

Hi Sherah,

There are two kinds of experience in Kant: theoretical experience and practical experience. That's why there are two separate *Critiques* - the first one is the critique of pure *theoretical* reason, and the second one is the critique of pure *practical* reason. Theoretical experience is the apprehension of appearances (via light, *phos*, hence phenomenal), and it is intuitive (yes, passive - you just look and see, and although though there is a complicated story about the constitution of this experience, from the subjective point of view it just "happens"). Note that "intuition" here is a technical term translating the German word *Anschauung*, and it means not 'hunch' or 'feeling' or 'sixth sense,' but rather a *source of information* about the world - such as sensation itself *per se*. Kant says that we have only sensory intuition, but he also says that we can't prove there aren't other kinds of intuition (such as intellectual intuition) - although Kant *does* think we can prove that *we* don't have intellectual intuition. Practical experience on the other hand is experience of something we can't see - the person. The person can only be got at by thinking (with our *nous*, hence noumenal), not by looking. These are two different forms of experience.

Time is defined as the form of experience by Kant: thus there must be two forms of time if there are two kinds of experience. In the phenomenal world, time goes one way - things in the past cause things in the present (aka efficient causation in Aristotle's terminology). In the noumenal world, time goes the other way - things in the future cause things in the present (aka final causation in Aristotle's terms). In other words, in the phenomenal world of appearances, matter bumps around blindly into other bits of matter, which makes the next thing happen. Whereas in the noumenal world, persons pursue aims, and have purposes and make plans - this is called freedom. *Homo Phenomenon* lives in the phenomenal world, the world of nature, and is completely determined; *Homo Noumenon* lives in the noumenal world, the world of freedom, and must choose and act. There are thus two times - one goes one way, the other the other, and both are happening at once. Our life as a whole is this stereo effect: both apparent and real, both determined and free. It is this duality which gave rise to the dogmatic superstition called "substance dualism" in Descartes, and to avoid this dogmatism a double critique is required.

It is really the contrast between these two temporalities that we call "experience" - knowing that we ARE this amalgam of necessity (my body obeys laws of physics in the "kingdom of means") and possibility (my will obeys laws of freedom in the "kingdom of ends"). Hence we are always figuring out the morally "right" thing to do, as the practical use of reason, just as we are always employing theoretical reason, as we co-ordinate our body's movement in the phenomenal world, seeking the "right" place to put our foot.

Ultimately in Kant, there not really two worlds, but rather two perspectives on the one world, or if you prefer, two worlds, but only one reality; this is why the contrast is actually the main thing. Pure theoretical and pure practical reasons are contrasting kinds of reason, which has two principles: identity (everything is itself) and sufficient reason (nothing happens without a reason) - [Kant got this defn from Leibniz via Wolff]. Theoretical reason is our ability to see the "push" of cause and effect, which Kant says Hume was right, we could never get from experience itself. And practical reason is the ability to see the "pull" of aims and plans, which we cannot intuit but reason tells us is the way to understand a person - to ask what motivates them? Both experiences are possible on the grounds of

being able to identify the unity of an event, and to string it into a series of events in some sense, and to see how some event is a sufficient reason for some other event's taking place.

The critical use of reason is its *reflective* use in assigning the respective limits of the understanding and the imagination, and their various interactions. The critique of pure theoretical reason is the setting of the limits to the past-pushed understanding of the world of spatio-temporal phenomena - "science" if you like. The eager imagination has to be limited by reason to what the understanding can grasp. In other words, science has to be limited to how phenomena cause each other in a past to present direction, and can never actually explain noumenal reality.

The critique of reason in its practical role (i.e. as what makes understanding *purposes* possible) reverses the limitation function, and restricts understanding in the interests of the imagination. Acting in the world of shared purposes takes "personality," not science, and requires creativity precisely here understanding needs to be limited in the interests of imagination, lest we become heartless bastards. The two decadent possibilities which Kant condemns - that we treat people as mere appearances; or that we use them as means to an end and not ends in themselves - are both immoral precisely because they are uncritical applications of understanding beyond the limits of the imagination. In the former case, we judge someone on the basis of their appearance, in the mistaken belief that we understand their experience, when in fact no one can actually imagine what its like to be someone else. And in the latter case, we use someone, thinking we understand the ramifications for them, and judge they'll be okay, when in fact we can't imagine the damage our selfish behavior might cause the used person.

