

## KANT'S CONCEPT OF INDIRECT DUTIES AND ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

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### ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to assess whether Kant's moral theory is suitable to deal with our obligations to take care of nonhuman animals and the environment. Kant's ethics distinguishes *persons*, that is, rational beings with unconditional values who are considered as ends in themselves, from *things*, which have only relative worth. In relation to nature as a whole and to nonrational beings, Kant argues that we have only *indirect* duties or duties *with regard* to them. According to some philosophers, Kant's ethics has anthropocentric starting points which lead to speciesist conclusions. This paper will argue that indirect duties can be in accordance with nonhuman interests, such as the suffering of nonhuman animals, the preservation of species and ecosystems, and so on. Thus Kant's moral philosophy may contribute to environmental ethics because it justifies at least animal welfare and environmental protections as constraints on unrestricted human action.

**Keywords:** environmental ethics; Kant; ratiocentrism; speciesism; indirect duties.

### Introduction

According to some philosophers, Kant's ethics has anthropocentric starting points (O'Neill 1998; Altman 2011) which lead to speciesist conclusions (Singer 2009). One of Kant's most familiar statements is that rational beings have wills because they are able to choose on the basis of principles and to establish ends provided by reason, rather than being entirely motivated by natural desires and impulses (GMS, AA 04: 412; TL, AA 06: 213-4)<sup>2</sup>. Kant's exposition of the Formula of Humanity in *Groundwork* distinguishes *persons* (rational beings considered as ends in themselves, that is, as something that may not be used merely as a means) from *things*, which, he says, "have only a relative worth" (GMS, AA 04: 428). Besides that, Kant says in the *Doctrine of Virtue* that human beings have duties *with regard to* or *indirect* duties in relation to nature and nonrational beings. For these reasons, Kant's moral theory is not considered suitable to deal with questions about how we should treat nonhuman living animals and the natural environment. This paper will consider both the strengths and weaknesses of Kant's ethics in dealing with nonhuman animals and nature in general. It will hold that Kant's concept of indirect duties contributes to environmental ethics because *at least* it justifies animal

welfare and environmental protections.

## 1 Kant's account of the value of rational beings and nature

To understand Kant's account of the value of nature and rational beings, we must consider two important concepts that appear both in *Groundwork* (GMS) and in the *Metaphysics of Morals* (MS), namely, "will" and "end". Kant says that everything in nature works according to laws, but "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" (GMS, AA 04: 413). That is to say, the will is the power within us to produce practical results (actions) from the demands of reason. Animals follow their desires and inclinations to eat, to avoid harm, and to reproduce. Plants do not have a nervous system, and their responses to stimuli like light or touch are slow. But neither animals nor plants are capable of acting on the basis of reason. Kant explains why the will should be determined by an end:

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. Now, what serves the will as the objective ground of its self-determination is an end (*Zweck*), and this, if it is given by reason alone, must hold equally for all rational beings (GMS, AA 04: 427).

The will of a rational being is always directed towards an end that he gives himself. The concept of "end" that appears in the *Groundwork* is better explained in the *Metaphysics of Morals*. In the introduction to the *Doctrine of Virtue*, Kant states: "Ethics [...] provides a *matter* (an object of free choice), an *end* of pure reason which it represents as an end that is also objectively necessary, that is, an end that, as far as human beings are concerned, it is a duty to have" (TL, AA 06: 380). The end is, therefore, an object of free choice (*Willkur*), and its representation determines it as an action. Every action has its end, and this should not be an act of nature but a free act by the agent. Thus, for Kant, "[...] there must be such end and a categorical imperative corresponding to it" (TL, AA 06: 385). This means that the ends which are simultaneously duties, namely one's own perfection and the happiness of others, are not established from the sensitive impulses of human nature, but from an individual's own free will. Kant holds that

[...] pure practical reason is a faculty of ends generally, and for it to be indifferent to ends, that is, to take no interest in them, would therefore be a contradiction, since then

it would not determine maxims for actions either (because every maxim of action contains an end), and so would not be practical reason (TL, AA 06: 395).

Thus, according to Kant, the Categorical Imperative has a form and also has a matter, that is, an end.

