

Foregrounding Desire: A Defense of Kant’s Incorporation Thesis

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Abstract In this paper I defend Kant’s Incorporation Thesis, which holds that we must “incorporate” our incentives into our maxims if we are to act on them. I see this as a thesis about what is necessary for a human being to make the transition from ‘having a desire’ to ‘acting on it’. As such, I consider the widely held view that ‘having a desire’ involves being focused on the world, and not on ourselves or on the desire. I try to show how this view is connected with a denial of any deep distinction between reason and inclination. I then argue for an alternative view of what ‘having a desire’ involves, one according to which it involves being focused both on the world and on ourselves. I show how this view fits naturally with the Kantian distinction between reason and inclination, accounts for independent intuitions about ‘having a desire’, and supports the Incorporation Thesis. I then make some further suggestions about how we might conceive of the object of incorporation.

Keywords Action · Agency · Animal agency · Desire · Inclination · Incorporation thesis · Kant · Kantian · Moral psychology

1 Introduction

A central feature of Kant’s moral psychology is what Henry Allison has called the “Incorporation Thesis” (Allison 1990, p. 40). The Incorporation Thesis is a claim about the structure of human motivation. While ambiguous in certain respects, it is roughly the claim that in order for an agent to act on a given desire, the agent must take an active stance towards that desire, “incorporating” it into her maxim.¹ This

¹ I am deliberately formulating the basic idea in very general way that does not rely on contentious interpretations of some of Kant’s moral psychological terms. Kant does say that the object of

thesis is usually introduced as a way of correcting a common misreading of Kant's account of heteronomous action. According to the misreading, Kant holds that heteronomous action is unfree in the sense that it is simply caused by mechanistic forces. The problem with this reading is that it makes heteronomous action look like a mere happening, in turn making it hard to see how the heteronomous agent is accountable for what she does. Against this, Allison notes Kant's claim in *Religion and Natural Theology*, that "freedom of the will [*Willkur*] is of a wholly unique nature in that an incentive can determine the will to an action *only insofar as the individual has incorporated it into his maxim* (has made it into the general rule in accordance with which he will conduct himself...)" (Kant 1793/1996, 6:24, cited in Allison 1990, pp. 40–41). While the Incorporation Thesis holds for all incentives, whether they stem from reason or feeling, it has particular significance for action to which inclinations—motives that come from feeling—make a contribution.² The claim is that even though inclinations have their origin in feeling, being in the state of having an inclination does not simply cause us to act. In order to make the transition from having an inclination to acting on it, we have to reflect on the inclination, or perhaps on the incentive provided by the inclination, and do something to or with it, something that Kant calls "incorporation."

In order to understand in more detail how reason and inclination work together to generate action, we need a clearer account of what the act of "incorporation" involves. But I have come to the conclusion that we cannot have this unless we have a clearer account of why incorporation is necessary. Allison claims, I think rightly, that the Incorporation Thesis "underlies virtually everything that Kant has to say about rational agency" (Allison, p. 40). Most contemporary Kantians agree, and I think it is safe to say that most believe Kant was actually right to hold it (Wood 1999, pp. 51–53; Hill 1992, p. 86; Korsgaard 1996, p. 94 and 2009, pp. 105 and 115). But was he? I will argue that Allison's initial defense of the Incorporation Thesis is incomplete, and that in order to supplement it, we need a more developed account of what it is to 'have an inclination', such that we cannot go from the

Footnote 1 continued

incorporation is an "incentive" (*Treibfeder*), and one might well ask whether an "incentive" is the same as a "desire" (*Begierde*) or "inclination" (*Neigung*). My strategy is to take a fairly clear stand on how I am using the term "inclination," and to work out an answer to the question, "given that we are subject to inclinations, why is incorporation something we need to do?" As such, I do not rely in advance on any settled interpretation of "incentive." However, in Sect. 4 I do try to outline my view of what it is that gets incorporated. If my overall view is plausible, it may give us guidance in interpreting "incentive".

² Here I set aside the question of how the Incorporation Thesis applies to rational incentives. I think the notion of a rational incentive is in fundamental ways different from that of an incentive stemming from feeling. First, there is essentially one rational incentive—the moral law. Second, when the moral law operates as an incentive, it does so in a unique way that is not directly analogous to the way other incentives function. The moral law only functions as an incentive insofar as it shows itself to be superior to all other incentives, striking down the pretensions of self-conceit. In this sense it is a second-order incentive. Moreover, its functioning as an incentive does not depend on its presentation to us of an object as to-be-pursued. Rather, in striking down the pretensions of self-conceit, it simply removes a hindrance to our recognition of its authority, and that recognition itself is supposed to be sufficient to motivate us (Kant 1788/1996, 5:75–76).

condition of 'having an inclination' to that of 'acting on it' without doing something additional.³

Before I start, let me make a point about terminology. The term "desire" can take on different meanings, depending on the moral psychological picture being presupposed. Sometimes it is used in a broad sense to refer to any motive whatsoever. Sometimes it is used in a narrower sense to refer to those motives that stem from the lower motivational faculty ("passion" or "feeling") rather than the higher ("reason").⁴ In general I will use the term "inclination" to refer to motives in this narrower sense, and when I do so, I will be assuming, with Kant, that we do have both higher and lower motivational capacities.⁵ Some of the philosophers I will be discussing reject this assumption. They tend to use the term "desire" to refer to motives generally. When discussing the work of these philosophers, I will use "desire" in the same broad sense that they use it.

My argument proceeds as follows. In Sect. 1, I motivate my question taking seriously Simon Blackburn's argument against Kantian moral psychology (Blackburn 1998, pp. 250–255). Blackburn argues that the central mistake made by Kantians is to misdescribe the condition of 'having an desire'. Kantians, he claims, mistakenly believe that in having a desire, we are reflectively aware of the desire. This distortion, he argues, leads to a distorted view of what is necessary to go from 'having an desire' to 'acting on it' as well as a false distinction between reason and desire more generally. In the Sect. 2, I argue that if Kantians accept the distinction between reason and inclination on prior and independent grounds, then they should accept the view that in 'having an inclination', we are reflectively aware of the inclination we are having. I argue further that this conception of 'having an inclination' provides philosophical motivation for the Incorporation Thesis. In the third section, I argue that there is a good reason, independent of prior acceptance of the distinction between reason and inclination, to accept this conception of 'having an inclination' as well as the Incorporation Thesis. In the final section, I use that picture as a guide to try to make a bit more sense of what the activity of incorporation involves.

