



Name:

Instructor:

Course:

Date:

Kantianism

The Kantian approach is a type of deontological moral theory that seeks to determine a systematic method of how morality is formed and, at the same time, explains how different human actions can be evaluated or judged based on their moral legitimacy (Wood 1). According to Kant, morality should be premised on reason. The philosopher argues that for an act to be considered ethical, the act in question has to be perfectly rational. Moreover, Kant also posits that the most rational behavior is typically the most ethical one. The other argument that Kant advanced in the realm of ethics was that involving the categorical imperative. In particular, the philosopher contends that behaving in accordance with moral standards is an issue of obligation and that there is no exception for moral behavior. Therefore, Kant's categorical imperative promotes the view that regardless of the consequences of a behavior or action, people should and must always do what is right. In brief, Kant's imperative specifies the importance of the decision as opposed to the consequences. The focus of this discussion is to argue that Kantian's perspective on ethics is not sufficiently persuasive and that scholars should not rely on the Kantianism to rationalize what constitutes ethical behavior.

Kant argues that a person's goodwill is the only element or aspect that is good and one without qualification: the philosopher describes goodwill as a "thing" that is guided by reason, which mainly entails being motivated by duty as opposed to the consequences (Wood 31). According to Kant, people must obey the moral law and that this duty is not optional but absolute. The moral law, according to Kant, is expressed by a categorical imperative that has more than one formulation. The first formulation of the categorical imperative relates to the Principle of Universality (Wood 118). In particular, the Principle of Universality advances the concept that we should always behave or act according to the rules of maxims that we could rationally want other people to follow as well. The second formulation of Kant's categorical imperative concerns the Law of Nature, which requires that we do not think of others as objects that we can use for our convenience or pleasure (Wood 114). Although Kant's theory of ethics offers compelling insights on whether or not an act or behavior is ethical, it does have fundamental flaws that tend to reduce its persuasion power. First, since all duties are mandatory or absolute, the theory cannot help us to address the conflicts of duty, for instance weighing between telling the truth and betraying our friends. Second, Kantianism seems to discount emotions such as remorse, sympathy, and compassion as suitable motives for ethical behavior.

In conclusion, the modus ponens or tollens propositional logic can effectively support the claims relating to the fundamental flaws that are evident in the Kantian ethics theory. First, if all duties are absolute, people should not lie to protect their friends, which is not an option in many cases; therefore, Kant's proposition that all duties are absolute is not true. Second, if remorse, sympathy, and compassion are not appropriate motives for ethical behavior, then indifference, disapproval, and heartlessness can be considered as suitable motives for ethical behavior. Traditionally,

indifference, criticism, and heartlessness are values that are frowned upon in the society, and, therefore, Kant's claim that remorse, sympathy, and compassion are not appropriate motives for ethical behavior is not valid.

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