS* 6:435)

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197 "*...die moralische Selbstschätzung...*"
198 "*...diese Selbstschätzung ist Pflicht des Menschen gegen sich selbst.*"

In the context of his description of why servility is in every case contrary to one's duty to oneself, Kant reinforces the moral standing of each and every human being. Although a human being does have a low value, or a relative price, insofar as he is simply a human animal, he also has a dignity insofar as he can view himself as a moral being. Consciousness of the absolute inner worth of one's personality comes in the form of a moral self-esteem, and it renders accessible a constraint on the imperfectly rational being who contains this potential, which is a predisposition towards the good. Such consciousness demands that he treat himself as an end-in-himself, and that therefore "[h]e can measure himself with every other being of this kind and value himself on a footing of equality with them." (*MdS* 6:435) Although his dignity issues self-esteem of its own accord, the human being, at the helm of his own two aspects, is presented with a choice, as to whether he acts with consciousness of his personality, or whether he denies himself this, and treats himself merely as a means to some worldly end. It is because, as an imperfectly rational being, he is always faced by this crossroads, that he can be said to have a 'duty of self-esteem'. What is properly meant by this, is that he has a duty to act in accordance with the self-esteem issued by his personality. It is noteworthy that Kant applies the same verb "verläugnen" (*MdS* 6:435), to describe the disavowal of both one's self-esteem and one's dignity: it seems that one disavows one's dignity by disavowing one's self-respect, and vice versa.

Kant defines humility (*humilitas moralis*) as the consciousness of the insignificance of one's own moral worth as compared with the moral law (*MdS* 6:435). The two vices contrary to this virtue are moral arrogance – a laying claim to a greatness of moral worth because of one's failure to compare it to the law – and morally false servility. This latter vice, Kant describes as the act of "waiving claim to moral worth in oneself, in the belief that one will thereby acquire a borrowed worth" (MdS 6:435). The incentive for this vice lies in the possibility of changing oneself in the perception of others, through false self-deprecation and ungrounded flattery, with the sole intention of gaining their favour; as a contravention of perfect duty to the self, it uses both the self and others as mere means to an end. False servility, in this sense, is a deliberate diminishing of one's own moral worth in the eyes of others; because of this, Kant says, "it degrades one's personality" (*MdS* 6:436), and is therefore contrary to one's duty to oneself. As a vice it involves lying to others but it does not necessarily involve lying to oneself. That is, in one's disposition one might maintain some self-respect – one might be willing to accept a favour that one

has no real need for, out of self-indulgence, but one might at the same time be unwilling to live as a parasite, accepting such favours all day every day.

Imperfect duties to the self

Having outlined an array of actions strictly contrary to the duty imposed by the right of one's humanity, Kant turns to certain positive duties to the self. He sets out an argument that a human being, as a being capable of making objects his ends, owes it to himself to cultivate his natural predispositions, capacities and talents – such as his knowledge of science, logic, philosophy; his mental instruments of memory and imagination; and his physical strength and skills (*MdS* 6:445) - with a view to furnishing reason with a wide repertoire of abilities, some of which will be requisite to a human being's being "equal to the end of his existence" (*MdS* 6:445). Because of the latitude present in what shape and direction a human being's life will take, the duty of cultivating these powers with regard to his *natural perfection* is only a wide and imperfect duty. Inasmuch as this duty overlaps with the duty a being has to himself of being a useful member of the world, it seems that this duty is ultimately connected with "the worth of humanity in his own person, which he ought not to degrade" (*MdS* 6:446). That is, the imperfection of this duty is merely with regard to details of the human being's end; that the human being should make every effort to perfect himself is a perfect duty, which impinges upon the strict command to respect one's dignity.

Similarly, the duty that a human being has to himself of increasing his moral perfection, i.e. that of rendering one's disposition to duty pure, Kant says, is narrow and perfect insofar as one should always make it one's end to act from duty, yet it is wide and imperfect in that it is by definition impossible for a human being to achieve (*MdS* 6:446). That is, a human being, by his very nature, can never attain the absolute end of humanity, in the form of an entirely pure will. Every time he achieves perfection in an act, he immediately returns to his default state of being a creature engulfed by the pulls of the sensible world, who merely contains the capacity to be moral.

Duties of virtue to others merely as human beings

I have argued that duty to the self is a morally practical relation that one stands in with regard to oneself as a human being, a duty whose content is analogous to the demand that one acts with a recognition of one's dignity, a recognition which takes the form of a self-esteem or respect. I now turn to an examination of the morally practical relations across humankind, that is the relation among human beings "represented by pure reason, that is, a relation of free actions in accordance with maxims that qualify for a giving of universal law" (*MdS* 6:451). I demonstrate that *respect*, as a moral regard for another's right, is the fundamental duty of virtue to another human being, and I examine duties of respect as contrasted and compared to duties of love. I try to explicate the manner in which duties to others depend on duty to the self for their possibility. I then turn to a consideration of the metaphysical connection between the respect required by duties to others, and respect for law.

In his discussion of duties of virtue to others, Kant presents an image for our consideration of a possible moral kingdom, where the principle of mutual love is designed to draw rational beings together, whilst the principle of the respect they owe to each other is designed to render them at a distance; the two 'moral forces'[199] at work create a balance which sustains a harmony between these beings. He seems to have the possibility of such a harmonious relation between human beings in mind, when he sets out the duties of love and respect to others, from which all other individual duties to others are ramified: both variants of duty involve regarding others as possible ends-in-themselves. He begins by drawing a distinction between the kind of duty to others which incurs an obligation on the recipient's part, because by it one does more in the way of duty than what one can be constrained by law to do – a meritorious duty; and that which does not incur an obligation on the recipient's part, because it is exactly what the law requires – a duty that is simply *owed*. At this early stage of the discussion, Kant says "*Love* and *respect* are the feelings that accompany the carrying out of these duties" (*MdS* 6:448), and proceeds to explain that these feelings can operate separately or together but are "basically always united by the law into one duty" (*MdS* 6:448).

[199] See *MdS* 6:449.

