Spring 5-12-2017

Kant On The Beautiful

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B.A. University of Maine, 2001

A PROJECT

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

(in Interdisciplinary Studies)

The Graduate School

The University of Maine

May 2017

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This thesis looks at Kant's question about the antagonism between freedom and determinism and how he tried to reconcile them through aesthetics. I begin the thesis by sketching the influences on Kant's aesthetics, by looking at the problem that arose after he completed his first two critiques, and by defining his three faculties. From there I examine his four moments of beauty. Next, I ask how beauty symbolizes morality. In the conclusion I submit a possible answer how beauty can resolve the antagonism between freedom and determinism. The tentative answer is as follows.

According to Kant, beauty doesn't require us to look at a thing through determinate concepts. In those moments we see a thing as an appearance and other than its appearance (as free). We then come closest to seeing a thing-in-itself because we see the thing as other than its label—we see it as purposiveness and not as a purpose to be used. When Kant said beauty is a symbol of morality, perhaps he meant absolute freedom can't have a direct representation outside of an aesthetic experience. If Kant is right that beauty bridges determinism and freedom, Kant makes a case for beauty's importance.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis couldn't have been written without my committee, Michael Howard, Kirsten Jacobson, and Michael Grillo. I am incredibly grateful to them.

I'm infinitely grateful to my advisor, Michael Howard. I would not have been able to complete this project if he hadn't agreed to help me. He also gave me invaluable comments, criticism, praise, and guidance. His guidance gave me the confidence to pursue these ideas, too. In addition, some of his ideas and the questions he asked me have been influential. I'm very grateful to him.

Kirsten Jacobson gave me valuable guidance in how to get this project going again. I had worked on a related project, but life circumstances arose that prevented me from reaching completion. She helped me get started again, and stayed on. I'm grateful to her for doing so. She also gave me invaluable comments.

Michael Grillo helped me develop a prototype of this thesis in an independent study I did with him. I'm very grateful for the encouragement he gave me. And like Kirsten, he was on my original committee. I'm very grateful he stayed on. His questions also played an important role in helping me along, too.

Babette Babich of Fordham University, where I did my undergrad work, was the one who introduced Kant's *Critique of Judgment* to me. I'm infinitely grateful to her as well.

Finally, my parents Henry and Marilyn and girlfriend Jen Clark have very been supportive during the writing of this thesis. I'm grateful to each of them.

PREFACE

How does Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) resolve the antagonism between freedom and determinism in his aesthetics? “Determinism” refers to the Newtonian laws of nature. “Freedom” refers to the moral law (or free will) within ethics. Another way of looking at these two terms is, freedom is the “ought” of *ethics* and determinism is the “is” of *science*.

Kant gave a tentative answer to this question in his first two critiques. Within time, space, and the laws of nature, a thing appears as determined. But space and time prevent us from seeing the thing-in-itself as free. But this answers the question in the negative: time and space belies freedom. Kant claims to give a positive answer in his third critique, *The Critique of Judgment* (1790). Frustratingly his answer isn’t clear. So, in this thesis I’d like to speculate what his answer may be. Here’s one possibility. And it’s the thesis’s argument.

The beautiful lets us see a thing without determining it with concepts. As a result, we come close to seeing a thing-in-itself (as free). In other words, in moments of beauty, a thing appears within the laws of nature (as phenomenon) yet also as “more than” its appearance (as noumenon). In the beautiful, we *experience* a thing as both phenomenon and noumenon. This is a paradox, true. But Kant will define beauty in four paradoxes. Underlying these paradoxes is a guiding principle: “purposiveness.” Purposiveness *senses* a thing as appearance and freedom. Beauty, then, may be a symbol of morality because a truly good (free) will can’t have direct presentation, except indirectly. That’s beauty.

In Chapter 1 I'll sketch the thinking about aesthetics that influenced Kant. In Chapter 2, I'll sketch Kant's driving question in the third critique. In Chapter 3, I'll define his three faculties as his aesthetics depend on an understanding of these terms. In Chapter 4, I'll delve into Kant's four paradoxical moments of beauty. In Chapter 5, I'll discuss how "the paradox of beauty" is a symbol of morality. Finally, in Chapter 6 I can develop the possibility that beauty solves the antagonism between determinism and freedom—as an object of beauty is free from concepts yet also appears within the sensible realm of determinable concepts.

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CHAPTER 1.

INFLUENCES ON KANT'S AESTHETICS

Kant didn't write in a vacuum. He synthesized ideas about beauty and art that were "in the air" during eighteenth-century Europe. But let me say this another way.

The Enlightenment was unique in history for how much brain-energy was spent thinking about aesthetic questions. Without those ideas, I'm not sure Kant's aesthetics would have been. But if that's true, where did Enlightenment thinkers get their ideas from? And what was it about this era that made these thinkers so preoccupied with aesthetic questions in the first place? We could trace the preoccupation back to René Descartes (1596-1650).

A. Descartes's Dualism

Now, it's true Descartes may not have been interested in aesthetic issues per se. But his "new" philosophy brought up "new" questions about the nature of beauty and art. That is, Descartes saw mind and matter as distinct. That thought inspired new questions about art and beauty. How so?

Descartes published *Discourse on the Method* in 1637 and *Meditations* in 1640. If we look at Descartes's life, we'll see Europe was floundering in the bloodiest religious war of its history, the "Thirty Years War" (1618-1648) during

his entire adult life.[1] Descartes was 22 years old when the war began, and he lived only 2 more years more after the war ended. 101 years after Martin Luther (1483-1546) nailed the *95 Theses* on a church door in 1517, wars erupted between Catholic and Protestant states that resulted in 8 million deaths, spread of disease, outbreak of witch hunts.[2] Stephen Toulmin argues in *Cosmopolis* that this may have been Descartes's motive for wanting to lay a new foundation for knowledge—something more "certain" than religion.

Descartes gave Europe hope. We can uncover universal truth, if we look for clear and distinct ideas. Let those be the ingredients of knowledge. Let what's most fundamental, clear, evident—place those propositions at the foundation of knowledge, not what's uncertain, unclear. But how can we find clear and distinct ideas? Descartes's answer: apply the standards of arithmetic and geometry. Just like arithmetic and geometry, "clear and distinct" deductions would have *universal* application. Descartes's method promised to uncover indubitable, universal truths —true for everyone, everything, everyplace, everywhen.

His ideal spread across Europe.[3] Many saw hope in replacing religious belief and superstition with more "secure" knowledge. Not long after Descartes's philosophy, witch hunts did end. But a problem arose. What place did this leave morality and aesthetics? Must these now be discarded as what's less clear, dis-

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[1] Stephen Toulmin, *Cosmopolis: The Hidden Agenda of Modernity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 61.

[2] Wikipedia contributors, "Thirty Years' War," *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Thirty_Years%27_War&oldid=749137774, accessed October 8, 2016.

[3] Monroe C. Beardsley, *Aesthetics from Classical Greece to the Present: A Short History* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1975), 141.

tinct, objective, certain—as mere "subjectivity"? Many Enlightenment thinkers wanted to argue that morality and aesthetics *can* give us "truth" that's as legitimate (and objective) as ideas yielded from the Cartesian method. The first post-Cartesian thinker to make such a case, especially for aesthetic judgments, was Anthony Ashley Cooper, Third Earl of Shaftesbury (1671-1713).

B. Empiricist vs. Rationalist Aesthetics

In the book *Philosophies of Art & Beauty*, Albert Hofstadter and Richard Kuhns wrote this about Shaftesbury: "It is probably no exaggeration to attribute to Shaftesbury the origin of all modern philosophies of art."[4] In fact, we could say two thinkers stand at the beginning of modern philosophical aesthetics: Shaftesbury in England and Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten (1714-1762) in Germany.

Shaftesbury's set of aesthetic issues would represent the "empirical" camp of aesthetics during the Enlightenment. In fact, John Locke advised Shaftesbury in his youth, though Shaftesbury would come to disagree with Locke's philosophy. Baumgarten's set of issues would represent the "rational" camp of aesthetics. He was a student of Christian Wolff (1679-1754), who had systematized Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz's (1646-1716) philosophy. Baumgarten built on Wolff and didn't disagree with him the way Shaftesbury did with Locke.

Instead, Shaftesbury took from neoplatonism and stoicism. His contribution to philosophy: all humans have a moral/aesthetic sense, a feeling that gives

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[4] Albert Hofstadter and Richard Kuhns, ed., *Philosophies of Art & Beauty: Selected Readings in Aesthetics from Plato to Heidegger* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1976), xvi.

us objective judgments about these. British philosophers after Shaftesbury came up with different solutions to how a feeling can give us objective judgments about morals and aesthetics.

Baumgarten's set of issues, on the other hand, derive more from Descartes. He looked at what Descartes might call "lower" act of cognitions, i.e., sense perception. Baumgarten even gave this cognition a name: "aesthetics," which is where we get the word from today. Baumgarten's question: how are "truths" of poetry possible within a Cartesian framework?

So, in a way both thinkers reacted to Descartes. But where Baumgarten worked *within* the Cartesian framework, Shaftesbury *challenged* it.

By the end of the 18th century, Kant synthesized both camps in his aesthetics.[5] He answered Shaftesbury's question about how the aesthetic sense might given us objective judgments about beauty using Baumgarten's idea of sense-perception-as-an-act-of-cognition. Kant disagreed with Baumgarten that sense perception is a "confused" and so "lower" judgment. Instead, Kant saw aesthetic judgments as equal to logical judgments. But I'm getting ahead of myself. Before we dig into Kant's synthesis of Shaftesbury and Baumgarten, let's look at what their positions were—starting with Shaftesbury.

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[5] Hannah Ginsborg, "Kant's Aesthetics and Teleology," Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant-aesthetics, last revised February 13, 2013, 7.

C. Shaftesbury (Empiricist)

1. A Non-Systematic Thinker

Shaftesbury wasn't exactly a systematic thinker, but his three-volume book of essays called *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* (1711), influenced British philosophers (like Hutcheson, Hume, Adam Smith), French thinkers (like Voltaire and Rousseau)[6] and of course Kant in Germany. His prestige declined in the 20th century though, with the rise of analytic philosophy.[7]

The reason is, Shaftesbury didn't use numbered premises to deduce conclusions. He used literary rhetoric, metaphor, analogy, play, illustrations (he worked with hired artists to produce allegorical illustrations[8]), and essays. 20th century analytic philosophers had trouble reading Shaftesbury, and dismissed him as literary rather than philosophical. Interestingly, Renaissance philosopher Michel de Montaigne relied on literary rhetoric in his essays, too. Although Descartes had a readable writing style, Descartes was similar to analytic philosophers in favoring a deductive style of doing philosophy. My only point is Shaftesbury seemed to do philosophy in the "old" Renaissance way rather than in the "new" Cartesian way.

Regardless, Shaftesbury wrote in different characters in *Characteristics*—similar to how Kierkegaard wrote under pseudonyms. For example, **Volume I** consists of (1) "*A Letter Concerning Enthusiasm"*—a letter to a lord; and (2)

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[6] John McAteer, "The Third Earl of Shaftesbury (1671-1713)," *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, http://www.iep.utm.edu/shaftes/, accessed October 26, 2016, 1.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid., 3.

"*Sensus Communis, an Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humor"*—a letter to a friend. **Volume II** consists of (3) "*Soliloquy, or Advice to an Author"*—an internal dialogue where Shaftesbury addresses himself; (4) "*An Inquiry Concerning Virtue and Merit"*—an ironic scholastic-style philosophy lecture; and (5) "*The Moralists; a Philosophical Rhapsody"*—a dialogue between Philocles and Theocles. *The Moralists* may arguably be the heart of the work. **Volume III** consists of "*Five Miscellaneous Reflections on the Said Treatises, and Other Critical Subjects"*—Shaftesbury's comments on the five essays, as if Shaftesbury the literary critic were in a dialogue with Shaftesbury the philosopher.[9] He began a second book called *Second Characters* but didn't live long enough to complete it.

But his diversity of form and personae resisted a system.[10] This makes sense. Shaftesbury in *Soliloquy* outright says, "The most ingenious way of becoming foolish, is by a System."[11]

Side note: my citations of Shaftesbury will refer to the online-accessible version of Den Uyl's Liberty Fund edition. I will cite volume and original page number, followed by the name of essay with its part and section. For example, the citation will read something like, 1.290, *Soliloquy*, III.i. I hope this will make it easier to reference my citations if needed.

In any event, why? Why did Shaftesbury resist systematic philosophy?

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[9] Ibid., 19.

[10] Michael B. Gill, "Lord Shaftesbury [Anthony Ashley Cooper, 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury]," *Stanford Encyclopedia Philosophy*, http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/shaftesbury/, accessed October 26, 2016, 3.

[11] Anthony Ashley Cooper, Earl of Shaftesbury, *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, ed. Douglas den Uyl (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2001), 3 vols, http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/1851; accessed November 7, 2016, 1.290, *Soliloquy or Advice to an Author*, III.ii.

He thought the purpose of philosophy was to make us better people, to "improve" us.[12] But as long as "Empiricks and pedantik Sophits" did philosophy in the Scholastic or Cartesian way, he thought philosophy would be imprisoned in "Colleges and Cells."[13] Dry, lifeless texts that claim to have all the answers but didn't touch "Interest," he thought, led to something worse than "Ignorance." They would prevent us from *actually* developing wisdom and from *actually* living well.[14]

Instead, what Shaftesbury was after was self-transformation, to turn ourselves toward virtue. That's why he took such pains to make his writing accessible to everyone—so he could touch people's "Interest." In fact, he used to read his writing aloud to see make sure it sounded[15] readable, engaging, conversational. And his thought is clear. In fact, the 11th edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* says one reason Shaftesbury may have been popular in the 18th century was because of the "agreeable feeling" of his writing.[16] A 21st century reader can still read his writing today with ease. So for Shaftesbury, he ditched analytic rigor so his philosophy could actually help readers live better lives, not so his reader could theorize about living better lives.[17]

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[12] Ibid., 2.427, *The Moralists*, III.ii.

[13] Ibid., 2.184, *The Moralists*, I.i.

[14] Ibid., 1.290, *Soliloquy*, III.i.

[15] McAteer,4-5.

[16] Thomas Fowler, "Shaftesbury, Anthony Ashley Cooper, 3rd Earl of," *Online Encyclopedia*, originally appearing in Volume 24, Page 763-5 of the *1911 Encyclopedia Britannica*, Cambridge University Press, http://encyclopedia.jrank.org/SCY_SHA/SHAFTESBURY_ANTHONYASHLEY_COOPE.html, accessed October 26, 2016.

[17] McAteer, 7.

2. An Anti-Cartesian Thinker

Even though Shaftesbury is known today as the origin of modern aesthetics, or as the philosopher who invented a link between aesthetics and ethics, he didn't see himself as a pioneer. He seemed to see himself as defending a synthesis that he thought already existed in classical philosophy.[18] In other words, he saw the moral relativism in Hobbes and Locke as a threat, and used classical philosophy as a shield. This is ironic, especially since Shaftesbury began his life under Locke's tutelage.

John Locke (1632-1704) was close friends with Shaftesbury's grandfather, the First Earl of Shaftesbury (1621-1683). In fact, Locke had treated a live infection of the First Earl's in 1666, most likely saving his life.[19] So, the First Earl (Shaftesbury's grandfather) invited Locke to become his personal physician and secretary. Locke accepted. Locke would also go on to supervise the medical treatment for Shaftesbury's father, the Second Earl's (1652-1699) poor health. And Locke helped the Second Earl's wife give birth to the Third Earl himself. But probably most significant, Locke supervised the eduction of the Third Earl. He selected Shaftesbury's governess, Elizabeth Birch, and designed the curriculum for her to follow. There's a good chance that Locke used that educational experiment as the basis for his work *Thoughts Concerning Education*.[20] Through Birch,

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[18] Ibid.

[19] Wikipedia contributors, "Anthony Ashley Cooper, 1st Earl of Shaftesbury," *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anthony_Ashley_Cooper,_1st_Earl_ of_ Shaftesbury, accessed October 9, 2016.

[20] Ibid., 3.

Locke gave Shaftesbury a strong education in the classics. By age of 11, Shaftesbury was fluent in Greek and Latin. But again, the irony is Shaftesbury would eventually use that classical education against Locke's philosophy.

Shaftesbury gave modern philosophy this idea: ethics and aesthetics derive from a "sentiment." More specifically, he thought we humans are designed to appreciate order and harmony—and that appreciation is the basis of "objective" judgments of morality and beauty.[21] As I said, he saw himself as building on top of Neoplatonism rather than innovating a "new" philosophy.

He followed Plato and Neoplatonists (like Plotinus) in thinking that humans have knowledge of the beautiful and good embedded in our souls, even if it's a shadow of absolute beauty and goodness. Shaftesbury used that idea to challenge Hobbes's "the state of nature is a war of all against all" and Locke's denial of innate ideas (which implies morality is relative, not natural or real). For Shaftesbury, we respond best to goodness, truth, and beauty.[22] So we naturally desire society.

Though Shaftesbury disagreed with Locke, they remained friends. While Shaftesbury's father was bedridden, Shaftesbury took over the family estate in 1689 (he was only 18 years old) and Locke advised him in his new duties. Locke and Shaftesbury had philosophical conversations and kept in touch (some of

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[21] Gill, 1.

[22] It's no wonder 19th century German art historian Hermann Hettner wrote of Shaftesbury: "A new-born Hellenism, or divine cultus of beauty, presented itself before his inspired soul." (encyc Brit, 1911). Shaftesbury seemingly desired to recover the spirit of Greek philosophy in this new Cartesian world.

their correspondence is still preserved).[23] But ultimately, Shaftesbury took Locke's *method* of empiricism (observe sensory reality) in a different direction (moral beauty exists independent of human experience).[24]

In any event, Shaftesbury challenged four elements in Hobbes and Locke: empiricism, mechanism, voluntarism, and egoism.

Empiricism rejected the innate ideas of morality. Mechanistic physics rejected purpose in nature. Voluntarism asserted universal moral principles are actually grounded in a sovereign will (i.e., in a social contract). Egoism reduced morality to self-interest—*all* human actions are selfish. But by postulating the existence of a moral and aesthetic sense, Shaftesbury argued morality a) isn't mere self-interest, b) moral principles aren't relative to a sovereign will, c) there is purpose in nature (and the universe), and d) each of us is born with an inner sense of beauty and morality.

His idea would influence Scottish philosopher Francis Hutcheson (1694-1746). Hutcheson would influence another Scottish philosopher, David Hume (1711-1776), who also thought morality should be based on sentiment, too. And of course Shaftesbury's idea of an aesthetic sense would exert a major influence on Kant. Kant's entire aesthetics is arguably an extension of Shaftesbury's idea that every human is born with an aesthetic sense.

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[23] McAteer, 3-4.

[24] Ibid., 2.

3. Shaftesbury's Idea: Common Sense

To repeat, Shaftesbury didn't see aesthetics and morals as separate senses. He didn't see one as an analogy for the other either. Instead, he saw beauty and goodness as "one and the same" sense.[25] In his essay *Sensus Communis*, he calls this sense "common sense."

Here he probably followed Marcus Aurelius's lead. Aurelius coined the term *koinonoemosune* to refer to our sense of the "common good."[26] Shaftesbury meant his "common sense" to be something similar, i.e., to harmonize with the good. When we apply common sense to human action, we call it "moral sense." When we apply common sense to external objects (nature or art), we call it "aesthetic sense."[27] But both are functions of the same sense.

The underlying feature of common sense is the ability to judge *immediately* without reasoning. Judgments derive from our ability to sense harmony.[28] That's why the word "sense" is so fitting—common sense responds *immediately* the way our bodily organ responds *immediately*.[29] As Shaftesbury puts it, common sense is like an external sensation where "straight an inward EYE distinguishes and sees the Fair…from the Deform'd."[30]

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[25] Shaftesbury, 2.399, *The Moralists*, III.ii.

[26] McAteer, 12.

[27] Beardsley, 179.

[28] Ibid., 179-180.

[29] Shaftesbury, 2.45, *An Inquiry*, 2.I.ii (Book 2, Part I, Section i).

[30] Ibid., 2.415, *The Moralists*, III.ii.

Though tempting to see common sense as an instinct (and Shaftesbury does call it an "instinct"), it may (possibly) be more accurate to call common sense an "innate potential."[31] The reason is, Shaftesbury notes common sense requires cultivation. Shaftesbury writes this in *The Moralists*, III.ii, "How long before a true taste is gained!" Every member of the human species is born with this potential, but we must learn how to use it through culture (or "education").[32] Otherwise, vice can cover over common sense.[33] That's why Shaftesbury says his philosophical aim is "to form within ourselves… relish,"[34] i.e., common sense.

The guiding principle of common sense seems to be harmony.[35] Harmony brings separate, diverse, conflicting parts into an ordered whole through form, design, number—like "*Symmetry* and *Proportion*."[36] We see this principle in art, in ethics, in nature. And so for Shaftesbury, harmony allows moral and aesthetic judgments *not* to be relative but universal.[37] How?

i. Nature as Organism (and Interconnected)

The short answer is, morality and beauty refer to Divine Mind's handiwork (as "harmony") running throughout nature. Common senses detects that harmo-

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[31] McAteer, 16.

[32] Ibid., 1.190, *Soliloquy*, I.iii.

[33] Shaftesbury, 2.41, *Inquiry*, 1.III.i.

[34] Ibid., 3.154, *Miscellaneous Reflections*, III.i

[35] Beardsley, 179.

[36] Shaftesbury, 1.218, *Soliloquy*, III.iii.

[37] Ibid., 180.

ny, and allows us in turn to imitate harmony in art, morals, and knowledge. Another way of saying this: morality and beauty rely on Shaftesbury's vision of nature as a concord of parts to form a whole.

a. Representative Beauty vs. Original Beauty

In *The Moralists*, Shaftesbury has Theocles (his spokesman) advise how to approach, say, a coin: "never admire the Representative Beauty, except for the sake of the Original; nor aim at other Enjoyment than of the rational kind."[38] Here's one possible translation of that sentence: "enjoy beauty in its original form rather than as its mere appearance."

