

## Grenberg's phenomenological Kant

### *El Kant fenomenológico de Grenberg*

PAULA SATNE\*

University of Durham and Open University, UK

**Book Review: Jeanine Grenberg, *Kant's Defense of Common Moral Experience. A Phenomenological Account*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2013.**

In *Kant's Defense of Common Moral Experience*, Grenberg presents a phenomenological reading of Kant's account of ordinary moral experience in order to argue that Kant's practical philosophy represents an attempt to ground morality on attentive reflection upon common, felt, first-personal phenomenological experience. Grenberg makes use of Kant's mature conception of feeling in the *Metaphysics of Morals* in order to provide a phenomenological reading of the main arguments of the *Groundwork* and the second *Critique*. Grenberg warns us that the "tragedy of Kant scholarship" is that it has lost sight of the first intention of Kant's project which was to 'provide a defense of a common approach to ethics.' (p. 1). The aim of Grenberg's book is to rectify this oversight.

In part I, Grenberg claim that for Kant moral philosophy "must begin with the non philosophical and intensely personal moral task of coming to terms with a conflict at the basis of human existence" (p. 2). This is the conflict between happiness and morality, a conflict that

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\* Teaching Fellow in the Department of Philosophy of the University of Durham and Associate Lecturer at the Open University (United Kingdom). E-mail for contact: [paulasatne@aol.co.uk](mailto:paulasatne@aol.co.uk).

is compounded by the human tendency to deceive ourselves about the true nature of moral demands by giving happiness more normative force than it really has. Moral life and moral philosophy begin when we identify, and make efforts to counteract, both the conflict and accompanying self-deceptive tendency. The moral perspective is the first-personal perspective which involves attentive reflection on one's moral experiences, through a process of self-knowledge, in order to obtain practical cognitions, that is, cognitions that are beyond the limits of theoretical reason. The job of the philosopher is just to articulate this common perspective available to all human beings more precisely. The common experience of being an obligated agent guides both the moral lives of ordinary human agents and provides the starting point for a philosophical reflection on morality. Kant, thus, provides a new method for practical philosophy, one that is phenomenological in nature and proceeds through "attentive reflection upon a common, felt, first-personal experience" (p. 9) of ourselves as agents.

Two questions, then, arise: (i) what are the salient features of these common experiences? and (ii) what is the phenomenological method that makes use of these experiences in order to make practical claims? (i) The experiences involved in the phenomenological method are not sensible experiences of *objects*, but they are 'subjective' experiences which involve 'inward' reflection of oneself as an agent, and as such they should be characterized as inherently first-personal 'phenomenological' experiences. Grenberg finds support for this reading in Kant's extensive use of practical examples presented as starting points of first-personal processes of deliberation.<sup>1</sup> These experiences are not merely idiosyncratic, instead they are experiences that "we all share", that is, the "universally shared aspects of our agential experience" (p. 21). Any attentive reader of Kant would agree with Grenberg that Kantian ethics is primarily a first-personal self-reflective ethics; however, the originality of Grenberg's reading consists in insisting that the appeal to common first-personal experience is mainly an appeal to *felt* experience. (ii) The phenomenological method is thus just a method of attentive reflection on this common felt first personal experience, a method that should be followed by both the ordinary person attempting to live a moral life and the philosopher seeking to ground philosophical claims about morality: "appeal to such experiences" are "part of [the philosopher's] arguments for justifying that human beings are obligated and free beings" (p. 23). In the case of ordinary agents, this means that the feeling

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<sup>1</sup>GMS AA 04: 405;GMS AA 04: 450-1; KpV AA 05:35 ff., KpV AA 05:98.

