KANT'S END-IN-ITSELF: THE CASE OF THE COGNITIVELY INCAPACITATED HUMAN

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ABSTRACT

Immanuel Kant's (1785/1998) *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* introduced a paradigm shift in the field of moral philosophy; it shifted the focus from moral realism—the conception that moral principles or laws are mind-independent entities—to a concept of morality that involves human beings actively originating moral principles or laws. This emphasizes the pivotal role human beings play in Kantian moral theory. Kant's notion of humanity permeates throughout the varying formulations of his supreme principle of morality—the Categorical Imperative. This study analyzes Kant's concept of humanity and its relation to the notion of the end-in-itself *vis-à-vis* the dignity of a marginalized group of human beings termed the 'cognitively incapacitated'—humans who lack capacity to make moral or rational decisions. In this thesis, I examine the various interpretations that philosophers, namely Christine Korsgaard (1996), Allen Wood (1998) and Richard Dean (2006), give to the Kantian notion of humanity and further explore their implications for the dignity of the cognitively incapacitated human. I defend the claim that though the cognitively incapacitated human may not measure up to the standard as an end-in-itself, they ought to be accorded dignity and respect that supersedes that accorded to nonhuman sentient beings. The basis of this claim is that "the will", in Kant's view, is the primary principle for ascribing dignity and respect to sentient beings. The cognitively incapacitated human does not possess the full complement of the will, that is, they are unable to make moral choices, yet they possess an aspect of the will, namely, the capacity to make choices through the motivation from sensuous inclinations. Hence, they have to be accorded with a certain degree of dignity and respect.

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INTRODUCTION

The main problem of this study concerns the appropriateness and coherency of the Kantian interpretation of humanity and the impact of such interpretation on "the cognitively incapacitated human", to wit, humans who lack the capacity to make moral or rational decisions. At the center of Immanuel Kant's moral theory is his Humanity formula which generally states that humanity ought to be treated as an end-in-itself and not as a mere means of obtaining another end (Kant, 1785/1998, p. 38). This formula undergirds the varying grades of inter-relational worth that humans bestow on their fellow humans, humans on non-human sentient beings, and by extension, humans on their environment. What is of concern regards how to situate the "cognitively incapacitated" within the context of Kant's notion of humanity.

Immanuel Kant's major concern in his *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (hereafter referred to as *Groundwork)* is to firmly establish a supreme principle of morality (Korsgaard, 1785/1998, p. x). He refers to his proposed supreme principle of morality as the Categorical Imperative. He further states that the Categorical Imperative primarily prescribes the form that moral laws should take but does not prescribe the content of moral laws (Korsgaard, 1785/1998, pp. xv-xvi). Kant's project, similar to the revolutions of Copernicus' Heliocentrism and Karl Popper's Falsificationism (1963) in the philosophy of science, is considered as a major revolution instituted in moral philosophy.[1] This revolution in moral philosophy results from his rejection of the Epicurean view that views morality as having its ground or justification in experience or the external world. On the contrary, Kant grounds morality on reasoning.

[1] I find Kant's project is similar to 'heliocentrism' and 'falsificationism' on the basis that 'heliocentrism' and 'falsificationism' introduced new paradigms in scientific inquiry, that is, in their respective epochs, heliocentrism shifted from an earth-centred universe to sun-centred universe, and falsificationism also abandoned induction as a method of scientific inquiry for deduction as a method of scientific inquiry. Similarly, Kant moved away from the popular view that considered man as passive recipients of moral principles to a view that considered man as authors of moral principles.

Before Kant's *Groundwork*, Epicurus postulated and defended the theory that an action is morally worthy if it maximizes happiness over pain (Kant, 1797 /1991, p. 273). The theory implies consequentialism whereby moral worth is based on the action's effect, that is, happiness and pleasure. Happiness, for instance, is an object discoverable only through sense perception or experience, and hence, is identifiable in the corporeal world. Epicurus' theory is also established on the basis of moral realism. Moral realism generally advances the claim that moral principles exist independent of their knowability by humans (Sayre-McCord, 2023, para. 1). The implication of moral realism is that it assigns to humans the role of passivity—mere recipients—in the formulation of moral principles.

In the *Groundwork*, Kant projects the human being as the centre of morality. In other words, humans by their possession of rational capacity become the authors of moral principles (Korsgaard, 1785/1998, p. vii). Thus, he purges morality of any empirical constraints. Kant begins this project by distinguishing values that are good in themselves from those that are good by the contingency on their effects. Kant asserts

> It is impossible to think of anything at all in the world, or indeed even beyond it, that could be considered good without limitation except a good will. Understanding, wit, judgments...courage, resolution and perseverance in one's plans...are undoubtedly good and desirable for many purposes, but they can also be extremely evil and harmful if the will which is to make use of these gifts of nature...is not good. (Kant, 1785/1998, p. 7)

For Kant, the 'good will' is the only thing good without limitation or qualification. The good will is good in itself but not by the end(s) it produces (Kant, 1785/1998, pp. 7-8). If the good will were considered good due to its end product, then Kant would have landed in the empirical trench, that is, consequentialism. On the other hand, he identifies health, understanding, courage, bravery, benevolence, happiness and sympathy, among others, as conditionally good since they are valued based on their accomplishments. What does it mean for a person to act out of good will, and how

does the good will relate to humanity or rationality? Readers of Kant are divided into two senses—narrow and wide—in their interpretation of what Kant's concept of humanity means.

For Christine Korsgaard, Kant's sense of humanity is coterminous with rational nature. In her view, Kant uses humanity and rational nature interchangeably in his work. She claims that by human beings' possession of rational nature, they must be treated as ends-in-themselves. Furthermore, this feature allows humanity to propose ends or purposes for itself (Korsgaard, 1996, p. 110). Allen Wood (1998; 2008) and Onora O'Neill (1998) agree with Korsgaard's claim of synonymity between humanity and rational nature. Wood claims that not all biological species fall into the category of humanity except those that are self-legislating. Self-legislation, according to him, is made possible by a rational nature. Hence, for Wood, as for Korsgaard, rationality is the distinctive characteristic of humanity (Wood, 1998, pp. 189, 193/ 2008, p. 88). O'Neill also confirms Wood's interpretation of Kant's notion of humanity by stating that while some entities may be of derivative value (a means to an end), only rational nature has intrinsic value, i.e., an end-in-itself (O'Neill, 1998, p. 214). This interpretation of Kant's notion will be termed "rationality-sense" or "broad-sense of humanity" for it includes all humans who exercise at least a minimal form of reason as part of humanity. In Chapter Two, I will further investigate Wood's and Korsgaard's respective accounts of humanity and rational nature.

On the other side of the divide is Richard Dean (2006), who rejects the rationality-reading of Kant's notion of humanity. Dean reduces the notion of humanity to good will. For him, Kant uses the notion of humanity coterminously with "good will" but not with mere rational nature (pp. 71-2, 77). His point is that acting by reason, not merely having the capacity to act, is the prerequisite qualification of humanity and that acting according to reason is morally good. Hence, that action is morally worthy. Victor Chidi Wolemonwu (2020) agrees with Dean. According to

Wolemonwu, humanity as an end-in-itself is that which involves a will that is motivated by moral principles, but not by sensuous inclinations (2020, p. 221). This class of views will be termed "the good will-sense" or "the narrow-sense" of Kant's humanity. This sense of humanity excludes humans whose actions are guided or motivated by sensuous inclinations, or any other force except reason from the category of humanity. "The good will sense" differs from "the rationality sense" on the basis that the former requires one's maxims to be morally good, that is, directed by reason, in order for one to be considered as possessing humanity, whereas the latter requires one to be merely capable of discerning morally good from wrong maxims as the requirement for humanity. "The rationality sense" does not necessarily require maxims to be morally good. It is pertinent to note that a maxim, in Kant's description, is a principle formulated by oneself to guide one's own will and actions (Kant, 1785/1998, p. 13; Allison, 1990, p. 87).[2]

Therefore, this study aims to test the inherent consistency of these divergent senses of Kant's notion of humanity. It also looks at the bearing of these senses on the cognitively incapacitated human being, that is, whether such a human being is to be treated as an end-in-itself or a mere means to an end, and the implications thereof. I propose a view that takes rationality as supervening[3] on or arising from an appropriate configuration of the will. In doing so, I argue for a relational feature that connects the cognitively incapacitated human with rational nature; hence, this relational feature serves as the basis for granting dignity or respect to the cognitively incapacitated human.

The pivotal questions I will examine are:

- What is the distinctive feature Kant assigns to the notion of humanity?

[2] Kant also refers to maxims as subjective principles of volition or actions. However, maxims can also assume an objective sense when its application is expanded to all rational beings which is then referred to as moral law (Korsgaard, 1785/1998, p. xviii; Kant, 1785/1998, p. 13).

[3] The term 'supervening' is defined and discussed in Chapter Three.

- Are the good will-reading and rationality-reading mutually incompatible in capturing the essence of Kant's humanity?
- What is the place of the cognitively incapacitated human in the divergent senses of Kant's humanity?

To the first question, the study reveals that Kant defines humanity, in one context, as humans who are oriented toward morally good maxims, while in a different context, as humans who are merely capable of formulating moral maxims regardless of whether the maxims are morally good or bad. To the next question, the study holds that the "goodwill-reading" is mutually included in the rationality reading since an agent whose maxims are oriented toward morally good actions is also an agent who is capable of formulating both morally good and bad maxims. On the contrary, the "rationality-reading" is not mutually included in the "goodwill-reading", in that the former includes agents who are oriented toward morally bad maxims as part of humanity since these agents are also capable of formulating good maxims. The latter excludes agents who are engaged in morally bad maxims from being part of humanity; it restricts humanity solely to agents whose maxims are morally good. On the last question, a critical analysis of the different senses of Kant's humanity shows that these senses do not regard the cognitively incapacitated as part of humanity; that is, they are not ends in themselves. This is because the cognitively incapacitated human lacks the capacity to reason or engage in moral discourse. That notwithstanding, the divergent readings of humanity accept, though without argument, that the cognitively incapacitated is deserving of dignity and respect.

To defend the thesis that the incapacitated human ought to be accorded with a certain level of dignity and respect, this study will proceed as follows: In the first chapter, I give a synoptic overview of Kant's *Groundwork* to set the tone for detailed discussions on the subject matter of

this study in subsequent chapters. The chapter shows that Kant uses the term humanity, in one context, to refer to humans who subscribe to morally good maxims. In a different context, he interprets humanity as humans who have the capacity of merely assessing moral situations but not necessarily opting for morally good maxims. The next chapter analyses the varying senses—the good will-reading and rationality-reading—of Kantian humanity or rational nature. The good will-reading advances supports for the interpretation that humanity is attributed to humans who subscribe to morally good maxims as against morally bad maxims. On the other hand, it is shown that the rationality-reading widens the scope of humanity to capture all humans who can merely distinguish morally good from bad maxims. In the final chapter, I examine the different senses of humanity and argue in justification of why and the degree to which the cognitively incapacitated human ought to be accorded dignity. The analysis here reveals that both the good will and rationality readings do not ascribe humanity to the cognitively incapacitated though they claim, without justification, that the cognitively incapacitated should be accorded with dignity and respect. It is in line with this justificatory gap that I argue that since the cognitively incapacitated possess will, however defective their will may be, they are deserving of dignity and respect higher than that accorded to nonhuman sentient beings.

The methodology used in this study centres on relevant contemporary literature on Kant's Humanity formula, specifically, on Christine Korsgaard (1996), Allen Wood (1998, 2008), and Richard Dean (2006). The primary target is to examine the various senses of Kant's notion of humanity as advanced by Korsgaard, Wood and Dean in order to test their coherency and their consideration for the cognitively incapacitated human.

CHAPTER ONE: Overview

This chapter gives a synoptic review of the notion of cognitive incapacitation and Kant's *Groundwork*. First, it briefly analyses the notion of cognitive incapacitation to stipulate the mental condition that is at play in this thesis. Cognitive incapacitation is construed as a mental condition in which one's rational capacity is permanently damaged, and one is unable to participate in moral and/or rational discourse. Next, an overview of Kant's *Groundwork* is given to tease out what he takes to be humanity. The overview shows that Kant weaves in between two senses: one who can formulate maxims, irrespective of the moral worth, and one who formulates only morally good maxims. The aim is to ascertain the role reason plays in Kant's notion of humanity and its impact on the moral status of the cognitively incapacitated. The chapter concludes that Kant does not regard the cognitively incapacitated as part of humanity, that is, as end-in-itself, since the cognitively incapacitated human cannot engage in rational discourse.

Cognitive Incapacitation

There is the need at this stage to briefly and contextually define the mental condition that characterises cognitive incapacitation since the term designates a class of humans who are central to this thesis. Definition of the mental condition will help situate the cognitively incapacitated within Kant's notion of humanity. The mental condition that is closely related to cognitive incapacitation is what Kant calls "mental derangement (mania)".

