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KANT'S MORAL THEORY AS A GUIDE IN PHILANTHROPY[1]

ABSTRACT
This paper focuses on Kant's moral theory and how it can guide our actions in philanthropy. Philanthropy is usually defined as a voluntary action aimed at relieving suffering and improving the quality of lives of others. It has been argued that, within the framework of Kant's theory, it is our duty to be beneficent, sacrificing a part of our welfare for others. The duty of beneficence is a wide one. Interpreters of Kant disagree on what the wide duty of beneficence requires. While a few argue that it only requires that we provide help sometimes, others hold that the duty of beneficence should be seen as more demanding, particularly in cases of emergency when help is urgently required. We are morally obliged to promote the happiness of others, but the duty of beneficence does not tell us whose happiness and how much of our resources to give. Other than emergency cases, in fulfilling the duty of beneficence, we can prioritize the ends of those near and dear to us who concern us more. Moreover, on condition that we are not indifferent to others, it is morally permissible to prioritize our ends. Finally, the paper argues that it is not always straightforward what kind of action is required in helping someone in need, and that beneficence in Kantian terms is not limited to the philanthropic sector.

KEYWORDS
Kant's moral theory, duty of beneficence, philanthropy

Introduction

The term philanthropy derives from the Greek word philanthrôpia, which means "the love of mankind" (Sulek 2010b). The meaning of the term "philanthropy" has changed through history. This term was in use in ancient times, then forgotten through the medieval period and reborn in the 17th century (Sulek 2010a; Sulek 2010b). Philanthropy in its contemporary usage has several meanings. Sulek synthesises seven frameworks for understanding the modern usage

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of the term philanthropy (Sulek 2010a). Philanthropy refers to: 1) the love of mankind; 2) god's love of humankind, 3) meeting needs or advancing human wellbeing; 4) a certain aspect of human nature that compels people to want to help others; 5) one's readiness to voluntarily help others, 6) a relationship, movement, organisation, or other such social entity that seeks to meet a certain charitable or public cause; 7) an act, such as the giving of money or time to a charitable cause or public purpose (ibid.).

There has been a growing scholarly interest in research in philanthropy since the 1980s, and a separate field of "philanthropic studies" has emerged (Bekkers 2014). In this academic field, philanthropy is the most often defined as a "voluntary action for the public good" (Payton and Moody 2008: xi), where the objectives of the public good are "(1) to relieve the suffering of others for whom one has no formal or legal responsibility, and (2) to improve the quality of life in the community, however one defines that idea" (ibid: 28). Philanthropy entails dedication of material and non-material resources to address the needs of others or to resolve certain problem. People can dedicate their material and non-material resources through organisations, usually referred to as philanthropic, charitable, third-sector organisation, but also directly to individuals or groups. Thus, philanthropy encompasses "both the spontaneous, individual acts of kindness and the planned, organized efforts that ensure acts of kindness are not ineffective or short-lived" (Payton, Moody 2008: 20)

Being a voluntary action means that philanthropy is uncoerced. It is not required by law (as is the case with the payment of taxes) or done in response to threats, blackmail or other forms of coercion (Payton, Moody 2008), neither it is done out of a professional obligation (Bierhoff 2002). While there is no legal obligation to perform philanthropic acts, the question is whether there is a *moral* obligation to relieve the suffering and/or improve the quality of lives of others. Almost all major ethical theories discuss the principle or a rule of beneficence – a normative statement of a moral obligation to act for the others' benefit (Beauchamp 2019). However, the source of this moral claim differs across moral theories and there is little consensus on the scope and content of the obligation to act beneficently (ibid.).

This paper focuses on Kant's moral theory and how it can guide our actions in philanthropy. Firstly, the main tenets of Kant's theory will be outlined, being aware that a brief account of Kant's theory cannot do justice to the details of his arguments. Then, the scope and content of the duty of beneficence will be analysed addressing the following questions: *Are we morally obliged to relieve the suffering and/or improve the quality of lives of others? To whom do we owe our support? Should we be impartial when deciding how to split resources for the benefit of others or should greater stress be placed on those near and dear to us? What is the place for our own projects? In what terms to define the need and the benefit of the other? Are motives ethically relevant? What are the appropriate means of help?* I will provide a summary of Kant's moral philosophy based on his three works *The Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785), *The*

Critique of Practical Reason (1788) and *The Metaphysics of Morals*, and I will also rely on the interpreters of Kant.