Mere appearance here might refer to mere bodily pleasure. Gratification of sexual pleasure when seeing a beautiful human body might be an example. We use rather than relish. "Rational" beauty, though, might refer to relishing the design of the coin or the design of a beautiful human body.

So, Theocles would observe we have an inclination to enjoy an object as *representation*, for use. For example, I may want to use the coin to buy stuff. But Theocles would advise us to also enjoy the coin for the sake of the *original*. That is, become aware of the design, the craftsmanship, the form. Then I'm no longer occupied by "my" interest to use it. My focus is less on "me." It's more on the "form" of the coin.

But when I do that, I'm in effect appreciating the mind that made the coin. This is crucial. The source of the coin's beauty is the effect of mind on material.

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[38] Ibid., 2.221, *Moralists*, III, ii.

But Shaftesbury doesn't stop there. When I become aware of what designed the mind that crafted the coin—Mind—I'm truly enjoying beauty for the sake of the *Original* rather than for its *Representation*.

Form underlying matter is the source of beauty, not matter. For example, when I see a woman of beauty walking down the street, I don't respond to her blood, veins, saliva, i.e., her "matter." I'm drawn to the *form* stamped on her matter.[39] The way Shaftesbury puts it, "The beautifying, not the beautified, is the really beautiful."[40] Or, to take another example, when we admire Michelangelo's *David*, it's not the marble we admire but the "design" impressed on the marble. Shaftesbury would go a step further: the ability to stamp harmony onto matter comes not from mind but from a higher place, Mind. We're really admiring Mind.

Shaftesbury's analogy of the coin reveals three kinds of beauty[41]: a) Representative Beauty (the coin itself), b) the Forming Power (the artist who formed the coin), and c) Mind (the source of the Forming Power of the artist). Likewise, Shaftesbury places all beauty into this tripartite hierarchy of forms.

b. Three Kinds of Forms

He calls the lowest forms "Dead Form." Human-made artworks (music, art, poetry) and natural forms (animals, trees, river, sky, stars) belong here. They're passive objects "which bear a fashion and are formed, whether by man or nature,

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[39] Ibid., 2.227, *Moralists*, III.ii.

[40] Ibid., 2.226, *Moralists*, III.ii.

[41] Ibid., 2.227-8, *Moralists*, III.ii.

but have no forming power"[42] themselves. In other words, they're "dead" because these forms can't make anything. Yes, spiders spin webs. But they do so from instinct rather than from looking inward toward Mind.

He calls the second order "Forms which form." Human minds belong here. He describes this second order as "forming forms… that is, which have intelligence, action and operation."[43] In other words, humans can make works of art through harmony. And we might say humans make themselves through moral choices also by turning inward and using Mind's principle of harmony as a guide.

He calls the third order "The Supreme and Sovereign Beauty." Divine Mind belongs here. Mind "forms not only such as we call mere forms but even the forms which form."[44] In other words, Mind designed minds and the "dead forms" of the natural world. Our common sense, then, is mind recognizing Mind.

c. The Three Forms are Interconnected

Now, "dead forms" aren't separate from Sovereign Beauty. Beauty and goodness are absolute, real, one—Beauty, Truth, and Goodness are forms of The Supreme. In fact, Shaftesbury says as much in *Miscellaneous Reflections*: "what is BEAUTIFUL is *harmonious* and *proportionable*; what is harmonious and proportionable, is TRUE; and what is at once both *beautiful* and *true*, is, of consequence, agreeable and GOOD."[45] That means humans don't decide what's good,

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[42] Ibid., 2.227, *Moralists*, III.ii.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Ibid., 2.228, *Moralists*, III.ii.

[45] Ibid., 3.111-2, *Miscellaneous Reflections*, III.ii.

true or beautiful because the Beautiful, True, and Good refer to the ground from which everything springs and upon which everything stands. As Shaftesbury puts it, Mind is "the principle, source, and fountain of all beauty."[46] Like Plotinus, Shaftesbury saw the entire cosmos as a single, living organism infused by "Mind,"[47] consisting of interconnected systems. "Dead forms" aren't separate from Mind, and nothing is outside of Mind.

Following Plotinus, Mind emanates as light from a dimensionless point called "The One," the center of all. As the dimensionless center of all, there is no outside vs. inside—until The One emanated Mind. The outermost edge of Mind's light is Soul. Faces look outward from Soul as individual "souls." Separation appears within time and space but when a soul turns inward, it sees the ground upon which all bodies have in common. The sensible world, then, is what is "outside," and the "outside" (the sensible realm) still belongs to The One (or non-duality).

In any event, this organism image is important to Shaftesbury for another reason: it's how he resists Hobbes and Locke.

ii. Nature as Organism Resists Hobbes and Locke's Relativism

We can see why Kant may have thought aesthetics might heal the dualism between freedom and determinism in Shaftesbury's idea of the organism. Briefly, here's Shaftesbury's idea.

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[46] Ibid.

[47] McAteer, 10.

a. Nature is Non-Mechanical and Non-Warring

From the perspective of a mind, the cosmos looks like a bunch of random, disparate bits. But from the perspective of Mind, the cosmos is a harmonious whole. Mind stamps harmony (or order) upon matter, making it "beautiful and sublime."

If we were to put that idea in Kant's terms then Mind is "free," and its stamp upon matter—the "laws" of nature that matter abide by—is "determined." But those are Kant's terms. Here's how Shaftesbury might put that idea.

Without Mind, the natural world would be "dead," a soulless machine, without purpose, without beauty, without the sublime.[48] With Mind the natural world is alive, its disparate parts ordered by number, put together for a purpose—as Shaftesbury says "there must be somewhere a last or ultimate end in man."[49] When we humans sense Mind's work within nature (as "harmony") we respond by saying it's "beautiful and sublime." In fact, we don't even have to think about it. We respond *immediately* without logic or concepts. We just sense Mind (or purpose) beneath representation, beneath appearance. The more we relish Mind's handiwork in nature and in art (in art we sense a Mind because the artist is participating in Mind), we turn more and more toward Mind—back to the original, back to reality.

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[48] Ibid.

[49] Shaftesbury, *Regimen*, p. 48 as quoted by John McAteer in "The Third Earl of Shaftesbury (1671-1713)," 11.

By the way, I just used the word “sublime.” This is another area Shaftesbury pioneered in philosophical aesthetics. He didn’t invent the term “sublime,” he borrowed it from “Longinus.”[50]

I put Longinus in quotation marks because no one knows who really wrote the Roman book *On The Sublime*. The reference manuscript is a copy (the original is lost) and the heading reads “Dionysius or Longinus.” Dionysius from Halicarnassus is unlikely the author because the style and content of his known works clash with this one.[51] Cassius Longinus (213-273 CE), a disciple of Plotinus, may have written this, but there’s some indication the work was written earlier in the first century CE, so Longinus as author is also up for debate.

Regardless, *On the Sublime* discusses a style of writing and speaking that elevates our thoughts and stirs our passions. Poet Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux (1636-1711) had translated *On the Sublime* for European audiences for the first time in 1674, and gave the concept a boost.[52] Shaftesbury’s “innovation” was to apply “the sublime” concept (originally meant for “poetics”) to nature. For example, check out this passage from *The Moralists* III.ii:

> Even the rude rocks, the mossy caverns, the irregular unwrought grottos and broken falls of waters, with all the horrid graces of the wilderness itself… will be the more engaging, and appear with a Magnificence beyond the formal Mockery of princely Gardens.[53]

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[50] Beardsley, 181.

[51] Wikipedia contributors, "Longinus (literature)," *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Longinus_(literature)&oldid=738042286, accessed November 6, 2016.

[52] Beardsley, 181-2.

[53] Shaftesbury, 2.220, *Moralists*, III.ii.

In other words, nature in its ruggedness (the sublime) can be as effective in turning us toward Mind as nature in its softness (the beautiful). Kant followed Shaftesbury's trail and thought the sublime could teach us to feel selfless pleasure as much as beauty can. Both lead us back to Mind.

b. Instead, Nature has a Harmonious Order

Rather than a mindless machine, a "mere body, a mass of modified matter,"[54] Shaftesbury saw nature as an organism with structure. That structure comes from Mind. This idea flies in the faces of Hobbes and Locke.

For if nature were merely mechanistic (without Soul and Mind), it would be useful to exploit, but not necessarily beautiful. On the other hand, when we see nature as alive like an organism (as having Mind, Soul, purpose), nature becomes beautiful—not a thing to manipulate. For example, in Part III of *The Moralists*, section ii, Shaftesbury has Theocles give this analogy:

> Imagine then, good Philocles, if being taken with the beauty of the ocean, which you see yonder at a distance, it should come into your head to seek how to command it, and, like some mighty admiral, ride master of the sea, would not the fancy be a little absurd? . . . You will own the enjoyment of this kind to be very different from that which should naturally follow from the contemplation of the ocean's beauty.[55]

When we seek to "command" nature, we enjoy it as "representational beauty," as something to be used. But when we "relish" nature, not as an object to be used (or mastered) but as an "organism" to be appreciated, we enjoy it for the "sake of the original." We might even say we find ourselves in a "harmonious" relationship

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[54] Ibid., 2.199, *Moralists*, III.i.

[55] Shaftesbury, 2.221, *Moralists*, III.ii.

with nature, too. Again, in contemplating nature's beauty, we see a connection between the aesthetic sense and the moral sense.

The organism model of nature is important for another reason. It implies nature has a moral order, i.e., systems within nature depend on each other rather than war against each other. In fact, Shaftesbury describes the cosmos as an ever-widening system of interconnectedness.

First, Shaftesbury defines what he means by system. He says, "Whatever things have order, the same have unity of design and concur in one, are parts constituent of one whole or are, in themselves, entire systems."[56] In other words, a system is an order of parts that fit together for a purpose. Parts aren't "independent"[57] in a system but have "relation to the whole."[58]

Likewise, the state of nature isn't to be in war but to be in harmony. Parts of a system must work together, or a system won't work. We can see this interconnection of parts, says Shaftesbury, in a "dissected animal, plant, flower."[59] So in nature, everywhere we see a "mutual Dependency of Things."[60] And *that* implies nature has a kind of inherent moral order.

Shaftesbury would say cells don't act like Hobbes's separate, self-sufficient billiard balls in a "war of all against all." Cells come together to form tissues. Tissues form organs. Organs form a system, for example the digestive system.

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[56] Shaftesbury, 2.161, *Moralists*, II.iv.

[57] Ibid., 1.62, *Moralists*, II.iv.

[58] Ibid., 1.163, *Moralists*, II.iv.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Ibid., 1.62, *Moralists*, II.iv.

Systems interact with other systems for a “common good” (purpose). The nervous system, muscular system, and skeletal system must work together so a person can walk down a street. Cells, then, (at least for Shaftesbury) depend on each other for a “common good.” Otherwise an organism won’t be able to function. Like Aristotle’s idea that all nature is directed to some good, Shaftesbury saw nature not as in war but in a “symbiosis” (or harmony) between different “Systems” for a purpose (or *telos*).

Second, after Shaftesbury defines what he means by a system, he observes not only is an individual organism *internally* united, but so are organisms *externally* united to each other.[61] For example, humans depend on species of plants and animals for survival just as “the spider (depends on) that of the fly.”[62] Ever-widening systems don’t stop there. Human individuals form a system called a community and a human individual can’t function without it. Next, all human communities form the human species. Every species on planet Earth fits into the ecosystem of Earth. Earth is one system of many in the larger order of the universe as a whole. And so, according to Shaftesbury, “All things in this World are *united*.”[63]

Third, after Shaftesbury shows how interconnected everything in the universe is through “harmony,” he draws out the moral implications of nature as organism.

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[61] McAteer, 10.

[62] Shaftesbury, 2.11, *Inquiry*, II.i.

[63] Ibid., 1.62, *Moralists*, II.iv.

c. Therefore, Morality and Aesthetics are Real

If I were to formulate his argument, it might look something like this. Underlying this ever-widening system of interconnectedness is harmony, not war. The reason there's order and harmony is because nature is infused by Mind's handicraft that has a higher purpose. Therefore, there's real, non-relativistic ethics and aesthetics within the natural order. For him ethics and aesthetics means to abide by the "harmony" imbued in the natural world. A subjective failure to make moral and aesthetic judgments according to this universally real value doesn't diminish its truth.[64]

iii. Common Sense Detects this Reality

What allows humans to sense Mind behind appearances? The "forming power" of our mind participates in the Forming Power of Mind. Like recognizes like. Our minds may be limited by the sensible realm, but our forming power that's like Mind's enables us to recognize Mind in its handiwork ("harmony"), even if we only see Mind's handiwork, not Mind itself. When we detect the "harmony" inherent in the natural order we can then also imitate it in our art, in our morality,[65] and in our "scientific" inquires.

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[64] McAteer, 12.

[65] Ibid.

a. Aesthetic Sense

As for the aesthetic function, Shaftesbury says we can tell the difference between a church and a "heap of sand and stones."[66] There's a "sense of order and proportion . . . imprinted on our minds"[67] and "interwoven in our souls"[68] so we know order immediately "by a plain, internal Sensation"[69]—without deliberation. This ability to detect harmony is innate in every human person. Again, the proviso is every person must learn how to use it, or we can lose the capacity.[70]

One way to develop our capacity is to relish nature and artworks. That process can draw us closer to the Mind. In the process we approach nature as an "end" rather than as a "means."

We also have the ability to make, i.e., impress harmony and ideas on stuff. But here's the proviso. Shaftesbury warns (following Aristotle) when an artist "follows Nature too close, and strictly copies Life" he is "unnatural."[71] Art can't be blind mimicry or else Plato's criticism of art would hold weight. Artists must have an "idea," "invention and design."[72] Ideas come from Mind. And so, even though

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[66] Ibid., 2.161, *Moralists*, II.iv.

[67] Ibid., 2.160, *Moralists*, II.iv.

[68] Ibid.

[69] Ibid., 2.161, *Moralists*, II.iv.

[70] McAteer, 16.

[71] Shaftesbury, 1.89, *Sensis Communis*, IV.iii.

[72] Ibid., 2.90, *Sensis Communis*, IV.iii.

art is “artificial,” with Mind, art can still teach us “the nature of mankind” better than mere factual histories.[73]

b. Moral Sense

We’re often faced with choices between “private good” and “real good.” In *An Inquiry Concerning Virtue*, Shaftesbury defines *private good* as “self-interest” and *real good* as what harmonizes with “the Good of the General System,”[74] i.e., the “common good” of a species.

Pursuing private good doesn’t make us selfish. It’s necessary to be selfish at times, to take care of the self. But when our private good becomes so “immoderate” that we detach ourselves from the system, we become selfish. The “human system” means society or even the whole species. If a person “points beyond himself” as a distinct “part” relating “to some other Being or Nature besides his own,” he will be part of the System,[75] and moral.

Common sense can help rein immoderate selfishness. It tells us what’s moral, what the common good is. Not all of us listen to this quiet voice. When we do, sometimes we do it out of self-interest, to get applause or to avoid punishment. So, Shaftesbury says we must reflect on what action common sense determines for us. If our sentiment responds with “affection” to the *greater good*, we’re motivated to do the right thing—not from *private good* alone (i.e., for a re-

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[73] Ibid., 2.91, *Sensis Communis*, IV.iii.

[74] Ibid., 2.11, *Inquiry*, 1.II.i.

[75] Ibid., 2.10, *Inquiry*, 1.II.i.

ward) but for the *real good*. In the process we become truly virtuous because we *want* to do the right thing for the sake of it being good in itself.

Also, when we turn inward we find conflict in our thinking, in our passions, in our pleasures. We can heal those antagonisms through a method Shaftesbury calls "soliloquy." In soliloquy, we divide ourselves into "two distinct *Persons*"[76] and engage in an internal dialectic between them. This helps us find a consensus, unity, harmony within. By seeking harmony within, common sense guides us in knowing ourselves, not in a Scholastic way, but *really* knowing ourselves.

c. Inquiring Sense

Shaftesbury doesn't discuss scientific inquiry as much, but he recognizes order, number, and harmony in the sensible realm. So, by examining that language which Mind has written the cosmos in, i.e., number, we can discover its laws and *how* it works. We may never know the *why*, i.e., Mind's highest aim. But we can study the natural world's systems, its systematic "mechanisms," its order, and in a Pythagorean spirit, bring order to our own souls and bring us closer to Mind.

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Again, though common sense is innate in every human, we must develop it. By doing so, we become more human and draw closer to the Original, to Reality, to The One. We turn ever more inward from attachment to Representation back to Reality. And we can avoid Locke and Hobbes's dangers of remaining

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[76] Ibid., 2.100, *Soliloquy*, I.i.

stuck in the outward world of self-interest. In Shaftesbury's view, aesthetics and moral judgments are subjective *and* objective because Mind runs throughout nature. And subjective mind is linked with Mind.

4. Kant's Takeaway

Kant seems to take three big ideas from Shaftesbury. a) There's a connection between morality and aesthetics. b) In beauty we see an ordered whole freely created by Mind yet we also see an ordered System that has a kind of determinism. c) Common sense unifies knowledge, morality, and creation. But where Shaftesbury links common sense with Mind, Kant finds another answer.

D. After Shaftesbury: Three Empiricist Camps

After Shaftesbury, British philosophers of taste divided into three camps:[77] (a) **internal-sense theories** including Shaftesbury, Francis Hutcheson (1694-1746), David Hume (1711-1776), Thomas Reid (1710-1796), William Hogarth (1697-1764); (b) **imagination theories** including Joseph Addison (1672-1719), Edmund Burke (1729-1797); c) **association theories** including David Hartley (1705-1757), Alexander Gerard (1728-1795), Archibald Alison (1757-1839), Joseph Priestly (1733-1804). Briefly here's how philosophers tried to solve Shaftesbury's problem without using Mind. Kant will build on them.

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[77] James Shelley, "18th Century British Aesthetics," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aesthetics-18th-british, accessed October 18, 2016.

1. Internal-Sense Theorists

Shaftesbury held the first "internal sense theory." As we saw, he thought judgments of beauty arise *immediately* like a "sense" organ. Also, the form underlying sensible material is what makes an object beautiful, not the sensible material itself.[78] Hutcheson takes Mind out of Shaftesbury's theory but still argues beauty depends on Mathematical theorems (forms),[79] rather than sensible matter.

2. Imagination Theorists

Imagination theorists held the opposite view. Addison founded this theory in 1712, a year after Shaftesbury's *Characteristics* came out in 1711. It's not clear whether Addison was reacting against Shaftesbury (he doesn't engage Shaftesbury), but he seems to assume him because he denies an internal-sense. Addison argues instead that the pleasure of beauty comes from the imagination.

Imagination is the faculty of representation—it represents things to us visually, in images.[80] This means beauty is dependent not on form but on sensible objects. It's the exact opposite view to Shaftesbury. Pleasure comes not from our mind but from the sensible world.[81]

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[78] Ibid., 12.

[79] Beardsley, 186-7.

[80] Ibid., 9.

[81] Ibid.

Burke expands Addison's idea to say imagination represents not just visual images to us but also sounds, tastes, smells, and feelings.[82] In either case, Addison at one point concludes "there is not perhaps any real beauty," as all creatures capable of visual representation (or imagination) may be able to feel pleasure.[83]

3. Association Theorists

Association theorists seem to have attempted to heal the dispute between internal-sense theorists and imagination theorists.[84]

Gerard advanced a version of the theory in his 1759 *Essay on Taste*. He argued judgments of beauty are pleasurable by association. That is, we go through a mental process when we judge an object of beauty. We then transfer a pleasurable (or painful) mental process to the object.[85] That means an object doesn't have the property of beauty. We just associate a pleasurable (or painful) mental process with an object. Gerard goes a step further in defining what kind of mental process gives aesthetic pleasure.

When we overcome a mental difficulty, we feel pleasure. Our mind is challenged, "puts forth its strength in order to surmount any difficulty"[86] but succeeds in surmounting that difficulty. When we do, we feel pleasure and associate it with

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[82] Ibid., 11.

[83] Ibid., 10.

[84] Ibid., 12.

[85] Ibid., 13.

[86] Alexander Gerard, pg. 3 in *Essay on Taste* (1759), as quoted by Paul Guyer in "!8th Century British Aesthetics," 13.

the object that had required us to endure that difficult mental process. The idea is, aesthetic pleasure comes from mental processes that are difficult, but not so difficult as to prevent success.[87]

Gerard thinks novel objects give us pleasure for this reason: they're unfamiliar enough to make their judgment difficult enough.[88] Sublime objects give us pleasure because their size makes conception of them just difficult enough.[89] Imitations that resemble originals make judgments of them just difficult enough. And the humorous has dissonance and inconsistency that makes conception of this just difficult enough.[90] Gerard even lists (in the essay's first pages) a scientific discovery and a philosophical theory as being objects of taste as much as a poem and a painting.[91]

So, aesthetic pleasure is neither only intellectual nor only material but a bit of both.[92] But the risk is, association theory also implies beauty might not be real, as beauty relies on a person's *particular* mental process. So, their view of beauty is also potentially relativistic.

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Kant wants to support the internal-sense theory that says there is a real, non-relativistic standard of beauty. So, he will follow Shaftesbury to argue "form"

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[87] Gerard, 3-4 as cited by Guyer on pg. 13.

[88] Gerard, 5-6 as cited by Guyer on pg. 13.

[89] Gerard, 14 as cited by Guyer on pg. 13.

[90] Gerard, 66-9 as cited by Guyer on pg. 13.

[91] Gerard, 6 as cited by Guyer on pg. 13.

[92] Guyer, 13.

underlying matter gives a thing its beauty, and that each of us is born with a common sense. But Kant doesn't rely on Shaftesbury's idea of Mind to say beauty is real and objective. He turns instead to the rationalist camp of aesthetics in Germany—especially to Baumgarten.