Having clarified the relation of the will to the purpose of pure reason, we can now properly analyze the value of nature and nonrational animals. As we have seen, the will of a rational being is always directed towards an end that he gives himself. In this way, Kant argues that the end as an objective principle will be rational nature: “Now I say that the human being and in general every rational being *exists* as an end in itself, *not merely as a means* to be used by this or that will at its discretion; instead he must in all his actions (...) always be regarded *at the same time as an end*” (GMS, AA 04: 428). After this passage, Kant presents the distinction between *persons* and *things*:

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, that is, as something that may not be used merely as a means, and hence so far limits all choice (and is an object of respect) (GMS, AA 04: 428).

In the *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant remarks that “[r]espect is always directed only to persons, never to things. The latter can awaken in us *inclination* and even *love* if they are animals (e.g. horses, dogs, and so forth), or also *fear*, like the sea, a volcano, a beast of prey, but *never respect*” (KpV, AA 05: 76). Then, the rational nature should serve as a restrictive condition of all relative and arbitrary ends. In other words, this restrictive condition can be translated as the duty not to treat humanity as a mere means. That is what the Formula of Humanity says: “*So act that you use humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means*” (GMS, AA 04: 429).

According to Kant, all rational beings stand under the law that each of them should treat themselves and all others “[...] never merely as a means, but always at the same time as ends in themselves.” This results in “[...] a systematic union of rational beings through common objective laws, that is, a kingdom, which can be called a kingdom of ends [...] because what these laws have as their purpose is just the relation of these beings to one another as ends and means.” (GMS, AA 04: 433). In the kingdom of ends, that is, in a community where all people are treated as ends in themselves, everything has a price or a dignity: “What has a price can be replaced by something else as its *equivalent*, what on the other hand is raised above all price and therefore admits of no equivalent has a dignity.” (GMS AA 04: 434). Kant argues that the

condition for something to be considered an end in itself is to have dignity:

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 worth, that is, *dignity*. Now, morality is the condition under which alone a rational being can be an end in itself, since only through this is it possible to be a lawgiving member in the kingdom of ends. Hence morality, and humanity insofar as it is capable of morality, is that which alone has dignity. (GMS, AA 06: 435).

One must treat rational nature as an end in itself because it has dignity. However, recent naturalistic interpretations of Kant's philosophy may bring new insights on this issue. Frederick Rauscher argues that in a naturalistic Kantian ethics there is no place for any intrinsic value property (Rauscher 2015, p. 209) and that there is no independently empirically real value property in persons or objects in nature (2015, p. 224). According to this, the value is not a property of anything independent of the moral agent, but an ordering of nature by reason. Thus, a naturalistic interpretation of Kant's obligation-based ethics may conform to moral idealism instead of moral realism. According to some Kantian ethicists, the claim that the environment is the locus of real values is hard to establish (O'Neill 1997). In this way, Kant's moral idealism can provide quite strong reasons to protect and to preserve the environment, including non-human animals. For instance, it may establish duties to animal welfare and environmental protections without strong metaphysical commitments.

It is then important to explain what Kant means by rational nature. In the *Groundwork*, Kant states that "[...] rational nature is distinguished from the rest of nature by this, that it sets itself an end" (GMS, AA 04: 437). The duties of virtue or ethical duties are those that promote some ends confirmed by reason, that is, duties that are ends simultaneously: "They are the one's *own perfection and the happiness of others*" (TL, AA 06: 385). Many of the ethical duties in *Doctrine of Virtue* are explicitly based on the principle of humanity. In the next section, this paper will consider the system of ethical duties and analyze the place for duties to inanimate nature and to nonrational beings.

## 2 Indirect duties to minerals, plants and to nonrational animals

According to Kant, the most fundamental division among ethical duties is between duties towards ourselves and duties towards others. Duties to ourselves are those required on account of respect for the humanity in our own person. We respect humanity in our own person by

promoting the end of our own natural or moral *perfection* (TL 6:385–387). All duties towards others are required to promote the end of their happiness. We respect humanity in others by promoting the ends set by rational beings, which compose the idea of a person's happiness (TL 06: 388). Duties to others are further distinguished into duties of respect and duties of love (TL 06: 448–450).