Morality and Freedom

Kant argues that we, humans, are part of both – *sensible* world, where everything is *determined* by the laws of nature, and *intelligible (rational)* world, where the possibility of *freedom* lies. Our behaviour is determined by the laws of nature, but it can also be based on the free will. In other words, our behaviour is influenced, and often governed, by our desires, passions and inclinations. However, our *reason* is capable of controlling natural impulses. Even more so, our behaviour can be motivated by reason itself.

While in nature everything is determined by natural laws, humans have *will*, humans act for reasons. Kant defines *will* as *practical reason*, which means a reason applied to govern our actions. Willing to do something is not merely wishing to do it or thinking about doing it. It means having a reason for doing it and setting oneself to do it. Human action is determined by certain *subjective principles* Kant calls *maxims*. Only when an agent has a maxim can we talk about his *motive* for action (Herman 1993). The maxim one acts upon can be based on one's desires or interest, but also on the moral law.

According to Kant, the will of a *moral agent* is *autonomous*. Will is autonomous in two ways. On the one hand, the will gives itself a *moral law* (it is *self-legislating*). On the other, it can motivate itself to follow the law which is often against desires, inclinations, passions or self-interest. In other words, our will is autonomous when it *respects* the *moral law* which it *prescribes* itself. Moral law has the causal power of natural law – it determines the will as natural law determines the physical world. The difference is that moral law resides in our reason and we act *in representation of the law*. This means that we think of ourselves as following the law, while objects in the physical world are necessarily determined by the law.

Hypothetical and Categorical Imperative

According to Kant, morality is about: "What *ought* I to do?". Something ought to be done either because it is *good as a means* of achieving a certain end, or because it is *good in itself*. Thus, there are two possible answers to this question. One is of the following form: "If I will A I ought to do B." In order to achieve a certain end, I ought to use a certain means. This is what Kant calls a *hypothetical imperative.* It is an imperative because it commands, and it is hypothetical because it commands conditionally, it depends on whether I *will* a certain end Kant argues that one who wills the end she also wills the means towards that end. If one wills the end, then it is *irrational* for her not to will the means for reaching this end. Being conditional on our end, hypothetical imperative is not the form of the moral law.

The second answer to the question: "What *ought* I to do?" takes the form of the *categorical imperative*, which is *the form of moral law*. The moral law requires the following:

> I ought never to act except in such a way that I could also will that my maxim should become a universal law. (G4:02)

This formulation of the Categorical Imperative is known as the *Formula of Universal Law*. Kant argues that all normal adults can understand the moral law, as it is derived from the *common use of our practical reason*. In our ordinary thinking, we approve of an action when we can will that everyone behaves according to the same principle (maxim) under the same circumstances. As rational agents willing certain actions we must accept specific normative principles as action-guiding (Cummiskey 1990).

Apart from the Formula of Universal Law, there are two additional formulas of the categorical imperative known as the *Autonomy Formula* and the *Humanity Formula* (known also as *End-in-itself Formula*).[2]

The categorical imperative in the Autonomy Formula requires the following:

> All maxims that proceed from our own making of law ought to harmonise with a possible kingdom of ends as a kingdom of nature. (G4:436)

Thus, our own maxims need to come into harmony with the maxims of all others, creating a union of rational beings through common laws.

The categorical imperative in the Humanity Formula requires the following:

> So act that you use humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means. (G4:429)

We ought never to use other people – more precisely the *rational nature* or *humanity* in other people – only as a means to our ends, but we ought at the same time to use them as the ends in themselves. Humanity refers to a person's rational capacities (Hill 2018). It regards one's ability to set oneself ends, to think consistently, to understand facts, to coordinate one's ends and means, and to acknowledge, respect, and follow rational moral requirements (ibid.).We use a shopkeeper as a means of getting necessary groceries. However, we should treat him with respect and not merely as a means of getting what we need. Moreover, we should treat humanity in our own person with respect. Thus, Kant puts humanity in one's person (the rational nature) at the centre of moral philosophy. Humanity is an end that already exists. It is worthy independently of any desire we may have. It has *dignity*, which is the value that cannot be compared or exchanged. In short, only humanity is an end in itself and has absolute worth (Wood 1999). As it cannot be used as mere means

2 Kant claims that the three formulas of moral law are equivalent, but here is a disagreement among contemporary interpreters on Kant regarding the status of each formula (see for example O'Neill 2013; Wood 1999; Herman 1993).

to our personal goals, the rational nature is the basis for a constraint on our actions. In other words, "the pursuit of subjective ends is constrained by the moral principle of respect for rational beings" (Cummiskey 1990).

