

The Kantian Non-Moral Saint

ALI SHARAF*

Kuwait University, Kuwait

Abstract

In *Moral Saints*, Susan Wolf raises a question for morality in general: should we strive to be perfectly moral, even though being a moral saint does not entail having a perfectly good life? Wolf answers that moral saints represent an undesirable and unattractive human ideal because they lack the “ability to enjoy the enjoyable in life” (Wolf 424). Accordingly, Wolf objects to both utilitarianism and Kantianism, claiming that these ethical theories present moral sainthood as an ideal. While this paper does not object to Wolf’s account of moral sainthood, it argues against Wolf’s objections to Kantianism in three parts. First (1), I explain Wolf’s argument and objections to Kantianism; second (2), I respond to Wolf’s objections against the ‘non-ideal’ Kantian saint interpretation; and third (3), I respond to Wolf’s objections against the ‘ideal’ Kantian saint interpretation. This paper concludes that Kantianism does not present moral sainthood as a human ideal.

Key Words

Kantian Ethics, Sainthood, Human Ideal, Moral Saint, Moral Ideal

In *Moral Saints*, Susan Wolf argues that moral saints represent an undesirable and unattractive human ideal because they lack the “ability to enjoy the enjoyable in life” (Wolf 424). To see how the moral saint’s life is unattractive, we need to imagine the ideal form of such a life. According to Wolf, a moral saint is a person “whose every action is as morally good as possible, a person, that is, who is as morally worthy as can be” (Wolf 419). This person only appreciates moral interests and does not value non-moral ones. He

* Assistant Professor, Kuwait University. E-mail for contact : ali.sharaf@ku.edu.kw

always devotes his life to making others happy. He always prefers donating extra money to charity instead of, for instance, watching *Star Wars* movies or reading Agatha Christie's crime novels. If you ask him to hang out with you and have some fun on a Friday night, he will reply that he does not have time for such things. He is always worried that he will fail in fulfilling his duty to improve the welfare of others. In short, this person will not have time for so-called desirable activities, because his mind is always consumed with how he can be a perfectly moral person.

The undesirable life of a moral saint raises a question for morality in general: should we strive to be perfectly moral, even though being a moral saint does not entail having a perfectly good life? Wolf answers that we should not strive to be moral saints, because being perfectly moral entails ignoring other essential goods, such as gourmet cooking or fashion (Wolf 422). Accordingly, Wolf objects to any ethical theory that presents moral sainthood as an ideal, arguing that moral saints represent an undesirable and unattractive ideal. For this reason, she objects to utilitarianism and Kantianism, because these ethical theories present moral saints as the ideal.

Wolf's argument that moral saints represent an unattractive human ideal has received much comment and scrutiny. Some philosophers object to Wolf's argument on the grounds that her account of moral sainthood is inaccurate and does not reflect real examples (Adams 1984). Others argue that Wolf's account of a moral saint is not as unattractive as she claims (Carbonell 2009). In this paper, I do not object to Wolf's account of the moral saint. However, I argue against Wolf's objections to Kantianism, in three sections. First (1), I explain Wolf's argument and objections to Kantianism; second (2), I respond to her objections against the 'non-ideal' Kantian saint; and third (3), I respond to Wolf's objections against the 'ideal' Kantian saint.

1. Wolf's Argument.

In the first section of *Moral Saints*, Wolf begins her paper by discussing a pre-theoretical notion of what we consider a "moral saint." She claims that our common-sense understanding of moral sainthood necessarily includes that "one's life be dominated by a commitment to improving the welfare of others or of society as a whole" (Wolf 420).¹ Moreover, Wolf claims that two differing conceptions of moral saint emerge from our common-sense notion: the loving saint and the rational saint. The loving saint is a person whose own well-being and happiness lie in the well-being and happiness of others. On the other hand, the rational saint is a person whose actions are determined by adherence to moral duties (Wolf 420). Even though the rational and the loving saints have different motives, Wolf claims that their "public personalities" would be similar (Wolf 421). Both of them would "have the standard moral virtues to a nonstandard degree" (Wolf 421).

