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978-0-521-34447-0 - Immanuel Kant: Critique of the Power of Judgment

Edited by Paul Guyer

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IMMANUEL KANT

*Critique of the
power of judgment*

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General editors' preface

Within a few years of the publication of his *Critique of Pure Reason* in 1781, Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) was recognized by his contemporaries as one of the seminal philosophers of modern times – indeed as one of the great philosophers of all time. This renown soon spread beyond German-speaking lands, and translations of Kant's work into English were published even before 1800. Since then, interpretations of Kant's views have come and gone and loyalty to his positions has waxed and waned, but his importance has not diminished. Generations of scholars have devoted their efforts to producing reliable translations of Kant into English as well as into other languages.

There are four main reasons for the present edition of Kant's writings:

1. *Completeness.* Although most of the works published in Kant's lifetime have been translated before, the most important ones more than once, only fragments of Kant's many important unpublished works have ever been translated. These include the *Opus postumum*, Kant's unfinished *magnum opus* on the transition from philosophy to physics; transcriptions of his classroom lectures; his correspondence; and his marginalia and other notes. One aim of this edition is to make a comprehensive sampling of these materials available in English for the first time.

2. *Availability.* Many English translations of Kant's works, especially those that have not individually played a large role in the subsequent development of philosophy, have long been inaccessible or out of print. Many of them, however, are crucial for the understanding of Kant's philosophical development, and the absence of some from English-language bibliographies may be responsible for erroneous or blinkered traditional interpretations of his doctrines by English-speaking philosophers.

3. *Organization.* Another aim of the present edition is to make all Kant's published work, both major and minor, available in comprehensive volumes organized both chronologically and topically, so as to facilitate the serious study of his philosophy by English-speaking readers.

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4. *Consistency of translation.* Although many of Kant's major works have been translated by the most distinguished scholars of their day, some of these translations are now dated, and there is considerable terminological disparity among them. Our aim has been to enlist some of the most accomplished Kant scholars and translators to produce new translations, freeing readers from both the philosophical and literary preconceptions of previous generations and allowing them to approach texts, as far as possible, with the same directness as present-day readers of the German or Latin originals.

In pursuit of these goals, our editors and translators attempt to follow several fundamental principles:

1. As far as seems advisable, the edition employs a single general glossary, especially for Kant's technical terms. Although we have not attempted to restrict the prerogative of editors and translators in choice of terminology, we have maximized consistency by putting a single editor or editorial team in charge of each of the main groupings of Kant's writings, such as his work in practical philosophy, philosophy of religion, or natural science, so that there will be a high degree of terminological consistency, at least in dealing with the same subject matter.

2. Our translators try to avoid sacrificing literalness to readability. We hope to produce translations that approximate the originals in the sense that they leave as much of the interpretive work as possible to the reader.

3. The paragraph, and even more the sentence, is often Kant's unit of argument, and one can easily transform what Kant intends as a continuous argument into a mere series of assertions by breaking up a sentence so as to make it more readable. Therefore, we try to preserve Kant's own divisions of sentences and paragraphs wherever possible.

4. Earlier editions often attempted to improve Kant's texts on the basis of controversial conceptions about their proper interpretation. In our translations, emendation or improvement of the original edition is kept to the minimum necessary to correct obvious typographical errors.

5. Our editors and translators try to minimize interpretation in other ways as well, for example, by rigorously segregating Kant's own footnotes, the editors' purely linguistic notes, and their more explanatory or informational notes; notes in this last category are treated as endnotes rather than footnotes.

We have not attempted to standardize completely the format of individual volumes. Each, however, includes information about the context in which Kant wrote the translated works, a German–English glossary, an English–German glossary, an index, and other aids to comprehension. The general introduction to each volume includes an

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explanation of specific principles of translation and, where necessary, principles of selection of works included in that volume. The pagination of the standard German edition of Kant's works, *Kant's Gesammelte Schriften*, edited by the Royal Prussian (later German) Academy of Sciences (Berlin: Georg Reimer, later Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1900–), is indicated throughout by means of marginal numbers.

Our aim is to produce a comprehensive edition of Kant's writings, embodying and displaying the high standards attained by Kant scholarship in the English-speaking world during the second half of the twentieth century, and serving as both an instrument and a stimulus for the further development of Kant studies by English-speaking readers in the century to come. Because of our emphasis on literalness of translation and on information rather than interpretation in editorial practices, we hope our edition will continue to be usable despite the inevitable evolution and occasional revolutions in Kant scholarship.

