

# Sublimity and Joy: Kant on the Aesthetic Constitution of Virtue

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Melissa McBay Merritt  
University of New South Wales

## 1. Introduction

One of the best known passages in Kant's entire corpus concerns the sublime. It comes not from the aesthetic theory propounded in the 1790 *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, but from the concluding remarks of the discussion of moral education in the 1788 *Critique of Practical Reason*:<sup>1</sup>

Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration [Bewunderung] and reverence [Ehrfurcht] the more often and more steadily one considers them: *the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me*. [...] The first view of a countless multitude of worlds annihilates as it were my importance as an animal creature, which after it has been for a short time provided with vital force (one knows not how) must return to the planet the matter from which it came. The second, on the contrary, infinitely raises up my worth as an intelligence by my personality, in which the moral law reveals to me a life independent of animality and even of the whole sensible world, at least so far as this may be inferred from the purposive determination [zweckmäßige Bestimmung] of my existence through this law [...]. (5:161-2)

The passage anticipates Kant's mature view of the sublime in all of its complexity: above all, it raises difficult questions about the relation between the appreciation of the sublime in nature and the sublimity of morality. These questions will occupy me in this chapter. The passage also marks a departure from Kant's earlier view in the 1763 *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime*, where he contends that appreciating the sublime is a "tiring" affair that "cannot be enjoyed as long" as the beautiful (2:211). By contrast, the "starry heavens" passage points to an appreciation of the sublime that is not inherently exhausting, but instead gathers strength the more that it is sustained.<sup>2</sup> Let me begin by sketching the significance of this in order to set the stage for this chapter.

We must first acknowledge a psychological point about the enjoyment of the sublime that remains constant throughout Kant's career, and that helps to explain the early view about the exhausting effects of the sublime. We do not enjoy the sublime through pure, unadulterated attraction; an element of aversion belongs to it as well. The representation of the sublime in

nature, Kant contends in the third *Critique*, gives rise to a state of mind that can be likened to a “vibration” since it consists of “a rapidly alternating repulsion from and attraction to one and the same object” (CJ 5:258). Still later, in the 1798 *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, Kant presents the sublime as a “reverence-arousing [ehrfurchterregende] greatness (*magnitudo reverenda*)” that both “invites approach” and yet is “at the same time a deterrent” (7:243).<sup>3</sup> It is not hard to see why such a tussle back and forth might be *tiring*. But Kant also suggests that the state of mind in appreciating the sublime is most like a vibration “at the beginning [vornehmlich in ihrem Anfange]” (CJ 5:258), hinting at the possibility of its settling into a frame of mind that is governed, more stably, by the attraction. And when we linger as we look out over the Grand Canyon, when we are held rapt by torrential rains from the safety of our porches, when we immerse ourselves in the pounding force of ocean waves as we perch, more or less untouched, on the rim of a Sydney rock pool, we are held by an attraction of some kind. The possibility of this attraction depends upon a person’s commitment to moral ends: this, I will argue, is the overarching thesis of the third *Critique*’s Analytic of the Sublime. My first aim in this chapter is to draw attention to this line of thought in the Analytic of the Sublime, and elaborate on the conception of human moral psychology that supports it (§§2-3).

Thus we need to understand some Kantian moral psychology — above all concerning the cultivation of good moral character, or virtue — in order to come fully to terms with his aesthetic theory of the sublime. At the same time, we can draw on that aesthetic theory to address a standing puzzle about the Kantian conception of moral virtue. In brief, that puzzle stems from the place that virtue has in the duty-based, or deontological, ethics that Kant developed in his critical-period works in moral philosophy, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785) and the second *Critique*. There Kant denies the supererogatory any place in ethics: anything good in human action can only ever be a matter of duty. And duty is necessitation, implying the standing possibility of being inclined to do otherwise (G 4:412-413). Kant accordingly conceives of virtue as “moral disposition *in conflict*” (CPrR 5:84),<sup>4</sup> and rejects an ancient conception of virtue as a perfect harmony of the soul whereby one unavoidably acts well because one is no longer so much as subject to incentives to act otherwise.<sup>5</sup> This line of thought has led many commentators to suppose that what figures as virtue for Kant is really something closer to what Aristotle deemed mere “continence”: an ability to act well, but only by muscling through countervailing urges to act otherwise. Friedrich Schiller lodged an early version of this complaint in his essay “On Dignity and Grace”; Kant replied to Schiller in *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, insisting that he had been misunderstood. The “aesthetic constitution” of virtue is “joyous [*fröhlich*],” not dejected (Rel 6:24n): thus there should be no confusing it with the

distemper of mere continence. In the same vein, he later invokes the “cheerfulness [Frohsinn]” that accompanies genuine virtue (MM 6:485, also 6:484). But how could these remarks collectively yield a coherent conception of virtue? The clue, I will suggest, lies in the idea that the appreciation of the sublime is a special type of contented attraction. My second aim in this chapter, then, is to draw on the foregoing account of Kant’s aesthetic theory of the sublime in order to show how he is plausibly entitled to claim that true virtue is essentially joyful (§4).

## 2. The aesthetic judgment of the sublime in nature

To understand the transition to Kant’s mature view of the sublime, we will need to understand how he links the appreciation of sublimity in nature to the sublimity of morality. One clue for this comes with his repeated denial that any physical entity is in fact sublime: what we deem sublime in nature stands in for a sublimity that can only be found in our own minds (CJ 5:256, 245-6, 257, 264). We speak of the sublime as that which is “*absolutely*” or “*incomparably* great” (CJ 5:278): but no physical entity can in fact be absolutely great. Whatever greatness of size or power that may obtain is always only comparably so. The explosion of an atomic bomb is comparable to — because measurable in terms of — the power of some number of horses.<sup>6</sup> (Quite a lot of horses, of course; but still the comparison can be made.) So how can we speak of the sublimity of nature at all? Kant’s answer, as we will see in more detail below, is that what we call sublime in nature *figures as* absolutely great in our representation of it. This representation of absolute greatness echoes a sublimity, or absolute greatness, that can only be found in our own minds.