³ Andrews Reath helpfully explores questions similar to mine in Reath 1989. In discussing the Incorporation Thesis, he acknowledges that on Kant's view, the motivational role of inclination must be limited: "Kant can allow an incentive to have an affective force of some sort, but the role assigned to such force in motivation and the explanation of action must be limited so as to leave room for the notion of choice." (p. 290) Reath's claim is that inclinations influence the will by providing "a certain kind of reason for choice." (p. 290) While I do not exactly disagree with this, I hope to provide a fuller account of the nature of inclination than Reath offers, one that in the end makes it clearer why the motivational force of inclination is limited, and how it can make something like a "claim" on the will even as it exerts psychological force.

⁴ Contemporary moral psychology and action theory tends not to distinguish these senses. An exception is Schueler 1995, though he does not appeal to the idea of faculties or distinct motivational capacities to explain the narrower sense of "desire" (pp. 29–38).

⁵ I also assume that inclinations are forms of motivation, not just pro-attitudes towards certain states of affairs. They are essentially inclinations *to* act in certain ways, not inclinations *that* such-and-such obtain. For a fuller account of my use of "inclination," see Schapiro 2009, pp. 230–232.

2 The Problem

There is a standard way of defending the Incorporation Thesis, and I want to show why it is inadequate. The defense is simply to appeal to the practical point of view. As I noted, the Incorporation Thesis is often invoked as a way of countering the claim that in heteronomous action, our inclinations simply cause us to act. To this, the Kantian replies that from the practical point of view, we “cannot act except under the idea of freedom” (Kant 1785/1996, 4:448) where this means we cannot see ourselves simply as loci through which causal forces work their effects. Interpreting this idea, Allison remarks, “I can no more observe myself-deciding than I can observe myself-judging, although in both cases I must be conscious of what I am doing” (Allison 1990, p. 40). His point is that insofar as I am engaged in deciding what to do, I cannot see my doings simply as happenings. I have to see them having their source in me, in my own activity.

Now according to Allison, this has implications for the way we have to conceive of our inclinations. He writes,

Correlatively, I cannot conceive of myself as such an agent [who freely sets ends] without assuming that I have a certain control over my inclinations, that I am capable of deciding which of them are to be acted upon (and how) and which resisted. These are, as it were, necessary presuppositions for all who regard their reason as practical (Allison 1990, p. 41).

The freedom presupposed in the practical standpoint must include, in general, freedom to choose to act or to refrain from acting on our inclinations. This much strikes me as uncontroversial. But notice that it is not enough to support the Incorporation Thesis. For the Incorporation Thesis holds not only that I *can* decide whether or not to act on my inclinations, but also that it is *necessary* for me to do so if I am to act on them. The Incorporation Thesis claims that upon having an inclination, I must endorse it, or affirm it, or identify with it in some way, otherwise I will not be able to act on it. In this respect it is quite a radical thesis. It implies that *being in the condition of having an inclination is motivationally insufficient for acting on it*. In a sense, then, the Incorporation Thesis contrasts sharply with Hume’s dictum that reason alone cannot motivate action. The claim is that desire alone cannot motivate action—though unlike Hume’s reason, Kant’s desire is a motivational force, one that nevertheless cannot alone lead all the way to action.

Allison’s appeal to the fact that we have to deliberate from the practical point of view might show that we cannot regard our inclinations as simply causing our actions. But does it show that we have to regard ourselves as having to do something to or with our inclinations in order to act on them? Perhaps the idea is that when I have an inclination, I ought to endorse it, because if I do not, I will have to see myself as simply being caused to act by it. But this does not seem right. We do sometimes act on our inclinations impulsively, in a way that we would describe as unreflective, without thereby thinking of ourselves as psychologically compelled, and without thereby thinking of our actions as mere happenings. I take it the Incorporation Thesis implies that even in these cases, despite the appearance of unreflectiveness, our having acted on the inclination is not fully explained by the

fact that we had the inclination. Part of the explanation is that upon having the inclination, we took an active stance towards it. But if we are to accept this, further argument for the thesis is needed. Mere appeal to the constraints of the practical point of view does not go far enough.

To see the problem more clearly, consider this passage from Christine Korsgaard's *Sources of Normativity*:

...Our capacity to turn our attention to our own mental activities is also a capacity to distance ourselves from them, and to call them into question. I perceive, and I find myself with a powerful impulse to believe. But I back up and bring that impulse into view and then I have a certain distance. Now the impulse doesn't dominate me and now I have a problem. Shall I believe? Is the perception really a *reason* to believe? I desire and I find myself with a powerful impulse to act. But I back up and bring my impulse into view and then I have a certain distance. Now the impulse doesn't dominate me and now I have a problem. Shall I act? Is this desire really a *reason* to act? The reflective mind cannot settle for perception or and desire, not just as such. It needs a *reason*. Otherwise, at least as long as it reflects, it cannot commit itself or go forward (Korsgaard 1996, p. 93).

I take it Korsgaard intends this as an elaboration of the Incorporation Thesis. But it seems to me one could reject the Incorporation Thesis and agree with the above passage. One could agree that we have the capacity to reflect on any of the desires we have, and that when we do reflect or "back up" in this way, we then face the task of deciding whether to act on the desire in question. One could also agree that we have the capacity to solve this problem through an act of incorporation or assent or endorsement or whatever. But nothing here entails that we have to reflect on our desires in the first place. Presumably I can just have an impulse to act and straightaway act on it, without taking a "step back" bringing the impulse "into view." Nothing in the above passage explains why we should think otherwise.

This is precisely the challenge posed by Simon Blackburn in *Ruling Passions*. There he argues that "[t]he first and far most important mistake made by those who oppose the Humean tradition comes from equating the standpoint of deliberation with a standpoint which *surveys* or takes account of desire..." (Blackburn 1998, p. 253) Against this, he maintains that

[t]ypically, in deliberation... [m]y own concerns and dispositions determine which features [of the external world] I notice and how I react to them. If I am a miser, the cost takes my attention; if I am a gourmet, the quality of the food does; if I am prudent, the durability of the cloth; if I am not a knave, the fact of the promise... There is not typically a *second-order* process of standing back, noticing that the cost is obsessing me, and deciding to endorse that fact about myself, or alternatively deciding to try to change it... Deliberation is an active engagement with the *world*, not a process of introspecting our own consciousness of it (Blackburn 1996, p. 254).