Kant claims,

> Mental derangement indicates an arbitrary course in the patient's thoughts, which has its own (subjective) rule but runs contrary to the objective rule, which is in agreement with the laws of experience. (Kant, 1798/2006, p. 96)

Kant asserts that an agent suffering from mental derangement encounters an "arbitrary course" in their thought. What does Kant mean by "arbitrary course"? Kant does not explicitly explain what

the "arbitrary course" is but he comments that in a situation where one supposedly intentionally commits an accident, to ascertain whether or not the person is to be held responsible for the accident, it is appropriate to investigate "whether the accused at the time of the act was in possession of his natural faculties of understanding and judgement..." (Kant, 1798, p. 108). Though still not explicit, Kant seems to suppose that mental derangement is a case where the person is unaware of the cognitive disorder. To be in possession of one's natural faculty of understanding and judgement implies being aware and in control of one's cognitive faculty.

Krista Thomason (2021) also explains the "arbitrary course" by asserting that

> Indeed, this part of Kant's account is the most consistent across the works where he discusses mental illness: some mental illnesses involve disordered thinking that the subject can identify as disordered, while others involve disordered thinking that the subject does not or cannot identify as disordered. (p. 199)

It is still unclear what Kant means by saying that an agent cannot identify their disordered thinking as defective. Is this partial disordered thinking or radical (extreme) disordered thinking? In the first instance, the agent's rationality or consciousness may be functional, although not to the point of identifying aspects of their thought or reasoning as resulting from mental illness. In this case, the agent involved can still be attributed with rationality since the agent's rationality functions or operates to some extent. This situation is illustrated in the movie *The Three Faces of Eve*, in which a young lady, Eve White, suffers from multiple personality syndrome, though is unaware of it at the initial stage.[4] These multiple personalities are Eve White (the timid character), Eve Black (the wild character) and Jane (the stable character; the median between the earlier two characters). Though the characters switch occasionally, at the earlier stage, Eve White is unconscious of this defect, that is, when there is a switch from Eve White to Eve Black; on the other hand, viewers are

[4] More prosaic illustrations include persons suffering from psychoses, e.g., bipolar, schizophrenia, when unable to grasp reality.

made to understand that Eve Black is conscious of all the operations of Eve White. This, however, is suggestive that Eve White, when she is of herself, apprehends the right operations of her thought or thinking capacity but is oblivious of the mental illness or mental switch. Later in the movie, a psychiatrist assists Eve White in appreciating the personality switches. The crux of this illustration is to show the possibility for an agent to be partially and rationally active at one point and at another point mentally defective, with intermittent switches between the two. Here, in my view, the agent is not completely deranged since the agent intermittently and inadvertently switches between the mental illness state and the normal self-state.

The second possible interpretation is that the agent is completely deranged. The agent's mental derangement is sustained throughout the agent's lifetime. It is even possible that an agent may have been born with this mental derangement or had acquired it at infancy. More so, some agents acquire the permanent mental defect at later stages in life. Hence, the second interpretation conceives of the "arbitrary course" as an attribute of a person whose cognitive faculty is irremediably and permanently disordered to the point of the victim's loss of consciousness[5].

I think that the appropriate construal of the claim, "the subject does not or cannot identify as disordered" is a reference to the second interpretation but not the first.

> In many diseases of the mind, when the imagination turns savage, and the patient's head resounds with great, unheard of things, or he is cast into the depths of depression and tormented by empty terrors, the mind has been dethroned, and bleeding, the patient is likely to produce better results than reasoning with him. In treating a deranged person, it is better

[5] The concept of consciousness, it must be admitted, is a slippery concept to pin down. However, it is not out of place to assert that the lynchpin of autonomy or freedom is consciousness. Consciousness makes it possible for one to identify the possible choices and their respective restrictions available to oneself. Hence, it is consciousness that gives rationality—in the broad sense, i.e., the ability to make decisions— cognitive significance. This is not to suppose that consciousness is equivalent to rationality or an end-in-itself even in the minimalist reading of Kantian humanity since it is logically possible for one to be conscious of oneself that their actions or thoughts are determined but not free. Hence, I would like to say that rationality and/or freedom are not necessary but rather probable consequences of consciousness. Nonetheless, if one is conscious of their free choice, then it is intelligible, in the minimalist sense, to attribute an end-in-itself to oneself. The relation between consciousness and rationality is a topic to be looked at in a different project.

> to use large doses of hellebore than to rely on the healing power of sound reason. (Kant, 1786/2007, p. 185)

The above quotation is in support of my interpretation that "the subject does not or cannot identify as disordered"[6] as a radical or extreme cognitive incapacitation or disorder. The euphemism used by Kant in the expression "the mind has been dethroned" implies derangement, and the expression "doses of hellebore" represents a physician (doctor). At the same time, "sound reason" refers to the philosopher or the psychologist. The philosopher's or psychologist's remedy appeals to an agent's mind or rationality—regardless of how much consciousness is left in the agent—in order to cure the agent of the mental illness.[7] Yet, in this case, there is not even an iota of rationality left in the agent for the philosopher or psychologist to operate on. Such therapy, as Kant claims, only works in a situation where the agent is at least somehow aware of their mental defect. I therefore claim that the reference to cognitive incapacitation as used in this thesis must be understood in the second sense of mental derangement, that is, complete loss of one's rational capacity. It is by this sense that one is viewed as cognitively incapacitated; hence, loses the capacity to make moral or rational decisions. I, therefore, take extreme cognitive incapacitation to be a situation in which an agent's rational capacity is completely destroyed to the point that their sensuous aspect absolutely dominates.[8]

How the cognitively incapacitated as synthesised into Kant's notion of humanity seems mystifying. This mysticism results from how Kant deploys certain key concepts—humanity, good

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[6] Thomason 2021, p. 199.

[7] This is exemplified in the movie, *The Three Faces of Eve*, illustrated above. Since the victim, Eve, still had partial awareness of her condition, it was a psychiatrist, but not a doctor, who handled her case of multiple personality.

[8] Cases in which victims suffer from hypochondria, e.g., multiple personality syndrome as portrayed in the movie, *The Three Faces of Eve*, is exempted from the focus of this paper since such scenario also has its peculiar ramifications or dynamics—the personal identity crisis it portrays results from persistent vacillation between conscious state and unconscious state.

will, rationality, end-in-itself, etc.—in couching and justifying the formula. These pertinent concepts will occupy the subsequent chapters.

Kant's Groundwork

In the *Groundwork*, Kant, like many moral theorists, projects humans as the focal point of morality not because of their mere possession of rationality but because of the significance that Kant assigns to rationality in issues of morality. For Kant, individual humans, by virtue of being rational, are the authors of their own moral principles (Korsgaard, 1785/1998, p. vii). Put differently, it is the role of reason, but not that of sensuous experience, to generate principles that are morally good. He purges morality of any empirical constraints. This chapter gives a synoptic review of Kant's *Groundwork* with the purpose of analysing the role reason plays in his interpretation of the notion of humanity. I defend the claim that Kant is inconsistent in his interpretation of the notion of humanity and therefore it is difficult to ascertain the exact role of rational nature in his moral theory. My position stems from the point that Kant slips between two senses of humanity: as humans who, by virtue of reason, are capable of engaging in moral discourse; and as humans who, by virtue of reason, opt for morally good maxims as against morally bad maxims. This analysis will, in subsequent chapters, help us ascertain the position of humans who lack the capacity for rational discourse—the cognitively incapacitated—in Kant's moral theory.

Kant starts this project by identifying values that are good in themselves from those that are good by their contingent effects. Kant asserts that the 'good will' is the only thing good without limitation or qualification. The good will is good in itself but not by the consequences it produces (Kant, 1785/1998, pp. 7-8). On the other hand, he identifies health, bravery, benevolence, happiness and sympathy, among others, as conditionally good since they are valued based on their

accomplishments (Kant, 1785/1998, p. 8). What does it mean for a person to act out of good will, and how does the good will relate to rationality?

To the above question, Kant distinguishes three kinds of motives that could bring about a person's action: immediate inclination, further inclination, and duty (Kant, 1785/1998, pp. 10-11). He claims that an action motivated by immediate inclination is done for other purposes and has no insight into what the moral law prescribes or the dictates of duty. This is to say that such actions are contra-duties, and examples of such actions are false promises and cheating. In the second, though, in accord with duty, the agent acts not with the aim of fulfilling duty but rather with a different accomplishment in view (Kant, 1785/1998, pp. 10-11). For instance, a person may choose to act benevolently not for the sake of duty, but because that action may cause other persons to cherish him or the action may bring happiness unto oneself. It should be noted that, unlike false promises, benevolence can be done for the sake of duty without any ulterior ends. For Kant, actions done out of the first two motives are not done out of good will; hence, they are not morally worthy. On the contrary, only actions from duty are done out of the good will; to act from duty is to act for the sake of duty and nothing else. He asserts

> On the other hand, to preserve one's life is a duty, and besides everyone has an immediate inclination to do so. But on this account the often anxious care that most people take of it still has no inner worth and their maxim has no moral content. They look after their lives in conformity with duty but not from duty. On the other hand, if adversity and hopeless grief have quite taken away the taste for life; if an unfortunate man, strong of soul and more indignant about his fate than despondent or dejected, wishes for death and yet preserves his life without loving it, not from inclination or fear but from duty, then his maxim has moral content. (Kant, 1785/1998, p.11)

Kant argues that acting in "conformity with duty" has no moral worth since such an act presupposes that one aims to avoid repercussions thereof or rather attain certain gains. If one desists from committing murder in order to avoid being imprisoned, then one's decision is in "conformity with duty". This is because one hopes to avoid the bad consequence that awaits

anyone who commits murder. These repercussions or gains are informed or determined by our experiences of the external world. Kant instead advances that when an action is done "from duty", the action is done for the sake of duty, hence out of the good will. For instance, an act of preserving life is done for the sake of duty or "from duty", if the agent performs the act not in anticipation of any empirical consequences, for instance, to obtain happiness. The act of life preservation should have its motivation solely from reason if it is to be counted as an act done "from duty", hence, out of "the good will".

To act "from duty", in the view of Kant, is to act from respect for the law. How does one identify these laws for which one must have respect? To look at how the laws, according to Kant, are derived, let us first distinguish between the two senses of law, i.e., formal law and subjective law, which Kant proffers. He writes,

> For when we think of a will of this kind, then although a will that *stands under the law* may be bound to this law using some interest, a will that is itself the supreme lawgiver cannot possibly, as such, depend upon some interest; for, a will that is dependent in this way would itself need yet another law that would limit the interest of its self-love to the condition of validity for universal law. (Kant, 1785/1998, p. 40)

Formal law, namely, legal laws (e.g., tort law and criminal law), for Kant, is given to oneself by an authority other than one's own self. Kant claims that one's adherence to such law is motivated by the consequence(s) that accompanies the law; hence, he claims that one "stands under" such law. It is in the interest of the person to adhere to the law. On the other hand, a law authored by oneself through reason is a subjective law which is meant to guide one's own actions. A law, not to cause harm to others, is a subjective law if it is given by oneself to guide one's own actions. Kant refers to these subjective laws as maxims. Kant considers the laws imposed on oneself by one's own reason as morally good laws.

Kant acknowledges that two types of laws govern humans—laws of understanding and the laws of nature (Kant, 1785/1998, pp. 17, 24). The laws of nature, arguably, belong to the empirical world which are discoverable via sensuous perception or *a posteriori*. The utilitarians —Bentham and Mill—leverage this type of law to build their respective hedonistic moral theories. Kant substantiates this by asserting,

> The human being feels within himself a powerful counterweight to all the commands of duty, which reason represents to him as so deserving of the highest respect - the counterweight of his needs and inclinations, the entire satisfaction of which he sums up under the name happiness. Now reason issues its precepts unremittingly, "without thereby promising anything to the inclination, and so, as it were, with disregard and contempt for those claims, which are so impetuous and besides so apparently equitable (and refuse to be neutralized by any command). But from this there arises a natural dialectic, that is, a propensity to rationalize against those strict laws of duty and to cast doubt upon their validity, or at least their purity of strictness, and where possible, to make them better suited to our wishes and inclinations, that is, to corrupt them at their basis and to destroy all their dignity—something that even common practical reason cannot, in the end, call good. (Kant, 1785/1998, p. 17-18)

It must be noted that hedonistic theories consider pleasure or happiness as the ultimate consequential value of moral actions. In other words, according to utilitarians, happiness or pleasure ought to motivate our actions. The worth of actions is informed by experience in order to identify happiness as the law that guides these actions, and here, rationality plays a subsidiary role to sense experience. However, according to Kant, it is erroneous to premise the supreme law of morality on experience, for experience, at best, furnishes us with consequences that are indeterminate of actions. In other words, a particular action could realize multiple consequences aside from our desired effect, say happiness.

On the other hand, the laws of understanding are discoverable *a priori*—by reason alone. Kant contends that duties, that is, the laws that our actions must be in respect of, are identifiable through reason. Reason is what aids humans to comprehend the laws of understanding (Kant, 1785/1998, p. 24). He asserts that it is the highest vocation of reason to direct the will toward moral

principles (Kant, 1785/1998, p. 10). Reason must precede sensuous inclinations in determining the will's direction. This presupposes that the will is involved in a tangle between reason and desire for incentives to author principles. The success of sensuous inclinations in motivating the will leads to laws that are not morally worthy. Rather, the will, under the tutelage of reason, produces morally apt principles or laws. Due to the will's entanglement between reason and sensuous inclinations, Kant formulates his supreme principle of morality which he calls the Categorical Imperative.