¹ In *The Good Life: A Response to Susan Wolf's 'Moral Saints' Argument*, Nicholas Moss objects to Wolf's argument that deontic theories represent moral saints as human ideal. Moss' objection is based on the view that common sense morality is not an indicator for a moral theory's credibility.

Therefore, Wolf argues that if a moral saint's life is determined and dominated by morality, other non-moral interests and goods are crowded out.

Furthermore, Wolf distinguishes between two types of obstacles that prevent a moral saint from pursuing non-moral interests: practical and logical. For instance, Wolf claims that, in most cases, a moral saint cannot practice hobbies, because "reading Victorian novels, playing the oboe, or improving [one's] backhand" requires time that otherwise would be spent promoting the welfare of others (Wolf 421). Therefore, a moral saint is prohibited from pursuing non-moral interests because of practical obstacles, such as lack of time, to performing moral duties. Moreover, a moral saint cannot pursue non-moral activities because of logical obstacles that are "in more substantial tension" with being a moral saint, because these activities are "against the moral grain" (Wolf 421-422). For instance, Wolf claims that a moral saint will not be able to laugh at a "cynical or sarcastic wit, or a sense of humor that appreciates this kind of wit in others, [as it] requires that one take an attitude of resignation and pessimism toward the flaws and vices to be found in the world" (Wolf 422). Hence, Wolf concludes that a moral saint represents an unattractive ideal because he does not embody the sort of non-moral ideals we admire in "athletes, scholars, artists—more frivolously, out of cowboys, private eyes, and rock stars" (Wolf 422).

In the second section of her paper, Wolf objects to utilitarianism and Kantianism on the grounds that these moral theories represent the moral saint as an ideal. According to Wolf, the loving saint characterizes the utilitarian ideal, and the rational saint characterizes the Kantian ideal. The rational saint's actions are determined by adherence to moral duties (Wolf 420). Since my goal is to defend Kantianism against Wolf's critique, I will not discuss Wolf's account of the loving saint, nor her objection to utilitarianism.

According to Wolf, there are two ways to interpret the relationship between her view of moral sainthood and Kantianism; each interpretation has two objections. The first interpretation implies that a Kantian saint believes in morality, which requires acting in accordance with the categorical imperative, such as the universal law formula and the humanity formula. I call this interpretation the "non-ideal Kantian saint". Wolf believes that this interpretation does not entail her concept of the ideal moral saint, which is proposed in the previous sections of her paper. She thinks that this interpretation does not swallow up the entire agent's personality, and that the agent can still pursue non-moral interests (Wolf 432). Although Wolf approves of this interpretation, she raises two objections to it: first, the non-ideal Kantian saint interpretation assigns lower value to non-moral interests when these are not arrived at through deliberation by the rational part of our being; second, it denies the necessity of devotion to benevolence and the maintenance of justice, all of which go beyond the threshold set by the categorical imperative.

On the other hand, the second interpretation implies that a Kantian saint believes in morality which requires acting in accordance with two duties: first, benevolence to take up others ends as one's own; and second, to develop natural and moral perfection (Wolf 30). I call this interpretation the "ideal Kantian saint." Wolf raises two objections to this interpretation: firstly, the life of this Kantian saint is dominated by unlimited moral duties;

secondly, it implies the “one thought too many” objection, which is explained in the third section of my paper.

Wolf claims that contemporary moral theories should be revised in terms of appreciation of non-moral interests. Wolf’s answer to the question ‘how should people live?’ is that “they must do more than adjust the content of their moral theories in ways that leave room for the affirmation of non-moral values” (Wolf 438). In other words, it is not sufficient only to leave a little space to value non-moral interests. She argues that these contemporary theories should assign the same level of value to both moral and non-moral interests.