Blackburn is not disagreeing with Korsgaard's claim that we *can* take a step back from this engagement with the world and reflect on ourselves-being-so-engaged. His

target is the Incorporation Thesis, which makes the stronger claim that we somehow *must* do so. I take it Blackburn is suggesting that the reasoning that leads to the Incorporation Thesis starts from a distorted conception of what it is to ‘have a desire’. Echoing Michael Smith and Philip Pettit, Blackburn maintains that our desires are normally backgrounded when we deliberate from the practical point of view (Blackburn 1998, p. 255; Pettit and Smith 1990). They shape our perspective on the world, but they do not enter our field of vision as objects of reflection. Now since neither Blackburn nor Pettit and Smith distinguish between desire in the broad sense and desire in the narrow sense, this backgrounding thesis is ambiguous from a Kantian point of view. The Kantian will ask whether this is supposed to be an account of what is involved in ‘having an inclination’, where that is a motive that arises independently of will or intention, or an account of what it is to have a motive generally. For the purposes of this paper, I will read Blackburn as if he were offering a thesis about what is involved in having a desire in the narrow sense, which I have been calling “inclination.” And I will read him as claiming not only that our desires are backgrounded when we have them, but also that this form of consciousness gives us everything we need, motivationally, in order to act on the desire. In particular I take him to be claiming that in order to make the transition from having a desire to acting on it, we do not need to introspect, to reflect on ourselves desiring, and somehow incorporate or endorse *that*. Having a desire allows us to see features of the world as having practical salience, and seeing the world in this way is all we need to do in order to act. Moreover, Blackburn would argue, contra Allison, that acting from this awareness of the world does not amount to seeing ourselves as having been caused to act by psychological forces external to us.

Blackburn takes his argument to show the falsity not only of the Incorporation Thesis, but also of Kant’s more fundamental distinction between reason and inclination. As I will explain, I think there are independent grounds for accepting Kant’s bipartite view of our motivational capacities. But I do not think Kantians should be dismissive of this line of criticism as a challenge to the Incorporation Thesis. What fuels it is the rather intuitive idea that having an inclination does not necessarily involve taking that inclination, or taking oneself-inclining, as the object of one’s reflection. Moreover, this intuitive idea is not distinctively Humean. To illustrate this, I want to show that the same line of criticism can come from rationalist quarters.

T.M. Scanlon uses “desire” in the broad sense, but he is more explicit than Blackburn in pointing out that this includes “desire” in the narrow sense. So as with Blackburn, I will be evaluating Scanlon’s view as a thesis about what it is to have a desire in the narrow sense. Like Blackburn, Scanlon holds that our desires are normally backgrounded in deliberation. On his view, the practical standpoint is not, in the first instance, one from which we take a stance towards our own desires; it is simply one from which we take a stance towards the world. The main difference between Scanlon and Blackburn on this point is Scanlon’s insistence that the motivational force of inclination depends on a kind of reasoning. Having a desire to \emptyset , Scanlon maintains, involves taking certain considerations as counting in favor of \emptyset ’ing (Scanlon 1998, pp. 37–41). So, for example, when I find myself with a desire to eat that piece of chocolate cake, I am implicitly taking the rich flavor of the

chocolate as a reason to eat the cake. And it is only in virtue of this taking-as-a-reason, Scanlon argues, that I am motivated upon having a desire.

Now a corollary of Scanlon's view is that once I have a desire, I do not have to bring that desire into the foreground of my awareness in order to act on it. Nothing about the condition of having a desire makes it necessary for me to reflect on myself-desiring and endorse *that*. As long as the considerations I take to be reasons in the experience of having the desire remain salient to me, I can act on a desire I have without further reflection.

Blackburn and Scanlon thus defend moral psychological pictures that share at least two features in common. The first is that our desires (in the broad sense, which includes the narrow sense) are backgrounded from the practical point of view, unless we engage in a separate act of reflection that brings them to the fore. The second assumption is that having a desire is motivationally sufficient for acting on it. Now I think it is not just coincidental that in addition to these two assumptions, they share a third, namely that we do not have two distinct motivational capacities. Whereas Blackburn denies that what we call "reason" is anything but a calm passion, Scanlon denies that what we call "passion" is anything but a spontaneous exercise of reason (Scanlon 1998, p. 40). On Scanlon's view, the "taking-as-a-reason" that gives our desires their motivational force is exactly what gives our decisions and intentions their motivational force. The so-called active motivational states—whether they be called "deciding," "intending," "reasoning," or "willing"—are not essentially different in structure from the so-called passive motivational states, i.e., "desiring," "inclining," "wanting," etc. All motivate in virtue of our taking considerations as reasons for action.

This unitary conception of our motivational capacities fits naturally, I think, with the other two theses: the picture of 'having a desire' as a condition in which the desire is backgrounded, and the denial of the Incorporation Thesis. In the next section I will try to make this clear by contrast. I will start from a prior and independent commitment to the bipartite view, and show how it leads naturally to an alternative conception of what it is to 'have an inclination' according to which the inclination is foregrounded in deliberation. By showing how this conception grows out of a more fundamental moral psychological picture, I hope to challenge Blackburn's suggestion that it is the foregrounding thesis that drives the basic Kantian distinction between reason and inclination. At the same time I hope to show more clearly what motivates both the foregrounding thesis and the Incorporation Thesis.⁶

⁶ This way of framing the problem might seem misguided. Why not acknowledge the limited validity of both the Blackburn/Scanlon picture and the Kantian picture by simply arguing that there are two types of action, thin and thick, and that only thick action (understood as intentional action, or action for a reason, or action that carries the agent's authority) requires incorporation? To be convincing, such a view would have to be backed up by a developed picture of human motivational capacities that explains why both types of action are possible for us, and why incorporation is necessary in some cases and not in others. It would have to make clear what the relation is between thin and thick senses of action. At the end of Sect. 2, I make some remarks about impulsive action that may help to clarify my (admittedly still undeveloped) view about this. I am grateful to Kieran Setiya for pressing me on this point.

3 Foregrounding Desire: The Argument from the Bipartite View

For now, for the purpose of argument, let us assume Kantians have independent grounds for thinking that we have higher and lower motivational capacities. Is it possible to hold this bipartite conception of agency while rejecting the Incorporation Thesis? Recall the passage from Korsgaard I cited above, which leaves the motivation behind the Incorporation Thesis obscure:

I desire and I find myself with a powerful impulse to act. But I back up and bring my impulse into view and then I have a certain distance. Now the impulse doesn't dominate me and now I have a problem. Shall I act? Is this desire really a *reason* to act (Korsgaard 1996, p. 93).