Now the temptation looms at this point to think that there can be one of two meta-critiques which get to a new level of understanding. On the one hand, some want to say that there's a meta-theoretical critique which shows the mechanisms behind purposes and subsumes the mind itself under "science". (materialist neuroscientists, those types) On the other, others want a meta-practical critique of science which shows how what we know is governed by purposes and interests (of social, political, ideological kinds).

Kant heads both off at the pass. He knows the two critiques need to be connected, but not by subsuming one under the other either way, but by building a bridge between them which ensured the critical reality of freedom. His cue is the fact that the experience of a phenomenal cause and the experience of a noumenal goal are both feelings of the appropriate co-operation of the imagination and the understanding. We get this feeling when we judge. We feel that we know a cause in the phenomenal world when we find a sufficient antecedent - "oh I see why the chair fell over - look, the dowel broke in the leg joint." And we likewise feel that we know a reason in the noumenal world when we find a sufficient motive - "oh I see why he committed the burglary, he's broke". We condemn the latter but not the former, because only the latter is free - i.e. chosen from a plurality of courses of action, some of which may be very tempting, but none of which can compel like a phenomenal cause, precisely because aims are imaginary.

In either case we judge, so the feeling of being able to judge is what needs to be critiqued. We need a critique of judgment. But to be able to critique judgment itself, we need its pure form. Everywhere we make them, judgments are interested: interested in understanding how things work in the phenomenal

world; interested in interacting aims-wise in the noumenal world (aka "getting a life"). Nowhere do we experience judgment itself; on the contrary judgment makes the experience possible, so we can't reflect on it.

Except in one place. In the art gallery, where it is as if we are seeing things (but actually aren't), and as if we understand purposes (but actually don't). We have this word "beautiful," and this describes a feeling - the feeling of judging an object (which isn't there, but is represented with paint and canvass) to have a purpose (which cannot be specified). It's the pure form of the feeling of judgment, and it shows us what we are. Art is the mirror for the mind, the image of what we are - namely, the potential to create: something which itself cannot be literally pictured (i.e. represented). There can be no literal picture of the mind, only a mindfulness of the limits of pictures. And pictures that remind you of that mindfulness, and lead you to reflect on your own mind's limitations.

Because of the first two critiques, we understand that there will never be a science of freedom, any more than there can be a science able to give itself purpose. But now we see this is not an either-or but a both-and; we can be determined by nature but *also* free to create ourselves, within limits.

The mind's limitation is that it cannot experience itself as an object without that very experience being subjective. At this point Hegel says "Aha! you see that reflection cannot reveal the whole, only speculation can do the trick. We must speculate as to what we are and see where it gets us." But not so fast says Kant, for we do have one supersensible faculty (3rd Crit #84) - freedom. Our sense of freedom is not an intuition, so the supersensible faculty of freedom does not breach Kant's general stricture on intellectual intuition. There is no passive experience of freedom itself, only a sense of freedom or the lack of it in any given active experience. The noumenal world cannot be imagined - a person can't be pictured, only their phenomenal appearance. A purpose can only be understood, not seen. But still, our sense of freedom reflects our mind in so far as we can know it.

Kant exegesis is complicated by the fact that Kant carves the mind up into faculties in at least three ways: (1) sensibility vs. understanding (2) imagination, understanding, reason (3) knowledge, desire, feeling. These are not competing models of the mind but finer-grained descriptions of Kant's reflections which have to be thought together.

(1) The passive active difference remains basic. Even though it is constituted, our capacity to experience appearances is immediate (aka intuitive) - we don't have to do anything, just look and see and there they are. But to be free, we must act: there is no passive intuition of who we are, there is only our decisions, actions, and eventual reflections. Sensibility is passive, understanding is active. Only in pure imagination do the twain meet (a nice place to visit, but not a sustainable dwelling).

(2) We can image only in the form of space and time; we must understand according to quantity, quality, relation and modality; everything is itself and has a sufficient reason. This is the diet for a balanced mind, all else is illusion.

(3) The higher form of the faculty of knowledge (1st critique) is that we can only understand what we can imagine; the higher form of the faculty of desire (2nd critique) is that we can only imagine what we can understand; the higher form of the faculty of feeling (3rd critique) is that we can only feel what we both imagine we understand, and understand we imagine. Only art can show us this.