Kant proposes two different kinds of imperatives: hypothetical and categorical. The Hypothetical Imperative is illustrated as: If you want to be a good student, you must always attend lectures and study hard (Kant, 1785/1998, pp. 25-26). Here, attending lectures and studying hard is not an act good in itself; rather, its goodness is inferred from its possible or actual attainment of good studentship. But as indicated in preceding paragraphs, the means identified herein may not necessarily bring forth the desired result: good studentship. It must also be noted that the Hypothetical Imperative is informed by our empirical experiences of the world. This is derived from our observation of a seeming uniformity of occurrences in the universe or corporeal world. It is only a 'seeming uniformity' because future occurrences can disconfirm our supposed uniform past experiences.[9]

In contrast to the Hypothetical Imperative, Kant asserts that the Categorical Imperative presents neither possible nor actual ends for executing an action; instead, reason is an end-in-itself. For him, the Categorical Imperative is *a priori* (Kant, 1785/1998, pp. 25-26). The permissibility of action lies in the fact that it is in itself good or valuable. The Categorical imperative exerts a commanding force on human beings by virtue of the fact that they exercise both rational and

[9] Karl Popper (1963) claimed that inductive reasoning upon which the Hypothetical Imperative relies does not guarantee the truth of their conclusions.

sensuous capacities. Kant claims that rationality is a property of the will. This means that the presence of the will is what makes it possible for an agent to engage in decision making that is influenced by reason. Rationality enables the will to explore and generate its moral maxims. The will legislates its maxims, which must be universalized as binding on all rational beings.

For Kant, the moral law is implied solely by the good will. If a maxim like 'one must not commit murder' is motivated by sensuous inclinations, then the maxim is deemed as resulting from a bad will. On the other hand, if the maxim is motivated by reason, then the maxim originates from a good will. It can therefore be inferred that a will can either be good or bad. The maxim originates from a subjective perspective as a particular will gives the maxim to itself. The maxim, for instance, that prohibits suicide, assumes an objective necessity if the maxim's application is extended to all rational beings. A maxim, 'the prohibition of suicide', according to Kant, as remarked by Korsgaard, is authored by an agent to guide the agent's own actions. On the other hand, a maxim becomes objective, that is a law, if the agent anticipates universalizing this maxim in a world of rational beings of which the agent is a member (Korsgaard, 1785/1998, p. xviii).[10] The will that authors the law becomes both the sovereign and a subject of that law.[11] The next section further pins down the significance of rational nature in Kant's moral theory by analysing Kant's formulations of his supreme principle of morality, namely, the Categorical Imperative.

The Formulas

Kant gives four formulations of the Categorical Imperative, i.e., the formula of the universal law, the formula of humanity, the formula of the kingdom of ends, and the formula of

[10] This constitutes the first formula (the formula of universal law) of the Categorical Imperative. Arguably, it is also considered as the basis of all the three formulas of the Categorical Imperative.
[11] For details on subjective and formal law refer to pp. 2-3.

the autonomy of the will.[12] Briefly, the formula of the universal law requires that one acts on maxims of which one can consistently will the maxims to become a universal law. This formula is termed the formula of universal law (Kant, 1785/1998, pp. 31-32). This formula states that a maxim that fails to meet the requirement is engaged in either practical contradiction (a contradiction in conception) or contradiction of will.[13] Kant asserts,

> We must be able to will that a maxim of our action becomes a universal law: this is the canon of moral appraisal of action in general. Some actions are so constituted that their maxim cannot even be *thought* of without contradiction as a universal law of nature; far less could one *will* that it *should* become such. In the case of others that inner impossibility is indeed not to be found, but it is still impossible to will that their maxim be raised to the universality of a law of nature because such a will would contradict itself. Either type of contradiction renders the action morally insignificant. (Kant, 1785/1998, p. 33)

To illustrate this, a false promise, in Kant's view, is considered a practical contradiction since universalising a lying or false promise will render the promise valueless or utterly insignificant in a moral world. Nobody will trust or believe any promise made by another person. At the extreme, one may not even trust a promise made to one's own self. He refers to the duty being contravened when practical contradiction is committed as a perfect duty. A perfect duty seems to fit well into Kant's non-consequentialist view. This is so in the sense that the moral acceptability or otherwise of a maxim of perfect duty solely depends on a will guided by reason. The perfect duty precludes one from trading off one's own or another's rationality for the rationality of other persons. For example, one is not morally permitted to commit suicide in order to sustain another person's life. The application of a perfect duty does not grant situational exemptions; that is, the agent is obliged,

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[12] It should be noted that, though Kant gives four formulations of the Categorical Imperative in his *Groundwork*, there is debate about how many formulae Kant actually provides. Some split the formula of universal law from the formula of the universal law of nature. The formula of the autonomy of the will will be treated in subsequent chapters. Our concern in this project is not about the debate herein identified.

[13] Korsgaard advances the term "practical contradiction" as the right interpretation of Kant's notion of "contradiction in conception" (Korsgaard, 1996, pp. 81-87). On the contrary, O'Neill uses the term "logical contradiction" as the appropriate interpretation of "contradiction in conception" (O'Neill, 1989, pp. 132-133). The examination of these seeming opposing views is beyond the scope of this paper.

in all relevant situations, to fulfill that duty (Wood, 2008, pp. 167-8). For instance, one is not to be selective of situations in which a promise ought or ought not to be fulfilled; rather in all times that promises are made, they ought to be fulfilled.

In view of Kant's "no-exemption requirement" on perfect duties, an agent who is faced with a dilemma of either committing suicide or giving a false promise in order to avoid suicide presents a situation in which the "no-exemption requirement" seems to break down. This is because one of the duties may have to be dropped to give way to the other duty. It presents a situation of the clash of perfect duties, yet a decision still has to be made. To prioritise one duty over another may perhaps depend on the demand of the situation occurrent, that is, the duty that is best required for the situation.

On the other hand, the contradiction of the will ensues when a person forms a maxim but is unwilling to universalize it. Kant asserts that this contradiction breaches the principles of imperfect duties. An illustration of maxims that breach imperfect duties is one's failure to develop one's own talent and the failure to be benevolent. In contrast to the contradiction in conception, the contradiction in will results if an agent conceives a maxim as a duty and is yet unwilling to make that maxim motivate the agent's own actions. What may cause the agent's unwillingness seems unclear. But to this, Kant asserts, "How far should a human expend his means in practicing beneficence? Surely not to the extent that he himself would finally come to need the beneficence of others." (Kant, 1797/1991, p. 248). O'Neill also remarks that "which particular forms of help should be offered or accepted by finite rational beings must vary. The types of helping and being helped that are vital to sustaining agency will vary in different situations and with different sorts of finitude." (O'Neill, 1989, p. 134). It can be inferred from both Kant and O'Neill that imperfect duty has practical limitations in the sense that the duty may be binding on an agent in one instance,

but in another similar instance, the duty may not be binding. The circumstances may dictate whether or not to attend to such duties. To illustrate this, if a duty of beneficence comes against an agent's duty to help oneself, the agent is permitted to forgo the duty of beneficence. Thus, one's failure to attend to such duties may cause a contradiction in will. This is unlike the perfect duty, which Kant claims to be binding in all relevant situations.[14]

The formula of humanity prescribes that our actions should treat humanity, be it in the person of another or our own person, as an end-in-itself and not merely a means to an end (Kant, 1785/1998, p. 38). This formula is grounded on the fact that humans are rational beings and possess dignity, which must be recognized as such. This view is asserted by Kant as follows: "...but that which constitutes the condition under which alone something can be an end-in-itself has not merely a relative worth, that is, a price, but an inner [moral] worth, that is, dignity" (Kant, 1785/1998, p. 42). For Kant, dignity is premised on the basis that the human is of an unconditional value, i.e., rational being.

It is by virtue of human rationality that a human is able to undertake the task prescribed by the formula of universal law. Through rationality, a human is able to generate maxims and act upon them. Rationality also facilitates a human's recognition or appreciation of fellow humans. For Kant, the rational capacity of humans distinguishes them from other beings like animals and inanimate beings. Animals and inanimate beings are assumed to lack conscience and the power to reason. Their will is only regulated by their appetitive or sensual part, and they lack the capacity to differentiate morally good actions from morally bad ones. There is a challenge amongst philosophers regarding what Kant means by "rational beings", and whether he uses it in reference

[14] Detailed discussion of the perfect/imperfect bifurcation is beyond the scope of this project.

to the entire human population or a special section of humanity.[15] This sets the question of where to locate cognitively incapacitated persons since their rational capacities have been utterly hampered, and they are unable to discern right actions from wrong actions. We will discuss this further in Chapter Three.

The last formula, which is the kingdom of ends, stipulates that we should act on maxims through which one considers oneself a law-making member of a kingdom of ends (Kant, 1785/1998, p. 39). The kingdom of ends here refers to the amalgamation of all rational beings, as persons, governed by a common objective set of moral laws. This common objective set of moral laws, as already shown, is that which is authored by the rational beings in the kingdom themselves. Kant claims that as beings governed by reason, we formulate our own moral laws; in other words, the laws, as Kant puts it, are

> Nothing other than the representation of the law in itself, which can, of course, occur only in a rational being, insofar as it and not the hoped-for effect is the determining ground of the will... (Kant, 1785/1998, p. 14)

The moral law is that which is given by no other than oneself as a member of a union of rational beings. This implies that by obeying the laws, one is only obeying laws set forth by oneself in the kingdom of ends. This idea of Kant's is reminiscent of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's (1895) concept of a general will wherein people willingly integrate their particular or individual will into a collective will for the good of the collective interest (pp. 10-12). The wills originate from the people themselves, hence their self-governance. Similar to Rousseau's concept of general will, the kingdom of ends serves as checks on the will against the influence of emotions or feelings in order to ensure the good of humanity or moral beings.[16] The checks are important on the grounds that

[15] This challenge is one of the main Kantian disputes for philosophers like Richard Dean (2006), Christine Korsgaard (1996), and Allen Wood (1998) among others.

[16] Kant's formula of the kingdom of ends extends his ethical theory from the individuals to the community of people bind together through their pursuit of the highest ethical good. For Kant, the highest ethical good is only attainable

man's will is entangled between reason which bears morally good maxims, and sensuous inclination which brings forth morally bad maxims. Hence, the kingdom of ends is meant to restrict humans to generate and act on only morally good maxims.

From the above, one can see that the notion of rationality underpins Kant's formula or principle of humanity. This rationality permeates all three facets of his formulas either directly or indirectly, and it is one of the key elements that serves as the interconnectivity among the three formulas. In the formula of universal law, it is only by reason that one can generate subjective maxims to guide one's actions, and also through reason that one can test it for its universal viability. Rationality, with regard to the formula of humanity, projects human beings as beings with inherent dignity who deserve to be treated as ends. Without rationality, humans would be no different from other beings—governed solely by sensual experience—which, according to Kant, have no intrinsic value in themselves and could only serve as a means to attaining a further end (Kant, 1797/1991, p. 238). It has been made clear in the formula of the kingdom of ends that the kingdom is constituted by humans who are governed by moral laws that are self-legislated by each individual of the kingdom by virtue of their possession of rational capacity, hence serving as both ruled and legislators of that kingdom. The Categorical Imperative, he claims, is binding on all rational beings. Because of the significance of the notion of humanity in Kant's moral theory, the next section attempts a dissection of rationality as Kant has deployed in his *Groundwork*.

The Notion of Humanity

In Kant's view, human virtue or dignity lies in the fact that humans possess rationality. In other words, humanity is undergirded by the ability of human beings to reason even in the face of

through a commonwealth of rational beings. The collective pursuit of the good and the individual and collective right also serve as the fabric of Kantian political constitution (Kant, 1793, p. 123).

obstacles presented by sensual experience. He also adds that the only incentive for a morally right action is human's rational power; hence, humanity is an end-in-itself. Kant's formula that touches directly on the notion of humanity is "*So, act that you use humanity, whether in your person or the person of any other, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means*" (Kant, 1785/1998, p. 38). Korsgaard identifies two main parts of this formulation. One part prescribes an unconditional end, and the second identifies humanity as the unconditional end (Korsgaard, 1996, p. 110). Both aspects of the formula raise serious controversy among philosophers.

As pointed out, Kant uses humanity synonymously with rational nature, i.e., person. Kant states:

> Beings the existence of which rests not on our will but on nature, if they are beings without reason, still have only a relative worth as means and are therefore called things, whereas rational beings are called persons because their nature already marks them out as an end-in-itself. (Kant, 1785/1998, p. 37)

One can see from the above that Kant uses rational nature interchangeably with humanity. By this, he distinguishes beings without rationality as *things* and beings with rationality as persons. The attribution of this synonymity to Kant is not contentious; rather, what is contentious is how Kant interprets rationality or the rational being. Not only does he use humanity, rational nature, and persons synonymously, but he also uses human beings interchangeably with the preceding terms. In different instances, he uses human beings instead of humans, rational beings or persons to mean the same thing. This is illustrated in the following, "A human being, however, is not a thing and hence not something that can be used merely as means, but must in all his actions always be regarded as an end-in-itself" (Kant, 1785/1998, p. 38). Philosophers differ in their interpretation of "rationality". In the above quotation, the use of rational beings does not specify what feature of rationality marks it out as an end. Does Kant, by "rational being", refer to a being who only undertakes morally worthy actions, or does he mean anyone who has the propensity to make a

moral judgement, i.e., know what is morally right from morally wrong? Textual evidence from Kant's *Groundwork* will be of great help in settling this dispute.