This passage gives us no reason to think Korsgaard denies that in the first instance, my desire is in the background, shaping my practical perspective, while my focus is on the practically salient features of my world. Moreover, Korsgaard's language does not indicate any conflict with the corollary that it is only through a further, reflective act that I bring my desire into the foreground as an object of thought. The problem for Korsgaard is that this makes it mysterious why she should affirm the Incorporation Thesis. Her stated view here gives us no reason to deny that I can go directly from having a desire to acting on it, without engaging in any further reflective act. While she does claim that "the reflective mind cannot settle for... desire, not just as such," she does not explain why it cannot. If, before I reflect, I am simply in the condition of having a desire, and if being in that condition makes me directly aware of the practically salient features of my world (whether they be construed as reasons or not), then it is not clear why I cannot settle for *this*—why being in the condition of having a desire cannot give me everything I need, motivationally, in order to act.

To indicate in a preliminary way what the alternative picture will look like, I want to suggest a friendly revision of Korsgaard's language, one that highlights instead of obscuring the more distinctive features of Kantian moral psychology. As I noted, Korsgaard states, in language used commonly by Kantians generally, that I first have an inclination, and then, through an act of reflection, I take a step back from it, bringing the inclination into view. I will argue that the Kantian should instead state the following: when I have an inclination, the inclining part of me takes a step forward, and the rest of me is made aware of itself as not being the source of that activity. On this view, *to be in the condition of having an inclination is to be internally divided; the inclining part of me is 'going for' an object, and the rest of me is aware of what that part is doing.* I will argue further that this reflective awareness is what generates pressure on the reflecting part to do something to or with the inclining part, something called "incorporation."

My argument starts from a conception of the distinction between reason and inclination that I have begun to develop in previous work (Schapiro 2009). In this article I will simply lay out features of that view, without trying to defend them in any detail. As I see it, the main motivation for some version for the bipartite view comes from the very basic human experiences of wanting to do things we judge we ought not to do, and of not wanting to do things we judge we ought to do. We are

aware that we cannot simply want at will. When I decide I ought to go to the dentist, that decision is sufficient to give me a motive to go to the dentist. But it is not sufficient to make me want to go to the dentist in the ordinary sense of 'want to' that contrasts with 'have to' or 'ought to'. If, upon having decided to go to the dentist, I also want to want to go to the dentist, then I have to find some way of generating that inclination in myself. There may be various ways to do this, but what will not work is simply deciding to have the inclination to go to the dentist, or even judging that I have grounds to be inclined to go to the dentist. It is a fundamental part of our human condition that we have motives that are independent of our wills to this extent. Moreover, awareness of this fact is reflected in our practice of holding ourselves and others accountable. We do not normally hold people accountable simply for having the inclinations they have. While it is true that susceptibility to certain inclinations can in some cases reflect on character, we still hold people directly responsible for their actions, while holding them at most indirectly responsible for their inclinations, considered apart from their actions.

The bipartite view is intended to do justice to this feature of our experience. But the bipartite view requires elaboration. How are we to conceive of a form of motivation with respect to which we are in this sense passive? To be motivated is not simply to be moved from the outside; it is to be self-moved. But how can a form of our self-movement be something with respect to which we are distinctively passive? Elsewhere I have argued that we should conceive of this form of motivation as having its source in a capacity that is both nonrational and agential.⁷ The claim is that if we are going to understand inclination as a form of motivation with respect to which we are distinctively passive, we have to see it as stemming from a capacity for nonrational action. Moreover, I conjecture that the nonrational form of agency exercised by our inclining part is structurally analogous to the type of agency that is exercised by nonhuman animals, creatures of instinct. The suggestion is that our capacity to incline has its source in our animal nature.

What might animal agency be like?⁸ Presumably a creature of instinct sees and responds to the world teleologically, conceiving of *this* as to-be-eaten and *that* as to-be-avoided. But a creature of instinct cannot call her instincts themselves into question. She cannot ask herself whether she really ought to eat the things that appear to her as to-be-eaten, or whether she ought to avoid the things that appear to her as to-be-fled. She cannot demand or act on justifications of the principles that motivate her, and in that respect, her form of agency is nonrational. I have argued that when a human being has an inclination, say, to eat that piece of chocolate cake, the passive part of her is motivationally engaged in the way characteristic of a such

⁷ Schapiro 2009. Obviously this view is just one variation on a theme that can be traced back to Plato and Aristotle. For helpful interpretation, see Cooper 1984 and 1988.

⁸ Kant's contrast between the *arbitrium brutum* of nonhuman animals and the *arbitrium sensitivum liberum* of human beings is suggestive here. He holds that whereas the *arbitrium brutum* is practically necessitated by sensuous impulses, the *arbitrium sensitivum liberum* is only affected by them (Kant 1781/1999, A534/B562; 1797/1996, 6:213–214). But Kant does not provide enough detail to explain how nonhuman animals can count as acting, even if they do not count as having distinctively human freedom. Presumably a nonhuman animal who is determined by instinct counts as acting, whereas a nonhuman animal who is moved by an outside force does not. Korsgaard has tried to develop Kantian theory on this point, and in some respects I have been informed by her view (Korsgaard 2005 and 2009, pp. 93–104).

a creature. That part of her, her “inner animal,” is seeing and responding to the chocolate cake as to-be-eaten, even though it has no capacity to demand reason or justification for its way of seeing and responding to the world.

In making the connection between human inclination and animal action, I do not mean to restrict the range of objects of inclination to things that could motivate nonhuman animals. My inner animal can go for reading a novel, even though a nonhuman animal cannot. The point is that the way it goes for reading a novel is structurally the same as the way a creature of instinct would go for food. My inner animal’s motivation does not go by way of deliberation about why reading this novel right now is something it has reason or justification to do. It is direct and nonrational, based on an “instinct” that may be the product not simply of biology, but also of associations formed as a result of socialization and experience. It is instinct in this expanded sense that we speak of when we say things like, “he knows how to push my buttons.” Instinct, as I am conceiving of it, is the biological/associative wiring that determines where our buttons are, and what happens when they get pushed.

To summarize the part of the view that I am describing here: in order to conceive of our inclinations as motives with respect to which we are distinctively passive, we have to think of them as attributable to a nonrational, agential part of us that sees and responds to the world in the way that a nonhuman animal does. Now, what are the implications of this for the Incorporation Thesis? Blackburn has suggested that the Incorporation Thesis is based on a distorted view of what it is to ‘have a desire’, according to which to have a desire somehow involves having ourselves in view. I believe Blackburn is right to think there is a connection between the Incorporation Thesis and this foregrounded conception of desire. However, my conception of inclination leads me to think the foregrounded conception of desire is actually correct.

