

Allen W. Wood

Quotes

*Thinking, Philosophy, People, Self, Views, Law, Feelings, Humanity, Facts,
Action, Decision, Believe, Way, Moral, Mean, Use, World, Religious, Doe, Order*

I think the term "Kantian constructivism" as an oxymoron. Kant was a constructivist about mathematics, but not about ethics.

~Allen W. Wood

Fichte is a necessary step to both Hegel and Marx.

~Allen W. Wood

Kant did think he had a moral route back to rational faith in God, for those who need it, and he thought that at some level, we all do need something like it.

~Allen W. Wood

Freedom is an unprovable but unavoidable presupposition, not an article of faith.

~Allen W. Wood

Marx's writings still have something to teach us about capitalism. They have little or nothing to teach us about any alternatives to it. Anyone who had read them knows that.

~Allen W. Wood

Freedom is a permanent problem for us, both unavoidable and insoluble.

~Allen W. Wood

Kant does represent a distinctively modern view of the human condition in contrast to that of ancient high culture, found in ancient Greek ethics and also in ancient Chinese ethics.

~Allen W. Wood

Clearly no working class movement ever came about that was able to do what Marx was hoping for.

~Allen W. Wood

Adam Smith was aware of the way that economic interests could have a distorting and destructive effect both on the market and on politics.

~Allen W. Wood

Capitalism has not proven to be a transitional form, a gateway to a higher human future.

~Allen W. Wood

My own view is that Kant's conception of the duality of the good (morality and happiness, the good of our person and the good of our state or condition) is a distinctively modern view.

~Allen W. Wood

There is a lot in Adam Smith that reflects the insights of Rousseau and anticipates those of Marx.

~Allen W. Wood

Notice that tearing oneself out of the insensible state is the opposite of remaining in it; the man who is beneficent from duty nevertheless acts with feelings, if not with empirical inclinations.

~Allen W. Wood

We cannot predict the effects of our actions, especially our collective actions over generations or centuries, to use instrumental reasoning toward these big final ends to tell us what we ought to do.

~Allen W. Wood

Consequentialist theories begin with a very simple and undoubtedly valid point: Every action aims at a future end, and is seen as a means to it.

~Allen W. Wood

Empiricist philosophy always tends to be anti-philosophy (and is often proud of it).

~Allen W. Wood

I don't think Kant's approach to religion is any longer viable in its original form. But that does not mean it is simply wrong or that we cannot learn from it.

~Allen W. Wood

Kant attempted to work out a view of religion and religious belief according to which existing religions could be brought into harmony with modernity, science and reason.

~Allen W. Wood

Philosophy is about getting the facts right, but it is also about thinking rightly about them. Philosophy is more about the latter than the former.

~Allen W. Wood

Sometimes when a philosopher's views are widely rejected by the world, the fault is not with the philosopher but with the world.

~Allen W. Wood

We can't coherently deny, or even decline to affirm, that we are free.

~Allen W. Wood

Many who are committed to reason and science have turned against religion altogether and treat it with fear and contempt.

~Allen W. Wood

What is central to morality is rational self-constraint (acting from duty), in cease where there is no other incentive to do your duty except that the moral law commands it.

~Allen W. Wood

Some empirical feelings, such as sympathy, are indispensable parts of certain moral virtues.

~Allen W. Wood

Virtues consist not only of acting in certain ways, but in ways of caring and feeling.

~Allen W. Wood

Kant's system of duties constitutes a Doctrine of Virtue because the duties also indicate what kinds of attitudes, dispositions and feelings are morally virtuous or vicious.

~Allen W. Wood

Kant thinks of judgment as a special faculty or talent of the mind, not reducible to discursive reasoning but cultivated through experience and practice.

~Allen W. Wood

In the mid-1960s, as hard to believe as it may be now, choosing to go into academic philosophy was not an imprudent career choice. There were lots of academic jobs in philosophy then.

~Allen W. Wood

Teaching and writing about philosophy is about the only thing I've ever been really good at.

~Allen W. Wood

It is probably not a good idea to ask someone to expound a position they do not accept and do not feel they even fully understand.

~Allen W. Wood

I think it is clear that what we ought to do has to be independent of our decisions about what to do, and independent of any procedures we might use in making such decisions.

~Allen W. Wood

In any matter of moral importance, our first task, before we plunge ahead and decide what to do, is to figure out what we ought to do.

~Allen W. Wood

We can make mistakes about what we ought to do, and these are not the same as making bad decisions about what to do.

~Allen W. Wood

Fichte would identify all states of our minds with states of our body - perhaps not merely of our brain, but the whole body as an acting organism.

~Allen W. Wood

Kant thinks that a free will is a will under moral laws and that freedom and the moral law are distinct thoughts that reciprocally imply each other. Fichte thinks they are the same thought.

~Allen W. Wood

That Hegel's theory is derivative from Fichte's does not prevent it from being strikingly original and of independent value.

~Allen W. Wood

I do not know how much my own work has achieved, and I must not pretend it has done more than it has.