Duty

An act that comes from the respect of moral law Kant calls a *duty*. In Kant's words, "duty is necessity of an action from respect of law" (G4:400). Since us, humans, belong to the sensible world, a moral law is perceived as a constraint. At the same time, this constraint allows us to be free from the dictates of our impulsive nature or the authority of others. Moral agents are legislators of moral law and subject to it. In this way, morality and freedom are bound together.

When we act in respect of moral law, our will is a *good will*. Kant argues that the only thing that is *good without limitation* is will under the moral law. It is our *rational nature*. Only good will has an intrinsic value – it is good in itself. All other things, such as *talents of mind* (wit, good judgement), *qualities of temperament* (courage, calmness) and *gifts of fortune* (wealth, power), have only a conditional value – they are valuable if they are chose by rational beings (Cummiskey 1990; Korsgaard 1983). Our goals are objectively good when they are chosen *rationally*. The questions that arise are: How do we know what our duties are? What does choosing rationally requires? In other words: How do we know what we morally ought to do in any particular situation?

When we consider whether an act that we want to undertake is morally right or wrong, we should test our principle of action, our maxim, against the categorical imperative. We should try to imagine a world in which our maxim is a universal law and seek out any contradictions that may arise. If a maxim passes the categorical imperative test (if we can universalise our maxim without contradictions) the action is permissible, if it fails the action is forbidden, and in this case, an opposite action (or omission) is required. Whenever the maxim cannot be universalised, when we cannot imagine a world in which our maxim is a universal law, then the *contradiction in conception* arises (O'Neill 2013) and we are facing a *perfect (strict or narrow) duty*. It is a perfect duty towards other refrain from making false promises. Besides perfect duty towards others, there are also perfect duties towards oneself, such as to refrain from committing a suicide no matter how horrible our life may be. Kant argues that we are always able to and required to act in accordance with the perfect duty. Regardless of any consequences, one has to do what moral law commands.

Apart from perfect duties, there are also *imperfect (wide) duties*. The examples of imperfect duties, as outlined in the *Groundwork,* are the duty to help others and the duty to develop our talents. When we think about whether we should help someone in need, then we again should go through the thought experiment of testing the maxim against the categorical imperative. Although we can universalise our maxim of not helping anyone – we can imagine a world in which no one helps anyone, we cannot *rationally will* such a world. In this case, a *contradiction in will* arises (O'Neill 2013). Kant argues that, in order to

achieve our valuable ends, we necessarily need the help of others – their help is the means towards our ends. We cannot rationally will the end without willing the means towards that end, which has already been pointed out in relation to the hypothetical imperative. Whenever we can imagine a world in which our maxim can be a universal law, but when we cannot rationally will such a world, it is the case of *imperfect (wide) duties*. Thus, beneficence is an imperfect duty towards others. Based on the same logics, Kant argues that we have an imperfect duty towards ourselves to develop our talents.

The difference between perfect and imperfect duties is in the respective maxims. While perfect duties require us to adopt *maxims of actions* – we must perform or omit specific actions, imperfect duties require us to adopt *maxims of ends*. A perfect duty is a duty not to do, or not to omit, an action of a certain kind, while an imperfect duty is a duty to promote a certain end (Donagan 1977). Kant defines ends as objects of choice of a rational being (DV 6: 381). When we set an end, there are usually many possible means to promote that end (Cumminsky 1990).

Virtue, Philanthropy and Duty of Beneficence

It was already argued that a human being is under obligation to regard herself, as well as every other human being, as an end. Moreover, a condition for internal freedom of human beings is that there are ends which are obligatory (Herman 2007). In *The Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant argues that the ends that are also duties are *one's own perfection* and the *happiness of others* (DV 6: 385). These two ends must be ends of all rational action (Herman 2007). Perfection means the cultivation of one's natural and moral capacities, which are necessary for setting and reaching one's ends and for pursuing virtue, while happiness concerns the set of objects which realisation leads to a life that pleases us (Herman 2001).

Our natural self-love, argues Kant, cannot be separated from our need to be loved and helped by others when we are in need. Therefore, we make ourselves an end for others. The only way this maxim can be biding is that it is qualified as a universal law – through our willing to make others our ends as well. Thus, the happiness of others is an end and it is also a duty (DV 6: 394). An end that is also a duty Kant calls a *duty of virtue*. He defines a virtue as "the strength of a human being's maxims in fulfilling his duty" (DV 6: 394). It is an ideal and thus always in progress, Kant stresses.