When I have an inclination, am I focused on the world, or on myself-being-inclined? On my view, the answer is both. Insofar as I am my inner animal, I am focused on the world. My sense of what is practically salient is shaped by my instincts, which operate in the background of my consciousness. But my inner animal is only a part of me. This complicates the picture. On the unitary view of agency, when I have an inclination, my whole consciousness is focused on the world. If I happen to engage in a separate act of reflection, turning my mind’s eye inward, I can bring myself-desiring into the foreground of my awareness. But this is an optional, second-order act. On the bipartite view that I am developing here, my inner animal spontaneously takes a step forward, and the rest of me is made aware itself as not being the source of that motivation. Reflection is thus built into the condition of having the inclination. So my consciousness is divided.

Two clarificatory remarks: first, in saying that my inner animal “takes a step forward,” I do not mean that it actually leads me, the whole rational animal, to act. What I mean is that it responds motivationally to its perception of the world, and that it does so independently of any activity on the part of the rest of me. Second, the notion of division here should not be confused with that of conflict. The claim is not that the rest of me opposes the inclining part. It is simply that the rest of me is aware of itself as not being the source of the inclining part’s activity. Indeed, it has not yet raised the question whether or not to oppose anything.

If awareness of this kind is built into having an inclination, then it is easier to see the philosophical motivation for the Incorporation Thesis. If when I have an inclination, I am aware of myself-being-divided, and if it is also the case that I have to be unified if I am to act (a claim I am just going to take for granted here), then in having an inclination, I am, in a sense, stuck. I am not conflicted, but I am nevertheless stuck.

Now it sounds funny to say that in having an inclination, I am stuck. The reason is that this runs contrary to an independent intuition we have about what is involved in having an inclination. I will put the intuition this way: having an inclination establishes a path of least motivational resistance in the direction of acting on it. Notice that this is true regardless of the content of the inclination in question. When I have an inclination to eat that piece of chocolate cake, then other things equal, to eat the cake is to follow the path of least motivational resistance. When I have an inclination to flee the threatening situation, to flee the threatening situation is to follow the path of least motivational resistance. By contrast to oppose inclination, whatever its content, requires a kind of effort or "will-power." Any account of what it is to have an inclination should support this intuition. Part of the appeal of Blackburn and Scanlon's account is that they obviously do. But my view supports it as well, albeit not as obviously. The fact that my inner animal is going for something establishes a path of least motivational resistance for my whole self, even though the reflective part of me is not yet motivationally engaged. The inclining part of me has determined itself to do something. The rest of me has not. Hence were I, as a whole person, to take the path of my inclining part, I would be taking the path of least motivational resistance. And yet there is still a sense in which I am stuck. Even though my inclining part has determined itself, my reflective part has to do the same if my whole self is to act.

Does this mean there is no such thing as impulsive action? Obviously there is some distinction between impulsive and deliberate action, and the view I am putting forth would be unattractive if it failed to account for it. So let me be clear about what the view does and does not imply. What it denies is that when we act impulsively, we do so because we are simply possessed by our inner animals. We can perhaps be possessed by them in emergency situations, where instinct simply takes over. For example, when I feel myself-sliding down a steep precipice, I instinctively reach out for something to hold onto. But to the extent that my inner animal does just possess me, my action is something less than 'action', something called "reaction" or "reflex." More fundamentally in this sort of case, there is no meaningful distinction between having an inclination and acting on it, and there is no meaningful question about whether the transition requires an act of incorporation. Such cases are not counterexamples to the incorporation thesis but rather possibilities that mark the limit of its scope. Still, there is a more ordinary sense in which we can act impulsively even within the scope of the incorporation thesis. I act impulsively when I *allow* myself to be possessed by my inner animal, incorporating it on *its* terms, instead of on terms laid down by my reflecting part.⁹ Of course, a full

⁹ I am gesturing here at an interpretation of Kant's implicit distinction between acting "from inclination" and acting "in accordance with" inclination. I believe this distinction has been underexplored in the Kant literature. While it is generally accepted that action "from inclination" is action on the basis of a principle of self-love rather than the Categorical Imperative, it is not exactly clear why the principle of self-love

account of this distinction would have to explain this notion of incorporating “on its terms.” To develop that here would take me too far afield, but I hope at least to have indicated the general strategy for showing that one can accept both the incorporation thesis and the possibility of impulsive action.

4 Foregrounding Desire: The Argument from an Independent Intuition

The account I have developed so far depends on prior acceptance of my version of the bipartite view. But suppose you are not already on board with that? In this section I hope to give my view indirect support by starting from a second independent intuition about what it is to have an inclination. I will argue that this second intuition, unlike the first, poses a real problem for Blackburn and Scanlon’s views, but does not pose a problem for mine.

The intuition is that having an inclination provides the occasion for deliberation.¹⁰ What I mean here takes a little explaining. Intuitively, I want to claim, there is an internal rather than an external relation between (1) being in the condition of having an inclination to eat that chocolate cake, and (2) asking myself, “should I eat that chocolate cake?” To claim the relation is internal is to claim that I do not need to posit any further motive in order to explain why, given that I have the inclination, I raise the question whether or not to act as it directs.¹¹ That I have the inclination is sufficient to explain why I see myself as faced with this question, why I take my inclination as *bidding* me to do something, putting a proposal on my deliberative agenda. I take it the natural thought that desires function as proposals, providing input to deliberation in the form of directives about what to do, presupposes this internality.¹²

Footnote 9 continued

should be so closely associated with inclination. It is worth noting, too, that contemporary philosophy of action, which relies heavily on Hobbesian/Humean belief/desire psychology, does not in any obvious way make room for this distinction.

¹⁰ Dennis Stampe describes Aristotle as holding that “practical thought originates in the appetite,” citing *Nicomachean Ethics* 1139b. In response, Stampe asks: “how is it *possible* for practical reasoning to begin in desire?” (Stampe 1987, p. 335) My question is the same, but I interpret it differently. Stampe believes that the truth in Aristotle’s remark lies in the intuition that the fact that I want to A gives me (at least some) reason to A. I do not think that intuition is a fixed point, much less the relevant fixed point, at least not as stated. The intuition I start with is that having a desire provides the occasion for deliberation. I want to leave it open whether this is what Aristotle had in mind.

¹¹ There are, of course, many senses to the notion of “internalism” as applied in practical philosophy. The notion of internality I am invoking here is, I think, implicit in some of the literature on internalism, but not necessarily all of it. See, for example, Williams 1981, Korsgaard 1986, and Darwall 1992.