PAUL GUYER
ALLEN W. WOOD

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I.

BACKGROUND: THE POSSIBILITY OF
A CRITIQUE OF TASTE AND TELEOLOGY

The *Critique of the Power of Judgment* was published at the Leipzig book fair at the end of April 1790, in the week following Immanuel Kant's sixty-sixth birthday (Kant lived from 1724 to 1804). The book completed the series of Kant's three great *Critiques*, begun with the *Critique of Pure Reason* in 1781 and continued with the *Critique of Practical Reason* in 1788. However, Kant clearly had no plan for such a series of works on the foundations of philosophy when he published the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* nor even when he was writing the *Critique of Practical Reason* during 1787, which itself began life in 1786 merely as part of the work for the revision of the first *Critique*, the second edition of which appeared in the spring of 1787. Kant's original assumption was that the *Critique of Pure Reason* alone would provide the foundation on which he could erect a system of theoretical and practical philosophy, or as he called them the metaphysics of nature and the metaphysics of morals (the first of which Kant did indeed provide in the 1786 work entitled *The Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*, and the second of which he finally provided, after a decade of delay occasioned not only by the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* but also by the 1793 *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* and such political works as the 1795 essay *Toward Perpetual Peace*, in the 1797 *Metaphysics of Morals*, which is comprised of two parts, named in analogy to the work on the foundations of natural science, *The Metaphysical Foundations of the Doctrine of Right*, containing Kant's legal and political philosophy, and *The Metaphysical Foundations of the Doctrine of Virtue*, containing the final form of Kant's account of our noncoercively enforceable duties of respect and love to ourselves and others). Yet only a few weeks after completing the manuscript for the *Critique of Practical Reason* Kant suddenly announced, in a letter to the young Jena professor Karl Leonhard Reinhold (1757–1823), whose *Letters on the Kantian Philosophy* of 1786–87 were doing a great deal to popularize Kant's philosophy,¹ that a third *Critique* was in the offing. Here are his words:

My inner conviction grows, as I discover in working on different topics that not only does my system remain self-consistent but I find also, when sometimes

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I cannot see the right way to investigate a certain subject, that I need only look back at the general picture of the elements of knowledge, and of the mental powers pertaining to them, in order to make discoveries I had not expected. I am now at work on the critique of taste, and I have discovered a new sort of *a priori* principles, different from those heretofore observed. For there are three faculties of the mind: the faculty of cognition, the faculty of feeling pleasure and displeasure, and the faculty of desire. In the *Critique of Pure* (theoretical) *Reason*, I found *a priori* principles for the first of these, and in the *Critique of Practical Reason a priori* principles for the third. I tried to find them for the second as well, and although I thought it impossible to find such principles, the analysis of the previously mentioned faculties of the human mind allowed me to discover something systematic, which has given me ample material at which to marvel and if possible to explore, sufficient to last me for the rest of my life, and has put me on the path now to recognize three parts of philosophy, each of which has its *a priori* principles, which can be enumerated and for which one can precisely determine the scope of the knowledge that is possible through them – theoretical philosophy, teleology, and practical philosophy, of which the second is, to be sure, the least rich in *a priori* grounds of determination. I hope to have a manuscript on this completed although not in print by Easter, under the title of the “Critique of Taste.”²

This makes it sound as if both the plan to write a “Critique of Taste” and even the tripartite division of the human mind into faculties of cognition, feeling, and desire (the last of which can be governed by reason), which could explain the need for three *Critiques*, one for each fundamental faculty of the mind, are entirely new. At the same time, it appears to shift the subject matter of a “critique of taste” from what one would expect, namely the ancient branch of philosophy, dating back to Plato but first dubbed “aesthetics” by the German philosopher Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten (1714–1762) in 1735, which studies the feelings of beauty and sublimity produced by works of both nature and human art and the principles of judgments about such feelings,³ to something quite different, the “part of natural philosophy that explicates the purposes [*fnis*] of things,” which had first been named “teleology” by Christian Wolff (1679–1754) just a few years earlier.⁴ But all of this is, to put it mildly, at least somewhat misleading. Kant had been interested in both aesthetics and teleology from very early in his philosophical career, and had accepted the tripartite division of human mental powers for at least two decades if not longer before the letter to Reinhold. And the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* that he would finish just over twenty-four months after writing this letter would hardly *replace* aesthetics with teleology, as the letter might seem to suggest, although it would certainly try to *connect* them. So just what could Kant have newly discovered in the few weeks before writing this letter?

