# MINDING OTHERS' BUSINESS

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Few people doubt that we are at least sometimes under a moral requirement to mind another person's business. That requirement is easiest to see and accept when the minding is aimed at preventing one person from violating the rights of a third person, or hindering her happiness or life prospects. The idea that we might be morally required to intervene in someone's life so as to promote that person's own happiness raises deep and troubling questions about paternalism, particularly in the public sphere. And yet, our personal lives are often characterized by relationships with people whose happiness is dear to us, but who do not always act in ways conducive to their own flourishing, or worse, undermine their prospects for happy lives through self-destructive actions and attitudes.

In such relationships, we find ourselves faced with a profound tension, one that Immanuel Kant insightfully characterized as a tension between love and respect. Love, he says, admonishes us to come closer to one another, while respect instructs us to keep our distance.[1] The love that directs us to concern ourselves with the happiness of others is constrained by the respect that their rational nature demands of us. This is the basis of Kant's account of beneficence, which instructs us to make the ends of others our own. But setters of ends are not always setters of good or wise ends. When this is the case, it is hard to know what love and respect require of us.

In this paper, I will argue that while the Kantian description of this particular moral landscape is deeply insightful, the practical problems it presents cannot readily be resolved within Kantianism, given its reliance on paradigms of relationships between rational agents. A better solution, I will argue, can be found by turning to Aristotelian virtue ethics instead, but the solution requires that we be able to articulate an account of this tension between love and respect in more Aristotelian terms.

My goal here is to give an account of the moral dimensions of minding others' business that draws on the insights of Kant's depiction of them while still being recognizably situated in virtue ethics. What Kant describes as a tension between love and respect, I shall argue for as a tension between two virtues—sympathy and humility. It is sympathy that draws us near to others and humility that cautions us against inappropriate interference. Virtuous sympathy, I argue, provides a broader justification for minding others' business than Kantian love. Likewise, humility constrains us against intervention into the affairs of others in quite different ways than does Kantian respect, and indeed, constrains some of us more than others. The result is that within virtue ethics, the problem of whether and how to mind another's business takes on a different shape and creates room for a wider, more nuanced range of responses.

I will begin in Part I with Kant's own description of the tension between love and respect, and the ways in which respect constrains love in the context of beneficent intervention in others' lives. Kant's account of beneficence is an attractive one for explaining the appropriate moral relationship between rational agents who have set rationally defensible ends for themselves. But of course, not everyone is a fully rational agent, and all of us fail to behave in rationally defensible ways at least on occasion. Kant

was certainly aware that human beings do not always act rationally; nevertheless, it is not entirely clear what Kantian respect demands of us in relationships with generally rational people who have committed themselves to ends that are not rationally defensible. In Part II, I will argue that the tension between love and respect in such cases can also be captured in terms of the virtues of sympathy and humility, and then go on to show how the practical problem of minding others' business can be satisfactorily resolved within virtue ethics.

## PART I: LOVE AND RESPECT

Kant had a great deal to say about love and respect individually, but in the following passage, he describes the effects of combining them in practice:

> The principle of mutual love admonishes men constantly to *come closer* to one another; that of the respect they owe one another, to keep themselves *at a distance* from one another; and should one of these great moral forces fail, "the nothingness (immorality), with gaping throat, would drink up the whole kingdom of (moral) beings like a drop of water."[2]

The passage, while perhaps a bit dramatic, is nevertheless deeply insightful. Among other things, it emphasizes the moral importance of love, which detractors of Kant have longed assumed must have held an inferior position in his theory. But it is not simply the fact that Kant acknowledges two "great moral forces" here that makes this passage so important; it is also the fact that, as Kant notes here and elsewhere, the operation of these two moral forces can generate practical conflicts.[3] The conflicts are of a sort that anyone who has ever seen a stranger weeping in public immediately recognizes. (Do I approach and offer aid, or would that be too intrusive?) This is not to say that every interaction with others presents us with a conflict between love and respect, or that love and respect

are the only moral forces at work in our relationships with other people. But Kant's description of the tension captures nicely the moral landscape we face when deciding whether to help someone whom we take to be in need of aid.

Kant's account of beneficence, under which most helping actions fall, reflects these competing pulls of love and respect. He argues in the *Doctrine of Virtue* that there are two ends that are also duties, or two ends to which anyone with a good will must commit herself.[4] Those ends are one's own perfection, both natural and moral, and the happiness of others. The latter is the foundation of our imperfect ethical duties of love. Adopting these ends is strictly required of us, and the resulting ethical duties are central to Kant's ethical framework.

The love that Kant says we are obliged to have for others is best understood as a practical attitude, rather than a feeling.[5] If I have the properly loving attitude toward my fellow human beings, I will have it as my maxim to promote their happiness, to take it on as a major moral commitment. But there is a crucial qualification. Kant insists that, "I cannot do good to anyone in accordance with *my* concepts of happiness (except to young children and the insane), thinking to benefit him by forcing a gift upon him; rather, I can benefit him only in accordance with *his* concepts of happiness."[6] At its core, beneficence is aimed at helping other people fulfill the ends that they themselves have set. As Kant puts it, the "duty of love for one's neighbor can, accordingly, be expressed as the duty to make others' ends my own."[7]

There is, of course, much to be said about what it means to make the ends of others my own. It's clear that Kant does not mean that we are morally required to promote all the ends of other people and indeed, we are not supposed to promote any

agent's impermissible ends. Generally speaking, we have latitude in determining which of the agent's permissible ends we promote. But for help to fulfill the duty of beneficence, it must be oriented toward the other person's end and moreover *because* it is her end. My helping someone achieve something that I independently value may be permissible, but it does not count as beneficence unless it is done for the sake of helping that person achieve her end. For purposes of beneficence, the ends to be promoted derive their value from the fact that they are the ends of a rational agent.[8]

This is what generates the respect-based constraints on beneficence for Kant. When I benefit someone in accordance with the ends she has set for herself, I acknowledge her as a setter of ends. In valuing her ends because they are hers, I express respect for her as a rational agent in the fullest Kantian sense. Kant is quite cognizant of the negative repercussions for a relationship that beneficence can generate.[9] He insists that aid must be rendered in such a way that it interferes as little as possible with the recipient's capacity for self-respect. All acts of beneficence must both acknowledge the other as a setter of ends and ensure that she can continue to acknowledge herself as such.

This account of beneficence has considerable intuitive plausibility in a certain range of cases, most notably those in which the would-be-beneficiary has rationally defensible ends. If you offer to help me paint my house, but decide that the color I've selected is ugly and paint it a different color instead, then you are failing to fulfill the requirements of Kantian beneficence. Indeed, it seems as though from a moral standpoint, it would have been better not to have offered to help at all. Declining to help me paint my house might be selfish, but it does not show the same kind of disrespect for

me as a rational agent that the deliberate subversion of my ends shows. In such cases, Kant's account gets the moral nuances just right.