Kant makes distinction between *benevolence* and *beneficence*, where the former is the "satisfaction in the happiness (well-being) of others", and the former is "the maxim of making others' happiness one's end, and the duty to it consists in the subject's being constrained by his reason to adopt this maxim as a universal law" (DV 6: 452). Beneficence is therefore practical, active benevolence.[3]

3 It should be noted that Kant is not always consistent in the usage of these terms, but the equivalency of practical benevolence and beneficence makes conceptual sense (Formosa, Sticker 2019).

Kant uses the term philanthropy in a sense of "love of human beings" (DV 6:450), where love is not seen as a feeling, but as "the maxim of benevolence (practical love), which results in beneficence" (DV 6: 449). Although Kant calls a philanthropist someone who finds satisfaction in the well-being of others – thus it depends on an inclination, he conceives philanthropy as a love of human beings – as an *active benevolence*.

While benevolence can be unlimited, beneficence has *the latitude* for doing more or less so (DV 6: 393). We ought to *sacrifice a part of our welfare to the others*, without hope of return, while the extent of this sacrifice cannot be determined in advance. In other words, Kant argues that: "To be beneficent *where one can* is one's duty;" (G4:398, emphases added).

Kant argues that the beneficence towards those in need is a universal duty because we are rational beings with needs united in one dwelling place so that we can help one another (DV 6: 453). We are vulnerable and dependent on each other, but we are also capable to help one another. Duty of beneficence is thus a general moral principle meant to be applicable to all rational beings in all circumstance. What does it require in any concrete situation? How can it guide our actions in philanthropy?

The duty of beneficence is the most often seen as rather undemanding, requiring that we help others sometimes and to some extent. We ought to be beneficent, but it is up to us to decide "*how*, *when* and *how much* to help others" (Schneewind 1992: 324, emphases added). We are morally required to adopt the principle of beneficence, but "it is not possible to lay down in advance which other should be helped in which ways, to what extent, or at what cost" (O'Neill 2013: 19). While the agents are obliged to adopt the maxim of beneficence, "they have considerable latitude in choosing the individual actions that manifest their commitment to the maxim" (Stohr 2011: 46). This implies that being, to some extent, negligent about others, neglacting some opportunities to help, does not make someone a vicious person, as long as one remains sincerely committed to the principle of beneficence as a maxim (Hill 2018; Pinheiro Walla 2015). However, as Herman (2001) holds, to "do something sometimes" is not enough. She argues that "to have an obligatory end is to be committed to a set of considerations as always deliberatively salient; [...] The "latitude" for choice that comes with an imperfect duty is not about frequency of acting for the end, but a space for judgment as to how (and how much), in appropriate circumstances, the end might be promoted" (ibid: 240).

True Needs and Rational Agency

The "space for judgement" in regard to wide duties is in a close relation to the *person's true needs,* in view of her sensibilities (DV 6: 393), and also to *means* someone has at her disposal (DV 6: 453). These are important guides in deciding how and toward whom to direct our beneficence.

True needs are ends that must be realised if a person is to act as a rational, end-setting agent (Herman 1984). They are conditions of our power to set ends

and a failure to meet such needs makes rational agency impossible. Kantians agree that there is a special case of beneficence referred to as an *obligatory aid* (Stohr 2011) or giving aid to people in distress (Hill 2018). When someone needs immediate help to meet basic needs for survival (Stohr 2011), but also for tolerable existence (Hill 2018), a *duty to aid* becomes a strict one.[4] As according to Kant, the humanity in one's person is an end in itself, which has unconditional and incomparable value, it is contrary to the dignity of humanity, "to let a person starve to death or live in mind-numbing squalor when one can easily prevent this by giving up relatively trivial things that have mere 'price'" (Hill 2018: 23). In other words, by refusing to provide aid to people in distress one shows the insufficient regard for the humanity of these individuals. Hill argues that such act "must be judged wrong by direct appeal to the Categorical Imperative" (ibid.).

Herman also agrees that a duty to provide assistance in such cases is a strict one and she calls it a *duty of mutual aid* (Herman 1984). She argues that duty of mutual aid arises from the acknowledgment that human beings are vulnerable and dependent on each other and that a failure to meet true needs is an impediment to rational agency. True needs has a claim on one's help – as our rational agency depends on the true needs being met, we must will that others provide for our true needs, thus we cannot rationally will to disregard the true needs of others (ibid.). In short, when somebody's true needs are endangered and someone can meet them without sacrificing any true needs of her own, refraining from providing help is not permissible.