E. Baumgarten (Rationalist)

1. Baumgarten's Three Works

Baumgarten was born in Berlin, 10 years before Kant. He was 2 years old when Leibniz died in 1716. Baumgarten was orphaned at age 8 and actually lived in an orphanage until he followed his brother (Jacob Sigismund, who became a prominent theologian himself) to Halle at 13. In 1730 at the age of 16 he entered university.[93] And by the time he was 21 (in 1735), he coined the term "aesthetics" in his thesis, *Meditationes philosophicae de nonnullis ad poema pertinentibus* ("Philosophical meditations pertaining to some matters concerning poetry").[94]

He published his *Metaphysics* in 1739, and his *Ethics* in 1740. Interestingly, Kant used both textbooks in his own classes on metaphysics and ethics. In 1750, Baumgarten published volume 1 of *Aesthetica*, and volume 2 in 1758. Those 2 volumes had only covered a *third* of his original plan. He didn't live long enough to execute the rest. Some speculate, though, that what he published may have covered the most original part of his plan.

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[93] Paul Guyer, "18th Century German Aesthetics," Stanford Encyclopedia of Aesthetics, http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aesthetics-18th-german/, accessed October 18, 2016, 12.

[94] Ibid.

2. Baumgarten's Idea: Studying Sense Perception

Here's the idea Kant used of Baumgarten's. We can see Baumgarten's idea develop in three phases.

First, in his 1735 thesis, Baumgarten argued poetry had a different truth than logical truth—he thought "poetic" kinds of truths needed a field of inquiry. Second, in his 1739 *Metaphysics*, Baumgarten argued sense perception *is* a cognition, independent from but parallel to logical cognition. Third, in his 1750 *Aesthetica*, Baumgarten argued beauty perfects our (internal) senses, and doesn't depend on the content of (external) representations.

It's this idea of a sensing, feeling cognitive power (independent from logical cognition) that Kant will use to argue beauty is universal. Let me dig into each of those phases a little deeper, because it will help us see where Kant got his answer to Shaftesbury's problem.

3. Working Within Leibniz and Wolff's Framework

Baumgarten had a connection with Leibniz through Wolff. Unlike Shaftesbury, Baumgarten didn't oppose his "teacher" (in this case Leibniz through Wolff) but developed his ideas within Leibniz's philosophy of monads—Wolff had systemized Leibniz's ideas.[95] In fact, a major theme in Wolff's philosophy was Leibniz's "law of non-contradiction."[96]

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[95] Thomas Mautner, *Dictionary of Philosophy*, second edition (London: Penguin Group, 2005), 659.

[96] New World Encyclopedia contributors, "Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten," *New World Encyclopedia*, http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/p/index.php?title=Alexander_Gottlieb_Baumgarten&oldid=994347, accessed November 9, 2016.

Wolff thought all truths are based on the premise that a proposition can't be both A and not A.[97] He proceeded to reduce as many things to this consistency vs. inconsistency principle as possible. When Wolff came to the ideas we get from sensation, he found them obscure, because they're neither clear nor distinct. Only ideas from logical refinement (such as from the law of non-contradiction) can give us clear content. Following Descartes then, Wolff thought logic can arrive at "clear and distinct" ideas better than our senses. This is one of the core ideas of rationalism: the process of logical philosophy opposes sense perception. British empiricists, on the other hand, thought ideas arise originally from sense perception.

4. Three Phases of Baumgarten's Idea

i. 1735: The Truths of Poetry

Baumgarten assumed Wolff's rationalism, but there was a question about sense perception that bothered him: how did the "truths" of poetry fit into the rationalist quest for "clear and distinct" ideas?

Now, we often repeat Descartes's phrase "clear and distinct" as a single idiom, but that's not how Descartes saw it. In *Principles of Philosophy*, he defined "clear" as "present and apparent," and he defined distinct as "precise."[98]

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[97] Ibid.

[98] René Descartes, *Principles of Philosophy*, trans. John Veitch (Produced by Steve Harris, Charles Franks and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team) http://www.fullbooks.com/The-Principles-of-Philosophy1.html, originally published in 1644, Part I, xlv-xlvi.

So, to take an example, a sharp pain can be clear but not distinct as long as we don't know yet where the source of the pain is.[99] Leibniz expanded on Descartes's definition: we can have "clear vs. obscure" ideas and "distinct vs. confused" ideas.[100] In obscure ideas, the meaning is hazy, vague, hidden, unclear. In confused ideas, ideas aren't distinct from each other. For example, if I can't explain why I dislike a painting, I may have a clear idea that I dislike it, but my reasons why I think so may not be distinct yet.[101] It's in that example from *Discourse on Metaphysics* where Leibniz coined the phrase "je ne sais quoi" ("I know not what"). So, the context in which he coined that phrase was a discussion about confused ideas: when a person is unable to explain why he dislikes a painting. And the phrase became familiar in later debates about taste.[102] In "I know not what," those ideas aren't distinct, but confused and jumbled.

So, the rationalists saw sense perception as confused, because it gives us non-distinct ideas. As Leibniz would put it, the roar of the sea is a mass of little sounds, some below the threshold of hearing. In addition, we might say the sea also has a mass of colors and smells.[103] Those ideas aren't distinct, but confused. Sense perception, then, is a lower form of knowledge because by its na-

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[99] Ibid.

[100] Beardsley, 157-8.

[101] Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Discourse on Metaphysics*, xxiv (1684) as quoted by Beardsley, p. 158 in note 6.

[102] Beardsley, 158.

[103] Ibid.

ture it's confused. Thankfully, logic allows us to distinguish these confused ideas from sense perception so that we can gain knowledge about an object.[104]

Baumgarten's point in his thesis was this. Artworks make ideas clear, but in a different way than the methods a mathematician gains clarity. For example, two poems might convey a message about falling in love. Yet one poem gets that idea across more *clearly* (and forcefully) than the other. The poet who's able to get his idea across clearly uses a different set of rules than the mathematician who employs logical analysis. Baumgarten calls the kind of clarity logical analysis gets to as "intensive clarity." The kind of clarity great poetic writing gets to, on the other hand, is "extensive clarity."[105] So, good poetry is clear (not obscure) and bad poetry is obscure.

But Baumgarten agrees with Leibniz that poetry gives us confused (not distinct) ideas. The reason is, poetry relies on sensation. Sensation perception always has a mass of undistinguished ideas. That's exactly why Baumgarten called poetry's clarity "*extensive*." "Extensive" means conveying emotions, ideas, sensations, images. But we *want* this in poetry. We don't want to separate out those ideas into neat, logical boxes. Otherwise, a poem would cease to be poetry. It would be logical discourse.[106]

It's in this very context Baumgarten introduces the word "aesthetics" for the first time. Here's the sentence in which he does so:

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[104] Ibid.

[105] New World Encyclopedia.

[106] Guyer, 13.

> The Greek philosophers and the Church fathers have always carefully distinguished between the aistheta and the noeta . . . What can be cognized through the higher faculty (of the mind are) the objects of logic, the aistheta are the subject of the epitome aisthetike or AESTHETICS (i.e., the science of sense perception). (*Meditationes*, CXVI, p. 86)[107]

Once again, his idea is through sense perception (aesthetics), poetry conveys truth through "extensive clarity." So, Baumgarten turns what would be a vice for science (confused ideas), into a virtue for poetry.

This is an idea barely hinted at by Wolff.[108] But despite its originality, the idea doesn't challenge Wolff's framework but fits within it.

ii. 1739: Aesthetic Judgment is an Analogue of Reason

Four years after his thesis, Baumgarten began to depart from Wolff in a subtle way. In his chapter titled "Empirical Psychology" of his 1739 *Metaphysics*, Baumgarten defines "judgment." His definition: judgment decides between perfection or imperfection. He then divides judgment into two branches: "practical" judgment and "theoretical" judgment.

Practical judgment is of "things foreseen." Theoretical judgment concerns everything else.

Next, he further divides theoretical judgment into two: that which is "distinct" (or logical) and that which is "sensible" (and confused). He calls sensible judgment "aesthetic judgment." In other words, the ability to decipher perfection from imperfection through the senses (not the intellect) is aesthetic judgment.

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[107] As quoted in Guyer, 13.

[108] Guyer, 13.

Finally, he divides aesthetic judgment into two: “intuitive” and “symbolic.” Intuitive aesthetic judgements judge sensible properties directly. Symbolic aesthetic judgments judge sensible properties indirectly.

He then deduces a definition of beauty. Beauty is a judgment of perfection perceived by the senses, not the intellect.[109]

But here’s his real departure from Wolff.

He calls the aesthetic judgment *analogon rationis*, “the analogue of reason.” This is something Wolff wouldn’t have ever argued. For Wolff, sensory perception was lower than reason. But Baumgarten thought the broad range of our dealings with sensory representations is *not* inferior to reason and logical analysis. It’s something *parallel* to reason. More, the complex of powers within aesthetic judgment such as when we see a sensible representation of perfection produces pleasure in us.[110]

We’re a step away from Kant’s concept of “free play” of our mental powers. And I’m not sure if Kant would have gotten to this idea without this shoulder called “Baumgarten’s idea of *analogon rationis*” to stand on.

iii. 1750: Beauty is Cognition without Content

In his last work, *Aesthetica*, Baumgarten begins to move even further away from Wolff. He dug deeper into this idea that sensory perception is inde-

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[109] Ibid., 14.

[110] Ibid., 14-5.

pendent of reason and possibly its “parallel.” Baumgarten begins that book with his famous definition of aesthetics as “the science of sensible cognition.”[111]

What’s fascinating about the original definition of aesthetics is Baumgarten probably didn’t intend this field to be only the study of beauty and art. He seems to have envisioned aesthetics to be broader—to study sensible cognition in general. But again in this work, he departs from Wolff’s philosophy even more, specifically from Wolff’s formulation of beauty.

Wolff thought beauty was the sensitive cognition of perfection. Baumgarten didn’t necessarily disagree, but he added to it. Baumgarten thought beauty *perfects* our sensitive cognition. Again, the departure is subtle.

Wolff’s formulation seems to be that beauty lies in the external representation of a sensible object. Here Baumgarten seems to internalize the experience of beauty. Beauty now is a pleasure we feel *in* our mental powers.[112]

In other words, the form and content of a sensible object can please our aesthetic judgment. But there’s a problem. The content can also please our theoretical and practical judgments, too. For example, moral content in a novel can delight *both* our sensible cognition *and* appeal to our practical judgment. So here’s Baumgarten’s radical idea. Aesthetic judgment can respond to an object without content.

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[111] Ibid., 15.

[112] Ibid., 16.

That idea will be critical for Kant's solution to Shaftesbury's problem of how judgments of beauty can be both subjective (pleasurable) and objective (real, universal, non-relative).

5. Kant's Takeaway

Kant takes Shaftesbury's idea of an innate aesthetic sense. Like British philosophers after Shaftesbury, Kant asks, how can a subjective judgment of beauty be objective? Rather than argue Mind is what makes an object beautiful, Kant uses Baumgarten's idea of an *analogon rationis*. For Kant, the process of judging a beautiful object, then, is similar to arriving at logical truth. The difference is, in an aesthetic judgment, we gain no knowledge.

But why take up Shaftesbury's question about common sense at all? Why attempt to answer this *British* question of subjective-yet-objective beauty?

Kant faced a gulf in his philosophy after he completed his first two critiques, and he wanted to bridge it. He may have thought Shaftesbury's ideas about beauty as a "bounded whole" might be a way out. Perhaps Shaftesbury's "aesthetic sense" showed a way to awaken the moral law within and also relish the starry skies above.

CHAPTER 2.

KANT'S PROBLEM AFTER THE FIRST TWO CRITIQUES

In this chapter, let's discuss the abyss that opened in Kant's philosophy after he completed his first two critiques.

His first critique represented knowledge and nature, his second critique represented ethics and free will. But now the two issues began to seem irreconcilable. Was there a way to bring the two together, to bridge nature and free will?

To get more specific, in the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant showed that we can know the laws of nature and its laws through the a priori principles of "understanding." In the *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant showed that we can find the moral law in the Subject through the a priori principles of "reason." But now one legislation ruled nature through understanding, and another legislation ruled freedom (the "inner" world) through reason. Understanding (the faculty for knowledge) and reason (the faculty for ethics) were cut off from each other, unable to interact. Kant wanted to see if he could bridge the gulf between understanding and reason so they can reciprocally influence each other.

Let me put that another way.

As long as we stick to experience, there's no proof of freedom. We see cause and effect. If a door opens, we explain it by saying something caused it to open. There's no free will there. Kant agreed that the world is determined by the mechanical laws of nature. But if that were the full story, we would never have to take responsibility for our actions. We could blame our circumstances or our

"genes." We wouldn't have to bother striving to do the right thing because nature (or even nurture) "made me do it." Kant needed a way to preserve the possibility that we're also free enough to abide by the moral law.

He observed that we have a power in our minds to see the whole. We can never actually see the whole because it's beyond our experience. But that power, which he called "reason," can come up with "ideas" about the whole like freedom. Kant argued we can believe in the idea of freedom (though there's no proof of it) because it's beyond the limitations of science to claim as fact it exists or doesn't. Moreover, the idea also allows us to have faith that there's a meaning to life, it allows us to act morally, and it allows us to take responsibility for our actions.

But now we have a dualism in our thinking. We have a "belief" on one hand about freedom and the "facts" about determinism on the other. Is there a way to bridge these two ways of thinking together? That is, is there any way to give "belief" in freedom a concrete grounding? On the other side, is there a way to show a way out of the deadening kind of thinking that only sees a world of facts and determined natural laws?

There's a second dualism Kant seems to want to bridge. In addition to a dualism in our thinking, there was also a dualism in the way Kant talked about objects "out there" in the world. Kant said objects appear to us in the determined realm of experience as "phenomena." Phenomena "appear" to us within time and space. But Kant also spoke about an object being a thing-in-itself as "noumena." A noumenon doesn't exist within time and space, so it can never be known, but is somehow the source of a phenomenon. If that's the case, why even posit a thing-

in-itself? Is there any proof that an object is determined as phenomenon but also is free as noumenon? Or is this “thing-in-itself” just an abstract idea without any grounding?

So, Kant’s aim in the third critique is to bridge this dualism in our thinking and the dual nature of objects “out there” in the world. In one light, Kant’s task may be to show there exists a concrete, sensible hint that freedom and the “thing-in-itself” might be real. If he can do that, he would also be able to unify nature and freedom as well as the two great branches of philosophy—theory (or knowledge) and practice (ethics) together. Kant thinks he has that possible bridge in our experience of beauty.

Now, the way Kant spoke about judgment before *The Critique of Judgment* (1790) wasn’t as a fundamental faculty. In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant used the word “judgment” to mean the cognitive action that subsumes particulars under general concepts. But without a principle of its own, judgment would remain a “worker bee” for understanding and reason. By the time he got to his third critique, judgment doesn’t merely work for understanding and reason anymore. Judgment became independent. How? Fortunately Kant discovered an a priori principle for judgment to be independent: purposiveness. Purposiveness is like the legislation that rules nature and is like the legislation that rules freedom.

Before we see how Kant unified philosophy using judgment’s a priori principle of purposiveness, we need to define understanding and reason first. Kant’s *Critique of Judgment* won’t make sense otherwise.

CHAPTER 3.

KANT'S THREE FACULTIES

Kant's *Critique of Judgment* may have been a surprise even to Kant—it doesn't appear to have been part of his original plan.[113] Instead, the third critique may have emerged after completing his first two critiques. He faced a problem: how to unify his critical philosophy into a single discipline? Consequently, it's difficult to understand *The Critique of Judgment* without having a background of Kant's philosophy first. That's the task of this chapter, to establish that background.

Again, Kant relies on an understanding of certain terms. I'll sketch out three crucial terms: understanding, reason, and judgment. According to Kant, these are the three faculties or "powers" of the mind. At the end of this chapter, I'll sketch out how Kant organized *The Critique of Judgment*.

I should also say something about the translation I'll be using here at the outset. Several translations are available of the *Critique of Judgment*. The one we'll use in chapters 3-5 (where we delve into that critique) is the James Creed Meredith translation. And I'll indicate passages in that text by section number rather than page number to facilitate the use of the variety of those translations.

Here's an overview of the difference between Kant's three fundamental faculties:

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[113] Douglas Burnham, "Kant's Aesthetics," *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, http://www.iep.utm.edu/kantaest (last modified June 30, 2005).

Table 3.1. Kant's Three Faculties

Faculties	Tools	*A priori* principles	Application
Understanding	Cognition	Conformity to law (or Kant's 12 categories)	Nature
Judgment	Feeling of pleasure and displeasure	Purposiveness	Art
Reason	Desire (or will)	Final Purpose (or The Ultimate Good)	Freedom

Let's fill in the details.[114]

A. Understanding

Understanding is what allows us to know nature. It's split into two capacities but bound together by imagination. The first capacity is receptive, the second conceptual. Kant calls the receptive capacity "sensibility," and the conceptual capacity "understanding."

1. Sensibility (receptive capacity)

As the receptive capacity, sensibility receives data from the external world, and does so in terms of time and space. Kant's term for external data is "intuition."

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[114] I put "art" under reflective judgment's application because that's the approach it takes. In other words, reflective judgment looks at nature (and obviously art) as an artwork. Also, judgment in its reflective function (not its logical function) becomes independent from reason and understanding thanks to the feeling of "disinterested pleasure" and the a priori principle of "purposiveness." More on what those terms mean in the next chapter.

A translator of Kant named Paul Carus made the point in his essay "Kant's Philosophy" that Kant doesn't mean "intuition" in the mystical way the word can sometimes mean. Kant's word is actually *Anschauung*, and like the Latin *intuitio*, the term signifies the act of *looking at* an object.[115] But Kant extends that meaning to sense-perception and argues it contains the *a priori* forms of time and space. So, for example, sensibility receives a "representation" of a tree without a label or concept. An intuition, still without a label or concept, sees the tree within time and space.

As the conceptual capacity, understanding subsumes particular intuitions under universal concepts. This action of subsumption is actually the work of judgment, but the universal concepts belong to understanding. Concepts are what allow us to "understand" data (or intuitions). In other words, without concepts we don't understand the intuitions that hit our senses.

At the same time, without intuitions we can't know either. Said another way, without intuitions our concepts would be empty, abstract, devoid of content. So we need both universals and particulars in order to understand anything. Kant's famous quote about this says there must be a balance between universals and particulars: "Concepts without intuitions are empty; intuitions without concepts are blind… only from their union can cognition arise."

In a sense, then, Kant's sensibility is like the basis of knowledge for empiricist philosophers who had argued knowledge can only come from experience, not from innate ideas. Likewise, understanding is like the source of knowledge for

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[115] Paul Carus, "Kant's Philosophy" in Prolegomena by Immanuel Kant (Chicago: Open Court Classics, 1997), 184.

rationalist philosophers who had argued innate ideas lead to true knowledge. Kant says both are right: we need both experience and *a priori* concepts to understand.

Another way of thinking about understanding's conceptual capacity is to see it as a pattern-seer. In other words, our concepts see patterns (or "universals") in "particulars." So if sensibility provides intuitions of Golden Retrievers, Poodles, German Shepherds, then understanding identifies the pattern (or abstract universal) in the particulars as "dog."

2. Understanding (conceptual capacity)

Now, our concepts can be both *a priori* or *a posteriori*. Again, this seems to be a synthesis of empiricist philosophy and rationalist philosophy. Empiricists claimed we get our concepts only after or "posterior" to experience, i.e., after having intuitions. The rationalists claimed true knowledge is embedded in our soul before or "prior" to experience. Kant argues we have some concepts ready-made within us *a priori*, but much of our knowledge comes from experience. We need both to understand.

An extreme (and outright defective) example of a concept learned *a posteriori* may be: "all men with blonde hair and blue eyes are superior to other humans." A Nazi would apply this *learned* concept to an "intuition" of persons. So, if he comes across a brunette lady with dark-eyes, he'd judge her inferior to him and then treat her with inhumanity. One benefit of philosophy is that it looks criti-

cally at *a posteriori* concepts (learned assumptions we take for granted as true) that go on to affect our feelings and behavior.

The focus for Kant in *Critique of Pure Reason* is *a priori* concepts, though. The term *a priori* comes from rationalist philosopher Leibniz. In his "principle of identity," he divided all propositions into two types: analytic propositions and synthetic propositions. The table below defines the difference between them:

Table 3.2. Leibniz's *Analytic* vs. *Synthetic* Propositions

ANALYTIC	SYNTHETIC
1. True by definition	1. True by facts
2. Necessarily true	2. Conditionally true based on facts
3. A priori, known before experience	3. A posteriori, known after experience

So, for example, these would be examples of analytic propositions:

1. All bachelors are men.
2. 2 + 3 = 5
3. Either A or not-A

And these would be examples of synthetic propositions:

1. All bachelors are lonely.
2. There are two oranges on the table, and three apples in the fridge.
3. I'm going to complete my thesis.

We know the statement "all bachelors are men" is true necessarily *a priori* just by its definition. Why? Because the meaning of the word "bachelor" is to be "unmarried." That statement is true without having to check with every bachelor to see if he's unmarried. If he's a bachelor, he's unmarried. But saying "all bachelors are lonely," I do have to go out into the world to see if that's really true or not.

Leibniz made the surprising move in saying *all* synthetic propositions are analytic—when we see them from God's point-of-view, outside of time. But to us, limited by time, those truths appear contingent. In other words, following Leibniz's "principle of sufficient reason," if anything exists the way it is, there's a necessary reason why. His last principle, the "principle of internal harmony," famously says if God is rational and good then God created the best possible of worlds.

Then Hume entered the scene, the most devastating empiricist philosopher. He revived Leibniz's analytic-synthetic distinction, but used it against rationalist philosophy. Hume called analytic statements "relation of ideas" and synthetic statements "matters of fact." Now, it may seem surprising that an empiricist like Hume admitted there were such things as *a priori* truths—it sounds at first like Hume admits not all knowledge comes from experience. But Hume makes a ruinous observation about analytic statements. They're *tautological*. Redundant. Trivial. They give no new knowledge.

But it gets worse.