But directing beneficence appropriately is often more complicated than that. Consider, for instance, the "helpful" career guidance that Mrs. Elton offers Jane Fairfax in Jane Austen's *Emma*.[10] Mrs. Elton is a self-important upstart who sails into the scene upon her marriage with the aim of becoming a pillar of town society. The image she wants to construct for herself includes being a well-connected patroness. To that end, she takes up the case of Miss Fairfax, an impoverished, but genteel young woman whose apparently imminent fate is to become a governess. Mrs. Elton undertakes a search for a suitable position for Jane, despite the latter's explicit requests that she do nothing of the sort. She then defends her interference by claiming that Jane is ignorant of the importance of a good situation and its effects on her future happiness.

On the surface, this case seems straightforward enough. By dismissing as irrelevant Jane's views about she wants and what she thinks will contribute to her own good, Mrs. Elton is doing precisely what Kant says we must not do—namely, aiming to benefit Jane in accordance with *her* conception of Jane's good, rather than Jane's own conception. In so doing, she fails to treat Jane as a rational agent, capable of setting ends for herself. Regardless of the intention behind it, her act clearly fails as an instance of Kantian beneficence because it is inadequately bounded by the necessary respect for Jane's rational agency.

Kant's account does capture our strong intuition that Mrs. Elton's interference in Jane's search for a position is disrespectful. And yet, there is something more to the story that his account does not capture as well, which is that Mrs. Elton actually has a point.

Although Jane rightly rejects Mrs. Elton's snobbish notions of what a good situation consists in, she is nevertheless mistaken in her judgment that the terms of the situation are irrelevant. Jane believes that being a governess is such a grim prospect, and so wholly incompatible with a good life that the details of a particular position are largely irrelevant. But the novel makes clear that this judgment is incorrect; the supremely happy life of Emma's former governess, Mrs. Weston, is proof against it. If Jane had ever proceeded with her plans for seeking employment just as they were, she would have been undermining her own prospects for flourishing.

Kant himself noted that his account of beneficence is unworkable when it comes to young children and the insane, who presumably are not capable of being end-setters in the relevant way. Others are clearly permitted to set ends for toddlers that they would not set for themselves, and prevent them from attaining ends that they do have. This requires that we have recourse to some conception of their good that is not reducible to the set of ends that they actually have.[11] For the sake of simplicity, I will refer to the satisfaction of an agent's subjective ends as her 'happiness' and use the term 'flourishing' to refer to an agent's overall good, more objectively considered.[12]

I take it, however, that Kant's account of beneficence among rational agents makes clear that beneficent actions are to be aimed at the other's happiness, rather than her flourishing.[13] This need not, of course, preclude the would-be benefactor from caring about the other's flourishing, wishing for it, and so forth. Indeed, it seems likely that love requires that we care about the flourishing of our fellow human beings, and not just their happiness, understood as the satisfaction of their ends.

But in the case of rational agents, what we may permissibly care about comes apart from what we may permissibly do. Respect constrains the latter in ways that it does not constrain the former.[14] Beneficence requires that I promote at least some of another's permissible ends, but respect for him as a setter of those ends requires that I allow him to define the space within which my beneficence toward him can legitimately function.

There are practical reasons for this, of course. We normally have good reason to assume that our would-be-beneficiaries are in a better position than us to know what they need in order to flourish. In fact, Jane's resistance to Mrs. Elton's offers of help is motivated in part by her secret engagement to Frank Churchill, of which Mrs. Elton knows nothing. But the Kantian reasons we have for promoting the actual ends of the beneficiary, rather than the ones we would have them pursue, are not merely practical ones. We have moral reason to direct our beneficence to the other's chosen ends because respect for her as an end-setter requires it.

Kant is clear that we are not required to promote all of an agent's actual ends, and surely it is contrary to the spirit of beneficence to help someone pursue an end one knows to be incompatible with her flourishing. In other words, no one should give Jane a dart to throw at the Regency equivalent of the classified ads. And yet it also seems contrary to the spirit of Kantian beneficence to stand by, hands behind the back, while a friend is on the verge of making what one has excellent reason to suppose will be a major mistake about her life. Love demands more from us.

If we love someone, we care not just about whether she achieves her ends, but also whether she flourishes. Practical problems arise, however, when we are in a position to judge that our loved one's chosen ends are incompatible with her flourishing. The

difficulty about Jane Fairfax is that she is failing to see her own circumstances in a fully rational way. She is certainly a rational agent in Kant's sense, but her perspective on being a governess is skewed by her youth, her attachment to the capricious Frank Churchill, and her present emotional state. And although the superficial and snobbish Mrs. Elton is in no position to advise Jane on this matter, other characters in the novel are. Indeed, the obvious solution here seems to be for a wiser, kindly motivated friend, such as Mrs. Weston, to talk some sense into her, with the hope of getting Jane to take up a different view of the possibilities for her future.[15] But what is not clear is the extent to which Kantian respect for another as a setter of ends is compatible with trying to change her ends, and whether such an undertaking could ever count as an act of beneficence.

There are some circumstances in which pointing out another's mistake will qualify as an act of Kantian beneficence. If you have your heart set on going to live in Africa for the next year, and you are about to accept a job in Suriname, I am not failing to respect you if I call your attention to your mistaken belief about its location. Rather, I am helping promote your end by pointing out a problem with the means you are employing to bring it about.[16] But we can see that in the case of Jane, it will be no remedy if Mrs. Weston crosses the room and tells Jane that she has this governess thing all wrong. This is because what Jane is lacking is not information about the means to her ends, but rather moral wisdom about the value of those ends. And it is not clear whether Kant's account of beneficence can accommodate help that comes in the form of wisdom about ends.

Let us take for granted that it is always impermissible to employ outright coercion or deception on rational people in an effort to get them to change their ends. Certainly Kant thinks so, and intuitively, it seems right.[17] And let us also take for granted that it is

not in principle impermissible to tell someone that you think she is making a major mistake about one of her ends. It might not count as an act of beneficence for Kant, but that doesn't imply that it's wrong, provided that it's done respectfully.[18] But of course, people who are in the process of messing up their lives often do not *believe* that they are messing up their lives, and aren't always amenable to rational advice from others. To put it differently, the concern is not so much with whether we can respectfully give brochures from Alcoholics Anonymous to the friend with a drinking problem; presumably we can. Rather, the concern is with how we respond when she throws them away.

