

Kantian philosophy term papers example

[Experience](#), [Happiness](#)



" Thus a good will constitute the indispensable condition of being even worthy of happiness" (Kant, p. 7).

According to the Kantian philosophy, good will refers to the only thing in the society that is universally good. He further describes good will by reason, and reason must be a universally accepted law in the society, which is universally applicable to all members of the society. Kant indicates that nothing in or beyond the world can possibly be considered as good without the qualification of good will, which implies that a good thing must be universally acceptable in the society. According to this passage by Kant in his " Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals," where he distinguishes between the things that are " unconditionally good" or " good without qualification from things that are good under certain conditions, he uses happiness to define good will.

Good will itself serves as a condition of the value of everything else. Every member of the society values happiness. Happiness is therefore considered a universal desire of all the members of the society. According to Kant, he believes that every member of the society would want to maximize his or her pursuit for happiness. In this regard, treating other members of the society with dignity to consider them worthy of happiness constitutes good will. As an example of the essential conditions for universally accepted laws in the society, Kant maintains that happiness is mandatory to construct free will. According to Kantian ethics and moral philosophy, the members of the society have the perfect and imperfect duties to perform in the society to improve the livelihood of each other. Therefore, treating each other as worthy of happiness is part of fulfilling the imperfect duty as well as pursuing

happiness for the self.

" An action done from duty has its moral worth, not in the purpose that is to be attained by it, but in the maxim according to which the action is determined" (Kant, P. 12-13).

As explained above, the members of the society have perfect and imperfect duties to perform in the society where they live. The perfect duty, such as the duty to tell the truth, usually holds true. On the other hand, the imperfect duty, such as the duty to give donations, can be performed flexibly and applied in particular places and times. According to the Kantian account of moral worth, he captures a wide range of intuition. He believes that the moral worth of an action does not entirely depend on the success of the action in realizing the desired ends of the action. As an example in the society today, when you arrive at coffee shop and find that a stranger has lost consciousness around the coffee shop, saving the person from duty has its moral worth. However, if you had arrived a little later and found that the stranger had died, then the moral worth of the action does not diminish. Moreover, you did not have the control over the collapse of the stranger. If an individual in the society performs an act out of concern for doing the right thing in the society, the factors that are not in his or her control do not disqualify the action performed from the moral value accorded to it. Kant believes that all members of the society, either with the perfect or imperfect duty or obligation, have the desire to assist each other and the society accords moral value to actions performed out of duty. He adds the phrase that, " not in the purpose that is to be attained by it, but in the maxim according to which the action is determined" to indicate that there might be

uncertainties that are uncontrollable and should not deprive actions of their moral worth.

" I should never act except in such a way that I can also will that my maxim should become a universal law" (Kant, P. 14 and 30)

This basically implies that every member of the society including yourself, should always act in a manner that all the other members of the society and the person performing the act could act. Also referred to as the categorical imperative, this philosophy rests on pure reason and not on experience.

When members of the society consider the actions they need to perform, considering making these actions a universal law that would be followed by everyone is significant. For instance, an individual can choose to tell a lie. However, trying to lie as a universal law would necessarily destroy itself. If lying would be universally accepted in the society, people would lose trust for each other, and promises would be taken for granted. Therefore, an orderly society would not consider such actions as its universal law.

As members of the society, every individual intends to act in his or her best interest. However, people often use the moral obligations to treat other members of the society as they would have wished to be treated. In this regard, this phrase implies that, while selecting our actions, especially those actions directed to other members of the society, people are usually very cautious to act in the manners they also consider appropriate the action was directed toward them. Based on the duties discussed above, Kant maintains that a moral obliged society would only accept good will, and actions that constitute the good will as the universal law. The society rewards people for their activities. Therefore, bad activities are rewarded with bad results and

that becomes the universal law of punishing offenders. When people do not act in the manner that is universally accepted, a universally accepted punishment is applied on them for misconduct.

“ In the Kingdom of ends everything has either a price or a dignity. Whatever has a price can be replaced by something else as its equivalent; on the other hand, whatever is above all price, and therefore admits of no equivalent, has a dignity" (Kant, p. 40)

According to Immanuel Kant, the Kingdom of Ends comprises of rational human beings who are capable of moral deliberations and choose to act by maxims implying unconditional necessity. In this ideal society, all the members of the society are at the same time the authors and subjects of all the laws governing actions in their society. This phrase, therefore, implies that, in the ideal kingdom of ends, people have value for dignity and all the actions of the members of the society have an equivalent price that they pay for these actions. All the things that have reference to the general inclinations and needs of the rational beings have their market value. Morality provides the capacity for the moral beings to become legislating members of the Kingdom of Ends. Therefore, only humanity and morality have dignity.

Conclusion

The Kantian philosophy maintains that the society is governed with the moral actions and that rational human beings make rational choices. In “ Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals,” Kant distinguishes between the things that are “ unconditionally good” or “ good without qualification from things that are good under certain conditions, he uses happiness to define

good will. His definition of good will entails the pursuit of happiness in the society. He considers members of the society to possess the perfect or imperfect duty to protect the good will of all members of the society. The Kantian philosophy of moral ethics considers the Kingdom of Ends to comprise of rational human beings who are capable of moral deliberations and choose to act by maxims implying unconditional necessity. These rational beings are both authors and subjects of all the laws governing actions in their society. Generally, members of the society strive to act in ways that they would desire to be considered as universal laws. This is the basic principle governing behavior and rewards and punishments for these behaviors.

Works Cited:

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