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A brief review of some of Kant's earlier thinking about both aesthetics and teleology may help us to see what is new and what is not in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. As mentioned, both aesthetics and teleology figured among Kant's philosophical concerns from very early in his career. Kant's first group of publications, in 1755–56, had focused on science and metaphysics, and did not include anything on either aesthetics or teleology.⁵ However, works in Kant's next main group of publications, written between 1762 and 1766, touched on both aesthetics and teleology. Kant took a cautious position on teleology in his 1763 work on *The Only Possible Basis for a Proof of the Existence of God*, which included, in addition to a version of Kant's critique of Descartes's famous "ontological" argument, that is, the attempt to prove the existence of God directly from the concept of him as a completely perfect being, a detailed critique of the popular argument from design, that is, the attempt to infer to an intelligent author of nature from the evidence of intelligent design within nature; Kant touched upon teleology when he argued that although no such argument could prove the existence of a perfect being as conceived by theology, such a being, if proven to exist on other grounds, could certainly be conceived of as working to achieve its purposes *through* the mechanical and regular laws of nature that we could discover by means of natural science.⁶ Then in 1764, in addition to an essay upon philosophical method that is his first real exploration of the foundational questions that would lead to the *Critique of Pure Reason*⁷ and another on "negative quantities," which introduced a clear distinction between "logical" and "real" relations, such as the logical relation of ground and consequence and the real relation of cause and effect, which marked a fundamental step in Kant's break with the rationalist philosophy of Leibniz and Wolff,⁸ Kant published a work called *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime*.⁹ The title of this book was clearly influenced by Edmund Burke's 1757 *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful*,¹⁰ although Kant does not provide an extensive psychological and physiological analysis of these feelings, as Burke did, but is instead primarily concerned with differences in the capacities for these feelings between the two sexes and among diverse cultures and nations.

Kant also discussed questions of aesthetics in his lecture courses (of which, given that he had no income except what students paid him directly, he offered a great variety!) from a very early point. In the printed announcement of his courses for the winter semester of 1765–66, Kant offered courses on metaphysics, logic, ethics, and physical geography, and explained why his course on logic would also include some discussion of aesthetics:

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I shall be lecturing on logic of the first type [a critique and canon of *sound understanding*]. To be more specific, I shall base my lectures on *Meier's* handbook,¹¹ for he . . . stimulates us to an understanding, not only of the cultivation of reason in its more refined and learned form, but also of the development of the ordinary understanding, which is nonetheless active and sound. The former serves the life of contemplation, while the latter serves the life of action and society. And in this, the very close relationship of the materials under examination leads us at the same time, in the *critique of reason*, to pay some attention to the *critique of taste*, that is to say, *aesthetics*. The rules of the one at all times serve to elucidate the rules of the other. Defining the limits of the two is a means to a better understanding of them both.¹²

Meier (1718–1777), following Leibniz, Wolff, and Baumgarten, had distinguished aesthetic response from logical thought as “confused” (or perhaps better “fused”) rather than “distinct” cognition, a form of cognition in which what is important is the richness of associations rather than analytical clarity, and Kant intended to explore this distinction in his lectures. The evidence that we have of his logic lectures from 1770 onward show that he did just that;¹³ and the 1765–66 announcement shows that Kant considered the “critique of taste” as part of his subject from this early period, although it does not imply that at that time he had already formulated an intention to write a book that would carry that title.

Kant included more extensive discussion of topics in aesthetics in the subject that he entitled “anthropology” on which he lectured beginning in the winter semester of 1772–73.¹⁴ By “anthropology,” Kant certainly did not mean what we now call physical anthropology; but on the other hand, he did not strictly limit himself to what we would now call cultural anthropology either, although this was certainly part of his interest. Instead, these lectures, for which Kant used as his text the chapter on “Empirical Psychology” from Baumgarten’s *Metaphysica*, the book that was also the basis for his metaphysics lectures,¹⁵ concerned both the proper and aberrant functioning of human cognition, feeling, and desire, with an emphasis on both individual and cultural differences in the function and use of these faculties. Thus, as early as 1772–73 Kant already organized his thought about the human mind around the tripartite division into the powers of cognition, feeling, and desire that he mentions in the letter to Reinhold as if it were a new discovery. In these lectures, issues in aesthetics are discussed at several places, as Kant was stimulated to touch upon them by Baumgarten’s topics. Thus, the nature of poetic invention, differences among the arts, and genius as the source of artistic creation were discussed in the first part of the lectures, on the faculties of cognition, where Baumgarten treated them – although the discussion of genius was considerably enlarged after the 1776 German translation of Alexander Gerard’s