This statement appears to be misleading, as several lines later, Kant exclaims that in the context of these duties, "...**love** is not to be understood as *feeling*, that is, as pleasure in the perfection of others...[or]...delight in them..." (*MdS* 6:449); and the "**respect** to be shown to others...is not to be understood as the mere *feeling* that comes with comparing our own worth with another's..."[200]. Love or respect as a duty could not constitute a feeling, as one cannot be put under obligation to *feel*; feelings do not, on Kant's view, lie within our control in this manner. Are duties of love and respect so called because they are accompanied by eponymous epiphenomenal feelings? This cannot be so, as for example, the command to love one's neighbours as oneself is morally binding, whether or not one happens to find one's neighbour worthy of love. Or are these the feelings that would *appear* to be the natural causes of the actions particular to such duties, in the way that if I received a death threat, I would assume that the purveyor of that threat hated me?

Love for another human being, as a duty, is practical love; it is the duty to make others' *ends* my own, insofar as they are permissible morally. An act of a duty of love is meritorious, in the sense that, because it was not owed to the recipient, it puts the recipient under obligation. Respect for another human being, as a duty, is practical respect[201]. It is a duty which bids one to be vigilant about how one affects others through one's own actions, so as "not to degrade any other to a mere means to my ends" (*MdS* 6:450); I must ensure that I do not "detract anything from the worth that the other, as a human being, is authorised to put upon himself." (*MdS* 6:450) Therefore, unlike practical love, respect for others turns out to be only a negative duty, and in this regard it appears to be analogous to the universal principle of right, whereby:

"Any action is *right* if it can coexist with everyone's freedom in accordance with a universal law, or if on its maxim the freedom of choice of each can coexist with everyone's freedom in accordance with a universal law." (*MdS* 6:230)

What distinguishes a duty of respect from a duty of right is not necessarily a difference in the particular duties each requires, but a difference in the lawgiving; with regard to duties of virtue the lawgiving can only be internal, but with regard to duties of right, external lawgiving can also be given: by taking up the moral incentive *respect for law*, one can

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[200] Ibidem. This feeling may refer to the concept of respect for persons; a feeling aroused by the acknowledgement of a moral *action* of another person.
[201] Kant employs the Latin term '*observantia aliis praestanda*'.

transform what would have been an action of right, into an action of virtue. Therefore we might at this stage pose an hypothesis that a duty of respect will turn out to be the moral requirement that one adopts respect for right. Such a hypothesis might be grounded in, for example, Kant's statement at the close of his article *Toward Perpetual Peace*, where he states:

"Both philanthropy and respect for the *rights* of the human being are duties: but the former is only *conditional* duty whereas the latter is *unconditional* duty, commanding absolutely, and whoever wants to give himself up to the sweet feeling of beneficence must first be completely assured that he has not transgressed this unconditional duty."[202]

Duties of love

With these preliminary points in mind, I turn first to Kant's division of the duties of love, which espouses beneficence as its leading duty, gratitude as a derivative duty, and sympathy or compassion, as a supporting duty. While *benevolence* is described as the mere satisfaction in the well-being or happiness of others, *beneficence* "is the maxim of making others' happiness one's end" (*MdS* 6:452). But Kant admits that one might query whether such an extensive duty to others is indeed presented by his pure reason through the constraint of his will. He feels the need to explain how it is that beneficence is a duty, and this explanation points to the nature of the relationship between duties to the self, and duties to others. It turns out that it is a duty of "common interest" (*MdS* 6:453):

"...beneficence toward those in need[,] is a universal duty of human beings, just because they are to be considered fellow human beings, that is, rational beings with needs, united by nature in one dwelling place so that they can help one another." (*MdS* 6:453)

As mentioned above, beneficence, in its form as a duty of love, is a meritorious duty, in that it puts its beneficiary under obligation. Kant holds that this condition that such a duty bears should be treated with delicacy and sensitivity. That is, the one giving should take pains to ensure that the recipient does not *feel* like he is being bound by this gift, not least because the agent, in giving away that which he will not miss, should experience the

[202] *Toward Perpetual Peace* 8:385

"moral feelings"[203] inculcated by virtue as its own reward. If the benefactor shows that he *wants* to contract an obligation on the part of the other, then, on this view, he may encroach upon the other's self-esteem, by deliberately humbling him. Because of this risk of lowering another in his own eyes, Kant insists that beneficence is best done "in complete secrecy" (*MdS* 6:453) but if this is not possible then the duty should be made to appear as if it were simply a duty that was owed.

The vice directly contrary to beneficence is that of *envy* (*MdS* 6:458), whereby one regards another's well-being with scorn and negativity. This vice stems from a misguidedness on the part of the agent in estimating his own well-being by comparing it to others, rather than looking with noble pride[204] on his own intrinsic worth. Hence an envious attitude is not merely contrary to the duty of beneficence to others, but it is contrary to one's duty to oneself, as it ignores one's dignity and the self-respect it ensues, turning to the prosperity of others for its standard. Here we see that moral self-respect indirectly facilitates beneficence.

In the light of Kant's words with regard to the care a benefactor must take in not lowering his beneficiary in his own estimation, one might be forgiven for assuming that any gratitude as a response to beneficence is not particularly important. One might, for instance, presume that a maxim of gratitude might simply be a maxim of prudence, to ensure the possibility of further benefaction. But that obligation on the part of another, incurred by the reception of an act of beneficence, takes the form of a duty of love in its own right; that of *gratitude*, the honouring of a person who has bestowed a benefit upon one. That this is a duty of love might appear befuddling, as it turns out to be a type of respect:

"The feeling connected with this judgement is respect for the benefactor (who puts one under obligation), whereas the benefactor is viewed as only in a relation of love toward the recipient." (*MdS* 6:454-5)

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[203] See *MdS* 6:653. I consider the nature of such moral feelings in my Chapter IV, which discusses the moral predispositions.