According to Hume there truly are only two categories of knowledge: **relations of ideas** (analytic *a priori* statements that are tautological and give no new knowledge), **matters of fact** (synthetic *a posteriori* statements from experience that do give new knowledge). And there's **nonsense**. Hume shows "truths" we normally take for granted—cause-and-effect, time-and-space, the self, gravity, inductive reasoning, God—are actually nonsense. For example, we can point to a clock, but we can't point to time itself, or cause itself or gravity itself.

When Kant read Hume's powerful argument in *An Inquiry Concerning the Human Understanding*, he famously said it "awakened him from his dogmatic slumber." Kant realized no progress in philosophy or science could be made unless Hume's arguments were refuted. Kant refutes Hume by inventing a new category of knowledge.

Kant accepted that analytic *a priori* statements are tautological and give no new knowledge. And he accepted that much of our knowledge is synthetic *a posteriori*. But Kant asked whether there could be such a thing as synthetic *a priori* propositions? Here's another graph to illustrate what Kant tried to do:

Table 3.3. Kant's Analytic vs. Synthetic Propositions

	ANALYTIC (gives no knowledge)	**SYNTHETIC (gives knowledge)**
a priori **(before experience)**	ANALYTIC *a priori* (gives no knowledge; true before experience) HUME'S "RELATION OF IDEAS"	SYNTHETIC *a priori* (gives knowledge; true before experience) KANT'S NEW CATEGORY
a posteriori **(after experience)**	ANALYTIC *a posteriori* (contradiction)	SYNTHETIC *a posteriori* (gives knowledge; true from experience) HUME'S "MATTERS OF FACT"

That is, could there be such a category of knowledge that gives us new knowledge but which isn't dependent on experience? Could there be synthetic *a priori* knowledge? Analytic *a posteriori* propositions make no sense because analytic propositions give no new knowledge as it simply breaks down an (abstract)

definition. But *a posteriori* gives new knowledge because it means it's based in (concrete) experience. Those two together are contradictory. But can there be synthetic *a priori* knowledge? Synthetic *a priori* not in Descartes's way where a baby is born with the idea of God. Kant rejects that as not grounded in evidence. But synthetic *a priori* in some other way?

For example, Kant shows the proposition "7 + 5 = 12" is not an analytical statement. Analyzing the concept "12" doesn't automatically yield "7 + 5." "12" could also be broken down as "6 + 6," "8 + 4" and so on. That's actually a synthetic statement, but it's also true *a priori*. Likewise, the statement "a straight line is the shortest path between two points" is a synthetic statement. Analyzing a "straight line" doesn't yield that statement. But visualization and experience can aid us in discovering it. So, it's a synthetic statement that gives us new knowledge *and* it's also true *a priori*, independent of experience.

Kant goes on to show that time-and-space and cause-and-effect fall under the synthetic *a priori* category, too. In other words, time-and-space and cause-and-effect aren't features of external experience but features of the structure of the mind. In what Kant calls a "Copernican revolution," Kant argues cognition of the world isn't passive. It's active. That is, the mind isn't like a soft piece of wax that gets impressed by the external world. The mind actively organizes *a posteriori* experience, experience that's objective. So, just as Copernicus replaced the earth with the sun as the center, "synthetic *a priori*" concepts replaces a passive mind for an active mind, i.e., for example, causality isn't "out there" but a catego-

ry of the mind. Kant's notion that our minds are active changed philosophy forever.

It's an astonishing claim. Time-and-space, cause-and-effect exist not *a posteriori* "out there" but *a priori* in our minds. It's these *a priori* "concepts" that help us to know anything at all. Without these *a priori* concepts, we would have no way of organizing data from nature. So, the reason Hume couldn't point to time or causality is the same reason why an eye can't "see" itself—they're parts of our "eyes."

Now, time and space belong to sensibility, our receptive capacity. More specifically, time and space are *a priori* forms of intuition. Sensibility, on the other hand, is the capacity for receiving intuitions,[116] and doesn't contain time and space.[117] The concepts of quantity, quality, relation, and modality belong to understanding, our conceptual capacity. All these concepts together make it possible for us to understand anything. They're "irremovable goggles" that filter our intuitions. That means anything that exists outside time and space (or outside quantity, quality, relation, and modality) can't be known in the way we can know, say, a tree. This includes God, freedom, the soul. A tree-in-itself must exist because it causes the objective appearance of a tree. But because minds are limited by *a priori* concepts like causality (as well as the forms of intuition, like time and space), we can never see the tree-in-itself.

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[116] Kant, Immanuel, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. J. M. D. Meiklejohn, (New York: Prometheus Books, 1990, 21, Part First: Transcendental Aesthetic, Introductory.

[117] Kant, Immanuel, *Prolegomena To Any Future Metaphysics That Can Qualify as a Science*, trans.Paul Carus, (Chicago: Open Court Classics, 1997), 65, section 24.

So, Kant giveth and Kant taketh away. He protects science and common sense from Hume's attacks. But he also takes away, too. By distinguishing between appearances and things-in-themselves where appearance can be known, but things-in-themselves can never be known (as they lie outside the bounds of experience), Kant took away metaphysics. At the end of *Critique of Pure Reason* in his "Dialectic of Pure Reason," Kant has a trick up his sleeve, though. We'll get to that when we look at reason.

So much for sensibility and understanding. The bridge that connects these two together is imagination.

3. Imagination (bridge)

This is surprising because, again, Kant defined judgment as subsuming particulars under concepts. Judgment would seem the perfect candidate to act as the bridge between sensibility and understanding. Problem is, judgment deals more with concepts than with sensibility. Judgment subsumes representations of the external world under concepts, but deals with more conceptual representations. Imagination, on the other hand, deals with the senses and concrete intuitions more directly, yet has a conceptual characteristic, too.

Another way of saying this is, imagination can mediate and link sensibility and understanding because it has characteristics of both sensibility and understanding. Imagination is like sensibility because imagination gathers and unifies *a posteriori* intuitions together. Imagination is like understanding because it's grounded in "apperception."

"Apperception" is our pure, original, unchangeable consciousness. It's the awareness that I'm aware; the *I think* that accompanies every judgment.[118] It precedes all experience, and its unity is both the *a priori* ground of all understanding's concepts as well as the ground of imagination. Apperception (or consciousness) is always there. It sees the manifold of intuitions. As apperception holds together experiences together as one, it allows imagination to synthesize intuitions and give them to our concepts. So, apperception is the original instigator of both imagination and our concepts.

One way of thinking about Kant's version of the imagination is as a synthesizer.[119] Imagination synthesizes intuitions together, then brings them to empty concepts. Something like myth, imagination has no direct understanding of intuitions. Or, like a dream, imagination is a blind play of representations. Without concepts, imagination is blind. It's a "precritical" stage of knowledge.

4. Sensibility, imagination, and understanding together

But here's what understanding, sensibility, and imagination look like together: We receive intuitions through the receptive capacity of sensibility in terms of time and space. Imagination then unifies these intuitions together and gives the sum of them (the intuitions) to the understanding. Understanding as judgment subsumes these particulars under universals. We then come to know and understand.

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[118] Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, 77, Section II of Chapter II in Book I of the First Division.

[119] Ibid., 60, Section III of Chapter I in Book I of the First Division.

Now, what happens when our mind begins to subsume all the concepts of the understanding as a unified whole? We step outside the realm of understanding, and into the realm of reason, i.e., we leave the realm of science and we enter the realm of metaphysics and ethics.

B. Reason

Reason "transcends" knowledge. If understanding subsumes particulars under universals (via judgment), then reason subsumes those universals under even more unifying universals (also via judgment). Reason moves us beyond the particular and the contingent to touch what's absolute, universal, unconditioned. Reason is at once like a bird seeking the forest from the trees, and like an inquisitor seeking to peek behind the veil of appearances. So, Kant isn't using word "reason" in the usual sense of "logic" or "rationality." His reason is more like Plato's Nous (usually translated from Greek as "reason") that lifts us up towards the realm of Ideas. Reason has two employments: metaphysical (or "pure reason") and ethical (or "pure practical reason").

1. Pure reason (metaphysics)

In terms of metaphysics (i.e., "pure reason"), reason reaches for higher and higher generalities to explain why things are the way they are. It wants to see all nature as a unified whole, to unify all knowledge, to move beyond the particular, conditioned realm towards the universal and unconditioned. In a way, it wants to know *everything*. It's also that part of us that observes the "me." That is,

whenever we become aware of our thoughts and ask, “who is it that’s thinking?” this may be reason at work.

Here’s an example of how reason works: through understanding I see the cause of me was my parents. I see the cause of my parents were their parents. Reason takes over and keeps tracing these causes back further and further until it asks, “well what’s the First Cause of everything?” So, it moves beyond experience *in* nature towards stepping *outside* nature to see it all as an organized whole. That’s exactly why reason posits ”ideas” such as God, immortality, freedom. Understanding has “concepts,” reason has “ideas.” Kant uses the term “ideas” because these can’t have intuitions as reason aims beyond appearances. In any event, reason seeks rest from the regression of conditions, to something unconditioned, completing the series.

But the tragedy is, reason can never know everything—though it yearns for knowledge of the totality of things. Why can’t we know everything? Because we can’t have the sensation of totality. As we saw with understanding, one of the conditions to understand something is having intuitions, then applying *a priori* concepts to them. The sensation of totality transcends our concepts of time and space, so we can’t understand it. Another way of saying this is, God, freedom, immortality are concepts but without intuitions, without content. So, they’re empty.

Another reason we can’t know everything: when reason tries to know what can’t be known, it generates a contradiction. And another contradiction. And another contradiction—which all mean nothing. In other words, rather than peter out, reason keeps doing intellectual gymnastics to come up with more absurd

hypotheses.[120] These propositions that lack content lead to their logical opposite, until it crashes and burns, accomplishing nothing. This has been true in the history of philosophy. Tempted by reason to know what can't be known, philosophers construct vast metaphysical castles that turn out to be clouds. Kant called these intellectual vacuities (which generate contradictions) "dialectics"—a throwback to the way ancient Greek philosophers argued back and forth.

More importantly, Kant thought it's a great thing reason can't know everything or God. Knowing God as if an object reduces God to a corpse that gets dissected in biology class. To presume omniscience is to presume superiority over God. This threatens the foundation of morals. The moral law is antithetical to "separating out" the self as if an overlord. Even "God" must abide by the moral law—or as Kant seems to hint at the end of *Critique of Judgment*, perhaps God and the moral law are the same.

So the "tragedy" is, each of us is driven to know things-in-themselves, but we're barred from this realm. We're like the donkey who has a stick tied to his back with a delicious carrot dangling at its end in front of our eyes. We forever chase after the carrot thinking it's just within reach, but never is. It's sad.

The lovely part of this insight is this, though. Yes, we human beings can't help positing metaphysical ideas, as if we're hardwired to believe in things that

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[120] One example Kant gives is in the first of his four antinomies found in his first critique. If we say time and space has a beginning we still want to know what happened before time and space (as if what happened before time and space happened in time and space). On the other hand, if we think of time and space as infinite (with no beginning) this still doesn't work. We see space and time as an infinite series of events in finite time and finite space. The point is, when we apply our experience of time and space to what's not in time and space we generate contradictions.

have no basis in reality. But there's good news. I'll break the good news down into three parts.

First, the drive of reason pushes us to know more and more and more. That's great for inquiry and science. Kant says we just must take care to recognize we can never get to the end. We also must avoid believing the ideas we posit are fact. That way we can avoid falling into a ditch. That is, we can dream up strategies to get to the end, but we must remember that an air-breathing jet can't leave the atmosphere.[121]

Second, it's important to assume "transcendental" concepts like "the will is free," "the soul is immortal," and "God is real." Again, as long as we're aware they're assumptions, not fact. Kant says these are actually matters of faith. But why are these assumptions so important? They give reason rest. They also provide us with a sense of purpose to life. These assumptions give life meaning. In that way they're "practical postulates." Otherwise, why get out of bed in the morning? If freedom is not possible, the moral law (and progress) is an illusion.

This second point is such an important point, it merits us pausing for a second to dwell on it.

The scientific backdrop that Kant was writing against was Newtonian physics (before relativity and quantum mechanics challenged it). The accepted idea in the 18th century following Newtonian science was nature obeyed natural laws. (By the way, Newton's "natural laws" still work in everyday experience—it's

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[121] I got that wonderful illustration from Lawrence Cahoone, "Kant's Copernican Revolution" in *The Modern Intellectual Tradition: From Descartes to Derrida*, (Chantilly: The Great Courses, 2010).

just at distances of light-years or when we peer deep into subatomic levels that Newton's "common sense" science no longer works.) But one danger of Newton's mechanistic science was the possibility of reducing morality and free will to matter. In fact, scientists even in our century have tried reducing the human mind to neurochemistry. But Kant's distinction between appearance and thing-in-itself prevents this.

That is, yes reason can never know things-in-themselves, but neither can understanding reduce things-in-themselves to appearance. In other words, science can never make scientific claims about free will or the purpose of life. Neither can it disprove God, the immortal soul, or freedom. The reason is, science would now be entering the realm of things-in-themselves, beyond the categories of understanding.

So, at first Kant seemed to have shut-up reason and metaphysics. But he also limits understanding (and science), too. That means we're free to believe in free will or God, especially when it gives our lives meaning. But Kant thinks we also need to assume freedom is possible, even though we can't explain how it's possible. And science can't take these assumptions away. Said another way, science can never definitively disprove the supersensible because it lies outside nature, outside the realm of science. This leads into the third reason these assumptions are important.

Third, rational assumptions like freedom make ethics possible. If everything were determined, moral choice and moral responsibility would vanish. If there were no freedom, I would become a victim of fate and I could blame my

"choices" on circumstance. The preservation of freedom and ethics isn't just great news, it's fantastic news. It's through ethics reason can finally touch the super-sensible realm. And that's exactly why reason in its practical capacity (ethics) is more important than reason in its pure capacity (metaphysics).

2. Practical reason (ethics)

Reason's second employment as practical reason (i.e., ethics) is more important because we can actually reach the supersensible. Again, we don't reach it through metaphysical knowledge but through ethical practice. Through ethics we become free in the same way the supersensible realm is free. But practice of what? Applying the moral law.

The moral law isn't scientific law. In fact, most of the time in the realm of "decision-making" we follow what Kant calls "hypothetical imperatives," which science can discover. "Hypothetical imperatives" derive from conditions, from "if, then." For example, if I feel hungry, I'll get something to eat. If I want money, I'll play the stock market. If I don't want to get yelled at, I'll lie. Understanding and science can easily discover hypothetical imperatives through experience. Only problem is, hypothetical imperatives are driven by self-interest, inclination, desires. How moral is making decisions based on "hypothetical" consequences?

Enter reason. Reason can find the single, universal, *a priori* moral law that's true before experience, that's true after experience forever and ever. It sums up all morality and must be applied anywhere, anytime. That is, this moral law is independent of self-interest, inclination, desire, "if, then" conditions. That's

why Kant's famous term for the moral law was the "categorical imperative." It must be followed no matter what, irregardless of consequences. But by practicing the application of the moral law even in our most mundane choices—even if our inclinations don't want to—we lessen our slavery to self-interest and become freer.

In the second formulation of the categorical imperative Kant says, "act so as to treat rational beings as ends in themselves, never solely as means." Personally, to my ears, this sounds like empathy, if empathy is "to put one's 'thing-in-itself self' in someone else's 'thing-in-itself place'—to see through their eyes and to see we're things-in-themselves in common." So, if I feel hatred for a Russian solider who was part of Communist Russia, empathy would stop me. Empathy or the categorical imperative would have me pause to think, "If I were in his shoes in his country, I would probably be doing the same thing. Understanding may categorize him as 'enemy.' But if I use reason to look into his eyes, wouldn't I see myself? Wouldn't I hate myself?"

Where compassion may be "feeling with" another's feelings (and it's not necessary to put myself in their place), empathy takes *thought*. Etymologically empathy in Greek and compassion in Latin essentially mean the same thing: "feeling with." Still, we seem to use the terms in different ways. When we use thought to put ourselves in another's skin, we seem to use the word empathy. When we feel the same emotions with another, we seem to use the word compassion. In any event, the categorical imperative takes reason to put myself in another's place and to remember another person as a thing-in-itself like me.

Kant's second formulation to treat others as a thing-in-itself rather than as an appearance to be used for my self-interest to me *is* empathy.

In the third formulation, Kant adds "Treat every person, *including yourself*, with respect owed to someone who is a universal moral legislator" (italics my own). So, another temptation is to treat others as things-in-themselves but to treat myself harshly as an appearance. Kant seems to add a dimension to Christ's golden rule by adding we must treat ourselves with respect, too.

And of course Kant's most famous formulation is probably the first, "Act so that you can will the maxim of your act to be universal law." That means if my inclination screams at me to steal money from an open cash drawer, again I have to pause and imagine what that action would look like if everyone did that. I would discover a "higher road" than my self-interested inclination. If I in turn choose the "high road" over my impulse (even though my impulse would resist), I become freer from the "natural law" of impulse. And I'm choosing this road not to be recognized as "morally superior," i.e., to get a gold star. Everything in me *wants* to take the money. I get nothing out of this action. No recognition, no praise, no cash. I go *against* my want. Then I follow the moral law not for consequence or self-interest but because it's right. I lessen my self-interest in the process.

That's why Kant argues reason and will are the same. Having a strong will means to act rationally, not impulsively. "Will," then, is rational control of impulse. Will is also the same thing as freedom. For example, if all things in nature obey natural law, only will is free from that law. So, for instance, a falling body, whether

feather, rock, human, will obey Galileo's laws of motion (all bodies accelerate at the same rate regardless of mass). But "will" can decide whether it's safe to jump at a certain height and not jump. When a person acts according to reason rather than the momentary impulse of our "biological urges," he's using "will." He has self-control and is free *from* natural laws of impulse. More importantly, he's free because he's moving *toward* aligning himself with the supersensible realm, where "The Good" or the moral law resides. It's both negative *and* positive freedom. The point is, reason, will, and freedom are all interconnected, then.

One last point about Kant's touching the supersensible realm through ethical action, not metaphysical knowledge. As Kant said in *The Critique of Pure Reason*, we can only see the appearances of things, never beyond them. In a similar way, we appear as an appearance to another and they can never see us as thing-in-itself. But we don't experience ourselves as an appearance but as a thing-in-itself. True, even here when we look into our noumenal selves, we still only "appear" to ourselves and don't know who we "really" are, independent of experience.[122] Yet when we follow the categorical imperative (rather than just posit metaphysical ideas about it) and treat another as a thing-in-itself in the way we may feel like a thing-in-itself, we may not be aware of it, but in those ethical actions we get closer to the freedom of the supersensible realm.

Here's the interesting connection between reason, understanding, and judgment.

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[122] Manfred Kuehn, *Kant: A Biography*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, 246.

Reason uses judgment just as understanding uses judgment. Judgment subsumes particulars under (universal) concepts. Understanding subsumes intuitions under concepts via judgment. Reason subsumes particular decision-making cases under ideas via judgment. But so far judgment just combines representations, whether of reason or understanding.

Things change for judgment when we experience the thing-in-itself not as distinct from appearance but entwined with appearance. That's the nature of beauty.

C. Judgment

To repeat, by the end of the second critique, judgment was just an action reason and understanding used to subsume particulars under concepts. Judgment had no *a priori* concept of its own then. In fact, to judge is to think. Whenever we apply a universal to a particular, we judge.

But before we conceptualize, we experience. Without *a posteriori* concepts, we're able to see an appearance yet sense there's something more to it than meets the eye—though our minds are structured *a priori* in such a way that we can't see the thing-in-itself. Aesthetic and teleological judgments suspend our *a posteriori* concepts.

As we saw, judgment does this through its own "irremovable goggles" or *a priori* principle of "purposiveness." This allows judgment to experience the supersensible and the sensible as a unity. In that way it bridges understanding and reason together.

As we hinted at, judgment's *a priori* concept neither gives knowledge nor lets us know how to act ethically. It simply reflects, i.e., looks and listens. Again, its *a priori* concept is "purposiveness." Its tool is the "feeling of pleasure and displeasure." That is, when we come upon purposiveness without purpose in nature and fine art, our imagination, understanding, and sometimes reason are thrown into a harmonious free play. This gives us a pleasure that's not self-interested (similar to morality). For Kant, this is the experience of beauty.

Finally, we're in a position to see exactly how judgment bridges the gulf between science and ethics. But first, a brief glance at how Kant organized the *Critique of Judgment*.

1. How Kant Organized *The Critique of Judgment*

Kant organized the *Critique of Judgment* along two kinds of reflective judgments: aesthetic and teleological. Before I go further, I should say a quick word about what Kant meant by the term "reflective judgment."

"Reflective judgments" are different from "logical judgments." Kant covered logical judgments in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Those judgments are in the service of understanding in order to know. But in reflective judgments, judgment is no longer in service to any other faculty but itself. When judgment *reflects* on nature, it doesn't labor to know or labor to decide. It's relaxed, at rest, on its own. All it's concerned with is taking pleasure in the *purposiveness* in nature. At times rational ideas may come in to help appreciate the way nature continually creates itself (teleological judgment). At other times understanding may come in to ap-

preciate the beauty of *that* zebra or *that* tree ("dependent beauty" in aesthetic judgment). But in either case, reason and understanding are now in the service to judgment. Judgment becomes the leader when it only seeks for *purposive-ness,* again neither needing to do nor needing to know. In this "restful contemplation" as Kant puts it, judgment just reflects. This elevates us.

Now, "aesthetic judgment" centers on the experiences of the beautiful and the sublime, and those reflections help us produce art. "Teleological judgment" centers on living beings. It's the judgment where we're aware organisms are alive as ends-in-themselves. Based on that judgment, Kant infers there might be purpose in nature as a whole. Reflective judgment, then, includes aesthetic and teleological judgment. It involves reflecting on nature, feeling the selfless stance of morality, and opening ourselves to "ideas" and feelings that could lead us to create fine art. Judgment bridges nature and freedom.

So Part One of the *Critique of Judgment* focuses on Aesthetic Judgment. Part Two focuses on Teleological Judgment.

In Part One, Kant deals with beauty first, the sublime second, and fine art third. The beautiful corresponds with understanding and imagination. The sublime corresponds with reason and imagination. In fine art, imagination plays a key role alongside both reason and understanding.