When we aim to help an alcoholic who is refusing help, the goal is the reconfiguration of one of her ends into something more rational. If she has proven to be unamenable to rational persuasion, then more intrusive methods may be the only way to help her. Suppose that my alcoholic friend has just had surgery and is on strict orders to avoid alcohol, on the grounds that it will interfere with the medication she is taking and seriously endanger her health. She persists in drinking anyway, despite my attempts to persuade her with the medical evidence. If I pour out her booze, knowing she cannot easily get more, I am thwarting her chosen end. Clearly this is cannot count as an act of beneficence as Kant understands it. Indeed, it might even be ruled out by the general requirement to respect her as a rational agent. And yet, I'm not convinced that pouring out the booze is always the wrong thing to do, particularly if it is done openly and non-deceptively. Or suppose that despite her requests to the contrary, I call her mother, who is especially skilled at delivering guilt trips, or that I deliberately frighten her by repeating true, but carefully selected stories of people dying from alcohol-drug interactions. Such tactics are certainly manipulative, but what one might deny is that

manipulation in such circumstances is wrong. I am not trying to change her ends so that they serve my own; rather, I am trying to change her ends so that they are in the service of her own flourishing. And I would argue that when it is clear that someone's chosen ends are undermining her own flourishing, and that thwarting or attempting to alter those ends is the only effective way to help her, then such actions ought to count as acts of beneficence. Pouring the booze down the sink is sometimes what love directs us to do.

Now one might argue in Kant's defense that Kantian beneficence is properly aimed not at promoting an agent's actual ends, but rather at promoting ends that would be rational for her to take up.[19] This is not an implausible position, although it is not easy to square with what Kant actually says about beneficence. Still, there are certainly instances where one may permissibly provide unsolicited aid on the grounds that a rational person would want such aid. (It is not, after all, wrong to help people who are presently unconscious.) It seems reasonable to think that when a person's wishes cannot be ascertained, we ought to choose ends for him based on what a rational person would choose in those circumstances. We might extend this to argue that since any rational person would have it as her end to be rescued from self-destructive behavior, we should act under the presumption that this is what the self-destructive agent in the next room would want, if she were thinking rationally.[20]

But of course, substituting our judgment for that of conscious and possibly resisting others is a messy business. Although it's true that the drunk person trying to drive home will likely be grateful to the friend who wrests the car keys out of his hand, it's less clear whether he will be grateful to the friend who prevents him from phoning his former girlfriend in an effort to win her back.

In the case of people who are drunk or otherwise temporarily impaired, we tend to think, talk, and act in terms of what their "real" or "normal" selves would want. When we know them well, we can generally make such a judgment reliably. But in the case of someone whose rational blind spots are not merely transient, it is not clear that we can sensibly talk about his "real" or "normal" self. The normal self just *is* the self that is in the grip of drugs, alcohol, anorexia, and so forth. The fully rational version of that self is somewhat of a fiction here, and the more we act on assumptions about what that imaginary fully rational self would want, rather than what the actual self wants, the further we get away from the respect-based constraints on beneficence that seem so intuitively plausible.[21]

Kantian love may well direct us to care about the flourishing of others in ways that go beyond their actual ends, or even conflict with them. If, however, we are ever warranted in thwarting someone's actual end or trying to get her to change it, it cannot be under the umbrella of Kantian beneficence. Kantian beneficence must be aimed at the person's own ends, if it is to count as respecting her as a setter of ends. It is the other person's status as an end-setter that generates the duty to promote the ends. If someone has that status, it is hard to see how one could respect her as a setter of ends while at the same time seeking to benefit her by replacing the ends she does have with other ones, even if they are better for her.

Part of the issue arises from the idea that our obligation of respect is directed toward others as setters of ends in the first place. Without suggesting that this is the only or best way of understanding Kantian respect, I think it's clear that this account of respect, however appealing, works best when the concerned parties are not committed to

any major ends that are not also rationally defensible at some level. But when it comes to end-setters who are setting rationally indefensible ends, it's not obvious what respecting them in the Kantian sense requires of us. Does it count as respecting a given person if we promote the ends that a more fully rational version of her would have, rather than those that she does have? If so, then Mrs. Elton may well prove to be acting respectfully when she ignores Jane's stated wishes and tries to secure her a suitable position. And yet that seems like the wrong conclusion.

A different strategy might be to argue (contra Kant himself) that we have a duty to adopt as an end not just the happiness of others, but also their perfection, either natural or moral (or both).[22] In most instances of self-destructive behavior, the person engaging in it is violating some kind of duty to himself. So the ends are likely to be morally indefensible, and not simply rationally indefensible. Presumably we are morally permitted, if not obligated, to thwart a person's ends when he is bent on destroying someone else. Perhaps we can find a similar Kantian obligation to interfere with those bent on destroying themselves.

Of course the person who is hurting someone else is generally violating a juridical duty and as such, can legitimately be coerced into stopping.[23] By contrast, the duties to improve one's own natural and moral perfection are imperfect ethical duties. They are duties to take up an end, and it is hard to see how we could have a duty to get someone else to take on a commitment. Kant's own resistance to such a duty is apparent in the following passage:

> So too, it is a contradiction for me to make another's *perfection* my end and consider myself under obligation to promote this. For the *perfection* of another man, as a person, consists just in this: that he himself is able to set his end in

> accordance with his own concept of duty; and it is self-contradictory to require that I do (make it my duty to do) something that only the other himself can do.[24]

The primary reason I have no moral duty to promote the perfection of others is that I *cannot* have someone else's perfection as my end in the relevant way. The problem is not so much one of inappropriateness as it is one of impossibility.

And yet, Kant himself acknowledges that a person's happiness can be affected by whether she is living up to the duty to attend her own moral perfection:

> The happiness of others also includes their *moral well-being,* and we have a duty, but only a negative one, to promote this. Although the *pain* a man feels from the pangs of conscience has a moral source, it is still a natural effect, like grief, fear, or any other state of suffering. To see to it that another does not deservedly suffer this inner reproach is not *my* duty, but *his affair*; but it is my duty to refrain from doing anything that, considering the nature of men, could tempt him to do something for which his conscience could afterward pain him, to refrain from what is called giving scandal. But this concern for others' moral contentment does not admit of specific limits being assigned to it, so that the obligation resting on it is only a wide one.[25]

Kant takes the pangs of conscience to be real. If so, then it makes sense to hold that beneficence requires that we concern ourselves with whether others are experiencing them, just as we would concern ourselves with any other sort of pain. On the other hand, Kant sees this obligation as strictly limited in scope. The duty, as Kant states it, is just to refrain from tempting a person to succumb to his human weaknesses. It is parallel to the obligation we have toward recovering alcoholics not to tempt them into joining us on a pub crawl.

On Kant's view, the primary obstacle to a good will is our human nature, with all its associated weaknesses and frailties. Although I cannot bring it about that someone else has a good will, I can interfere, for better or for worse, with his capacity for virtue, which Kant takes to be strength in overcoming wayward inclinations. This is why Kant

thinks that it is wrong to act in ways that hinder another's moral resolve in the face of his own weaknesses.

But what about those who have no such moral resolve, who are uninterested in their own moral perfection? What are our obligations toward them? Kant of course thinks that all human beings should have their moral perfection as an end, and it's clear that if someone does, beneficence instructs us to help her with it, not just by avoiding corrupting her, but also by helping her shore up her strength against temptation. But when confronted with a person who does not have her moral or natural perfection as an end, our obligations are much less straightforward.

