

## Kantian Ethics: Scope and Limits to Kant's Concept of Duty

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**Abstract:** The research explores the moral philosophy of Immanuel Kant and compares the richness of his ethical thoughts to other leading moral theories such as Consequentialism, Virtue Ethics and many more. The paper will thoroughly discuss the concept of good will and, the role and significance of reason rather than emotion, in the execution of one's action towards a better result. Furthermore, the research will examine Kant's concept of duty and determine whether Kant is correct in claiming that good intention is not enough to be deemed as morally good, it needs the principle of obligation for it to be considered as having moral worth. The paper will also determine the difference between the two types of duties, namely the perfect and imperfect duties, and its relation whether a certain action is to be recognized as immoral or not. The Categorical Imperative will be thoroughly discussed, especially its relation to one another and in the whole of Kantian Ethics. Finally, critiques of Kant will also be encountered along the discussion of his moral philosophy so that the research will contemplate whether Kant's ethical thought is what is needed by the people for the whole of humanity to live in peace with one another.

**Keywords:** Categorical Imperative, Deontology, Duty and Good Will

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“Duty is the necessity to act out of reverence for the law.”

- *Immanuel Kant*

### Introduction

The action of an individual is difficult to define, whether that action is morally good or not, since the foundation of the concept of morality itself is challenging to determine. There have been several accounts as to what is the groundwork of a morally good action. There are those who claim that an action can be deemed good if it produces good results, although there are others who declare otherwise, stating that the consequence is not the basis of morality but rather the action itself

or the means of attaining one's particular goal.<sup>1</sup> And there have been many other ethical positions such as Virtue Ethics, Relativism, Secularism, Existentialism, Utilitarianism, Hedonism, Consumerism and Religious Ethics to name a few.<sup>2</sup> Among the many ethical theorists is the German philosopher Immanuel Kant. For Kant, the foundation of morality should not be based according to the consequences an action produces, but the means of attaining one's specific objective, the action

itself of the individual that is grounded on reason and good intention.<sup>3</sup> Kant's moral philosophy is what modern ethicists call Deontology, which held that an action is morally good when it is motivated by duty.

The paper will explore the moral philosophy of Immanuel Kant particularly his conception of the good will, and the role and significance of reason in relation to one's action. Also, the paper will discuss the moral worth of an action, on whether the action has moral worth if it is based on the emotions of love and sympathy, or if it is based on the dictate of man's rational nature, thus emphasizing the importance of Kant's concept of duty. Including in the discussion of duty is the distinction between perfect and imperfect duty, and what is interpreted as duties to oneself and duties to others, so as to have a better understanding of Kant's moral philosophy. Furthermore, the paper will thoroughly discuss Kant's famous Categorical Imperative and relate it with each other as well as the whole of Kantian Ethics, in order to determine the strengths and weakness of Kant's philosophy, and to somehow present a clearer understanding of Kant's ethical notions. Critiques of Kant's moral theory will also be touch in the paper though not exhaustively, part of what will be discussed is the position of the Consequentialist, more specifically the philosophies of the Utilitarianism, also some of the stands of Existentialism.

### **Good Will and Rational Nature**

According to Kant, nothing can be called good without qualification except a good will, this means that everything can be claim as good or not only in relation to a good will.<sup>4</sup> Here, Kant is not referring to a specific virtue like honesty or compassionate, by good will, Kant is

referring to a certain mental attitude. For Kant, the good will is not just willing to do the right thing but also willing to do the right thing in accordance to reason.<sup>5</sup> Kant is known for his systematic and orderly works, he give much importance to reason, including the practice of moral matters. All actions should be done base on reason, that is one prerequisite of being a human, people should think first before they act so as not to lead to an unfortunate event for that individual and those around him or her. Reason has an important role to play in relation to action; it is significant for it is the only principle that can counter unwanted and baseless emotion in the execution of an action to a given situation. Though, being reasonable is not enough; a person must also be motivated to do the right thing before the act can be called moral, reason and good intention goes together, both are the necessity for an action be deem good, for it to be a good will.<sup>6</sup>

