Kant and the Categorical Imperative: the Outline of an Argument
Michael Lacewing

1. What is morality?
   a. it is meant to guide our actions; maxim: principle of action
   b. it is universal, the same for everyone
   c. it is categorical, not optional

2. There are (only) two things that influence what we choose
   a. happiness
   b. reason

3. Morality cannot be based on happiness
   a. what makes people happy differs
   b. happiness can be good or bad

4. So morality must be based on reason
   a. everything that morality applies to is rational
   b. reason is also universal in content
   c. reason is not dependent on what we want

5. The Categorical Imperative
   a. If morality is based on universal reason, then it can’t mention what varies
   b. Any moral law must hold for all rational beings; if it depends on something contingent and variable, it is not a law
   c. so “Act only on that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law”