2. A Response to Wolf’s Objections Against the Non-Ideal Kantian Saint Interpretation.

Wolf raises two objections to the non-ideal Kantian saint interpretation. First, Kant does not “give an unqualified seal of approval to the non-morally directed ideals” that were advocated by Wolf (Wolf 432); second, Kant’s moral theory does not explain supererogatory actions when morality is limited by an upper boundary (Wolf 432). Therefore, she concludes that this interpretation of Kantianism is objectionable.

According to Wolf, even if the non-ideal Kantian saint interpretation leaves some room for non-moral interests and does not swallow up the agent’s entire personality, Kant argues that the rational part of our being should always control our passions, and not the other way around, because we have duties of apathy and self-mastery. So, Wolf’s objection suggests that, at least sometimes, passion should not be controlled by reason. To respond to this objection, we need to answer two questions: what is Kant’s account of passion? Why should passion not command reason?

Kant defines passion as “a sensible desire that has become a lasting inclination” (MM 6:408). Moreover, passions are “inclinations that make all determinability of the faculty of choice by means of [rational] principles difficult or impossible” (CJ 5:272). He adds that passion is “an inclination that excludes mastery over oneself” (R 6:29). Kant distinguishes between two types of passion: that from natural inclination and that which results from human culture. Therefore, a passion is a very strong motive that prevents the agent from controlling himself on rational grounds.²

At first glance, it may seem as though Kant claims that we should not let passion control reason, because the latter is the source of governing ourselves. However, this is an incomplete understanding of Kant’s argument for the duties of apathy and self-mastery. According to Kant, we should not let passion command ourselves because of its overwhelming force. This power prevents the agent from recognizing other motives, such as feeling, desire and duty. Therefore, Kant says that passions “please one inclination by placing all the rest in the shade or in a dark corner” (AP 7:266). This entails that passions

² In *Anthropology*, Kant claims that we should not let passion and affect command our lives, because both prevent us from controlling ourselves and reflections. According to Kant, affect is “rash, that is, it quickly grows to a degree of feeling that makes reflection impossible” (AP 7:252). For more information about the difference between passions and affects, see Formosa (2011).

force the agent to focus on only one interest and completely forget others, whether they be moral or non-moral. In this case, passions would swallow up the whole personality of an agent, and this is precisely what Wolf objects to.

One may claim that not all passions are immoral, because they could support duty in morality when the passionate agent is blind to non-moral interests, and when he only values moral interests. At first glance, it seems that Kant would agree with this claim. However, he explicitly objects to it when he says that “beneficence [is] ... morally reprehensible, as soon as it turns into passions” (AP 7:266). For instance, when an agent acts from the passion of benevolence, he would commit any action to satisfy his passion, even if this requires committing immoral actions such as lying or killing. Hence, even if passion might serve morality, it would destroy other inclinations and feelings that are important in Kant’s moral theory.

Kant and Wolf are on the same page. Both agree that we should not let any motive or interest swallow up the agent’s personality. Kant does not claim that we should not pursue an end simply because this end is morally valuable, or because our rational part does not control other motives. However, Kant’s argument entails that an agent *can* pursue an end among others without ignoring other ends. Since passion would blind the agent from recognizing other ends and disable the rational part from fulfilling its natural function, Kant claims that we should not let passion command our lives, and that we have a duty of apathy and self-mastery.

Here, we respond to Wolf’s second objection that Kantianism does not leave room for supererogatory actions, i.e., that Kantianism only requires the minimum conditions of morality to be met, and that it does not go beyond what the agent is required to do. I respond to this objection in two ways: first, a moral theory does not require leaving room for supererogatory actions; second, Kant’s moral theory, in fact, does leave such room.