For example, there are two types of chemist who are both formulating a cure for a particular disease; one is doing so for the sake of fame and profit while the other is doing for the sake of helping those who are sick. Both might produce the same result, which is saving millions of lives of sick people, but there is an ethical difference between the approached of the two chemists. One is doing a good deed for his own sake while the other is doing a good deed for the sake of the other, and so one is motivated to do good while the other is ethically indifferent. The first chemist, the chemist who is seeking a cure because of personal purposes, cannot be called immoral especially when he produce a cure that will save lives, but his actions cannot also be claim as good since he has a different motivation, an inspiration that is not the good will. The second chemist on the other hand, the chemist who strive to formulate a cure in order to help those who are sick can be called ethical

or moral since they are motivated to do the right thing, even if the chemist did not happen to find a cure, his or her action is still considered as good for it is inspired by the good will. According to Kant, the result of an action is not the basis whether the action is ethical or not, for Kant the foundation of morality is the action itself, the means used in attaining one's goal.<sup>7</sup> And so, even if in the end one's action resulted in an unfortunate event, that action still has moral worth and cannot be in any time be claimed as immoral or unethical.

Another important principle of Kantian Ethics besides the good will is the significance of reason in relation to one's action. Other than the motivation to do good deeds, people must also use their reason or their rational nature with matters concerning actions; they must see to it that their action is reasonable before doing it.<sup>8</sup> What separate man with other animals is that he is rational; man's rational nature is the underlying principle that makes up the dignity of the human person. People have dignity because he or she is rational, that is what makes man so special among the other animals, and that is what makes man free to will whatever it is he deems necessary. Though a man may act out of reason, it is still not enough for his actions to be regarded as ethical since there are various types of reason, one type is pure reason, which is concern with non-empirical concepts or metaphysical principles, other types of reason are instrumental reason and practical reason.<sup>9</sup> Both instrumental and practical reason is concern with human actions though the difference is that instrumental reason is aiming at achieving one's personal and selfish desire while practical reason is aiming at doing what is best and what is the right thing to do. What Kant is referring when he states than man must use his reason, he is saying that man must use

his practical reason in considering what actions he ought to take.

### **The Moral Worth of Acting from Duty**

After presenting the role and significance of the good will and rational nature, the following step towards understanding Kant's moral philosophy is his interpretation of the moral worth of an action. According to Kant, an action only has a moral worth if it is done out of duty, which is the obligation an individual recognize from the authority of his very own reason and will.<sup>10</sup> The moral worth of an action is therefore not base on the agent's propensity for feelings of love and sympathy, but rather it is based upon whether that action is done out of the agent's sense of obligation. For example, while walking the street on the way to school or meeting, a car unexpectedly crash, the individual who witness the crash now then proceed to help the passengers in the vehicle, the action of a person who helped the passengers for the sake of duty has moral worth, while the action of a person who helped the passengers because of his sympathy for them has no moral worth. The action of the individual who help others out of his love or consideration for them is worthy of praise and approval although it has no moral value or to be more precise it is morally indifferent. Although, it does not necessarily follow that actions done out of inclination is morally evil, or that it cannot be consider as good, it just does not have any moral worth. The following passage is what Kant said regarding the matter:

“To help others where one can is a duty, and besides this there are many spirits of so sympathetic a temper that, without any further motive of vanity or self-interest, they find an inner pleasure in spreading happiness around them and can take delight in the contentment of others as their own work. Yet I maintain that in such a case an action of this kind, however right

and however amiable it may be, has still no genuinely moral worth.<sup>11</sup>”