Notice that experience in general remains construed subjectively by Kant, and this is where Hegel says Kant is unduly limited. Feeling is primarily communal according to Hegel, and only derivatively individual, and the subjective experience in the art gallery is a pale imitation of a full-fledged realization that *we* are spirit - "you," "I" - these are the confused attempts of the mind to grasp itself - and the real meaning of religion-in-general, of which art, religion and philosophy have only so far been inadequate representations. Communication itself is divinity, or rather not *communication* so much as *congregation*. God is essentially gregarious for Hegel - *we* are his thought, his dialogue with himself, for his essence is to reveal him self. He *has* to do this. But that's another story, the one about love, which in my interpretation is the main one for Hegel. I don't think there's much love in Kant, nor much room for it in his system. Part II Chapter I Section I in the *Metaphysics of Morals* makes it clear that Kant thinks only subjectivistically about love, as something "I" do, and not something that "we" happen(s) (deliberate confusion of passive and active voices with plural and singular persons). Thus Kant analyzes love in terms of duty (the price of freedom), and considers love for "all men" higher than a meeting of singularities in a unique possibility-opening existence-event. The thought that there are higher forms of temporality that we can access beyond the subjective "what are my plans for me?" kind of freedom doesn't even seem to cross Kant's well-ordered mind.

>> John Milbank in *Theology and Social Theory*, p.151:

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>> 'Metacritique' does not imply a further critique founded on Kant's initial  
>> effort, but rather a denial of the possibility of Kant's critical endeavour,  
>> from a critical point of view that is a more genuine and secure one. This  
>> point of view is that of language. If it is true that we only think in  
>> language, then it is simply not possible to investigate our thinking  
>> instrument – to say what it can or cannot think in advance of its  
>> deployment. We can only know our thinking capacity to the extent that we  
>> have thoughts, use words, and this means to the extent that we assume we  
>> have some conception of what 'things' and objective realities are. Hence it  
>> is not possible to separate out within language the 'categories' – whether  
>> of 'reason', the 'understanding' or 'the imagination' – by which things are  
>> thought, from 'intuitions' or the empirical contents of thoughts themselves.

This paragraph is a naked grab for power. To speak on behalf of language itself, what an authoritative position to be in! Makes him greater than Kant by far, who only presumed to speak on behalf of the entire human race. But language beats human race because it colonizes past and future too.

This guy doesn't realize he's cut the limb off he's sitting on. Language is not a point of view. Where's he supposed to be speaking from? Why did he sign the text and profit from its sale? But of course he's not speaking from some radical post-subjective viewpoint beyond personal pronouns, the voice of language itself. That would be kind of cool, but no it's just John Milbank's point of view pretending to hide. Which is:

"If it is true that we only think in language, then it is simply not possible to investigate our thinking instrument – to say what it can or cannot think in advance of its deployment".

First, it begins with a big if. What do I do when I get to a corner, stand there going "Ummm", then eventually walk one way. No language, yet I maintain I was thinking about which way to go. Even so,

the word "simply" does not constitute an argument, and the word "hence" is used a couple of sentences later in a largely rhetorical fashion. There's just a hopeless confusion of empirical and transcendental levels here. Of course we only see our concepts in application - Kant is no Platonist. But the point is to see the distinction between what I'm seeing and how I'm seeing while I'm seeing.

"To investigate our thinking instrument" is the loaded phrase. There's a stealthy subject perched back there in the shadows, hiding in the herd with the word "our", but it shows itself only indirectly - as thinking of itself as the user of an instrument, and unreflectively mistaking itself as an instrument. We use the metaphor, and it's a strong insult for a reason - but no-one actually *is* a tool. This instrumental rationality Kant would point to as the typical scientific confusion - that physical machinery could ever get one iota closer to explaining freedom. Of course Kant is not saying the mind is just a machine, and if he were, Milbank would be right. But the mind is free - the mind *is* freedom. And we ARE free to investigate our minds, and are also able to gain a high degree of insight into how we might think in all sorts of context never yet actually encountered. Even accepting Quine's relativization of the synthetic/analytic distinction, we need to remember the polarity into contingent matters of fact and relatively invariant core factors of my subjectivity and the objectivity of entities. This invariance grounds a model of the mind which, although admittedly local, is relatively widespread in the "West", and able to be generalized across cultures with appropriate adjustment. His question is really what is the relation between grammar and logic, and how both relate to ontology. And it's so unfair to ask Kant that question. It's like criticizing Galileo for not discovering Pluto. Read Hegel, Nietzsche, Saussure, and Wittgenstein to see how this story came out. And especially Levinas' paper "Language and Proximity" (ch7 of Collected Phil Papers).

cheers, David

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