It is tempting to fill out this last line of thought by pointing to Kant’s views about the absolute — incomparable — worth we possess as persons (G 4:434). And we would be right to connect the dots in that way. But we would also risk oversimplification if we stopped there, without further elaboration. Consider the German term for the sublime, *das Erhabene*: it comes from the verb *erheben*, to raise or lift up. So, Kant is telling us that what we call sublime in nature stands in for a sublimity — an upliftedness — of our own minds. The pressing question is what exactly this might *mean*. To unpack it, we will need to see how Kant’s aesthetic theory of the sublime relies upon background claims about human nature — claims Kant develops in his anthropological writings, and invokes *passim* in his ethical works. Kant accepts the classical definition of the human being as *rational animal*. Yet he underscores that our rational essence is neither an endowment received through birth, nor a development of subsequent physical growth: it is a perfective *to be realized* in what we make of ourselves through what we do and how

we live. We are called to make ourselves fit for our own essential rationality. Ultimately, for Kant, we do this by making ourselves fit for moral ends, which just is to cultivate virtue in ourselves. A person's commitment to this calling — to *lift oneself up*, as it were — is precisely the true sublimity that Kant contends can only be found in our own minds. Thus Kant's aesthetic theory of the sublime is tied particularly to his ethics of *virtue*, and not simply to his more general claims about the ontology of persons.

All of that is overview for a case that still needs to be made. We will begin by looking into Kant's account of the sublime in the third *Critique*. Why are we attracted to natural sublimity? How does it please us? Uncovering Kant's answers to these questions will then lead us to the conception of human nature that drives his account of the sublime from behind the scenes.

## 2.1 Clues from the aesthetic judgment of reflection

Kant distinguishes *logical* and *aesthetic* judgments. The sublime in nature is appreciated through a certain kind of aesthetic judgment. Locating that judgment in Kant's wider taxonomy of judgment will yield a preliminary account of why and how the sublime pleases.

Logical judgments, for the most part, determine representations (whether intuitions or concepts) under concepts, in order to make a cognitive claim.<sup>7</sup> Aesthetic judgments do not determine representations under concepts; instead they relate a given representation “to the subject and its feeling of pleasure or displeasure” (CJ 5:203). Aesthetic judgments are expressed in the register of *feeling* (pleasure or pain), which Kant distinguishes from *sensation* (e.g., of colour, sound, and so forth) (FI 20:224; CJ 5:206). While sensation plays a legitimate role in empirical theoretical judgment — that is, in the determination of how, in fact, things are — feeling does not. Aesthetic judgments are, accordingly, non-cognitive (FI 20:224, CJ 5:203). Kant then distinguishes aesthetic judgments *of sense* from aesthetic judgments *of reflection*,<sup>8</sup> depending on the basis of the pleasure, or liking, that is involved (FI 20:224). Aesthetic judgments of sense express immediate liking for what is agreeable, or disliking for what is disagreeable, owing to contingent facts about the judging subject's physical constitution. Aesthetic judgments of reflection express immediate liking as well, but one that is *not* based upon contingent facts about the judging subject's physical constitution: for such judgments make potentially legitimate claims to “universal validity and necessity” (FI 20:225).<sup>9</sup> What then is the basis of the pleasure that is involved? The aesthetic judgment of reflection is expressed in a liking that answers to the *rational* nature of the human being.

There are two kinds of aesthetic judgment of reflection: one concerning the beautiful (the judgment of taste), and one concerning the sublime.<sup>10</sup> Both modes of reflective aesthetic judgment are “*singular*” since they concern a *this* — this beautiful rose, this sublime seascape — but at the same time both are “judgments that profess to be universally valid in regard to every subject, although they lay claim merely to the feeling of pleasure and not to any cognition of the object” (CJ 5:244). The basis of these judgments’ universal validity, Kant elaborates, is that they express a liking for what is regarded “to be in accord with the *faculty of concepts* of the understanding or of reason, as promoting the latter” (CJ 5:244). Now, the particular concepts that Jane, a nuclear physicist, has at her disposal may be somewhat different from those that Jack, a saddlemaker, has at his. They have set themselves different purposes, and their minds have been cultivated in accordingly different ways. Thus when Kant says that the aesthetic judgment of reflection involves a liking based on an appreciation of a thing’s accordance with “the faculty of concepts”, he means what is necessarily and universally constitutive of this faculty: for only then could he claim that such judgments have universal subjective validity.<sup>11</sup>

Now we need to consider more carefully what Kant means by the “faculty of concepts” in the above remark. The aesthetic judgment of reflection is *non-cognitive*, since it does not determine a particular *this* under any concept. And yet such judgments involve a relation to the *faculty* of concepts, and hence involve a relation “to concepts, although it is indeterminate which” concepts (CJ 5:244). I will return to this indeterminacy, at least as regards judgments concerning the sublime, in §2.2. Our immediate task is to get to grips with what Kant means by the “faculty of concepts” at all. For Kant, the intellect is a capacity for general (as opposed to singular) representation: *concepts* are general representations (A320/B377). Thus the intellect is, most basically, the faculty of concepts. But Kant’s terminology for the intellect is confusing, since he speaks of understanding and reason each in both wide and narrow senses. At times Kant prefers to call the intellect as such “understanding” (see A131/B169; FI 20:222; An 7:142, 196-7),<sup>12</sup> while at other times he refers to it as “reason” (see A835/B863): these are wide senses of *understanding* and *reason*. In the remark at issue, Kant says that the aesthetic judgment of reflection involves the “faculty of concepts”, where this faculty can be further specified depending on whether concepts of understanding, or of reason, are at issue. Concepts for determining phenomena are concepts *of the understanding*. Concepts for determining what ought to be done are concepts — ideas — *of reason*.<sup>13</sup> Ideas are concepts to which no sensible object can ever be adequate (A320/B376-7). The judgment of taste involves a liking for what accords with the faculty of concepts specified as the *understanding*, while the judgment concerning the sublime involves a liking for what accords with the faculty of concepts specified as *reason*.<sup>14</sup>

The faculty of concepts, broadly construed, is the higher cognitive faculty. Understanding and reason — in the narrow senses — are elements of the higher cognitive faculty, each specified in terms of the concepts constitutive of its cognitive exercise.<sup>15</sup> Thus when Kant says that the aesthetic judgment of reflection is a felt appreciation for what accords with the *faculty of concepts*, he indicates that the pleasure draws from what is proper to us as creatures capable of knowing.<sup>16</sup> More often than not, Kant casts these claims in terms of the “subjective purposiveness” of the aesthetic judgment of reflection.<sup>17</sup> This liking, we should underscore, does not follow upon a discursive recognition *that* the beautiful or sublime object is *good* for one’s own capacities (CJ 5:244). The liking for the beautiful rose, or the “sublime” seascape, is itself the *felt* — non-discursive — appreciation of its amenability to proper human mindedness.<sup>18</sup>

