

Kant and Schopenhauer in Dialogue

September 22-24, 2021

Central European Summer Time

Program

Wednesday, 22.09.2021

Erbacher Hof (Grebenstraße 24-26, Kardinal-Volk-Saal)

- 11:00 – 11:10: **Welcome address**
- 11:10 – 12:10: **Matthias Koßler** (Universität Mainz): Criticism and the „True“ Criticism.
Enlightenment in Kant and Schopenhauer
- 12:10 – 13:30: Lunch
- 13:30 – 14:30: **Manja Kisner** (Universität Wuppertal): War Schopenhauer ein Kantianer?
Von Kants Ding an sich zu Schopenhauers Willensbegriff
- 14:30 – 15:30: **Dieter Birnbacher** (Universität Düsseldorf): Human dignity – how justified
is Schopenhauer's critique of Kant?
- 15:30 – 15:45: Coffee break
- 15:45 – 16:45: **Paul Guyer** (Brown University): Rational or Non-Rational Will?
Schopenhauer's Critique of Kant (via Zoom)

Thursday, 23.09.2021

Erbacher Hof (Grebenstraße 24-26, Kardinal-Volk-Saal)

- 11:00 – 12:00: **Rainer Schäfer** (Universität Bonn): „Des Pudels Kern“ - On the Relation of
Ego and Brain in Kant and Schopenhauer
- 12:00 – 13:30: Lunch
- 13:30 – 14:30: **Alexander Sattar** (Humboldt University Berlin): Schopenhauer's 'Kantian'
Metaphilosophy
- 14:30 – 15:30: **Margit Ruffing** (Universität Mainz): Theorie des Rechts bei Kant und
Schopenhauer

15:30 – 15:45: Coffee break

15:45 – 16:45: **Rachel Zuckert** (Northwestern University): Kant's Conception of the Real in Sensation and Schopenhauer's Realism (via Zoom)

Friday, 24.09.2021

Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz (Jakob–Welder–Weg 18, Room P 11)

10:00 – 11:00: **Sandra Shapshay** (CUNY): The Moral Weight of Art in Kant and Schopenhauer

11:00 – 12:00: **Dennis Vanden Auweele** (KU Leuven): Schopenhauer's Adaptation of Kant's Universal Religion

12:00 – 13:00: Lunch

13:00 – 14:00: **Günter Zöllner** (LMU München): "I Cannot Stand the Word Practical Reason." Universalism and Negationism of the Will in Kant and Schopenhauer (via Zoom)

ABSTRACTS

War Schopenhauer ein Kantianer? Von Kants Ding an sich zu Schopenhauers Willensbegriff

Manja Kisner

Im Vortrag beschäftige ich mich mit dem Einfluss Kants auf Schopenhauers Philosophie unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Dinges an sich bei Kant und Schopenhauer. Im ersten Teil stelle ich Schopenhauers Auseinandersetzung mit Kants Philosophie dar und zeige, warum Schopenhauer der Meinung war, dass Kants transzendentaler Idealismus in der ersten *Kritik* grundlegend für seine Schlussfolgerung ist, dass sich der Wille mit dem Ding an sich gleichsetzen lässt. Im zweiten Teil richte ich meinen Fokus auf Schopenhauers Begriff des Willens zum Leben und analysiere den möglichen Einfluss von Kants dritter *Kritik* auf Schopenhauers Deutung des Willens zum Leben. In diesem Teil erläutere ich, was Schopenhauer unter dem Begriff der philosophischen Physiologie versteht und warum er auch in diesem Kontext auf die Bedeutung Kants verweist.

Human dignity – how justified is Schopenhauer's critique of Kant?

Dieter Birnbacher

Kant is the best-known and most important ethicist of human dignity. Schopenhauer is his best-known and most important critic on this point. How far is Kant's concept vulnerable to Schopenhauer's attack? Is Schopenhauer's criticism justified? There is no unanimity on this point. It is less controversial that Schopenhauer's criticism has anticipated most of the topoi of the present-day debate on human dignity.