of obligation somehow guides or informs our moral decisions. Grenberg claims that moral obligation cannot be deduced from either non moral or practical claims. Instead she reads the FoR as implying that obligation is a “fact forced upon us.” The method of attentiveness consists in taking note of this fact and its implications for our understanding of ourselves as obligated and free beings. Even though this is a common universal experience, attentiveness is required because of the human tendency for self-deception. So, Grenberg claims, in somehow Aristotelian fashion, that the first moral task is the task of improving our moral perception by “becoming more subtle appreciators of the feeling-informed twists and turns of our first-personal phenomenological experiences” (p. 24). Grenberg, however, ascribes too much practical import to feeling: why should the ‘felt’ experience of the moral law forcing itself upon us be so informative? After all, the ground of obligation is not provided by the strength of the feeling, but by a universal intelligible law of reason. Ultimately whether or not the maxims of our actions have an obligatory character would depend on their justifying force, which should be established by rational reflexion alone (i.e. reflexion on the justifiability and universality of the reasons implicit in the maxim). Grenberg claims that the first moral task is to pay attention to the painful feelings that arise when the moral law thwarts our inclinations, and that attentiveness to this felt obligation provides the first step in the recognition of moral reasons for action. This might be true in some cases, perhaps cases in which agents lack extensive deliberative reflective experience or agents that possess a weak or not fully developed moral character. In contrast, a virtuous agent, someone who has spent considerable time reflecting about moral matters, and has made the moral law the supreme principles of all acts would have a clear understanding of the sort of considerations that provide legitimate justifications for action and would not need to rely on feeling to discover moral obligation. Thus, I do not find Grenberg’s account of the need to appeal to our felt experience of obligation in the case of ordinary moral agents very convincing. Yet, perhaps surprisingly, Grenberg provides a better justification of the informative nature of feeling when she explains the philosopher’s need to pay attention to felt experience.

The philosopher needs to take first-personal experience as the starting point of her reflexions on the nature of morality because the limits of theoretical knowledge “make superphenomenal topics of investigation inaccessible from a theoretical point of view” (p. 25) precluding the possibility of theoretical, third-personal knowledge of moral matters. Grenberg thus claims that the phenomenological method is the necessary route by which practical

philosophical reflections gain authority. Grenberg is well aware that her appeal to feeling will result on “traditional Kantian moral philosophers” having “a range of alarm bells ringing” (p. 29). She argues that her account does not attempt an empirical synthetic a posteriori grounding of morality or a conversion of Kant into a moral sense theorist. Kant wrote extensively against both approaches, and if Grenberg’s appeal to feeling had those implications, her account would just not be recognisably Kantian. Instead Grenberg provides a novel interpretation of the role of feeling in Kant’s practical philosophy, one that does not require that we abandon the practicality of pure reason, or the objective synthetic a priori status of moral claims. It is this novel interpretation of the role of feeling which Grenberg develops in Chapter 2 and which in my opinion constitutes the most important contribution of her book. She shows that there is space in Kant’s conception of feeling, particularly the theory of feeling developed in the late *Metaphysics of Morals*, for a felt and object-less phenomenological experience which can provide evidence of the effects of the noumenal moral law without violating the limits of reason, and without compromising the a priori status of the resulting claims. Grenberg notes that Kant appeals to experience liberally.<sup>2</sup> Here experience cannot be understood as referring to empirical generalizations obtained through induction because that would directly undermine the universality and necessity required for moral claims. Instead Kant’s appeal to experience should be understood in phenomenological terms, that is, as an irreducibly subjective and first personal felt experience of oneself as an acting agent. The most important example of an experience of this kind is presented by Kant in the second *Critique*. The Gallows Man (GM) has an experience of being categorically obligated to tell the truth even in the face of mortal threat. The obvious and immediate problem, given the limits of reason established by Kant in the first *Critique*, is: how can we have a direct experience of moral obligation, if moral obligation is understood as intelligible and noumenal, that is as something which is beyond the limits of possible experience? Grenberg solves this problem by appealing to the notion of feeling. The phenomenological experiences that are at the ground of practical philosophy are felt experiences.<sup>3</sup> The key point is that felt experiences are not experiences of empirical objects. Grenberg relies on some passages<sup>4</sup> at the beginning of the *Metaphysics of Morals* in which Kant claims that feeling, in

<sup>2</sup> *GMS* AA 04: 405/ 451/ 460; *KpV* AA 05:30.

<sup>3</sup> *GMS* AA 04: 405/450; *KpV* AA 05: 91-92.