[204] Kant defines noble pride, or love of honour, as a concern to yield nothing of one's human dignity in comparison with another. (*MdS* 6:465)

There are two points worth noting with regard to Kant's conception of moral gratitude. Firstly, he espouses this duty as *sacred*, in the sense that its obligation cannot be undone by any action in keeping with it. No reciprocal thanks, or kindnesses, or favours will ever rid the recipient of the obligation he has been placed under, "since the recipient can never win away from the benefactor his *priority* of merit, namely having been the first in benevolence" (*MdS* 6:455). This might seem to us excessive, especially for comparatively small acts of beneficence. Why should the fact that a friend helped me to fix my bicycle (even if she did it ultimately from duty) put me under eternal obligation to her? What about if she helped me, knowing full well that we would never meet again? Even if I am now under lifelong obligation to her, why is it that the judgement acknowledging such gratitude is connected to a feeling of respect?

A clue can be found in Kant's insistence that the violation of a sacred duty "can destroy the moral incentive to beneficence in its very principle" (*MdS* 6:455). Now, the principle of beneficence rests on the equality[205] and common interest (*MdS* 6:453) of all rational beings with needs, and hence ultimately on its universality. The moral constraint to look after oneself, with its ultimate basis in self-respect for one's dignity, may involve one looking to others for help on certain occasions: the only way in which help from others can be a command of practical reason, is if each being, including oneself, is under obligation to every being (including oneself) of that kind. It seems that by 'the moral incentive to beneficence in its very principle', Kant is not referring to respect for the law, as the moral incentive in its absolution; rather, he might have in mind the moral guarantee that the benefactor's duties to himself will be reinforced in an esteem or respect by the beneficiary; and thus, through the duty of beneficence, that possible moral kingdom of ends, held in mutual moral respect, will remain within grasp.

Indeed, Kant confirms that the vice opposed to gratitude - that is, *ingratitude* - stems from a misunderstanding of one's duty to oneself:

"...we fear that by showing gratitude we take the inferior position of a dependent in relation to his protector, which is contrary to real self-esteem (pride in the dignity of humanity in one's own person)." (*MdS* 6:459)

[205] The principle of equality is said to explain the duty of mutual benevolence. (MdS 6:451)

This fear can lead to people mistakenly assuming that it is in line with one's self-esteem to deny oneself help from another, or if one does accept another's help, to then feel even hatred to the one who provided the help, for acknowledging one's own vulnerability and helplessness. Not only might such ingratitude deter people from acts of beneficence but, Kant says, it "stands love of human beings on its head, and degrades absence of love into an authorization to hate the one who loves." (*MdS* 6:459)

The second point regarding Kant's notion of the duty of gratitude is that a recipient of beneficence need not regard the obligation he incurs as burdensome: he can, instead, take it as "...an opportunity... to combine the cordiality of a benevolent disposition with sensitivity to benevolence (attentiveness to the smallest degree of this disposition in one's thought of duty), and so to cultivate one's love of human beings" (*MdS* 6:456). So, the duty of gratitude perpetuates the duty of beneficence in a second way; not only does it render the recipient of benefaction under obligation to the benefactor but it also presents him with an opportunity to reflect on, and presumably approve of, the benefactor's moral disposition. These two points pick up the two possible types of respect connected with a gratitude: in the first case, an attitude of respect for the benefactor in terms of his status as a moral being, analogous to one's self-respect; in the second case, a respect for the agent's moral disposition, which is properly a respect for the law. In the first case, respect is an attitude we can, and should, adopt. In the second case it is a type of moral feeling. Why would a sensitivity to benevolence cultivate one's *love* of human beings, if that sensitivity will comprise a *respect* for the person? Perhaps we see here why Kant notes that the two feelings often come together.

As a supporting duty of love, Kant names that of *sympathetic feeling* (*MdS* 6:456). He points out that a human being does not merely possess a receptivity, bestowed by nature, to feel sadness or joy at the happiness or pain of others, but has a capacity to *will* to share in the feelings of others. The first type of feeling is *unfree*, the second type is *free*, and based on practical reason. The act of sharing in the sufferings of others cannot, Kant says, be a duty, as it would increase the number of ills in the world; but the duty of beneficence would be assisted by one's ability to sympathise actively in the fate of others, and so therefore it is an indirect duty to cultivate one's ability to do this. *Malice* (*MdS* 6:459) is named as the vice directly contrary to sympathy, as it is a way of secretly hating human beings. Kant describes that "malevolent joy" of malice, which is found in "...the

haughtiness of others when their welfare is uninterrupted, and their *self-conceit* in their good conduct" (*MdS* 6:460). Hence it is evident that malice is a product of self-conceit, which, as has already been discussed, is directly opposed to one's proper moral self-esteem. Once again, a duty to others – that of sympathetic feeling – can be shown, through an examination of its opposing vice, to have its roots in a moral self-esteem, that is, a consciousness of one's humanity.

One could argue that beneficence is the *duty of love proper*, and that gratitude and sympathetic feeling assist in its perpetuation across the world of moral beings. Sympathetic feeling encourages an agent to be beneficent; gratitude, through the respect that it demands for the benefactor, and the awareness that it entails of the neediness of the recipient, helps to prevent the recipient from demanding too much. That is, practical love is encouraged by sympathetic feeling, and curbed by gratitude. But why is gratitude framed by Kant as a duty of love, not as a duty of respect?

Duties of respect

Kant considers a world in which human morality were simply limited to duties of right – perfect duties, whose purpose it is to secure the outer freedom of all its members. Even if such duties were fulfilled by all the members of the world, and every member could enjoy his own perfect freedom, Kant notes, a "great moral adornment" (*MdS* 6:458), that is, benevolence, would be missing. What such an adornment invites is for humans to concern themselves with the ends of others, as well as merely with themselves; the act of viewing another person's ends as my own can involve my adopting certain feelings, particular to human beings, such as those of love, respect and sympathy, towards that being, and such relations between persons are part of the richness of human morality. Where a failure to fulfil a duty of love, however, is classed as mere lack of virtue (*peccatum*)[206], Kant holds that failure to fulfil a duty of respect is a vice (*vitium*). What this distinction clearly points to, is that a failure to fulfil a duty of love maintains a neutral state of affairs between persons, but a failure to fulfil a duty of respect trangresses someone's *right*.