## 2.2 The specifics of the sublime

So far we know that any aesthetic judgment of reflection involves the felt appreciation of what accords with the “faculty of concepts”; we also know that in judgments concerning the sublime, this means *reason*. Concepts are general representations; and *reason*’s concepts are *ideas*. No sensible object can ever be adequate to an idea of reason: this, indeed, distinguishes ideas of reason from concepts of the understanding. Now let us turn to the specifics of Kant’s account of the sublime. Here we will need to appreciate certain complexities about the sense in which it involves a liking for what is amenable to reason in the narrow sense, as the faculty of ideas. Kant distinguishes two modes of natural sublimity: the representation of absolute greatness of size (*mathematical* sublime), and the representation of absolute greatness of power (*dynamical* sublime). This division, as we will see, tracks different sorts of ideas of reason. We should not assume from Kant’s systematic tidiness, however, that the two categories of the sublime are mutually exclusive. The great surf at Nazaré, a vast stretch of inhospitable terrain, even the starry heavens themselves — all can surely occasion sublime feeling inflected in both ways at once.

The mathematical sublime is a representation of absolute greatness of *magnitude*. Since no physical entity is in fact absolutely great, what counts is how an entity is taken in by the senses — how it is “apprehended” in the imagination, as Kant says in this context (FI 20:220, 223, 233; CJ 5:190, 217, 232, 244, 251-2) — so that it *figures as* absolutely great. We must not stand so close to the huge entity that we take in only a mass that spreads on all sides, consuming our focal and peripheral vision together; and we must not stand so far off that the boundaries of the thing easily register in a single glance. We need to stand at just the point where we will approach

having a comprehensive view of the thing, but always just fail (CJ 5:252). It is precisely this struggle, and failure, to attain a comprehensive view of the thing that allows for it to figure, in our representation of it, as absolutely great: for if we had a comprehensive view of the thing, we could proceed to compare it in size against something else. This failure of the imagination, Kant contends, “awakens the feeling of a supersensible faculty in us” (CJ 5:250): namely, the power of reason to conceive, in pure thought, of what can never be given to us through the senses.

The rational idea at issue in the mathematical sublime is that of an infinite, given totality. Kant implicitly connects the mathematical sublime with the “first antinomy” discussed in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (CJ 5:254-5), which concerns the cosmological representation of the world as a whole — whether it is bounded, or infinite, in space and time (A426-33/B454-61). But the cosmological representation of the world as a whole is a mere idea of reason to which no sensible experience can ever be adequate; thus it ought not serve as a basis for making determinations about the real magnitude of the world (A517-23/B545-51). Thus the first antinomy exposes the limits of reason in theoretical cognition; it exposes reason’s *incapacity* in this regard. However, the pleasures of the mathematical sublime plainly cannot lie in a revelation of reason’s incapacity in theoretical cognition. The idea of an infinite, given totality must therefore play some legitimate role in theoretical cognition. And indeed, Kant reminds us here of our need “to *think* nature itself in its totality” (CJ 5:268) — to think of it as “the sum total of appearances”, as we must do in order to *cognize* it as a law-governed whole (see Pro 4:318). This is why Kant links the failure of imagination in the mathematical sublime to reason as “the *faculty of cognition*” — i.e., to reason in its role in theoretical cognition of nature (CJ 5:247).

The dynamical sublime involves a representation of absolute greatness of *power*. Kant is less clear here about how the representation of the dynamically sublime should involve a struggle and failure of the imagination. It will involve taking in sensible particulars (e.g., booming sounds, sensations of brute impact, visual cues of swiftness); so in that regard it must involve the imagination as the capacity for sensible representation. These sensible representations will moreover need to contribute to a representation of the physical force at issue as *absolutely great*. Thus I will need to have a sense of a power that could overwhelm and crush me. The modality of this is important: I cannot recognise an actual threat on my life — if I did, I would not be inclined to stick around to soak up the attendant sensations (CJ 5:261). Yet I need to be fully immersed in these sensations, so that the power figures as immeasurable and unmanageable (CJ 5:269). Normally, my apprehension of particulars informs the grip I have on my bearings in the world, and my ability to move about as I choose within it. Now, Kant says that the *dynamical* sublime relates the failure of the imagination to “the *faculty of desire*” (KU 5:247), which he

elsewhere glosses as “the faculty to be by means of one’s representations the cause of the reality of those representations” (CPrR 5:9n). Thus the dynamical sublime gives one a feeling of the power of rational agency. But rational agency can be determined either by natural instinct and sensible inclination, or by “laws of reason independent of natural instinct” (G 4:459). The representation of the dynamical sublime assaults the former, and promotes the latter. But why, exactly, should this be pleasurable? For the answer, we need to turn to Kant’s general account of the pleasure involved in our appreciation of natural sublimity.

When Kant introduces the sublime, he claims that the pleasure we take in sublimity is “very different in kind [der Art nach ... sehr unterscheiden]” from the pleasure we take in beauty, which “*directly* brings with it a feeling of the promotion of life” (CJ 5:244; my emphasis). (5:244). The feeling of the sublime, by contrast,

is a pleasure that arises only *indirectly*, being generated, namely, by the feeling of a momentary inhibition of the vital powers and the immediately following and all the more powerful outpouring of them. Hence [...] the satisfaction in the sublime does not so much contain positive pleasure as it does admiration [Bewunderung] or respect [Achtung] [...]. (5:245; my emphasis)

The contrast that Kant means to draw is not that the appreciation of beauty involves a “feeling of the promotion of life” while the appreciation of sublimity somehow does not. For both types of the aesthetic judgment of reflection involve a liking for what is amenable to our cognitive constitution, and so as promoting the cognitive life of the mind. Rather it is that the appreciation of beauty engages this feeling *directly*, the appreciation of sublimity *indirectly*.<sup>19</sup> There are, moreover, two conceptions of life or vitality at work in the remark just quoted. The representation of natural sublimity assaults vital powers of one order, while it quickens vital powers of another.

