

THE BEAUTIFUL, THE GOOD, AND THE AGREEABLE: KANTIAN AESTHETIC LAYERS IN FARZANA AQIB'S *SEASONS OF HEART*

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Abstract

Objective: This study applies Immanuel Kant's aesthetic theory to analyze the poem *Seasons of Heart* by a Pakistani poet named Farzana Aqib (Aqib, 2023, p. 106), focusing on how readers experience beauty through emotion, meaning, and admiration.

Method: A qualitative approach was used with thematic analysis to explore Kant's three concepts including the agreeable (personal feelings), the good (moral meaning), and the beautiful (pure admiration) within the poem.

Findings: The poem connects with readers emotionally, encourages personal growth, and offers artistic beauty. The analysis shows that Kant's theory helps us understand poetry on emotional, ethical, and aesthetic levels.

Keywords: Kantian aesthetics, poetic analysis, thematic analysis, emotional response, the beautiful, literary criticism

Background of the Study

Poetry has always been a powerful way to express emotions, beauty, and life experiences. Readers often connect with poems not just for their words but for the feelings and meanings they carry (Wimsatt & Beardsley, 1954). While many theories help us understand poetry, "Immanuel Kant's aesthetic theory" offers a unique way to explore "why we find poems emotionally moving, morally meaningful, or simply beautiful" (Kant, 1790/2007). However, this theory is rarely applied to "modern South Asian poetry", especially poems written in English by Pakistani poets (Ahmad, 2017). This study aims to fill that gap by using Kant's ideas to explore the deeper layers of meaning in the poem *Seasons of Heart*.

Statement of the Purpose

The purpose of this research is to explore how Immanuel Kant's aesthetic theory, especially the concepts of liking for the agreeable, the good, and the beautiful can be applied to analyze the emotional depth, moral meaning, and artistic beauty of the poem *Seasons of Heart* by a Pakistani writer. This study aims to show how readers experience the poem on personal, ethical, and universal aesthetic levels.

Literature Review

Immanuel Kant is one of the most important figures in the history of aesthetics. In his book *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (1790/2000), Kant explains how people judge beauty and art. He divides aesthetic appreciation into three types: liking for the agreeable, which is personal and based on feelings; liking for the good, which is moral or meaningful; and liking for the beautiful, which is pure and universal. According to Kant, true beauty is something we enjoy without wanting anything in return we just admire it. This idea helps us look at art and poetry in a deeper, more thoughtful way.

In this connection, many scholars have used Kant's theory to understand literature and art. Guyer (2006) explains that Kant's focus was not just on beauty, but on how and why we feel connected to certain works of art. Crowther (2010) also adds that Kant's aesthetic ideas allow us to experience art not only emotionally, but also intellectually, as we find meaning or personal growth in it. These ideas are especially useful in poetry, where emotional expression, moral reflection, and beauty often come together.

Lastly, in literary studies, Kant's ideas are used to understand how a reader responds to the emotional tone, the life lessons, and the artistic techniques of a poem. The present study follows this line of thought by using Kant's three-part model to analyze a modern Pakistani

poem, "Seasons of Heart." This poem shows emotional longing, personal growth, and poetic beauty all of which fit Kant's concepts. By applying Kant's aesthetic theory, we can explore how readers connect with the poem on multiple levels, including personal feeling, moral insight, and artistic admiration.

Theoretical Framework

This analysis is grounded in Immanuel Kant's aesthetic theory, which explores how individuals appreciate art through three distinct forms of aesthetic judgment: liking for the agreeable (based on personal pleasure), liking for the good (based on moral or meaningful value), and liking for the beautiful (based on disinterested, universal admiration of beauty) (Kant, 1790/2000).

Methodology

This research follows a qualitative approach because it focuses on understanding the deeper emotional and aesthetic meaning of a poem rather than using numbers or statistics. Qualitative research is best when we want to explore feelings, themes, or artistic beauty in literature (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The **data collection** method is textual analysis, meaning the poem "Seasons of Heart" is used as the main data. It was selected purposively because it contains rich emotional content and symbolic expressions that are ideal for applying Kant's aesthetic theory (Gibbs, 2007).