<sup>4</sup> *MS* AA 06: 211/ 212.

contrast to sensation, is “thoroughly subjective experience in that, while it too is subjectively experienced, it does not get involved in the constructions of empirical objects of experience” (pp. 42-3). Feeling expresses simply a relation to the subject, and nothing at all in the object. The felt experience of being morally obligated and thus free should not be understood as a direct experience of suprasensible objects. Grenberg notes that Kant cannot take these felt experiences as a starting point of a transcendental argument to ground the moral law without violating the limits of reason established in the first *Critique*. The key claim is that although we cannot know the noumenal causes of these phenomenological felt experiences, we can “consider this inaccessible noumenal cause not as an object of knowledge, but as an object of wonder and mystery” (p. 47). The felt experience of moral obligation point us back mysteriously<sup>5</sup> towards the experience's intelligible cause and the moral law becomes an object of wonder, that is, practical cognition, not theoretical knowledge. Grenberg avoids constructing Kant as a moral sense theorist by claiming firstly that this practical feeling is not a contingent feeling, but a “necessarily felt feeling that expresses a practical, necessitating determination of the will” “which is also truly common” (p. 58), and secondly by claiming that feeling is not what justifies the validity of the moral law: “feeling can only play an enabling instead of an evidential role in the justification of the moral law” (p. 58). The claim is that feeling helps us to get epistemic access to our rational natures which in turn is that that “will provide evidence or proof of practical cognitions” (p. 59). Feeling enables us to access the necessity implicit in our experience and whatever grounds that necessity, i.e. our rational natures, provides the evidence or proof of moral obligation. The feeling that has the required necessity and commonality to perform this enabling role is of course “the a priori, non contingent moral feeling of respect” (p. 60). By arguing that attention to moral feeling can provide us “with limited epistemic access to our noumenal rational natures” (p. 60), Grenberg opens a new possibility for the understanding of one of the most difficult aspects of Kant's practical philosophy, i.e. the relationship between the phenomenal and the noumenal, between the sensible and the intelligible. This is in an important contribution that will generate a lot of interest and debate among Kant's scholars.

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<sup>5</sup> Grenberg supports the appeal to mystery in the various passages in which Kant talks about the inscrutability of the moral law (e.g. *GMS* AA 04:463; *MS* AA 06: 399-400).

In Part II, Grenberg provides a detailed discussion of the role of common felt phenomenological experience in the *Groundwork*. She argues that in the *Groundwork*, Kant's attitude to the felt phenomenological experience of moral obligation is ambivalent as Kant goes 'back and forth' on the proper content of this felt experience. Ultimately, this ambivalence makes the *Groundwork* as a whole a "phenomenological failure" (p. 95). Kant starts by endorsing a "limited innocent non conflicted experience of categorical demands" (p. 76) in *Groundwork* I. However, he ends up rejecting the experience of moral obligation as a possible ground for morality in *Groundwork* II in light of the experience of the conflict between happiness and morality and the self-deceptive tendency to grant priority to the moral law. For this reason, Kant shifts the focus on *Groundwork* III and seeks to ground proof of moral obligation in our common felt experience of ourselves as active in relation to our mental representations, but ultimately this felt experience will prove to be phenomenological sterile.

According to Grenberg, in *Groundwork* I the discovery of the universal law formula is presented as the result of a person reflecting on the permissibility of lying. The common person achieves understanding of moral demands through 'attentive' reflection on her deliberative experience as exemplified by Socrates.<sup>6</sup> Insofar as Socrates does not teach the person "anything new,"<sup>7</sup> this reflection is pre-philosophical and pre-scientific as the common person discovers moral categorical reasons by paying close attention to the principles that are already implicit in her own experience. However this initial filtration with an innocent non conflicted experience of categorical demands proves problematic because ultimately innocence cannot protect itself and is "easily seduced."<sup>8</sup> The common person must move beyond Socratic practical wisdom and take a more philosophical instruction in order to assure the 'durability' of those moral principles in face of human self-deceptive tendencies. Philosophy thus becomes necessary in order to find a firm ground of moral obligation but here we are well beyond Socratic guidance as the philosopher is now providing external "information" and "instruction"<sup>9</sup> which implies that Kant has abandoned the experience of obligation as the starting point of the phenomenological method. Grenberg interprets this

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<sup>6</sup>GMS AA 04: 404.