Kant argues that there can be no *direct* duties in relation to nature as a whole and to nonrational beings (TL 06: 442–443). However, we have *indirect* duties or duties *with regard* to them. According to him, these duties appear to be duties toward them because of an “*amphiboly in moral concepts of reflection*”, that is, a misunderstanding that leads us to conflate a “duty to *with regard to* other beings for a duty *to* those beings” (TL AA 06: 442). They can refer to objects *other than persons* or to objects that are indeed persons, but quite *imperceptible* ones, that is, those who cannot be presented to the outer senses: “The first (*nonhuman*) objects can be mere inorganic matter (minerals), or matter organized for reproduction though still without sensation (plants), or the part of nature endowed with sensation and choice (animals). The second, (*superhuman*) objects can be thought as spiritual beings (angels, God)” (TL AA 06: 442). Indirect duties can be defined as duties that moral agents have regarding nonhuman animals and the environment because of their relationship to people's interests or rights. These duties are *regarding* nonhuman animals or the environment, but not *to* them (Sandler 2017).

In relation to minerals and plants, Kant recognizes that the appreciation of beauty in inanimate nature is required for morality: “A propensity for wanton destruction of what is *beautiful* in inanimate nature (*spiritus destructionis*) is opposed to a human being's duty to himself” (TL AA 06: 443). For Kant, aesthetic appreciation of plant life and nonliving natural entities can help foster dispositions that make one more likely to fulfill one's duties to human beings. So *spiritus destructionis* weakens a disposition of sensibility that greatly promotes morality or at least paves the way for it: “the disposition, namely, to love something (e.g., beautiful crystal formations, the indescribable beauty of plants) even apart from any intention to use it” (TL, AA 06: 443). Moreover, according to the notes of Vigilantius, Kant claimed similarly that, regarding nonanimal nature, moral agents have “a duty only to have no *animus destructionum*, i. e., no inclination to destroy without need the useable objects of nature” (V-MS/Vigil, AA 27: 709). This is because “the need to love other things outside us must not be self-serving” and because one “cannot be more disinterestedly satisfied, from a moral point of view, than when this inclination is directed upon lifeless objects [...]” (V-MS/Vigil, AA 27: 710). As we can see, Kant holds both that not caring about the destruction of beautiful natural entities “is opposed to a human being's duty to himself” and that humans have “a duty only to

have no *animus destructionum*” (V-MS/Vigil, AA 27: 709). Being moral includes regarding oneself and nature in a manner that is not merely self-serving. Appreciation of beautiful flora and nonliving entities cultivates a similar disposition, since one thereby admires beautiful entities apart from their propensity to serve one’s own interests. According to Allen Wood, Kant says that our duty to further our own moral perfection requires us to appreciate and preserve natural beauty *for its own sake*. He says that, “Kant is apparently acknowledging that something, namely natural beauty, can have *worth for its own sake* (and not merely as a means) without being rational nature *in the person* of some rational being” (Wood, 1998, p. 200). This fits well with Kant’s claim that moral agents ought to view one another as deserving of respect, treating others as ends-in-themselves rather than as mere means.

In relation to duties to nonrational living beings, Kant’s argument *seems* to be that one should not be cruel to animals because this makes one more likely to be cruel to humans. Kant writes:

With regard to the animate but nonrational part of creation, violent and cruel treatment of animals is far more intimately opposed to a human being’s duty to himself, and he has a duty to refrain from this; for it dulls his shared feeling of their suffering and so weakens and gradually uproots a natural disposition that is very serviceable to morality in one’s relations with other people (TL, AA 06: 443)

Kant says that human beings ought to abstain from the violent and cruel treatment of animals because such treatment will make humans more likely to fail in their direct duties to one another. Contemporary proponents of this argument frequently point out that perpetrators of violent crimes sometimes have a prior history of violence towards animals. Kant mentions the fact that, in England, butchers or surgeons were not allowed to serve on juries because their profession was thought to inure them to death (V-Mo/Collins, AA 27: 460). However, some ethicists maintain that there is no necessary connection between cruelty to animals and a reduction in one’s sensitivity to human suffering (Svoboda 2015, p. 147; Sandler 2017, p. 111-112)