To follow the first response to Wolf’s objection, we need to distinguish what is admirable from what is morally right. An action is morally right if it fulfills what is required to be done in a particular situation. However, an action is admirable if it goes beyond what is required. Hence, supererogatory actions belong to the second type. Truly, we admire those who sacrifice themselves to save other people, but that does not entail that this action is morally good. For instance, in *Lectures of Ethics*, Kant mentions an example from history to illustrate that although an action is admirable, that does not necessarily mean it is a morally right one. In this example, Cato commits suicide to influence his army “to fight to the bitter end in defense of their freedom” (LE 149). According to Kant, even if Cato’s action is admirable and honorable within Roman culture, it is not morally justifiable. Cato’s act is honorable and admirable for cultural values, but not for moral reasons. We can see further instances in which supererogatory actions are morally wrong. For instance, where the agent is certain that he cannot save a drowning man and will die trying, it is morally wrong to try to save the man, because both would die. Hence, if a supererogatory act does not necessarily entail that it is a morally right one, we have good reason to argue that a moral theory should not include this category of action.

Still, one may claim that a moral theory without this category of action fails to accord with our common-sense morality.³ To respond, I argue that Kant’s account of imperfect duty does leave room for supererogatory actions. To do this, I should explain the distinction between perfect and imperfect duties.

In *Groundwork*, Kant distinguishes between two types of duty – perfect and imperfect moral duties – and each type is divided by first-person moral agency: myself, and others. They are detailed as follows:

	Perfect duty	Imperfect duty
Re: oneself	No suicide	Self-development
Re: others	No false promising	Helping others in need

The form of each type of duty emphasizes an important feature of Kant’s moral theory. Imperfect duties have a positive form: helping others and developing yourself. Kant does not claim that the agent must fulfill this duty in a specific way or by specific actions. However, the positive formulation of imperfect duty indicates that the agent should be aware of it; he is free in deciding how and what to develop, so long as he does not violate any perfect duty. For instance, if an agent has a musical talent, it is up to him to decide which instrument to play, which genre of music to play, and how much time to spend practicing. However, the musician should not cheat or lie to improve his musical skill. Another important feature of Kant’s distinction between moral duties is that imperfect duties are affected by external conditions. For instance, in countries where there is civil war, people should learn how to defend themselves by improving their skill in using weapons. Otherwise, they are likely to die.

The other imperfect duty – helping others in need – also has a positive form. Again, the agent should recognize that he has a certain duty, but it is up to him to decide how to fulfill this duty without violating perfect duties. For instance, if an agent has money that can cover more than his essential needs and walks by a homeless person, the agent is free to decide how to help the person. The agent can offer shelter, give some money, or teach a skill that can help in covering basic needs. Additionally, this imperfect duty is affected by external conditions beyond our control. For instance, in the case above, if the charitable agent were blind, he would not be able to help the homeless person.

On the other hand, perfect duties have negative forms: do not lie; do not commit suicide. The negative form does not require performing an action, but abstaining from performing one. The distinction between the negative and positive forms may suggest that one type of duty is more important than the other. This is not the case. To explain why this distinction does not dictate a hierarchy of importance, we should explain the relationship between perfect and imperfect duties.

³ Even though some philosophers claim that it is questionable to base morality on our common sense, I assume that it is plausible for the sake of the argument. For instance, in *Kantian Ethics and Supererogation*, Marcia Baron claims that it is often dubious to appeal to common-sense morality (Baron 254).

In their simplest form, perfect duties are the necessary conditions of imperfect duties. For instance, not committing suicide is a necessary condition of imperfect duty of self-development. By the same token, perfect duty not to make a false promise is a necessary condition of imperfect duty to help others in need. Clearly, if I want to help someone, I should not lie to him or break a promise; otherwise, I would contradict my intention to help him.

After explaining the distinction between perfect and imperfect duties, we can respond to Wolf's objection that Kantianism does not leave room for supererogatory actions. According to the discussion above, the positive form entails that the agent should recognize a certain duty as a principle, and the agent may freely decide how to fulfill this imperfect duty, and to what extent, as long as he does not violate any perfect duty. Hence, the agent is free to do more than what morality requires to be done in a situation, as long as he does not violate any perfect duty. In fact, in the *Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant says imperfect duties "leave a playroom for free choice in following the laws" since "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" (MM 6:390). Hence, Kant's moral theory leaves room for supererogatory actions under imperfect duties of self-developing and helping others in need.

