

**Schopenhauer's many criticisms of Kant's ethical theory (up to p. 78)**

52: Kant assumes without defense that the task of ethical theory is to give laws about what ought to happen even if it never does happen.

52-55: The idea that ethics is about laws or imperatives for the will ("thou shalt") actually rests on a religious foundation—God's commandments. It is thus foreign to philosophical ethics.

55-56: "ought" only makes sense in the context of rewards and punishments. There cannot be a "categorical imperative." All commands are "conditioned".

56: thus a command-centered ethics is based on the agent's self-interest, whereas Kant had said he had banished eudaimonism from ethics. (He thinks he did but he didn't.)

58-60: there can't be duties to oneself

61: Kant should not have applied the distinction between a priori and a posteriori to ethics. It leaves him saying that ethics cannot be based on human experience of any kind (inner or outer)

(62: Kant did not represent the moral law as a fact of consciousness. Post-Kantian "philosophasters" are screwed up by doing so. [This is not a criticism directed at Kant.] Criticism repeated on 71-72.)

62: By trying to ground ethics in pure a priori concepts, Kant is grounding it in nothing of any substance. (On 70, quotes Kant as admitting this.)

63: Kant has no basis for saying ethics should apply to all rational beings, and anyway we don't understand what this means. Rationality cannot exist apart from humans. It cannot exist by itself.

64f: the a priority of space, time, and causation, i.e. of categories/forms of experience, is not analogous to the alleged a priority of the moral law, since former is about what experience has to be like, while latter has nothing to do with experience.

66: Kant's view of the indifferent or cold-hearted person acting from duty, and view that sympathetic feelings get in the way of a clear focus on duty as the moral motive, are offensive to "genuine moral feeling." The former person can only be motivated by a fear of punishment, not by anything moral.

67 (and elsewhere): misuse of "necessity" in relation to ethics. Can't say an act is "necessary" unless it actually happens, and has to happen.

73-74: Kant actually establishes the moral law through a train of thought involving the law having to conform to pure universality. This is actually theoretical reason at work. [I don't really get this one!]

74-75: The moral law cannot originate within the human agent. The agent would not look around for a law for her will—i.e. for whether her maxim could be universalized—unless she was prompted to do so by another moral motive that forced itself on her.

74-75 [related to previous]: The moral motive has to be real and grounded in human experience. It has to be capable of standing up to human egoism, a very powerful motive.

76 [again, similar point]: human beings can be motivated only by empirical motives (don't know about "rational beings"). So the basis of Kantian ethics lacks real substance.

76: therefore, freedom which is supposed to be demonstrated by the existence of morality (at least in the sense that it must be postulated) can not rest on such an insubstantial foundation.

77-78: In Critique of Practical Reason (written when S thinks Kant is going downhill), morality is presented as a "fact of pure reason." This makes no sense—facts are the contrary of pure reason. Fichte takes this to absurd lengths.