Schopenhauer's critique starts with all three aspects of Kant's ambitious concept of dignity: the *axiological* aspect, the *ontological* aspect, and its rootedness in *transcendence*. I argue that most of Schopenhauer's arguments reveal crucial weaknesses of Kant's conception of dignity. In particular, Schopenhauer sees through Kant's justification of the binding nature of practical reason by its special ontological status as the repetition – later made explicit by Nietzsche – of the *proton pseudos* of a quasi-theological legitimation of norms.

The contemporary debate on the concept and principle of human dignity largely follows Schopenhauer's polemics. To this day, the indeterminateness of the term has served as an invitation to project one's own moral evaluations into it and to provide them with an apparent higher legitimacy. Remedy can be provided by a reconstruction of the content of this term, on the line of some legal interpretations, by fixing its semantics to a minimal satisfaction of basic human needs and strengthening the relationship between human dignity and human rights. In this way, the concept and principle of human dignity might be rehabilitated even within the framework of a roughly Schopenhauerian ethics.

Schopenhauer's Realism and Kant's Conception of the 'Real' in Sensation

Rachel Zuckert

Schopenhauer clearly identifies his agreement with Kant's idealism: he explicitly endorses Kant's identification of time, space, and causality as human forms of representation, holding true of the objects of phenomenal experience, but not true of things in themselves. I focus, however, on a moment in Schopenhauer's thought that seems clearly, even shockingly opposed to Kant's view: his realism, specifically his claim that human beings can know directly the nature of the will as ultimate reality or thing in itself, in virtue of bodily feeling. This "most characteristic and important step" in his philosophy, Schopenhauer writes, is the "transition from phenomenon to thing in itself, given up by Kant as impossible" (WWR II, chapter 18, E.J. Payne translation). I linger on this shocking moment to suggest, first, that Kant and Schopenhauer are not as far apart as one might think. For Kant's concept of the 'real,' particularly as treated in the Anticipations of Perception chapter of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, characterizes a datum (one might say) surprisingly close to Schopenhauer's bodily feeling of ultimate reality: a representation neither subjective nor objective, which is how things in themselves contribute to experience (or, to use Schopenhauer's terms, are "manifested" or "objectified" within experience). Of course Kant and Schopenhauer interpret this datum differently, and come to dramatically different conclusions on its basis – and I shall suggest that we may use these diverging interpretations and inferences to become clearer about what is at stake, or what is to be decided, in a dialogue between Kant and Schopenhauer. Attention to this concept also raises questions about how to understand its deployment in their concept of (transcendent) 'reality.'

Schopenhauer's 'Kantian' Metaphilosophy

Alexander Sattar

Despite his self-professed 'Kantianism,' Schopenhauer's metaphysical escapades seem to completely disregard one of the most fundamental ideas of Kant's philosophy, namely the restrictions it imposes on human knowledge: while, for Kant, they are in principle unsurmountable, Schopenhauer does claim cognition – and even *immediate* cognition – of the thing in itself possible. In the literature, this divergence between Kant's and Schopenhauer's philosophies serves to mark a fundamental difference between what can be called their *metaphilosophies*, which notion I, for the purposes of this talk, take in a narrow sense, i.e., as answers to two questions: 'What is the subject matter of philosophy?' and 'What is its method?'. However, I aim to show that this account is too simplistic and that several elements of Schopenhauer's metaphilosophy run counter to the standard story about his 'dogmatic' opposition to Kant. In particular, I shall concentrate on two conceptions he puts forth predominantly in his later texts. First, the understanding of metaphysics as *transcendental* philosophy, which has the very conditions of cognition, not the given in experience, as its subject matter. Second, the understanding of philosophy as a *pragmatic*, hypothetical, and praxis-driven approximation to truth, or better still verisimilitude, instead of claims to positive theoretical knowledge.