Kant points out that the duty of beneficence requires sacrifices, but he does not explicitly discusses how much sacrifice is required. As we have a duty to preserve conditions for pursuit of our rational ends, it can be inferred that our duty to aid is limited by our ability to continue to supply for our own true needs. Moreover, duty of beneficence cannot require from us to perform morally impermissible acts, for example to lie or to kill in order to promote ends of others.[5] We have thus an obligation to aid others when doing so does not involve 1) acting immorally and 2) sacrifice of our true needs (Cumminsky 1990).

Herman makes a distinction between the duty of mutual aid and the *duty of kindness or general helpfulness*, both being duties of beneficence (Herman 1984). She argues that a helpful person views the other as a "fellow pursuer of happiness" and she is willing to set aside or delay her own pursuits to provide for someone else's. While the true needs of another have a claim on one's help, which is independent of any interest one may have, the helpful person has an interest in the wellbeing of others and because of it she provides assistance (ibid.). However, it is appropriate that the helpful person weighs the costs of help, taking into account both the demands of others and her own goals (ibid.).

4 Kant himself does not explicitly distinguish the duty of aid from beneficence in general (Pinheiro Walla 2015).

5 Though there are arguments that Kantian normative theory does not rule out the sacrifice of one person to a greater good – to save many (see Cumminsky 1990).

Thus, "the nature of the need to be met determines whether it is an occasion where helping is required from us" (ibid: 601).

In the similar vein, Stohr (2011) argues that the Kantian duty of beneficence has two components: 1) a wide duty to perform helping actions on occasion and 2) a narrow duty to avoid an attitude of indifference toward others as end-setters (ibid: 50). However, there are certain differences in justification for the strict duty of aid. While for Herman a distinction between a strict duty of mutual aid and a duty of general helpfulness is based on the kind of needs, Stohr points out that what makes certain helping actions strictly required is "that refusing to perform them constitutes a failure with respect to the obligatory end of beneficence itself" (ibid: 57). She interprets beneficence as implying a narrow duty to avoid indifference to others as ends or as setters of ends, where the indifference toward someone implies the attitude that other's permissible ends are not accounted for into our plans in any way (ibid). She further argues that to acknowledge a status of a person as an end-setter, we have to adopt the attitude that her ends carry moral significance insofar as they are her ends. Such an attitude is always required, even when we are not actively helping a person pursue those ends. Helping actions are obligatory because refusing to help would express indifference. In short, "although we are not always required to help, we are always required not to be indifferent. When helping someone is the only way not to be indifferent to her, we are required to help." (ibid: 62).

We are thus obliged not to be indifferent to others' as end-setters and to provide aid to those whose true needs are endangered. For example, when I drive a car and see someone injured in the accident I am obliged to provide aid to this person (Stohr 2011). However, it can happen that we cannot help everyone who needs a rescue. Seeing that ten people fall from a boat and there are only three lifeboats, the only thing we can do to help is to throw the three available life preservers to three of the ten and use discretion in deciding which three to aid (Cumminsky 1990). Nevertheless, the fact that I have just saved somebody's life does not mean that I can forgo the easy rescue even if it occurs the very next moment (Stohr 2011).

We are well aware that there are emergency cases all over the world. There is always someone who cannot meet her true needs. The modern technology allows us to get familiarised with the suffering of people in distant places. Charitable organisations seeking for donations and soliciting help bring the life stories of individuals who lack resources to satisfy the very basic needs. Are we morally required to provide help to all those individuals? Does distance matter? Kantians argue that the emergencies in our vicinity have a different moral status from emergencies that occur far away (Herman 2001). As we are required to treat the other people with respect and to avoid paternalism, providing a tailored help to someone at distance is difficult (Herman 2007). The distance between the agent and the person who cannot meet her true needs change the type of duty we are dealing with (Formosa, Sticker 2019).[6] While we

6 Such a conclusion is in opposition to the more demanding consequentialist theories of beneficence, such as effective altruism, which holds that people from affluent

have a strict duty to provide aid to those in our vicinity, and not only to those who are spatially close to us, but also who are close to us in terms of relationships, such as family and friends, providing help to people who are away from us seems as not strictly required within Kant's framework.

