Review
Reviewed Work(s): Nietzsche’s Critiques: The Kantian Foundations of His Thought by R. Kevin Hill
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behalf of an aesthetic or moral conviction contains menace during the last century provides examples of harm. The eastern European and Russian experience is both mistaken if they believe they are completely that we will do harm. Yet, legislators and preachers try to persuade our audience by preaching a sermon rather than Klopstock. Such an effort at persuasion is modest. He wanted his audience to read Goethe rather than Klopstock. Such an effort at persuasion is surely legitimate. Even if we take a further step and try to persuade our audience by preaching a sermon on behalf of what we consider good art, it is unlikely that we will do harm. Yet, legislators and preachers are both mistaken if they believe they are completely harmless. The eastern European and Russian experience during the last century provides examples of compelling observance of legislation in aesthetic matters. Although this example counts as an abuse of legislating, and it may not reoccur, preaching on behalf of an aesthetic or moral conviction contains another danger. We must become aware of that danger.

Preachers address their message to both the righteous and the unrighteous. Neither the pastor nor the flock need to change their way of life on hearing the sermon. It is indeed of crucial importance that the preacher (just as the critic or aesthetician) cannot enforce his or her views, he or she is merely concerned with bringing sinners to subject themselves to Divine law. If they decline to do so, that is their loss, and that is the end of the matter. The danger arises when some members of the flock take the sermon seriously to the point that they want to remove the black sheep from the flock so that these nonconformists cease to offend the righteous. We have a name for people who contemplate such actions, we call them sectarians. The unwarranted sectarianism of some listeners of the sermon is the danger that comes with preaching on behalf of convictions.

The lack of an authoritarian streak in Cavell’s writings convinces me that the Kantian tradition of criticism can dispense with elitism and that preaching is preferable to legislating. Film was a characteristic art of his time, so he showed its intellectual content. Does the movies’ intellectual content keep them from being ideologically tainted products of the entertainment industry? Not at all. Adorno was mistaken if he thought that the ideological taint vitiates the movies’ intellectual content. Cavell is mistaken if he believes the movies’ intellectual content removes their ideological taint.

Sex and love are admissible only within the bonds of marriage—this is the dominant ideology adhered to in these movies, even if occasionally some fictional characters violate the expected standards of behavior. Cavell believes that in these films marriage is an allegory of what philosophers have called friendship. It may be the case that in America marriage has taken the place of what in Europe is called friendship. Still, marriage and friendship are incomparable, at least in certain respects. Marriage and divorce require the contributions of authorities spiritual or temporal. Marriage is considered a sacrament or an institution. There is nothing analogous in the context of friendship.

It would be difficult to overestimate Cavell’s contribution to our field. Readers critical of his style—pretentiousness is the usual charge—have not considered sufficiently the importance of his insights. In a critical vein, I would submit that more attention be paid to the ideological content of the movies Cavell discusses, and that the occasional abuse of preaching about moral matters by sectarians be taken seriously. But this does not diminish my admiration for this book.

P.S.: The index is deficient.

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This book presents an original and systematic study of Immanuel Kant’s influence on Friedrich Nietzsche and is the first sustained examination of Nietzsche’s debt to Kant. As such, it addresses a need hitherto neglected by the vast secondary literature on Nietzsche, to which it is a valuable addition. Kevin Hill’s overarching thesis is that Nietzsche is a systematic philosopher who knew all three of Kant’s
Critiques more intimately than is commonly thought. Hill argues that Nietzsche can be properly understood only in relation to Kant. For throughout the course of his philosophical career, Hill contends, Nietzsche grappled with many of the central themes of Kant’s critical project, generating many of his own positions, on the one hand, out of a negation of Kant’s, and, on the other, as an extension or development of Kantian ideas. Overall, this contrast with Kant is a fruitful and meaningful one, which effectively brings out many fundamental features of Nietzsche’s thought.