Schopenhauer's Adaptation of Kant's Universal Religion

Dennis Vanden Auweele

Schopenhauer is very open to admitting some of his philosophical resources, such as 'the divine' Plato and 'the amazing' Kant. Their impact on Schopenhauer's metaphysics and epistemology is recognized widely. In his moral philosophy, however, Schopenhauer is often believed to walk an altogether different path than his philosophical predecessors. In this paper, my purpose is to show how Schopenhauer remains broadly speaking within the Kantian framework when he develops one aspect of his moral teachings, namely his philosophy of religion. This framework can be understandably missed since Schopenhauer makes no mention of Kant when developing his philosophy of religion. My talk opens with indicating the historical reasons as to why Kant is not mentioned in reconstructions of

Schopenhauer's philosophy of religion and arguments against a direct impact on him by Kant's *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*. Further, I will discuss four major components of Kant's philosophy of religion and indicate how Schopenhauer adapts these to his philosophy. These components are: (1) the distinction between 'religion' and 'historical faith'; (2) a moral anthropology structured through hamartiology; (3) moral exemplarism in the form of a Christology; (4) moral communitarianism in terms of an ecclesiology.

The Moral Weight of Art in Kant and Schopenhauer

Sandra Shapshay

Connections between moral and artistic value have pre-occupied philosophers, on and off, at least since Plato and Aristotle, but has really exercised Anglo-American aestheticians for the past 20 or so years. At the heart of this debate, are two main questions. First is the ethical criticism question—is such criticism legitimate?—and second, is the question of “aesthetic education”—do artworks in general have a morally educative function, and, if so, how so?

Exactly where Kant's aesthetics and philosophy of art stands with respect to these questions is, as one would expect, highly complicated but ultimately pretty clear. A lot of scholarly work has been done on this topic. Far less clear is what *Schopenhauer's aesthetics* has to say about them. This is the focus of my paper.

Ultimately, like Kant, Schopenhauer makes no trouble for the ethical criticism of art (despite the fact that for both thinkers, aesthetic experience is disinterested). On the question of aesthetic education, however, I shall argue that there is a striking difference between them. Probably the deepest aesthetic education in Kant's system is afforded by the symbolic relationship between beauty and morality. Schopenhauer transforms this into a metonymic relationship between beauty and *resignation*.

But resignation is actually *beyond* morality, for morality is based in compassion, in *co-suffering*, and the resigned person regards the world entirely as a knower rather than as a sufferer. Since resignation is a state beyond all willing, suffering, and ipso facto co-suffering, it is in fact an *amoral* state. Thus, aesthetic experience gives us a taste of the amoral. Ultimately, this makes Schopenhauer one of the first philosophers to theorize a real *separation* of the moral and aesthetic realms.

“I Cannot Stand the Word Practical Reason.” Universalism and Negationism of the Will in Kant and Schopenhauer

Günter Zöllner

“Hier ist nun die bloße Gesetzmäßigkeit überhaupt [...] das, was dem Willen zum Princip dient.” (GMS, AA 04: 402)

The talk compares and contrasts Kant’s and Schopenhauer’s accounts of the status and function of rational volition in ethics. The central thesis is that, notwithstanding the methodological and doctrinal differences between Kant and Schopenhauer in general and their divergent metaethics and proto-ethics in particular, Schopenhauer’s negation of the will and Kant’s universalization of the will exhibit structural and functional affinities that belie Schopenhauer’s polemical disavowal of Kant’s “invention” of pure practical reason. Section one, entitled “Parallels and Polemics,”

outlines the historical and systematic affinities between Kant and Schopenhauer. Section two, entitled “Kant Cut in Half,” details the main doctrinal and metaphilosophical differences between Kant and Schopenhauer. Section three, entitled “The Will Rejected and Refined,” addresses the hidden functional affinities between Kant and Schopenhauer with regard to the foundation of ethics. Special emphasis is placed on the surprising affinities between the universalization and the negation of the will as alternative modes of the latter’s purification from selfishness and egoism in Kant and Schopenhauer, respectively. The mutual *rapprochement* of Kant and Schopenhauer is based on Kant’s foundational writings in moral philosophy from the 1780s, including — in addition to the *Foundation for the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785) and the *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788) — the Canon of Pure Reason from the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781; 1787), and on Book Four of the first edition of *The World as Will and Representation* (1818), as recently reissued in a superb critical edition, and the second prize essay, *On the Foundation of Morals* (1840), by Schopenhauer.