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Essay on Genius of 1774.¹⁶ The main discussion of the subject of taste, however, is found from the outset squarely in the middle of the second section on the faculty of feeling, by which Kant means above all the feeling of pleasure or displeasure. Thus, the association between taste and the faculty of pleasure that Kant mentions in the letter to Reinhold was hardly new, but had been the basis for Kant's aesthetic theorizing for the better part of two decades. Indeed, what was to become the central thought of the analysis of aesthetic judgment in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, the idea that in a judgment of taste a person can claim intersubjective validity for the feeling of pleasure that she experiences in response to a beautiful object because that pleasure is produced, in an attitude of disinterested contemplation, not by a practical concern for utility or advantage in the possession of the object, but by the free and harmonious play of the cognitive faculties of imagination and understanding that the beautiful object induces, and that she can rightly claim such validity for her feeling because we all share these cognitive faculties and they must work pretty much the same way in all of us, was already well developed in these lectures, if not at the outset in 1772–73 then certainly by the middle of the 1770s, at least a decade before the letter to Reinhold.¹⁷

Again, the prominence of taste as a topic in Kant's anthropology lectures does not prove that he had formulated the intention to write a "Critique of Taste" prior to December of 1787. However, there is separate evidence that even Kant's idea of writing a "Critique of Taste" was by no means new, but dated back to a time at least some months prior to the commencement of his first course on anthropology. In his epochal letter of 21 February 1772 to his prize student Marcus Herz, then studying medicine in Berlin, in which he first announced his intention of writing what would become the *Critique of Pure Reason*,¹⁸ Kant clearly included the subject matter of aesthetics in the scope of his plans. He wrote:

I had already previously made considerable progress in the effort to distinguish the sensible from the intellectual in the field of morals and the principles that spring therefrom. I had also long ago outlined, to my tolerable satisfaction, the principles of feeling, taste, and power of judgment, with their effects – the pleasant, the beautiful and the good – and was then making plans for a work that might perhaps have the title, *The Limits of Sensibility and Reason*. I planned to have it consist of two parts, a theoretical and a practical. The first part would have two sections, (1) general phenomenology and (2) metaphysics, but this only with regard to its nature and method. The second part likewise would have two sections, (1) the universal principles of feeling, taste, and sensuous desire and (2) the universal principles of morality. As I thought through the theoretical part, considering its whole scope and the reciprocal relations of all its parts, I noticed that I still lacked something essential, something that in my

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long metaphysical studies, I, as well as others, had failed to consider and which in fact constitutes the key to the whole secret of metaphysics, hitherto still hidden from itself.¹⁹

Now, there need be nothing surprising about the fact that in spite of this statement in 1772, it was the end of 1787 before Kant was ready to start writing a systematic treatise on the “universal principles of feeling [and] taste”: It would take Kant nearly a decade to write the first part of what he described to Herz as the treatment of “general phenomenology” and the “nature and method” of metaphysics that would become the *Critique of Pure Reason* of 1781; and then Kant would be constantly occupied until a few weeks before the letter to Herz with the defense of the first *Critique* in the *Prolegomena to any future Metaphysics* of 1783 and the revision for its second edition on which he worked in 1786, with the *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science* published in 1786, and with laying the foundations for his moral philosophy in the *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* that he published in 1785 and in the *Critique of Practical Reason* that he wrote in 1787. So Kant could hardly have started any serious work on a third critique on taste much before the date of his letter to Reinhold. But that still does not explain the air of discovery that we sense in the letter. Why did it apparently come as a *surprise* to Kant, more than twenty years after he had announced his intention to lecture on the “critique of taste,” that he should now be in a position to write one?