In the opening chapter, Hill considers the nature of Nietzsche’s knowledge of Kant by briefly examining three of the nineteenth-century interpretations of Kant that Nietzsche is known to have read, namely, those of Kuno Fischer, Friedrich Lange, and Arthur Schopenhauer. Hill underplays the importance of Schopenhauer in an attempt to diffuse the common view that Nietzsche’s grasp of Kant derived entirely from a reading of Schopenhauer’s arguably superficial interpretation of Kant. This claim is central to Hill’s whole enterprise, since if Nietzsche’s knowledge of Kant was derived exclusively from Schopenhauer, then this would render both his debt to and his criticisms of Kant unworthy of further consideration. However, Hill argues persuasively not only that Nietzsche’s knowledge of Kant was not confined to Schopenhauer, but also that it was not restricted to secondary sources: Hill adduces substantial evidence that Nietzsche had direct acquaintance with all three of Kant’s Critiques, as well as several more minor works of the Kantian corpus.

Chapters 2 and 3 focus on Nietzsche’s early encounter with the Critique of Judgment. Hill argues that Nietzsche’s claims about metaphysics and epistemology in The Birth of Tragedy and the posthumously published essay “On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense” can be made sense of only within the context of his appropriation of the third Critique. As a preliminary to this, Hill offers a new interpretation of this perplexing Kantian text, which focuses on the centrality of reflective judgment in the work. Hill defends Kant’s claim that aesthetic and teleological judgments are both reflective, as opposed to determinative, in the sense that they exemplify ways that the subject is caused, by the constitution of the mind, to think of the object of experience “as if” designed. Hill then argues that Kant’s conception of reflective judgment had a significant influence on Nietzsche’s early views on teleology and aesthetics. Hill contends that Nietzsche’s early published and unpublished writings, including The Birth of Tragedy, are more indebted to Kant’s metaphysics and conception of the supersensible than they are to Schopenhauer’s metaphysics of the will. Though Nietzsche retained a conception of the noumenal, Hill argues that he rejected Schopenhauerian determinative judgments about noumena in favor of Kantian reflective judgments, which, though intersubjectively acceptable, are nonetheless not objectively valid.

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 deal with Kant’s influence on Nietzsche’s mature critiques of metaphysics and epistemology. Hill argues that Nietzsche’s naturalism is best understood as a rejection of the transcendental ideality of space and time, as Kant argues for it in the “Transcendental Aesthetic.” As Hill notes, this generates a puzzle about how to understand the relationship between appearances and reality, given Nietzsche’s continuing adherence to the Kantian thesis that the mind imposes order on its experiences, on the one hand, and his rejection of things-in-themselves, on the other. Hill attempts to resolve this seeming tension by claiming that the contrast between appearance and reality in Nietzsche is not between the illusory world of experience and ultimate metaphysical reality. The contrast is between the world we directly experience by virtue of our cognitive and perceptual apparatus and the world as posited by our best empirical theories. One would have liked to see Hill do more here to underline the obvious and fundamental differences between the two philosophers’ approaches to metaphysics and epistemology. Although it is true that some of Nietzsche’s most important ideas in these areas are to be viewed as outgrowths of a variety of specific metaphysical and epistemological claims made in Kant’s Critiques, Nietzsche’s metaphysico-epistemological views invariably serve his own ethical or evaluative agenda, rather than, as with Kant, a purely analytic or epistemological one.

The final chapter of the book considers the various ways the three treatises of the Genealogy confront particular aspects of Kant’s practical philosophy and related works about Kantian ethics. Hill claims that each treatise derives from an encounter with a different aspect of Kant’s moral philosophy: rational reconstruction of moral intuitions, the analysis of agency, and the practical postulates. In respect of the first of these, Hill argues that the first treatise traces the moral intuitions Kant relies on to slave morality and its social and psychological conditions, thus debunking their claim to transcendental legitimacy. One problem for Hill’s reading here is that it is Schopenhauer’s ethics to which Nietzsche explicitly opposes himself in the Genealogy (see, for example, On the Genealogy of Morality, Preface: 5). But in general, the first treatise presents a genealogical analysis of Christian morality and its secular forms, of which Kant is just one among many proponents. Hill goes on to claim that the second essay appropriates key aspects of Kant’s model of agency, and that the third treatise traces the phenomenal/noumenal distinction to the ascetic ideal, which is said to have
its roots in a deep hostility to natural human existence and the world at large. But again, this reading seems highly tendentious, since the phenomenal/noumenal distinction is not an exclusively Kantian idea, but rather has an ancestry that reaches back through Christianity, Plato, and beyond. In addition, Hill argues that Nietzsche’s immorality is best understood as a rejection of the universalistic or agent-neutral dimension of Kant’s analysis of rule-governed action. This seems fair up to a point, but ethical universalism is also one of the defining characteristics of Christian morality, which once more seems to be the more obvious target of Nietzsche’s critique.