This is one aspect why many criticized Kant’s moral philosophy, many seems to think that Kant’s approach to ethics is cold and unnatural, since people are not detach from their emotions. Several critiques of Kant are the Existentialist; among them are Friedrich Nietzsche, Max Scheler and Jean-Paul Sartre to name a few. According to the Existentialist, man is not made up of reason alone; man is also composed of emotions and wills. For Existentialist Phenomenologist Max Scheler, in his *Der Formalismus in der Ethik*, Kant is incorrect to distinguish only those that can be sense and those that can be known, Scheler emphasis the importance of those that can be felt.<sup>12</sup> It is according to French philosopher Blaise Pascal, an influence of Scheler, which stated that, ”the heart has reasons which reason knows nothing of...” Scheler stated that Kant should not categorize values according to rational or empirical principles alone because there is also the principle of emotion to consider, and this emotion is not part of either rational or empirical notions. Sartre’s position on the other hand is his philosophy “existence precedes essence,” meaning that man is free to choose what he wants to be and what he wants to do.<sup>13</sup> There can be no definite set of rules to follow, no principles to guide all human action in determining what one must do in a given situation, since an action can only be ethical in relation to how one view the situation.

Although Kant’s approach to morality seems cold and detach from human emotion, his claim is true that actions from duty does have moral worth, if people are only to do what they are obliged to do then all people would be living in a perfectly morale environment. Duties and obligations are important, and doing them even

against one’s inclination deserves even more esteem. A fine example is the story in the Bhagavad Gita, specifically Arjuna’s dilemma on whether he should fight or not, since fighting is his duty but he is not inclining to battle with his relatives.<sup>14</sup> It was Shri Krishna that convinces Arjuna that doing his dharma or duty is the best course of action for him to take, that doing one’s duty is the right thing to do. Doing something base on one’s inclination may not be morally incorrect, like helping the poor because of the feeling of pity, though it is still not enough to be deem as having moral worth because submitting to one’s inclination is always dangerous; it is bound to be blind to the agent’s desire and so making the action threatening to the recipient and to those around the agent. It is only proper to state that actions that have a good intension and is bounded by reason, hence duty, are the only one that can be recognize as having moral worth.

### **Duties to Oneself and Duties of Love and Respect to Others**

Immanuel Kant’s concept of duty is divided into two types; the first one is the strict duties one must perform, the omission of such obligation will be deem as immoral, thus it is called perfect duties, while on the other the second type of duty is the narrow duties one may or may not perform since the omission of such will not lead one to be unethical or immoral, hence it is called imperfect duties.<sup>15</sup> An example of perfect duty is never to commit murder; this is a perfect duty since it is specific in its command of not killing, if one is to commit murder, he or she is violating a perfect obligation, hence his or her action is consider as unethical and/or immoral. Perfect Duties are strict; they are to be followed with no exception that is the reason why Kant does not consider self-defense as an excuse for murder. An

example of imperfect duty is to protect the Earth; it is an imperfect duty since there is no specification on how one must protect nature. One can protect nature by keeping it clean, or by not littering in it, another way of protecting it is by not overly using its natural resources, or one can advocate a campaign to protect the Earth and so many more, there is no specific requirement in order to protect nature, hence the omission of such will not make one unethical or immoral. It is an imperfect duty because it is very wide, there are various means of doing the said obligation and so the absence of one means is not wrong.

Duties may also be divided as duties to oneself and duties to others, duties to oneself are responsibilities that people need to do in order to develop themselves, duties to others are obligations people need to accomplish for the sake of other people.<sup>16</sup> Perfect and Imperfect duties are for the individual, one must choose what course of action to take in a given situation, such doings, be with in accordance to perfect or imperfect obligation, is the individual's responsibility to his being. According to Kant, doing one's duty is an act of respect for the law, meaning that if people where to do their obligations then they are acknowledging their being human, since to be human is to be rational. Although, if say, a student knows well that he has to study for his examination the following day but still omits on doing so, he is disrespecting his own self because he is neglecting the factor that it is his own reason that commands him to study in the first place. Respect for the law is synonymous to being obedient to the authority of one's rational nature, and so as rational being, people must do their duty, it is necessary that they follow the dictates of their reason. Doing one's duty, even for the sake of oneself can sometimes be difficult, most of the time people tend to be

more like animals, following the commands of their passions and desires rather than their reason, but that is what makes people human. People have the capacity for inclination but still opted to do what they think is right, that is what makes certain actions morally good or morally worthy.