As we have seen, Kant expresses doubts about whether a duty to promote the perfection of others is even possible, given what he thinks moral perfection consists in. But there is a further question about whether it would be morally appropriate to have that as end for someone who has not herself adopted it. Do I have an obligation to do what I can to make someone else a better person, either morally or naturally, if she does not have it as an end herself?

In his discussion of friendship, Kant suggests that we might have duties of love toward our friends that include efforts to promote their perfection: "from a moral point of view, it is, of course, a duty for one of the friends to point out the other's faults to him; this is in the other's best interests and is therefore a duty of love." And yet he immediately goes on to say:

> But the latter sees in this a lack of the respect he expected from his friend and thinks that he has either already lost or is in constant danger of losing something of his friend's respect, since he is observed and secretly criticized by him; and even the fact that his friend observes him and finds fault with him will seem in itself offensive.[26]

The puzzle is left unresolved in the text; we do not know whether, all things considered, Kant thinks friends should point out each other's faults, given that doing so might well destroy the friendship. But Kant clearly thinks that intimacy among even the closest of friends must have some limits; otherwise, we will lose hold of one of those two great forces that keep the moral world afloat.

So we are returned to the question of the extent to which respect for another as a setter of ends constrains us against thwarting her self-destructive ends or attempting to change them. It is easy to say that Mrs. Elton should not have done what she did, that she should have let it go once Jane objected. But letting it go is not always a morally satisfactory option either. (Indeed, Jane does end up benefiting from Mrs. Elton's interference, albeit in a roundabout way.) Whether it is depends on the nature of the end, the mistake, and the type of interference in question. Of course, trying to get people to change their ends is often ineffective and can sometimes even be counterproductive. And yet even when the attempts are likely to fail, love may instruct us not to give them up, just in case. When there's a chance of success, loving persistence in the face of opposition may be the appropriate moral response.

The respect-based constraints on Kantian beneficence stem from features of the beneficiary as a rational agent and hence, a setter of ends. As such, they apply across all rational agents, regardless of the extent to which those agents possess the wisdom to set good ends for themselves. Thomas Hill suggests that this is a result of Kant's concern for freedom:

> My suggestion is just that, in addition to other factors, respect for individual freedom to choose one's own particular way of life, within moral limits, may have been a significant reason for Kant's giving priority to happiness over human flourishing. Even if there is a discernible fact that certain individual ends

> contribute better than others to fulfilling characteristic, natural human capacities, Kant says only that our responsibility in helping others is to respect *their* choices of the ends they want to pursue….Admittedly, Kant says that we all have a duty to develop our mental and physical capacities, but he classifies this as a duty *to ourselves* that is not the business of others to enforce…Undeniably Kant was moved by ideals of human perfection, for individuals and humanity in general, but his moral theory reflects a strong counterbalancing concern for allowing individuals to choose, and judge, for themselves, even if they choose less than what would best promote their flourishing.[27]

The universality of the respect-based constraint on morality protects something that, on Hill's reading, Kant takes to have considerable moral value. I suspect that most people would agree that in the case of generally rational agents, it does have considerable moral value. It is, however, much harder to argue that there is considerable moral value in the exercise of a person's freedom to stay in an abusive marriage, starve herself to death through anorexia, or pursue his heroin addiction. What this shows, I think, is that respect for others as setters of ends is going to have to be complicated, and complicated in ways that a universal constraint against unwanted intervention is not well designed to handle.

The Kantian account of beneficence is one in which the reach of loving actions is systematically constrained by the requirements of respect for the other's rational agency. Interference in the lives of others is morally inappropriate when it consists in substituting other ends for the ones that the agent in fact has, even when it would be to her good to substitute them. That is because in the act of substitution, I fail to treat her as an end in herself, as a rational being capable of setting ends. The obligation of beneficence is thus strictly limited to promoting people's (permissible) ends as they are, not as we would wish them to be.

And yet love directs us to care not just about their actual ends, but also about their flourishing. When these come apart, we are faced with serious practical difficulties. If

we know that our judgments about what does and does not contribute to the other's flourishing are correct, as we ordinarily do in the case of alcoholics, drug abusers, anorexics, and so forth, then it would seem that we ought to intervene, and for reasons akin to the reasons we have for helping them in other circumstances.

My goal in this section has been to highlight a new aspect of a familiar difficulty in Kantianism regarding the role of rationality and the moral standing of those who lack it to greater and lesser degrees. Kant's account of beneficence has considerable moral appeal when it comes to helping agents pursuing rationally defensible ends. It is also subject to well-known difficulties about children, those with serious cognitive impairments, animals, and so forth.[28] The cases with which I am concerned in this paper, however, fall somewhere in between those two categories. They involve agents who warrant basic respect as end-setters, and yet who cannot lovingly be left to pursue their own conception of happiness. Intuitively, it seems that we ought sometimes try to help such people by thwarting or getting them to revise self-destructive ends, particularly when we have reason to think we would succeed, but Kantian beneficence has trouble accounting for this intuition. Kant provides us with the insight that these are situations in which love and respect collide, but he does not give us much help in navigating our way through the wreckage. With that in mind, I will turn to the question of whether Aristotelian virtue ethics might be able to do any better.

## PART II: SYMPATHY AND HUMILITY

In this section, I will argue that virtue ethics can give a description of these cases that both accommodates the Kantian insight that they produce conflicts between love and

respect and also provides us with the theoretical resources needed to respond to them. I said above that while Kantian love may direct us to care about another's flourishing, beneficence, as a general duty, is aimed at the other's happiness. Aristotelian virtue ethics makes no such distinction.[29] The virtue of sympathy, as I will defend it, is aimed at the other's flourishing, as are the helping actions that virtuous sympathy directs us to do. But if sympathetic involvement in another's affairs is going to be virtuous in the Aristotelian sense, it will require not simply a desire to help, but the exercise of practical wisdom as well and, I will argue, the moral virtue of humility.

Aristotle, of course, took for granted that some of us are wiser than others, not just in terms of having more useful bits of practical information, but in terms of having a better grasp on the central features of a flourishing human life. It is built into his theory from the outset that (a) the virtue of practical wisdom is essential to the exercise of moral judgment in all its forms and (b) practical wisdom is acquired only over time and experience, and not in every case. There is such a thing as genuine moral expertise, and not everyone has it, or has it to the same degree. Indeed, most of us, at least some of the time, lack the expertise necessary to know which pursuits will in fact contribute to our flourishing and which will hinder it. And likewise, most of us, at least some of the time, have expertise that would help someone else flourish.

