

Robert Johnson

Interest of inclination

1. *Meaning and location in Kant's works*

An interest is a principle the content of which contains the condition under which the exercise of a given faculty of the mind is promoted. 5:119 The condition under which the exercise of inclination is promoted is pleasure. Thus, an interest of inclination is always bound up with pleasure.

Wichtige Stellen: 5:119, 4:413n, 6:212

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2. *Related keywords in Kant's work*

Incentive, interest, interest of morality, moral interest, motive, pathological interest

3. *Philosophical function in Kant's philosophy*

The idea of an interest of inclination is an important element of Kant's moral psychology. Inclination is "the dependence of the faculty of desire upon feelings" (of pleasure). 4:413n Kant's moral psychology is thus hedonistic to the extent that desire requires pleasure in an object. In particular, an interest of inclination is a practical pleasure that necessarily precedes desire. A practical pleasure is a pleasure necessarily connected to desire. By being connected to desire, a practical pleasure is pleasure in the existence of some object. This is in contrast with contemplative pleasures associated with aesthetic judgments of beauty or taste. Thus, if the representation of an object arouses or is aroused by desire, it is a practical pleasure, and in the former case, it must precede desire, and hence is an interest of inclination. 6:212

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Kant also refers to interest as "the dependence of a contingently determinable will on principles of reason". 4:413n The exercise of the human will relies on principles that have their origin in reason, but some of those principles (hypothetical imperatives) are based on interests of inclination, while reason must somehow "take" an interest in acting when the will is determined by the Categorical Imperative.

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