<sup>7</sup>GMS AA 04: 404.

<sup>8</sup>GMS AA 04: 404.

<sup>9</sup>GMS AA 04: 405.

story of the common person's passage from innocence to conflict as the story of the very birth of the first-personal, felt, phenomenological method. However, as Grenberg herself recognises "one might wonder, though whether we are in the territory of *felt* experience" (p. 86). The pre-philosophical reflection of the innocent agent of *Groundwork* I does not appeal to feeling and it seems to consist mainly on the exercise of judgment and intellectual reflection on the nature of her reasons for action. As mentioned above, there is no doubt that Kantian ethics is an ethics of self-reflection but what is more controversial is whether this process of self-reflection is accomplished by feeling. Grenberg attempts to get out of this difficulty by arguing that feeling becomes necessary only when we enter the territory of conflict and in these passages Kant does use the language of feeling.<sup>10</sup> However, the fact that moral reasons can be appreciated and recognised by attentive first person deliberation through a process of judgment which is mostly intellectual constitutes a more serious objection to Grenberg's account that she herself admits. The point is that *Groundwork* I introduces the first-personal perspective of the common man, but it seems that such perspective is not the phenomenological perspective of *felt* experience. Appeal to conflict does not fully solve the problem because although there might a felt aspect to the experience of conflict, there is also considerable textual evidence to read the conflict between happiness and morality as a conflict between two ultimate principles of justification or meta-maxims.<sup>11</sup>

In any case Grenberg finds the appeal to an external instructive conception of practical philosophy deeply problematic insofar as it implies the rejection of the experience of categorical obligation as the ground of morality. In *Groundwork* III, Kant shifts focus and now attempts to ground morality on the objective reality of freedom. Grenberg once more makes an original move by reading the argument for the objective reality of freedom as relying on an appeal to felt experience. Contemporary interpreters usually take the first-personal experience of freedom as the starting point of Kant's argument<sup>12</sup> but interpret Kant's claim that "we cannot act otherwise than *under the idea of freedom*"<sup>13</sup> as requiring a rational demand that we take, assume or infer ourselves to be free. However, Grenberg points out that the passage that follows after the one just considered introduces a new starting point, one that

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<sup>10</sup>GMS AA 04: 405.

<sup>11</sup> I will return to this line of objection towards the end of this article.

<sup>12</sup> Grenberg mentions Allison's (1990) and Korsgaard's accounts (1996a and 1996b).

<sup>13</sup>GMS AA 04: 458/ p. 43.

attempts to articulate a common, felt, first-personal, phenomenological experience of freedom<sup>14</sup> (p. 111). According to Grenberg, Kant asks us to focus our attention on two distinct sorts of felt experience: the experience of being either active or passive in the formation of our representations. As feeling cannot provide knowledge of the noumenal, it would be illicit for Kant to argue that this experience somehow provides a proof of our positive freedom. Instead Kant's appeal to the experience of being active in relation to one's representations refers to the practical experience of ourselves "as simply unconstrained" (p. 114). The argument of *Groundwork* III attempts to proceed from freedom to morality by showing that attention to the felt experience of negative freedom will affirm that we are autonomous legislators of the moral law. By focusing our attention on our newly affirmed status as members of the world of understanding, we learn that we act under the laws of reason which are the will's own laws and which exemplify the concept of autonomy and, in turn, the universal principle of morality.<sup>15</sup> Although the appeal to feeling here is somehow tenuous (p. 120), Grenberg claims that she has proved that "Kant successfully introduces a proto-phenomenological felt experience of freedom to start his argument" (p. 120) and that "the negative freedom accessed via felt experience plays a grounding or justificatory role in Kant's effort to prove ourselves obligated" (p. 121). Here feeling is supposed to play an enabling role, as it allows us to access negative freedom, and the negative freedom thus accessed, then plays an evidential role in Kant's attempt to ground morality. However, Grenberg also argues that this early attempt at phenomenological method is unsuccessful as this movement from the felt experience of negative freedom to awareness of ourselves as obligated, autonomously lawgiving agents, ultimately fails. The objection is that attentiveness to the felt experience of negative freedom does not yield the set of practical conclusions about rational agency and morality that it is required by the argument: although the felt experience of negative freedom can indicate that something in us is the source of our activity, "we cannot affirm, from the felt phenomenological perspective, that this non sensible thing is a rational cause" (p. 127). The problem is that the argument would require appeal to the theoretical claim of global causal determinism but such an appeal is ruled out by the first-personal practical nature of the