It needn't follow that it would be good for each of us to have a *phronimos* on retainer, standing ready to intervene whenever we're about to take a step that will affect our prospects for flourishing. Even if there were enough *phronimoi* to go around, we all know the importance of making and learning from our own mistakes and it seems unlikely that any of us could develop practical wisdom without relying on our own

judgment in important matters. I will suppose only that unsolicited intervention in one's life by someone wiser is at least sometimes a good thing, even if it means being thwarted in one's projects or subject to repeated attempts to change one's mind about what one wants.[30] To that end, I will consider what Aristotelian virtue ethics might say about the norms and constraints governing the practice of helping people flourish even when they do not believe they need the help.

Let me begin with sympathy, which, although not technically on Aristotle's list of virtues, would surely be on any contemporary version of it. If sympathy is a moral virtue, then it will be a disposition, acquired over time and through habituation and guidance, to act and feel in certain ways that line up with the judgments of practical wisdom.[31] It seems right to think of sympathy primarily as a virtue of attachment, in this case, an attachment to another person's flourishing.[32] I want, hope for, and promote what is good for her; I despise, mourn, and try to prevent what is bad for her.[33]

On the Aristotelian view, the judgment about what is good or bad for a given person is a judgment of practical wisdom, itself a virtue. Roughly, practical wisdom consists in the knowledge of what is genuinely valuable in human life, along with the capacity to identify in particular situations the actions and responses that reflect that knowledge. Aristotle argues that it is impossible to exercise a moral virtue like sympathy in the absence of practical wisdom. This claim constitutes one half of his reciprocity thesis.[34] (The other half is the claim that one cannot acquire practical wisdom in the absence of the moral virtues. I will return to this shortly.) The attachment to another's flourishing, with all its attendant dispositions, must be guided by correct judgment about what that flourishing consists in, if it is to produce virtuous actions and responses. Warm

feelings are important elements of virtuous sympathy, but they are not the whole of it, and undirected or misdirected warm feelings can lead to results that are quite contrary to the aim of the virtue.[35] Virtuous sympathy aims at the other person's flourishing, and practical wisdom is required in order to know what that is.

Aristotle, of course, held that human flourishing is tied to universal features of human nature, and thus whether something does or does not conduce to a person's flourishing is an objective question, at least in principle. Unsurprisingly, virtue ethicists—even Aristotelian ones—are skeptical of Aristotle's particular account of a flourishing human life, which now seems unacceptably narrow. Fortunately, this debate can be set aside for my purposes. All I need is the possibility that a person, presumably in virtue of having greater practical wisdom, may at least sometimes be in a better position to judge whether something will be conducive to another's flourishing than that person himself. And this much, I suspect, any Aristotelian virtue ethicist will accept.

So it is practical wisdom that enables the sympathetic agent to judge that what has happened to someone, or what is about to happen to him, is either good or bad for him in light of what he needs to flourish, and also to determine what would constitute an appropriately sympathetic response. This judgment about what is good or bad for another agent is not entirely independent of the other agent's own perceptions; my assessments of his situation will inevitably depend to some extent on how his situation appears to him. And yet, virtuous sympathy can lead me to grieve losses for him that he does not register as such, or rejoice (privately) in benefits to him that he in fact sees as harms. We can and do have sympathy for those who are unaware that they are in need of it.[36]

Indeed, it is built into the structure of virtue ethics that certain plights, particularly moral plights, are not readily seen from within. Anyone can know that she is drowning in a pond, but it is not so easy for me to tell when I am truly addicted to alcohol, when my relationship has crossed the line into abusive, when my moral slip-ups have turned into full-fledged moral corruption. In those cases, I may be prevented from rescuing myself by my own inability to occupy the epistemic position necessary to make the judgment that I am in need of rescue. I can be saved only by someone who can see that I need saving.[37]

Sometimes all that is needed in order to help someone occupy the relevant epistemic position is to provide her with information. If I am a physician listening to someone at a cocktail party casually report symptoms that she wrongly thinks are insignificant to her health, it will likely be enough if I point out to her that they are in fact serious, assuming that she recognizes my expertise. I can help her by providing her with information that, once she has it, motivates her to take the steps necessary to promote her own flourishing. But of course this is not always the case. That sort of intervention works only for people who are already attached to their own health in the right way, and whose assessments of its importance function properly in their practical reasoning.

And this is where the second half of the reciprocity thesis—the claim that the moral virtues are necessary for the acquisition of practical wisdom—adds something important. For sometimes the reason why a person cannot occupy the correct epistemic position is that he is not attached to the right things, or attached to them, but not adequately, or not in the right way. He values what he should not, or values what he

should, but less than is warranted. According to the reciprocity thesis, this will interfere with his capacity for practical wisdom across the board.

Take moral corruption as an example. The vicious, on Aristotle's account lack knowledge of what is genuinely good. In that sense, all moral corruption is a form of ignorance, albeit a culpable form. But it is ignorance with a twist, because it results from fundamentally disordered attachments. The coward is overly attached to his own safety and not adequately attached to the goods that could be obtained through risking it; the stingy person attaches too much importance to her own possession of material goods and not enough to the needs of others. When the coward wrongly chooses to preserve his own physical well-being rather than risk it for something worthwhile, he is making a mistake of judgment. But the reason he makes this mistake is that he doesn't adequately appreciate the value of what will be lost, an appreciation that has both cognitive and affective dimensions. Nor is he capable of seeing why his judgment in this case is wrong; it will undoubtedly seem reasonable to him. (Aristotle notes that to the coward, the brave person appears rash—risking too much for too little.[38]) Indeed, the more corrupt someone is, the less likely he is to recognize it. The person who is weak-willed knows that he should risk his safety here, but cannot bring himself to do it. The person who is really cowardly, by contrast, cannot even see why the risk is worth taking. His disordered attachments mean that he is that much further removed from the judgments of practical wisdom and also that much further from recognizing his own moral failings.

If, as Aristotle appears to believes, vice precludes flourishing, then vicious people warrant our sympathy, even though they will not believe themselves in need of it. It is impossible to flourish in any significant Aristotelian sense unless one is virtuous. Thus,

concern for a person's happiness always demands concern for her virtue.[39] Indeed, it may even warrant intervention, if there's a chance that we can help the other become more virtuous. Aristotle, of course, believes that the acquisition of virtue is a communal enterprise, and so it stands to reason that we might be able to help vicious people develop different habits and attachments, which would improve their capacities for practical wisdom and hence, for virtue overall. (Well-run detention programs aim to do just that.) It is certainly not easy to help someone change his attachments, but neither is it easy to help someone recover from an addiction to drugs, or get the better of mental illness. Indeed, since Aristotle believed that virtue is the better part of flourishing, we have stronger sympathy-based reasons to rescue people from vice insofar as we can, than from other, lesser plights.

Thus, the moral virtue of sympathy is directed at another's flourishing, properly understood. It consists both of an attachment to the other's good and of the knowledge of what that good consists in. Not just any well-meaning form of interference counts as virtuously sympathetic; it must be aimed at what is in fact the person's flourishing. Thus, sympathy as a virtue is constrained from the outset by the virtue of practical wisdom. But according to the second half of the reciprocity thesis, the virtue of practical wisdom is itself constrained by other moral virtues. My judgments about what is to the other person's good will be correct only if I also possess the requisite attachments. And this will prove to be the key for generating the constraints on sympathetic interference that Kant's account of respect makes so plausible.