Latitude in Beneficence

Apart from discussed emergency cases, we have a latitude in choosing whose happiness to promote (Hill 2018). Kant gives an important guidance when it comes to what to be considered as the happiness of others. He argues that we need to promote the happiness of the other person "in accordance with *his* concept of happiness" (DV 6: 454). Moreover, the beneficiary should be treated with dignity – not as a passive receiver, but as an agent. In other words, our beneficent act should be directed towards the other person's successful pursuit of her self-defined goals (Herman 1984).

How much of our resources should be dedicated to others through the beneficent acts? "Surely not to the extent that he himself would finally come to need the beneficence of others" (DV 6: 454), argues Kant. Are we required to actively seek for situations and people who need help and perform as much beneficent acts as possible? We should never act contrary to duty, but the function of the motive of duty is not to press constantly for more dutiful actions (Herman 1993). Searching for situations where we make more and more promises and refraining from false promises does not make our will extremely good (ibid.). By analogy, seeking out more and more situations where we can help someone in need and thus helping more people is not strictly required within Kant's framework. However, such behaviour is more virtuous (Formosa, Sticker 2019). In other words, while it is more virtuous to help more, it is not vicious – it is not morally wrong to fail to reach the maximum amount of helping one possibly can (ibid.).

Closeness, Partiality and Own Projects

The duty of beneficence does not tell us whose ends exactly to further and how much of our resources to give to promote the happiness of others. Should we be impartial when deciding how to split resources for the benefit of others or should greater stress be placed on those near and dear to us? What is the place for our own projects?

Kant argues that "[...] the law cannot specify precisely in what way one is to act and how much one is to do by the action for an end that is also a duty. But

societies are morally obliged to donate to charities that provide aid to people living in extreme poverty in developing countries (MacAskill 2015; Singer 1972, 2009, 2015). It would be wrong not to donate to aid agencies when by doing so one can prevent death and suffering without sacrificing anything nearly as important (Singer 2009), donating to aid agencies may result in a great amount of overall good, much greater than if one spends on herself (MacAskill 2015).

a wide duty is not to be taken as permission to make exceptions to the maxim of actions, but only as permission to limit one maxim of duty by another (e.g., love of one's neighbour in general by love of one's parents), by which in fact the field for the practice of virtue is widened" (DV 6: 390). Kant further holds that "[...] in wishing I can be equally benevolent to everyone, whereas in acting I can, without violating the universality of the maxim, vary the degree greatly in accordance with the different objects of my love (one of whom concerns me more than another)" (DV 6: 452). Therefore, in fulfilling the duty of benevolence, we can prioritise the ends of those near and dear to us who concern us more.

Not only is it permissible to us to prioritise the benefit of our friend over that of a stranger, but we have "much more demanding duties to help those whose happiness is enmeshed with our own" (Herman 2007: 273). It was already pointed out that we should promote other's happiness as she conceives it, not in the way we define the well-being of a particular person. Knowing someone well is thus an important prerequisite for understanding what she needs and what her concept of well-being entails. We should strive to reach what Herman calls "engaged benefaction" – to develop a relationship with the other person fostering understanding and trust, and accepting the judgment of others about what they need (ibid.).

The ends of all rational agents, including of those who are our family members and our friends, as well as our own personal ends, have "deliberative salience" in moral decision-making (Formosa, Sticker 2019; Hill 2018). Moreover, since no one's happiness is intrinsically more important than anyone else's (Hill 2018), under the condition that we are not indifferent to others, it is morally permissible to prioritise our needs and non-moral interests (Formosa, Sticker 2019). Kantian morality does not require that we structure our whole life in a way that we perform dutiful actions all the time. In other words, we do not have to be developing our talents and/or helping others all the time. We are allowed to undertake (permissible) actions that make us happy. Of course, promoting one's own happiness is not a matter of duty, as it is our inclination, something we strive for by our nature.[7]

Motives and the Moral Worth

Kant argues that we ought to sacrifice a part of our welfare to the others, without hope of return. Thus, beneficence must be *without a personal interest*. Moreover, helping others has *moral worth* only if it is done *out of duty*. Within the framework of Kant's ethics, duty is the only moral motive. Someone may feel compassion when confronted with a beggar in the street, and this may prompt him to give money to the beggar. Kant argues that though *praise worthy*, such

7 It should be stressed that some interpreters of Kant argue that it is never morally permissible to pursue some other ends when we could be pursuing obligatory ends instead (see for example Timmermann 2005). Such interpretation, usually referred to as a rigorist, makes Kant's concept of beneficence overdemanding (Formosa, Sticker 2019).

act lacks moral worth and does not deserve *esteem* because it is undertaken from an inclination. Such act is *in conformity with moral law*, but it is not undertaken *in respect of moral law*. Someone else may be experiencing deep sorrow and, preoccupied with his own unfortunate situation, he is unable to feel compassion for others. Passing a beggar, he no longer feels compassion, but he finds the strength to help the person in need because moral law requires him to do so. Such an act, since it is done *out of duty* and not just in conformity with duty, deserves moral worth.