With this in mind return again to the famous “starry heavens” passage. The incomparable vastness of the night sky “annihilates my importance as an *animal creature*”: this particle of flesh is nothing compared to *all of that*; it is imbued with “vital force” for just a moment; it will return to the dust from which it came. They are dark thoughts, but we find ourselves drawn to the vistas that occasion them. And *finding ourselves so drawn*, we recognise in ourselves “a life independent of animality and of the whole sensible world” (CPrR 5:162) — a vitality proper to our status as persons, not things. The incomparable vastness that checks the feeling of life of the one kind promotes the feeling of life of the other kind.<sup>20</sup>



The large or mighty entity in nature would *simply* repel us, Kant elaborates, were our minds not cultivated along certain lines:

[W]hat is properly sublime cannot be contained in any sensible form[...] Thus the wide ocean, enraged by storms, cannot be called sublime. Its visage is horrible; and one must have already filled the mind with all sorts of ideas if by means of such an intuition it is to be put in the mood for a feeling which is itself sublime, in that the mind is incited to abandon sensibility and to occupy itself with ideas that contain a higher purposiveness. (CJ 5:245-6)

The ideas at issue are specifically moral ideas — namely, those needed to conceive of oneself in terms of a “higher purposiveness”, of having an end apart from sustaining oneself in animal life. Accounting again for the indirect pleasures of the sublime, Kant remarks that “the very same violence that is inflicted on the subject by the imagination is judged as purposive for *the whole vocation [Bestimmung]* of the mind” (CJ 5:259). What I dislike owing to its lack of amenability to my physical existence I nevertheless enjoy owing to its amenability to the complete picture of what I am called to be.

The term *Bestimmung* in this context has a special sense. In its most basic usage, the term *Bestimmung* means “determination” — what makes something what it is, or gives it a certain character. But the term takes on a teleological sense where the *Bestimmung* of the human mind is at issue, and is therefore typically rendered “vocation” in English translation.<sup>21</sup> The human being is the *rational* animal; rationality is the distinguishing difference — the form — of our kind. But this rational essence is not itself a given endowment: it is something to be realized in what we make of ourselves through what we do and how we live. In the anthropological writings, Kant is concerned with the *Bestimmung* of the entire species, and claims that it consists in human “perfection” (An 7:322, CB 8:115, LP 9:445; see also LE (Collins) 27:470-1). No individual can fulfil this *Bestimmung* (An 7:324; LP 9:445): and that is not only because the perfection of our rational nature is an ideal towards which we can only strive, but also (and perhaps chiefly) because we are collectively responsible for establishing the practices of communication, education, justice, and so on that stand to make the realization of our rational nature possible at all.

That said, self-perfection plays a central role in Kant’s ethics of virtue. In the *Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant argues that virtue can be cultivated only with the free adoption of two morally obligatory ends: (a) one’s own perfection and (b) the happiness of others (MM 6:385). On this

basis he divides his account of virtue into what one owes oneself and what one owes others. Immediately relevant for us here is the end of self-perfection. It calls for “the *cultivation* of one’s *faculties* (or natural dispositions), the highest of which is the *understanding* as the faculty of concepts”; and since this faculty (here broadly construed) *includes* “concepts having to do with duty”, the end of self-perfection therefore “also at the same time” calls for the cultivation of “one’s *will* (of the moral way of thinking)” (MM 6:386-7). Our *Bestimmung*, most fundamentally, is to make ourselves fit for our own essential rationality; this centrally requires cultivating our cognitive capacities, which for Kant includes the will, towards the standard of virtue that is thought through the moral law.

Kant contends that a background commitment to moral ends is required in order to be able to enjoy natural sublimity at all. Without that background commitment, one would simply feel assaulted, terrified, or (at the very least) painfully disoriented. One has to be able to have the thought that there is more to one than one’s physical (animal) existence. To have such thoughts requires a certain facility with moral ideas. But since the judgment is aesthetic, it cannot draw on any determinate thought of the good, on any particular moral ideas.<sup>22</sup> Kant walks a fine line here. We might recall the ambiguous rider in his general gloss of the aesthetic judgment of reflection, applying it now to the specifics of the sublime: the judgment is the felt appreciation (the liking) for what accords with our faculty of concepts (here: of moral ideas) “as promoting it” (CJ 5:244). Natural sublimity attracts us in the particular way that it does *because of* (and perhaps *to the extent that*) we are attuned to the “whole vocation” of the human mind. What counts as sublime must not simply stretch the imagination in ways that make palpable the power of reason; the movement must indeed “produce a disposition of the mind” that is “compatible with that which the influence of determinate (practical) ideas on feeling would produce” (CJ 5:256).<sup>23</sup> Kant stops just short of claiming that the enjoyment of natural sublimity promotes the cultivation of the moral disposition. He does, however, effectively say that the enjoyment of natural sublimity must harmonize with this disposition in some cognitively indeterminate register of feeling.

We can return now to our starting point in this section (§2), that nothing in nature is strictly speaking sublime: “true sublimity must be sought only in the mind of the one who judges, not in the object in nature” (CJ 5:256). Nature is called sublime, Kant elaborates, only when it occasions a movement of the mind that makes “palpable [fühlbar] to itself the peculiar sublimity of its own vocation [die eigene Erhabenheit seiner Bestimmung] over nature” (CJ 5:262; see also 5:264, 268). But what exactly does this mean, to say that the *Bestimmung* of the human mind is itself sublime? At the very least it must mean that we are called to raise ourselves up from a

default condition to perfect the rational nature that is proper to us.<sup>24</sup> However, if we left it at that we would overlook one of the chief lessons of the aesthetic theory of the sublime: namely, that sublimity is appreciated through feeling.

### 3. The emotional register of the sublime

We have considered Kant's account of the indirect pleasures of the sublime: a representation of absolute greatness first assaults "the vital powers" of our animal being, before we revel in it for its accordance with what we are called to make of ourselves as essentially rational beings. Thus Kant contends that we enjoy the sublime not through straight pleasure, but through "admiration or respect" (CJ 5:245; quoted at greater length above). Although Kant gives some impression here of taking admiration and respect to be interchangeable, in fact he clearly distinguishes between the two. This distinction is muted in the third *Critique*, where Kant (for example) says that we appreciate natural sublimity with "a kind of respect [eine Art von Achtung]" (CJ 5:249), and later elaborates that "the feeling of the sublime in nature *is* respect for our own vocation" (CJ 5:257, my emphasis). But this is not the copula of strict identification. The usage is something more like the copula in "Frank Oz is Yoda". For the respect we feel for the large or mighty entity in nature is not literally the respect we feel for our own vocation as rational beings: the former stands in for the latter, and enacts it in a morally indeterminate way.