Opponents of the reciprocity thesis have argued that intuitively, it seems perfectly possible to have one moral virtue without having another.[40] Surely one can excel at

sympathy while falling short with respect to honesty or justice. To some extent, this intuition is compatible with the reciprocity thesis, for it is certainly possible to have one natural virtue while lacking others. But at a deep level, defenders of the reciprocity thesis must deny that one can have the full virtue of sympathy without also having, at least to some degree, the attachments that are characteristic of all the other virtues, including justice and honesty. For if the attachments are necessary in order to make correct judgments about flourishing, and correct judgments about flourishing are necessary in order to act in a virtuously sympathetic way, then there is some sense in which one cannot be sympathetic without also being just, honest, brave, and so forth.

Importantly, though, defenders of the reciprocity thesis need not hold that the full version of one moral virtue is required to exercise the full version of another. Indeed, it may be possible to explain the intuition that one can be sympathetic without also being just or honest by pointing to the fact that we are more susceptible to weakness of will in some areas of our lives than others. The person who appears genuinely sympathetic, but dishonest, may prove to be mostly akratic with respect to honesty. On the Aristotelian view, the akratic person would be attached to truth as a good, though not adequately. But the fact that he is attached to it at all might be enough to make practical wisdom operate properly in some other sphere, like sympathy. It is harder to see how someone could be virtuously sympathetic while refusing to see truthfulness or fairness as the least bit worthwhile. One need not be perfectly honest in order to be virtuously sympathetic, but one must at least take honesty to be valuable in order to be able to exercise practical wisdom at all.

According to the picture I have drawn, no one will be able to exercise fully virtuous sympathy in the absence of the attachments characteristic of the other moral virtues. When one or more of those attachments is absent or disordered, then sympathy will go awry. I'd like to turn now to a particular moral virtue that I think is especially important to the exercise of practical wisdom with respect to minding others' business. That is the virtue of humility—a virtue which is certainly not on Aristotle's list, and perhaps not even on all contemporary versions of it. The aspect of humility that interests me here is humility with respect to one's own capacities for judgment and performance. The exercise of virtuous humility, I will argue, constrains sympathy in many of the same ways that Kantian respect constrains love, but the constraints operate differently. Humility constrains in virtue of features of the benefactor, not the beneficiary. It follows from my account that whether one should mind another's business depends a great deal on one's own capacities for practical wisdom and its exercise in that situation. This means that the norms governing moral interference within Aristotelian virtue ethics will be, as might be expected, highly sensitive to context.

Virtuous humility, as I am using it here, is an ability to appraise with accuracy one's own capacities for judgment and effective action, and to act in accordance with those appraisals. One might say that humility as a virtue is constituted by the appropriate attachment to one's own expertise. We tend to think of it as primarily a way of acknowledging our own limitations, but it also calls for us to acknowledge our strengths of judgment and behavior when we have them. It is, above all, a virtue that calls for self-knowledge and self-reflection. When it comes to intervention in the affairs of others, proper humility requires appropriate caution, not simply in making judgments about what

is in fact to the good or ill or others, but also in acting on those judgments. It is, after all, hard to know what is best for another person, and perhaps even harder to know whether a given attempt to help is likely to succeed or fail.

I will focus here on three crucial features of humility as it pertains to intervention in the affairs of others. First, virtuous humility requires that we recognize the conditions necessary for good judgment to operate. When these conditions are not met, the virtuous person will be reluctant to judge that particular thing is or is not conducive to another's flourishing, and will be even more reluctant to act on that judgment. It is not hard to judge that a person's addiction to methamphetamine will interfere with her prospects for a flourishing life; it *is* hard to judge that a person's choice of career or partner will likewise interfere. Certainly the humble person will wait until she has enough of the relevant facts; she will not, for instance, be willing to judge a person's choice of marriage partner or career as unsuitable until she has an adequate understanding of the former's character and the latter's prospects.

But of course, good judgment requires more than factual information; it also requires relevant experience. Aristotle insisted that practical wisdom is acquired only with age, and even then there are no guarantees. It seems reasonable to suppose that humble people acknowledge when they lack the experience one would ordinarily need to make a good judgment in that case. This would mean, among other things, that a younger person ought to exhibit more caution in judgment than an older person across the board. But it would also imply that older people ought to exhibit caution in making judgments on matters where there have been considerable cultural or other kinds of shifts

in recent years. And it would certainly mean being careful about making inferential leaps from one's own experiences to what others might expect in similar situations.

Second, the virtuously humble person will engage in reflection on her past errors of judgment and present moral weaknesses, so as to know how they affect her capacities for judgment. By the reciprocity thesis, the person who is overly attached to material comfort is likely to misjudge what is best for his friend considering a career with a relief organization operating overseas. The virtuously humble person knows her own biases, and acknowledges their influence over her judgment. If and when she identifies moral deficiencies in herself, she will be especially reluctant to make judgments in that area of life on behalf of other people.

This brings us to a third characteristic of proper humility, which is a willingness to acknowledge that other people may be in a better position than we are to make the requisite judgments. Generally speaking, people know more about their own lives than they do about other people's; this means that humble people will work under the default (but defeasible) assumption that she knows less about what is good for her friend than does her friend herself. But even in cases where a virtuous person is confident that her friend is making a mistake, she should be slow to assume that she herself has the solution. After all, being able to see a problem does not entail being able to solve it. Humility requires that we understand just how difficult it is to acquire practical wisdom, and also to recognize that others may have insights that we do not. If I know that other people whose opinions I value think quite differently about, say, my friend's marriage partner, that should give me pause about my own judgment. Where wise people disagree, they should also fear to tread.

Finally, humble people do not overestimate their abilities to bring about the desired changes. The properly humble person also knows that even when she is right in judging that someone's actions are undermining his flourishing, it doesn't follow that she ought to intervene. Intervention might, after all, be fruitless, or make things worse for him. There *are* things that people have to work out for themselves, and the virtuous person recognizes this. Determining whether an intervention should take place and carrying it off well requires practical wisdom, and a good deal of social skill to boot.[41] It is not easy to tell others what to do in a way that will get them to do it, and being right in the initial judgment does not guarantee success in the action. The wise person (like the wise parent) knows when to keep her correct judgments to herself.

As I have described it, sympathy consists in an attachment to another's flourishing. That concern draws us closer to them and motivates us to interfere on their behalf, especially when they are in plights from which they cannot extricate themselves. Humility exercises constraint primarily through our attitudes toward our own judgments regarding those plights, and toward our propensity to act on those judgments. When we are considering intervening on someone else's behalf, humility tells us to ask questions like these: "Do I really know the full story? Am I genuinely in a position to understand what it's like for her and what this might mean for her future? Am I right in what I am taking to be at stake here and how valuable it is? Do others disagree with me, and if so, on what basis? Is there any reason to think that my interference will actually make things better, and not worse?"