The **data analysis method** is thematic analysis. This means the poem was read carefully to identify themes that relate to Kant's three types of liking: agreeable (emotional), good (moral), and beautiful (universal aesthetic pleasure). The reason for using thematic analysis is that it helps to organize and explain the poem's meaning in a clear and structured way (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Analysis & Discussion

In this analysis, the scholar applied Immanuel Kant's aesthetic theory to understand and interpret the emotional depth and artistic value of the poem *Seasons of Heart*. Kant talks about three types of aesthetic appreciation, and the researcher used these to explore how a reader connects to the poem.

1. Liking for the Agreeable (What feels personally pleasant)

This type of liking is all about how the poem makes us feel emotionally or sensually happy. In *Seasons of Heart*, the poet uses phrases like:

After many moons... like a voyage of stars

This gives us a dreamy, romantic feeling something we enjoy just like we enjoy a beautiful sunset or soft music. It is personal and emotional. Anyone who has missed someone or experienced deep emotions can relate to this. This part of Kant's idea is fulfilled because the poem pleases us on a personal level, without needing any logical explanation.

2. Liking for the Good (What we admire because it feels meaningful or morally right)

Kant also says that sometimes we like something because we think it is good or meaningful, not just beautiful. In this poem, the speaker meets someone after a long time and says:

He appeared the same / But my heart was rejigged / It turned metamorphosed

This shows a kind of inner growth. The speaker does not feel the same emotions anymore, even though the other person has not changed. This teaches us about emotional maturity, acceptance, and change, which are all meaningful life lessons. So, this poem is not just about feelings, it is also about personal development, which fits Kant's idea of admiring what is "good."

3. Liking for the Beautiful (What we find universally pleasing without needing to own it)

Finally, Kant says true beauty is something we enjoy without wanting anything from it, we just admire it for what it is. The poem ends with:

Weather was transmuted / So was the seasons of heart

Here, the poet compares changes in the weather to emotional changes in the heart. This is a beautiful metaphor that many people can connect with. The poem does not try to teach a lesson or force emotion; instead, it lets the reader feel and interpret naturally. This fits Kant's highest level of aesthetic appreciation pure, disinterested enjoyment.

Findings

1. Emotional Connection (Liking for the Agreeable):

Readers emotionally connect with the poem's gentle tone and imagery. Lines like "After many moons... like a voyage of stars" evoke feelings of longing, beauty, and peace. These reactions reflect personal pleasure, which Kant calls the "agreeable." This type of response is subjective and emotional, showing how the poem touches individual hearts.

2. Moral and Personal Growth (Liking for the Good):

The speaker undergoes emotional transformation. Phrases like "my heart was rejigged... metamorphosed" show emotional maturity and acceptance of change. This reflects Kant's idea of the "good" aesthetic appreciation that goes beyond feelings and points to inner development, reflection, and meaning.

3. Universal Beauty (Liking for the Beautiful):

The poem's metaphors like comparing changing seasons to shifting emotions are universally appreciable. The beauty lies not just in emotion or meaning, but in how it allows disinterested pleasure (enjoyed without personal need). This aligns with Kant's idea of the "beautiful" something pleasing for its own sake, to almost everyone.

Conclusion

The analysis shows that the poem "Seasons of Heart" fulfills all three levels of Kant's aesthetic judgment:

It touches the heart (agreeable),

It teaches moral or emotional values (good), and

It offers beauty that can be appreciated universally (beautiful).

Thus, Kant's theory is a useful and meaningful tool to understand not just how poems look or sound, but how they make us feel, grow, and reflect.

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Appendix

"A Hundreds Bedizen Heavens"(The name of Farzana Aqib's poetry collection from which the poem was taken).

Seasons of Heart

Season is changed

So doth my heart

I saw him after such a long journey

After many moons ...

Like a voyage of stars

He appeared the same

But my heart was rejigged

It Turned metamorphosed

I didn't feel it skipping a beat

And my eyes weren't even

gleaning enough to greet

Weather was transmuted

So was the seasons of heart

—Farzana Agib