Kant writes, "Rational nature is distinguished from the rest of nature by this, that it sets itself an end. This end would be the matter of every good will" (Kant, 1785/1998, p. 44). Here, Kant identifies rational nature as equivalent to using *a priori* means to set an end for oneself and that the end ought to align with the good will; it is by reason that one is led to the morally right maxims. This is so in the sense that by willing in line with one's rational nature, one is willing autonomously or from free will. Thus, we put up resistance against the brute influence of inclinations upon the will. As identified in the preceding paragraphs, moral feelings, pleasure, and happiness, generally put as actions or maxims based on empirical motivations or incentives, are the sources of morally unworthy or forbidden maxims or actions and are deterministic. Kant claims,

> Understanding, wit, judgement...are undoubtedly good and desirable for many purposes, but they can be extremely evil and harmful if the will which is to make gifts of nature, and whose distinctive constitution is therefore called *character*, is not good... unless a good will is present which corrects the influence of these on the mind and, in so doing, also corrects the whole principle of action and brings it into conformity with universal ends. (Kant, 1785/1998, p. 7)

The above maintains that one cannot rely on sensual incentives to generate morally worthy maxims since these incentives rather impinge or inhibit the will from making morally praiseworthy maxims. As shown previously, the will is considered by Kant as imperfect, not in the sense that it generates morally bad maxims, but rather because of the will's potentiality to be misguided by empirical motivations.[17] (Kant, 1785/1998, p. 25). Reason, thus, is the source of moral principles or maxims, and that the maxim instituted by reason, i.e., rationality, is necessarily good. If this line

[17] Kant contrasts the imperfect will—a will of a human being—to the perfectly good will which he construes as the divine/ holy will. The holy will, he claims to be a will that is necessarily motivated by moral principles or laws; hence, a will that is not subject to the Categorical Imperative or oughtness. (Kant, 1785/ 1998, p. 25)

of interpretation holds, then it follows that, with respect to the quotation above, rationality strictly refers to humans who perform morally right actions.

> The above deduction could also be inferred from Kant's remarks that, since reason is nevertheless given to us as a practical faculty, that is, as one that is to influence the will; then, where nature has everywhere else gone to work purposively in distributing its capacities, the true vocation of reason must be to produce a will that is good, not perhaps as a means to other purposes, but good in itself, for which reason was absolutely necessary. (Kant, 1785/1998, p. 10)

Here, in Kant's view, rationality also seems to refer to a morally upright human but not the mere awareness that one's maxims can be as a result of the good or bad will. For him, the true vocation of reason is to lead one to maxims that align with the good will. This task is possible only when the motivation of rationality over the will supersedes that of empirical motivations to the will. Hence, a bad will cannot originate from reason but from empirical motivation.

> In another context, Kant writes,
>
> Now, a human being really finds in himself a capacity by which he distinguishes himself from all other things, even from himself, insofar as he is affected by objects, and that is reason. (Kant, 1785/1998, p. 57)

Kant, at this point, aims to show that there is a substantial distinction between human beings and all other beings. His point of distinction is by means of the human's possession of reason or rationality. Rationality, according to Kant, is the capacity by which human beings show themselves as different and unique from other non-human animals. And of course, rationality is the will's freedom to exercise the ability to make moral options in specific situations. The moral options here are, for instance, whether to act on a maxim of giving alms or developing one's talent, etc., in particular situations. These options are unavailable to non-human animals because they arguably lack the capacity for reasoning. Hence, non-human animals are only regulated by the laws of nature emanating from the corporeal world or sensual experience, i.e., the satisfaction of hunger and the need for shelter, etc.

To shed more light on the above, another extract from Kant is worth looking at. He states,

> Everything in nature works in accordance with laws. Only a rational being has the capacity to act in accordance with the representation of laws, that is, in accordance with principles, or has a will. Since *reason* is required for the derivation of actions from laws, the will is nothing other than practical reason. (Kant, 1785/1998, p. 24)

Here, Kant also stresses rationality as a peculiar feature of a human. It is through reason that the will can self-legislate, make subjective maxims, and attempt universalizing these maxims. He notes that aside from rationality being a distinctive feature of humans, a human being also possesses a will that no other non-human animals possess. The will, as discussed, is caught between the principles of reason and the principles of happiness. And through the will's autonomy, in the face of the forcefulness of sensation to subdue the will, the will freely decides from which of the available motivations the will generates its maxims. A question worthy of further discussion is, 'Is the will the property of only rational beings so that even persons who suffer from radical or extreme cognitive incapacitation do not possess a will even to the least degree?'.

This chapter advances the view that Kant is inconsistent in handling the notion of humanity. He weaves back and forth between two basic interpretations of humanity. In one context, he ascribes humanity solely to humans who subscribe to only morally worthy maxims. However, in another context, Kant assigns humanity to humans who can appreciate moral situations, regardless of the moral worth of the maxims or actions. Neither of these contexts considers as part of humanity the cognitively incapacitated, and thus it remains uncertain how the cognitively incapacitated are to be treated. This is because the cognitively incapacitated lacks the capacity to engage in moral or rational discourse. On this note, the next section will deal with the varying interpretations commentators assign to Kant regarding the scope of humanity.

CHAPTER TWO: Perspectives on Kantian Notions of Rational Nature

In the preceding chapter, I defended the claim that Kant's handling of the notion of humanity is problematic. He shifts between different connotations of the term. This chapter, therefore, examines the varying connotations or interpretations of the following philosophers: Christine Korsgaard, Allen Wood, and Richard Dean. The claim of this chapter is that Korsgaard and Wood give wider interpretations of the notion of humanity. Generally, they hold the position that humanity is assigned to any human who exercises reason in decision making. Exercise of reason here refers to one being able to formulate and appreciate morally good and bad maxims. On the contrary, Dean proffers a narrower reading of the notion of humanity by claiming that humanity refers to humans, who by reason, generate morally good maxims at the expense of morally bad maxims. The opposing positions herein identified will help to situate the cognitively incapacitated human in Kantian moral theory in the final chapter.

A. Christine Korsgaard

Korsgaard argues for the thesis that for one to be considered as part of humanity, one should possess the capacity to generate maxims to guide one's own actions (Korsgaard, 1996, p. 111). To argue for the above thesis, she, like some philosophers, acknowledges the central function of the concept of humanity in Kant's moral philosophy. She identifies two distinct but interrelated components of the formula of humanity. One of the components is the unconditional end, and the other is humanity as an end (Korsgaard, 1996, p. 109). She claims the unconditional end is that which is self-sufficient and valued in itself, and not as a measure to obtain any ulterior or further purpose or value. This unconditional end contrasts with the conditional or that which serves as a means to obtaining another end or purpose. By way of illustration, one may pursue education as a means to acquire intelligence, which may, in turn, earn one praise, dignity and admiration from

other people. By the necessity of the unconditional end, the Categorical Imperative commands absolute adherence.

Korsgaard further states that, for Kant, the unconditional end is not a purpose to be pursued (Korsgaard, 1996, p. 108). This understanding of the unconditional end is termed the negative sense. The negative sense of the end requires that one refrains from obstructing the existence of that end, whatever the unconditional end may be (Korsgaard, 1996, p. 108). The unconditional end necessitates the binding force of the Categorical Imperative, while the conditional end, in contrast to the end-in-itself, grounds the Hypothetical Imperative. The Hypothetical Imperative prescribes a particular course of action to be followed in order to reach a desired effect. The desired end may involve advancement towards an end-in-itself (a duty) or conditional end (non-dutiful result). In the view of Korsgaard, the Categorical Imperative logically implies a necessary action or end. In contrast, a Hypothetical Imperative supposes a probable action for a possibly unattainable effect. To this, Korsgaard writes: "The difficulty Kant points to is that in constructing the imperative of prudence [Hypothetical Imperative] reason must specify the end before it can determine the means; but there is no possible rule for specifying 'the plan of happiness'" (Korsgaard, 1996, p. 112). Kant identifies the unconditional end as humanity or rational nature, but what peculiar feature justifies humanity as an unconditional end?

It can be said, arguably, that animals and nonanimals—matter in general—in themselves are not subjects of moral discussion, but rather become subjects of moral discussion by virtue of their relation or value to humans. This is because it is assumed that these nonhuman sentient beings cannot engage in rational or moral discourse, that is, they are unable to discern morally good from bad actions. The action of these nonhuman sentient beings is considered to be motivated by sensuous experiences. On the other hand, by virtue of human reason, the will is presented with a

capacity that aids it to hinder the forceful intrusion of the sensuous inclinations on the will (Korsgaard, 1996, p. 109). As already noted, sensuous inclinations give false motivations for human action; that is, the sensuous inclinations determine actions through the Hypothetical Imperative, but not through the Categorical Imperative.

Korsgaard presents Kant's assertion that "Rational nature is distinguished from others in that it proposes an end to itself" as meaning that "the capacity to propose an end to oneself is the characteristic of humanity (as distinguished from animality)" (Korsgaard, 1996, p. 110). She means that the distinctive feature of humanity that makes it the unconditional end and the sole candidate of the Categorical Imperative is the ability to deploy reason in setting out "maxims" for one's actions. The maxims then become the aims of the potential actions. On Korsgaard's interpretation, an end is chosen freely, and it is only through the capacity of practical reason that one can freely choose. As Kant maintains, autonomy is a property of the will, which is the ability of the will to choose freely among an array of maxims.

According to Korsgaard, every maxim has an end though not all ends are morally worthy. She claims that it is not one's choice of the morally praiseworthy actions or maxims that uniquely identifies humanity or rational nature as an end-in-itself, but rather, one's capacity to freely scan through and choose among the agent's generated maxims, irrespective of the moral praiseworthiness of that which is chosen. Korsgaard writes,

> To see that this is not Kant's view is important for understanding the formula of humanity: it is the capacity for the rational determination of ends in general, not just the capacity for adopting morally obligatory ends, which the formula of humanity orders us to cherish unconditionally. (Korsgaard, 1996, p. 111)

Korsgaard repudiates claims that consider humanity as being equivalent to one's ability to produce morally obligatory ends. By obligatory ends, she refers to ends that conform to the dictates of the Categorical Imperative, that is, ends that are morally praiseworthy. Her concern is that not only

humans who undertake morally praiseworthy actions should be valued or treated as ends-in-themselves, but any human equipped with the practical reason of free choice. The only humans, perhaps, who fall outside of Korsgaard's humanity are those who lack reason or thought capacity; hence, they cannot access thought or reason in the generation or production of maxims irrespective of the moral praiseworthiness of the maxim. In her view, autonomy does not necessarily lie in making morally acceptable choices; it rather lies in acting or/and freely deciding from the maxims of one's choice. Though she doesn't say this directly, Korsgaard sees free choice as a distinctive feature of humanity which is lacking in the cognitively incapacitated and animality. Korsgaard considers animality as an aspect of human nature which humans share with nonhuman animals. Animality is characterised by actions that are necessitated by the faculty of instinct or inclinations (Korsgaard, 1996, p. 110-111). Instinctual motivations are derived from natural laws or the laws of the corporeal world. Since natural laws have an existence independent of any knowing agent or subject, and coupled with the fact that animality lacks a rational nature and will, the only way for animals to survive is to lean on the instinctual drive. It is significant to note, though this will be dealt with in detail in the subsequent chapter, that regardless of the conditional value of animality, i.e., animals, their worth is not to be abused; they are to be used only for the judicious benefit of humanity.

To sum up Korsgaard's interpretation of what Kant views as the essential feature of humanity (i.e., an end-in-itself), she claims that humanity or rational nature is distinctively picked out among other entities for its capacity to set goals or purpose for itself and to act on them. This capacity is made possible due to its possession of the will, which is autonomous; the will is free to produce a plethora of maxims for itself. Hence, acting on morally worthy maxims is not equivalent

to being unconditionally valued. The next chapter will examine the implication of Korsgaard's interpretation of humanity on humans who lack free choice.

B. Allen Wood

Allen W. Wood (2008) teases out the specific feature that makes humanity the unconditional or absolute value and also argues in support of Kant's position that the end-in-itself is rational nature (Wood, 2008, p. 85). According to Wood, Kant refers to humanity or rational nature as a "self-sufficient," "independent," or self-standing end and contrasts these descriptions with "the end to be effected" (Wood, 2008, p. 196).