It should be noted that Kant differentiates compassion as an emotional contagion from sympathy based on practical reason and argues for duty to cultivate the last one, albeit a conditional duty (DV 6: 456). He refers to this duty as the *duty of humanity*. Our humanity can be free and unfree, argues Kant. When it is located in sympathy – the capacity and the will to share in others' feelings, it is free, when located in compassion – the receptivity to the feelings of joy and sadness of others, it is considered unfree, as it "spreads naturally among human beings living near one another" (DV 6: 457). Kant stresses that it cannot be our duty to suffer along the others, and thus to increase the ills in the world. However, it is our duty to sympathize actively in the fate of those who suffer, and "to this end it is therefore an indirect duty to cultivate the compassionate natural (aestetic) feelings in us, and to make use of them as so many means to sympathy based on moral principles and the feeling appropriate to them" (ibid.). We therefore, further argues Kant, should not avoid places where we can meet with or see people in need, in order to protect ourselves from suffering alongside them, but we should rather seek out for them.

Kant did not eliminate emotions from his theory, though his theory has been criticised being cold and unemotional.[8] He gave emotions a subordinate position in relation to reason, and there are many arguments in favour of this approach. To begin with, we cannot feel compassion for every needy person we encounter. Thus, helping another out of compassion makes the act itself unstable and dependent on inclination of each person.[9] Most often, our emotions prompt us to favour our group's members (Green 2013). Moreover, some people are by their very nature more compassionate than others. Their motivation is the product of a "fortunate temperament". When we act from a moral motive, out of duty, we are acting as any actor is required to do when he can help a person in need regardless of his emotional capacities. Thus, unlike compassionate action, dutiful action may be commanded.

When we have both moral and non-moral motives to perform an action such action is called *overdetermined action.* Interpreters of Kant have different

8 For example, Michael Stocker argues that this leads to the strange conclusion that a person who visits her friend in the hospital out of a sense of duty deserves moral esteem rather than a person who visit her friend because the friend is someone whom she loves and cares for (Stocker 1976).

9 Some scholars question the notion that compassionate behavior is unstable (see for example Blum 1980).

opinions on the moral status of an overdetermined action. While some authors argue that only action which is performed out of duty in the presence of an opposing inclination deserves moral worth, others argue that an action can have moral worth when it is performed out of duty no matter whether and what kind of non-moral motives are present as well (see Herman 1981; Herman 1993; Henson 1979; Stocker 1976).

Beneficence and Organised Philanthropy

It has been argued that actions aimed at relieving the suffering and improving the quality of lives of others can take many different forms. Philanthropy can be organised, managed and coordinated through organisations, but it can also be carried out through loosely organised groups, often spontaneously gathered to address certain problem, or through ad-hoc initiatives of individuals. Usually, organisations are intermediary between the donors and receivers, but they can also be the final recipients of individuals' contributions. The philanthropic organisations make up a sector – referred to as a voluntary, philanthropic, non-profit, non-governmental or the third sector, which is distinguished from the government and business sectors. In modern societies, societal problems are addressed through government programmes or through private initiatives of individuals and organisations.

While within Kant's moral theory beneficence and philanthropy are closely related, it should be noted that Kant's beneficence is a broader concept than organised philanthropy. The means one can be beneficent to others are not limited to the philanthropic sector. In some cases, beneficence might require the work towards establishing government institutions and programmes. While it is quite obvious what a person injured in a car accident needs and what concrete action is required from someone who is in the vicinity (if the agent is a doctor and capable of dealing with the injuries, to provide medical help, if not than to call an ambulance), the appropriate means of beneficence might not be that straightforward in some other cases. For example, in order to address the issue of extreme poverty in developing countries, someone could donate money or volunteer at the relief agencies, but she could also advocate for the introduction of government programs, or protest against the current political and economic order she believes is the root cause of the problem. All of these actions could be seen as required by the duty of beneficence. Moreover, when we estimate that philanthropy, neither formal nor informal, isn't an appropriate means to address certain social problem, "public institutions can do the work of beneficence for us, and that part of our general duty is met by contributing a fair share of support" (Herman 2007: 23).[10] In short, philanthropy is not the only means to fulfil our duty of beneficence.

