

THOUGHTS ON IMMANUEL KANT'S CONCEPT OF UNIVERSAL COMMUNICABILITY OF THE SUBJECTIVE

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I confess that I have not gone carefully through Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Aesthetic Judgment*. I learned to day from Mark Sandy that Engell's *Creative Imagination: Enlightenment to Romanticism* contains some idea of importance of this *universal communicability of the subjective* for aesthetic judgment.

This is extraordinarily important for my interest in Universal Self. The natural questions which are much more basic require scientific scrutiny. First, is the subjective communicable at all? Second, what subjective are communicable to anyone else, and what is the method of communication? Third, what subjective are universally communicable?

Here on one hand we do know that we have a common human nature with 99.9% of the genetic code identical across the globe. On the other hand, what faculties we have of communicating the subjective and what we have of receiving such communication are quite obscure to me. It would be quite optimistic to have any understanding of *universal communicability of the subjective* at all.

1. QUESTION OF FACULTY OF UNDERSTANDING ANOTHER'S SUBJECTIVE

I will immediately say that it is very difficult for me to appreciate that all people have the capability to understand another's subjective by any form at all. It is unclear to me whether such a faculty is particularly good for the human race generally but even if it were, it is not in my experience. I am unclear what the method of communication is either. It seems to me that the Ancient Greek Poetics for Tragedy has some effort in this of identification with the protagonist and then some absorption of the subjective and its reaction. But even this is extremely difficult to understand clearly.

Certainly, the uncultivated heart and soul will not have any ability at all to receive communication of the subjective extremely well.

At the same time, in principle, we have capabilities and universal genetic code in common which suggest, without any clear conclusion, that there is some communicability that is possible.

2. COUNTEREXAMPLE FOR COMMUNICABILITY OF SUBJECTIVE

Consider the subjective experience of a rape victim. Now rapes are very low across the world, and are uniformly less than around 100 per 100,000, or 0.1% per population per year. It is therefore a subjective experience that could not have produced any evolutionary adaptation to experience. We would want people who are experts at handling rape victims to have special training to avoid the effects on their own psyche of rape victims in order to assist them to recovery. In this case,

seeking *communicability of the subjective* is not reasonable. We do not expect that an ordinary healthy human being has any capacity to receive such communicability in high fidelity. This counterexample shows that the concept of *communicability of the subjective* is not universal for all subjective experiences in human nature.

3. HOW CAN WE UNDERSTAND COMMUNICABILITY OF THE SUBJECTIVE?

Simpleminded logic would proceed as follows. First we consider ordinary human experiences into frequent and common experiences, and unique and exotic ones. Let us enumerate them as finite sets

$$C = \{C_1, \dots, C_p\}$$

and

$$E = \{E_1, \dots, E_q\}.$$

We pool together all exotic subjective experiences into E . Then we might ask the simplest question: are experiences from C communicable? If so what is the language or method of communication?

Then if the answer is there exist some concrete methods that allow us to communicate experiences from C perhaps using ordinary language, then we can make sense of universal communicability of the subjective.

Then the question arises of whether certain types of subjective experience require cultivation and habituation and are worthy of the effort. Then we can expand to issues of communicability to the cultivated of these sorts of subjective experiences.

The above is an abstract sketch to appreciate the difficulty of the concept that Kant introduces.

In order for Kant's idea of *universal communicability of the subjective* to apply to artistic forms, we have to have on the part of the consumer of the art appropriate cultivation. And that is a serious ambiguity for me, since my own experiences in life show that there is no uniform cultivation of being able to decipher or receive communication of the subjective of, say, the poetry of Shelley. The vast majority of Earth will not have the cultivation in their subjective experience to receive anything but ornate rhetoric from Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* for example.

Perhaps in some future world cultivation of the subjective experiences will be uniform across the globe for receiving and judging the subjective without extraordinary effort. But that is not the case at the moment.