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<sup>14</sup> Kant claims that we must "inquire whether we do not take a different standpoint when by means of freedom we think of ourselves as causes efficient a priori" (*GMS* AA 04: 451/ 56) and that this change of standpoints can be made by "the commonest understanding..." through "an obscure determination of judgement which is called feeling." (*GMS* AA 04: 451/ 56).

<sup>15</sup> *GMS* AA 04: 452.



method of attentive reflection on felt experience (p. 128). If the first step in the argument cannot be granted, the argument as a whole is found wanting. Kant's refusal to accept an experience of categorical obligation as the starting point of his deduction means that the argument of the *Groundwork* as a whole is a "phenomenological failure" (p. 126). However, one might wonder whether the real problem is with the phenomenological interpretation itself. We have already noted that the textual evidence to ascribe a phenomenological method to *Groundwork* I is not very strong. In addition, Kant's rejection of reliable categorical obligation in *Groundwork* II also seems to count against the phenomenological interpretation. Finally the alleged problem with the appeal to felt experience of negative freedom is that it needs to appeal to a theoretical premise but such appeal is ruled out by the phenomenological method. This objection strikes me as circular, after all the appeal to theoretical claims can be seen as evidence of Kant's lack of commitment to such phenomenological method. It does not seem that much is gained by reading the *Groundwork* in phenomenological terms. We are told that the *Groundwork* is a failure but this is not news, as Grenberg herself notes the argument of *Groundwork* III "is the most beloved flawed argument in the history of philosophy" (p. 106). Grenberg's alleged contribution is to highlight that the failure is a failure of the phenomenological method, but the arguments to ascribe to Kant commitment to such a method are not very convincing.

In part III, Grenberg argues that the FoR of the second *Critique* represents Kant's most successful attempt to ground morality through phenomenological method. The second *Critique* operates Kant's "great reversal" (p. 141) as he now attempts to ground freedom through the experience of moral obligation. The phenomenological method is exemplified by the Gallows Man (GM) example<sup>16</sup> which shows how attention to felt experience can successfully reveal unconditional obligation even to the conflicted agent. Grenberg finds support for the phenomenological method on a particular reading of the FoR. She argues against Allison's "standard reading" of the Fact<sup>17</sup> which is a "paradigmatic example of how one might affirm the validity of the moral law through appeal to a common, but nonsensical, consciousness of the moral law" (p. 140) by rejecting Allison's central claim that the moral feeling of respect follows from the FoR, and is not a condition of it, but just a motivational

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<sup>16</sup> *KpV* AA 05: 30.

<sup>17</sup> Allison (1990) Chapter 13, pp. 230-249.

aspect. After conceding that there is some textual support for Allison's claim,<sup>18</sup> Grenberg rejects Allison's reading on the grounds that to try to prove "knowledge of the validity of morality... without appeal to sensibility demands that" we trespass the limits of reason (p. 143). The recognition of a priori practical principles must rely on receptivity, sensibility or in more Kantian terms "susceptibility to respect for the moral law."<sup>19</sup> This is because the FoR is something that "forces itself upon us"<sup>20</sup> and the language of *force* suggest both passivity and receptivity which in turn imply our capacity for sensibility. This capacity for sensibility should not be understood as the capacity for intuition but as the capacity for receptivity in the sensible form of feeling examined by Grenberg in the first part of the book. The upshot is that the moral feeling of respect is not a consequence of the previous non felt consciousness of the FoR, but instead is part of that very consciousness: we become aware of moral obligation through the feeling of respect. Grenberg also notes that "the direct cause of the moral feeling of respect is not so much our consciousness of the validity of the moral law, but instead our rational, autonomous nature" (p. 148).<sup>21</sup>