In Part Two, Kant deals with living organisms that seem to embody their own purpose. That is, Kant asks how do we recognize organisms not just as phenomena but also as purposeful with an "intrinsic purpose." In other words, teleological judgment sees natural organisms as beings not for us to use, but as

purposeful from their own viewpoint. *Telos* comes from the Greek for purpose or end, and we'll see how Kant takes Aristotle as his inspiration. Like aesthetic judgments, teleological judgment reflects. It doesn't give us scientific knowledge or tell us how to act, but it might hint that the universe has purpose.

Both Part One and Part Two are further divided in two identical ways: an analytic section and a dialectic section. For Kant, this follows the scheme of philosophy in general: we start by analyzing a subject-matter into its components. We end by resolving any apparent contradictions (a dialectic) back into a whole, or synthesis.

Another similarity between Part One and Part Two is both parts begin with how judgment works with understanding and nature, then moves to how judgment works with reason and freedom. At the end of Part Two, Kant even gives a unique argument of God[123] by beginning with nature. That means both aesthetic and teleological judgments work with understanding and reason in reason's ethical and metaphysical employments.

Here's a visual layout of the *The Critique of Judgment*:

[123] Unique because Kant doesn't try to give knowledge of God's existence.

Table 3.4. Layout of Kant's *Critique of Judgment*

I. FIRST PART. Critique of AESTHETIC Judgment

A. 1st Division. ANALYTIC of "Aesthetic" Judgment

1. Book 1. Analytic of THE BEAUTIFUL

2. Book 2. Analytic of THE SUBLIME (includes a discussion on fine art)

B. 2nd Division. DIALECTIC of "Aesthetic" Judgment

II. SECOND PART. Critique of TELEOLOGICAL Judgment

A. 1st Division. ANALYTIC of "Teleological" Judgment

B. 2nd Division. DIALECTIC of "Teleological" Judgment

C. Appendix. APPLYING "Teleological" Judgment

With all these preliminaries out of the way, we can finally dig into Kant's *Critique of Judgment*. Again, the driving question is whether it's possible to overcome the dichotomy between appearance (or determinism) and thing-in-itself (or freedom) both in terms of objects "out there," as well as in terms of thinking "within" our minds, i.e., bridging concrete understanding with abstract reason. Freedom and noumena are still abstract. But perhaps beauty can hint at their possible reality and their unity with appearance.

CHAPTER 4.

KANT'S FOUR MOMENTS OF BEAUTY

CHAPTER 4: KANT'S FOUR MOMENTS OF BEAUTY

In this chapter, let's dig into Kan't analysis of the beautiful.

A. Why Four "Moments"?

Kant organizes the analytic of the beautiful into four "moments." These four moments correspond to the four *a priori* categories of the understanding: quality, quantity, modality, and relation.

Category here has a similar meaning to the original Greek word. In Greek, category meant the predicate of a thing. That is, what can be said about something. For example, "the rose is red." Category, then, is a thing's attribute, quality, characteristic.

Kant took the notion of category from Aristotle, who thought there were 10. Aristotle's primary category was "substance." Substance is unique because, of the 10, it's independent and can exist on its own, i.e., a particular tree or a particular man isn't a predicate of something else. But the kind of thing a particular thing is can be predicated of it. For example, Aristotle (subject) "is a man" (predicate). Aristotle called these kinds "secondary substances." Aristotle called the other 9 categories "accidentals" (or predicates). These were all the kinds of predicates, in addition to substance, that could be asserted about a particular substance. For Aristotle these included: quality, quantity, relation, action, affection,

place, time, position, state. These 9 can't exist independently of a substance, they describe a substance, i.e., greenness, tallness, yesterday, down, triple. They're also possibilities, not absolutes. An object can't have all predicates at the same time. For example, it's impossible for a thing to be both present and absent. Or for a thing to be possible and impossible at the same time. Again, the categories are properties that belong to things. We can't think about something without these categories.

Kant appreciated Aristotle's effort but thought his list was imperfect. He thought Aristotle almost put them down as they came to him.[124] Kant, on the other hand, organized all categories into 4 groups. Under each group were three sub-categories. Here's how Kant organized the categories:

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[124] Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, 62-3, Section III of Chapter I in Book I of the First Division.

Table 4.1. Kant's Twelve Categories

	Objects of Intuition (Pure)	**Objects of Intuition (Empirical)**	**Existence of Objects in relation to each other**	**Existence of Objects in relation to understanding**
	1. Quantity (subsumes phenomena using mathematics)	**2. Quality (subsumes phenomena as real or not)**	**3. Relation (subsumes phenomena in relation with each other)**	**4. Modality (subsumes phenomena using the method of modifiers)**
Condition	Unity (one)	Reality (presence)	Substance (subject and predicate)	Possibility (conditional)
Conditioned	Plurality (many)	Negation (absence)	Cause (cause and effect)	Existence (actual)
Combination	Totality (all)	Limitation (present till, then absent)	Community (reciprocal collection of all subjects)	Necessity (occurs under all conditions)

Kant's proposed list is less haphazard than Aristotle's, but it's not without issues. For example, Aristotle is still the innovator here—Kant seems to simply organize Aristotle's list into a system. That system might be less empirical than Aristotle's. What I mean is, even though Kant's list is more systematically conceived, he seems to also force things into a closed, static scheme that leaves out other possibilities, for example negative modalities.[125] Still, the idea behind this scheme is brilliant: *a priori* categories such as causation is what allow us to understand anything at all.

By the way, as a side note, Kant also drew up the following table of logical judgments. As Kant says in his *Prolegomena*, "Thinking is the same as judging."

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[125] Avi Sion, "Chapter 5. Kant's "Categories," *TheLogician.Net*, http://www.thelogician.net/6_reflect/6_Book_2/6b_chapter_05.htm, accessed July 12, 2016.

What he means is when we try to understand something, we unite “representations” (sensible intuitions) with the *a priori* categories above. So, the four classes of judgments is logical activity. They correspond with the four classes of categories:

Table 4.2. Kant’s Twelve Logical Judgments

Quality (affirm/ deny)	Quantity (how much)	Relation (relativity)	Modality (possibility)
Affirmative	Universal	Categorical (absolute)	Problematic (possible or impossible)
Negative	Particular	Hypothetical (maybe)	Assertoric (asserts)
Infinite	Singular	Disjunctive (either/or)	Apodeictic (self-evident)

In any event, there were 12 *a priori* categories for Kant (not 10) we put our intuitions into that allows us to “know” them at all.

Now, why must things exist in trinities so much for Kant? In a footnote, Kant answers that question at the end of his Introduction to *The Critique of Judgment*. He says it’s due to the nature of the case. Analysis needs the law of contradiction. That means breaking a condition down into two: A and not-A. But if we’re to have a synthesis we also need a third element to bring the opposing pair back into a whole, a unity. So, we begin with a) a condition, b) see its opposite as the conditioned, and c) bring the conditioned into unity with its condition. Johan Gottlieb Fichte (1762 - 1814), a big fan of Kant, invented a more famous group of terms for what Kant was trying to say: thesis, antithesis, and synthesis.

Interestingly, the entire aim of the *Critique of Judgment* is exactly this: to synthesize his first two critiques back into a whole.

Regardless, as Aristotle pointed out, we can't think of a thing without these and Kant followed him. So, it makes sense that Kant organized his analytic of the beautiful in terms of the four *a priori* categories: quality, quantity, relation, and modality. Because we wouldn't be able to experience or understand beauty without these.

Fascinatingly, the first three "moments" of beauty are each paradoxes. Then the fourth moment synthesizes the previous three paradoxes together. Here's an overview:

Kant's Four Moments:

- *Quality*: We experience beauty with **disinterested interest**.
- *Quantity*: The beautiful is both **universal yet subjective**.
- *Relation*: Beauty is **purposive without purpose**.
- *Modality:* Beauty is a **common sense** all humans have: the beautiful senses the sensible and supersensible as one.

Kant thought if he could show how beauty is universal *and* "in the eye of the beholder" using an *a priori* principle, he could explain how we experience appearance as possibly more than its appearance. Let's now look at each moment with a bit more detail.

1. First Moment of Quality: Disinterested Interest

Kant begins with “quality” because our experience of beauty starts with disinterested interest.

Interest means “I want” an object. It involves desire. Disinterest means “not wanting” an object. The experience of the beautiful, then, entails pleasure (interest) yet not needing to “have” the object of beauty (disinterest).

Beauty also entails disinterest because it can refer to a real thing (like nature) or a thing that doesn’t exist (like art). An “inclination” or “personal preference,” is in the eye of the beholder. A personal preference for vanilla ice cream is a personal desire, it’s not valid for all humans. But disinterested interest allows beauty to be universal.

We discern beauty through feeling either pleasure or displeasure, which is subjective. We don’t discern it by intellectualizing or conceptualizing. But in the case of beauty, it’s a pleasure that doesn’t need to possess. To clarify this special kind of pleasure, Kant compares disinterested interest with two other kinds of interest: the agreeable and the good.

The agreeable delights the senses. That is, stimuli delight the senses. The delight is immediate. We’re gratified, our hunger is satiated, an itch is scratched. Here it makes perfect sense to have personal preferences. We may enjoy the way vanilla ice cream delights the taste buds. Another may enjoy the way chocolate delights the taste buds. Again, the agreeable is about consuming a real object. Having it, possessing it. Kant says the animal in us experiences the agreeable.

The good is a delight we experience in the mind, through concepts. Kant says the human in us experiences the good. A real object is involved here, too. Our desire here is less about consumption and more about achieving a goal. Our minds see a goal. We will to reach it. When we achieve it, we feel pleasure and delight. That goal is real. The delight is more mediate though. So, the good inspires action. Also, the good involves, for example, when we know the concepts of how a fine play should be crafted and we use those concepts to discern whether that play is good. When we use concepts to judge and feel delight, the delight comes from the good, not the beautiful.

The beautiful, though, doesn't need any concepts to please us. Aimless lines, shapes, arrangements, rhythms can please without knowing what its goal is. So, the beautiful doesn't need a real object. It doesn't *need* at all. Instead of desire, only the feelings of pleasure or displeasure are at work. We don't need to possess or consume an object as with the agreeable. And we don't need to act to achieve a goal as in the good. The beautiful is both intellectual like the good and sensible like the agreeable, but there's no inclination to have. In a way, the beautiful is *like* seeing a thing-in-itself, although we can never see a thing-in-itself. What I mean is, because we don't need to consume it or to know it or to conceptualize it or to act to achieve it or to use it, we simply delight in its presence. As Kant says, both the animal and the human in us delight in the beautiful.

An example of the beautiful as compared to the agreeable and the good: If we're starving and devour a pizza without tasting the food, that delight from gratification would be agreeable. If we conceptualize the pizza and say we shouldn't

eat it because we're trying to lower our cholesterol and we eat grilled chicken salad instead, that delight comes from the good. Beauty would be if we've already eaten and we don't need to gratify ourselves. We sampled a slice of pizza whether it's the right thing to eat it or not, we just pay attention to the flavors. The pleasure we feel from the flavors would be disinterested interest, without needing to satiate hunger or without needing to conceptualize.

The first moment of beauty then is the observation that we find pleasure in beauty without needing to possess it. Taking in a sunset may be another example of disinterested interest. We neither need to possess it nor conceptualize it. We simply look, and still feel pleasure.

2. Second Moment of Quantity: Universal yet Subjective

Related to the first moment, the second moment of quantity says every person must agree with my judgment of beauty. Yet their judgments must come from within their own Subject too. This relates to quantity because every person (quantity) must agree on what's beautiful, without being told "that's beautiful." In other words, each person must come to the "conclusion" on their own. If a person was told to "believe" this was beautiful, the aesthetic judgment would then be conceptual. So even though beauty is subjective and personal, it must also agree with every other person. Quantity is linked with quality because the way this "universal yet subjective" judgment is possible is through *disinterested* interest.

As a review, disinterested interest is not a private feeling like the agreeable. The agreeable pleases me personally, but no one else has to agree with

me. For example, one person may like the Beatles, another may prefer heavy metal. To quarrel over the agreeable as universal is absurd. Everyone has a right to their own opinion and to their own personal preference—in the realm of the agreeable, that is. Not so in the realm of the beautiful.

For example, to say "honey is beautiful to me" is an incorrect use of the term "beautiful." For something to truly be beautiful, it must not only be true of one person, but for *all* persons. Otherwise we wouldn't need the word beauty. It would refer to nothing, if everyone simply had their own preferences. Many may claim "beauty is in the eye of the beholder" as if it's a personal preference, but that's not how we use the term.

Also, when we say "that's beautiful," we speak as if beauty were a property of a thing. It's not. For Kant, here's where "beauty is in the eye of the beholder" has a sound point. Beauty must be subjective like the agreeable. Again, regurgitating an authority figure's concept of what's beautiful means a person hasn't had a subjective experience of beauty. Beauty must be a subjective feeling of pleasure, yet paradoxically it's a subjective feeling shared with *every* person. That's the point of the second moment.

Another distinction about quantity: every person shares this pleasure in a "universal" way, not in a "general" way. Universality and generality have a similarity, but Kant says there's an important difference.

Here's an example. In the 1960s, the marketing department at *Cosmo* magazine put Twiggy on the cover of their magazines. Many bought the magazine and agreed "she's beautiful"—in a general way. In the 1600s, Rubens paint-

ed his women with voluptuousness. Many agreed then “those women are beautiful”—in a general way.

In both those cases, “general rules of convention” were followed. Yes, a great quantity of people were pleased. But they were pleased because conventions were followed. This is a function of interest, not disinterested interest. Twiggy and Rubens’s women were respectively agreeable for the times. So, this isn’t a universal beauty. General rules were followed, like empirical rules. What is universally valid then? Kant will solve that in the third moment with his idea of *purposiveness without purpose*.

But in the meantime, being “befogged” by “rules of convention” may explain why a great artwork is often “ahead of his time” and many in that time don’t see it yet. For example, Mozart’s *Don Giovanni* was panned by critics in Vienna when it first came out. Why? Because it had challenged some conventions of Italian opera. But when listening to the music without attachment to those dated conventions of what “should” be beautiful, who would say *Don Giovanni* isn’t beautiful? In other words, listening to Mozart’s music with “disinterested interest” (without rigid preconceptions) allows every person to feel beauty more easily.

So, the universal doesn’t rest on social rules of custom. The beautiful must be beautiful for every person, regardless of the *a posteriori* conceptual rules (and perhaps bias) in vogue of a culture. This allows us to judge more accurately what’s universally beautiful.

This brings up another paradox about this second moment. Concepts, like plurality, are universal. But to distinguish the beautiful from the true and the good, beauty must be universal apart from concepts. Otherwise beauty would be a mere cognition.

So, how can the beautiful be both subjective and universal (or *a priori*) and also apart from *a priori* concepts? Here Kant introduces an ingenious solution. The universal pleasure wrought from beauty is based on a free play between the understanding and the imagination.

It's not that we feel pleasure first, then say that's beautiful afterwards. That would be no different than the agreeable. Rather, disinterested pleasure is a result of something more fundamental. On the one hand, our *a priori* concepts (like presence and absence) are universal. On the other hand, the intuitions the imagination brings to the concepts are also universal. But to subsume intuitions under a concept creates cognition and knowledge. So, rather than subsume intuitions under concepts what happens in the experience of beauty is, a free play between the two.

And that's exactly the pleasure we feel with beauty. The pleasure is a free play between imagination and understanding. We're not trying to "know" an object, or act towards a goal or use it. We simply enjoy the play and harmony between these universal faculties of the mind. But the play doesn't happen intellectually, otherwise we're in the realm of knowledge and concepts again. It happens through the senses. We feel a type of harmony between the senses and the intellect.

So, that's how the beautiful is both universal and also felt by every person. *A priori* concepts and intuitions are universal. The free play between the two is pleasurable, not business as usual when the two labor to know. Because the two are universal, when they're at play they give us a universal pleasure.

This may explain why so many agree that Michelangelo's *David* is beautiful without having to rely on a teacher to tell them so. Or why we don't have to learn from a book that a sunset is beautiful, yet everyone comes to feel its beauty on their own. In the free play between understanding and imagination we feel pleasure but don't need to know it, consume it, use it, act on it. We get close to seeing an appearance as more than appearance.

The third moment discusses what's happening in an object that has us feel the pleasure of play between understanding and imagination. It's about how we relate to an object of beauty.

3. Third Moment of Relation: Purposiveness without Purpose

If the second moment of quantity explains the pleasure of beauty psychologically, the third moment explains what's happening in the object that causes us to feel pleasure. Again, beauty isn't a property of the object, so this moment is what's going on in an object that makes us feel disinterested interest. Again, Kant wants to show how beauty is universal, yet is also a subjective experience. In the third moment, we sense there's something beyond the appearance of a thing.

Put another way, what causes us to feel disinterested interest is we sense in the form of an object, its purpose but we don't what know what its purpose is. So, here's the third paradox of beauty: beauty is both purposive and without purpose. Meaning, we relate to an object's purpose, without knowing its explicit purpose.

For me, one of the most compelling examples Kant gives of purposiveness without purpose is a tulip. In a tulip, we perceive a purpose in its lines. But we don't know what the purpose is. It's as if we come close to seeing the tulip as it is, but not quite. "Purposiveness" tells us we sense the "thing-in-itself" lying beneath the garment of phenomenon. "Without purpose" tells us appearance still conceals it.

In fact, this is Kant's point in the last section of his "Critique of Aesthetic Judgment," in his dialectic.

i. Antinomies of Aesthetic Judgment.

In sections 55 - 58, Kant brings up a series of antinomies, or claims that seem to contradict each other. The same kind of dialectical problems also appeared in his *Critique of Pure Reason* and *Critique of Practical Reason*. Those problems involve a confusion between the supersensible realm and the sensible realm. And that's the case in this dialectic as well.

Here's the antimony:

1. Thesis: Beauty can't be based on concepts. In other words, it's impossible to describe what's most hidden. It's impossible to describe the taste of food. It's impossible to explain what love in the heart feels like. These are all hidden. In a similar way, beauty can't be reduced to concepts, labels, words. Beauty, then, isn't up for dispute.

2. Antithesis: Beauty must be based on something *a priori* like the concepts of unity and plurality. Otherwise, beauty can't belong to every person.

Here's another way of putting the antimony:

1. Thesis: Scientific laws can't describe beauty.

2. Antithesis: We can understand beauty scientifically. For example, we can describe how crystals are made scientifically. And crystals are objects of beauty. Also, nature understood scientifically isn't purposive. Nature is random.

Kant says the confusion is an illusion. The reason is, the supersensible lies at the base of beauty. And we can never understand the supersensible realm scientifically.

In other words, the *a priori* "concept" that accounts for purposiveness *is* the supersensible realm underlying all nature, and that includes us humans as objects of nature. The supersensible realm is not a matter of scientific knowledge. An object of beauty appears purposive to our limited human perspective. So, when we experience beauty we feel it on a subjective level. We can't put it into words because we're responding to the supersensible realm underlying the sensible realm. The reason this subjective experience can also belong to every person is because the supersensible realm is universal and *a priori*.

The way Kant puts it: the unfolding of beauty, whether in art or in nature, is *like* the product of some inner genius. Kant defines genius later (but unfortunately we won't have enough space to discuss it here). This piques the interest of reason, as reason seems to have found evidence for its far-reaching claims about the supersensible realm. This is the profundity of beauty. Beauty is a kind of revelation of the hidden substrate of the world. Kant will argue it's the basis of the highest human projects, like science and morality. In other words, beauty is the mediating link between science and morality. But I'm getting ahead of myself once again.

Let me just pause here to say how much I personally love this idea, because it complements Kant's metaphysics and ethics.

Kant's metaphysics tells us we can only know an object's appearance, never the thing-in-itself. Kant's ethics tells us, though we can only see a fellow human being's appearance, we must relate to them as ends-in-themselves via experiencing ourselves as ends-in-themselves. Kant's aesthetics seems to extend this idea beyond humanity to all phenomena, to all nature. Purposiveness is the name Kant gives for what seems to be going on in an object of nature (the supersensible realm) that causes us to feel disinterested interest (or beauty).

But back to the specifics of the third moment, which entail sections 10 - 17. Before Kant digs into his concept of purposiveness, he defines some terms first.

ii. Kant Defines Terms at the Outset.

1. Purpose. First, he defines "purpose." Purpose means striving towards an end. Similar to Plato and Aristotle's "The Good," the ground of all nature is directed to The Good, i.e., an end desired not for-the-sake-of something else but for-itself. The Good is the final *telos* (goal) on which all other goods (or ends) depend. In fact, James Creed Meredith translates "purpose" and "purposiveness" as "final" and "finality" respectively. In any event, if purpose is an end, then where there's purpose there's a will, or the faculty of desire. That is, purpose is a desire to get to that end.

2. Purposiveness. Second, Kant defines "purposiveness." Purposiveness means the appearance of purpose. In other words, we don't know what an object's purpose is. We just sense it. As Kant puts it, purposiveness means looking

at a thing without reason or understanding. If we looked at an object with reason or understanding—as something to know or to use—our judgment of it would become conceptual, categorical. Purposive instead means to look at an object as it is, not as an object to know or to use. When we use aesthetic judgment to reflect on an object's beauty, we get close to seeing it as a "thing-in-itself."

Let me see if I can say that in an even clearer way. On the one hand purposiveness is an approach to an object, a kind of eye-glasses through which to look at an object. In this approach we don't use an object, don't conceptualize an object, and don't consume an object. Instead we "appreciate" an object. On the other hand, purposiveness can also refer to the form of an object. For example, a passage of music may rise to a climax then fall, or the lines of a tulip may meander with some (inner) purpose. These appear to have a sense of purpose, but we don't know what that purposes is.

So, we can either approach an object as purposive, or some objects have the form of purposiveness and awaken aesthetic judgment within us. As I indicated above, when we sense in an artwork or in a natural object *will* aiming at a purpose, but we don't know its purpose, the object has a form of "purposiveness." But in either case, whether we approach an object as purposive or the purposive form of an object puts us in a purposive state-of-mind and we feel a "non-needy" (or disinterested) pleasure. We'll develop that idea in a moment.