A duty to others is different from a duty to oneself, it is already challenging enough to perform obligations to oneself, what more, people must also take responsibility for each other. It may somehow seems strange that since Kant's moral philosophy is somehow detach from human emotion, Kant still elaborates that people must take responsibility for one another. According to Kant, all people must respect one another because each person possess a dignity, a dignity that come from being rational, and one way of respecting others is by taking responsibility for them.<sup>17</sup> It is true that for Kant, in order for an act to be consider as moral it must be perform out of duty and not out of some inclination an individual feel that lead him to the execution of the said action. It is still possible for the individual to feel a certain kind of love for the other yet still perform his or her duty. According to philosopher Emmanuel Levinas, people must take responsibility for one another; the very act of seeing the face of the other is already the recognition of one's responsibility to help that other.<sup>18</sup> It may seem that this is opposing Kant's position on the basis of how and when one must help the other, but in reality both Kant and Levinas perceive that helping others is a responsibility of an individual. For example, while walking the streets of Dapitan a child comes begging for food, both Kant and Levinas would agree that the individual must help the hungry child and give him food. Because for Levinas the act of seeing the face of the child is already a calling for the individual to help the child, that the very

act of seeing the child's face is already a recognition of one's obligation to the child in need. For Kant on the other hand, the individual must help the child because it is his responsibility as someone who has the capacity and means to help those who are in need, the individual may be objective in his approach on how to help the child but nonetheless he must help those who are in need because that is what reason and the good will dictates of him.

### **Categorical Imperative**

One of the main highlights of Kant's moral philosophy is his Categorical Imperative. In his *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant differentiates a Hypothetical Imperative from a Categorical Imperative.<sup>19</sup> A Hypothetical Imperative is a conditional type of command; it is conditioned by the individual's objective, for example, if the individual's objective is to earn money then he must do whatever it takes for him to earn money. He may work hard for it or he may cheat other people in order to gain the money he aims for. Therefore, the Hypothetical Imperative cannot be what is needed in matters of morality, while on the other hand the Categorical Imperative is an absolute command. As have been said earlier, Kant is not interested by the consequences of an action but he is more concern on the action itself, the means into which the individual is to attain his goal, thus Kant formulate a command that is so absolute that one cannot escape form it. There are four main formulas of the Categorical Imperative.

The first version of the Categorical Imperative is the Formula of Universal Law, which means that people must consider the action they are to take as accepted universally.<sup>20</sup> For example, the act of lying, for Kant lying can never be an acceptable action, since when apply universally

the world would be in chaos because no one will ever believe the other, because the agent will be aware that if lying is accepted then majority of the people would lie. And so, people must see to it that the action they are to take can be accepted universally, that other people will also consider the action as somewhat proper or appropriate. One can enquire into the classical teaching of Confucius stating that, "Do not impose on other what you do not wish for yourself," implying that people must look at their action from the point of view of another.<sup>21</sup> An example is a friend who like to gossips about but she does not like others gossiping about her own affairs, therefore actions that can lead to contradiction and anarchy when applied universally must not be accepted, hence they must be avoided. Kant is correct in stating this principle so that people will be more careful in their action, though a problem may arise since in contemporary time everything is relative. According to the teachings of Jainism known as *Anekantavada*, everything is subjective or relative, that nothing is absolute, and that there are various perspectives in a single object or situation.<sup>22</sup> The doctrine of Jainism can be well apply in today's time, today there are various interpretation to a single situation, that there is a diversity of culture, and that people base their positions on how they see the world. Although, it may be true that there is cultural relativism, or that there are varying subjective views on a situation, there must still exist values that is accepted universally.

