

# What can be answered on the question about incentive in Kant?

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Abstract:

*Following paper suggest an interpretation of the crucial moment of Kant's moral philosophy: namely, how is possible that opposed to all sensual and empirical inclination we decide to act morally, i.e. adopt a moral law as an single incentive of our action. It proceeds by introducing several critiques on Kant moral teaching (Schiller, Habermas etc.), which will be answered by interpretation focusing on the double role of respect in Kant's Critique of Practical Reason. It will be argued that Kant is not so pure and strict cognitivist or formalist as suggested, though the respect for moral law is not exactly the same as the notion of sublime.*

Key words:

*Kant Immanuel – moral philosophy – moral law – incentive – respect*

## I. Introduction

“Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and reverence, the more often and more steadily one reflects on them: the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me” [C5:162].<sup>1</sup> So says Kant's catch-phrase from the *Critique of Practical Reason*. The following paper will be concerned with last part of the quote, namely with the role and effects of moral law within being that is capable to hold moral law but not necessarily determined by it, i.e. finite rational being. I will argue that Kant cannot be interpreted as mere “cognitivist, formalist and universalist” as some scholars, including Habermas, contend.<sup>2</sup> This formalistic interpretation and the following critique can be traced far back to Kant's contemporaries. Already Friedrich Schiller was worried about “monkish asceticism” as the only right and good way of life. Where could be the source of such a interpretation, according

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. Jürgen Habermas, “Morality and Ethical Life: Does Hegel's Critique of Kant Apply to Discourse Ethics?”, in *Kant's Political Philosophy: The Contemporary Legacy*, (ed.) R. Beiner and W.J. Booth, Yale University Press 1993.

to which Kant in his moral theory follows strict puritan moral commands without a pinch of happiness and joy?

A basic argument for this formalistic view could be put together already from the first two parts of the *Groundwork*, where Kant rejects the utilitarian principle of happiness as a common goal and ground of moral acting. Since all the elements belonging to the concept of happiness – that is the source of our inclinations – are without exception empirical [G4:418], and therefore changeable, they cannot stand as a firm moral principle for limited, finite beings. Only when the action is done from the duty and not only in conformity with it (for this distinction cf. G4:398), where duty means the necessity of an action from the respect for the law, and action from duty means putting aside entirely the influence of inclinations raised by the objects [G4:400], first then has the action its genuine moral worth. Taking it all into account, it would seem that we necessarily have to refuse anything with a slight shade of happiness and follow solely the moral law in order to be judged as moral.

However, this argument has several problems, not to mention that due to its simplicity it is mistaken in what Kant wants to say. First, having solely this strict argument, it seems to me, there would be no possible way to explain, what leads human beings to act upon a maxim based on the moral law. Second, there are textual evidences – though not unproblematic – that Kant, after all, counts with the happiness within the human actions.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, this formalistic argument violates human nature, since we are told by Kant, that “*all people have already, of themselves, the strongest and deepest inclination to happiness*” [G4:399].

According to my interpretation, which will be presented in the next sections, the relation between duty and happiness is more subtle and it does not follow at all that acting morally – from duty, as from the necessity grounded in respect for the moral law – means being unhappy. Kant’s worry about *misology* and the beginning of the *Groundwork* shows that he was aware of this possible objection concerning simplicity of the formalistic argument. So the question to be answered is, how is it possible to act upon the principle of pure practical reason, namely upon a moral law, in another words, how can pure reason become practical and still to be “pure”? Here we have to trace the problematic path from a priori knowledge to a posteriori application. In order to construct the appropriate answer we have to consider following problems. What would be the subjective determining ground of the will, namely *incentive*, in these actions? Man is a rational being but he is also being of need, impulse and

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<sup>3</sup> E.g. *On the Common Saying*, pages 278-79: human being is not required to renounce happiness, only to abstract from it, so that it does not play any role within the grounds for the action purely from duty; compare the note on page 442 in *Groundwork*: “*I count the principle of moral feeling under that of happiness ...*”

sense. How then can the moral law or our consciousness of it be a determining factor in our action, as it is if we can properly claim to be moral agents?<sup>4</sup>