Strictly speaking, we *admire* the sublimity of *nature* and *respect* the sublimity of *morality*. There are important clues to this usage in the second *Critique*, where Kant underscores that *respect* "is always directed only to persons, never to things", and therefore should not be confused with the "*admiration* [that ... ] can be directed to things also, for example: lofty mountains; the magnitude, number, and distance of the heavenly bodies; the strength and swiftness of many animals, and so forth" (CPrR 5:76). Kant then provides an extensive account of respect for *the moral law*: the moral law is of course not itself a person; but it is the principle of our personality. It is owing to the fact that practical reason is constituted by this law, Kant thinks, that we are imputable agents, and thus are persons rather than things (as Kant supposes the rest of the animal kingdom to be) (CPrR 5:95-98, MM 6:223). In this context, Kant argues that the basic capacity to feel respect for the moral law is proper to us as embodied rational beings.<sup>25</sup> A quick sketch of this argument is needed before we can track Kant's distinction between admiration and respect.

The argument that concerns us here itself assumes the core results of the first chapter of the second *Critique*: that the moral law is constitutive of reason in its practical capacity (CPrR

5:19-57). This (quite controversial) claim entails that a rational being must have some grasp of what morality requires — no matter how obscure — just as soon as she is able to think about what she has reason to do at all. Kant’s argument establishing that the moral law is constitutive of practical reason abstracts entirely from the fact that reason is *embodied* in the rational animal. A purely rational creature (a disembodied “holy will”) does not have any physical needs or desires, and thus is not subject to any sensible incentives for action; it can act on no other incentive than that of pure reason alone, and hence for it morality could not be a matter of *duty*. But a human being does have physical needs and desires, is subject to sensible incentives for action; our practical thought is guided, by default, by principles of self-love; thus we are subject not to the moral law full stop, but to the moral law *as a categorical imperative* (CPrR 5:32; see also G 4:414). So, while we necessarily have some grasp (no matter how obscure) of moral requirement just as soon as we are able to think about what we have reason to do, at the same time we are also always subject to non-moral incentives on action and are liable to answer their call even when doing so conflicts with duty.

From these premises, Kant argues (in the third chapter of the second *Critique*) that the recognition of moral requirement necessarily has a certain *effect* on us: the feeling of *respect*. Respect is a feeling of the sublimity of the moral law. The moral law checks the claims of self-love, which are in themselves perfectly reasonable (CPrR 5:73): it is morally permissible to answer the claims of self-love, as long as this does not conflict with moral requirement. But the moral law *humiliates* the claims of self-conceit (CPrR 5:73, 74, 75, 78). Self-*conceit* is the condition in which self-love is taken to be unconditionally legislative on action, so that the claims of morality are subordinated to it (rather than the other way around), and one takes one’s own happiness to be the objective good and proper end of anyone’s action (CPrR 5:74).<sup>26</sup> This humiliation is the painful aspect of respect, in which we are repelled by the claims that morality makes on us. But inasmuch as we recognise that the law comes from our own reason and therefore is not imposed upon us from without, we are thereby also impressed by its command. A gloss on the sublime from the third *Critique* is perfectly apt here: “That is *sublime* which pleases immediately through its resistance to the interest of the senses” (5:267). Respect is the felt appreciation of the sublimity of morality: it is how we revel in our own power of self-determination as rational beings through the moral law, despite the possibility of its commanding us counter to the claims of self-love. This is how Kant comes to speak of the sublimity of *duty*,<sup>27</sup> of certain *maxims*,<sup>28</sup> and (again) of the human *Bestimmung* itself.<sup>29</sup> It is because the moral law is constitutive of practical reason that we are disposed to be pleased in this way; but the stability of this pleasure, and our readiness to feel it, will depend upon the ends we set ourselves.

This last point is crucial to distinguishing respect (*Achtung*, *Ehrfurcht*<sup>30</sup>) from admiration (*Bewunderung*). To do this, we need to return to the idea that the moral law makes substantive claims about what we ought to care about: a person ought to care about perfecting herself and promoting the happiness of others. These are the morally obligatory ends around which Kant organizes his account of virtue, as noted above (§2.2). My own reason *requires* me to adopt these ends: and yet I might still *choose not* to adopt them as morality requires; I might *in fact* care about my own happiness above all else. But they are not discretionary ends that I am at leave to adopt (or not), as I am at leave to adopt (or not) the end of being a scientist, or a gardener. Suppose that I myself do not care about gardening: people give me plants; the plants die; and I shrug. Suppose, too, that my friend Julia has an exuberant garden; she can make anything grow with luscious abandon. I can admire Julia for her gardening, if it strikes me as something great. But she sets no example *for me* unless I am resolved, and somewhat prepared, to do better with my wan seedlings: only then could I respect her (for her gardening). Misplaced respect, moreover, is a sign of delusion: I should be mocked if I said that I *respect* Stephen Hawking for his scientific acumen, since it suggests that I seriously share his end of unlocking the secrets of the universe — and I am not so much as *equipped* to set myself this end, since I am clueless about what it would require of me. But I can perfectly well *admire* him for his particular intellectual powers. Respect is exhortative: it calls me to certain courses of action. Admiration does not.

The point that I have just made concerns the role that ends play in distinguishing respect from admiration. A further point concerns the role that *morally obligatory* ends play in distinguishing respect for a person's good character from respect for discretionary skills and talents. Where we are one and all called to the same essentially human ends, it becomes possible to respect someone as a *good person* full stop — as when Kant speaks of the respect that is wrung from him by “a humble common man in whom I perceive righteousness of character in a higher degree than I am aware of in myself” (CPrR 5:77).<sup>31</sup>

Since admiration can be felt either for persons or things, it is presumably the register in which we stand to appreciate natural sublimity. At the same time, my attraction for the sublime vista is not unrelated to practical thought, to my conception of myself as a rational agent — although it does not directly engage this agency. I am not exhorted by it to *do* anything. Thus it is appropriate to characterise the feeling involved as *admiration* rather than respect in the strict sense.<sup>32</sup>

#### 4. The temperament of virtue

At the outset of this chapter, I pointed to a curious transition in Kant's thinking about the sublime. While Kant initially thought of the sublime as something exhausting, in the critical period he comes to suppose that sublimity is enjoyed in a way that gains strength the more that it is sustained. Quite obviously, however, we are not awestruck in perpetuity by sublime vistas in nature. Sure, I may linger as I look out over the precipice of the Grand Canyon — the awe is sustained — but still it is an episode that comes to an end. And likewise, I may feel respect for an exemplary person's goodness, but this too is an episode that comes to an end. Sublime feeling is episodic (as feelings tend to be). Moreover, the feelings of admiration and respect noted here are ways of being struck by something that stands out from the ordinary run of things. They may punctuate normal lived experience from time to time, but they are not constantly online. What then are we to make of Kant's hints about sublimity as an abiding temperament? Humility, I suggest, fits the bill.