3. A Response to Wolf's Objections Against the Ideal Kantian Saint Interpretation.

Wolf raises two objections against the ideal Kantian saint interpretation. The first objection is that the agent is dominated by the motivation to be moral; the second is that this interpretation entails the "one thought too many" problem. To defend against the first objection, I argue that imperfect duties are limited by perfect ones and by external conditions. To defend against the second objection, I argue that Kant values non-moral interests, even if they are not manifestations of respect for moral law.

Wolf bases her first objection on two premises: first, that imperfect duties are unlimited; second, that "it is natural to assume that the more one performs such actions, the more virtuous [one] is" (Wolf 430). Hence, she concludes that Kantianism entails that the more one performs actions in accordance with imperfect duties, the more virtuous one is. In other words, the ideal Kantian saint interpretation entails her account of a moral saint, because the agent is dominated by the motivation to be moral.

To defend Kant's moral theory against Wolf's first objection, I object to Wolf's first premise that imperfect duties are unlimited. We have seen above that the positive form of imperfect duties entails that the agent is free to choose how to fulfill these duties and to what extent, as long as he does not violate any perfect duty. Hence, imperfect duties are limited by perfect ones that only require abstaining from performing definite actions. For instance, if the agent decided to kill himself and to donate his organs to those who need them, he would violate a perfect duty: not committing suicide. So, in this case, even though the agent's intention is morally good, Kant would evaluate this action as morally wrong, because the agent violates a perfect duty.

A second reason to object to Wolf's first premise, that imperfect duties are unlimited, is that these duties are limited by external conditions. These external conditions are beyond our control. To clarify this limitation, let us consider the following case: a man lives in a very poor society where people die from starvation. This man decides to help these starving people by donating his food. However, if he donated his food, he would die from starvation. In this case, Kant would say that the agent should not donate his food, because the poor man's action is limited by an external condition: his own poverty. In addition, the agent fulfills his duty as long as he wills the maxim of helping others, even if he does not perform any action to help them, because imperfect duties represent principles. Therefore, if the agent is free to choose how to fulfill his imperfect duties, as long as he does not violate any perfect duty, and his duty to help others in need is constrained by external conditions, Kant's moral theory does not need to be dominated by the motivation to be moral.

Let us now turn to Wolf's second objection of the ideal Kantian moral saint interpretation. According to Wolf, it is dubitable to assume that moral motives are behind one's inspirations to paint as well as Picasso, and behind one's actions on behalf of beloved ones. Hence, Wolf argues that Kantianism contains a "one thought too many" objection, because the agent's activities and character traits would be valuable only if they "were manifestations of respect for the moral law" (Wolf 431). In other words, for an action to be morally worthy, it should only arise from duty rather than any other motive. Against this "one thought too many" objection, I argue that Kant's moral theory does not necessitate that, for an action to be morally worthy, it must only arise from duty or be dominated by moral motivations. To do this, we should explain why one may argue that Kant's moral theory entails that for an action to be morally worthy, it should only arise from duty.

In *Groundwork*, Kant explicitly criticizes the naturally kindhearted person that acts out of natural feelings or inclinations:

To be beneficent where one can is a duty, and besides this there are some souls so sympathetically attuned that, even without any other motive of vanity or utility to self, take an inner gratification in spreading joy around them, and can take delight in the contentment of others insofar as it is their own work. But I assert that in such a case the action, however it may conform to duty and however amiable it is, nevertheless has no true moral worth, but is on the same footing as other inclinations, e.g., the inclination to honor, which, when it fortunately encounters something that in fact serves the common good and is in conformity with duty, and is thus worthy of honor, deserves praise and encouragement, but not esteem; for the maxim lacks moral content, namely of doing such actions not from inclination but *from duty*. (G 4:398)

This passage suggests that the kindhearted person might do the same thing that the dutiful man does, but that does not mean that their actions are equal. In fact, this passage entails

that Kant values acting out of moral duty more than out of inclination.⁴ However, there are several indications suggesting that inclinations and feelings are necessary but not sufficient conditions in Kant's moral theory. To see how inclinations and feelings are necessary conditions in Kant's moral theory, we need to answer the following questions: does Kant's moral theory necessitate that morally worthy action requires acting only from natural inclination? Or does it require acting only from moral duty? Or acting out of both inclination and duty?