## II. Exposition of the problem in the *Groundwork*<sup>5</sup>

Kant tells us that the moral worth of a given action is not at the goal we are about to reach or in a purpose of this action. The moral worth is intrinsic, and it is grounded in the principle of the will. The moral judgment does not depend on the object, but on the principle of volition [G4:399-400]. The genuine moral worth is then ascribed to an action, which is done from duty, without any antecedent inclinations. After all, nothing is left than actions done from the duty at the conformity with the universal law, which is stated first at 4:402 and further in the second part of the *Groundwork* developed into forms of categorical imperatives: “*I ought never to act except in such a way that I could also will that my maxim should become a universal law.*”

Since duty is the necessity of an action from the respect for law [G4:400], it has to be explained what does the respect for moral law mean. The point Kant stresses is that action from duty involves “necessity”; duty is something we feel we must do, as opposed to something what we do only because we want to.<sup>6</sup> Respect is a feeling that differs from all other feelings. I cannot receive it by the means of influence, from outside. I cannot have respect for the inclinations. Kant says that it is “*a feeling of self-wrought [selbstgewirktes] by means of a rational concept*” [G4:401n]. The reflexive self- [*selbst* in German] signals that respect is the *effect* not the *cause* of the law. And from the note on the page 401 in the *Groundwork* we can infer that since the moral law has this effect on us, we accept it as an incentive, i.e. subjective ground determining our action. The concept of duty, as suggested by Paul Guyer, fulfills here a double role: it is a criterion for moral principle and it gives a motive for conformity to what is required by such a criterion.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> To the extensive statement about the problem see Lewis W. Beck, *A commentary on Kant's Critique of Practical Reason*, The University of Chicago Press, 1960 [further Beck]; p. 210. His other version of the fundamental question is: “*How can a being in the phenomenal world through his knowledge of the law of the intelligible, control his conduct so that this law does in fact become effective?*”

<sup>5</sup> The scope of this paper will be limited on Kant's writings from so-called critical and post-critical period [cf. footnote 1]. Certain traces of what would be latter in the paper analysed as *moral feeling* are to be found already earlier in *The Distinctness of the Principles of Natural Theology and Morals* [1764] or in *Observation on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime* [1764], where Kant talks about believed and unanalysable “*feeling for the good*”. For interpretation of these pre-critical writings see: Beck, pp. 213-14 or Paul Guyer, *Kant and the experience of freedom*, Cambridge University Press [further Guyer], pp. 340-41.

<sup>6</sup> For the discussion of the duties in the *Groundwork* see Allen W. Wood, *Kant's Ethical Thought*, Cambridge University Press 1999 [further Wood], pp. 43-5.

<sup>7</sup> Guyer, p. 339.

All moral interest consists simply in respect for the moral law. We respect something not because we (antecedently) want to respect it, but because we are aware of reasons why we have to respect it. Our rational response to these reasons is what makes us want to show respect for it.

What needs further clarification, though it is not necessary part of this thesis, is, why we can ascribe moral worth to our actions only according to the inner principles. If we accept that freedom and responsibility is inevitably tied to morality then, with the help of Kant's argument for freedom of human will from the last part of the *Groundwork*, we can give an explanation to this problem. At the beginning of the third chapter we are told that will is a kind of causality of living beings insofar as they are rational and freedom is property of such a causality freed from alien inclinations. Kant has to explain the possibility of our freedom, whereas holding that the phenomenal world is fully causally determined.

According to Kant we are not only subjects of the laws within the phenomenal world, as rational beings we belong to the intelligible, noumenal world, and as such we can never think of the causality of our own will otherwise than under the idea of freedom [G4:452]. In the third part of the *Groundwork* Kant calls the whole argument a "deduction" of a moral law [G4:454], and connects freedom and reason through the capacity of reason for pure spontaneous activity, which is exhibited in its productions of ideas. This spontaneous activity shows we are members of the intelligible world and therefore free. With the idea of freedom Kant closely combines the concept of autonomy, acting upon the self-given laws, and with the concept of autonomy is connected the universal principle of morality [G4:452-53]. Therefore we exercise our freedom predominantly within the realm of inner principles upon which we act and only according to them could by our act morally judged.