> In the claim that rational nature is an end-in-itself, rational nature is not thought of as a state of affairs to be produced by action. Instead, an "end-in-itself" is something already existing whose value grounds even our pursuit of the ends produced by our actions. The notion that the word "end" may refer only to such a producible state of affairs is simply a philosophical error about the concept "end." (Wood, 2008, p. 85)

Wood's claim is that "rational nature is not...a state of affairs to be produced by action". He disagrees with John Rawls's (2000) view that maxims become rational and objective when in a hypothetical social world these maxims exert possible alterations in some state of affairs.[18] In other words, Wood claims that an end-in-itself is not reducible to any state of affairs. For him, rational nature or end-in-itself is a value beyond which no other value is sought or required. Thus, rational nature is a self-justified end, an end whose justification is not derivative from other ends. Instead, other conditional ends must face their justificatory tribunal from rational nature. Wood states: "Every moral action must have an end to be produced, but such actions must be grounded on a 'self-standing' end" (Wood, 2008, p. 85). Refuting the description of the unconditional value as a reproducible state of affairs puts Wood and Korsgaard in agreement; that is, the unconditional

[18] Rawls' interpretation herein referred to is extracted from his "Lectures on the History of Moral Philosophy" (2000, pp. 169-170).

value cannot be reduced to an end product of actions. It is rather a maxim/action that must conform to its standard for the actions or maxims to attain the status of moral trustworthiness. The existence of the end-in-itself or unconditional value is independent of the action or maxim that a will produces. Maxims must be chosen and acted upon for the sake of meeting the requirement of humanity. It is the measure of all moral maxims or actions; hence, it is codified into a Categorical Imperative. The Categorical Imperative's command curtails one from acting strictly from the empirical inclinations; thus, inclination should not motivate maxims or actions.

Responding to the question of the essence of humanity in relation to morality as advanced by Kant, Wood maintains that Kant categorizes human nature into three basic dispositions: animality, humanity, and personality (Wood, 1998, p. 189/ 2008, p. 88). To distinguish among them, Wood writes,

> Animality contains our instinctual capacities for the survival of the individual and the species: "mechanical" (prerational)...Humanity contains our rational capacity to set ends and devise means to them and our rational self-love, giving grounds for forming a conception of our happiness and pursuing it. Personality is our rational capacity to legislate the moral law for ourselves and obey it. (Wood, 2008, p. 88)

We see from the above that animality as a predisposition represents the natural desires or inclinations of human beings. The sort of inclination referred to here is derived from our external environment. This is a predisposition that derives its source from our brute interactions with the corporeal universe. Humans share this feature with nonhuman animals since it involves the predominant use of sensuous experience against the use of reason or rational capacity; hence, its reference to the term prerational predisposition implies the motivation from experience for their survival. Regardless of the similarity between animal and human instinct, Kant regards animal instinct as that which operates with "mechanical necessity", i.e., "without consciousness" and is characterized by a one directional course towards its desire (Kant, 1997, pp. 71-72). On the other

hand, human instinct involves the display of will in deciding to pursue any of the motivations from experience or reason. Human instinctual drive is not merely a necessitation from the external world (Kant, 1781/1998, pp. 533-534). Wood disagrees with Kant on the latter's description of animal instinct. According to Wood, animal instinct is not mechanically necessitated as Kant supposes. Wood claims that animals sometimes exercise some sort of choice, though they are very much influenced by immediate impulses (Wood, 2008, p. 126).[19] For Kant, animality does not give humans their unique character as unconditional value since animality is a deprivation of the use of reason (Wood, 2008, p. 88). However, animality is what differentiates human beings from purely rational beings. The presence of animality in humans is the source of possible deviations from morally praiseworthy actions. This possible deviation necessitates the Categorical Imperative as a guiding law for human's actions.

Wood further asserts that human is characterized by its use of reason in setting and approaching the ends. He explicates a further bifurcation of humanity—technical and pragmatic. The former refers to the capacity of reason to aid in manipulating nonhuman entities—which, for their lack of rationality, Kant refers to as 'things'—for the convenience of humanity. Therefore, this aspect of humanity is termed instrumental rationality (Wood, 2002, p. 88). The pragmatic stands for the use of rational capacity to seek self-love at the expense of other human beings. This indicates that by virtue of the pragmatic predisposition, humans use their fellow humans, but not things, as mere means to an end, provided it will enhance their own preservation of life and satisfy self-interests and desires.

This presentation of predisposition to humanity, especially the pragmatic sense, is suggestive that rationality can be used in generating maxims or actions that are morally

[19] Since the debate over the nature of animal instinct is not the primary concern of this thesis, I will not delve further into it.

unacceptable. This is shown in the instance of reducing fellow humans to mere things, mere means to others' ends. This seems contrary to the claim that morally unacceptable actions or maxims stem from only sensuous experience and that morally acceptable ones emanate from reason. It rather shows that reason brings forth both morally acceptable and unacceptable maxims or actions. One may claim that it is the failure of reason that results in unacceptable maxims. This claim will be accepted of a person who has, say, a partial defect with their rational capacity, but not of a person with fully functional rationality. In my view, a way of demystifying this conundrum is to claim that situations where reason engages in unpraiseworthy actions are situations in which one's will is weakened or overridden by one's sensuous experience. In this case, indirectly, the action will still be motivated and directed by inclinations. In other words, the blameworthiness of the maxim is not a result of weakness in the person's rational capacity but the will instead.

Wood's interpretation informs my claim above on the nature of the will. Wood follows Kant by positing two aspects of the will: *Wille* and *Willkur*. *Willkur* is the power of choice, while *Wille* legislates the moral principles. According to Wood, brute animals possess a kind of choice of will—*Willkur*—that lacks *Wille*. Hence, they do not exercise the free power of 'choice' since they are not presented with any practical law to serve as governing choice (Wood, 1999, p. 51). The *Wille*/*Willkur* distinction presupposes why a person's will could be weakened. The weakness, in my view, could be a result of the person's weakness in *Willkur*, which gives in to the brute influence of sensuous motivations against practical maxims or laws.

The last predisposition by Kant, as claimed by Wood, is personality. Personality has the sole responsibility for self-legislating moral laws. Hence, Wood refers to personality as a moral predisposition. This is done through not inclination or instinct but reason alone (Wood, 2008, p. 88). According to Wood, personality is the source of dignity, indicative that the maxims or actions

resulting from personality predisposition are necessarily morally good, i.e., adhere to the Categorical Imperative.

However, Wood expresses surprise as to why the distinctive feature of an end-in-itself should hinge on the pragmatic sense but not personality. He writes: “It is noteworthy that what Kant claims to be an end in itself...is humanity—especially in this last (pragmatic) sense. It is not animality... Nor (perhaps more surprisingly) is it our moral predisposition” (Wood, 2008, p.88). As seen from the above, the former seems to have a weak will as its basis and produces morally wrong actions by exploiting fellow human beings or rational beings. It is also noteworthy that at the heart of pragmatic predisposition is, as Wood puts it, rational self-love and the end of our happiness (Wood, 2008, p.88). It is unclear what this rational self-love is. However, having happiness as the end of our actions suggests that our maxims follow Hypothetical but not Categorical Imperatives. However, as Wood presents, Kant’s pragmatic predisposition makes the point that another’s rational nature is exploited by one’s self-love. We should note that elsewhere, Wood states,

> The fundamental end whose value grounds the theory is the dignity of rational nature, and its command is always to treat humanity as an end-in-itself. Here, the term 'humanity' is used technically to refer to the capacity to set ends according to reason. (Wood, 1998, p. 189)

Kant’s notion of humanity, as ascribed to him by Wood, can also be inferred from the above. He identifies the dignity of humanity as the absolute end that serves as the basis of Kant’s moral theory. The question of why dignity is the sole reserve of rational nature becomes pressing for discussion: why should only humanity be accorded dignity but not other nonhuman beings? To this question, Wood claims that a being capable of exercising its rationality in generating goals, purposes, or means and carrying out the purpose is one who deserves dignity. Any being whose

actions are deterministic, controlled or forced upon itself by external forces, for instance, the laws of nature, lacks dignity.

The above claim implies that the nature of humanity is premised on its competency of making moral judgements or decisions by virtue of reason regardless of its moral status, worthiness or otherwise, of the judgement or decision. Combining this with his breakdown of human beings into animality, humanity and personality, it can be deduced that rational nature includes the use of reason to exploit other rational beings to one's advantage and also the ability to generally generate goals and devise ways or means of attaining these goals. The maxims or goals need not be necessarily morally permissible. Wood's interpretation of humanity does not regard the cognitively incapacitated as ends in themselves and therefore leaves hanging on what basis the cognitively incapacitated human can be accorded with dignity and respect.

C. Richard Dean

Richard Dean (2006) visits some controversial issues that accompany Kantian moral theory—a version of deontology.[20] Such challenging thematic areas cover issues such as the notions of autonomy, good will, humanity and the end-in-itself. Though these issues, from the forgoing discussion, are interrelated, what has been the primary concern in this chapter is to bring out the appropriate representation of what Kant takes to be humanity, a rational nature or an end-in-itself. Dean turns his attention to this issue in Chapter Two: "What Should We Treat as an End-in-itself?" However, the treatment of this issue is not exhausted in this chapter but permeates his book.

[20] Deontology—though has different schools of thought—generally, is a moral theory that posits that the moral value of an action or maxim is its conformity to a moral norm or intrinsic to the action or maxim itself. It does not regard the end product of the action or maxim in justifying the moral status of the action or maxim (Wood, 2008 p. 259). One of the issues that serves as point of departure for deontologists relate to the source of moral justification for maxims; whether a maxim's justification is derived from principles accepted through a social contract (Contractualism as Rawls upholds) or whether its source is agent-centered as for instance Kant in his *Groundwork* claims (Alexander and More, 2021).

Dean rejects the claim by philosophers that humanity is a feature possessed by all mature human beings or that humanity is synonymous with human beings. He avers that for Kant,

> 'humanity' or what he often calls 'rational nature' in a person is what has value as an end-in-itself, and this rational nature can be possessed by rational beings other than members of the human species, if there are any such beings. Notoriously, Kant also seems committed to the position that not all members of the human species possess this feature. Whatever Kantian humanity is, it is lacked by the permanently unconscious, the seriously deranged, the severely brain damaged, and (perhaps most troubling) by very young children. I think the claim that not all humans qualify as ends-in-themselves is not quite as deeply problematic as some have taken it to be... but the point, for now, is just that 'humanity' is not interchangeable with 'human beings', but rather refers to some property possessed by many humans and possibly by other rational beings. (Dean, 2006, p. 18)

Although he acknowledges that the major problem does not border on the scope of coverage of human beings that Kantian humanity is applicable to, the problem he identifies is rather the unique feature that marks out Kantian humanity amongst the general population of human beings. These two problems are interrelated; a response to the latter, namely, the unique feature(s) of humanity, helps to identify the class of humans who possess humanity—have the unique feature(s)—from those who do not possess humanity—lack the unique feature(s). For Dean, it seems it is without a doubt that Kantian rational nature is clear that the severely brain-damaged and seriously deranged are outside the bracket of humans that Kant attributes humanity.

Dean, however, holds a view which reduces Kant's notion of humanity to good will. To buttress this point, he asserts,

> It has become common to think that 'humanity' refers to some minimal feature or features of rationality, necessarily possessed by any rational agent. I think this is mistaken and that 'humanity' instead refers to good will, the will of a being who is committed to moral principles. (Dean, 2006, p. 18)

What Dean means by the minimal rationality feature of all well-informed adults is perhaps a person's ability to exercise reason, to discern what is good from wrong; or is capable to make judgement in situations. In other words, minimal rationality is possessed by one whose character

or maxim is not solely informed or determined by one's sensuous experiences; it also refers to one who exercises, though to various degrees, the use of reason before embarking on some actions. He instead holds the good will to be the distinctive feature that isolates persons or entities that possess humanity from those that are deprived of humanity. Further, he rejects any claim that reduces Kantian good will to 'moral worth.' And by this, he refers to the claim that the performance of a dutiful action serves as the standard of good will. The rejection, according to him, is that to assume the good will as an instance of performing or executing dutiful or morally worthy action will imply that the good will is a notion whose existence or subsistence is intermittent; that is, it comes into being for a person only when the performance activates moral actions when necessitated by duty. On the other hand, a person's performance of a morally right or permissible action, though in the absence of the necessitation of duty is a deprivation of good will (Dean, 2006, p. 19).