The second version of the Categorical Imperative is the Formula of Humanity as an End in Itself, meaning that an individual must never treat other people as means in order to achieve a certain ends. Kant is stating here that all must respect the dignity of each other, that a person is not just an instrument to be used in order for a certain goal to be achieve, and that

the human person is an end already.<sup>23</sup> Though many may view Kantian Ethics as somewhat cold and emotionless, Kant did not forget that people must consider the well-being of each other. Earlier, the duties of love and respect to others is mentioned, those obligations for the other is grounded in the Formula of Humanity as End in Itself. A person must not use other people, for example, to take revenge on someone or to gain profit, other people are also significant being, they are also composed of intellect and will, as well as emotions and feelings. It is easy enough to state such things though in reality, doing such is never easy, and there are certain scenarios when people do make use of one another, like for example, an employer makes use of his employee to gain profit and an employee makes use of his or her employer in order to pay the bills. In today's time and age, people make use of one another to gain something, they compromise with each other to reach their ambitions or objectives, and there is nothing wrong with that, an action only becomes unethical or immoral when an agent makes use of someone in order to achieve his personal, selfish purpose. Like when a girl makes use of a boy who adores her in order to make another boy jealous is a wrongdoing.

The third version of the Categorical Imperative is the Formula of Autonomy, which means that an individual is a lawmaker and at the same time should also be a law-abider.<sup>24</sup> An individual has the capacity to make laws since he is rational, therefore allowing the individual to rationalize an action into whether it can be a universal law. Although, an agent is a lawmaker, it follows that he or she must also obey the laws into which he or she makes, as have been mentioned in the Formula of Universal Law, no one is exception to the law, people cannot make excuses for his or her action when he or she is aware that it cannot be applied universally. The Formula of

Autonomy may be similar to the Formula of Universal Law, but what makes the third formula different from the first formula is that in the third formula the human intellect and will is given much more emphasis. According to Kant the will transcends nature, meaning that it can represent itself, it has the ability to make laws, to recognize the necessity of following the said law and choosing to conform to that law.<sup>25</sup> It is yet again, emphasis is here that human reason and will is important and that humanity itself is the end of all endeavors.

Finally, the last version of the Categorical Imperative is the Formula of the Realm of Ends. It is in this formula that Kant envisions a perfect world where there is peace and harmony among the people, it is in this formula that he stated that every man should follow the Formula of Universal Law so that people may live together where each one of them is an end to one another. For example, imagine a world where everyone is there ready to help the other, where everyone treats each other with respect, where no one considers the other as a mere instrument to be used for a specific gain, if that is the case then people will live in a somewhat perfect world. Although, Kant's idealistic thoughts may seem impossible, especially in today's time. People in the contemporary age consider only two types of person, an ignorant or a selfish person, and that an agent can only choose one type of person he will be. No one in today's time desires to be used and so most people decided to be selfish instead, but of course this is not always the case, people only need to start being selfless in order to influence the whole of society. There may be those who remain greedy, though the act of giving will not be wasted for there is a big possibility that many people will change and mend their ways in order to help those who are in need. Kant's aim in the last formula is possible only if people are willing

to follow the Categorical Imperative; the Formula of Realm of Ends is the formula into which Kant emphasized the possibility of a perfect world.<sup>26</sup> Human beings are rational therefore they are autonomous, and as have been said earlier in the Formula of Autonomy, man has the capacity to make laws and to recognize the necessity of doing it.

All the Categorical Imperative are connected with each other, the Formula of Universal Law, the Formula of Humanity as an End in Itself, the Formula of Autonomy and the Formula of the Realm of Ends, all these formulas make up the Categorical Imperative. The Formula of Universal Law is in relation to the Formula of Autonomy since rational beings are autonomous, they are able to make laws in such a way that it can be universalized and that they acknowledge that the laws, which they make, must be known universally or by all people. The Formula of Humanity as an End in Itself is in relation to the Formula of the Realm of Ends since it is stated that all people must be considered as ends in themselves, and if such recognition is known then all people would be living in a somewhat perfect world, all would be in the Realm of Ends. All the formulas or versions of the Categorical Imperative are connected because they all point to one thing, that all rational being possess reason into which they can consider the action they are to take as something that can be universally accepted so that all people would not be a mere instrument to some objective and be treated as ends in themselves.<sup>27</sup>

### **Critique of Kantian Ethics**

The main opposition of the Kantian Ethics is the Consequentialism, specifically the Utilitarianism, and one of the main proponents of the Utilitarianism is John Stuart Mill.