3. Disinterested. Third, he defines "disinterested" more explicitly here than earlier. As a review, disinterested means we don't want to use the object for our gratification, i.e., possess it or consume it or act on it for our own self-interest.

4. Interest (or Pleasure). Fourth, he defines “pleasure” (or interest). Pleasure means we want to persevere in that state. By the way, he also defined pleasure earlier in the Introduction of the whole critique this way: pleasure is when we attain an aim (Introduction VI). Interestingly, Plato described The Beautiful in *The Symposium* in a similar way: Desire is desiring to be in the presence of The Beautiful forever.

5. Displeasure. Fifth, Kant defines “displeasure.” Displeasure means when a representation repulses us, makes us not want to be in that state forever. We want to end that state as quickly as possible. That does sound like pain.

6. Disinterested Interest. Sixth, Kant defines “disinterested pleasure” more explicitly here too. Disinterested interest means we’re arrested in the presence of an object and we don’t want the state to end, yet we don’t need to consume it either. Although these aren’t Kant’s words, perhaps disinterested pleasure is like falling in love but not needing to possess the person. Or, like being absorbed in a live performance of a concert pianist, where we don’t want it to end and feel as if time stood still but don’t need to possess anything. There’s no cognizing or choosing or gratifying. We simply listen and look. Beauty, then, is more passive than a cognition or than an action. Free play may be active to a certain extent, but the play is restful, relaxed. In a way, it’s like the mind dreaming when we’re resting. And the added benefit is we learn to forget our self-interest in the process.

iii. The FORM of Purposiveness is the Source of Beauty.

To repeat: the form of purposiveness gives us disinterested pleasure. Form is the operative term here. Also, as mentioned earlier, purposiveness is what gives us our feeling of pleasure. Purposiveness is the source of our interest, form is the source of our disinterest. Purposiveness is the source of pleasure because there's no concept at work, i.e., we don't know what an object's purpose is. Form is the source of disinterest because we can't use what's intrinsic to an object. We don't consume the form of a delicious recipe, we consume its extrinsic ingredients. Likewise, the extrinsic qualities of an object draw our interest. Bells, whistles, embellishments, flash are put on top of form to draw interest, to make us want to gratify. But it's form that makes us behold.

On a related note, the form of purposiveness doesn't cause disinterested interest. It's not a causal relationship. If beauty was an effect, beauty would be dependent and *a posteriori*. If beauty were *a posteriori*, it would not be *a priori* nor universal to every person. To say this another way, the beautiful does not depend on experience. If it were, beauty would be learned, and if beauty were learned it would be conceptual, a human construct.

So, the form of purposiveness doesn't *cause* disinterested pleasure. It may put us in a purposive mind-state, but that mind-state *is* the pleasure. After all, purposiveness and disinterested interest both refer to not needing. A purposive mind-state (not naming, using, consuming) means to relax the cognitive faculties, allowing them to play freely. The spectacles of purposiveness (again, not

naming, using, consuming) is like an object with purposive form (unnameable, unusable, un-consumable). They're alike as well as disinterested pleasure is alike as a purposive mind-state is pleasure without interest. Let me say this another way.

If disinterested (i.e., non-needy) pleasure were caused, it would be dependent on an external force and would therefore be interested (i.e., needy). Needy pleasure is conditioned in time and space: an external force causes it (beginning), and if we consume too much of it, we want the activity to stop (end). But disinterested interest (not needing to know, use, or consume) by definition is an activity of rest complete, unconditioned, and perfect unto itself as it needs nothing.

Whether we put on a pair of purposive "eye-glasses" or whether an object with purposive form puts us into a purposive mind-state, either way we need nothing else—and that *is* disinterested interest. Also, putting on those eye-glasses to appreciate purposive form quickens, strengthens, and reproduces our cognitive powers. That is the pleasure, too. We want to persevere in this state-of-mind. And we can't have too much of it since it's an intrinsic pleasure without self-gratification.

So, purposiveness doesn't name, use, or consume which is disinterested pleasure that needs nothing and desires no end which is purposive form that can't be used or named. They're the same, not separate events in time and space.

iv. Four Parts of the Third Moment.

Kant makes four points about our relation to an object of beauty:

1. **Form is essential.** Form is essential to feeling disinterested pleasure.

2. **Beauty is NOT "confused" knowledge.** Our relation to an object of beauty isn't a matter of "confused knowledge." Beauty isn't knowledge. Beauty is beauty.

3. **Purposiveness frees our imagination.** The form of purposiveness frees our imagination, and that is the pleasure. We'll see how below.

4. **The "ideal" of beauty.** There's a specific form of purposiveness that causes disinterested pleasure in us.

Let's look at each of those. They're fascinating.

a. Form Is Essential.

First, Kant discusses why form is essential to disinterested pleasure. He first divides aesthetic judgment into two. He says, just as theoretical judgment is divided into "empirical theoretical judgment" (i.e., understanding) and "pure theoretical judgment" (i.e., reason), there is "empirical aesthetic judgment" (i.e., the agreeable) and "pure aesthetic judgment" (i.e., the beautiful). "Empirical aesthetic judgment" is *a posteriori* and depends on sensation. "Pure aesthetic judgment" is *a priori* and depends on form.

"Empirical aesthetic judgments" that depend on sensation aren't universal. This is just the agreeable. Examples of the agreeable include preferring

the sound of the piano over the violin, or preferring the color green over the color pink. These can't belong to all subjects, nor should they be. Some prefer some sensations over others. And that's okay. As we've said, this is just personal preference.

But **"pure aesthetic judgments"** that depend on form are universal (and do belong to all subjects). This is the beautiful. As a warning, what Kant says next is a sorely misunderstood part of his aesthetics. On a closer look, the argument makes an interesting point. Here's what he says.

If a sound is nothing more than vibration of air, or color nothing more than the way light hits an object, then these aren't intrinsic to beauty. Rather the form beneath the sound of an instrument and beneath the color of, say, a statue is. In other words, it's not the sound of the piano that makes a piece of music beautiful. It's the arrangement of sound, the proportions, the design. Whether we hear a Bach fugue on a harpsichord or a piano, the way Bach designed his music remains. People can agree or disagree which sound they prefer to hear the fugue on. That's personal preference. There's something deeper and universal: Bach's design. So the *form* of Bach's fugue is the true source of the music's beauty.

We can see this in reverse, too. Things that lack form or clear shape we usually call "ugly." For example, Quasimodo was de-formed. A 2016 *National Geographic* magazine cover showed de-formed vegetables and the title said "How Ugly Vegetables Can Save The World." We say a person who's in shape is beautiful because their body has shape. We say a pianist plays a passage of

music beautifully because the passage has shape. We say a dancer dances well when her lines have shape, too.

But scholars have raised questions about Kant's views on "ugliness." They note Kant speaks little about negative judgments of ugliness, he focuses almost exclusively on positive judgments of beauty. Does Kant allow for an experience of ugliness? If he can, is the pleasure interested or disinterested?

Paul Guyer argues Kant allows us to feel displeasure in the ugly, but his controversial argument is those judgments always involve interest.[126] When we see a pile of dung, we want move away from it out of interest. Hannah Ginsborg agrees with Guyer that Kant allows us to judge something to be ugly, but disagrees we never feel *dis*interested displeasure. She thinks our judgments of ugliness can sometimes be pure. The reason is, if in certain contexts we expect something to be beautiful and it's not, we can judge it to be ugly with *dis*interested displeasure. She does acknowledge we feel *interested* displeasure when an object is potentially harmful or disgusting, though.[127]

The title of David Shier's article, "Why Kant Finds Nothing Ugly" may take things too far. Kant does allow for judgments of ugliness. He says so. In section 48, he says fine art can represent the "ugly" in a beautiful way. Specifically he says, "Furies, diseases, devastations of war . . . can be very beautifully described, nay even represented in pictures." And he goes on to say one kind of ugliness can't be depicted beautifully—an object that "excites *disgust*." If an artist

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[126] Ginsborg, 13.

[127] Ibid., 12-3.

accurately depicts a pile of dung, we'll take it to *be* dung and feel disgust. Only indirect representations of the disgusting might be beautiful.

The point is, Kant acknowledges there are "ugly" and "disgusting" objects. He also says we "feel displeasure." If a purposive form gives us disinterested interest, then objects without form or purposiveness would make us feel displeasure.

Kant never answers the question whether that displeasure is sometimes disinterested or always interested. We could say Kant (in the quoted passage above) distinguishes between two kinds of ugly: a) what we find morally offensive like war, and b) what we find physically disagreeable like sickness, which excites disgust.[128] It would seem interest is involved in both kinds of ugliness but delving into that topic may be better left to another paper.

Kant's real point seems to be form gives an object its beauty—not its surface razzle-dazzle. Flashy sensations can attract us to a beautiful object, but flash appeals to self-interest. It gratifies us, provokes desire, appeals to "me." So, performing Shakespeare's *Hamlet* with dazzling lighting and bright-colored costumes appeals to my interest, but it's Shakespeare's design of his plays that is purposive and that refers "me" to something larger than "me." It's no wonder, then, why Hollywood films with dazzling special effects can still leave us feeling empty if there's no story (form of purposiveness). Spectacle delights, form nourishes.

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[128] Paul Guyer, "Kant and the Purity of the Ugly," *Kant e-Prints* – Vol. 3, n. 3, 2004, ftp://ftp.cle.unicamp.br/pub/kant-e-prints/vol.3-n.3-2004.pdf, 20.

But Kant thinks there's a place for sensation, spectacle, charm. He says charm (which is extrinsic) can be added to form to enhance it, enliven it. In other words, charm might be like a woman putting makeup on over the form of her face, or a man putting clothes on over the form of his body. Kant's point is: makeup and clothes aren't the source of the beauty. They may catch our attention and enhance the form underneath, but the question is what's the form like underneath? Even if the face or the body underneath had blemishes (or had perfect complexion), the real beauty lies in the form, not the outer surface.

So, Kant's not against charm. It's just if we're not careful, charm can distract us from form. He gives an example of a gold frame. If we rely too heavily on extrinsic factors, it's like putting a garish, gold frame around a picture. The frame distracts us from the beautiful painting itself. He says a better relationship between the agreeable and the beautiful would be putting a frame around a painting that draws the eye to the painting rather than to the frame.

The overall point is, form allows us to feel disinterested interest. Form refers us to purposiveness rather than to me, my interest. And purposive forms allow pleasure to be universal. Charm captures our desire, but to feel free when beholding an object, the sensations must only supplement, ornament. They must not be the center of attention. That way beauty doesn't gratify or provoke desire (like an addiction), we take pleasure in a form (good in itself) without needing the object.

b. Beauty is NOT “Confused” Knowledge.

Second, Kant discusses how our relation to an object of beauty isn’t a matter of “confused knowledge.” Like makeup, utility is also external to an object of beauty. So, utility doesn’t determine beauty either. If utility did, then we would understand an object conceptually as its use. But Kant raises this question: does the internal “perfection” of an object cause us to experience it as beautiful?

Here’s an example of what Kant means. Let’s take a piece of music by Bach. If we were to analyze it, take the music apart, see how mathematically symmetrical it is, we might say this work of art was “internally perfect.” So, his question is, is it the internally perfect form of an object what makes it beautiful or something else? After all, Kant had just finished arguing form is the true source of beauty.

Surprisingly, Kant’s answer is no: internal perfection is not the source of beauty. Let’s take the Bach example again to illustrate why.

We listen to a Bach fugue and can’t help but be moved by it. “Beautiful,” we say. Let’s say we’re not trained in music so we don’t have the background to analyze it and take it apart to understand why the music works so “perfectly.” This means our experience of the music was just an unclear understanding, or confused knowledge.

Let’s now ask Kant’s question again. Are all experiences of beauty confused knowledge? When we don’t conceptualize a Bach fugue, we’re able to enjoy the piece more and feel its beauty. But when we begin breaking it down to understand its internal perfection and structure, we no longer feel its beauty. So

does that mean beauty is just a primitive stepping stone towards the real goal which is understanding?

Again, Kant's answer is no. That would mean aesthetic judgment is a function of confused concepts, but concepts nonetheless. But beauty has its own unique identity or value. It's meant to be enjoyed without concepts. Enjoying nature or an artwork without conceptualizing it has value in itself.

So, Kant's answer: beauty isn't confused knowledge. Beauty isn't supposed to yield knowledge. The only role understanding plays when we feel disinterested pleasure is recognizing I'm feeling disinterested pleasure. Beauty isn't meant to induce us to ethical action either. Beauty simply allows us to see an object as appearance but also as more than appearance.

Okay, fine, but what does the understanding do during an aesthetic judgment? I said it recognizes "I'm feeling disinterested pleasure." But isn't understanding's job is to apply concepts? Does understanding then just stop doing this? Ted Cohen offers an interesting answer in his article "Three Problems in Kant's Aesthetics."

In that article, Cohen notes how strange it is understanding doesn't seem to be doing anything. For example, take a rose. Imagination represents a red rose to understanding and understanding says, "This rose is red."[129] But in an aesthetic judgment understanding isn't supposed to apply concepts. What? If understanding isn't applying concepts in an aesthetic judgment, what's it doing? Af-

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[129] Ted Cohen, "Three Problems in Kant's Aesthetics," *British Journal of Aesthetics*, Vol. 42, No. 1, January 2002, 1-2.

ter all, the rose *is* a flower, red, possessed of petals and so forth.[130] Does the understanding not recognize these all of a sudden?

Here's the idea Cohen proposes. He dismisses the idea understanding refuses to apply concepts because that describes what understanding is *not* doing rather than what it *is* doing. So, he proposes this idea instead.

Maybe understanding applies all concepts of that rose at once: "it's a flower, it's red, it's possessed of petals." In other words, an aesthetic judgment sees a beautiful object in its completeness, all concepts at once. But this means understanding is at work endlessly. Cohen asks, would that busy process ever cohere to a single aesthetic judgment?[131]

Cohen's answer is, yes. By letting the object display all of itself, that's when we see it as beautiful. Said another way, an aesthetic judgment is when the understanding doesn't apply one concept but it continuously inspects, like a "vibrating" perception.[132] This may fit in nicely when Kant observes an aesthetic judgment "quickens" our cognitive faculties. But there's one problem, Cohen notes. Any and every object would then be beautiful.

One possible problem with Cohen's argument is he assumes understanding is doing something. Kant says the power to judge is the same as the power to think, but in an aesthetic judgment, judgment is "passive," at rest, at play, *not* at work. Let me say that again. The act of subsuming particulars under concepts is

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[130] Ibid., 2.

[131] Ibid., 3.

[132] Ibid., 4.

by judgment, not understanding. Understanding (with a capital “U”) refers to sensibility, imagination, understanding, and judgment working together to make a logical judgment. But understanding (with a lower case “u”), which is a part of Understanding, refers to our concepts. Within Understanding, judgment puts intuitions under concepts and understanding refers to our concepts. Cohen seems to mistake concepts with applying concepts. Applying concepts is judgment’s job, not understanding’s. Understanding (with a lower case “u”) is just the collection of concepts that makes up understanding. In that light, it may still be possible for judgment to rest from subsuming particulars under concepts, as it can do other things besides apply concepts.

Let me give an illustration.

Imagine Understanding as a factory that must put different gadgets into their correct boxes. The parts that make up a gadget we might call the intuitions we gather from the external world. The receiver of the parts we might call sensibility. The worker who puts those parts together into a gadget we might call imagination. The shelf that contains different categories of boxes we might call understanding. And the inspector who puts the gadgets into their correct box we might call judgment.

Now, when judgment is on the clock putting gadgets into their correct boxes, he must abide by the factory’s rules. Here judgment is an employee of the factory of “Understanding.” The rules judgment must abide by are the laws of nature. The factory as a whole, then, pumps out logical judgments and creates products of knowledge.

But all things need rest. When judgment rests, i.e., when he reflects, he doesn't have to play by Understanding's rules anymore. On break, he can work for himself now. His rule? Don't categorize, don't use, don't consume, i.e., put on the goggles of "purposiveness." In other words, relax and ask, "do I feel disinterested pleasure?" If so, judgment and his co-worker imagination gain freedom to play with the parts of a gadget (intuitions). They don't have to fix these parts according to the factory's strict rules. The parts can just be. Judgment enjoys the patterns underlying intuitions and enjoys watching the possible play between imagination and understanding.

For example, when we turn that picture of Einstein upside down and relax our judgment, we no longer have to name his "eye, nose, mouth." We're allowed to see shapes, lines, and the relationships between them. We can see different animals in the clouds without identifying a "cirrus" cloud or a "stratus" cloud. We can see different viewpoints in an M.C. Escher drawing. We can see a hidden image in a "Magic Eye" poster. We can enjoy the moon and stars without identifying them as "astronomical bodies." Judgment can relax and just watch the play. It's fun. He feels free, and so he feels like he could do this forever. When judgment relaxes and calms so he can simply feel disinterested pleasure (rather than fixing gadgets to exact boxes), he pumps out aesthetic judgments and, if that judgment belongs to a person who has developed a certain skill in a craft, he could communicate that experience of beauty through artworks.

So, in this perspective it's not understanding that's doing, it's judgment. And it's possible to let the boxes go empty and to just enjoy patterns (or forms) of

intuition without naming them. It's possible because concepts don't do anything. The factory worker (judgment) is the one who decides to take a concept off the shelf or not. Imagination brings intuitions together and can use the intuitions to play with concepts in free (not literal) ways (like seeing animals in the clouds). Judgment enjoys the play and enjoys witnessing the patterns (forms) themselves of the intuitions.

Judgment can still feel like life in the factory as drudgery, though. He might still ask himself at some point, "is there any higher meaning to life?" Thankfully, outside and behind the factory of "Understanding" is a temple called "Reason" and judgment can visit anytime to answer those kinds of questions.

The inside of the temple is sublime. There's an ancillary room inside called "Metaphysics" but the central space is called "Ethics." Inside the "Metaphysics" room is a library filled with books called "ideas" about what might exist beyond existence—they're ideas, not realities. Judgment can read about those ideas like about God, soul, freedom.

Inside "Ethics," the chapel area, is an altar called "Moral Law." The altar represents the freedom that may exist beyond existence. To feel the freedom of beyond, judgment must abide by the Moral Law in his actions. The idea is, the more judgment abides by the Moral Law, the more judgment can taste (not just speculate about) freedom.

My overall point is, judgment is the actor, not understanding. Not only is the power of judgment the same as the power of thinking, but the power of thinking is the same as the power to choose. Judgment can choose to fix gadgets into

their correct boxes, or he can choose to take a break, or he can choose to visit the temple outside the factory and abide by the Moral Law. As thinker and chooser, perhaps even consciousness (I'll explain below), judgment mediates Understanding and Reason, especially when he's on break working for himself. In these aesthetic judgments, concepts and ideas can interact with each other.

If I may, let me attempt one last illustration to demonstrate how that interaction between concepts and ideas is possible, and also to further illustrate how understanding "does" nothing during a reflective judgment. Again, understanding does nothing because understanding refers to concepts. Judgment is the actor. And when judgment reflects, it rests from knowing, allowing imagination to play with concepts (i.e., to not be bound and determined by them) as well as open up to ideas. Okay, this is an illustration of Kant's idea that intuitions are brought under understanding *in general*—this might be how that could look like.

Imagine a lantern that consists of a lamp and a flashlight attached.[133] The lantern as a whole represents judgment. The flashlight represents logical judgment and the lamp represents reflective judgment. The lamp can light up a whole room, but a flashlight brings specific objects (intuitions) into clarity. When we concentrate on a task, our attention narrows. This is like judgment fixing gadgets into their correct box. But when we watch a good movie, the flashlight no longer narrows on a specific object. We allow the flashlight to lose itself in the wider light of the lamp (though the flashlight may still shine in the background). In fact, not only does the flashlight become less specific in its scope, the lamp loses its

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[133] I got this image of a lamp with a flashlight attached from Serge Kahili King in his book *Mastering Your Hidden Self: A Guide to the Huna Way,* (Wheaton: Quest Books, 2006), 51.

awareness of anything outside the movie, too. This adds to our pleasure because we don't feel as confined anymore. A movie critic isn't so lucky, though. He has to dim the lamp and keep the flashlight in the foreground on certain aspects of the film such as performance and style.

But when the narrow scope of the flashlight loses itself in the wider scope of the lamp, we hear the melody of a song more and don't focus on its words so much. We sense angry body language and pay less attention to a person's "nice" sounding words. We sense what words express in a poem rather than take them literally. We sense the visual symbolism in, say, a Stanley Kubrick film without being conscious of the circular shapes he might use to express uneasiness. We become aware of color, shape, texture in an environment without having to name "mountain," "tree," "sky."

These two lights of judgment can work together, too. A martial artist can focus on his opponent while being aware of the whole environment. A good driver can engage in a conversation while being aware of other cars and pedestrians in general.

The point is, the flashlight loses its narrow focus in the generalized light of the lamp, even though the flashlight still shines in the background. In logical judgments, the flashlight is focused so it can fix an object into a clear and distinct concept. In aesthetic judgments, the lamp widens its scope to allow patterns of intuitions by themselves to flow (i.e., shapes, rhythmic lines, symmetries, proportions, harmonies, gradation of light and shadows, colors) without our consciously naming them. The lamp's wide scope may even allow images, feelings, memo-

ries, perhaps concepts without content, and even “ideas” from Reason to flow, too. In the wider scope of an aesthetic judgment, concepts and ideas interact.

Again, the light of the whole lantern might be seen as consciousness, as light allows us to see. In an earlier section I said the disinterested pleasure of an aesthetic judgment is an activity of rest. This may be how. The light of consciousness still shines even when it rests during an aesthetic judgment. Judgment sees intuitions and its concepts or ideas and decides how to bring them together. So, subsumption—not always correct but still a kind of decision—is by judgment. Exact subsumption doesn’t matter as much in an aesthetic judgment. In any event, an aesthetic judgment might be general awareness and a logical judgment might be focused attention. Judgment can decide which light to use, logical or aesthetic, in addition decide how to apply its concepts to know and its ideas to act.