10 It should be noted that Kantians disagree on the role of the state when it comes to the issue of redistribution, whether or not it should introduce taxation and to what extent. Discussion on the role of the state and that of private initiatives when it comes

Conclusion

In this paper, I endeavoured to sketch a guidance in philanthropy based on Kant's moral theory. It has been argued that, under the framework of Kant's theory, we are morally obliged to relieve the suffering and/or improve the happiness of others. Kant defines philanthropy as love of human beings, which is a practical love, resulting in beneficence. It is our duty be beneficent sacrificing a part of our welfare to the others. The duty of beneficence is a wide one. Interprets of Kant disagree on what the wide duty of beneficence requires. While a few argue that it only requires that we provide help sometimes, others hold that the duty of beneficence should be seen as more demanding and having two aspects. On the one hand, there is a strict duty to provide aid in case of emergencies, when someone's true needs are at stake. However, the distance between the agent and the person who cannot meet her true needs matter ethically. While we have a strict duty to provide aid to those in our vicinity, and not only to those who are spatially close to us, but also who are close to us in terms of relationships, such as family and friends, providing help to people who are away from us is not strictly required within Kant's framework. On the other hand, we have a duty of general helpfulness, which requires that we are not indifferent to other people, that their permissible ends are always deliberately salient in our decision making. The duty of beneficence does not tell us whose ends exactly to further and how much of our resources to give to promote the happiness of others. It was argued that, in fulfilling the duty of benevolence, we can prioritise the ends of those near and dear to us who concern us more. Moreover, under the condition that we are not indifferent to others, it is morally permissible to prioritise our own ends. Kant's moral theory thus does not require that we structure the whole life in a way that we perform dutiful actions all the time. It was also argued that motives of acting for the others' benefit are ethically relevant within Kant's framework. We are required to be beneficence without a personal interest. When we help others because we feel compassion with them such an action is prise worthy, but it does not deserve esteem because it is undertaken from an inclination. Helping others has moral worth only if it is done out of duty. However, Kant differentiates compassion as an emotional contagion from sympathy based on practical reason and argues for duty to cultivate the latter one. It is our duty to sympathize actively in the fate of those who suffer, and to this end we have an indirect duty to cultivate the compassionate natural feelings. Finally, it was argued that what kind of action, what type of means, are require in order to provide help to someone in need are not always straightforward, and that beneficence in Kantian terms is not limited to the philanthropic sector.

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to relieving the poverty is beyond the scope of this paper. For some current debate on the topic see for example Shell S.M. (2016) "Kant on Citizenship, Society and Redistributive Justice", in A. Fagion, A. Pinzani, N. Sanchez Madrid, *Kant and Social Policies*.

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Bojana Radovanović

Kantova moralna teorija kao vodilja u filantropiji

Apstrakt

U fokusu ovog rada je Kantova moralna teorija i na koji način ona može da usmerava naše odluke u domenu filantropije. Filantropija se obično definiše kao dobrovoljna radnja koja ima za cilj ublažavanje patnje i poboljšanje kvaliteta života drugih. Dobročinstvo je u okviru Kantove teorije dužnost. Kantovi interpretatori se ne slažu oko toga šta zahteva dužnost dobročinstva. Dok neki tvrde da je dovoljno da samo ponekad pružimo pomoć, drugi smatraju da bi dužnost dobročinstva trebalo posmatrati kao zahtevniju, posebno u hitnim slučajevima kada se pružanje pomoći smatra striktno obaveznom. Moralno smo dužni da unapređujemo sreću drugih, ali nam dužnost dobročinstva ne govori čiju sreću i koliko svojih sredstava u te svrhe treba da posvetimo. Osim kada su hitni slučajevi u pitanju, u ispunjavanju dužnosti dobročinstva, možemo dati prednost onima koji su nam bliski i dragi. Štaviše, pod uslovom da nismo ravnodušni prema drugima, moralno je dozvoljeno da dajemo prioritet sopstvenim ciljevima. Konačno, u radu se tvrdi da nije uvek nedvosmisleno koju konkretno radnju treba preduzeti da bismo postupali u skladu sa dužnošću dobročinstva, te da dobročinstvo u kantovskim terminima nije ograničeno na filantropski sektor.

Ključne reči: Kantova moralna teorija, dužnost dobročinstva, filantropija