From the previous argumentation it is clear that Kant consider a free will and a will under moral law to be one and the same [G4:447], since freedom of will means the subjection of the will under no other law than those it gives itself as a practical reason.<sup>8</sup> And both of them are at a certain point unexplainable. In Kant's philosophy, freedom of the will cannot be theoretically established. To establish it would be to achieve knowledge of noumenal world, and this is something what we cannot have. The freedom of the will is asserted, but as a practical postulate, and only from a practical point of view [cf. G4:458-59]. Later in the

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<sup>8</sup> This argument is based on the identification of the will with the practical reason on G4:412 and two passages from *What is Orientation in Thinking*, page 145: "Freedom in thinking means the subjection of reason under no other law than those it gives itself. ... if reason will not subject itself to the law it gives itself, it will have to bow under the yoke of law which other impose." This fact is further considered in *The Critique of Practical Reason*, p. 29: "Thus freedom and unconditional practical law reciprocally imply each other."

*Critique of Practical Reason* Kant explicitly writes: “How can a law be of itself and immediately a determining ground of the will is for human reason an insoluble problem and identical with that of how a free will is possible” [C5:72 or cf. R20]. In this quote we can see, that in the *Critique* (when further in the text I speak about the *Critique* it means *Critique of Practical Reason* if not explicitly stated otherwise) Kant develops the notion of respect and moral incentive. This further and deeper interpretation will be content of the next chapter.

### **III. Incentive of pure practical reason**

#### ***The Critique of Pure Reason and The Metaphysics of Morals***

The *Critique of Pure Reason* adopts several topics that we know from the interpretation of the *Groundwork*. These serve here as preliminaries to the third chapter, which is of our main interest. Moral law is sufficient to determine the will. Freedom and unconditional practical law imply each other, so as we have seen above, the free will and will under the moral law are one and the same. Kant further develops his thesis that true moral worth can be ascribed only to principles upon which will acts. In the *Critique*, the good [*Gute*] or evil [*Böse*] are always taken in the reference to the will insofar as it is determined by the law of reason. Therefore again not the goal or purposive object of the action, but its principle is the ground for moral judgment. Moral law is therefore prior to the concepts of good and evil. Otherwise the good and evil would be based not on the principle, but on the experience, i.e. feelings of pleasure and displeasure, which Kant tries to avoid.

The third chapter, named *On the incentives of pure practical reason*, should give us the answer – so far as it is possible – how can formal law, that prescribes to reason nothing more than the form of its universal lawgiving as the supreme condition of maxims, be a priori determining ground of practical reason. The first paragraph gives us the most important basic statements: “moral law determines the will immediately”; definition of the incentive: “the subjective determining ground of the will” of a finite rational being; and finally “incentive of the human will can never be anything than the moral law” [C5:71-2]. Interpretation and further development of these principles form almost the whole rest of the chapter.

But before proceeding further in the interpretation it is necessary to notice one important shift within Kant’s thoughts. We have already seen in previous part of this paper, the question, how can a law be of itself and immediately a determining ground of the will, doesn’t have an answer that could be given by us as finite rational being. Therefore Kant has to step aside in the argument. He will not try to show a priori the ground from which moral law is an

incentive, but rather what it does in the mind in so far it is an incentive. So instead of the direct explanation – which is indeed impossible – he gives a description of the effects of moral law as an incentive. Above all, Kant’s later remarks seem more like a psychology rather than metaphysics. There is no obvious metaphysical foundation for these claims, but they seem profoundly right as psychological observations.<sup>9</sup>

From the *Groundwork* [G4:401n] we know that the effect of the law upon a subject is respect, this feeling resulting from the intellectual grounds. In order to follow Kant’s argument, let us summarize what is the effect (in the sense of activity) of the moral law in the mind as far it is an incentive:

- (i) *Moral law must by thwarting all our inclinations produce a feeling that can be called pain* (JJ – pure practical reason infringing upon self-love). [C5:73]
- (ii) *Moral law weakens the self-conceit.* [C5:73]
- (iii) *Hence the moral law unavoidably humiliates every human being when he compares with it the sensible propensity of his nature.* [C5:74]

We can see that these effects of the moral law as incentive are merely negative, and as such this incentive can be considered *a priori*. The greatness and power of the moral law destroys and weakens all our empirical, pleasure based, inclination and shows us our small-mindedness, when we are under the rule of these inclinations. The vision of the moral law before man strikes down his self-conceit and humbles his arrogance; as such it produces pain. In the interpretation of Lewis White Beck, what humiliates us is an object of respect. Hence we respect the moral law.<sup>10</sup> Beck’s interpretation, in my point of view, is still explanatory insufficient. According to Kant to each of these negative effects there is a corresponding and inseparable positive effect, in text usually closely following previous statements:

- (i) *Inasmuch as [pure practical reason] only restricts [self-love] to the condition of agreement with this law and then it is called rational self-love.* [C5:73]
- (ii) *Inasmuch moral law strikes down self-conceit, it is an object of greatest respect and so too the ground of a positive feeling that is not of empirical origin and is cognized a priori.* [C5:73]
- (iii) *If something represented as a determining ground of our will humiliates us in our self-consciousness, it awakens respect for itself insofar as it is positive and determining ground. Therefore the moral law is even subjectively ground for respect.* [C5:74]

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. Guyer, pp. 365-6.

<sup>10</sup> Beck, p. 219.

Each of the negative, mostly humiliating effects has its positive counterpart. Indeed these aspects or counterparts are to be distinguished only nominally and it would be a mistake to try to imagine this pure formal scheme under, for example, chronological succession. First, negative ground of this feeling is to be called humiliation. Second, inevitably connected is called respect. Moral feeling – basic effect of the moral law as incentive – in the *Critique* and in the *Metaphysics* is feeling of both negative humiliation and positive respect. Moral feeling is an effect of the consciousness of the moral law on sensuous feeling, not a feeling given prior to the discovery of what the law demands of us in a principle and not a mystical feeling.<sup>11</sup> The term ‘feeling’ has here a very different meaning than ‘feeling’ as usually used by Kant. Moral feeling or respect does not arise from any object or its representation but is purely based and effected by intellectual ground, by pure practical reason alone.

The *Metaphysics of Morals* follows this argument by stating that after humility, which follows from our comparison with moral law, comes exaltation of the highest self esteem, the feeling of inner worth, which instills in him respect for himself [M6:436]. By revealing our power to frustrate our own inclinations this very pain reveals the presence of the higher power of pure practical reason within us and thus generates a positive feeling.

Above all, the respect for the law is not the incentive to morality. Instead it is morality itself subjectively considered, namely the moral law, which now alone has the influence. In the same manner as no clouds are needed in order to see the starry heavens above us, the moral law cleans and scours our soul, so we can see and admire, respect the moral law, which by this functions as an moral incentive.

As it was stated above, Kant is not a pure cognitivist or formalist, though respect and moral feeling are effects of moral law as an incentive. As it is stated at several instances [G4:399; C5:25], the demand to be happy – not perhaps joyful but happy in the sense of “pursuit of happiness” – is necessarily embodied in any finite rational being and therefore it is unavoidable determining ground of its faculty of desire. We have seen that this all is weakened and humiliated by the moral as an incentive, but it would be violating of human nature if it would be possible to act morally only without any happiness at all. So either the