There are three reasons to argue that Kant condemns the view that the morally worthy action requires acting only from natural inclination. The first is that acting only from natural impulses undermines Kant's essential principle of freedom, because "true character is character of *freedom*" (LA 25:1384). Because, when an agent acts only from natural inclinations, his action is determined by external motives rather than his freedom. The second reason is that acting only from natural impulses violates Kant's autonomy formula: "the Idea of the will of every rational being as *a will that legislates universal law*" (G 4:432). According to this formula, Kant emphasizes that we should act as we are law-givers and not followers. Hence, we should not let ourselves be controlled by our natural impulses such as inclination and feeling, because these motives prevent us from being legislators of our own laws through our will.

The third reason is that acting only from our natural impulses violates Kant's universal formula, because our natural feelings and inclinations are inherently contingent. In *Groundwork*, Kant states the formula of universal law of nature: "*So act as if the maxim of your action were to become through your will a universal law of nature*" (G 4:421). Acting only from natural feelings and inclinations violates this formula, because these motives are unreliable and changeable from situation to another one. In other words, we cannot will the maxim of our actions as a universal law of nature because the law should be consistent in all situations and circumstances. To understand why our feelings and inclinations are contingent, we need to discuss Kant's example of a case of suicide:

One person, through a series of evils that have accumulated to the point of hopelessness, feels weary of life but is still so far in possession of his reason that he can ask himself whether it might be contrary to the duty to himself to take his own life. Now, he tries out whether the maxim of his action could become a universal law of nature. But his maxim is: 'From self-love, I make it my principle to shorten my life when by longer term it threatens more ill than it promises agreeableness'. The question is whether this principle of self-love could become a universal law of nature. But then one soon sees that a nature whose law it was to destroy life through the same feeling whose vocation it is to impel the furtherance of life would contradict itself, and thus could not subsist as nature; hence that maxim could not possibly obtain as a universal law of nature, and consequently it entirely contradicts the supreme principle of all duty (G 4:421-22).

⁴ This is not the first time that Kant criticizes acting out of natural impulses. In *Anthropology*, Kant also criticizes the kindhearted person (AP 7:286: cf. LA 25:1158).

In this case, two natural feelings are competing: self-love and a feeling for life. The agent has a desire, motivated by self-love, to end his miserable life. On the other hand, a feeling for life motivates the agent to continue his life, regardless of his troubles. According to Kant's example, the feeling for life overrides the feeling of self-love. However, if one feeling 'wins' in this case, it does not entail that it 'wins' on every occasion. In other words, if something can 'win' in a certain situation at a particular time, it can also 'lose' in another situation at a different time. Hence, our natural inclinations and feelings are insufficient for morality. We need support from another type of motive that strengthens and protects the right feelings or inclinations. According to Kant, this motive is duty.

To sum up, acting only from natural feelings and inclinations undermines Kant's essential principle of *freedom*, and violates both autonomy and the universal law of nature formulas. Therefore, Kant clearly condemns the view that the morally worthy action requires acting only from natural inclination.

Let us return and answer the question: does the morally worthy action require acting only from moral duty? Kant explicitly objects to the view that for an action to be morally worthy, the agent should act only from moral duty. Indeed, Kant emphasizes that duty alone is insufficient, because feelings of sympathy are "one of the impulses that nature has implanted in us to do what the representation of duty alone would not accomplish" (MM 6:457). Clearly, according to Kant, we need more than acting out of moral duty for an action to be morally worthy.