Humility is an abiding temperament or attitude, rather than a passing feeling. Humility is also “a sublime state of mind, that of voluntarily subjecting oneself to the pain of self-reproach in order gradually to remove the causes of it” (CJ 5:264). It is a sublime state of mind because it involves an openness to the pains of self-reproach, with a contented attraction to the standard against which one compares oneself. In the *Vigilantius* lectures on ethics, Kant invokes the same notion of humility, evidently correcting his students' liability to associate it only with Christian ethics, noting that it is found in the “*humilitas animi* of the Stoic” as well:

[...] the sublimity of mind whereby he, conscious of his inner strength, took his humanity calmly [sich über seine Menschheit beruhigte] and determined himself in dutiful obedience to the law, in that he unceasingly endeavoured in his actions to approximate its holiness. (LE 27:610)<sup>33</sup>

What is Kant saying here? The Stoic *accepts* his humanity: he accepts the problem of being human, the calling to make ourselves adequate to our own essential rationality. And yet, “conscious of his inner strength”, has some confidence in his ability to heed it: to hear, and be moved by, the call. This is not a downtrodden, self-denigrating humility; it is not the “Carthusian” frame of mind, “weighed down by fear and dejected”, that Kant dismissed in his reply to Schiller (Rel 6:23-4n).<sup>34</sup>

Humility is, at least intuitively, an abiding temperament, a general attitude of mind. Humility brings with it a readiness to reconsider how things strike one in the situations in which one finds oneself: to reconsider what immediately seems to matter most of all, and what one may have neglected — perhaps not even noticed — as not mattering much at all. It checks blind, unreflective, confidence in oneself. It is a self-directed attitude, a way of being on the lookout for the pretensions of self-love, always on the make to assert its claims as “primary and originally valid” as Kant puts it in the second *Critique* (5:74). It is therefore also a *temperament*, since it brings with it an openness to the pains of self-reproach. And inasmuch as it is a manifestation of a person’s moral commitment, it is a stable and abiding temperament — at least to the extent that this commitment is itself stable, and strong.

True humility is also not blind, unreflective, denigration of oneself. That is the “false humility” that Kant decries as engendering moral passivity, an unwillingness to *make oneself* adequate to moral ends (CJ 5:273).<sup>35</sup> Thus true humility is an attitude of willingness to make oneself adequate to moral ends. To will an end (as opposed to idly wish for it) is to muster all means within one’s control to bring it about (G 4:394). And where the end is self-perfection, the means are capacities of judgment and dispositions to be motivated in certain ways. To muster these resources is to cultivate them, to bring them to the ready. We do not, after all, acquire virtue by incantation, simply pronouncing our commitment to moral ends. We commit ourselves through what we do and how we do it — in the attitude of our willing, and in the principles of our action. We commit ourselves (or not) through what we take as a reason for doing what, situation by situation, over and over again.

Humility is the temperament of virtue, we might then conclude. And, having taken account of Kant’s view that humility is a sublime state of mind, we should see that it must be governed by a pleasurable attraction of some kind — even as it involves painful feelings of self-reproach. But these conclusions, nice as they are, still leave us at something of a loss to understand how, really, the virtuous temperament should be *joyous*. To address this final puzzle, we need to elaborate a bit more on Kant’s conception of virtue.

As we have seen, Kant thinks that virtue can only be cultivated with the free adoption of morally obligatory ends. Relatedly, Kant makes something of (what he takes to be) the etymology of *Tugend*, the German word for “virtue”, from *taugen*, “to be fit for” (MM 6:390). This move has roots in classical (but non-Aristotelian) ideas about virtue as a certain sort of skill. And in the *Metaphysics of Morals* Kant explicitly allows that virtue might be a certain skill, *Fertigkeit* (MM 6:383-4) — though in a certain qualified sense: it is both like, and yet in certain respects unlike, normal skills. The ins-and-outs of this is a topic unto itself.<sup>36</sup> But we can say, quite

generally, that a skill is an acquired fitness for a certain end. For the most part, skills are acquired fitnesses for *discretionary* ends; but virtue, Kant indicates, is fitness for *morally obligatory* ends. These ideas surface in the *Vigilantius* lectures on ethics as well, where we find an intriguing clue to the puzzle about the joyfulness of virtue. This remark occurs, moreover, as Kant is in the process of hashing out his debate with Schiller about the temperament of virtue.

It is true that one can find enjoyment in virtue and in the contemplation of it, but only when and for the reason that one has become skilled to carry out one's duties,<sup>37</sup> so that it becomes easy to follow the prescriptions of reason; from this one attains a contentment about one's actions and about the strengthening of one's will for the prescriptions of reason; and one regards the future with cheerful courage [...]. (LE 27:490-1)

Virtue is enjoyable because — in the ideal — one has fully cultivated the required resources. One readily appreciates what does and does not matter, morally speaking, in the situations in which one finds, and places, oneself; and one is fully impressed by one's recognition of what morality requires of one, and hence readily disposed to act accordingly. Without humility, this skill would be unreflective and falsely confident. Thus Kant rejects any idea that to attain virtue is to transcend human nature: this is where the Stoics erred, Kant contends, despite correctly appreciating that the path to virtue lies in *humilitas animi* (LE 27:609-610; cf. CPrR 5:86, 5:127-8n).

Perhaps, for Kant, the virtuous person is something like the bird whose joyful song announces a contentment with his own existence (CJ 5:302). For the virtuous person, too, must be content with his own existence, but not because he is sure of his own good character. His existence as a rational being consists of a calling to make himself adequate to an ideal can only be conceived in pure thought, through the moral law. Though this calling can never be definitively answered, it may be possible to become attuned to it in a way that reverberates through one's entire frame of mind, giving shape to an abiding temperament. That is why virtue is not only a sublime state of mind, but also — just plausibly — a joyful one, too.<sup>38</sup>



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<sup>1</sup> Hereafter *Critique of the Power of Judgment* will be referred to as the “third *Critique*”, and *Critique of Practical Reason* as the “second *Critique*”.