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<sup>11</sup> Here I do not agree with the conclusion of Lewis White Beck (Beck, p. 225), that in *Critique* the moral feeling is equated with respect. Respect is only the positive part of effect of the moral law as incentive. Moral feeling, as we are told on C5:75 is both – feeling of negative humiliation and of positive respect. Paul Guyer makes ambivalent statement about this problem: “Yet if anything Kant tends to reserve the term ‘respect’ for the positive feeling of admiration toward the moral law. It would seem most accurate simply to treat ‘respect’ and ‘moral feeling’ as synonyms naming a single but complex effect of the decision to adhere to the maxim of duty on our emotional state” (Guyer, p. 358). Yet, I fully agree with Guyer’s first sentence about Kant’s tendency, I am not sure about the correctness of the simple treatment of moral feeling and respect as equal.

desire for happiness is the objective motive and forms in us the subjective inclinations, which is impossible with the knowledge of moral law, or the maxim of our will must be the efficient cause of happiness. The latter, as Kant says, is impossible and false not absolutely but only conditionally, when this causality would be considered under the same rules as the causality in the phenomenal world [C5:113-14].

Consciousness of a determination of the faculty of desire is always the ground of a satisfaction in the action produced by it. “*But this pleasure,*” says Kant, “*this satisfaction with oneself, is not the determining ground of the action: instead the determination of the will directly by reason alone is the ground of the feeling of pleasure*” [C5:166]. This adopting of the strongly modified pleasure principle does not mean that respect – as consciousness of direct necessitation of the will by the law – is analogous to the feeling of pleasure. It only does the same in the relation to a faculty of desire, namely serves as its determining ground, but from different sources: principles of pure practical reason.

This contentment with oneself [*Selbst-zufriedenheit*] necessarily accompanies consciousness of virtue, i.e. acting according to the moral law. Feeling that we are the authors of a state being worthy of happiness is itself a positive feeling of self-contentment. According to the *Metaphysics of Morals* moral feeling is exactly the sensitivity to feel pleasure or displeasure merely from being aware that our actions are consistent with or contrary to the law of duty [M6:399]. The statements of *Metaphysics* seem to adopt the pleasure point of view more than decent text of the *Critique*. Lewis White Beck points out this difference as the result of discussing two different view points: in the *Critique* it is the feeling that a rational sensuous being has in the face of recognized duty; in the *Metaphysics* it is not a state of consciousness but potentiality that is discussed.<sup>12</sup> Kant, in my words, does not imply the pleasure and pain principle immediately to moral law as an incentive – except perhaps the pain of thwarting the inclinations, but there is pleasure arising afterwards from the consciousness of acting according to the moral law.

“*The moral ground on which a human being (and as far as we can see, every rational creature as well) stands is respect for the moral law*” [C5:84]. To sum up, within the *Critique* principle of pure practical reason, namely moral law effects respect in our minds for itself as an incentive of our actions and so from this concept of incentive arises that of interest, the moral interest of practical reason that is free of any empirical or sensual inclinations. Not only that the determination of the will by moral law does not require any presupposed feelings, but it decimates all such possible prior feelings.



#### IV. Further specifying of moral feeling

In the previous paragraphs we have seen Kant's argument for the moral law effective as an incentive for our will. Several times in the *Critique, Metaphysics* or in *Religion*, we are told that nothing but moral law could be an incentive [C5:72] and whoever makes it his maxim is morally good [R:19]. We have seen how the pure reason, without any empirical inclinations (without any antecedent principle of pleasure and pain) is practical; namely, that a law completely a priori and independent of any sensible data can function as the supreme law of the will [C5:91]. Kant distinguishes respect both from inclinations as well as from the sphere of cognition. Respect, it seems, occupies a nonspace somewhere between the phenomenal and noumenal realms.<sup>13</sup>

But the idea of moral law does not serve for Kant only as an incentive grounding the moral worth of our action. The idea of moral law and our respect – its effect – for it forms the basis for personality, which feature building the possibility of a respect among human beings.<sup>14</sup> Predisposition to personality has a man as a rational and at the same time accountable being [R:21]. That means such a being that ceased from acting based on changeable, empirically evoked inclinations.<sup>15</sup> This predisposition is characterized by the capacity to hold the moral law in itself as a principle of pure practical reason as an incentive for the will. It is possible that the free will incorporates such a moral feeling into its maxim, the property of such a will is then the good character. And because of this good character the other human beings are worthy of respect. So respect is not only a subjective feeling. It is also a relationship between people, which can exist only if the person respected as well as the person respecting fulfills certain requirements, which means adopting such a maxims to be worthy of respect.