There is also the question of whether Kant’s ethics is anthropocentric. Anthropocentrism is the view that the criterion for having inherent worth is to be a member of the species *Homo sapiens*, and that all and only human beings are directly morally considerable. Conversely, the different versions of nonanthropocentrism (ratiocentrism, sentientism, biocentrism) represent the view that at least some nonhumans have inherent worth, and several criteria have been used to decide which nonhumans should be directly morally considerable. Sentientism is the view that all organisms that have psychological states or mental experiences are directly morally considerable, while biocentrism is the view that all living things are directly

morally considerable, since they all can be directly benefited or harmed (Sandler 2017, p. 95). In anthropocentric views of moral status, nonhuman animals do not have inherent worth and are not directly morally considerable. Thus, according to some commentators, Kant's position is not a nonanthropocentric one (Altman, 2011, p. 60). Some critics emphasize the limitations of the indirect duties position. One could argue that if animals are only indirectly considerable, then it would seem to be permissible to treat them however you wish. Indirect duties may imply that there is no need to take care of animals for their own sake or that there is nothing morally problematic with animal cruelty in itself. Nonetheless, Kant emphasizes that indirect duties do not imply that we can treat animals however we wish. He thought that animals should not be killed painfully, overworked, experimented on unnecessarily, or harmed for sport: "The human being is authorized to kill animals quickly (without pain) and to put them to work that does not strain them beyond their capacities (such as work as he himself must submit to)" (TL, AA 6: 443). Killing animals painfully and slowly is cruel, as is working animals beyond their capacities. Besides that, Kant claims that "agonizing physical experiments for the sake of mere speculation, when the end could also be achieved without these, are to be abhorred" (TL, AA 6: 443). Thus, we should not cause unnecessary harm to animals through frivolous and painful experiments. Finally, Kant says that hunting animals for sport is immoral (V-Mo/Collins, AA 27: 460). Therefore, one must kill animals quickly and painlessly, and not for one's own entertainment. Critics of Kant's indirect duties believe that nonhuman animals have interests that must be morally considered, and that this warrants welfare and protections that limit what people can do to them. Peter Singer considers Kant's argument speciesist. According to him, "[p]erhaps it is true that kindness to human beings and to other animals often go together; but whether or not this is true, to say, as [...] Kant did, that this is the real reason why we ought to be kind to animals is a thoroughly speciesist position" (Singer 2002, p. 268). The next section of this paper will analyze whether Kant's justification of duties towards nonhumans is indeed speciesist.

### 3 Kant's anthropocentrism and speciesism

A common criticism of anthropocentric positions in ethics is that they all incorporate what has come to be called "speciesism". According to some philosophers, speciesism unjustifiably discriminates against nonhumans on the basis of factual differences that are not morally relevant: "Because membership in the species *Homo sapiens* seems to fail to track anything ethically significant, basing worth on it seems to those who offer this argument to be unjustified

discrimination against nonhumans – that is, speciesism” (Sandler 2017, p. 99). By claiming that only humanity must be treated as end in itself and that human beings have no direct duties in relation to nonrational beings, Kant seems to hold a form of anthropocentrism. But Kant is not favoring the species *Homo sapiens per se*, but the rational nature or capacity to reason that many human beings have and some nonhumans may have.

Allen Wood thinks that Kant's ethical theory is *logocentric*, by which he means a position “based on the idea that rational nature, and it alone, has absolute and unconditional value” (Wood 1998, p. 189). Some environmental ethicists call this position “ratiocentrism”, that is, “the view that only robustly rational beings are directly morally considerable. This includes cognitively developed humans, but would also encompass robustly rational artificial intelligences or members of other species” (Sandler 2017, p. 95). Matthew Altman points out that the implications of logocentrism are the same as those of anthropocentrism: “human beings are included but plants, animals, and ecosystems are excluded from direct moral considerability” (Altman, 2011, p. 16). Wood, however, stresses that the problem with Kant's views on how we should treat nonhuman entities arises not from logocentrism, but from Kant's support of a *personification principle*, that is, “the idea that humanity or rational nature has a moral claim on us only *in the person of* a being who actually possesses it” (Wood 1998, p. 193). The personification principle makes a claim about the beings to whom duties or rights may be owed. It implies that “there can be no duties *toward* animals, toward nature as a whole, or indeed toward *any* nonrational being at all” (Wood 1998, p. 194). Wood says that Kant mistakenly thought that he could not establish any duties to nonrational beings because he also adopted the personification principle, by which every duty is a duty owed to some person (Wood 1998, p. 196). The personification principle holds that the logocentric claim (only rational nature has absolute and unconditional value and should be treated as an end in itself) applies only to humanity *in someone's person*. Onora O'Neill comments on Wood's thesis saying that

Even if in practice Kant thinks that there are duties to infants or impaired humans, who are not currently rational, he should not have done so, and he was correctly following the implications of the personification principle in denying that there are human duties to non-human animals, or to other parts of nonrational nature, or to supernatural beings (...). It is the personification principle rather than logocentrism which, as Wood views it, leads Kant to speciesist conclusions (O'Neill 1998, 220-221).