According to Mill in his book Utilitarianism, what constitutes a good action is the action that brings about the greatest amount of happiness to the greatest number of people.<sup>28</sup> If, for example, the cutting down of trees in order to build large corporations would bring about a large amount of satisfaction to many people, then the action of cutting down the trees is consider morale in the perspective of Utilitarianism. The Utilitarianism belongs to the Consequentialist for the reason that they give much value to the consequences of an action rather than the action itself, it is against the doctrines of Kant's moral philosophy, which is recognize as Deontology, because for them the following of ordered rules is not the basis whether an action is good or not.<sup>29</sup> Another group that has a similar position to Utilitarianism is Hedonism, which only considers the principles of pleasurable as something good, while the principle of pain is something evil. Hedonism can be traced centuries ago, in the Doctrines of Carvaka and the philosophies of Epicurus, both held that people must seek pleasure since it is the highest good of all and to avoid pain in all its possibility for it will bring misery to people. It is in the Doctrine of Carvaka that states people must seek pleasure in life for it is only good that can be found in this lifetime and since there is no afterlife, people must live a pleasurable life to the fullest.<sup>30</sup> For Epicurus on the other hand, people must seek pleasure for only in pleasure can they find happiness and satisfaction in life, that pleasure alone is good in itself.<sup>31</sup>

Another opposition of Kant's ethical position is the Doctrine of Subjectivism or Cultural Relativism. It is a given fact, especially today that there is a diversity of culture, that there are some cultures that accept polygamy while there are others that is extremely against it, some is against abortion while others even consider it as

a Law for a specific purpose, the main point is that everyone does not belong to the same society that values the same thing, and so nothing can be universalized. The position of Thomas Kuhn is also regarded as relativistic, because for him there is always progression, meaning that a “paradigm shift” is always at core, including moral actions.<sup>32</sup> Kuhn’s theory may be correct in its claiming, since what is considered ethical now is not the same as before, like slavery, before it was accepted but today it is illegal. His theory can be likened to George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel’s philosophical thought, that the interplay of the positive and negative aspect is always at work, that negation is always essential in process of development. Hegel is very much influenced by the works of Kant, though he did not accept all of Kant’s teaching, since for Hegel the interplay of the thesis and antithesis is not confined by metaphysical principle alone, the whole of reality is also an interplay of the thesis and antithesis, and one of those is matters regarding ethics.<sup>33</sup> As mentioned earlier, Jainism also held a relativistic position, since for them nothing is absolute, people must not accept a single perspective of things, including matters in ethics and morality.<sup>34</sup>

Besides the already mentioned groups that oppose Kant’s moral philosophy, Existentialism is also against Kantian Ethics. As has been discussed before, there are many Existentialist philosophers that consider Kant’s moral thought as impossible because what Kant is proposing is a somewhat cold approach to Ethics. It is already mentioned earlier that Max Scheler, an Existential Phenomenologist, is opposed to Kantian Ethics for it ignores the aspect of emotion in human action. Another is Jean-Paul Sartre who claimed that sets of rules are not the defining principle to the being of an individual. When a man is faced with a problem,

rules do not always help him in order for him to know what to do; it is a matter of choice of what the individual chooses to do. There are many people who do not agree with Kant’s philosophy, although Kant’s ethical thoughts are what society needs today in order to find peace and harmony. The concept of utility will not make one moral since it directs the individual not to do the right thing but the thing that will enable the individual to attain what he desires; thus, the agent’s desire is the one guiding the person. Same with the hedonistic approach in morality, pleasure is not always in the good, most of the time pleasure can be evil and immoral especially when it is excessive. Another thing that people must take in consideration, it is correct that there is a diversity in culture and that society is progressing, though there will always be certain virtues and actions that will never lose their value. For example, the value of honesty will never diminish, that whatever the situation may be, honesty is always honesty, if people get hurt because of the truth, the individual is not responsible for that sorrow of the other by just telling the truth.