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<sup>12</sup> Beck, p. 224-25.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. William W. Sokoloff, *Kant and the Paradox of Respect*, American Journal of Political Science, Vol. 45, No. 4, Oct. 2001.

<sup>14</sup> Wood points out one problem within comparison of personality in *Religion* or *Critique* with the categorical imperative in its formula of humanity: "... the basic idea behind formula of humanity does not include the personification principle and is even inconsistent with it ... To treat humanity (or rational nature) as an end in itself requires more than treating humanity in persons as an end in itself." [Wood, pp. 144].

<sup>15</sup> Human being has several predispositions as aspects of its whole being: *animality*, which is characterized by mechanical self-love; further *humanity* that is characterized by self-love desiring equality; and finally *personality*, which is characterized by the capacity to accept moral law in itself as a sufficient incentive to will. These "steps" or "aspects" within human being could be perhaps traced back to the Aristotelian kinds of soul and lives.

Since the moral law is a priori principle of pure practical reason, there can be no duty to have it or somehow acquire it. Instead every human being (as a moral being) has it originally. There is no such human being without a moral feeling. Therefore everyone has a conscience. Conscience, for Kant, is “*practical reason holding the human being’s duty before him*” [M6:400] or “*consciousness of internal court*” [M6:438]. So it is impossible for any human being to be without a conscience. When we say that someone acts as without conscience, what has to be meant is that such a person does not care about the voice of conscience but cannot avoid hearing it.

When we have seen that the moral law is so powerful and great to humiliate our inclination, self-love and to serve as an incentive. Further we have been told that every human being possesses conscience and cannot avoid its voice. Now, following question can be raised: how is it possible that we act badly? How is an evil act possible? According to Kant the distinction between good and evil person does not lie in the incentives and inclinations they adopt, but rather in their subordination: which one – based on either on moral law or self-love – is to be chosen as a maxim. There is propensity to good in human, moral law can serve as an incentive for the choice of the will for right maxim, but there is a propensity to evil as well [R:32-3]. Neither good nor evil itself then starts from the mere propensity to it. Rather good starts with accepting the moral law as an incentive and evil starts with sin: transgressing the moral law. But still we cannot see how it is possible that we choose one opposed to another. This question, like the question about the free will of our soul, must remain unanswered, since we were already told by Kant, answer lies beyond capacities of human finite mind [C5:72; R:20].

In the following part of this paper I will try to summarize what does it mean to act from the respect for the moral law itself as an incentive. Main part of this section will be negative, stating what acting from respect is not, and so avoiding possible misinterpretations.

To act because of the respect for moral law, that means to act from duty, is not acting from benevolence. Acting from benevolence may be nice and good, says Kant [C5:82], but since it needs always acting gladly – we have to act from duty, from commands of the moral law, not only when we are glad to do so – benevolence is not the same as respect for moral law. Moreover it is not possible to command someone to act gladly [C5:83; M6:401]. Similarly, to act from the law of duty is not acting based on moral enthusiasm. Motives grounded in moral enthusiasm are overstepping the bounds of practical pure reason – are done from ebullitions of feeling – and therefore not respecting the subjective determining grounds settled by the respect for moral law [C5:86].

Although God is an inevitable part of Kant's moral philosophy, acting from the respect of moral law is not the same with the act that has motives grounded in grace. Though God is the Creator assuring needed correspondence between the highest possible good and our good will, and the notion of holiness and deity comes up several times during the texts I have interpreted, the duty is not possible to combine with grace [R:19n].<sup>16</sup> Although Kant says that the moral law and humanity within human being needs to be treated as holy [C5:87], this has to be taken as mere simile, than pointing to an essential graceful character of the moral law. There might be analogies between a human being accepting moral law as an incentive and Deity [O8:280n], but they do not overlap.