~Allen W. Wood

We usually can't know how, and we probably should not even ask, how our lives contribute to a better world.

~Allen W. Wood

Those who employ their modest talents as best they can do make a contribution to a better human future.

~Allen W. Wood

As Kant says, the contribution of any common laborer would be greater than that of the greatest philosopher unless the philosopher makes some contribution to establishing the rights of humanity.

~Allen W. Wood

I think the contribution people make is not proportionate to their fame or success. In fact, I think the relation is often inverse.

~Allen W. Wood

Leaders of nations, and people whose wealth or fame gives them power over the lives of others quite often do more harm than good.

~Allen W. Wood

What I most fear now is that within a century or so there may not be any human future at all.

~Allen W. Wood

Kant takes a free will to be a being or substance with the power to cause a state of the world (or a whole series of such states) spontaneously or from itself.

~Allen W. Wood

Fichte takes an I or free will to be not a thing or being but an act which is not undetermined but self-determined, in accordance with reasons or norms rationally self-given.

~Allen W. Wood

Reason necessarily expresses itself through emotions and emotions are healthy only insofar as they are expressions of reason.

~Allen W. Wood

The relation of the law to the self is only a helpful way of thinking about the law, that helps us better understand its validity for us.

~Allen W. Wood

Kant says that we may regard ourselves as legislator of the moral law, and consider ourselves as its author, but not that we are legislators or authors of the law.

~Allen W. Wood

If being "iron headed" is to be lacking such feelings, then Kant's position is that an ironheaded person could not be a moral agent because such a person would not be rational.

~Allen W. Wood

Kant thinks we can show that there is no contradiction in supposing we are free.

~Allen W. Wood

We can establish empirical criteria for free actions, and investigate human actions on the presupposition we are free.

~Allen W. Wood

Descartes recommended that we distrust the senses and rely on the ... use of our intellect.

~Allen W. Wood

We can treat human responses to cognitions as involving law-like connections grounded on free choices which show themselves in our character.

~Allen W. Wood

We can never prove that we are free or integrate our freedom in any way into our objective conception of the causal order of nature.

~Allen W. Wood

People are often most proud of precisely those things of which they should most be ashamed.

~Allen W. Wood

The moral law is simply the way we think our own freedom as self-determination.

~Allen W. Wood

If the problem of free will is to see how freedom fits into the order of nature, then Kant's basic view about the free will problem is that it is insoluble.

~Allen W. Wood

It would be nice, wouldn't it? if we could get comfortable about the problem of freedom. Kant thinks that we can't.

~Allen W. Wood

Our procedures of deliberation are not ways of finding out independent moral truths but instead ways of "constructing" these truths, in the process of deciding what to do.

~Allen W. Wood

Kant considers belief in God and immortality to be items of "faith" because he relates faith to the pursuit of ends - in this case, the highest good.

~Allen W. Wood

Since the Enlightenment, popular religion has rejected the Enlightenment path and transformed itself into a bastion of resistance against reason.

~Allen W. Wood

Kant does not regard freedom as an item of faith because it is too basic to our agency to be related to any end.

~Allen W. Wood

Kant was a rational theologian. He did not pretend to be a biblical or revealed theologian.

~Allen W. Wood

The problem is that many who reject Marx do not read him, or read him only by bringing prejudices to their reading that prevent them from understanding him.

~Allen W. Wood

It seems to me self-evident that it is worthwhile to understand the best thoughts of the past, to appropriate them, to criticize them.

~Allen W. Wood

No theory about our bodies as mere objects of observation and calculation (as distinct from partners in communicative interaction, assumed to be free) can comprehend human nature.

~Allen W. Wood

In general, those who defend capitalism are basically out of touch with reality.

~Allen W. Wood

We commit not only theoretical error but also moral wrong in objectifying ourselves or other rational beings, ignoring their capacities for free action and communicative interaction with us.

~Allen W. Wood

It is both theoretically mistaken and morally wrong to regard others as objects of investigation rather than partners in free rational communication.

~Allen W. Wood

The species of anti-Enlightenment religion we find among evangelical protestants is far more impoverished, anti-intellectual and downright wretched.

~Allen W. Wood

Fichte is concerned with freedom as non-domination.

~Allen W. Wood

Fichte thinks that the mutual recognition of one another as free beings belongs among the transcendental conditions of self-consciousness itself.

~Allen W. Wood

Kant can provide, and has provided, a good model for philosophers to think about the relation of metaphysics to science and scientific methodology.

~Allen W. Wood

Hegel's theory of recognition is basically derived from Fichte, who is its real author.

~Allen W. Wood

Kant certainly was sympathetic with the metaphysical tradition of rational theology that he criticized.

~Allen W. Wood

We are generally forced to choose one way or the other of distancing ourselves from Kant. I suppose I tend to choose the irreligious way. But I regret that Kant's path has not been followed.

~Allen W. Wood

Not only our moral life, but even our use of theoretical reason - on which we rely in rationally inquiring into nature - presupposes that we are free.

~Allen W. Wood

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