We still have one question to answer: Does the morally worthy action require acting out of both inclination and duty? On the one hand, Kant's example of suicide and his critique for the kindhearted person suggests that Kantianism condemns the view that the morally worthy action requires acting only out of natural inclination. However, these examples do not necessitate that Kant only approves actions when they "were manifestations of respect for the moral law", as Wolf argues. In fact, they suggest that our natural impulses can play a positive role in morality. For instance, in Kant's example of suicide, what prevents the hopeless person from committing suicide is not the moral duty; rather, it is the natural feeling of life. Moreover, according to Kant's critique of the kindhearted person, even if the agent does not perform the action out of moral duty, his action is still worthy of honor, and deserves praise and encouragement. In fact, Kant's account of imperfect duty of helping others entails that we should strengthen and encourage our natural inclinations and feelings, as long as they do not violate any perfect duty. Hence, Kant wants to illustrate the necessity of natural feelings and inclinations in morality.

Additionally, Kant's critique of naturally kindhearted people in the *Anthropology* lectures illustrates that acting both out of natural inclination and out of moral duty are necessary for morality. After criticizing naturally kindhearted people, Kant says that: admittedly both [strength of soul and kindness of soul] must be found united in the same subject in order to bring out what is more ideal than real, namely, the right to the title of magnanimity" (AP 7:293). Hence, it seems that we have strong reason to argue that, for an

action to be a morally worthy one, in Kant's moral theory, it should be performed out of natural inclinations and moral duty.

According to the discussion above, Kant's moral theory does not necessitate that, for an action to be morally worthy, it must only arise from duty or be dominated by moral motivations. However, Kant approves feelings, inclinations, desires and duty; each is necessary in his moral theory, although insufficient. Each of these motives is insufficient, because it can be strong in one situation and weak in another. According to Kant, it is necessary to be motivated by non-moral motives, such as desires, feelings and inclinations. Kant's moral theory entails that if these motives work with each other in harmony, the agent will be motivated by more than one type of motive to perform the morally right action. In this case, the action can be a morally worthy one. For instance, Kant would not object to having a strong desire to be an artist, as long as the agent does not violate any perfect duty. However, desire alone will not motivate the agent to work hard and achieve what he wants. He needs to transform this desire into a duty by taking responsibility for developing his skill or talent, in order to achieve this stage of excellence in painting.

Moreover, the response to Wolf's first objection of the non-ideal Kantian saint interpretation shows that, according to Kant, there is no problem if an agent is motivated by a strong inclination, feeling, duty or desire for something, as long as this motive does not transform into passion, because that will prevent him from recognizing other motives. Hence, all kinds of motives are necessary in Kant's moral theory; we should not allow any motive to blind us from recognizing other ones.

4. Conclusion

Kant has a complex theory in ethics. To defend Kantianism, we need to read Kant's moral theory as a system of ethics. In this system, each component is connected to one another. In this paper, I have defended Kantianism against Wolf's objections. I have responded to Wolf's objections of the non-ideal Kantian interpretation by explaining some of the main principles in Kant's moral theories. I challenged Wolf's objection that Kantianism does not explain supererogatory actions by explaining Kant's account of perfect and imperfect duties, and by arguing that Kant's moral theory leaves room for supererogatory actions under imperfect duties. And I have responded to Wolf's objection that Kantianism does not give an unqualified seal of approval to non-morally directed ideals by explaining Kant's account of passion, and by showing that both Kant and Wolf are on the same page. Both agree that we should not let any motive or interest swallow up the agent's personality.

On the other hand, I have responded to Wolf's objection of the ideal Kantian interpretation – that Kantianism entails that the agent is dominated by the motivation to be moral – by undermining her argument since she bases her objection on a false premise. Finally, I have challenged Wolf's objection that Kantianism contains a “one thought too many” objection by arguing that Kant's moral theory does not necessitate that, for an

action to be morally worthy, it must only arise from duty or be dominated by moral motivations. Therefore, Kantianism does not represent moral sainthood as a human ideal.

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