¹² The alternative is to see desires simply as features of our circumstances to be taken into account in the same way that we might take into account other features, like the fact that it is raining outside or the fact that I am having a certain sensation (regarded simply as a sensation, and not as an inclination to do something, e.g. to scratch my nose). If desires are thought of third-personally as dispositions of a certain kind, then practical reflection on our desires ends up being reflection on features of our circumstances. I think this alternative is more radically counterintuitive than most people recognize. It makes it hard to know what desire is, such that it has the role of making proposals about what to do. See Schapiro 2009, pp. 238–239.

By contrast, consider what I mean by an external relation. Suppose I decide on Monday to go to the mountains rather than the seashore over the weekend. Suppose that on Tuesday I ask myself, "should I really go to the mountains rather than the seashore over the weekend?" In this sort of case, I am reopening the same question that I had already closed by making the decision on Monday. Does my being in the condition of having decided to go to the mountains explain why I am revisiting the question whether or not to go to the mountains? No. To explain that, we need to know what happened between Monday and Tuesday. Perhaps I read an ominous weather report for the mountains, or I found out my hiking buddy could not make the trip. Perhaps my mood simply changed. Or perhaps I am simply indecisive, in which case what I am doing is simply continuing the same course of deliberation I started on Monday. The relation between having made a decision to A and revisiting that decision is fundamentally different from the relation between having an inclination to A and raising the question whether to A. The former is external while the latter is internal.

Now I claim that the views put forth by Blackburn and Scanlon (and Korsgaard in the passage I cited) imply that the relation between having an inclination and deliberating about it is an external relation. Insofar as they take the act of reflection to be a separate act of "stepping back," they fail to explain why having an inclination *as such* should put a question on my deliberative agenda. This is so regardless of variations between them. In particular, it is true whether the object of reflection is thought of as the world or myself-desiring. We could interpret Blackburn and Scanlon as claiming that even when I do reflect, what I take a step back from and bring into view is not myself-desiring, but the world as it appears to me from the perspective of me desiring. On Korsgaard's view, what I step back from and bring into view is in some sense the desire itself, or myself-desiring. My point is that either way, reflection is regarded as an act separate from having the inclination in the first place—separate in such a way that a further explanation, beyond appeal to the structure of the condition of having an inclination, is needed to account for why the agent engages in it.

In this respect, Blackburn and Scanlon might be thought of as having assimilated the condition of having an inclination to that of having made a decision. That this assimilation would occur is not surprising, given that Scanlon and Blackburn reject the idea that inclinations and decisions stem from distinct motivational sources. Korsgaard does not reject the bipartite model, but I take her similarity to Blackburn and Scanlon in this respect as evidence that she does not fully recognize (at least in that passage) the implications of the bipartite view.¹³

Now I can imagine an objection to my characterization of Scanlon on this score. Scanlon might well be sympathetic towards the idea that there is some close connection between having the desire to eat the chocolate cake and raising the question, "is that rich flavor really a reason to eat the cake?" Indeed I think it is unlikely he would be comfortable with the view that this relation is external, like

¹³ Stephen Darwall explicitly endorses the view that desires are backgrounded in practical reasoning. I think he too does not fully recognize that there is a tension between this claim and his otherwise Kantian conception of agency. See Darwall 2006 and Schapiro 2010.

reopening a question one has already decided. But neither would he be sympathetic with the bipartite picture. My sense is that he might try to explain the connection differently, in terms of the idea of “seeming” or “appearing” (Scanlon 1998, p. 40). He might argue that when I have a desire, it *seems* to me that the rich flavor of the cake is a reason to eat it. Because this is just a seeming, I have reason to ask whether this appearance stands up to critical reflection. My desires present the world to me in terms of what I am aware of as apparent reasons, whereas my decisions present the world to me in terms of what I take to be genuine reasons. It is my awareness of the reasons presented by my desires as merely apparent that prompts me to reflect.

This argument has intuitive pull, but its force depends, I think, on an implied analogy that simply pushes the real question back. The implied analogy is between desire and perception. Just as desires “call for” reflection, so perceptions call for reflection. Scanlon assumes it makes sense to talk in terms of perceiving reasons, so let us just grant that. His argument, as I am imagining it, is that we can explain why desires call for reflection by recognizing that either that they are a species of perception or that they are analogous to perceptions. But why do perceptions call for reflection? What is it about having a perception that makes it appropriate to ask, “Should I believe according to what I perceive?” To answer that, we need an independent theory of perception. The appeal to the language of “seeming” and “appearing,” then, does not go very far towards explaining what we want explained.¹⁴

Alternatively, one might object to the original claim that there is an internal relation here. If the intuition about internality does not seem strong to you, this might be because you think it has counterintuitive implications. For example, to say that there is an internal relation between having an inclination and deliberating about it can seem to imply that whenever I have an inclination, I have good reason to deliberate about whether to act on it. But sometimes I have very good reason to simply tune out my inclinations and treat them as psychic noise. For example, if I have made a commitment stop eating dessert until I have lost three pounds, then upon feeling tempted to eat the chocolate cake, I have good reason to just to distract myself instead of deliberating about whether to eat the cake.

I do not think this type of example shows the relation to be external, so let me explain why. Upon committing to do anything, I make an implicit, blanket commitment to refrain from acting on inclinations that would interfere with my living up to my commitment. When I decide to lose weight by cutting out dessert, I decide not to act on inclinations to eat dessert. From then on I do have good reason to tune out my inclinations to eat dessert, rather than take them seriously as proposals. But this does not mean it is a separate question whether to treat them as proposals. I tune them out only because I have already treated them as proposals—I have already considered and rejected what they are proposing, albeit implicitly. If this description is correct, then the intuition about internality implicitly includes a proviso: having an inclination provides the occasion for deliberation, provided I have not already considered and rejected acting on this type of inclination in this type of circumstance.

¹⁴ I make the same point in Schapiro 2009, p. 243.

The same can be said of a slightly different kind of case, in which I make a blanket commitment to act on certain inclinations in certain circumstances. Suppose I make a commitment to “go with the flow” in a limited context. I step out on the dance floor, having decided to let the music move me. It would be absurd to think that in this situation, I should treat every inclination to move one way or another as an occasion for deliberation. That would ruin the fun. But this does not mean I am denying my inclinations the status of proposals. It is rather that I have made an implicit, blanket commitment to act on all inclinations to go where the music takes me, at least within the constraints of my other commitments (for example, to avoid slamming into the person next to me, or making an *utter* fool of myself). So the proviso is yet a bit more complicated: having an inclination provides the occasion for deliberation, provided I have not already considered and either rejected *or* accepted acting on that type of inclination in those circumstances.