[206] See *MdS* 6:464

Because the duties directly arising from the respect due to a human being are negative (and therefore perfect) duties, Kant describes them in terms what they prohibit. The first vice directly opposed to the duty of respect for other human beings is *arrogance* (*superbia*)[207], or *self-conceit*, the laying claim to an exaggerated esteem from others, which at the same time contemptuously treats those others as mere means to one's ends. Not only does this vice completely disregard the moral respect the agent owes to others as persons, but it also, in effect, ensures that the moral respect the agent is actually due from others is diminished: "for the more he shows that he is trying to obtain respect, the more everyone denies it to him" (*MdS* 6:465). Whilst arrogance is here depicted as directly opposed to a perfect duty of respect to others, its first appearance within the will of a human being is opposed to duty to the self. That is, self-conceit is the attempt a human being makes to render his self-love lawgiving: "...if self-love makes itself lawgiving and the unconditional practical principle, it can be called *self-conceit*." (*CpV* 5:74) In order for such self-conceit to take its hold within one's will, it would have in every case to shun the moral incentive of respect for the law, thereby entirely disregarding one's moral personality.

Where arrogance involves inflating the appearance of one's own self-esteem in order to make others, by comparison, feel belittled, *defamation*, as the second vice contrary to a duty of respect, involves a more direct attempt to reduce the worth of others. Kant explains that the intentional spreading of something that detracts from another's honour "diminishes respect for humanity as such" (*MdS* 6:466). What is most interesting here is that, with regard to the vice, it is irrelevant as to whether the content of this defamation is true or false. Similarly, with regard to the third vice that Kant names as violating the respect due to human beings, the vice of ridicule[208], it is irrelevant as to whether this ridicule pertains to real or invented faults about another human being: any mockery or ridicule, whose aim is to deprive another of the respect he deserves, is a violation of one's duty of respect to others. Kant argues that we have a duty to "throw a veil of philanthropy" (*MdS* 6:466) over the faults of others, so as not to "dull one's moral feeling by repeatedly exposing one to the sight of such things" (ibidem). On what grounds would Kant endorse keeping our moral judgements about the vices of other human beings to ourselves? He clearly sees a direct connection between our ability to attribute to humanity the respect it is due, and virtue:

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[207] See *MdS* 6:465
[208] See *MdS* 6:467

"...[Defamation] is contrary to the respect [*Achtung*] owed to humanity as such; for every scandal given weakens that respect [*Achtung*], on which the impulse to the morally good rests..." (*MdS* 6:466)[209]

Here it must be observed that Kant signposts a causal connection between the acknowledgement that respect is owed to humanity, and 'one's moral feeling' or 'the impulse to the morally good'. Gossip about another's alleged misdemeanours is directly contrary to the respect owed to humanity because it contributes to an overall lowering of any listener's general esteem for human beings. Because the one hearing the gossip does not have a power of perception whereby he can directly *sense* the dignity of another, his esteem for that person is threatened by misgivings caused by the slander or exposure of the faults of that person. That is, I might acknowledge the inherent dignity of a friend and the respect that he is owed on the grounds of this dignity. This respect will entail that, at the very least, I act only in a way that is consistent with that friend's right to moral freedom. But, on hearing that he steals money from the shop he works at, my respect for him, which I adopted on the grounds that he possesses dignity, is immediately threatened.

That is, I cannot help but disapprove of the fact that he has acted so contrary to his own dignity, and I think: if he doesn't respect his own dignity, why should I? The necessitation impressed by my own sense of duty is rendered, in my estimation, less pressing: owing to the imperfection of my own rationality, the effort involved on my part to overcome certain inclinations and make certain sacrifices in order to treat my friend as an end-in-himself suddenly seems less worthwhile. Temptations on the part of my own feelings start to impinge upon my reasoning: I might, for instance, inflate my own sense of self, by declaring that, because I would never act in such an immoral way, I am therefore better than my friend. Or I might actively treat my friend with less care for his own personality: I might feel tempted to use him, just as he uses others. In other words, because my respect for any other human being is always at risk, measures should be taken to help to keep it intact, and one such measure is the moral prohibition of defamation.

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[209] Ibidem 6:466: "Die übele Nachrede (*obtrectatio*) oder das Afterreden,...[]... ist der schuldigen Achtung gegen die Menschheit überhaupt zuwider: weil jedes gegebene Skandal diese Achtung, auf welcher doch der Antrieb zum Sittlichguten beruht, schwächt und so viel möglich gegen sie ungläubisch macht."

Although a duty of respect merely comprises a *prohibition* not to violate the respect owed to others, its content reaches far beyond simply observing the right that another has to moral freedom, and avoiding the transgression of that other's freedom. Such a duty would merely lie within the bounds of the doctrine of right. Where outwardly a duty of respect prescribes only inaction, inwardly, as I have shown, it involves the necessitation to make the *right* of another person one's own end. I have tried to show that the respect due to others arising from their humanity demands that one treats another in a way that would be in line with his own moral self-esteem, and I have argued that such (negative) duties to others are dependent on the possibility of duties to the self, as one must be able to appreciate one's own dignity and one's capacity to act in line with it, in order to infer the dignity of others and the rights that they have by virtue of it. What cannot be ignored is that the concept of duty only applies to imperfectly rational beings who contain *humanity*: if the humanity in a human being is only actually *owed* duties of respect, then how is it that an agent can feel constrained to perform a duty of love, that is, a duty to another which is not owed? In order to answer this question, I shall return to the convergence that Kant draws between:

a. *the respect owed to each and every human being*, and
b. *the respect on which the impulse to the morally good rests*.[210]

It is tempting to isolate the bounds of these two types of respect, declaring that the former (a) is the content of a duty, a regard demanded by the moral law, whose aim is simply to preserve the dignity of any human being; and that the latter (b) is the morally grounded incentive to any duty, a special kind of feeling, effected by the moral law. One might then claim that the only connection between (a) and (b) is that it is through (b) that one can achieve (a). But such a reading is not fully sensitive to Kant's words: he holds that any act (such as defamation) contrary to (a), weakens (b). How could a diminishing of the respect *owed* to a human being weaken one's *incentive* to be moral? An answer, such as the one I outlined above, suggesting that by lowering the estimated moral worth of a person, one is then likely to be less inclined to act morally towards that human being is far from satisfactory. The incentive to be moral is always *respect for the moral law*: that I have a duty not to use another person as a means to my end remains untouched by my

[210] See *MdS* 6:466.

estimation of whether or not that particular person is a good person. The maxim of my self-constraint must be decided upon *from duty*, that is, *from respect for the law*, not from any weighing up of my positive esteem for the other person's righteousness. The only way in which (b) could conceivably vary according to any fluctuations of (a), would be if the consciousness of (b) could, in some sense, depend on the consciousness of (a).