Notably, these questions are directed at the agent's own capacity for judgment, not at the beneficiary's status as a setter of ends. Because the answers will depend on

features of the intervening agent, so will the justification for intervention. Whether I should intervene depends primarily on my qualifications for intervening, not on the status of the other person as a setter of ends. It follows that some of us are more justified in intervening than others. We are justified if and when we are able to exercise practical wisdom about the matter in question. Those with practical wisdom should intervene on behalf of others when they think it can be done successfully; those who lack it should think twice, or thrice about intervening, even in the same circumstances. The hard part, of course, lies in determining which category each of us is in.

Mrs. Elton clearly does not understand which category she falls into, although we do. No doubt she believes that her interference in Jane's affairs exhibits good judgment; we see it as an expression of her arrogance. The novel gives us reason to doubt that Mrs. Elton's sympathy for Jane is genuine. But even if it were, her interference would still be unpalatable because of her lack of humility with regard to her own capacity to understand Jane's situation and to improve it. Despite the gentle reminders of other characters that she is a stranger in town and barely knows Jane, Mrs. Elton fails to see this as any limitation on her ability to know what kind of employment situation would be to Jane's benefit. Implausibly, she also believes that the fact that she is married and has a well-married sister improves her epistemic position relative to others. She is a snob, but does not know that she is one; thus, she cannot see that her assessment of a good situation for Jane is skewed by her own tendency to conflate social status with merit. Moreover, she takes the fact that no one else supports her interference as evidence of their ignorance and haplessness, rather than as an indication of possibly sounder judgment.

Humility demands considerable caution both in making judgments about what is best for people and also in acting on those judgments. This is because it is, quite simply, very hard to know what is really best for other people and how to bring it about. Before pouring her alcoholic friend's booze down the sink, the virtuously humble person will think hard about what effect this is likely to have, both on her friend's health and also on her standing to employ rational persuasion with her friend in the future. But when our judgment that someone else is careening toward self-destruction is well-founded, and we have good reason to think that we can stop it, humility will not stand in the way.

I have argued in this paper that while Kantianism is capable of describing the practical problem of minding others' business very well, it is less successful when it comes to resolving it, at least in the case of otherwise rational agents setting self-destructive ends. Kant's account of beneficence has too limited a scope to account properly for these cases. My goal has been to show that by turning to Aristotelian virtue ethics we can account for the moral dimensions of both the problem and the solution. The tension between love and respect can be understood as a tension between sympathy and humility, and by changing the focus away from the other as a setter of ends and toward the would-be-benefactor's own level of moral expertise, virtue ethics permits a more nuanced set of loving responses to self-destructive people. It may turn out that given how hard it is to acquire practical wisdom, the practical conclusions of the two theories will not differ that much. Virtuous humility will likely constrain most of us as much or perhaps even more than Kantian respect would. But the nature of the constraint will be different, because humility does not impose universal requirements in the way that Kantian respect does. Humility will constrain us considerably more when we are

dealing with agents behaving rationally than it will when we are trying to help those who are seriously messing up their lives. The difference lies in the extent to which we can be confident that we know more than the other person about what will enable her to flourish.[42]

It is part of the underlying structure of Aristotelian virtue ethics that we are, for better or for worse, deeply entwined in each other's lives. Aristotle thinks that we cannot properly be described as doing well when those we love are floundering.[43] My flourishing depends on the flourishing of others. That makes it all the more important to permit wise intervention in others' affairs, for in minding others' business, we are also often minding our own.[44]

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[1] Immanuel Kant, Metaphysics of Morals, trans. J. Mary Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). References to the Doctrine of Virtue will be abbreviated as DV and will follow the standard citation format for Kant relying on the Prussian Academy pagination. The cited passage is from DV 449.
[2] DV 449.
[3] Marcia Baron agrees that the remark is insightful, but is not convinced that love and respect pull us in different directions. See her "Love and Respect in the Doctrine of Virtue" in Kant's Metaphysics of Morals: Interpretative Essays, ed. Mark Timmons (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002). See also Christine Swanton, Virtue Ethics: A Pluralistic View (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), chapter 5, especially pp. 104-100.
[4] Kant's account of our moral duties is complex, in part because he divides up duties in several different ways and it is not easy to map the terrain as he describes it. The dominant division in the Metaphysics of Morals is between juridical and ethical duties, but Kant also draws distinctions between perfect and imperfect duties, and narrow and wide duties. The two ends that are also duties provide the framework for all other ethical duties. In the way that I am characterizing Kant, both love and respect are ethical duties.
[5] At DV 452, Kant distinguishes between benevolence and beneficence. Benevolence is best understood as a kind of stance of good will, which Kant says that we are required to have toward all other rational beings. As Kant describes it, benevolence has few, if any, practical implications, except insofar as it might dispose us to act beneficently when required. The duty of beneficence, by contrast, is a practical duty that is exercised toward particular others on particular occasions. The kinds of interference I am discussing here are clearly instances of beneficence, not benevolence. I make this point because one might think that Kantian benevolence is closer to virtuous sympathy than beneficence. There is something to this, but the former's lack of practical import makes it very little like an Aristotelian virtue. I am grateful to Rosalind Hursthouse for reminding me of this point.
[6] DV 454.
[7] DV 450. Kant actually presents three duties of love: beneficence, gratitude, and sympathy. Beneficence generally gets the most attention, and it will be my focus here as well because most cases of minding another's business fall into this category. Still, it is worth noting that for Kant, the practical implications of making the ends of others my own extend well beyond beneficence.
[8] Diane Jeske has offered an interesting argument for the claim that such ends can have independent value in the Kantian scheme. See her "Perfection, Happiness, and Duties to Self," American Philosophical Quarterly 33 (1996): 263-276.