This last case actually illustrates something more general. Arguably, nearly all of our undertakings involve implicit decisions to “go with the flow” with respect to a certain range of inclinations. I decide to sit down in this chair to read the newspaper, but in that decision I give myself latitude to adjust my posture as necessary to maintain a certain comfort level. I have implicitly said “yes” to inclinations to shift my weight in my chair if one hip starts to feel tight, or to scratch my nose if it itches, provided none of these actions conflict with my commitment to read the paper. We can hold that inclinations provide the occasion for deliberation without denying the obvious fact that in most of what we do, we allow room for a degree of spontaneity in response to the bidding of inclination.

There is still one more type of case worth mentioning. Certain types of psychological illness can undermine our reflective distance on our inclinations. Suppose I am suffering from depression, and I find myself seriously entertaining thoughts of suicide, even though an impartial observer would say that I have no reason to commit suicide. To the extent that I have gained insight and recognize that I am ill, I may come to see these suicidal thoughts not as my own, but as products of a force external to me that has taken over my agential capacities. To that extent I may recognize that I have good reason to treat my suicidal thoughts as psychic noise.

But again, I do not think this undermines the basic intuition that having an inclination provides the occasion for deliberation. Indeed we might see this as a kind of exception that proves the rule. Arguably it is because the internal relation to deliberation has been undermined, and not simply because I disapprove of the content of my inclinations, that I see myself as having an illness. My pathology does not just consist in the fact that I am having inclinations on which I would not choose to act. It consists in the fact I do not “have” them in the normal way, a way that provides the occasion for deliberation.¹⁵ If this is right, then the intuition about internality carries an additional proviso: having an inclination provides the occasion for deliberation, provided my agential capacities, both rational and nonrational, are in good working order.

¹⁵ I admit this requires further argument, but see again the last paragraph of Sect. 2 of this paper.

Taking stock: I have argued that even if you do not already endorse the bipartite conception of agency, you may feel the force of an independent intuition, namely that having an inclination provides the occasion for deliberation, subject to the foregoing provisos. I have also argued that Blackburn's and Scanlon's respective views fail to support this intuition, because they do not provide an account of why there is an internal rather than an external relation between having an inclination and deliberating about whether to act as it directs. My account does better on this front. On the view I have developed so far, to have an inclination is to be divided. If action requires unity, then in having an inclination, I am in a sense stuck. But the fact that I am stuck may help to explain why having an inclination provides the occasion for deliberation. It provides the occasion for deliberation, I conjecture, if deliberation is the way to re-unify myself.

5 What is Incorporation?

But are deliberation and self-unification the same thing? Presumably the role of deliberation is to figure out what we ought to do, or what we have most reason to do, or what the thing to do is. The role of self-unification is to make ourselves whole. I am certainly not going to try in this paper to argue for the claim that deliberation and self-unification amount to the same thing. But I am going to try to get clearer on what the activity of deliberation would have to involve, were it occasioned by having an inclination in the way I have described. The Kantian claim is that this activity involves something called "incorporation." But what is incorporation? What gets incorporated? And what makes it incorporable?

Kantians generally just appeal to the metaphor of proposal: inclination makes a proposal to reason, and reason has to accept or reject that proposal. But they do not tell us what kind of thing inclination is, such that its nature is to be the source of such proposals. I have offered an account of the nature of inclination, and although it gives us a reason to think that having an inclination generates pressure towards self-unification, it does not obviously show us how inclinations are the source of proposals that serve as inputs to deliberation. As I have described it, my inclining part is my inner animal, and it simply sees and responds to the world motivationally. It does not turn its attention towards the rest of me, as if to ask, "Mother, may I?" Indeed this sort of interaction would seem to require capacities that my inner animal does not even have, capacities that are "second-personal," to use Stephen Darwall's terminology.¹⁶ Most importantly, my inner animal would have to have a sense of its proper authority relative to the rest of me, a sense of itself as a participant in a rule-governed practice in which it has a particular status or role. It would have to recognize itself as having a kind of obligation to act within the limits of that role, by making proposals to reason rather than imposing its agenda by force. But if the metaphor of the inner animal is apt, it is hard to see how these other metaphors could be appropriate as well.

¹⁶ Darwall, *The Second Person Standpoint*.

Perhaps the situation is not as complex as I am making it out to be. Why not just get rid of the metaphor of proposals? When I have an inclination I recognize that part of me is going for something. It is not proposing anything to me. It is just going for something. Since I am also aware of myself as divided, and since I am aware that I need to unify myself, it makes sense for me to ask: should the rest of me go along with this part of me?

I think this is almost right. Suppose I am walking my dog through an open field, and I do not have any prior commitment to go in any one particular direction. Now my dog spontaneously goes over to the left, tugging the leash in that direction. Given that wherever we go, we have to go together, it is natural for me to ask myself, "Should I go along with him, or should I resist?" I do not need to picture my dog actually making a proposal to me in order to see how her activity could provide me with the occasion for deliberation of this kind.

But here is an important limit to the analogy. My dog is not a part of me, at least not in the same sense that my inner animal is. Its motivation does not in any sense constitute my motivation, not even the motivation with respect to which I am passive. By the same token, even if I decide to go along with my dog, following him to the left, his motivation does not become my motivation, and his action does not become my action. We may be walking together in some sense, but that walking is attributable to *us*, not to *me*. By contrast, when I have an inclination to eat the chocolate cake and I go along with that inclination, my eating of the cake is attributable to me as an individual agent. The story might be more complicated in the case of *akrasia*, but I am assuming the more basic case in which I have made no prior commitment not to eat the cake. When deliberation leads me to act on an inclination I have, the result is that *I* act, not that *we* act.

I believe it is this disanalogy that makes the talk of proposals seem so natural. If a proposal is conceived as a move within a constitutional system, then when the relevant authority accepts (or even rejects) the proposal, the resulting action is attributable not to any separate branch of government or faction in power, but to the will of the whole. This is a point emphasized by Korsgaard, and I will not try to argue for it here (Korsgaard 2009). What it implies is that my inner animal has to be thought of as part of me in something like the way individual constituents are part of a constitutional order. It has to be thought of as something that has a claim on me, a share in our common agential authority. Otherwise even when I choose to go along with my inclination, I will not be unifying myself in the requisite sense.

But there is also a deeper lesson to be learned from the constitutional analogy. Notice that the constituents of a constitutional order are not themselves complete agents.¹⁷ The legislature is what it is only relative to the larger system, and legislative action is only action in relation to that larger system. I have already noted that when the legislature acts unilaterally, it cannot represent the whole. But it is also true that acts cannot even be attributed to the legislature in the first place unless that entity is conceived as a part of the larger system. Considered in abstraction from the other branches of government, the legislature is not a complete agent.