Throughout this chapter, I have argued that the respect owed to the humanity in any other human being is accessible to my consciousness only through an awareness of my own dignity, by means of my self-respect, and an act of inference: that that other person is the bearer of an imperfect will containing a predisposition towards the good, which is metaphysically on the same standing as mine. Before continuing with the ramifications of my argument, I wish to bring back in the issue regarding the roots of self-respect and respect for law, which I set aside earlier. Previously, I suggested – with great reservation - that *self-respect* was in some sense fundamental to *respect for law*, since it appeared that self-respect was the sole basis, for a human being, on which the conditions required for *personality* could be sustained (i.e. the basis for duties to the self). Now I wish to reinforce the fact that both self-respect, and respect for law, are effects of the moral law[211]. It *cannot* be the case that self-respect is metaphysically primary to respect for law, as whilst both derive from the moral law, it is solely through respect for law that one can become conscious of the object of self-respect:

"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 let us discover the sublimity of our own supersensible existence and subjectively effects respect[212] for their higher vocation in human beings..." (*CpV* 5:88)

The practicality present in the imperfect reason of a human being, as possessing a predisposition towards the good, necessarily contains the moral law and the ability to legislate this law. The law emits certain effects on the will; respect for its commands, and respect for the capacity of lawgiving. The first is the 'impulse on which the morally good rests', the second is that on which duties to the self rest. Whilst the manner by which these two types of respect relate to each other is philosophically unclear, what can be stipulated with certainty is that, for Kant, self-esteem and respect for the law share a

[211] Compare *MdS* 6:403, *CpV* 5:76.
[212] "*Achtung für ihre höhere Bestimmung*" (*CpV* 5:88)

common root. By extension, since I have argued that the respect owed to others is, in some sense, a dutiful replication of the duties in line with respect for the self, I now further argue that the basis for such respect is the moral law. Kant explains:

"I am not bound to revere[213] others (regarded merely as human beings), that is, to show them *positive* high esteem[214]. The only reverence[215] to which I am bound by nature is reverence for law as such (*revere legem*); and **to revere the law, but not to revere other human beings in general** (*reverentia adversus hominem*) or to perform some act of reverence for them, **is a human being's universal and unconditional duty toward others, which each of them can require as the respect[216] originally owed others** (*observantia debita*)." (my bold lettering) (*MdS* 6:467-8)

This articulation of what a human being's universal and unconditional duty properly involves leaves open the possibility of my interpretation. If the respect owed to others is reducible to a demand for an agent to revere the law, then this is perfectly consistent with the view that an agent has to *infer* the presence of the law within others. One only has direct access to the law within oneself, and this access is solely through the feeling of reverence. An objection that might immediately spring to mind is the seeming paradox present in this reduction of duty to others: how can I have a duty to revere the law, when duty itself is "the necessity of an action from respect for law" (*G* 4:400)? Reverence or respect, as a feeling, is that through which I can feel the necessitation of my duty, so how can I have a duty to *have* this feeling? I cannot; but I can have a duty to act on it. From an agent's point of view, he feels the motivation to do his duty through the feeling of respect, but he finds that he can still act against that motivation. A duty to revere the law, in this context, must simply mean that at this point of choice, the morally valuable action is always to meet the reverence effected by the moral law with a decision to perpetuate that reverence. This functions in the same way as a duty of self-esteem, which is properly a duty to act in consistency with one's self-esteem.

It is on this understanding that we should understand Kant's suggestion that a diminishing of the respect owed to humanity can jeopardise the moral incentive: the

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213 "*verehren*"
214 "*Hochachtung*"
215 "*Achtung*"
216 "*Achtung*"

moral law is to be presumed to be present in every imperfectly rational being, and it is the moral law which gives rise to its own incentive. By denying the presence of the moral law in a particular human being, one would deny the duty to revere the law within them: that is, the negation of (a) entails, in this particular case, a negation of (b) (see above). As a consequence of such a denial, that human being would be classed as unworthy of duties of respect, for he is assumed to contain no law within him, which demands such respect; and so too would he be deemed unworthy of duties of love, since he would be classed as incapable of universalising his own maxims, and thereby as unable to contribute to the moral community invited by the principle of beneficence.

Having ascertained the root cause of the debt of respect that a human being has to all other human beings, it must be considered whether the duties that are not owed – that is, duties of love – share the same source as the duties that are owed, or whether they are not dependent on the assumption of the presence of the moral law in another. They might, for example, be simply dependent on one's esteem for one's dignity, and a propensity ingrained in human beings, for desiring to be part of a community, where each can expect a certain degree of benevolence from the other. Another way of formulating this question might be to ask whether there could be a moral force of love, without the moral force of respect. We have seen that a world devoid of such love would be a world of right: could a world of moral love devoid of respect exist?