<sup>2</sup> I concluded with this observation in “The Moral Source of the Kantian Sublime,” in *The Sublime: from Antiquity to Present*, ed. Timothy Costelloe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 37-49. Thus I am to some extent picking up where I left off, focusing now on its particular implications for Kant’s ethics of *virtue* per se.

<sup>3</sup> I have modified Louden’s translation here, both to follow the cue of Kant’s Latin gloss, and to show that *Ehrfurcht* occurs both here and in the “starry heavens” passage.

<sup>4</sup> Kant says little about virtue in the 1785 *Groundwork*, and offers just a few passing remarks about it in the 1788 second *Critique* (like the one just quoted, which simply distinguishes human virtue from *holiness*). He begins to develop an account of virtue in the 1793 *Religion*, and elaborates at length in the 1797 *Metaphysics of Morals*.

<sup>5</sup> Kant thinks that such a conception of virtue opens the door to special forms of moralistic *Schwärmerei* and self-conceit (CPrR 5:84-86).

<sup>6</sup> Kant’s example for this same point concerns greatness of size, rather than power: the breadth of a galaxy (CJ 5:250).

<sup>7</sup> I have just glossed “determining” logical judgments; there are also “reflecting” logical judgments, which concern the objective purposiveness of nature (FI 20:221).

<sup>8</sup> This locution — “aesthetic judgment of reflection” — appears in full only in the First Introduction to the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*; in the published third *Critique*, Kant calls them “aesthetic reflective judgments” (e.g., in the heading at CJ 5:266).

<sup>9</sup> While aesthetic judgments of sense can be either pleasurable or painful, it appears that aesthetic judgments of reflection can only be pleasurable. Commentators have disputed this, at least as regards negative judgments of taste (i.e., concerning the ugly). I cannot weigh in on that debate here; I simply note that it is hard to see what an aesthetic judgment of non-sublimity could possibly be. Perhaps it would be a pained response to a representation of relative greatness. But *that* would be nothing other than a contingent felt response to a theoretical determination of magnitude, which simply doesn’t fit the bill of an *aesthetic judgment of reflection*.

<sup>10</sup> When Kant introduces the aesthetic judgment of reflection in the First Introduction, he elaborates by making reference to the specifics of taste. However, Kant eventually makes fully explicit that the aesthetic judgment concerning the sublime and the judgment of taste are alike species of the aesthetic judgment of reflection (CJ 5:244).

<sup>11</sup> But only judgments of taste — not judgments of the sublime — require a separate “deduction” to establish their universal subjective validity (CJ 5:279-280). To elaborate on this would require an account of Kant’s notion of a deduction and his handling of the issue for the judgment of taste, which lies well beyond the scope of this chapter.

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<sup>12</sup> Kant regularly invokes the wide sense of “understanding” in contexts where he begins with the distinction between singular and general representation (intuition and concept), which then aligns with a distinction between sensibility and *understanding* — the latter as the “faculty of concepts”, meaning the intellect as such. Consider A126; JL (9:36), WL (24:806, 846).

<sup>13</sup> Other ideas of reason play a role in theoretical knowledge of nature, but they are not constitutive of reason as a capacity for practical knowledge. I return to this below.

<sup>14</sup> The beautiful object appears to be “the presentation of an indeterminate concept of the understanding” whereas the sublime appears to be “that of a similar concept of reason” (CJ 5:245).

<sup>15</sup> The higher cognitive faculty is divided into understanding (in the narrow sense), reason (in the narrow sense), and the power of judgment (A130-1/B169; An 7:196-7). In the third *Critique*, Kant points out that the power of judgment has no objective principles of its own, whereas the understanding has concepts of nature and reason has the idea of freedom articulated as a substantive principle through the moral law: see FI (20:202 and 208).

<sup>16</sup> Kant indicates that the capacity for first-personal thought, and thus the faculty of concepts, most fundamentally accounts for our status as *persons* rather than mere things (as he takes all other living creatures to be) (An 7:127). He identifies the capacity for first-personal thought with *understanding* in this passage — in the broad sense, as the faculty of concepts *tout court*.

<sup>17</sup> The felt appreciation of purposiveness (i.e., of amenability to the faculty of concepts) *just is* the pleasure involved in the aesthetic judgment of reflection (CJ 5:221, FI 20:228, 249 — and especially 20:250). On subjective purposiveness in the judgment concerning the sublime, see CJ (5:247, 268, 269); and in the judgment of taste, see CJ (5:222, 227, 242).

<sup>18</sup> Note also Kant’s distinction between the *formal* subjective purposiveness “contained” in the aesthetic judgment of reflection versus the *material* subjective purposiveness “contained” in the aesthetic judgment of sense (FI 20:224, 230). Some readers may be tempted to read this talk of “formal” purposiveness as tracking the fact that no determinate concept is involved in this assessment of purposiveness. But Kant makes *that* point by noting that *subjective* purposiveness is recognised through pleasurable *feeling* (see, e.g., CJ 5:247). Material subjective purposiveness is recognised by feeling that (again) has its basis in one’s physical constitution, whereas *formal* subjective purposiveness is recognised by feeling that has its basis in one’s “form” — i.e., in the cognitive constitution one shares with any other rational animal (FI 20:225; note also 20:215n regarding this sense of “form”).

<sup>19</sup> Cf. RA-565 [c.1776-8]: “The whole feeling of life is a joyfulness. [...] Liberation following from a pain is a positive movement of the organ to life” (15:245).

<sup>20</sup> See CPrR (5:89) for the same dual invocation of “life”; cf. CPrR (5:88).

<sup>21</sup> Kant alludes to a public debate between Thomas Abbt and Moses Mendelssohn, who were themselves responding to the considerable popular influence of Johann Joachim Spalding’s 1748 *Betrachtung über die Bestimmung des Menschen*. See Reinhard Brandt, “The Vocation of the Human Being,” in *Essays on Kant’s Anthropology*, ed. Brian Jacobs and Patrick Kain (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 85-104;

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Allen Wood, “Kant and the Problem of Human Nature” in the same volume, 38-59; and Manfred Kuehn, “Reason as a Species Characteristic,” in *Kant’s Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim: A Critical Guide*, ed. Amélie O. Rorty and James Schmidt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 68-93.

<sup>22</sup> The aesthetic judgment of the sublime is, after all, not a logical judgment.