In Dean's view, the good will ought to have lasting or enduring presence even when the person's action is not in accordance with duty or the action is not required by duty. This conclusion is based on Kant's distinction between *Wille* and *Willkur,* which are two different components of the will (Dean, 2006, p. 20). According to him, the *Wille* is the aspect of the will that deploys reasoning in formulating practical laws or principles; whereas the *Willkur* possesses the capacity to choose amongst the principles or laws. The practical laws from the *Wille,* along with sensuous inclinations produced by external experience, present the *Willkur* with dual sources of motivations from which an agent may choose a principle to possibly guide actions. As earlier discussed, the sensuous inclination is *a posteriori*, whilst principles provided by the *Wille* are *a priori*. With this dualism, he means to establish the point that the good will, i.e., humanity, is not associated with or apprehended through sensuous experiences or inclinations. Any motivation derived from sensuous experience leads to morally unworthy maxims (Dean, 2006, p. 23). He rather claims that

the good will is only apprehensible solely *a priori*; and by virtue of reason—the operations of the *Wille*—moral principles are acquired or formulated.[21]

Further, the good will, for Dean, is equivalent to one's commitment to prioritizing moral principles over principles or laws emanating from sense perception. The reference made to moral principles is a reference made in connection to the Categorical Imperative, while the sense perception is to the Hypothetical Imperative. He writes,

> The second point is that, on Kant's account, a good will is not discernible through empirical observation. We can never have sufficient empirical grounds to reach definite conclusions about someone's character because we can only observe her actions and not her principles. Then, since a good will is a matter of one's principles and priorities, not one's actions, empirical observation can never tell us that someone has or lacks a good will. (Dean, 2006, p. 23)

The above claim follows a point that Dean makes earlier that, for him, Kant's reference to humanity is a reference to a will that is good; hence, Dean's claim that Kant's notion of humanity is nothing other than the good will. He states, "First, to dispel in advance a possible misunderstanding, my claim is that the humanity which we should treat as an end-in-itself is exactly a will that is good..." (Dean, 2006, p. 23). The two points herein referred to by Dean reveal that humanity is equivalent to the good will, which prioritizes moral maxims or principles over sensuous inclinations. More so, it leads to the view that humanity is not determined by manifestations of the principles in one's actions but rather in one's commitment or prioritization of the practical laws—Categorical Imperatives—over sensuous incentives—Hypothetical Imperatives. For Dean, Kant claims that a *Willkur* may be disposed to choosing a maxim emanating from sensuous incentives, though the *Willkur* may be committed to moral laws. This detraction, Kant claims, is possible due to the frailty of the agent's heart or human nature (Kant, 1793, p. 29; Dean, 2006, p. 22). In his view, it is only when an agent is considered in the sense that the *Willkur*

[21] Refer to previous subsection for Wood's comment on the *Wille*/*Willkur* distinction.

prioritizes practical laws over incentives from experience that the long-lasting endurance of humanity is sustained. Dean substantiates this by asserting, "A good will is the will of an agent who is committed to moral principles, and this commitment can be present even when one is not performing actions that display it" (Dean, 2006, p. 21). We should also note that the participation of the will in thought (reason) is an operation characterized by what Kant calls 'the freedom of the will,' consequently, the good will is free since the will legislates the moral principles to which it is subordinated.

There is a potential problem that threatens Dean's interpretation of the good will as an intentional state. The formula of humanity requires that rational agents ought to treat one another and one's own self as an end but never merely a means to an end. As understood from the perspective of Dean and the philosophers already discussed, Kantian humanity is not equivalent to or coterminous with human beings; i.e., not all human beings qualify as humanity—an end-in-itself (Dean, 2006, p. 18). If this claim obtains, then it also requires one to have a practical means or procedure of distinguishing humans who possess humanity from other humans, namely, the cognitively incapacitated, who do not possess humanity, in order to be able to fulfill that requirement of treating humanity as an end-in-itself. Yet, the situation is one in which one's humanity is a matter of the *Wille's* commitment to moral laws—which is a mental state[22]—and not accessible to a third person other than to oneself. And if physical behaviour is not a sufficient or good ground of determining one's humanity, then how does one identify a human being as possessing humanity? This is a genuine conundrum against Dean's interpretation because intentional or mental states are only apprehensible by one's own self but not others[23]. So, at best,

[22] By mental state, I make reference to a domain of operation that is not within the perception—visual, tactile, olfactory, gustatory and auditory—of people. The mental state is only accessible through the intellect or the mind of the agent who entertains that state.

one could only attribute humanity to oneself, not others. This problem can be termed the indistinguishability challenge, which by logical consequence leads to moral solipsism, which is that 'I alone am humanity; hence, an end-in-itself,' and either I at best suspend my judgement about other people or consider them as mere means to an end. The implication is that one would not have access to the standard that designates the cognitive incapacitated as one who does not possess humanity. Consequently, Dean's attempt to delineate between humans who possess humanity (good will) and those who do not possess humanity breaks down.

A Brief Comparative Analysis of the Various Perspectives

According to Dean, philosophers' various interpretations of Kantian notions of humanity, as presented above, can be categorized into two basic groups: the minimal or broad-scope reading and the goodwill or narrow-scope reading (Dean, 2006). On the one hand, Korsgaard and Wood belong to the minimal reading school of thought, while Dean is the sole good will reading philosopher considered in this project.

In the first place, it is obviously clear that both perspectives acknowledge that Kantian humanity is not attributable or ascribable to all human beings. Put differently, humanity is not equated to human beings, as has been seen from the discussion in previous sections. Humanity, according to them, has a special feature that is possessed by some human beings, which other human beings, like the cognitive incapacitated, lack. This implies that not all human beings ought to be treated as an end-in-themselves. What does this special or unique feature of humanity entail?

Even the minimalist readers differ slightly on the nature of this uniqueness of humanity or rational nature. The minimalists encountered herein agree that if one has the capacity to discern, examine, apprehend or appreciate a moral situation, then one is qualified as an end-in-itself; hence, needs to be treated with dignity. Thus, one should be able to tell of maxims or actions that are

morally appropriate from those that are not morally appropriate.[24] This capability does not imply that one should act based on right maxims before accorded humanity status; merely having the capacity to identify morally discrepant situations is enough for one to be accorded the status of humanity. However, Wood and Korsgaard interpret the will as that which freely generates and chooses from moral maxims upon which an action is performed. They do not consider the will as free in terms of its relation to sensuous experience. In other words, the sensuous incentives causally motivate an agent's will, though the cause involved is not a necessitating cause. Notwithstanding the identified differences, both views will consider criminals or wrongdoers as participants in humanity if and only if they are agents who can decipher good from bad maxims. These are humans who know right from wrong, although their actions or maxims are strongly or mostly (or always) motivated by the Hypothetical Imperative.

Dean disassociates himself from the position of the minimalists. He does so on the ground that an agent's will ought to be good for the agent to be termed an end-in-itself. Any will influenced by sensuous inclinations in its formulations of maxims is a bad will; hence, it is disqualified from being an end-in-itself. He also prioritizes intentions or mental states over actions or behaviour in determining humanity. This draws him into the problem of moral solipsism, which was explained in the preceding sections. His account of humanity as good will suggests that criminals or wrongdoers are not involved in his account of humanity unless these criminals, aside from their heinous crimes, possess mental states that prioritize moral principles over sensual inclinations. This situation is possible only if we accept the concept of *akrasia*. *Akrasia* generally refers to a

[24] Herman (1993) calls this 'rules of moral salience,' which are empirical, but have their basis in *a priori* principles.
[23] On the contrary, Henry Allison (1990) claims that heteronomous motivation on the will is not characterized as causal, but rather agents exercise some sort of autonomy or freedom in choosing such motivation (pp. 95-96)

situation in which one's actions are contrary to one's best judgment because one lacks a strong will to carry out what reason (the best judgment) dictates (Steward, 1998, para. 1).[25]

It must be noted that the minimalist readers so far presented are silent on whether humanity is a mental state or a physically manifest state. However, for the minimalist to explain humanity or rational nature as the capacity to set ends and devise means of attaining or achieving the ends, one may suppose that the minimalist reader accepts both internal and physical states as appropriate procedures for expressing and identifying humanity. If this interpretation is right for the minimalist readers, then it absolves them from the charge of solipsism, which comes up against the good will reader. Notwithstanding the differences between the good will and the minimalist readings, both consider reason as the essence of humanity. This is because, by virtue of reason one is able to formulate both moral maxims and sensuous maxims, and make choices on which maxims to act. None of these activities of the will can be undertaken by the cognitively incapacitated since the incapacitated lack the ability to reason. Nonetheless the cognitively incapacitated are not treated as nonhuman sentient beings; neither are they treated as end in themselves. The dignity assigned to the cognitively incapacitated is a level below one assigned to rational humans but a level above nonhuman sentient beings. In the final chapter, I will argue out why the cognitively incapacitated is assigned such level of dignity and respect.

[25] Akrasia is not a central issue of this project, hence, detail analysis on the plausibility of its claims will be left out.

CHAPTER THREE: Cognitive Incapacitation and Kantian Unconditional Value

This chapter looks at the implication of the various readings—the minimal and the good will—of Kantian notion of humanity on the moral status of the cognitively incapacitated human.[26] The driving question of this chapter is: what moral status is assigned to the cognitively incapacitated human? It can be inferred from both readings that the cognitively incapacitated are not ends in themselves since the incapacitated lack the capacity for moral principles. However, because Kant holds the will as the principle for assigning dignity to beings, and the cognitively incapacitated possess will—though without ***Wille***—I argue that the cognitively incapacitated are deserving of respect and dignity. The presence of the ***Willkur*** enables the incapacitated to make free choices from sensuous maxims.

Divergent Kantian Perspectives on Cognitive Disability and Moral Status

This section discusses the divergent interpretations of Kantian unconditional end or humanity and their implications on the cognitively incapacitated. I advance the claim, based on the analysis in this section, that all the divergent readings, that is, the good will and the minimalists, of Kant's humanity do not characterise the cognitively incapacitated as ends in themselves. This is because both readings hold that the cognitively incapacitated lack moral principles.

Korsgaard's interpretation of the Kantian end-in-itself sets the pace for this discussion. She proposes that what Kant means by an end-in-itself is nothing other than the capacity of an agent (human agent) to set an end for one's maxims or actions. In the interpretation of the unconditional end, nonhuman sentient beings are excluded from beings ascribed with intrinsic value. For

[26] It should be noted that in John Rawls' (1971) *Theory of Justice*, persons of physical incapacitation are excluded from being involved in his hypothetical Original Position. Their exclusion is not to be understood in the moral sense. Rawls object is to propose a society that is fair and impartial; hence, inclusion of such incapacitation, in his view, could hamper the above object. The tenability of his proposal is another contention to be pursued elsewhere.

Korsgaard, these nonhuman animals lack consciousness, accompanied by rationality by which goals and purposes can be set. For this reason, the Categorical Imperative does not apply to nonhuman animals. As aforementioned in earlier chapters, Korsgaard, by excluding nonrational entities from being ends-in-themselves, does not imply that their nature may be abused. She rather calls for judicious use or utility of the nonrational entities for the benefit of rational nature. In other words, using nonrational beings as means to an end, i.e., for only their conditional value, should be impactful to the sustainability of rational nature and by extension the universe. However, can the same treatment be extended to the cognitively incapacitated? Going strictly by Korsgaard's interpretation of Kantian humanity, since the cognitively incapacitated human lacks consciousness, that is, has a will divorced from reason, such a human does not qualify as an end-in-itself (Korsgaard, 1996, p. 111).

But it remains contestable that human beings who are rationally or intellectually incapacitated can be placed on the same pedestal as rational humans. The contention is because rationally incapacitated humans lack the capacity to appraise moral situations while rational humans understand and can appraise moral situations. Nonetheless, it is also counterintuitive to use the incapacitated as a laboratory experimental object, simply as a mere means to an end, without concerns of moral right infringements raised against such treatment. In other words, the human agent who lacks reasoning is hardly considered a being of a similar grade to nonhuman sentient beings, even though that human agent has no rational determination or cannot accord dignity to other humans. Korsgaard's account of Kantian humanity seems to give us no way out of this conundrum.

For Allen Wood, like Korsgaard, humanity consists of one's capacity to set ends and propose means of achieving these ends (Wood, 1998, p. 189). Wood's technical sense of humanity

refers to humans who can use their rational capacity to regulate their lives. On this view, they must possess consciousness of others, themselves, and their immediate environment.[27] Wood's construal implies that humans of extreme cognitive or intellectual incapacitation lack humanity. And here, there seems to be no difference between humans with extreme cognitive disability and nonhuman corporeal beings. This is for the reason that both categories of beings, i.e., the extreme cognitive disabled person and the nonhuman corporeal beings, do not have rational capacity. Does this mean that the cognitively incapacitated human is to be construed as a mere means to an end? To this, Wood avers that

> ...I argue that logocentric ethics, which grounds all duties on the value of humanity or rational nature, should not be committed to the personification principle.[28] It should hold that honouring rational nature as an end-in-itself sometimes requires us to behave with respect toward nonrational beings if they bear the right relation to rational nature. Such relations, I will argue, include having a rational nature only potentially or virtually, or having had it in the past, or having parts of it or necessary conditions of it. (Wood, 1998, p. 197)

Wood, thus, claims that nonrational beings, of which the cognitively incapacitated human is included, though not ends in themselves, ought not to be treated as a mere means to an end. He is of the view that respect should be accorded not only to ends in themselves (rational nature) but ought to be extended to the cognitively incapacitated as well as nonhuman corporeal beings. Wood does not make it clear whether the supposed respect that should be extended to nonrational nature should be equivalent to the respect accorded to rational nature. In my view, since rational nature is used as the measure of the relation, the respect to be accorded to the nonrational nature will play

[27] In contrast to Wood's technical sense of "humanity" is the commonsense interpretation which regards humanity as beings who possess some essential biological feature(s) of human beings, whatever this feature(s) is. The Common-sense interpretation denies rationality as the yardstick for delineating humanity from nonhumanity. This sense of humanity is a version of the concept of "speciesism". This version ascribes humanity to the cognitively incapacitated human provided the human possess the essential biological feature. Peter Singer (1975/2009) and Shelly Kagan (2015) discuss in detail the dynamics of the concept of "speciesism". The scope of this paper does not cover the dynamics of "speciesism".