Kant sets out in his Concluding Remark in the *Doctrine of the methods of ethics*:

"All moral relations of rational beings, which involve a principle of the harmony of the will of one with that of another, can be reduced to *love* and *respect*; and, insofar as this principle is practical, in the case of love the basis for determining one's will can be reduced to another's *end*, and in the case of respect, to another's *right*." (*MdS* 6:488)

It seems that for practical love, or beneficence, to be placed under moral constraint, respect is always required. Indeed, Kant's division of the duties of love, standing apart from his duties of respect, itself contains a duty of gratitude which comprises respect. What is more, in Kant's example of an act of beneficence towards someone poor, under the command of the moral law, he notes:

"...since the favour we do implies that his well-being depends on our generosity, and this humbles him, it is our duty to behave as if our help is either merely what is due him or but a slight service of love, and to spare him humiliation and respect for himself." (*MdS* 6:448)

It is certainly the case that where an act of love might easily get carried away, respect as a moral force limits that love, by demanding that the agent does not overreach into the bounds of another's moral freedom, and that the recipient does not accept more than that which is in keeping with his own self-respect and dignity. But respect and the duties pertaining to it do not simply have the function of *limiting* another moral force: a world of positive duties towards others, that is, the world Kant upholds as containing the adornment of morally valuable beneficence, presupposes the respect present in duties to others and duties to the self. A duty by which I ought to treat another person's (morally permissible) ends as my own (i.e. a duty of love) *presupposes* that I ought to revere the law in that person; and reverence for the law, as we have seen, is that which ultimately constitutes the respect owed to a person (i.e. a duty of respect). I cannot fulfil a conditional duty to another person, without fulfilling an unconditional duty to that person. It is solely by acknowledging that one ought to attribute respect to another person, that one acknowledges that that person is worthy of my duties of love.

External constraint, duties of right and a world of respectful relations

In his treatment of duty as necessitation through law, Kant does not confine himself to the workings of the inner life, to the concepts of purity of will and personal moral value; he looks outside to the world, its members and their needs, both natural[217] and moral. He envisages two different types of restraint, self-restraint and external restraint, which connect to two different facets of duty. A poignant question concerns whether or not the primacy of *respect* as a basic right of all human beings is contained within Kant's picture of the world of right. If it is – and I shall go on to discuss how this could be conceived as the case – although Kant proffers a selection of duties of respect whose concepts contain a certain latitude, by his duties of right it could be said that he seems to eclipse the need

[217] A human being is considered as both an animal, and as a person capable of free action, with needs adjoined to both aspects.

for such duties: it could then be argued that Kant invokes an artificial type of respect through the strictness and narrowness of his duties of right, by assigning external lawgiving and constraint to secure harmonious relations within the world of finite beings; such constraint is contracted to his notion of right[218], governed by the basic requirement for all of a certain type of freedom – an independence from being constrained by another's choice, in so far as it can coexist with the freedom of every other in accordance with a universal law[219].

The right of humanity and its union with respect

An arrangement of society protected by the imposition of duties of right in effect ensures that each member can expect and enjoy being regarded and treated with respect – as we would understand the concept today – that is, with a recognition of each person as being with rights to freedom and fair treatment. This is clearly exemplified in his Introduction to the Doctrine of Right[220]: Kant appeals to three classical formulae which he attributes to Ulpian[221] in order to capture the divisions of his Doctrine of Right. The first formula "Be an honorable human being (honeste vive)", he rephrases in terms of the right of humanity: i.e., "Do not make yourself a mere means for others but be at the same time an end for them". The second formula is "Do not wrong anyone (neminem laede)", and the third runs "...enter into a society with [others] in which each can keep what is his (suum cuique tribue)". In these closing remarks I try to demonstrate that the notion of 'the right of humanity' is closely connected to Kant's concept of respect.

Overriding the need for duty: respect devoid of moral worth – a pessimism about human nature?

Kant's duties of right concern themselves with what is unequivocally due to each and every human (or imperfectly rational) being. He recognises that certain duties must be

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[218] See MdS 6:230.
[219] See MdS 6:237.
[220] See MdS 6:229 onwards
[221] Domitius Ulpianus (born in Tyre, Phoenicia and died in A.D. 228) was a Roman jurist.

treated as strict and narrow, that is, that no room is to be given for them to be left undone. Whilst duties of virtue have an inevitable latitude, as the ends that one must make for oneself by one's own maxims are very unstable, owing to the vicissitudes and fluctuations of inclination and aversion affecting our wills, duties of right must be binding without exception. Kant therefore hails external lawgiving and constraint to secure the enaction of these duties, whose compelling force overrides the need for a person to act from duty; the external constraint appealed to in order strengthen the command of duties of right demonstrates that an arrangement of respectful relations of human beings within a community seems to require a more powerful force than duty itself. It could even be said that in aligning right with external constraint, Kant displays an acute awareness of the moral law's weakness in its ability to affect the human being's action, when compared with the fear of punishment or a desire to obey an external and authoritative lawgiver: after all, this external lawgiving merely reiterates the moral law's own command, and the external constraint is only reinforcing what the moral law is already pressing upon the agent. So it seems that this mutual respect in the form of acting in a manner consistent with everyone else's freedom, although it is due to human beings, requires external influence.

Widening the concept of duty beyond what is due: the breadth Kant's respect

Yet it *is* possible to fulfil a duty of right in two ways: one might act out of fear or awareness of the punishment threatened by the external constraint, or one might act from duty, imposing self-restraint on one's maxim. Kant holds that all duties belong to ethics; the difference between duties of virtue and duties of right lies in their lawgiving, and likewise, all lawgiving can be distinguished with respect to the incentive[222]. It is to the incentive to which we look if we wish to judge the moral worth of an action; Kant states that there is nothing meritorious (i.e. morally valuable) in the conformity of one's actions with right, but the conformity of one's maxims of actions with right, i.e. *respect* for right contains moral worth[223]. In describing this distinction, Kant explains that by making the right of human beings one's end, one "widens the concept of duty beyond the concept of what is due (officium debiti)" (*MdS* 6:391). It seems that just as duty has its narrow form,

[222] *MdS* 6:218-20
[223] *MdS* 6:390

i.e. what is due, regardless of my disposition, and its wider form, where the law is my incentive to make certain matters my end, there are forms of respect which correspond to these variations of duty, one a paler, artificially induced version of the other, where the incentive towards the action - *Achtung* - is that which determines the moral worth of the concept, and that which can transform a minimal notion of respect into a fully-fledged moral notion of respect.

It is therefore in every case through *Achtung* that a human being is able to perform his duties and assess what his duties are, but where *Achtung* is lacking, Kant's system of morals provides an alternative mechanism which can mirror what would have been its effects: a 'respectful' world is sadly possible without Kant's moral attitude of respect.