[9] DV 453.
[10] The version in use is from the Oxford Illustrated Jane Austen series, ed. R.W. Chapman, 3rd edition. (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
[11] I do not mean to suggest that caretakers are morally permitted to run roughshod over the ends of small children or those with mental disabilities, on the grounds that they are not rational. Quite the contrary, it seems that we ought to accommodate and promote the ends of not-fully-rational agents when it is compatible with their good in a more objective sense. But the determination of "when we can" will inevitably depend on some other conception of their good. Thus, I ought to allow my toddler to decide what color shirt to wear today because it is irrelevant to her good in the more objective sense but I ought not let her decide whether she will play in the street or in the yard.
[12] Here I more or less follow the use of these terms by Thomas Hill, though I am glossing over many subtleties in Kant's account of happiness to which Hill attends. See his "Happiness in Human Flourishing" in Human Welfare and Moral Worth (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), and "Meeting Needs and Doing Favors" in the same volume. See also Stephen Engstrom, "Happiness and the Highest Good in Aristotle and Kant" in Aristotle, Kant, and the Stoics ed. S. Engstrom and J. Whiting (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), and Andrews Reath, "Hedonism, Heteronomy, and Kant's Principle of Happiness" Pacific Philosophical Quarterly 70 (1989) pp. 42-72.
[13] See Hill, "Happiness and Human Flourishing," p. 188. In a footnote, Hill acknowledges that a full articulation of this view will have to be more complicated.
[14] This is not to say that there are no respect-based constraints on what we may care about; I feel confident that there are.
[15] As it turns out this proves unnecessary, thanks to the convenient death of Frank Churchill's aunt, who would disapprove of his marriage to Jane. But Jane could not have counted on that death, and given Frank's reluctance to stand up to his aunt and bear the consequences, it would have been wiser for Jane to develop a contingency plan.
[16] I must, however, point out your mistake respectfully. "You idiot! Look at a globe!" will not do. See DV 463.
[17] I will leave aside the question of whether we may legitimately employ coercion or deception with agents whose rational capacities are seriously diminished.
[18] I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for reminding me of this.
[19] Sarah Buss argues for something like this in "Appearing Respectful: The Significance of Manners" Ethics 109 (July 1999): 795-826. Her account has clear Kantian affinities, but she is not explicitly aiming to give a Kantian account.
[20] This is the mindset in which another of Austen's characters, Mr. Darcy, acts when he steps in to prevent his friend Mr. Bingley from marrying Jane Bennet. He takes it that Bingley's own judgment is impaired by the strength of his feelings for Miss Bennet, and so acts on his behalf. The interference proves to be wrongheaded on several counts: Darcy employs deception to pull it off, but he also turns out to be a poor judge of what will actually make Bingley flourish in marriage. Thanks to an anonymous referee for this example.
[21] There may yet be times when it is most respectful to treat people as being far more rational than they are. I would argue that this is the case when interacting with elderly people suffering from the diminution of their rational powers. But this does not require that we substitute our ends for theirs.
[22] I am grateful to an anonymous referee for reminding me of this. Lara Denis has argued that a duty aimed at the perfection of others is compatible with Kant's overall ethical framework. See her "Kant on the Perfection of Others," The Southern Journal of Philosophy 37 (1) (1999): 25-41.
[23] I'll leave open the issue of whether we can legitimately coerce people into not committing suicide.
[24] DV 386.
[25] DV 394.
[26] DV 470.
[27] Hill, "Happiness and Human Flourishing", p. 198. Hill presents a similar view of our relationship to others as end-setters in "Humanity as an End in Itself" in Dignity and Practical Reason (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992).
[28] There have been a number of interesting and compelling attempts by Kantians to overcome this problem in its various forms. See, for instance, Thomas Hill, "Ideals of Human Excellence and Respect for Natural Environments" in Autonomy and Self-Respect (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Tamar

Schapiro, "What is a Child?" Ethics 109 (July 1999): 715–738; Allen Wood, "Kant on Duties Regarding Nonrational Nature" Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society Supplement, vol. LXXII (1998).

[29] Stephen Engstrom ("Happiness and the Highest Good in Aristotle and Kant") has argued that there are substantial similarities between Aristotle's conception of eudaimonia and Kant's conception of the highest good. It would be interesting to consider how Kantian beneficence would be different if it were aimed at an agent's highest good, rather than the satisfaction of some of her chosen ends. I suspect there would be considerable effects on the duties we have to promote and sustain virtue in others.

[30] I am not, of course, suggesting that such intervention is always a good thing.

[31] It matters that the feelings are to line up with the judgments, rather than the actions. I have argued elsewhere that harmony between virtuous action and the accompanying feelings is not always desirable. See "Moral Cacophony: When Continence is a Virtue" *Journal of Ethics* 7, no. 4 (2003): 339-363.

[32] I am following Philippa Foot's description of virtues of attachment. See "Virtues and Vices" in Virtues and Vices and Other Essays in Moral Philosophy (Oxford: Clarendon, 2002).

[33] Christine Swanton spells out a number of important variations on these terms in Virtue Ethics: A Pluralistic View (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.)

[34] I am calling this the reciprocity thesis rather than the unity thesis, so as not to conflate it with the very different Socratic picture, on which all virtues are a form of wisdom.

[35]This is why virtue ethicists ought to agree with Kantians about Kant's example of the sympathetic philanthropist, who acts solely on his sympathetic inclinations. Such a person exhibits at best natural virtue, and perhaps not even that. See Rosalind Hursthouse, On Virtue Ethics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 99-107. I also make this point in "Virtue Ethics and Kant's Cold-Hearted Benefactor." *Journal of Value Inquiry* 36, no. 2-3 (2002): 187-204.

[36] There is nothing preventing a Kantian from taking this claim on. If, as I suggested earlier, Kantian love can be aimed at the other's flourishing, love would produce these responses. I owe this point to an anonymous referee.

[37] This too is something that Kantians may be able to take on, albeit in a qualified way. Some forms of rescue will clearly be welcomed by any rational agent, but they are ones in which we can safely presume that she has already the end of being rescued. The difficulties, as we saw above, arise when the person does not have that as her end. My thanks to the same anonymous referee for this point as well.

[38] Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, 1108b25. The translation in use is by Terence Irwin, 2nd edition. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1999).

[39] My use of "always" is likely to be controversial here, on the grounds that at least some prominent Aristotelian virtue ethicists (most notably Rosalind Hursthouse) reject the idea that virtue is strictly necessary for happiness. Hursthouse accepts that a wicked person might "flourish like the bay tree" but nevertheless argues that virtue is the only reliable bet for flourishing. So even if virtue is not strictly necessary for my friend to flourish, I still have reason to promote her virtue as part of her flourishing. See Hursthouse, On Virtue Ethics, pp. 170-187.

[40] See, for instance, Owen Flanagan, Varieties of Moral Personality (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), p. 262.

[41] For more on how this aspect of practical wisdom works, see Rosalind Hursthouse, "Practical Wisdom: A Mundane Account" Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society 106, no. 3 (May 2006): 283-307.

[42] Since it is not easy to know the extent of our own practical wisdom about a given matter, humility may well require that we adopt something like Kant's respect-based constraint on beneficence as our ordinary practice. Of course, the Mrs. Eltons of the world, who lack both humility and practical wisdom, will continue to act badly thinking that they are acting well, but this is what would be expected in virtue ethics.

[43] See NE 1097b10.

[44] An earlier version of this paper was given at the Minnesota International Conference in Ethics at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, June 2007. I am grateful for the helpful comments of the audience there, and to Michelle Mason for organizing it. Additional thanks are owed to Rosalind Hursthouse, Rebecca Kukla, Judy Lichtenberg, Maggie Little, Jim Nelson, Becky Stangl, Christine Swanton, and an anonymous referee for *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*.