In the famous letter to Herz, Kant had clearly assumed that a *single* work on the “nature and method” of metaphysics would be all that was needed before he could construct his practical philosophy, which would deal with the principles of both taste and morality. At that time, then, he did not envision writing three *Critiques*, but only one. This was clearly still his assumption when he wrote the *Critique of Pure Reason*, since he thought that upon its completion he could quickly proceed to write the systematic metaphysics of nature and morality.²⁰ So at this point he might have thought that he could write a systematic treatment of the principles of feeling and taste akin to the metaphysics of nature and morals, but not that he would need to preface any such treatment with a *critique* of the faculty of feeling any more than he would need an additional critique of the faculty of desire or practical reason before he could write his metaphysics of morals. However, this is not exactly what Kant thought when he wrote the first *Critique*: not only did he not see the need for a separate *critique* of taste, but now he was not even sure that there was room for any systematic treatment of the principles of taste at all. At least that seems to be the implication of a striking footnote to the “Transcendental Aesthetic” of the first *Critique*, the section in which Kant presents his theory of space and time as nothing but the pure forms of the human mind for the intuition of

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external objects and our own inner states.²¹ In explaining why he felt he could appropriate Baumgarten's coinage to label his exposition of his theory of our *a priori* knowledge of the properties of space and time, which has nothing to do with the traditional subjects of aesthetics at all, Kant had gone so far as to write this:

The Germans are the only ones who now employ the word "aesthetics" to designate that which others call the critique of taste. The ground for this is a failed hope, held by the excellent analyst Baumgarten, of bringing the critical judging of the beautiful under principles of reason, and elevating its rules to a science. But this effort is futile. For the putative rules or criteria are merely empirical as far as their sources are concerned, and can therefore never serve as *a priori* rules according to which our judgments of taste must be directed, rather the latter constitutes the genuine touchstone of the correctness of the former. For this reason it is advisable again to desist from the use of this term and to save it for that doctrine which is true science.²²

In other words – and this is quite consistent with what Kant usually held in his lectures on anthropology – judgments of taste, even though they make claims about how others can be expected to respond to objects on the basis of our own feelings of pleasure (or displeasure) in them, are *empirical*: they do not rest on any *a priori* concepts or principles; rather we learn to make them in a fairly reliable way by observing the responses of those around us and correlating them to our own responses. Indeed, for this reason Kant had frequently maintained that people could not learn how to make judgments of taste except by growing up in society; someone growing up in the circumstances of a Robinson Crusoe could never learn how to determine whether his own responses corresponded to those of others, even if the idea of doing so somehow occurred to him.²³ Thus, it seems, in 1781 Kant no longer thought there could be a systematic philosophical treatment of the principles of feeling and taste, let alone a critique of taste, which if it were to be anything like a critique of pure reason would have to discover foundations for *a priori* principles of taste. And while in revising the first *Critique* in 1786 Kant ameliorated this harsh assessment to the extent of adding that the rules of taste are merely empirical as far as their "most prominent" sources are concerned and allowing that the term "aesthetics" might be "shared" with transcendental philosophy, taking it "partly in a transcendental meaning, partly in a psychological meaning,"²⁴ he still gave no indication that he intended to avail himself of this loophole in order to write a critique of taste.

Kant's 1785 *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* was not meant as a separate critique of practical reason; Kant's primary intention in this work was to provide a sufficiently clear formulation of the fundamental principle of morality – a principle which he took every person to be tacitly aware of and inherently to acknowledge, although not in a

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sufficiently clear form to prevent its corruption by temptations also present in ordinary human nature²⁵ – to allow him to proceed to the detailed formulation of our legal and ethical rights and obligations, in what would eventually become the *Metaphysics of Morals*. The reception of this work, particularly of its attempt to derive the binding force of the moral law from the freedom of the human will in its section III, convinced Kant that he had to do enough additional work on foundational questions to merit a separate *Critique of Practical Reason*, although this had not been part of his original plan of 1772. This new *Critique* greatly amplified Kant's treatment of the problem of freedom of the will, and reversed the argument of the *Groundwork* by holding that the fact of the freedom of the will could only be inferred from our awareness of the binding obligation of the moral law, rather than the validity of the moral law being inferred from any independent proof of the freedom of the will. But while this amplified the argument of the *Critique of Pure Reason* by showing how the actuality and not merely the possibility of the freedom of the will could be established on moral rather than theoretical grounds, it did not fundamentally alter the argument of the first *Critique* in any way, *a fortiori* it did not alter that work's negative assessment of the possibilities for a critique of taste. The second *Critique* in fact almost ends with an allusion to what would become the central argument of Kant's treatment of taste in the third: in contrasting pleasure in the beauty of objects with a moral interest in their existence based in pure practical reason, Kant characterizes the former, pleasure in beauty, as "a consciousness of the harmony of our powers of representation . . . in which we feel our entire cognitive faculty (understanding and imagination) strengthened . . . a satisfaction that can also be communicated to others."²⁶ However, this substantive view about the nature of aesthetic experience, which Kant had already held in very much this form since the time of the first *Critique*,²⁷ did not signal a change in Kant's recent view about the possibility of a *critique* of taste; once again, nothing said in the second *Critique* gives any indication that Kant intended to write a third one, let alone immediately start working on it.