## Conclusion

Immanuel Kant’s moral philosophy emphasized the importance of duty in order for the action of an individual to be considered as moral or ethical. In his *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant discussed the good will as the principle that can be good in itself, the good will is the will that motivates an individual to do the right thing in accordance with the dictates of his reason. Man is the only being that can be moral or ethical because he is the only one that can know whether his action is right or not, man is special among all the animals since he is the only one that is endowed with intellect. The other animals only have intuition as their guiding principle on what to do, but man has

reason that can dictate him on what action he is to take or not, and that is the significance of the rational nature of man. Good motivation is not enough according to Kant, in order for an individual to do the right thing, he needs reason to guide him, and since love and sympathy are emotions that can sidetrack man into doing something that can be considered as wrong and unethical. And of course, doing the right thing is also part of ethics, in the examples of Kant, the merchant who did not deceive the vulnerable customer cannot be considered as ethical since he has selfish motivation in doing so, there should always be a desire to do the right thing in matters of morality.

As have been said earlier, in Kantian Ethics, Kant emphasis the importance of duty for the action to be moral. Kant cite many examples in his Groundwork, like the case of suicide, a person who suffers the worst in life and wish to die, yet still refrain from killing himself or committing suicide because he knows it is his obligation is doing to preserve his life is acting from duty, therefore the action deserve to be recognize as a moral action. Another emphasis of Kant regarding the concept of duty is that people must not be diverted from doing their duties by emotions like love and sympathy. It is already mentioned a few times the in relationship of reason to duty, that a person who helps others because he consider it as his duty has moral worth than a person who helps other because he sympathized with their hardship. Of course there are limits to Kant's concept of duty, that there are times where a person is confronted with a situation wherein he cannot just do a certain action because it is his duty. A likely scenario is that an individual must sacrifice a certain obligation for the sake of the other, like when an agent has a duty to study because it is his responsibility as a student but he also has to help out in the house because it is

his obligation as a son to help his family. Most of the time an individual can compromise with such situation though there are still times that he has to sacrifice one in order to do the other. It is easy enough to rationalize situations where one has to choose between emotion or duty, but it is difficult to rationalize which one should choose between duty and duty. Kant did not give emphasis regarding this matter and so there is no linear set of rules to consider in choosing which type of duty one should decide. In this likely situation, a Consequentialist approach may be what is needed and so the limits of Kantian Ethics, though the means should still be consider even if the result is what is being consider.

Further discussion is regarding the two types of duties, namely perfect and imperfect duties, and the Categorical Imperative. There are many critiques of Kant regarding his moral philosophy, and it should be noted that these critiques of Kant do have a point with regards to Ethics. Like the Utilitarianism, a Consequentialist approach is sometimes what is needed in a given situation in order to determine what one must do, as have been discussed earlier. Cultural Relativism is also true therefore not every action and principle can be universalized, and that moral principle most of the time change over time, what one may consider moral now is not the same as before and may also not hold true in the future. Despite the strong arguments of some of aforementioned critiques of Kant, the influence and argumentation of Kant must not be ignored since it may be what society needed today in order to thrive and survive. Kant's moral philosophy that stressed the importance of good motivation, reason and obligation is what society needs so that crimes today might lessen and in time altogether disappear. Principles such as autonomy, equality and community, Kantian

ideals that is grounded on the Categorical Imperative, should be recognized by all people so that they may live peace and harmony with one another.

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<sup>1</sup> Dietmar Pfordten, "Five Elements of Normative Ethics – A General Theory of Normative Individualism," *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice: An International Forum* vol. 14 no. 4 (August 2012), 449-471.

<sup>2</sup> Donald Palmer, *Why It's Hard to be Good: An Introduction to Ethical Theory* (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2006).

<sup>3</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans by Mary Gregor and Jens Timmermann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Donald Palmer, "Kantian Ethics," in *Why It's Hard to be Good: An Introduction to Ethical Theory* (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2006), 54.

<sup>10</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans by Mary Gregor and Jens Timmermann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Rodolphe Gasché, "A Material 'a priori'? On Max Scheler's Critique of Kant's Formal Ethics," *Philosophical Forum* vol. 41 no. 1-2 (2010), 113-126.

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<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

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