Thus, according to O'Neill, Kant is only committed to the personification principle.

Wood says that we should reject the personification principle. According to him: “a logocentric ethics, which grounds all duties on the value of human or rational nature, should not be committed to the personification principle” (Wood 1998, p. 197). Then, he argues that Kant’s moral theory should be modified and extended to accommodate moral concern for nonhumans: “we should also respect rational nature *in the abstract*, which entails respecting fragments of it or necessary conditions of it, even where these are not found in fully rational beings or persons” (Wood 1998, p. 198). Wood thinks that we ought to give nonhuman animals moral consideration because they have elements of or necessary conditions for rationality. However, one could object that it is not clear whether we can attribute fragments of rationality to all nonhuman animals which have desires, sentience and some ability to initiate action. As we will see, Wood’s interpretation of the logocentric principle may not be extended to species that do not have rationality.

Christine Korsgaard also tries to extend Kant’s philosophy to justify direct duties to animals. Differently from Wood, however, she says that those caveats concerning which beings have humanity (infants, the severely intellectually disabled, those with incurable mental illnesses, those with dementia and so on) are misguided. According to her, in Kant’s conception of rationality, most of those beings who are nearly rational are indeed rational beings: “Some of them are, for various reasons, unable to reason well; some of them are at stages of their lives when reason is undeveloped, inert, or non-functional. These conditions (...) do not affect their standing as rational beings under the Kantian conception” (Korsgaard, 2004, p. 82). She says that despite appearances, and despite what Kant thought, “his arguments reveal the ground of our obligations to the other animals” (Korsgaard, 2004, p. 82). However, differently from Wood who thinks that we ought to give nonhuman animals moral consideration because they have fragments of rationality, Korsgaard claims that human beings have direct duties to animals in virtue of each animal’s natural good. She writes that

an animal is an organic system to whom its own good matters, an organic system that welcomes, desires, enjoys, and pursues its good. We could even say that an animal is an organic system that matters to itself, for it pursues its own good for its own sake (...). When we say that something is naturally good for an animal, we mean that it is good from its point of view (Korsgaard, 2004, p.102-103).

Animals do not give themselves moral law because they are not self-legislating agents, but they are worthy of moral consideration by those who do. Korsgaard holds that human beings through their legislative wills confer normative value on their own natural good as animal beings and on the natural good of nonhuman animals as well. According to her “[i]n taking ourselves to be

ends-in-ourselves we legislate that the natural good of a creature who matters to itself is the source of normative claims. Animal nature is an end-in-itself, because our own legislation makes it so. And that is why we have duties to the other animals” (Korsgaard 2004, p. 106). Korsgaard accepts Kant’s claim that value is the result of our reasoning about what ends we will pursue and deciding what is worthwhile. Then, she rejects the argument that, as a condition of all other goods, humanity alone is an end in itself. Valuing the capacity to reason commits us to valuing our natural existence, which also commits us to valuing the natural existence of other organisms that, like us, care about their own wellbeing.

Both Wood and Korsgaard conclude that animals are deserving of direct moral consideration. However, Wood does not claim that animals are ends in themselves. He claims that we also ought to respect things that are not themselves rational, but that have fragments of rational nature. Wood presents an extended scope of moral concern and calls this a “reasonable interpretation” of Kant’s logocentric principle.

The point I am making is easiest to see, and hardest to deny, in the case of many human beings (in the nontechnical sense) who lack ‘humanity’ (in the technical sense), and therefore must fail (technically) to be persons at all. They include small children and people who have severe mental impairments or diseases which deprive them, either temporarily or permanently, of the capacity to set ends according to reason. Clearly Kant would not want to say that such human beings are mere things, which are to be treated only as means. The important thing, though, is not what Kant would want to say, but rather what is required by a reasonable interpretation of his basic principle that rational nature should be respected as an end in itself (WOOD, 1998, p. 198).

