

SCHOPENHAUER ON MORAL WORTH; DIFFERENCES WITH KANT'S FORMULA OF HUMANITY; SUFFERING AS "POSITIVE," IDENTIFICATION [RESPONDING TO CLASS OF DEC 3 AND "3 POINTS/1 QUESTION" COLLECTED THAT DAY]: 136-148

A. Criterion of moral worth (MW): S says 3 things that, taken together, are self-contradictory:

1. Malice is different from egoism—it involves an absence of egoism [136]
2. The absence of egoism is the criterion for a motive having moral worth [140]
3. Malice does not have moral worth [140]

In practice, S's criterion of moral worth in a motive is that it involve a direct concern for the weal of another person, a person other than the self, for her own sake. Only this formulation is violated by both egoism and malice, and provides a basis for saying that compassion is the fundamental moral motive, i.e. the only one satisfying the criterion of MW.

B. Schopenhauer thinks that **Kant's FH** is saying the same thing as what he regards as the fundamental moral principle of action: Hurt no one; help everyone as much as you can. (Only he thinks Kant does not state this principle in a clear way.) In this sense they agree on the principle of right action

However, S provides a different fundamental *motive* for obeying this principle from K—compassion rather than a sense of duty or respect for rational nature. These are not the same [why/how not?]

So S agrees with Kant in one respect but disagrees in another about the foundation of ethics.

C. on 146, S says that **suffering is "positive"** and happiness is "negative." This is confusing, because you might think that means that suffering is desirable and happiness is not. However, S thinks that suffering is undesirable and happiness is desirable.

What he means by this possibly misleading choice of words is that suffering has its own distinct reality, whereas happiness does not but is simply a negation or absence of suffering.

D. Identification. You might want to say that in S's view, when we have compassion for another we identify with her. But there are two very different ways that this word is used:

(1) to identify is to be strongly aware of the otherness of the other, yet to feel her feelings acutely.

(2) to identify is to *lose* a sense of one's own distinctness from the other and to feel her feelings as one's own because one is not clearly distinguishing the other from oneself (either because of an identity confusion or, as the philosopher Cassina suggested [147], by a momentary deception in which we imagine that we are the other person).

S thinks "identification" in sense (1) is part of compassion, but in sense (2) is not.

148-52: 2 ways another's suffering can provide a motive for me: (1) stop me from causing suffering; (2) prompt me to active help [negative vs. positive]

150: acting on principles and abstract knowledge [how is this different from Kant's view?]

151: women as philanthropic, men as just

151-52: compassion as the ultimate support for justice [how does this relate to 150 and 151?]

[157: the real meaning of duty: being bound not to injure a particular other person through making an explicit pledge to do so, or by virtue of one's relationship, e.g. parent and child]

162-167:

162: Greeks did not recognize loving-kindness as a virtue. Comes from Christianity but further back from Hinduism

163: 2nd degree of compassion: loving-kindness as helping others, which may involve different degrees of self-sacrifice

163, bottom: instinctive participation in other's sufferings is sole source of moral worth. [how about justice?]

164: examples of helping A out of malice for B, or even malice for A (very insightful!)

165: desire for divine reward (Matthew) is regarded as wandering in the darkness in Hindu Vedas

165-66: restatement of nature of compassion: I share the suffering "in him"; barrier between ego [self] and non-ego [other] is abolished

166: compassion at root of abolition of slavery in England, can't be derived from Christianity, which condones slavery

167: Ethical content of Old Testament is justice, of New Testament is loving-kindness