¹⁷ Thanks to an anonymous reviewer of *The Journal of Ethics* for helping me to see this.

Similarly, I want to claim, my inner animal, considered in abstraction from the rest of me, is not a complete agent. In this way it is fundamentally unlike my dog, and my relation to it is not precisely analogous to my relation to any separate agent of which we can conceive. The relation is *sui generis*. Moreover, that it is *sui generis* should not come as a surprise. It is a relation distinctive of us as rational animals. There is nothing exactly like it. No matter how we think of it, our intuitions are going to be strained.

But that is no reason not to try. In *Self-Constitution*, Korsgaard makes the passing remark that artifacts that are not in use are actually “incomplete objects” (Korsgaard 2009, p. 37). It is only once your vacuum cleaner is in use that it is what it is, because it is only then that it is performing its proper function. But then she adds,

In fact, the truth of this matter [is that] there is no such artifact as a vacuum cleaner at all. What we call your vacuum cleaner is actually an entity that, when incorporated by you, makes you into a vacuum cleaner (Korsgaard 2009, p. 37).

I am not going to attempt a real argument for the metaphysical claims here, but I think it is fruitful to try out thinking this way about my inner animal. Like an artifact, my inner animal is designed for a form of activity that it cannot perform all by itself. It is in this sense an incomplete entity, unlike my dog. But unlike the vacuum cleaner, and like my dog, my inner animal is designed for a kind of activity that is not mere production. It is designed for self-movement. So whereas incorporating the vacuum cleaner makes me into a producer, incorporating my inner animal makes me into a self-mover.¹⁸

My suggestion is that the deliberation occasioned by having an inclination is deliberation about whether I can integrate this inner animal into myself, whether I can make its mode of self-movement into my mode of self-movement, given what I am already doing—which is to say, given who I already am. To incorporate is to integrate in this sense. But even if this is on the right track, what, then, is the object of incorporation? What, exactly, do I incorporate? I have argued that what I incorporate is my inner animal. But what, exactly, is the object of my reflection? The constitution model suggests that what I am doing is deciding whether to endorse a proposal. But what, on my view, corresponds to this thing that is the proposal?

Recall my claim that when I have an inclination, I am both inside and outside my inner animal. Part of me sees the world through its eyes and responds to the world with its heart, and part of me is aware of itself as not being the source of this way of seeing and responding. Now presumably if this experience raises a deliberative question, that question is about my inner animal’s mode of self-movement, its way of seeing and responding to the world. Conceived as an object, this way of seeing and responding to the world can be thought of as an instinct, a kind of nonrational principle.¹⁹ I want to claim that while the instinct that governs my inner animal is

¹⁸ This is so even if, in acting on my inclination, I act heteronomously. Heteronomous action is still my own, and this is why I am accountable for it. Here I will not address the question of the relation between this thin sense of self-movement, necessary for mere accountability, and autonomy in the full sense.

¹⁹ Cf. Korsgaard 2005.

indeed backgrounded in the part of my consciousness that is its consciousness, that same instinct is foregrounded in the reflective part of my consciousness. Thus, when I have an inclination, the reflecting part of me is aware of the nonrational principle that shapes my inner animal's way of seeing and responding to the world.

Now the constitutional model would seem to suggest that it is my awareness of this principle that constitutes my awareness of the inclination as a proposal. The idea is that the reflecting part of me just takes my inner animal's mode of self-governance as if it were a proposal about how I should govern myself as a whole person. I think this is almost right, but given the account I have laid out so far, the story turns out to be a bit more complicated. My account implies that there is a mismatch between my inner animal's mode of self-governance, and the mode of self-governance I have to exercise as a whole person. As I have stated, instinct's rule is dictatorial; it simply tells a creature how things are and how it ought to respond. Instinct does not offer justification, because it is designed to govern a type of creature who cannot demand justification. But, I want to claim, my inner animal's incompleteness just consists in the fact that its dictatorial principles are necessarily addressed to the whole of me, including my reflecting part, which requires justification. As such those principles are like the edicts of a dictator who finds himself condemned to function within a constitutional order. In this respect they are not like proposals issuing from a well-functioning legislature. Rather, they are like orders (e.g. "do this!") issuing from a dictatorial authority that by its very nature overreaches its proper authority. I believe Kant had something like this in mind when he wrote, in the *Second Critique*:

Now, however, we find our nature as sensible beings so constituted that the matter of the faculty of desire (objects of inclination, whether of hope or fear) first forces itself upon us, and we find our pathologically determinable self, even though it is quite unfit to give universal law through its maxims, nevertheless striving antecedently to make its claims primary and originally valid, just as if it constituted our entire self (Kant 1788/1996, 5:74).

I take it that Kant is stating not simply that the pathologically determinable self addresses proposals to the whole self, but that from the outset it purports to dictate to the whole self, to claim dispositive rather than mere consultative authority. Moreover, I take it Kant's claim is that this tendency to overreach is built into the very nature of inclination. My account of the nature of inclination explains why this is so. By the same token it explains the rather deep intuition that we ought to take a defensive stance towards our inclinations, simply as such. This intuition is evident in the ways we typically characterize inclination's influence: we say that our inclinations coerce, or manipulate, or seduce us. Defenders of the value of the inclinations often dismiss this way of speaking as prejudice, arguing that it is based on the mistaken idea that our inclinations are more likely to lead us astray than to lead us aright. But I think the intuition stems not so much from a view about the content of our inclinations as from a view about their nature. Their nature is to claim greater authority than they have, simply because they are designed to do something they cannot do all by themselves.

6 Conclusion

The aim of this paper has been to provide a defense of Kant's Incorporation Thesis. The Incorporation Thesis, I claim, presupposes that we have a bipartite motivational nature. The bipartite view, understood along the lines I am suggesting, implies that to be in the condition of 'having an inclination' is to be divided. If action requires unity, then the pressure to act is the pressure to unify, and it is this pressure that explains the need to incorporate. Those who reject the Incorporation Thesis generally deny our bipartite nature, or deny that the condition of having an inclination involves self-division.

There is a truth in tales about werewolves, which is that our inclinations do not influence us by causing our behavior. They influence us by possessing us, taking over our agential capacities for attention and response, and claiming to speak in our names. What is false in these werewolf stories is the assumption that we can become our inner animals without incorporating them. I think Blackburn and Scanlon take on this falsehood, albeit unintentionally. They suggest that to have an inclination is, in the first instance and prior to reflection, to be fully possessed by it. I have argued that this oversimplifies the unique relationship in which we stand to ourselves as creatures who are, at the very same moment, both rational and animal.

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