The GM experience of conflict provides the phenomenological experience that will initiate practical philosophy. Grenberg argues that the conflict that the man experience is a conflict of feelings: the felt inclinations related to the desire for happiness against the moral feeling of respect which constraints those inclinations (p. 166). Attentive reflection upon this experience leads the philosopher to recognize that the GM's experience is a "felt experience of categorical necessitation of the will" (p. 169) and thus that moral feeling of respect is an a priori feeling in the sense of being a feeling with a necessary cause. Not only are human beings categorically obligated to the moral law, but they are also capable of acting as the moral law demands. Recognition of this capacity sets the basis for the deduction of freedom. Grenberg's defense of the phenomenological method depends on showing that the experience of categorical necessitation of the will has its origin on the felt experience of respect constraining our inclinations. This obligation is something that the agent "literally" feels in the felt experience of conflict, as long as he pays attention to it. In contrast, the recognition of our capacity to act as the moral law demands, that is, our freedom, is not itself directly felt,

<sup>18</sup>*KpVAA* 05: 89-90 is according to Grenberg the most important text in support of Allison's reading.

<sup>19</sup>*KpVAA* 05: 27.

<sup>20</sup>*KpVAA* 05: 31/30.

<sup>21</sup> Grenberg also examines and reject recent "Fichtean, first-personal readings of the Fact of Reason" (pp. 148-158).

but inferred from that feeling (p. 176). Grenberg is correct in pointing out the FoR of the second *Critique* provides Kant's most fruitful route to prove morality and freedom. As already indicated the most important contribution of the book (Chapter 2) is Grenberg's identification of a Kantian conception of feeling which can be seen as an enabling condition that can play an epistemic role in the grounding of practical cognitions. However, Grenberg goes too far in claiming that: (i) the experience of being categorically necessitated is revealed exclusively through feeling, and (ii) reading the FoR as stating that the moral law forces itself upon us through the moral feeling of respect, and thus implying that we become aware of moral obligation only through this feeling.

With respect to (i) Grenberg herself notes the difficulty of affirming that the entire GM's experience is a "*felt one*," (p. 165) particularly the second part of the example where the love of life "seems to be challenged not by other feelings but only by the man "*judg[ing]*...that he can do something because he is aware that he ought to do it" (p. 165). Grenberg argues that this objection can be quickly dismissed. Grenberg's main point is that by the phrase "the *judg[ment]* of the Gallows Man"<sup>22</sup> Kant means "the judgment of common human understanding" which is a judgment that "operates via reliance upon "a special kind of feeling," viz., the "moral feeling of...respect"<sup>23</sup> (p. 165). So, the GM's judgment is the felt judgment of the common person experiencing the moral feeling of respect constraining the inclinations. Moreover, the feeling of respect thus has an epistemic role in that the common person learns, by paying attention to this interplay between contingent and necessary feelings, of the special authority of the moral law and thus the categorical character of moral reasons. He first learns that his lust is not irresistible, and that both love of life and lust are merely hypothetical determinants of his will. By paying further attention to his feelings the man discovers a new conflict, the conflict between love of life and the moral demands to tell the truth and not injure others. These demands just won't go away; they have categorical force, that is, they present themselves with more authority than the demands of self-love. Thus, Grenberg claims that the GM acquires consciousness of categorical obligation by paying attention to the affective experience of the moral feeling of respect, and thus respect plays an enabling role in confirming practical cognition of moral obligation. However, what is difficult

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<sup>22</sup>*KpV* AA 05: 30.

<sup>23</sup>*KpV* AA 05: 91.

