

## **Hope, Despair, and the Primacy of the Practical**

Kant thought that “practical” (pragmatic and/or moral) considerations can sometimes justify commitments about what exists, even in the absence of theoretical proof or empirical evidence. He focused on the idea that our moral goals, hopes, and needs can underwrite metaphysical commitments regarding the self and God. The main aims of this paper are (i) to examine the three different kinds of argument that Kant offers, (ii) to evaluate their fit within a plausible theory of moral motivation and (iii) to consider whether such argument-structures have ongoing appeal. My claim is that the third kind – a more “psychological” form of the argument based in empirical efforts to sustain moral hope and resolve – has advantages over the other two. I conclude by suggesting that it also has some intriguing contemporary applications.