Conclusion: the Centrality of Respect in Human Morality

Within the confines of this thesis, I have argued that Kant's conception of *Achtung* – respect or reverence – for the moral law is far from an afterthought, which conjured up an obscure feeling in which Kant takes 'refuge' (*G* 4:401, footnote), in order to maintain his disparateness from moral sentimentalists and meanwhile to demonstrate how rationality of itself, cleansed of inclination, aversion, and their objects, can motivate morally valuable action. Far from wishing to hide away from a weighty philosophical problem produced by his metaphysics – that of how reason, of itself, within an imperfectly rational being, can be practical – Kant, in setting out his moral philosophy, is acutely conscious of the limits of the human condition, and fully takes on the burden of explaining how human beings can and do act morally. I hold that respect or reverence for the law, for Kant, is not a convenient escape route by which the philosopher can avoid addressing the question of how a human being can bring himself to override the impulses and temptations of sensuous pulls and act from duty alone; rather, under the name of *Achtung*, Kant is pinpointing a different kind of motivational attitude which a human (or any imperfectly rational being) is capable of experiencing; our capacity for experiencing this attitude toward the moral law is a feature built into the human constitution, and without such a capacity the human being would be entirely alien to and removed from the possibility of achieving or appreciating moral value.

The necessity of respect or reverence to Kant's vision of human morality is that which I illuminate in my Chapter I. Whilst Kant claims that his singular aim in the *Groundwork* is "nothing more than the search for and establishment of the *supreme principle of morality* which constitutes by itself a business that in its purpose is complete and to be kept apart from every other moral investigation" (*G* 4:392), he concerns himself with proceeding analytically from common cognition (*G* 4:392) to the determination of this supreme principle. Clearly Kant does not have in mind a metaphysics of morals which bears no relation to human action – an objective, necessary, universal moral law, knowable a priori but completely out of reach for the imperfectly rational; rather, he, from the very beginning, is overtly preoccupied with what is humanly possible, that is, how an imperfectly rational will, embodied in a finite being, can be good. This turns out to be a question of how it is that such a being can act *for the sake of duty* – that is, if an action is morally good if only it is done for the sake of duty, how can such partly rational, partly

sensuous beings, who are always by default being prompted by their inclination to act for the sake of the ultimate fulfilment of the senses, be motivated by duty alone? A related question, I outlined, is how such beings can ever appreciate the peculiar worth of moral goodness in themselves or in others: by what faculty do they have a sensitivity to this peculiar value that is the unconditional good, if by default they see the world and its value in terms of what can bring satisfaction to the inclinations?

Kant answers the first question succinctly in his so-called third proposition about duty, stipulating that "Duty is the necessity to act out of reverence for the law" (*G* 400, 14). I have argued that Kant's very inclusion of reverence within this proposition unequivocally highlights its cruciality to the possibility of duty: the concept of duty, as the sole mechanism of human morality, is clarified by the use of the terms of necessity, reverence and law. I further argued that at this stage Kant already regards reverence as the subjectively felt incentive to moral action, and I have suggested that Kant might have mistakenly presumed that such a capacity for reverence was present in ordinary rational thought: indeed, as I have shown, he describes reverence as "an estimation of a worth that far outweighs any worth of what is recommended by inclination" (*G* 4:403). It is through reverence alone that a human being is able to be conscious of and sensitive to moral value, and this sensitivity is accompanied by a motivational power. Kant's sketch within his appended footnote of how reverence, as the effect of the moral law on the subject, has two aspects, both of which are apt to stir action - one analogous to fear, and the other analogous to inclination (*G* 401 footnote) - serves to justify this claim that the reverence of the third proposition was always intended to provide the motivational force in the workings of human morality; this is confirmed by the words on which he ends the note; "All moral *interest*, so-called, consists solely in *reverence* for the law".

In Chapter II, I focused on the mechanism of the moral incentive, arguing that the practicality of the reason within an imperfectly rational being is possible only because of that being's capacity for reverence. I worked on the assumption that the practicality of reason does not merely involve the ability to give or issue laws: a practical reason must be capable of obeying the laws that it gives or issues. I analysed the workings of the mechanism of the moral incentive in order to show that reverence and the moral law stand in an intimate relation within the imperfectly rational will, where reverence always

follows the moral law as its effect – it is the incentive, presented to an imperfectly rational will, by the moral law, to make the law its maxim.

A deeply potent question with regard to the moral incentive is that of why it so frequently fails to motivate moral action: this question could mistakenly be taken to entail that the moral law on occasion fails to have any effect whatsoever on the imperfectly rational will. I have addressed this problem in detail, explaining that the moral law is *always* accompanied by its effect within the will – as Kant says, even the most hardened scoundrel "who, when one sets before him examples of honesty of purpose, of steadfastness in following good maxims, of sympathy and general benevolence (even combined with great sacrifices of advantage and comfort), does not wish that he might also be so disposed." (*G* 4:454) - but that, at the same time, duty "only holds forth a law that of itself finds entry into the mind and yet gains reluctant reverence (though not always obedience), a law before which all inclinations are dumb, even though they secretly work against it;..." (*CpV* 5:86). That is, reverence, as the incentive to moral action renders imperfectly rational beings *able* to act morally, but acting from reverence for the law remains a choice that will involve considerable effort and the sacrificing of at least some of the objects of inclination. The presence of an ability and a motivation to use that ability far from guarantees action. Reverence does not remove the imperfection of the will, it simply facilitates a striving for the fleeting correction of that imperfection.

Having examined Kant's vision of the operation of the moral incentive within the will of an imperfectly rational being, I then turned, in Chapter III, to a consideration of a different type of *Achtung*, that of Kant's notion of respect for persons. Whilst the motivational feeling of reverence with its sole object of the moral law might appear to have nothing to do with an attitude of respect for another person, I argued that a passing remark made by Kant in the Groundwork (401, footnote) highlights an intimate and unavoidable relationship between respect for law and a morally sensitive esteem prompted by the actions of other:

"All *Achtung* for a person is properly only *Achtung* for the law (of honesty and so on) of which that person gives us an example."