[28] The personification principle according to Wood is that which restrict respect and dignity only to rational nature excluding nonrational nature. (Wood, 1998, p. 193)

a subsidiary significance to respect accorded to rational nature. However, "subsidiary respect" may arguably be acceptable in the case of nonhuman animals but not in the case of nonrational humans, i.e., babies and the cognitively incapacitated human. This is because, Wood, in my view, considers babies to possess potential rationality—their rationality is underdeveloped or not yet developed—while the cognitively incapacitated human either had rationality in the past—in the case of one who loses rationality in their adult life—or having necessary conditions of rationality—as in the case of one who never possessed rationality since birth. The view that the cognitively incapacitated deserves respect will be argued for in the subsequent section of this chapter.

As seen from preceding chapters, Dean proposes an interpretation of Kant's notion of rational nature or humanity that, in at least one sense, significantly deviates from the views of Korsgaard and Wood. For Dean, rational nature is value-ladened; it is only when one's maxims or actions are products of one's good will, that one is considered rational. Sheer exhibition of consciousness or discernibility is not enough to accept one into the category of humanity (Dean, 2006, p. 18). He categorically objects to any view that assigns humanity or rational nature to a cognitively incapacitated human.

It is clear in his writings that the seriously deranged, who are equivalent or synonymous to radically incapacitated human beings, are excluded from the class of humanity. His interpretation of Kant only seems radical and stricter against the cognitively incapacitated human than the varying interpretations of the minimalist readers. However, Dean advances a moral theory to defend a differential moral status for rational and nonrational beings. His moral theory is modelled on the Kantian kingdom of ends and Rawlsian veil of ignorance, wherein Dean proposes a hypothetical union of morally committed humans who serve as legislators of moral laws. Through

this union, he claims a consistency between his good will reading and his proposal of varying moral status to sentient beings (Dean, 2006, pp. 185-187). He claims that,

> If the view I have offered is even roughly correct, then there is a natural sense in which one could simultaneously maintain both that there is a significant difference in moral status between beings with good will and those without, and that it is straightforwardly wrong to mistreat even beings who lack this commitment. (Dean, 2006, p. 190)

He further asserts that

> It is true that concern for the pain of such non-rational humans presumably would lead to moral rules prohibiting the pointless infliction of such pain for the same reasons as in the case of non-humans. However, in the case of children, there would be additional reasons to formulate rules demanding their proper care and development. They are, after all, future members of society, and so their proper development and education will affect the welfare and stability of society.... The rules governing the treatment of severely retarded adult humans, as well as humans in persistent vegetative states and the like, would probably be more limited but still not the same as the rules governing the treatment of animals.... There is no reason to think that non-rational humans should be treated in the same ways as animals, even if they have, in one sense, a lesser status than fully rational humans who possess a commitment to morality. (Dean, 2006, p. 195)

For Dean, children should not be mistreated or construed as mere means to an end since they are the future of human society. From the above citation, he does not make clear the unique trait that makes children deserving of respect. Nonetheless, it can be assumed that children are deserving of respect because they possess the good will (humanity) in its immature form. In other words, the child's *Wille* is not fully operational to present the *Willkur* with clear morally principled alternatives to choose from. This makes the *Willkur* predominantly disposed to sensuous inclinations. However, with the right and appropriate nurturing over time, the potentiality of the *Wille* will most probably fully actualize or manifest. The potentiality of the *Wille's* and *Willkur's* full operationality gives children a higher moral status over animals since animals have no *Wille,* and their *Willkur*, if they do have one, is mechanically necessitated by sensuous needs. Thus, choices made by animals are purely sensuous. As discussed earlier, this assumption ties in with Wood's right relation to the rational nature hypothesis. Thus, children stand in right relation to

rational nature or good will through having their good will potentiality actualized, manifested in time. What is challenging concerns the special feature that bestows a relatively higher moral status on the cognitively incapacitated human than that ascribed to non-human animals. Dean here does not identify any unique feature possessed by the cognitively incapacitated human. Though I agree with his notion of differential moral status, Dean leaves us in a justificatory and explanatory lacuna as to why the cognitively incapacitated human should have a moral status higher than animal moral status.

It can be summed up that both the minimalist and the goodwill readings, in their strict interpretations of the notion of humanity, do not accommodate the cognitively incapacitated human as an end-in-itself. That notwithstanding, I agree to their claim of a kind of morally differential treatments among sentient beings. However, the difficulty I identified with Wood's and Dean's respective views, though plausible as they may appear, is their failure to account for the relational feature that connects the cognitively incapacitated human with rational nature. Thus, they do not justify why the cognitively incapacitated deserve dignity and respect that supersede that accorded to nonhuman corporeal beings. For this reason, the next section argues that the cognitively incapacitated possess *Willkur*, though restricted to free choice among sensuous maxims. This limited *Willkur* becomes the relational feature that connects the cognitively incapacitated to rational humans, and it is that which justifies why the cognitively incapacitated is accorded with higher dignity and respect than the dignity accorded to nonhuman sentient beings.

The Supervenience of Humanity on the Will

The forgoing section draws our attention to the divergent understandings—the minimalist and the good will readings—of Kant's notion of humanity and its relation with humans with radical cognitive incapacitation. The analysis, arguably, brings to bear that both the minimalist and the

good will readings do not categorise the cognitively incapacitated human as ends in themselves. Nonetheless, the readings, generally, eschew any view that considers the cognitively incapacitated as mere means to an end. The readings rather advance that the cognitively incapacitated should be assigned respect and dignity that is higher to that assigned to nonhuman sentient beings. The challenge is that none of the readings proffers justificatory basis that necessitates the ascription of higher respect to the cognitively incapacitated human. It is on the basis of the justificatory gap that, in this section, I propose and defend a reading of humanity or rationality that supervenes on the human will. By this reading, one can justifiably ascribe to the radically cognitively incapacitated the rightful dignity that is above that of non human corporeal beings.

The supervenience is a theory that relates to the various studies within philosophy. It stretches from philosophy of mind, philosophy of science, metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics. The theory in general claims, according to McLaughlin Brian and Karen Bennett (2005), that "A set of properties *A* supervenes upon another set *B* just in case no two things can differ with respect to *A*-properties without also differing with respect to their *B*-properties. In slogan form, 'there cannot be an *A*-difference without a *B*-difference'". Further, Robert Francescotti writes.

> Philosophers usually construe the supervenience relation as a relation between classes of properties, where a class of properties, F, supervenes on a class of properties, G, just in case there is *no difference in F-properties without some difference in G-properties*. As David Lewis puts it, 'no difference of one sort without differences in another sort'. (Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, para. 1)

The theory, as stated above, can be interpreted as *B*-properties being a substructure upon which the superstructure of *A*-properties arises. In other words, the former properties bring about the latter properties. Arguably, a sustained interrelation or interdependency is established between the substructure and the superstructure.

A few clarifications should be made at this point. Some of the contentions of this theory relate to what it means for the substructure to bring about the superstructure. And what is the nature of the interrelation or inter-dependency between the substructure and the superstructure? To the former question, there have been debates about whether the 'substructure bringing about the superstructure' should be understood in the sense of a causal relation between the two structures or whether it should be understood as a nomological relation. A causal relation would generally imply that the substructure is inherently potent or efficacious in generating another property, which is the superstructure. This causal account of the relation becomes problematic if the properties involved belong to different category types, i.e., one set of properties is physical, and another is non-physical (immaterial, spiritual or mental). Here, the challenge is about how one category of properties brings into existence a different category of properties. The challenge takes into cognisance the fact that each category is regulated by different types of laws—mental or spiritual laws in the case of the nonphysical properties, and mechanical or physical laws in the case of the physical properties. Arguably, laws that govern mental properties are incommensurable with laws that govern physical properties.

On the other hand, the relation between the two sets of properties may be interpreted in a nomological sense. According to Brian Cutter (2024), the nomological account refers to a preestablished harmony or natural law that mediates between the two categories of properties (pp. 484-485). Unfortunately, this account is unable to avoid the challenges faced by the causal account. This is so because the nature—physical or nonphysical—of the natural law or harmony is unspecified. It is no challenge if the harmony is physical and it mediates between physical properties, or the harmony is nonphysical and it mediates between properties of nonphysical

nature. However, the problem faced by the causal account resurfaces if the mediation is to occur between a physical property and a nonphysical property.

The second question is, what is the nature of the interrelation or interdependency between the superstructure and the substructure? It deals with whether the flow or trend of influence or relation is a one-directional or two-directional relation. The relation could be construed as one-way traffic, i.e., one-directional (Rickles, 2024, para. 22). By this, the relation may originate from the substructure to the superstructure, implying that a change in the substructure reflects or brings about a change in the superstructure. Conversely, it may also be claimed that it is rather a change in the superstructure that brings about a change in the substructure. The other side of the divide is that the relation is a two-way traffic, i.e., a change or shift of organization in the substructure reflects or brings about an alteration in the superstructure, and this same alteration obtains in the substructure when it first occurs in the superstructure (Rickles, 2024, para. 23). This brief account of the supervenience theory suffices to set the tone for the supervenience theory of rationality. The supervenience theory of rationality proposed herein will be modelled on the account of a causally one-directional relation. This helps to explain why changes in configuration within the will: *Wille*, *Willkur* and sensuous inclinations, effects corresponding changes in one's capacity to reason. Thus, rationality on my account is causally inept in its relation to the will.

Kant states that freedom is a property of the will. He claims, "Autonomy of the will is the property of the will by which it is a law to itself" (Kant, 1785/1998, p. 47). He further asserts that "the will is thought as a capacity to determine itself to acting in conformity with the representation of certain laws. And such a capacity can be found only in rational beings" (Kant, 1785/1998, p. 36). My understanding of the above citations in relation to preceding discussions is that autonomy as a property of the will emanates from the will's *Willkur*—the segment of the will that functions

as free choice. As has been stated elsewhere in this project, the other segment of the will is *Wille,* which is the legislator of morally right principles, and it is the interaction between *Wille* and *Willkur* alongside sensuous inclinations that results in the will's capacity to determine itself. The *Willkur* operating with laws derived from either sensuous inclinations or the *Wille* (moral principles) is indicative of the will's self-determination.

At this juncture, it is important to identify two senses of rationality. In my view, there is the general sense of rationality, as already discussed, which involves an agent's ability to will any principle regardless of the moral appropriateness of the source of the principle—*Wille* or sensuous inclination. Another sense of rationality is comprised of the will aligning its choice to morally worthy principles as against unworthy principles. Both senses of rationality, in my view, supervene on and are higher-order properties of the will, i.e., the interplay between the *Wille*, *Willkur* and sensuous inclinations. This is because each sense of rationality is constituted by at least the *Wille* and the *Willkur*, that is, the exercise of freely choosing from among moral principles. Nonetheless, the first sense of rationality, as against the second sense, additionally involves free choice from maxims motivated by sensuous inclinations. However, what does not constitute rationality is the exclusive interplay between *Willkur* and sensuous inclinations when an agent's *Wille* is either permanently or temporarily damaged.[29]

The supervenience of rationality on the will, in my view, does not encounter any interaction problem. The interaction problem results when one category of the interacting entities is non-physical in nature while the other category of entities is physical in nature. And since the physical operate by mechanical laws while the nonphysical operate by nonphysical laws, it becomes problematic to claim that a nonphysical entity, that is, the mind (e.g., hunger), causes the body to

[29] This situation amounts to cognitive incapacitation or mental derangement.

perform tasks (e.g., the activity of eating food). Arguably, mechanics laws and nonphysical laws are not commensurable, hence, nonphysical entities, such as the mind, cannot interact with physical entities. However, the interaction between the will and rationality is one that occurs among entities of the same category. Both entities, the will and rationality, are nonphysical and operate within the same sphere of nonphysical laws. Hence, the configuration of the will is able to bring about changes in the quality of rationality.

The interpretation of 'supervene' here refers to a causal relation between the will and the rational capacity. The will causes the existence of rationality when the *Wille*, *Willkur* and sensuous inclinations are configured appropriately, as pointed out in previous paragraphs. If there is a change in configuration or interplay between *Wille*, *Willkur* and sensuous inclinations, there will be a corresponding alteration in the degree of rationality a person will possess. Put differently; a configuration change will inform on the principle formed and the principle's relation to rationality (either general or narrow sense). There cannot be any alteration in an agent's rational capacity without a prior alteration in the interplay of the *Wille*, *Willkur* and sensuous inclinations. This is to say that the causal influence is from the will to rationality but not vice versa. A strong will is suggestive of a more effective rational capacity, while a weak will is suggestive of a less effective rational capacity. A weak will implies a will that is dominate by sensuous inclinations, hence less effective rational capacity. The above analysis is the relation between the will and rationality that paves the way for filling in the lacuna in Wood's and Dean's account of assigning moral status to the cognitively incapacitated human. But the modification to be added here is that the lack of causal efficacy of heteronomous motivation only applies to the *Willkur*, that is, the principle of free choice. Totally weak will is solely motivated by experiences the agent obtains from the external world since a totally weak will lacks a *Wille*—the legislator of moral principles. And this

is the case of the cognitively incapacitated since their operations are completely taken over by sensuous inclinations as a result of their damaged *Wille*. However, a strong will has the right kind of *Wille* to produce moral principles, and freedom to discern among the various motivations available to it. As pointed out earlier, the weakness of the will implies ineffectiveness or, at best, less effective rationality. In my view, the cognitively incapacitated human possess a will that is without the principle for morality or reason; a will that makes free choice from maxims motivated by only sensuous inclinations. The will here is differently configured from that of the rational humans since rational humans make free choice from maxims motivated by both reason and sensuous inclinations. The complete lack or breakdown of *Wille* of the cognitively incapacitated makes the will completely exposed to only sensuous or heteronomous motivations.