Periodically, then, the reader is left feeling that Hill has overstated his central thesis concerning the nature and extent of Kant’s influence on Nietzsche, and that the orthodox view that Nietzsche was centrally preoccupied by Schopenhauer is closer to the truth. As Hill notes, there are 381 references to Kant/Kantian in the Colli-Montinari edition, but this number is easily surpassed by references to Schopenhauer. All in all, however, Nietzsche’s Critiques is a volume that will be of great value to all serious scholars and students with interests in either of these philosophical titans, or in the history of ideas generally.

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SPITZER, MICHAEL. Metaphor and Musical Thought. University of Chicago Press, 2004, x+380 pp., 1 color+6 b&w illus., $60.00 cloth.

Michael Spitzer’s book begins with the bold claim that all discourse about music is inevitably metaphorical. Metaphors are needed to assist us in understanding something so abstract. (As used by Spitzer, the concept of metaphor is a portmanteau that includes analogy, simile, allegory, metonymy, and a variety of other tropes.) These metaphors are said to shape our experience of music and determine what we hear it as. As bold as his initial claim may seem, Spitzer makes a bolder one: music can, and often does, employ metaphors. This ambitious book is designed to be “nothing less than a general theory of musical discourse” (p. 93). It is a theory concerning both discourse about music and discourse by means of music. In developing this theory, Spitzer displays an encyclopedic knowledge of writing about music and a deep sensitivity to music.

This book is divided into two parts. Part I is a theoretical exploration of the concept of metaphor and its application to music. Spitzer draws on a wide range of writers on metaphor. These range from Anglo-American theorists such as George Lakoff and Mark Johnson to continental thinkers. The continental thinkers Spitzer favors belong to the hermeneutic tradition. Paul Ricoeur is a major inspiration, while Jacques Derrida comes in for periodic criticism. Roger Scruton is credited with being “the writer who, more than any other, put musical metaphor on the map.” Spitzer quotes Scruton as speaking, in his Aesthetics of Music, of the “indispensable metaphor” we use in approaching music: it is a “living, breathing, moving organism” (p. 83). Although Scruton is the starting point, Spitzer believes that a variety of metaphors can be used to approach music. A primary aim of the book is to identify these metaphors and show how they affect the experience of music.

A major challenge faced in Part I is showing that apparently literal talk about music is metaphorical. In particular, the analyses of music by Heinrich Schenker and his disciples seems to be completely literal. Spitzer maintains that their writing about music is thoroughly metaphorical. He has two arguments. Both start from the claim that metaphor involves a comparison between distinct domains. The first argument, which I do not quite follow, leads to the conclusion that Schenkerian analysis is metaphorical because “counterpoint and meter are used metaphorically; the original, basic-level categories are mapped onto the imaginary domain of a theoretical abstraction” (p. 30). The second argument turns on the claim that Schenkerian writing constantly involves the use of metaphors of growth and motion as ways of understanding musical forms. Schenkerian metaphors, like others, influence what listeners hear music as.

The suggestion that music itself is metaphorical is introduced in the second and third chapters of Part I. Spitzer states that “metaphor is intrinsic to musical discourse throughout the common-practice period” (p. 112). (Here ‘musical discourse’ refers not to discourse about music, but discourse by means of music.) Spitzer illustrates his position with examples from Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven. In discussing measures 18–20 of the St. John Passion, for example, Spitzer notes: “By reworking the opening instrumental ritornello so as to include the choir, Bach embodies the music with human voices. Second, this moment enacts an incarnation of the figure of Christ, who steps forth into the drama for the first time. The descending C minor triad is Christ’s theme in the entire Passion” (p. 113).

Part II, much longer than the first part, begins with an extended conceit, somewhat in the style of Derrida, on the use of the sunflower and the heliotrope as metaphors. This florilegium is supposed to reveal the structure of this part of the book. Even if readers find the conceit unhelpful, the structure of this part of the