Whilst it is reverence for the law that can enable a human being to decide upon a morally valuable maxim of action, an attitude which goes by the same name, "*Achtung*", is that which one adopts when one witnesses another person acting in a (seemingly) morally valuable manner. What is more, Kant holds that the object of this attitude of respect for a person is not *properly* the person, or even that person's good deed, but rather the law exemplified by that action. I have demonstrated that the respect experienced by an observer for another person functions in a similar manner to reverence for the law; its sole object is the law, and where the law is lacking, so too it is lacking. What is more, such respect for a person is a "tribute" which "we cannot refuse to pay" (*CpV* 5:77); as soon as we are conscious of an example of the moral law in an action of another, it is no matter of choice as to whether or not we experience respect for that person, even though, admittedly, we can choose not to *show* respect for the person. I have argued that this choice parallels the choice we have as to whether or not we act on the reverence we feel for the moral law, on its appearance within the will. I also discussed the recognition of the practicability of moral action brought about both by reverence for the moral law within one's will, and by observing a moral action performed by another. I concluded the chapter with an observation that 'respect for persons' can never precede respect for the law: whilst the respect experienced at a supposed example of another's moral deed might inspire us to act morally, any such inspiration is owing to a recognition of our own causality as moral beings.

In my Chapter IV, having explored Kant's notion of personality, achievable in a fragmentary fashion through morally good acts, the absolute worth or dignity of the embodiment of that personality, and the type of respect deserved by any instantiation of moral goodness, I returned to the subjective conditions of the imperfectly rational will required in order for any such instantiation of moral worth to be possible. I explored Kant's description in the *Metaphysics of Morals* of a set of predispositions of the mind, referred to by Kant as 'moral endowments' (*MdS* 6:399) – moral feeling, conscience, love of one's neighbour, and respect for oneself. Rather than simply presuming that love of one's neighbour and respect for oneself are really duties that do not belong to the category of moral endowments, I have argued that the closeness of moral feeling to respect for oneself (which turns out to be a type of moral feeling) demands that the latter two named endowments are given careful consideration and credence.

I have tried to show that the moral predispositions not only enable the reception of duty but also give practicability to the many individual duties: specific moral actions, that is, duties specific to human beings, may in some sense reflect our moral predispositions, because a particular duty contains within it the quality of being practicable for a human being, and such practicability has at least some roots in the moral predispositions. Having outlined how the predisposition of love of one's neighbour might render imperfectly rational beings better equipped to shape duties which apply to other people, I then turned to the moral predisposition of respect for oneself. My suggestions regarding how a capacity for respect or esteem for oneself must be understood as essential to human morality might appear ambitious, not least because duties of respect as elements of the 'Doctrine of Virtue' may be interpreted as irrelevant to the morality of the whole 'Doctrine of Right'; but my claims are reinvigorated by an analysis of Kant's discussion of duties of respect and love.

In Chapter V, I have tried to demonstrate how a morally grounded self-respect contributes to one's awareness of the moral constraint placed on one's own will: an appreciation, through self-respect, of one's absolute worth or humanity brings with it an awareness of the rights of one's humanity, and such rights demand the execution of certain perfect duties. What is more, a number of imperfect duties, broader in the latitude of their application, are recommended by a respect for the self. I then examined the relationship between duties to the self and duties to others, and highlighted that an awareness of duties to others is reliant upon an understanding of one's duties to oneself. I concluded that respect, as a moral regard for another's right, is the fundamental duty of virtue to another human being; I conjecture that it is the impossibility of forcing another person to adopt an end that prompts the need for the principle of right and the external forces permitted by the 'Doctrine of Right'. The relations conjured up by actions in line with the principle of right mimic the relations that would be brought about by each man making every other man's right his end. What duties of love provide seems to be positive actions towards others, not merely the refraining from trampling on someone else's dignity.

What is undeniable about each and every conception of *Achtung* examined within this thesis is that, for Kant, *Achtung* seems to be that by which the imperfectly rational being can connect to or access any perfection or purity lurking within that imperfection.

Reverence for the moral law stands between the moral law as its cause and an imperfectly rational will beset by input from sensibility as the arena which it effects. Respect for persons, again, is an attitude experienced by an imperfectly rational observer but its object is always the form of the pure moral law which is instantiated by the moral action being observed. The capacities for moral feeling and for self-respect are both necessary to the possibility of human morality – without such capacities, a human being would both be incapable of acting from duty, and incapable of conceiving of the various particular duties required of him. Finally, duties to the self and to others are possible only through a self-respect, which renders one able to appreciate one's absolute worth or dignity and the rights entailed by this worth, and thereby similarly able to attribute such worth to other persons.

In spite of this common thread, there are definite differences between the various conceptions of *Achtung* which I have brought to light. Reverence for the moral law, in its role as the moral incentive, is a rationally wrought feeling which has the law as its sole and direct object. Respect for persons is a response to what one supposes is a morally valuable deed committed by another person; whilst its object is properly the law, this is a type of regard experienced towards another person at the observation of his or her action: it is not a direct, immediate effect of the moral law, but rather an eventual effect of the moral law – a respect mediated through experience and cognition. The predispositions for moral feeling and self-respect constitute neither an immediate nor mediated effect of the moral law; rather a moral predisposition is a feature of the psychological make-up of an imperfectly rational being which guarantees that such a being can be receptive to the moral law. Without such capacities in an imperfectly rational being, the moral law could neither prompt appreciation for its unconditional value, nor the motivation to take up its command. Standing apart from the types of *Achtung* dealt with in my first four chapters are self-respect itself and duties of respect to others. Actions in line with self-respect and duties of respect towards others cannot narrowly be described as effects of the moral law or responses to the moral law: rather they stem from the absolute worth of a will that has the potential to be lawgiving, that is, a will equipped with the necessary moral predispositions, that can be sensitive to moral worth and that is amenable to the motivational stirrings of reverence. As I have described, the capacity for respect for the law and respect for the moral action of others can aid an imperfectly rational being in judging that his own self or another being is

deserving of treatment sensitive to his moral personality, but there is a respect owed to humanity regardless of any empirical observations that a particular person has ever acted morally. This type of respect derives from the very practicality of the will of an imperfectly rational being, and it demands that this being is treated in a way that observes, protects, and gives freedom to his ability to be moral.

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