The crux of my argument is that the extremely cognitively incapacitated human possesses a will. The will possessed is one that is dominated by sensual experience devoid of *Wille* (moral legislation). The difference between the cognitively incapacitated and the rational person is that the rational person possesses a *Wille* alongside information or incentives from the external environment. The *Wille* and the incentives provide multiple motivations to the *Willkur*. The cognitively incapacitated, though possesses *Willkur*, lacks moral principles to serve as alternative principles to sensuous incentives. Hence, the cognitively incapacitated human has a defective will since its *Wille* is impotent in producing moral principles. The possession of *Willkur*, though directed solely to sensuous motivations, distinguishes the extremely cognitively incapacitated human from the nonhuman sentient beings, to wit, animals. Kant's characterization of animal instinct as mechanical necessitation helps to clarify this point. What Kant means by mechanical necessitation is a mode of behaviour without a choice-making process (Kant, 1785/1998, p. 533). Thus, for Kant, animals do not engage in decision or choice- making since they possess no *Willkur*

but mere instinct that faces the brute force of sensuous motivation. On the other hand, the cognitively incapacitated human has free choice, which is only directed to sensuous motivations. In my view, the cognitively incapacitated human's possession of *Willkur* serves as the basis for their superior moral status to the status given to animals. Hence, the cognitively incapacitated should be respected with a kind of dignity that differentiates it from the sort of treatments given to nonhuman corporeal beings. In other words, the *Willkur* should be the yardstick for assigning dignity or determining the extent of moral status to be assigned to the different kinds of sentient beings.

A possible objection against my justification of the claim that the cognitively incapacitated ought to have a higher level of dignity over the dignity bestowed on animals can be derived from what I will call the indistinguishability problem. The indistinguishability problem is premised on the ground that a person's decision between maxims is motivated by reason (*Wille*) and sensuous elements, which is clearly distinct from mechanical necessitation that Kant attributes to animals' instinctual response to sensations. In other words, rational humans are engaged in both rational and moral decision-making, while animals are only caused or forced to act by sensuous experiences. The objection continues that this clear distinction does not pertain between the decision-making process of the cognitively incapacitated human and the animal mechanical necessitation, since, both involve motivations solely from sensuous experience. Hence, there is no basis for distinguishing the choice-making process of the cognitively incapacitated from animals' mechanical necessitation, and so, it is unjustified to ascribe a higher grade of dignity to the cognitively incapacitated, but a lower grade of dignity to animals.

As has been argued earlier, the cognitively incapacitated human possesses a will that is deficient of *Wille*, the legislator of moral principles. Notwithstanding this deficiency, the part of

the will that functions as choice-making (*Willkur*) is still operational. It navigates or chooses among the various motivations presented to it by sensory experience. (We should also note that this position agrees with Allison's claim that the relation between sensory motivations and the will is not a causal one but a motivation that is freely chosen by the will.) There could be raised a charge of contradiction against my claims that:

1. A causal relation exists between rationality and the will.
2. But the will exercises free choice in choosing maxims presented by sensuous inclination and the *Wille*.

It is necessary to clarify that it is not contradictory to claim a causal relation between will and rationality, yet deny a causal relation between the will's *Willkur* and sensuous inclinations. I will call the former relation intra-substructure relation and call the latter substructure-superstructure relation. The intra-substructure relation refers to a relation that obtains between the components of the will, namely, *Willkur*, *Wille* and also sensuous inclinations. This is because, as a composite element of the will, the *Willkur* is the principle of free choice. Its functionality implies that it makes choices among principles or maxims that are motivated by both the *Wille* and sensuous inclinations. For instance, by the virtue of the *Willkur* (the principle of free choice), one is able to choose among maxims, made available by the *Wille*—benevolence, loyalty and trustworthiness—and sensual inclination, such as, lack of respect, dishonesty and selfishness. So, the will's relation to sensuous inclinations and moral principles is characterised by free choice, *Willkur*, but not causal relation.

On the other hand, the relation between the will and rationality referred to in this thesis is on a different level. This relation involves the derivation of rationality from a holistic configuration of the *Wille*, *Willkur* and sensuous motivations. This relation underscores the relation between, on

the one hand, the superstructure (rationality), and on the other hand, the substructure (*Wille*, *Willkur* and sensuous inclinations). The configuration of the substructure determines the strength and weakness of the agent's rationality—whether the agent has strong, weak, or damaged rationality (as in the case of the cognitively incapacitated). To illustrate this, a will whose *Willkur* permanently chooses maxims motivated by sensuous incentives, such as deceptions and selfishness, is considered to have no or damaged rationality. But a will whose *Willkur* persistently opts for maxims that extol moral principles (*Wille*), that is, trustworthiness, benevolence and self-development, has rationality and for that matter a higher degree of rationality. Hence, the clarification here speaks to the point that the relation that exists between the superstructure and the substructure ought not necessarily be the same relation as that which exists within the substructure. The former is regulated by causal relation while the latter is regulated by free choice relation.

To sum up, the implication of the above is that since the cognitively incapacitated human possesses a will, regardless of its deficiency of *Wille*, it still makes free choices among motivations presented to it by sensuous experience. The presence of the will equips the incapacitated with the concepts of things, that is, one is able to organize the world into interrelated concepts. However, these concepts may not be able to stand up to rational and moral scrutiny. The relatedness of concepts is missing in animal's mechanical necessitation since this necessitation is not a product of a will. It should be pointed out that the *Willkur* does not solely make choices between moral maxims and sensuous motivations; it also has the capacity of choice-making from among sensuous motivations in the absence of moral motivations, just as it possesses the capacity to make choices from moral motivations in the absence of sensuous motivations. In the case of the cognitively incapacitated human, the motivations available to the *Willkur* are only provided by sensuous experience. Thus, the primary distinction between the cognitively incapacitated person and an

animal is the *Willkur* coupled with the concept of relatedness, which affords the cognitively incapacitated the capacity of choice-making as against animal mechanical necessitation. This distinction as argued points to why the cognitively incapacitated is deserving of dignity and respect higher than that assigned to nonhuman sentient beings.

CONCLUSION

The issue that frames my thesis is the moral status of the cognitively incapacitated human in Kant's moral philosophy, primarily, in his *Groundwork*. In practical life, generally, people who are extremely intellectually disabled are treated differently from nonhuman sentient entities. Nonhuman sentient beings are sometimes used as test objects in laboratories without relatively many moral issues raised against their involvement. Yet, to put the cognitively incapacitated human to such treatment is considered dehumanizing, to say the least. This is indicative of the point that though the cognitively incapacitated person possesses no ability to deploy reason in their everyday life, they are relatively rated above nonhuman sentient beings. The foregoing analysis of Kant's notion of humanity, as proposed by Dean and Wood, revealed that the cognitively incapacitated humans have dignity. That notwithstanding, they do not specify the exact feature(s) that gives the cognitively incapacitated human more dignity and respect over nonhuman temporal entities. I, however, argue for a reconstruction of the notion of humanity to show why cognitively incapacitated humans do possess dignity, though not as ends in themselves. The supervenience of rationality on the will is argued as a view or position which makes it possible for the cognitively incapacitated human to be respected for their dignity at least to some extent in Kantian moral philosophy.

The analysis of Kant's *Groundwork* and his other related works through the lenses of Korsgaard, Wood, and Dean reveals the central role rational nature or reason plays in the Kantian notion of humanity. I have argued that, the overemphasis on rationality precludes the cognitively incapacitated human from the class of corporeal beings considered as ends in themselves, and by implication, devalues the cognitively incapacitated human. However, this devaluation does not put the cognitive incapacitated at the level or below the level of nonhuman temporal beings since placing them in the same category with nonhuman corporeal beings is counterintuitive.

Unfortunately, the respective interpretations of Wood and Dean do not account for why the radically cognitively incapacitated humans ought to be accorded dignity superior to nonhuman temporal beings.

This paper advances and defends a view of the supervenience of rationality on the will. My view justifies why the cognitively incapacitated human ought to be treated with dignity and respect, as espoused (although not justified) by Wood and Dean. My view claims that the *Willkur* should be the fundamental basis of assigning dignity to people or entities. My conclusion is that any corporeal entity that possesses complete or only aspects of the will should be treated with dignity and respect relatively higher than temporal beings that are without any component of the will. And, as argued, the cognitively incapacitated human, while not possessing *Wille*, possesses *Willkur,* which enables them to make choices from a variety of sensuous motivations. And since only humans, including the cognitively incapacitated, possess will—either completely or partly, then the cognitively incapacitated human should be accorded with higher dignity than that of nonhumans. The Kantian notion of humanity thus allows for cognitively incapacitated humans to be accorded with respect and dignity.

In relation to the forgoing, an instance where the cognitively incapacitated human should be treated differently (accorded higher dignity and respect) from nonhuman animals would be in the area of conducting researches and laboratory experiments. When conducting research or experiments, the cognitively incapacitated may be used as test objects only if that experiment is to their own wellbeing. For instance, if the experiment aims at averting future occurrences of cognitive incapacitations or developing mechanisms that can improve the health or cognitive conditions of humans with cognitive incapacitation.

Experiments involving animals differ significantly from those involving humans. Animals are often used in experiments that do not directly benefit the animals themselves, but rather for the advancement of human wellbeing. Even though moral consideration is arguably of great concern in research involving animal as test objects, the moral status granted to animals differs fundamentally from that of humans. As argued in this paper, the cognitively incapacitated are accorded with higher respect and dignity since they possess *Willkur*, the part of the will responsible for choice-making. To therefore use them in any research just as animals are used, merely as means to an end that primarily benefit rational humans, will be a moral devaluation of the dignity of the cognitive incapacitated. This implies that the dignity of the cognitively incapacitated human should not be circumvented for the benefit of rational human beings.

To put the discussion in more perspective, in times of pandemics or disease outbreaks, vaccines or medical drugs are manufactured to help humans build immunity against or curb the spread of the disease. In ensuring the efficiency and efficacy of the vaccines, most often animals with biological structure similar to that of humans are used as test objects. As test objects, animals are intentionally exposed to a disease for which a vaccine has been created. The vaccine is then applied to these animals to ascertain the responses of the animals to the effect of the vaccine. This process could put the test objects into both mental and physical distress, and in extreme cases death. This preliminary test of vaccines is to ensure that their application on humans will not endanger human lives. The use of animals as test objects in this situation is an exploitation of the wellbeing of animals to the benefit of humans. This exploitation seems allowable, but same cannot be said in the case of the cognitively incapacitated. The cognitively incapacitated cannot be used as test objects for vaccines in the sense that animals are subjected to. However, there is a different sense that the cognitive incapacitated can be involved in laboratory experimentation. If the

experiment is meant to revert the deficiency found in the cognitively incapacitated, experimenting on them, in my view, is permissible. This is because it is their own wellbeing that is at the central interest of the experiment. Even so, the incapacitated cannot be used as the preliminary test object; other means of preliminary testing. i.e., the use of animals, could be the first phase of deploying or testing the medication or vaccine.

The cognitively incapacitated cannot be used as decoys or human shields in military or security operations. In some security or military operations, animals, especially dogs, are used as shields on battle fields or security operations. This deployment is such that the animals are to help the security personnel identify whether a particular security or war zone is safe, ambushed or booby-trapped. The use of animals in these operations is mostly criticised since it puts the lives of the animals involved in danger. The situation becomes more critical when the cognitively incapacitated is used as human shields or decoys. The fact that the incapacitated lacks rational capability does not mean that they be exploited in security or military operations to the benefit of rational humans. The cognitive incapacitated should not be used as a mere means to an end in this case since their proximity to rational nature is closer than the proximity of animals to rational nature.

It is worth noting that individuals suffering from extreme cognitive incapacitation face challenges in communicating effectively and making appropriate decisions. For this reason, the role of surrogate decision-makers become inevitably paramount. The surrogates must ensure that the decision made on behalf of the cognitively incapacitated is in the best interest of the latter. For example, when the research will offer benefits to the lives of cognitively incapacitated persons, such as, researching the causes of their incapacities or performing experiments that would discover

new treatments for them, their involvement would be morally justified. The case for their participation in this research should be permissive if it is in their best interest.

Finally, research designed to be for benefit of the cognitively incapacitated should help further general social understanding of the nature of cognitive incapacitation. It should foster an environment in which governmental policies and resources are directed toward their support and prevention of future occurrence of the incapacitation. Unlike animal research subjects which may be used for the benefit of rational humans and also of the cognitively incapacitated, cognitively incapacitated persons should not be treated as mere means to benefit rational humans or nonhuman sentient beings. The incapacitated should only be subjected to research or experimentation if the process accords them a higher respect for their dignity as compared to the dignity of non-human animals. Although the cognitively incapacitated are rationally inept, they are most often excluded and ought to be excluded from any experimentation that exploits their wellbeing. The cognitively incapacitated, though not rational, as argued, has *Willkur*, hence, gives them a superior moral status to the moral status of nonhuman sentient beings.

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