In either way, judgment shines its light on the external world and to a certain extent on the internal world (only to thoughts and feelings rooted in sensible experience). Again, judgment’s flashlight (logical judgment) has a narrow scope and determines facts. Its lamp (aesthetic judgment) has a wider scope—which allows a cascade of thoughts. When the lamp shines, the flashlight's narrow focus blends (and sometimes sinks) into its broader light.

So, the question isn’t what understanding is doing during an aesthetic judgment. Understanding (with a capital “U”) refers to rules, and understanding refers to concepts. The real question is what judgment is doing. And according to Kant, aesthetic judgment relaxes its logical capacity, allowing imagination, intuitions, concepts, and ideas freedom of play without filling concepts in a fixed way.

When I raised this question about what understanding does at the outset of this discussion, I said if judgment “does” anything “literal” (in the sense of knowing) during an aesthetic judgment, judgment knows it feels disinterested pleasure. That’s how judgment can tell whether an object is beautiful. And yes, judgment can have knowledge of this “internal” process because pleasure is a sensible experience. But outside knowledge of disinterested interest, aesthetic judgments know nothing, achieve nothing, consume nothing. There’s freedom involved in this disinterested pleasure. And an object becomes free from concept and utility, too.

But does that mean any and every object can be beautiful? No. Not all objects have a purposive form that makes us feel disinterested pleasure. Some object excite disgust. Some objects have a purposive form and return us to feeling disinterested pleasure *immediately*, without our having to think about it (in fact, we often don’t know why we feel it). But other times we have to put on the goggles of purposiveness, relax our logical judgment, and allow ourselves to feel disinterested pleasure at, say, the sight of a rose.

That is, I refrain from naming the rose. Even if I say “this rose is red,” I wouldn't experience the rose anymore. I also refrain from picking up the rose. If I picked up a rose, it would begin to die. Instead, I relax my ability to know and act so I can appreciate the rose. In that case I begin to approach it “morally,” as if it were an end-in-itself. Putting aside concepts and desire, I experience a kind of freedom, even when I feel stuck in the factory. And the more I exercise reflective judgment, the more I may look beyond the factory to seek the Moral Law.

c. Purposiveness Frees Our Imagination.

Third, Kant discusses how the form of purposiveness frees our imagination and how that is the pleasure itself. He does this by distinguishing between "free beauty" and "dependent beauty."

Dependent beauty is when we feel disinterested interest, but when we also have a concept of an object. To take the Bach example again, when a trained musician feels pleasure listening to the music and understands what makes it good, there's disinterested pleasure but also a concept is at work. He's dependent on a concept to enjoy the music.

Other examples of dependent beauty: when we see a beautiful person. We feel the beauty but we also know what the thing is. We know the concept. Dependent beauty is a combination of intellectual (or the good) and aesthetic judgment. If makeup on a pleasing face is a combination of the agreeable and the beautiful, then knowing what an object is, is a combination of the good and the beautiful. In both cases, these are examples of dependent beauties. They're less "pure" versions of beauty.

Free beauty is when we have no concept or knowledge of an object. The object represents nothing. It has no intrinsic meaning to us. Aristotle gave a wonderful example of this, again in his *Poetics*. In chapter 4, he describes someone who's never "seen the original, the pleasure will be due to… the execution, the

coloring, or some such cause,"[134] i.e., we still feel its beauty even if we don't know what the object is. To take an example from the sitcom *Seinfeld*, if a child hasn't met anyone like the character George Constanza yet, the child might still laugh at the "execution" of how Jason Alexander portrays the character without understanding the concept of why his portrayal is so funny. Again, we can look at an artwork without understanding it, but still feel its beauty.

Kant gives another excellent example to clarify the difference between free and dependent beauty. When we look at the beauty of a flower and also say, "that's the reproductive organ" we're reflecting on the object as dependent beauty. But when we look at a flower without concepts or labels and notice the rhythm of its meandering lines without the use of concepts, this is a purer aesthetic experience. It's free beauty.

Art teachers use a similar technique to help students learn how to draw. If students have a difficult time drawing a photograph of Einstein, for example, the teacher turns the photo upside down and has the student draw that. Students usually have a better time drawing the photo because they're no longer looking through concepts such as nose, eyes, mouth, hair. They're forced to pay attention just to the shapes without concepts. In a similar way, Kant argues that paying attention to shapes, lines, the relations between them without needing to know their intrinsic meaning is an aesthetic experience. Perhaps aesthetic judgment is what it means to look at the world like an artist and logical judgment would be to look at the world more like a scientist.

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[134] Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. S. H. Butcher (New York: Hill and Wang, 1961), 56, chapter 4.

Also, in the *General Remark* following his discussion of the four moments, Kant adds beauty doesn't derive from stiff regularity. Stiff regularity (close to mathematical regularity) lessens free play and contracts the imagination. We're also more apt to conceptualize. A charming example Kant gives of "stiff regularity" is a pepper garden with regular rows and parallel lines. Another example might be a plain white wall. Or perhaps a suburb. Or playing Bach's *Prelude in C minor* with such regularity (and without contour of line), it sounds like a washing machine. Beauty needs variety, spontaneity (as well as structure). Variety charms the imagination and gives imagination scope for play. A bird's song, for example, has more freedom and engages the imagination more than a human voice straining to meet strict rules. Too much mathematical regularity makes us grow tired. In addition to form, repetition, pattern, symmetry, motif, we need variety so the regularity doesn't become annoying. This is another paradox of beauty: beauty needs both structure and spontaneity.

In any event, free beauty gives more freedom to the imagination. This makes sense because if we're beholden to and dependent on concepts, the understanding and sensation isn't as free. Free from concepts, labels, words to contemplate purely the forms frees the imagination and understanding to play. That's the true aesthetic pleasure (or disinterested interest).

Once again, the free play of the imagination *is* the disinterested pleasure. Play doesn't cause it. "Losing one's self in the moment," so to speak *is* aesthetic

pleasure.[135] The two are synonymous, entwined, inseparable. If the pleasure were caused, it implies the activity happens and ends in a point of time, and the pleasure happens in another point of time and ends. In this view, the two are separate from each other. But sustained activity (feeling like you could do that activity forever) is what the disinterested pleasure is. Besides, if disinterested pleasure were caused, it would be dependent on an empirical experience, *a posteriori*, and not universal.

On a related note, why can't we be content with an Epicurean view of beauty as simply pleasant? That's "agreeable pleasure" where self-interest is involved. Personal pleasure isn't universal. The way we use the word "beauty" is to refer to an experience shared by everyone. For pleasure to be shared by everyone, it must be apart from personal preference. But more importantly, universal beauty will also allow Kant to argue later that beauty is related to the freedom and universality of the moral law.

d. "Ideal Beauty"

Fourth and last, Kant discusses where the "ideal" of beauty comes from, or what it is about the form of "purposiveness without purpose" that gives rise to disinterested interest. This is a difficult question to ask because to provide an ideal is to make beauty into a concept. Again, if beauty were conceptual, it would no longer be beautiful but mere knowledge.

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[135] When we're "in the moment," we lose track of time. In other words, we don't want the "state-of-mind" to end. This is one of the ways Kant defines the nature of pleasure, i.e., we want to persevere in that state.

Also, if we discovered this supposed ideal of beauty, it would allow aesthetic taste to be learned externally. We would learn it logically from an outside authority, like a teacher or book. The aesthetic experience wouldn't arise spontaneously in a Subject. That kind of ideal might be universal like a conceptual truth but it would no longer be subjective. And beauty must be both universal and subjective.

So Kant says we can't have an "external ideal" the way knowledge is external. Said another way, we can never know what underlies the appearance of a thing. So, ideal beauty can't rest on rules but only on the pleasure one feels when the imagination is at play. But there is one case where we can come close to understanding what it is about "purposiveness without purpose" that gives rise to disinterested interest.

Before Kant reveals what this case is, he asks if we arrive at this "ideal of beauty" *a priori* or empirically? In other words, is the ideal learned, or are we born with a type of internal compass that helps us determine what's beautiful? Kant's answer: beauty is *a priori*, the ability to judge aesthetically is born in every human. That looks ahead to the fourth moment, but for now Kant tells us in what case we can come close to understanding what it is about the form of "purposiveness without purpose" that gives rise to disinterested interest.

The beautiful object we can come to understand the ideal of beauty in is in the human being, as we're human ourselves. To explain, Kant contrasts an "**aesthetic normal idea**" with an "**aesthetic rational idea**."

The “aesthetic **normal** idea” comes from the play between imagination and understanding, and it’s empirical. Through experience and having many intuitions of human beings, we come to sense an ideal of beauty in the average. That is, if we average 1000s of human faces, the ideal of beauty is the mean between them all. We come to this ideal not through rules or concepts but through experience. It’s as if we imagine an archetype of form underlying the 1000s of particulars, and we respond to the archetype.

The “aesthetic **rational** ideal” (i.e., an idea from reason) comes from the play between imagination and reason and may be purer. When there’s a visible expression of moral ideas governing a person inwardly—whether it’s benevolence, equanimity, strength, femininity—we feel beauty. So we feel the beauty of a woman because she expresses a certain moral idea. Same with the beauty of a man. Batman may be aesthetic in the sublime way he demonstrates courage. Catwoman may be aesthetic in the feminine way she moves, or when she decides to help a fellow human in need even though she’d rather steal that diamond. This kind of “rational” ideal of beauty is found only with humans because according to Kant the human is the animal that deals with moral choices. “Aesthetic rational ideas,” then, come less from the form and more from (rational) “ideas.” And the pleasure we feel derives from imagination in a free play with reason.

The point is, we relate to the form of purposiveness by feeling free play of imagination. That play is the disinterested interest that every human feels inter-

nally. Kant's last moment of modality is the climax, the sum of the previous three moments. Beauty is an "aesthetic sense" every human has.

4. Fourth Moment of Modality: Common Sense

Modality is a logical classification that asserts or denies the a) possibility, b) impossibility, c) contingency, or d) necessity of a proposition. Of these, Kant's fourth moment claims the mode of beauty is *necessary*. But beauty has a special kind of necessity.

Beauty isn't theoretically necessary or practically necessary. It's not theoretically necessary because aesthetic judgments produce no universal knowledge. It's not practically necessary because aesthetic judgments produce no ethical action. But beauty is still necessary. It's necessary in the sense that if a person describes something as beautiful, everyone *ought* to agree. The universal agreement doesn't derive from concepts or from experience. Everyone must agree on their own volition. Each person feels disinterested pleasure without being told. Beauty is aesthetically necessary because it makes a person aware of the purposive form in an object.

Again, the assent of beauty is subjective but it's necessarily universal. When we describe something as beautiful we say no one else can be of a different opinion, yet this "opinion" rests on a subjective feeling. In other words, beauty isn't a private feeling, but a public feeling. This isn't to say everyone *will* agree. A few might feel so anxious at a given moment, they can't enjoy a sunrise. Rather, this is to say everyone *ought* to agree with us. That is, the anxious person can

still feel beauty if the anxiety (or interest) wasn't there. So, beauty is necessary and universal. In fact, the necessity says more about us humans than an "object" of beauty. It says an aesthetic judgment is a "common sense."

Common sense here doesn't mean logic or know-how, the way we usually use the term "common sense." Kant calls that "common understanding." For Kant, common sense means every human has an aesthetic ability that operates in the same way. Said another way, every human being can sense beauty, as if the ability to see beauty is part of our hardware as human beings. To be human is to have an aesthetic sense. To be human is to sense the supersensible underlying the sensible realm.

I use the term "aesthetic sense" because Shaftesbury used that term, and this idea most likely is a borrowing of that idea. As we had discussed, Shaftesbury's idea is, each human person is born with an aesthetic (and moral) sense at birth, *a priori*. Kant seems to follow him in asserting that if each animal has a unique gift, perhaps the human gift is the ability to sense beauty. Kant will argue that beauty is a symbol of morality. We'll see how in a moment. For now, this aesthetic sense may be the beginning of our ability to know and to act morally and Kant hints it may also bridge these two powers together.

i. Kant's Proof of Common Sense.

Kant develops the idea of common sense after discussing the sublime in sections 30-40. Then he turns once more to common sense after discussing fine art and genius in sections 55-58. Common sense sets up his claim in the final

two sections of “Critique of Aesthetic Judgment,” 59 and 60, that beauty is a “symbol” of morality, and the mediating link between theory and practice.

The reason he spends extra time developing common sense is because it sums up all four Moments. By arguing that common sense exists in every human, Kant argues beauty is valid, i.e., both universal and subjective. If he can argue this convincingly he can resolve the antagonism between freedom and determinism and link theory and practice together. He planted the seeds of his argument already in his initial discussion of the Four Moments. But here’s how he develops his argument further.

In general, judgments are mental acts that bring a particular (e.g. my dog Elsa) under a universal (e.g. a golden retriever). As we discussed already, Kant’s earlier work suggested our ability to judge was as a mere processor. In aesthetic judgments, judgment now has a principle of it own, purposiveness.

Purposiveness allows us to listen. Normally, we don’t approach an object as purposive. More often we use judgment to know and to make choices. For example, we apply some universal to a particular and we’re done. But in the case of the beautiful, we’re not done so fast—there’s no concept involved so we can’t just apply a concept and be done with it. An object of beauty or approaching an object aesthetically makes us stop, look and listen. This makes sense. We become aware of the object as something more than its appearance. Like Shaftesbury might have said, that’s the beginning of curiosity and morality.

Kant’s four moments set limitations on aesthetic judgments. The first limitation: aesthetic judgments must involve no self-interest. We feel pleasure but we

don't want to consume or to possess. The second limitation: aesthetic judgments must be universal yet subjective. It's a subjective feeling that doesn't look through the lens of a concept yet it's a feeling that also belongs to every person. The third limitation: the object's form seems like it has purpose but it's a purpose we can never know or use. The fourth limitation: the beautiful is an aesthetic instinct or "common sense" every human has. We all have the ability *a priori* to see beauty, even if self-interest might sometimes blind us to it.

"Common sense" belongs to each human because the faculties of understanding, imagination, and sensibility are involved—and those faculties are present in *every* human *a priori*. So, the existence of "common sense" hinges on the universality of understanding and imagination, and the free play between them. In other words, all of us have understanding and imagination. All of us experience the play between these. That makes beauty universally valid. Said another way, the same universal faculties involved in cognition are also involved in aesthetic judgments, except they're in play or at rest rather than in labor. Beauty is the yin (rest) and cognition is the yang (work). Let me take a moment to underscore this point, because it's an important one.

Understanding, imagination, and sensibility are present *a priori* in all human beings. In cognitions, i.e., when we come to know something, understanding and imagination labor: we subsume intuitions under concepts. In aesthetic judgments, the same understanding and imagination are involved. The difference is, rather than the two laboring, the two are playing. So, those universal activities are still involved in beauty—making beauty as universally valid as cognitions.

Again, beauty releases us from cognitive labor. It's like a holiday. But there's as much value in this as in cognition. Cognitive labor is limiting: to arrive at truth as we must accurately subsume facts (intuitions) under their appropriate categories. But in beauty, we're allowed to go outside the "lines" (so to speak) of fact. The "free play" we feel in aesthetic judgments produces a cascade of thoughts and feelings. And it's so pleasurable, we don't want that state-of-mind to end.

Here's the other crucial value of free play. Free play recognizes the supersensible underlying the sensible. This may be another paradox of beauty. In beauty we see the sensible and supersensible not divorced from each other, but bound as a unity. This in turn allows reason (looking beyond to the supersensible realm of freedom) and understanding (looking around us in the sensible realm of determinism) to interact with each other.

But Kant's point about common sense is this. Beauty is a subjective pleasure that's universal to everyone. Again, how?

Imagination, sensibility, understanding, reason, play belong to everyone. These are universals. The play happens in the recognition of the supersensible underlying the sensible. That's universal, too. The pleasure we feel in the play of our cognitive faculties having recognized the supersensible is apart from self-interest. Interest that's not selfish (or a personal preference) is also universal. Therefore, beauty is universal and the common sense—the ability to experience beauty—exists in every human being.

Moreover, common sense is universal because it bridges theory and practice for every human being. When we want to know, we apply understanding to nature, but knowledge is limited to sensible nature. When we want to decide, we apply reason to the moral law of the supersensible realm, and in the process we become freer from the sensible realm. Common sense (aesthetic judgment) looks at a sensible object that could be determined by our concepts but instead looks at it with a sense of freedom (free play is free after all). And we use *all* faculties: understanding, imagination, judgment, and reason. Appreciating a beautiful object is like understanding but not quite, and is like reason but not quite. That's why aesthetic reflection allows reason and understanding to interact.

Reason gets especially involved in our experience of "the sublime." Unfortunately, space prevents me from delving into this exciting idea (as well as Kant's intriguing ideas about how fine art is created). Let's then skip to the climax of the "Critique of Aesthetic Judgment": how Kant links beauty with morality.

CHAPTER 5.

"BEAUTY AS THE SYMBOL OF MORALITY"

In section 59 where Kant says that beauty is a symbol of morality, Kant begins by defining what a symbol is first.

A. Defining symbol

1. Hypotyposis

Kant writes that "symbol" falls under the broader heading of "hypotyposis." *Hypotyposis* comes from the Greek *hypo*, "under" and *typosis*, "mold." *Hypotyposis*, then, is a "presentation" or a sensible illustration. To give a clearer meaning Kant distinguishes "hypotyposis" from a "mark." Marks (or signs) include words and numbers. They re-invoke a concept without an intuition. But a *hypotyposis* links a concept with an intuition. Kant next divides *hypotyposis* into two, "schemata" and "symbols."

2. Schemata vs. Symbols

Schemata are direct presentations of a concept, i.e., empirical intuitions of a concept. In other words, they're concrete examples to illustrate a concept. But symbols are different.

Symbols are *indirect* presentations of a concept. In other words, rather than *demonstrate* symbols directly, symbols use *analogy*. As a symbol, an intuition performs a double function.

First, an intuition and a concept are "thrown" together. The word symbol comes from the Greek *sym* "with" (or together) and *ballein* "to throw." So, the etymology aligns with Kant's view that an intuition and concept are thrown together. But in the second function, a symbol differs from a schema.

Second, the rule of an intuition is applied to another concept so that we can better see the rule of the concept, specifically a rational concept. We need symbols on behalf of rational concepts. Some ideas can't be verified with examples from objective reality—because no intuition of a rational idea can be given. So, symbols use intuitions to present rational ideas indirectly, again by analogy.

3. Examples of Symbols

The example (or in Kant's terms a "schema") Kant gives to illustrate symbols is of a monarchical state. When governed justly by constitutional laws, we use the intuition (or image) of a living body to represent it. On the other hand, when governed unjustly by an individual's absolute will, we might use the intuition (or image) of a machine or hand-mill to represent that. These aren't direct one-to-one examples. There's no direct likeness between a despotic state and a hand-mill. But when reflecting on the "rule" of a hand-mill we understand the "rule" of a despotic state better.

Other examples Kant uses: using the word “ground” to mean basis. Using the word “flow” rather than “follow.” Calling trees “majestic and stately,” plains “laughing and gay,” colors “innocent, modest, soft.”

Again, symbols express concepts using intuitions by analogy, indirectly. It’s difficult to describe the nature of “yellow” to a blind person, but by using the analogous sensations of “warm” it eases the task. Again, we use symbols to express ideas where no concept or intuition could correspond. But by transferring reflection of an intuition to a rational idea, we better sense what the rational idea is.[136]

Interestingly, Kant says God can only be represented symbolically. God can’t be known through the properties of the understanding, like an objective reality, like a direct demonstration of beings in the world. We use the word God as a symbol, an analogy, a label for what transcends intuitions and what is maximum. But to take the symbol God as a literal intuition is to commit the error of anthropomorphism—projecting ourselves onto what’s larger than ourselves, thus limiting it. “God” is just a symbol that points to something higher than us. Beauty also is a symbol that points us to the morally good.

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[136] As a parenthetical comment, Freud took Schelling’s idea of the *unconscious* and claimed it (the unconscious) communicated by means of symbols. For example, in dreams an image may appear to a dreamer that represents an underlying wish or fear (feelings that are deeper than concepts). Jung went a step further and thought the symbols that make up myth—he called them archetypes—spring from the *collective unconscious*. Finally, Nietzsche thought the Apollonian principle of art springs from the dreaming state of existence—implying fine art also uses symbols. The point is, dreams, myths, and the arts may use symbols because “rational ideas” can’t be presented any other way.

B. How beauty symbolizes morality

The morally good belongs to rational ideas to which no intuition is adequate. The beautiful belongs to the realm of intuitions but points us toward something higher than mere intuitions. Through beautiful intuitions, we're elevated above mere sensibility, above mere self-interested pleasure, above mere impressions. Beauty, like a sign—something visible to all—is like an arrow pointing up (or down towards the depths, i.e., whatever is beyond appearance).

The beautiful also links understanding and reason together.

In other words, aesthetic judgment brings our higher cognitive faculties into accord. Said another way, aesthetic judgments don't separate understanding and reason from each other, shutting off one in favor for the other. Rather, aesthetic judgment brings them into accord. Again, in science we rely on understanding to focus on external phenomena and we often shut off reason (to stay close to evidence). In ethics, we rely more on reason, focus on internal freedom (or noumena) to transcend "scientific" understanding (and evidence). But in reflective judgment understanding, reason, and judgment are all on at the same time, in accord.

Here's another way of saying that. When the faculty of judgment isn't working to understand or isn't working for reason to see beyond, but works for itself on its own terms, aesthetic judgment neither tries to determine nature nor determine the right course of action. Yet it includes both external nature and internal freedom. So, in beauty we experience the supersensible and the sensible bound into one, a single unity. Phenomena and noumena are no longer dichoto-

mous. Neither are reason and understanding shut off from each other. As a quick side note, there's an analogous idea in the Buddhist idea of the Eight-fold path.

