Kant and Metaphor in Contemporary Aesthetics

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Trying to assess Kant's impact on contemporary aesthetics is by no means a straightforward task, for the simple reason that the subject is saturated with his influence. In all aspects of the theory and practice of art, it is possible to observe concepts and attitudes at work which are either a reflection of, or a response to, Kant's thinking. This might seem a rather overblown claim and a difficult one to substantiate but, without going into too much detail at this point, one has only to consider that the central tenets of both modernism and postmodernism can be traced back to Kant's Critical thought. There is the modernist's interest in the conditions of possibility of representation - as evidenced, for example, by the push towards abstraction in the visual arts and the attempt to paint not the world but the process of painting itself - and, responding to this, the postmodernist's concern that these conditions of possibility should not become universal absolutes.

If one had to give a reason for the thoroughly Kantian nature of aesthetics today, then, I would suggest, it is the interaction that Kant sets out to achieve between sensibility and thought which has proved to be so fruitful for the development of aesthetics. This interaction is broached by Kant in two related respects: (1) his argument for the necessary connectivity between concept and intuition, and (2) his attempt to show how those aspects of human existence traditionally attributed to the realm of the supersensible, for example, categories of perception, and the origin of moral agency, can interact with the sensible realm. While it is true to say that Hegel also attempts a reconciliation of the sensible and the supersensible by defining art as the sensuous manifestation of the ideal, he nevertheless reinstates...
idealism's commitment to supreneural thought standing over and above sensibility. With Kant, however, we are given an architectural which tries to demonstrate the intersection of thought and sensibility and which, following the Critique of Judgments, offers art, beauty, and the appearance of design in nature as those regions of experience where this intersection is most visible.

In this paper I propose to examine Kant's impact on contemporary aesthetics by focusing on the concept of metaphor. Metaphor has received an enormous amount of attention within aesthetics and the humanities over the past few decades. The bibliographies in recent works by Kittay, Orrony, and Lakoff and Johnson are a good indication of the scope and diversity of recent metaphor research. In the first part of my paper, I give a brief explanation for the popularity of metaphor as a research area, and suggest that much of the thinking behind this research can be traced back to aspects of Kant's philosophy. I also highlight the role metaphor plays in contemporary aesthetics, and identify ways in which the metaphoricity of art contributes to its critical or discursive impetus. Part two locates the origins of this critical, metaphorical aesthetic in the Critique of Judgments. Kant's argumentation in third Critique, I show, is heavily dependent on metaphor, to the extent that his philosophy cannot be rendered systematic without it. The way in which metaphor is put to work in Kant's theory of judgement, I maintain, helps to establish the epistemological and cognitive significance of metaphor, and this has implications for recent accounts of analogy in the third Critique. Parts three and four address some of these implications in the analytic and continental traditions of Kantian scholarship respectively: part three focuses on accounts from Guyer and Allison, while part four considers Derrida's essay 'Paregoric'.

1. Metaphor and the Arts

There are, I propose, two reasons for the recent growth of interest in metaphor, both of which have Kantian elements. First, the linguistic turn in the humanities – following the work of Saussure, Frege, Wittgenstein and Whorf – has foregrounded awareness of the role our linguistic categories play in the organization of the world into identifiable chunks. This position is of course an extension of Kant's epistemology and much twentieth-century debate on language and perception has returned to the Kantian question of how one secures objectivity given that the task of organizing the world has been assigned to (subjective) consciousness. In addition, metaphor itself arguably raises this question, since, as several commentators have observed, it involves the subjective production of meaning which is not yet insightful, creative yet objective. An original, freshly coined trope (the case is not an instance of creative, subjective language yet, far from producing nonsense, a new metaphor offers insight and new perspectives on its subject and, as such, could be said to be objective as to contain an objective component. Thus, to confront metaphor is to confront one of the central themes of Kant's epistemology and the linguistically inclined humanities.

A second reason for the popularity of metaphor is the volume of interest there has been in the questioning of boundaries – between subject areas and between the wider concepts of the moral, the political, the epistemological, and the aesthetic – as a result of the tension between modernist and postmodernist thought. Principal concerns in these debates are the status of knowledge and the way in which the concepts of truth and objectivity are understood. Philosophy has been under attack for its bias of 'universal truths', for example, Descartes's cogito, Kant's table of categories and Hegel's absolute consciousness. The main arguments against this universalism invoke metaphor on two related accounts: (1) the fact that key epistemological concepts have metaphors at their root, for example, 'mirroring', 'correspondence', 'sense datum', is taken as evidence of the contingent, communal, subjective status of knowledge, and (2) because metaphor (as a form of dislocated or dislocating predication) works by testing the appropriateness of the inappropriate, it is seen as a means of challenging the boundaries whereby one subject defines itself in relation to another.

If we take postmodernism's critique of philosophy as an example, it is philosophy's notions of the 'true' and the 'proper' which are under suspicion. Any universal claim to truth, the postmodernist argues, will exclude or leave unheard other forms of experience. To combat this, we should undertake the task of reconceptualizing, of transforming the identity of an object through adopting a new, unconventional, inappropriate perspective in relation to it. As regards philosophy, it should be encouraged to embrace what is inappropriate to it, to 'other'. Philosophy should become like art. And this is what we find happening in the tradition of continental philosophy, from...
KENT AND MEXICO IN CONTRASTING ATTRIBUTES

The expression of contrast in the construction of the country's economy and society is evident in several ways. Kent, being an industrial region, is characterized by its large manufacturing sector and diverse industries. On the other hand, Mexico is known for its agricultural and tourist industries, as well as its rich cultural heritage. This contrast is further highlighted in the following aspects:

1. Economic Structure: Kent's economy is heavily dependent on manufacturing and industrial production, whereas Mexico's economy is diversified with contributions from agriculture, tourism, and services.

2. Cultural Influence: Kent's culture is influenced by industrial work and urban living, whereas Mexico's culture is rich with traditions and customs from its history and geography.

3. Social Dynamics: Kent's population is more urbanized and focused on the development of its industrial sector, whereas Mexico's population is more rural and focused on agricultural activities and tourism.

These differences reflect the distinct developmental paths and cultural identities of the two regions, each contributing to their unique characteristics and attractions.
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KANTIAN NATURE VULNERABILITY

The Kantian nature vulnerability framework is a model that explores the impact of human activities on the natural world. It argues that humans have a duty to respect and preserve the natural world, as it is inherently valuable in itself. The framework suggests that human actions should be guided by a moral imperative to protect the environment, even if it means sacrificing short-term gains for long-term benefits.

According to the Kantian nature vulnerability model, nature has an inherent worth that is independent of human needs or desires. This intrinsic value is what gives nature its moral status, and it is this status that should guide human behavior. The framework posits that humans have a moral obligation to act in ways that protect and preserve the natural world, even if it means sacrificing short-term gains for long-term benefits.

The Kantian nature vulnerability framework is based on the idea that human actions should be guided by a moral imperative to protect the environment, even if it means sacrificing short-term gains for long-term benefits. This framework is particularly relevant in today's world, where human activities are having a profound impact on the natural world. The framework suggests that humans have a moral obligation to act in ways that protect and preserve the natural world, even if it means sacrificing short-term gains for long-term benefits.

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