So we return to where we began, and ask again what Kant could suddenly have discovered in the few weeks after finishing the second *Critique* that persuaded him that a third one was possible and necessary after all. We know now that it could not have been simply the connection between taste and the faculty of feeling, as contrasted to the faculties of cognition and desire, for that division had been part of Kant's views for close to two decades. However, we also now know what obstacle Kant believed he had to overcome in order to write a critique of taste: the *Critique of Pure Reason* had dashed Baumgartian hopes for a philosophy of taste on the ground that taste permitted only

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empirical generalizations, not *a priori* principles; so for Kant suddenly to have embarked on a critique of taste, he must have become persuaded that in some way or other taste does have some kind of *a priori* principle. Yet the reader will quickly see from the third *Critique* itself that Kant did not change the view, frequently evinced in his lectures, that there can be no mechanical and determinate rules for individual judgments of taste, such as the supposedly Aristotelian rule of dramaturgy that all the action of a play must transpire within twenty-four hours, which could guide aesthetic judgment in the same way that one geometrical theorem can lead to the next.²⁸ So what kind of *a priori* principle for taste could there be?

Here is where the connection between taste and teleology to which Kant alludes in the letter to Reinhold may come in. The letter is certainly too brief for us to know precisely what Kant had in mind in writing it, and ultimately it can only be the published work itself that tells us how Kant thought he could finally put the critique of taste on an adequate philosophical footing and connect it in an illuminating way with teleology – a subject about which he had largely been silent since his comments almost twenty-five years earlier in the *Only Possible Basis*. But the thought naturally suggests itself that in reflecting upon the connection between aesthetics and teleology Kant somehow came up with the idea of a new *kind of a priori* principle that would let him write a critique of taste without undermining his scruples about determinate rules for judgments on the beauty of objects. And what would such a new kind of principle be like? It would have to be one that can ground judgments about similarities among human minds, for that is what judgments of taste claim, without depending upon determinate predicates of particular objects, for that is what Kant abjures. And perhaps this is what in the most general way teleology suggested to Kant: an *a priori* principle about the relation between the human mind and the nature that surrounds it, including other human minds, that can give us confidence in the validity of our judgments without directly giving us new concepts of objects.

The two versions of the introduction to the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* suggest that Kant did indeed see the formulation of a new kind of *a priori* principle as the key to a critique of both taste and teleology, but also that it was no simple task for him to formulate such a principle;²⁹ and whether he did succeed in doing so has certainly been one of the fundamental issues in the interpretation of the third *Critique*. Kant's introduction will also reveal another connection between judgments of taste and teleology that appears to be quite new in Kant's philosophy, namely the idea that both judgments of taste and judgments about the purposiveness of natural objects are forms of a hitherto unrecognized kind of judgment, which Kant calls *reflecting judg-*

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ment. This is not mentioned in the letter to Reinhold, but at least seems to play a central role in Kant's account in the work itself of why he has linked what had hitherto seemed the unrelated topics of taste and teleology. While previously he had recognized the ordinary function of judgment as that of subsuming a particular under a universal that is antecedently given to us, such as a pure concept in mathematics or an empirical concept in scientific classification, he now calls that function "determining judgment," in order to distinguish it from the quite different case of "reflecting judgment," in which we are not given a concept under which to subsume a particular but are instead given a particular for which we must seek to find a universal, a concept or rule of some kind that we are not immediately given.³⁰ Another fundamental question for the interpretation of the third *Critique* is certainly how this notion is to be understood, how well it succeeds in connecting aesthetic and teleological judgments, and in particular, given how much of Kant's detailed analysis of the character of judgments of taste had been in place for so many years, whether this notion really adds anything substantive to Kant's longstanding views.