to accept is Grenberg's claim that the judgment of the GM is the judgment of common human understanding which relies entirely on feeling. Grenberg's reading rests on the passage quoted above<sup>24</sup> but this is just one passage and there are other important texts which suggest a more intellectual role for moral judgment: "practical universal laws ... [are] principles that contain the determining basis of the will not by their matter but merely by their form."<sup>25</sup> There are passages that suggest that the "commonest understanding" refers to an intellectual capacity for judgment as Kant says that it can "quite easily" and "without hesitation" see "what is to be done" "on the principle of the autonomy of choice," by contrast "under the presupposition of the heteronomy of the power of choice, what is to be done is difficult to see and requires acquaintance with the world."<sup>26</sup> What these passages suggest is that the conflict between happiness and morality is not only, or mainly, a conflict between two types of felt experience, i.e. the experience of contingent feelings caused by inclinations and the experience of necessary feelings caused by the moral law. Instead the conflict between happiness and morality is a conflict between ultimate principles of justification for action. In addition to the texts of the second *Critique*,<sup>27</sup> there is also support for this reading in the *Religion*, where Kant introduces the concept of *Gesinnung* to refer to the agent's moral character understood as the agent's fundamental maxim, that is, the maxim which underlies all the other maxims adopted by the agent and provides the ultimate ground and justification of his actions.<sup>28</sup> Kant makes a distinction between good and bad character stating that the person with a good character (*Gesinnung*) is the person whose fundamental maxim is to make the moral law the supreme condition of all acts, thus subordinating the demands of self-love to the demands of morality.<sup>29</sup> This suggests that moral law operates as a principle of justification, not merely as the source of affective forces (however rational the origins of those forces are taken to be). Grenberg is right in pointing out that although knowledge of Kant's moral philosophy is not necessary to become a moral agent, the common ordinary agent must at least have "some more rough-and-ready appreciation of the moral concerns for unfairness" highlighted in the first formulation of

<sup>24</sup>*KpV* AA 05: 91.

<sup>25</sup>*KpV* AA 05:27/ p. 40.

<sup>26</sup>*KpV* AA 05: 36/ p. 54. There are many other texts, of course, in which Kant stresses the formal ground of practical laws and clearly distinguish it from the material grounds of heteronomous principles (e.g. *KpV* AA 05: 44/ 69).

<sup>27</sup> See also *KpV* AA 05: 97 where Kant clearly identifies self-love with a practical principle.

<sup>28</sup>*RGV* AA 06: 21-25.

<sup>29</sup>*RGV* AA 06:36.

the Categorical Imperative (pp. 26-7). So, although the ordinary moral agent might not ask himself whether he can will the maxim of his action as an universal law of nature, a person with a good *Gesinnung* is a person who is committed to act only on those maxims that can be fully justified to others (I take this to be a rough understanding of the first formulation of the moral law available to the ordinary moral agent). The important point is that the GM does not discover the obligatory character of morality only by attentively reflecting on his feelings of being painfully constrained by the demands of the moral law, but also by judging and reflecting on the normative force of the maxims of honesty and no injury. This does not mean that the route for an enabling and epistemic role for feeling is precluded, but the story about the metaphysical origins of the feeling of respect is just one *part* of the story, perhaps an important part in the philosophical story of the grounding of morality and freedom, but a story that cannot provide the whole basis for the practical deliberations of ordinary moral agents. Feeling is insufficient for ordinary practical deliberation which also requires an appeal to ultimate principles of justification for action.

With respect to (ii) we should note that awareness of moral obligation cannot be acquired only through the receptive and passive experience of the moral feeling of respect because respect is not only a passive and receptive feeling. Kant claims that “respect for the moral law is (...) the sole and also indubitable moral incentive”<sup>30</sup> and that “the [moral] incentive of the human will (...) can never be anything other than the moral law.”<sup>31</sup> These passages suggest that in addition to the affective aspect of respect, there is also an intellectual aspect. This intellectual aspect involves the agent's active recognition of the moral appropriateness of an action as providing an incentive to act morally. It is part of the FoR that we are the type of beings for which the mere recognition of an action as being morally required constitutes an incentive to act morally, in the sense of something that it is worth pursuing. Grenberg's reading puts too much emphasis on the passive affective aspect of respect, but Kant also emphasises the intellectual and active aspects of the notion.

Grenberg's defense of a phenomenological and common approach to Kantian ethics is not only novel and original, but also provides a well-sustained line of argument which is based on a detailed examination of Kant's foundational ethical writings. Her book provides a

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<sup>30</sup>*KpV* AA 05: 78/ p. 102.

<sup>31</sup>*KpV* AA 05: 72/pp. 94-5.

new and refreshing take on Kant's practical philosophy and it would be of great interest to moral philosophers working inside and outside the Kantian tradition.

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