1. Comparison with the Eightfold Path

The eight practices in Buddha's Fourth Noble Truth are often listed in a linear way, but they operate more like a circle, entwined. Aesthetic judgment seems to link understanding and reason in a similar way. Here's the analogy.

The eight practices can be divided into three headings: (a) Wisdom or the intellect, (b) Ethical Conduct or the heart, (c) Mental Discipline or the attitude underlying wisdom and ethical conduct.[137] "Wisdom" encompasses Right Understanding and Right Thought. Like Kant's understanding (and reason in its metaphysical function), the focus of these two practices is to understand. "Compassion" encompasses Right Action, Right Speech, and Right Livelihood. Like Kant's reason, the three practices focus on action and relating with fellow beings. "Mental discipline" encompasses Right Mindfulness (or Attention), Right Effort, and Right Concentration. Like Kant's judgment, these three practices focus neither on understanding nor on action but are a kind of listening. Likewise, Kant's beautiful is a type of reflectiveness, a "paying attention to," or listening.

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[137] Walpola Rahula, *What The Buddha Taught* (New York: Grove Press, 1974), 46-7.

Table 5.1. Buddha's Eightfold Path vs. Kant's Three Faculties

Buddha's Eightfold Path	Kant's Three Faculties
A. Wisdom (or intellect) 1. Right Understanding 2. Right Thought	A. Understanding (knowledge) and Reason (metaphysics) or Logical Judgment
B. Ethical Conduct (or the heart) 3. Right Action 4. Right Speech 5. Right Livelihood	B. Reason (ethics) or Moral Judgment
C. Mental Discipline (or attitude) 1. Right Mindfulness (or attention) 2. Right Effort 3. Right Concentration	C. Reflective Judgment (aesthetics)

Most importantly, Mental Discipline bridges Wisdom and Ethical Conduct together. Reflective judgment neither understands, nor chooses. Rather it listens without concepts to see a thing *as if* it were a "thing-in-itself." Reflectiveness is involved when we understand as well as when we act. Aesthetic judgment links them together in a similar way that attitude links intellect and heart in the eight-fold path.

Kant ends section 59 ("Beauty as the symbol of morality") by showing four ways beauty is analogous with the good, while taking care to show their differences, too.

C. Comparing Morality with Beauty

Interestingly these four ways look like Kant's four moments:

Table 5.2. Beauty vs. Morality—Similarities and Differences

Beauty's Difference	Similarities between Beauty and Morality	Morality's Difference
Reflective judgment seeks purposiveness	Purposiveness and the moral law are *a priori* and *autonomous*	Reason seeks the moral law
No action	Drop self-interest	Interest in achieving a moral end
Freedom of imagination	Freedom	Freedom of will
Pleasure	Universally valid yet subjective	Action/Choice

1. The beautiful isn't an *a posteriori* empirical law. As we saw, beauty can't be based on experience, because each person has different experiences from each other. Kant is after something universal that precedes experience. In this way judgment is like reason as reason also gives the law to itself to allow us to act ethically. If the two things that filled Kant's mind with awe were the "starry heavens above and the moral law within," he may have added "the 'aesthetic law' within," too.[138]

Wittgenstein would later say something similar—but in parentheses—at the end of his *Tractatus*: "ethics and aesthetics are one." In other words, both

[138] Attribution goes to Michael Howard, my thesis advisor, for the following observation. Kant's term "awe" could refer to aesthetic experience, possibly of the sublime. In either case Kant's famous sentence (from the *Critique of Practical Reason*) here encapsulates the entire aim of the third critique. His aesthetic experience is the awakening to both knowledge (the starry heavens above) and ethics (the moral law within). It underlies both.

beauty and the good belong to the realm of value rather than fact. Likewise, beauty is *synthetic a priori* rather than *synthetic a posteriori*.

But **the difference** between morality and beauty is, where reflective judgment reflects on purposiveness, reason reflects on the moral law. In both cases, though, they please *immediately*. That is, they're autonomous (internal and free) rather than heteronomous (external and gratifying).

2. The beautiful pleases without interest. Like morality, we drop our self-interest in moments of the beautiful. But **the difference** is, in beauty there's no desire to act but in morality there's interest in achieving a moral end. In morality, though, this kind of interest isn't a gratifying kind of interest the way "delight" is.

3. The beautiful frees our imagination and understanding. In other words, in the beautiful we experience a freedom that's similar to the freedom underlying the categorical imperative. Said still another way, when we free ourselves from self-interest, we become freer human beings. **The difference** is, where the freedom of the will is in harmony with the universal moral laws of reason in morality, it's the imagination that's free, in accord with understanding in the beautiful and with reason (after a conflict) in the sublime. Also, purposiveness is free.

4. The beautiful is valid for every human even though it's also subjective. Similarly, the moral law of reason is universal and valid for every human, as the categorical imperative is universal but the choice is always a subjective one. **The difference** is, what's universal in beauty is pleasure and what's universal in morality is the moral action and choice.

The beautiful, then, operates like morality. Even more, the beautiful prepares us for a moral state-of-mind. Disinterested interest puts aside self-gratification in the same way that following the categorical imperative does. In other words, beauty excites us, but in a way analogous with a moral state-of-mind.

The famous image from Plato's *Symposium* comes to mind here. Socrates quotes Diotima saying a youth begins life lusting after beautiful bodies. But if Eros leads him right, in a step-by-step fashion, he begins to see the beauty of one body is brother to the beauty of other bodies. When he realizes that, he stops trying to "get" one body and begins to value The Beautiful underlying all beautiful bodies instead. As Plato says, this gives "birth to ideas as will make young men better. The result is that our lover will be forced to gaze at the beauty of activities and laws,"[139] the realm of ethics. Kant seems to say a similar thing. After a person takes the step from wanting to possess a "body" for his own self-gratification towards seeking the Beautiful itself, he's prepared to take the next step into the moral realm.

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[139] Plato, *Symposium*, 210c in *Plato: Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper and D.S. Hutchinson, *Symposium* trans. Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff, (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1997), 492-493.

Disinterested interest "pays attention to" the sensible realm without needing to self-gratify. This allows us to transition from the realm of sense to the supersensible realm of morality "without too violent a leap,"[140] as Kant says. Once again, beauty in nature and in fine art produce a mind-state we can take into our relationships, as well as our polity.

D. Implications of "Beauty as Symbol of Morality"

Ted Cohen draws a fascinating implication in his essay, "Why Beauty is a Symbol of Morality." His question: "why is beauty a symbol of morality and not the other way around?"[141] Before I get into his answer, let me give a quick backdrop to his question.

Kant's philosophical aesthetics is rare. Cohen says in general, philosophies of art and beauty are preoccupied with the relationship between beauty and morality. Philosophers usually reduce beauty to morality, i.e., beauty is really a moral good. We see this in Plato, Hume, Collingwood, Tolstoy. Less common are philosophers who reduce morality to an aesthetic experience, such as Nietzsche, Dewey, and to a certain extent Heidegger. But rarest is the philosopher who doesn't reduce one to the other—who sees morality and beauty come together. Aristotle and Kant are representatives.[142]

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[140] Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 225, section 59.

[141] Ted Cohen, Why Beauty Is A Symbol Of Morality," in *Essays in Kant's Aesthetics*, Ted Cohen and Paul Guyer, ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982, 222.

[142] Ibid., 221.

So, if that's true, then why is beauty a symbol of morality for Kant, and why isn't morality a symbol of beauty?

I'll put Cohen's answer in the following format:

1. Moral judgments are indeterminate, even to one's self. Freedom has no "marks"—so, there's no concrete way to represent good will directly.

2. Aesthetic judgments can be known to one's self through disinterested pleasure. And a beautiful object has "marks," but it's undetermined by a concept.

Conclusion: Therefore, a beautiful object (known but indeterminate) can indirectly represent a good will (*un*known and indeterminate). But a good will (un-known and indeterminate) has no "marks" to symbolize beauty with.

Let me unpack that. It may offer the final hint to how beauty binds Kant's critical philosophy together.

1. Moral judgments are indeterminate.

Morality is a matter of will.[143] Our will acts in pursuit of external ends—to realize an effect. So, how can we know if an end is good? According to Kant, if the will is truly good then both the means and the end will be good. But how is that possible? Either the good end doesn't lie outside the good will (i.e., they're the same) or there is no such thing as an unqualified good will.

Kant believes there is moral reality and that there is an unqualified good will. But in that case, a good end can't lie outside the good will. This sounds strange but if there is such a thing as an unqualified good end, it would have to

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[143] Ibid., 227.

be a good will willing itself. The ends and the means wouldn't lie outside the good. The good will would will to will itself.[144] In that view, a good end has no conditions. And again, an end doesn't lie outside an absolutely good will.

How could we ever find a will like this? In the real world, the end of every living being is outside of itself—every will pursues external ends. True, Kant would say. We can never have a direct experience of good will in the sensible realm. That's why morality (or the unqualified good will) needs a symbol. Without a symbol, we would have no concrete way to experience what a good will is like.[145]

Here's another question Kant asks about moral action. How do we judge whether a moral action is truly good? The short answer is, we can't. To judge a moral action we must know what the motive (or will) of that agent was. But it gets worse. We can't even know our own motives. Our own motives and intentions are opaque to us, unknown—much the way Freud thought our motives are unclear to ourselves, buried deep in our unconscious.[146] Kant says morality has an "objective necessity"—we have to assume absolute freedom to act morally—but can never know absolute freedom itself.[147] If a person acts out of the moral law, their will becomes free. But we can never judge if a person's act is truly moral because we can't see other people's wills, their motives, or even our own.

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[144] Ibid., 230.

[145] Ibid.

[146] Ibid., 233.

[147] Ibid., 227.

Freedom, then, isn't a concept that can be known like "that's a tree." Freedom is an idea that's forever unknown to us. Another way of saying this is, concepts have concrete "marks," but ideas have no marks. An idea remains indeterminate (non-sensible) always. The intuition "tree" can be subsumed under the concept "tree," but no sensible object can be subsumed under an idea like freedom. An idea has no instance—so, we can only present it indirectly as a symbol. Enter beautiful objects.[148]

2. Aesthetic judgments are indeterminate yet known

Moral judgments have an "objective necessity" but are unknown. Aesthetic judgments have a "subjective necessity" and can be known. This is great news. Beauty isn't a property of an object but a feeling in the subject. We can determine beauty by how I feel towards an object (do I feel disinterested pleasure?) and whether that feeling coincides with the "idea" of a "universal voice."[149]

But we can't say, "this rose is beautiful" in the moment because then we would be conceptualizing the rose. In the moment we can only feel disinterested pleasure. That leads to an even better piece of news. No concept can be applied to the beautiful.[150] The word "beautiful" is a concept. Why is that even better news?

A beautiful object appears to us like an object of knowledge does because (unlike freedom) both have concrete "marks." Yet unlike an object of knowledge,

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[148] Ibid., 233.

[149] Ibid., 224.

[150] Ibid., 223.

a beautiful object isn't determined by a concept. With a beautiful object, we now have something like a bridge between phenomena and noumena. We have a direct, sensible object that's also undetermined.

Now, Kant has one more thing to say about how we can determine whether something is beautiful. We also know something is beautiful when it has the form of purposiveness.

An object is purposive when it could be known as or used for some purpose but we don't know it or use it. For example, we could use a beautifully crafted sword in battle, but in a moment of beauty we don't. That moment of beauty is like an unqualified good will that doesn't pursue an external end outside itself. So, a beautiful object is like good will. We experience what a good (free) will is like in our experiences of beauty.

3. Therefore, beauty symbolizes good will

So to ask Cohen's question again: why can beauty symbolize morality, but morality can't symbolize beauty?

A good (free) will can't be known—even our own motives are opaque to ourselves. Freedom is an idea. It has no concrete marks for understanding to determine. A beautiful object, on the other hand, does have marks—and we can know beauty through our feelings, even if understanding can't conceptualize beauty. Beauty is undetermined like freedom yet it appears to us in the concrete as if it could be determined. So, freedom can't symbolize morality because it

can't be presented directly. But beauty *can* symbolize morality because it appears as an object that's both present to us directly and free.[151]

Cohen asks one more question at the end of his essay. If beauty is a symbol of morality, is beauty like good will itself or is beauty like having good will? Is it meeting good will or having good will?

Cohen argues, both. He cites Kant's moral theory as his rationale. Kant's moral theory (especially in the second "Humanity formulation" of the categorial imperative[152]) covers respect for another *and* respect for one's self. So in beauty, we feel respect for an object as something to reflect on (not used) *and* we feel disinterested interest in ourselves.

So, we find a parallel of the moral experience in the experience of beauty. Not only that, but Cohen notices that Kant says beauty is THE symbol of morality. That is, *only* the experience of beauty stands for the moral experience. Why?

Once again, because freedom is indeterminate and unknown it can never represent the beautiful. But because beauty is indeterminate and known, we can experience what it's like to have a good will *and* to meet good will. Only an aesthetic judgment of beauty offers that kind of experience.

We're now in a position to answer Kant's overarching question: how does beauty resolve the dualism in his philosophy?

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[151] Ibid., 233.

[152] Second "**Humanity Formula**": "Act in such a way that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never merely as a means to an end, but always at the same time as an end." -Immanuel Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*.

CHAPTER 6.

UNITY OF PHILOSOPHY

We can engage an object in three ways: for gratification, for knowledge, and for action.[153] We can drink a glass of cold water on a hot day and take sensory pleasure in it. We can determine what kind of thing water is and gain knowledge about it. We can use water as an action to feed plants, provide for a family, community, and members of our species who don't have access to any.

But in an aesthetic judgment, Kant eliminates all three ways. In the beautiful, we're not gratified. We don't determine an object to gain knowledge about it. We don't use an object for some purpose. Yet at the same time a judgment of beauty incorporates elements of all three. We feel pleasure but it's disinterested pleasure. We see an object as if it could be determined and known but we don't. We could use the object for some purpose but we don't. This isn't surprising as Kant defined the beautiful in four paradoxes, or unities of opposites.

So, here's one answer to how beauty may resolve the antagonism between freedom and determinism. From a "theoretical" perspective, we see the natural world as determined by natural laws. From a "practical" perspective, we assume free will. From either one of those perspectives, theory or practice, we see dualism and an antagonism. But from the perspective of the beautiful, we experience freedom and determinism together at once, as a unity.

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[153] Cohen, 230.

Let me put that in another way.

In an aesthetic judgment, we don't apply a concept (i.e., a label) to an object. That enables a beautiful object to belong to sensible determinism *and* supersensible freedom. The object (obviously) belongs to the sensible realm because it appears to us as a phenomenon. It has "marks," it's concrete, as if it were a determined object. But when we look at that object as beautiful we don't determine it as a concept. The object becomes purposive.

In the last chapter we saw how Kant thinks a "purposive" object symbolizes morality. That is, a beautiful object symbolizes good (free) will—what's beyond appearance or the supersensible, where freedom resides. But that doesn't mean we see free will itself in a beautiful object. It only means we *experience* freedom indirectly, by analogy. We experience freedom in ourselves when our cognitive faculties are thrown into free play, and we meet freedom because the beautiful object is free from determinism. The beautiful object allows us to taste what freedom may be like even though the object is sensible and could be determined.

That's why the term "purposive" is so crucial to Kant's aesthetics. Purposive means a beautiful object can be used as an object with purpose in the phenomenal world or it can be known. But when we see an object as beautiful we refrain from using it or knowing it. A purposive object then becomes like morality where we respect a thing as an end rather than as a means. As purposive, a beautiful object stands for both the sensible and the supersensible realms at the same time. We experience freedom and determinism together.

But what does this mean in the real world, and how is this even possible? One answer might be that freedom and nature share the same substrate, so an aesthetic judgment is responding to that. Kant says this in Introduction IX:

> the ground that determines the causality of things of nature . . . at the same time also in unison with the formal principle of the laws of reason—a ground which, while its possibility is impenetrable, may still be completely cleared of the charge of contradiction that it is alleged to have.

Kant applies a footnote to that sentence. He says:

> One of the various supposed contradictions in this complete distinction of the causality of nature from that through freedom . . . is easily avoided . . . The resistance is not between nature and freedom, but between the former (nature) as phenomenon and the effects of the latter (freedom) as phenomena in the world of sense. . . . the causality of freedom is the causality of a natural cause subordinated to freedom . . .

If my reading of those two passages is correct, then the antagonism between freedom and determinism isn't real. The "contradiction" rises from our perspective, from our being unable to access the supersensible realm. Let me give an image to illustrate what I think Kant means.

We see a horse as it appears to us, as the "phenomenon" of a horse. But the horse is also a thing-in-itself, more than its appearance. We can't see the horse-in-itself because we're limited by our understanding. That doesn't mean there's a contradiction between horse-as-appearance and horse-as-thing-in-itself. If the illusion arises, it's only because our understanding is limited by the intuitions of time and space, and other *a priori* categories of understanding. In other words, the dualism has to do with us, not with reality. But there's hope. In our experience of the beautiful, we're given a hint that the horse is more than its con-

cept, more than mere appearance. We see the horse as possibly determined and also undetermined—as a sensible object but also as an end-in-itself.

Now, Kant says something else in the above passage. He says the cause (or "law") of freedom is also the cause (or "law") of nature. This may be a controversial reading of the passage, but if the moral law is also the law of freedom, then wouldn't that also mean the law of nature is the moral law? Again, only if my reading is correct, there may be a parallel between that passage and Shaftesbury. For Shaftesbury, the natural law harmonizes the various organisms into a whole in the same way the moral law harmonizes persons into a community. Like Plato's Demiurge stamping a structure modeled after The Good onto chaos, nature may be determined but its natural laws come from someplace higher, the moral law. That's just speculation. But maybe aesthetic judgment responds to truth (order) referring us deeper to its roots, to the good?

That may be risky to say, but this is my point. If the sensible substrate shares the same substrate as the supersensible realm, then freedom and determinism aren't antagonistic to each other, they're parts of the same reality. The horse is free but also abides by natural laws. A piece of music is determined by number, but also sings with freedom. In fact, the stronger the structure, the more freely music can sing (we can't dance across a rickety bridge). Determinism and freedom aren't dichotomous but one. The beautiful tells us there's more below the horse's appearance than meets the eye, and there's more below an artwork's appearance than meets the eye. Appearance vs. thing-in-itself aren't separate forces but poles on a continuum.

So, the “unity of opposites” that is reality might make our experience of the beautiful possible. That unity isn’t abstract speculation. Maybe Kant wants to say that beauty is a concrete experience hinting at the possible existence of freedom, a freedom not divided from nature. And every one of us can experience beauty.

The unity of philosophy may mean something else in the real world, besides a revelation into the nature of reality. It might also reveal something about our humanity.

Taking his three critiques together, Kant seems to think basic humanity shows itself in three activities:[154] to know (or to make sense of things), to influence things (through action), and to see beauty (which can be communicated universally as art through a craft). Aesthetic judgment is an emblem of all three.

Here again we could possibly see the influence of Shaftesbury on Kant.

Common sense—in Kant’s narrow meaning of “aesthetic instinct”—could be seen as the ground of humanity. That is, we first see unity, the whole. From that vision of beauty we can now go in one of those three directions. We can determine an object for knowledge. We can act in ways that are respectful to ourselves and others. And we can open ourselves to the “ideas” of “reason” to create artworks that in turn remind the rest of humanity of the beautiful. Ideas, concepts, and imagination interact with each other in our common sense.

The following graph may help review what we’ve discussed throughout this thesis, and illustrate what Kant’s unity might look like.

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[154] Cohen, 235. Cohen originally said he “believe(s) Kant thought essential humanity shows in two things we do: make sense of objects and act to influence objects.” But after reading Kant’s section on fine art in the third critique, I can’t see why Kant wouldn’t add making art.

Table 6.1. The Unity of Philosophy

Determinism - Looking at an object	**Aesthetics - Looking at an object**	**Freedom - Looking at an "object"**
Phenomenon as having an External Purpose	Phenomenon as Purposive	Noumenon as having an Internal Purpose
Appears	Thing appears but as if a thing-in-itself	Thing-in-itself
Sensible	Sensible yet undetermined (like the supersensible)	Supersensible
See external object in **nature** literally—as concept or use	See external object as **art**—without concept or usefulness	See no external object—referred to **freedom** (within)
Purpose as a law to determine an object, in terms of function or concept	Purposiveness as an object that could be determined as a concept or a function; and also purposiveness as an end an object wills for but which we can't see	Purpose as an end which the will strives for which we can't see

Understanding - In our minds	**Judgment - In our minds**	**Reason - In our minds**
Understanding applies the categories and concepts of our **Cognitive Powers to know**	Judgment applies the **Feeling of Pleasure or Displeasure to appreciate**—it especially uses disinterested interest, which can be known to us, but which concepts don't apply, so object remains undetermined	Reason applies **Desire** (or Free Will), which can't be known, **to act**
Understanding uses **a priori principle of Natural Law**	Judgment uses **a priori principle of Purposiveness**	Reason uses **a priori principle of Final End** (or moral law)

	The Unity	
Looking at a concrete object with marks that could be known or used…	…but not knowing the object or using it…	…is like seeing an object as an end-in-itself, and it's like having a free will that needs nothing
Therefore, understanding (to know)…	…can interact with…	…Will (which can't be known)
	They can reciprocally influence each other	
	Responding to the unity of appearance and will	

In fact, in the final section of “Critique of Aesthetic Judgment,” section 60, Kant suggests the beautiful (and fine art) can bridge “the more cultured and ruder sections of the community” together. He says the beautiful communicates universally and touches each person’s common sense. In the process we would educate “the universal feeling of sympathy” and learn to “communicate universally one’s inmost self.” If I’m not off in reading Kant that beauty is the ground of our humanity, then that could mean beauty helps our humanity flourish.

In a world where “dualisms” in thinking can tear communities apart; in a world where sometimes we feel there’s nothing higher than the sensible realm; in a world where concrete “jungles” don’t always allow for aesthetic experiences, Kant’s argument has relevance. Beauty is important. By relishing nature and creating artworks of beauty, we can help bring communities together, respect nature as an end,[155] open the imagination to play, and give a person hope there exists a purpose higher than what our senses can see.

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[155] I may develop this further in another paper.

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