Reading the First Section

Ideas for reading the GMS. (1) *Slow down, and pause often.* Read as if you read it out aloud, or as if you write the text by hand. (b) *Savour the text*, even if it is hard to enjoy what appears, or is, hard to grasp. Take some passages as riddles that you can solve like a detective. (c) *Be charitable.* Remember that Kant knows exactly what he is doing, and that he thinks he writes with painstaking precision. So, we do not understand him because he is a sloppy writer—quite the opposite: he is almost too accurate. You can notice this by slow reading. Kant is aware that his writing is obscure and dense. Perhaps it is in the nature of the topic, not his style: hence his allusions to not being popular (see GMS II 409–10, or *Metaphysics of Morals* 206). (d) *Be patient.* Some passages make sense once you have read on. Mark the elusive ones, and return to them later. Read multiple times. Perhaps, it is a good idea to read a paragraph fairly quickly at the start, just to see what roughly goes on in it. Read again with an eye on key terms of phrases. Then read again, asking yourself what is the main idea that Kant expresses in the paragraph. (e) *Keep track.* Read again, and ask yourself how this relates to what he wrote in the previous paragraphs: for Kant is developing a 'plot', he invites us to follow a line of thought that he lays out for us. (f) *Read with a pen*, which you may use to highlight key thoughts, or to annotate the text. But avoid overusing it: too much underlining etc. becomes ineffective. (g) *Congratulate yourself* when you manage to grasp an insight. Write it down in your own words.

1. Identify and briefly explicate Kant's first claim in Section I .(393.5–394.31)
2. What is the relation between the concept of the good will and the concept of duty? (397.1–10)
3.* What does it mean for an action to conform to duty *and* to be such that we have an 'immediate inclination' to it? And why is it difficult to determine in these cases if the action is done *from duty* or not? (397.14–32)
4. When, or in virtue of what, do our maxims have moral content? (397.33–398.7)
5. What do you make of the three philanthropist examples? (398.8–399.2)
6.* Does Kant suggest that it is immoral to act from duty *and* enjoy it? (398.8–399.2)
7.* What does Kant mean by the point that 'love as an inclination cannot be commanded'? (399.29)
8.* In what sense is the will 'as it were at a crossroads'? (400.12)
9. Explain what Kant means by 'respect' (*Achtung*). (401.note)
10. How does Kant introduce what in Section II shall become the categorical imperative? (402.8–9)
11. We can will lies, but we cannot will a universal law to lie (403.11). Sketch the context of this claim, and then describe what Kant means.
12. Kant observes that we feel in ourselves 'a powerful counterweight to all commands of duty' (405.5). Why does Kant say this? Is he right?

Background Information. (a) At 399.3, Kant mentions *indirect* duties. Such duties bind only accidentally or tangentially. Indirect duties are thus relative to ends that are directly or immediately prescribed. This means that indirect duties have no moral value themselves. (Not to be confused with *imperfect* and *perfect* duties, which Kant introduces at 421.23.) (b) Someone who suffers from gout in the foot (*Podagrist*, 399.16), should avoid certain kinds of food in order to avoid uric acid in the blood. The example thus points to a conflict between inclination and duty. Kant's point is then that the patient still has an *indirect* duty for moderation (and health), since otherwise he might violate or not fulfill immediate (direct) duties (e.g., to preserve one's life, see 397.33). (c) The term 'pathological' (399.31) means 'passionate'—it has nothing to do with an illness. It derives from the Greek *pathos* (πάθος) which means that which happens to someone. (The verb *paschein*, πάσχειν, means to undergo or suffer something.) These days, the passions are often called 'emotions'. This paragraph looks like an allusion to moral sense theories. See the snippets from Francis Hutcheson's *Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (4th ed., London 1738).

the *Presence* of others as *necessarily* *displeases* us. Nor can we, by our Will, *any otherwise procure Pleasure, or avoid Pain, than by procuring the former kind of Objects, and avoiding the latter. By the very* Frame *of our* Nature *the one is made the Occasion of Delight, and the other of Dissatisfaction.*

THE same Observation will hold in all our other Pleasures and Pains. For there are many other sorts of Objects, which please, or displease us as necessarily, as material Objects do when they operate upon our Organs of Sense. There is scarcely any Object which our Minds are employ'd about, which is not thus constituted the necessary Occasion of some Pleasure or Pain. Thus we find ourselves pleas'd with a regular Form, *a Piece of* Architecture *or* Painting, *a Composition of* Notes, *a* Theorem, *an* Action, *an* Affection, *a* Character. *And we are conscious that this Pleasure necessarily arises from the Contemplation of the Idea, which is then present*
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to our Minds, *with all its Circumstances, altho' some of these Ideas have nothing of what we commonly call sensible Perception in them; and in those which have, the Pleasure arises from some* Uniformity, Order, Arrangement, Imitation; *and not from the simple Ideas of* Colour, *or* Sound, *or Mode of* Extension *separately consider'd.*

THESE Determinations *to be pleas'd with any* Forms, *or* Ideas *which occur to our Observation, the* Author *chooses to call* SENSES; *distinguishing them from the Powers which commonly go by that Name, by calling our Power of perceiving the Beauty of* Regularity, Order, Harmony, *an* INTERNAL SENSE; *and* that Determination *to approve* Affections, Actions, *or* Characters *of rational* Agents, *which we call* virtuous, *he marks by the Name of a* MORAL SENSE.

HIS principal Design is to shew, " *That* Human Nature *was not left* " *quite indifferent in the Affair of* " Virtue, *to form to itself Observa-*
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