*"The majesty of the moral law instills awe; and in this instance, since the ruler resides within us, this respect, as o a subject toward his ruler awakens a sense of the sublimity of our own destiny, which enraptures us more than any beauty"* [R:19n]. The notion of 'sublime' emphasized in this quotation is used by Kant with relation to respect on several places: *"It is something sublime in human nature to be determined to actions directly by a pure rational law,"* [C5:177] or the genuine moral incentive is nothing other than *"pure moral law itself, insofar as it lets us discover the sublimity of our own supersensible existence"* [C5:88]. The connection between respect and sublime is very close one. This is apparent even from the second book of the *Critique of Judgement*, which is devoted to the sublime. Feeling of the sublime in nature is said to be the respect for our own vocation, substitution of a respect for the Object in place of one for the idea of humanity in our own self [CJ:257].

The effect of the moral law described in the third chapter of the *Critique of Practical Reason* has indeed several similarities with the notion of the sublime. The sublime is defined as something absolutely great [CJ:248] or that in comparison with which all else is small [CJ:250]. This must be true about the effect of the moral law, if it is supposed to humiliate all our inclinations, infringe upon self-love and be accepted as an incentive, moreover by an act that is incomprehensible for our finite human mind.<sup>17</sup> Moreover we are told by the *Critique of Judgement* that the sublime cannot be contained in any sensuous form, but rather concerns ideas of reason [CJ:245].

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<sup>16</sup> Cf. with the passage from *Critique of Pure Reason*: *"Thus without a God and a future world invisible to us now but hoped for, the glorious Ideas of morality are indeed objects of approval and admiration but not springs [Triebfeder] of purpose and of action. For they do not fulfill in its completeness that end which is natural to every rational being and which is determined a priori, and rendered necessary, by that same pure reason."* Critique of Pure Reason, A813 = B 841.

<sup>17</sup> Similar interpretation pointing out the similar terminology and ground for both feelings can be found in Beck, pp. 220-21.

But nevertheless we must argue that feeling of respect as an effect of the moral law as an incentive is not the same as the feeling of sublime.<sup>18</sup> Respect is above all a moral feeling, without technical use of this term, that is, the way in which the idea of law affects thought. And there are many differences between such a moral feeling and aesthetic feeling of the sublime.<sup>19</sup> The mixture of fear and exaltation present in the sublime feeling cannot be reduced to respect. The sublime feeling is an emotion, a violent emotion, close to unreason, which forces thought to the extremes, from joyous exaltation to terror. The Sublime feeling is in no way moderate feeling of happiness as it is the case with positive respect. Therefore, as says Lyotard in his analysis, “*in the sublime is not respect for the moral law itself.*”<sup>20</sup>

Although we do not know and we cannot know the subjective cause of the adopting the moral law as an incentive for our will, we can now see at least two aspects of Kant’s argument, how pure reason can become practical, or how it is possible and what does it mean to act morally. First, we have described what are the effects of moral law that becomes itself an incentive (part II. and III. of this paper). After all it is clear that there is a natural predisposition to morality in man, but not any natural morality. To conclude with a quote, Kant tells us “*not how we are to become happy, but how we are to become worthy of happiness.*” [O8:278] Further, it was made clear what the moral feeling and respect is not, i.e. where could be the biggest mistakes of possible interpretations.

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<sup>18</sup> Main part of following argument is based on the analysis of Jean-François Lyotard in *Lessons on the analytic of the Sublime*, Stanford University Press, 1994 [further Lyotard].

<sup>19</sup> Paul Guyer indeed calls the experience of the freedom ‘aesthetic’ and connects the power of reason in the feeling of sublime with our practical freedom (Guyer, p. 335), but Lyotard’s analysis and the text of the *Critique of Judgement* §§23-25 clearly shows that the parallel is not so straightforward.

<sup>20</sup> Lyotard, p. 234.

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