<sup>23</sup> Or later: “In fact a feeling for the sublime in nature cannot even be conceived without linking it to a disposition of mind that is *similar to* the moral disposition” (CJ 5:268; my emphasis).

<sup>24</sup> In *Religion* Part I, he links this default condition to the fallen state of humankind (i.e., original sin); see, e.g., (6:38ff).

<sup>25</sup> Later Kant underscores that there can be no duty to have this capacity, only to *cultivate* it (MM 6:400). Thus when Kant says that the appreciation of natural sublimity both “requires culture” and yet “has its foundation in human nature [...] namely, in the predisposition to the feeling for (practical) ideas, i.e., to that which is moral” (CJ 5:265), he clearly means that it depends upon the *cultivation* of moral feeling that is itself central to the development of virtue.

<sup>26</sup> Kant does not take self-conceit to be unusual or monstrous depravity: for if it is essentially a matter of prioritizing the claims of self-love over those of morality, thereby taking the former to be unconditionally *legislative*, then it is nothing other than the default human condition after the fall, as sketched in *Religion* Part I (6:3-53).

<sup>27</sup> “*Duty!* Sublime and mighty name that embraces nothing charming [...] and yet does not seek to move the will by threatening anything that would arouse natural aversion or terror [...] but only holds forth a law [...] before which all inclinations are dumb” — etc. (CPrR 5:86).

<sup>28</sup> “[...] it is in this independence of maxims from all such [sensible] incentives that their sublimity consists” (G 4:439).

<sup>29</sup> “This idea of personality, awakening respect by setting before our eyes the sublimity of our own nature (in its vocation)” (CPrR 5:87); “The majesty of the law [...] rouses a *feeling of the sublimity* of our own vocation” (Rel 6:23n).

<sup>30</sup> Kant uses *Ehrfurcht* more or less interchangeably with *Achtung* in moral contexts (e.g., at Rel 6:23n, where *Achtung* is apposite to *Ehrfurcht* — though this is obscured in the Cambridge translation of this passage, where both terms are rendered “awe”). Kant occasionally uses the Latinate term *Respect* (e.g., at Rel 6:23n), which he elsewhere glosses as “respect bound up with fear [mit Furcht verbundener Achtung]” (MM 6:438).

<sup>31</sup> See Kant’s more tangled account of the two points at issue (in this and the previous paragraph) in his example of Voltaire and his “common” admirers, at CPrR (5:78).

<sup>32</sup> In the third *Critique*, Kant also speaks of our admiration for natural beauty (CJ 5:301, 5:482n). But these remarks are puzzling in light of Kant’s comment that we enjoy beauty through pure unadulterated liking, whereas we enjoy sublimity indirectly, in a pleasurable attraction that goes by way of painful aversion — and *therefore* enjoy sublimity through *admiration* and respect (CJ 5:245). Moreover, while Kant

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elaborates at length on why respect should be a feeling of this sort, he never *explains* how admiration fits that bill. But Kant also mentions how we tend to admire nature at the discovery of new order within it — namely, the “unifiability of two or more heterogeneous laws of nature under a principle that comprehends them both” (CJ 5:187). Here we are admiring what we have presumably first struggled to comprehend: thus an example like this accords with the point he wants to make about admiration at CJ (5:245). But how, in Kant’s terms, can we *admire* the beauties of nature?

A dash of common sense might help here: we admire what stands out from the common run of things. This begins to account for how we could *admire* such diverse things as a beautiful flower, an impressive surf, and a friend’s gardening skills. Further, Kant takes admiration (*Bewunderung*) to be a kind of astonishment (*Verwunderung*) or surprise (*Erstaunen*). Astonishment and surprise are assaulting: it is how we respond when we are presented with something enough out of the ordinary that, at least for a second, we don’t quite believe it. There is something unpleasant about such a shock, inasmuch as it rattles one’s grip on the order of things (though this admittedly sounds overblown for something like admiring a friend’s gardening skills). At any rate, admiration is a type of astonishment since it involves this rupture in one’s sense of the order of things, but where we continue to marvel even after this shock is gone (CJ 5:365; see also An 7: 243 and 261). We continue to marvel because there is something *pleasing* about how the thing stands out from the normal run of things. It lies beyond the scope of my work in this chapter to elaborate any further on these issues.

<sup>33</sup> This last point — that the standard at issue is one of *holiness* rather than *virtue* — is one of Kant’s central criticisms of Stoic ethics; see CPrR (5:127n).

<sup>34</sup> See Jeanine ` , *Kant and the Ethics of Humility* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) for an account of the importance of humility to Kant’s ethics of virtue — an overarching thesis I support, though I would contest many of the details of her account. However Robert Louden (“Kantian Moral Humility: Between Aristotle and Paul,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 75 (2007): 632-639) doubts the overarching thesis, pointing out that Kant more often refers to moral virtue as a kind of “courage” and only rarely explicitly links it to humility. That may be right, but it doesn’t settle much if humility plays a deeper conceptual role in Kant’s thinking about virtue. Moreover, I think that Louden errs on some points of interpretation that are relevant here. He bases his account of Kantian moral humility on the idea that the moral law invariably “humiliates every human being when he compares it with the sensible propensity of his nature” (CPrR 5:74). But *humiliation by the moral law* is not the same thing as *humility*. Humiliation is painful, and we naturally respond to pain with aversion. When Kant says that moral humility is a “sublime state of mind”, he indicates that it is a temperament more stably governed by an *attraction* to the standard of goodness thought through the moral law. As such, it should already *include* the positive feeling of moral self-esteem that Louden points to as evidence against Grenberg’s claims about the importance of humility in Kant’s ethics (637).

<sup>35</sup> See the related passage at Rel 6:159-160, and note Kant’s citation of Matthew 6:16.

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<sup>36</sup> I discuss Kant’s qualified endorsement of the skill model of virtue in “Kant on Virtue as a Skill,” in *Natur und Freiheit: Akten des 12. Internationalen Kant-Kongresses 2015*, eds. Violetta L. Waibel und Margit Ruffing (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter [forthcoming]); and I elaborate on the issue at greater length in my book manuscript, *Kant on Reflection and Cognitive Virtue*.

<sup>37</sup> The phrase is “insofern es uns schon zur Fertigkeit geworden, Pflicht zu erfüllen”; the LE translation renders this “being equipped to fulfil duties” — which is fine, except that it obscures the notion of skill, and the ancient debate about virtue as a skill, that is tacitly at issue here.

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