The extension of the scope of moral concern for rational nature to those beings who, in Wood’s terms, exhibit ‘fragments of rationality’, but are not currently *persons* in Kant’s narrow use of the term is clear. For example, Kant considers that we have duties in favor of human beings such as infants whose rational agency is potential. In the *Doctrine of Virtue*, Kant says that when a pregnant woman takes her own life, she not only commits a crime against her own person, but also against another person (her fetus) as well (TL, AA 06: 422). In the *Doctrine of Right*, Kant holds that parents have a duty to preserve and to care for their children. He says: “children, as persons, have by their procreation an original innate (not acquired) right to the care of their parents until they are able to look after themselves” (RL, AA 06: 280). Kant also argues that we have duties to human beings who have temporarily impaired use of reason, for instance, through illness or incapacity (TL, AA 06: 457). As we can see, Kant is considering rights to children and direct duties to fetuses, infants and those who are not yet *persons* or who are only nearly rational. Onora O’Neill says that “Kant never in fact doubts that all of these are

owed the duties that we owe to those humans who are in the maturity of their faculties: in this respect he was perhaps, and honourably, a speciesist” (O’Neill, 1998, p. 221). According to her, Kant’s ethics, like other models of ethics, has unavoidable anthropocentric starting points. Only humans, or other ‘rational natures’, can hold obligations.

Some form of anthropocentrism is a necessary presupposition of any moral theory or moral discourse: no agents, no morality. Anthropocentric starting points are needed not only by Kant but by other forms of Kantian ethics, by utilitarians, by rights theorists, by virtue ethicists and by others whose conception of morality is not theoretically structured. Kant is distinctive on this point not because he assumes that morality requires agents, but because he has a strong and complex notion of what it is to be free and rational, and so an agent. This indispensable anthropocentrism neither assumes nor establishes any form of speciesist moral conclusions. It says simply that morality requires agents, and leaves open who or what may be on the receiving end of the action that is to be morally regulated, and whether the ways in which they should be treated vary with their species. (O’Neill, 1998, p. 217)

O’Neill holds that Kant’s conclusions are less speciesist than is often supposed: “Even if Kant is a speciesist, he is not a human chauvinist who unthinkingly assumes the greater worth of the human species” (O’Neill, 1998, p. 212). O’Neill also argues that Kant’s position leads to a wider view of the objects of moral concern. Nonetheless, O’Neill maintains that Kant’s view may be speciesist up to a point: “it requires action that takes account of difference of species. It does not establish that nonrational beings of any species have rights, or that rational beings have direct duties to them. But Kant’s position is not a straight and simple form of human chauvinism” (O’Neill, 1998, p. 227). This is not a conclusion which some antispeciesists will accept. However, an argument that animals which will never have moral agency should have rights without duties would be even harder to sustain. Kant does not view nonrational animals as mere things for use. His theory based on indirect duties can provide reasons to protect the natural world, including individual nonhuman animals. Then, O’Neill sustains that indirect duties must be part of any environmentally sensitive ethics: “a focus on indirect duties offers another, perhaps humbler, way of filling out the appropriate relations between the human and nonhuman worlds” (1998, p. 226). Kant’s indirect duties are in accordance with many nonhuman interests, such as animal welfare and environmental protections. Besides that, they can be related to efforts “to establish and sustain productive ways of life, clean waters, fertile soils, non-polluting technologies and stable habitats for human and nonhuman animals, as well as preserving biodiversity” (O’Neill, 1998, p. 226). Therefore O’Neill considers that Kant’s speciesism is not thoroughgoing.

## Final Remarks

Kant's rejection of direct moral consideration for nonhuman nature might seem incompatible with justifying moral consideration to animals and the environment. However, the statement that there are indirect duties from which nonhuman animals ought to benefit is not an insignificant protection in Kant's moral theory. Indirect duties matter because they are duties that bind and restrict the actions of all who are capable of having them. It is crucial then to note that Kant never said that animals and nature are valuable only as resources to satisfy unreflective human wants, that nonrational things can be used as we like or for the mere satisfaction of human needs. We can conclude that Kant's ethics restricts our behavior in ways that are consistent with the wellbeing of animals and the preservation of environmental systems.

## Notes

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<sup>2</sup> Kants writings will be cited according to “*Akademie-Ausgabe*”: (Abbreviation, AA volume: page number)

GMS *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten* (AA 04)

KpV *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft* (AA 05)

KU *Kritik der Urteilskraft* (AA 05)

MS *Metaphysik der Sitten* (AA 06)

    RL *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Rechtslehre* (AA 06)

    TL *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Tugendlehre* (AA 06)

VA *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht* (AA 07)

V-MS/Vigil *Die Metaphysik der Sitten Vigilantius* (AA 27)

V-Mo/Collins *Moralphilosophie Collins* (AA 27)

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