Kant's deepest connection between taste and teleology, however, may be something he does not hint at in the letter to Reinhold at all, although it would explain why he became convinced of not only the possibility but also the necessity for a third *Critique* so soon after finishing the second. In the concluding section of the published introduction to the work, Kant claims that "the power of judgment provides the mediating concept between the concepts of nature and the concept of freedom, which makes possible the transition from the purely theoretical to the purely practical, from lawfulness in accordance with the former to the final end in accordance with the latter, in the concept of a **purposiveness** of nature; for thereby is the possibility of the final end, which can become actual only in nature and in accord with its laws, cognized."³¹ The meaning of this statement can hardly be immediately clear, but it is enough to suggest that Kant had become convinced that both aesthetics and teleology have something profound to teach us about the relation between nature and morality, and that the foundations of his philosophy would not be complete until he had fully explored what this is. Somehow, without violating the distinction between the beautiful and the morally good that he had long advocated or the exclusion of human or superhuman aims from scientific explanation of natural phenomena that he had likewise long accepted, Kant suddenly saw how he could take the existence of both natural and artistic beauty and our sense of the purposiveness in the organization of nature as evidence that human beings as moral agents can nevertheless be at home in nature, and even as of value in preparing ourselves for the exercise of our moral agency. Indeed, it may have been

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precisely this insight that, after a decade of already enormous labor, during most of which he had been skeptical about the possibility of a critique of taste, gave Kant the strength to write an ambitious and complex third *Critique* in less than a quarter of the time it had taken him to write the first – an extraordinary accomplishment.

This introduction is not the place to expound a detailed interpretation of the motivation and meaning of the work to be presented.³² What follows offers a succinct outline of the main themes of the work and then a brief account of the actual circumstances of its composition and publication.

II.

AN OUTLINE OF THE WORK

Introduction(s). Both the first draft of Kant's introduction and the version that he finally published are translated in the present volume (the circumstances that left us two versions will be explained in the next section). The first draft consists of twelve sections, while the published version has only nine, and only about half as many words. But the main points of the argument are similar, and may in each case be reduced to four main steps. In the first part of each introduction, Kant correlates the tripartite division of the higher faculty of cognition – as contrasted to the lower faculty of cognition, which, in the tradition of Baumgarten, is assumed to consist of sensibility and imagination – into understanding, judgment, and reason – a division already assumed in the first *Critique* – with the tripartite division of the powers of the mind more generally into cognition, feeling, and desire, and then suggests, as an hypothesis, that since understanding has been found to furnish *a priori* principles for cognition and reason the *a priori* principle for the faculty of desire (the moral law), perhaps the faculty of judgment will be shown to supply an *a priori* principle for our ability to feel pleasure and displeasure.³³ By describing this correlation as provisional,³⁴ Kant makes it clear that it can be proven only by the detailed arguments that will comprise the body of the work, thus that he does not expect the persuasiveness of the work as a whole to depend upon this highly abstract and one might well think artificial maneuver. Kant concludes the first part of the introduction by introducing his new distinction between the “determining” (*bestimmend*) and “reflecting” (*reflectierend*) uses of the power of judgment. In the determining use of judgment, we are supposed to be given a universal, such as a concept of pure mathematics or physics, and to have the task of finding an individual to subsume under it, while in the “reflecting” use of judgment, we are supposed to be presented with an individual, such as a beautiful scene or an intricate organism, and to seek a universal under

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which to subsume it.³⁵ It will turn out, however, that the kinds of universals that may be sought by reflecting judgment will have to be understood broadly: while in teleological judgment of an intricate organism the universal that we seek may be understood to be the concept of purpose, such as the purpose of a particular organ within the internal economy of the organism, in the case of aesthetic judgment Kant will explicitly deny that we seek to subsume the object under any particular or determinate concept at all. In this case, as Kant's argument will reveal, the only universal that we seek is the idea of interpersonal agreement in pleasure in a beautiful object or in awe at a sublime one (which is actually both awful and pleasurable). Much of the detail of Kant's account of judgments of beauty in particular was worked out long before Kant introduced this new conception of reflecting judgment, and it is an issue of continuing debate just how much of a role this notion plays in the body of the text.

Although the main body of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* is divided into two parts, the "Critique of the Aesthetic Power of Judgment" and the "Critique of the Teleological Power of Judgment," the introductions actually consider not two but three main forms of reflecting judgment. The second of these is aesthetic judgment, which Kant initially treats as if it is directed only at beautiful objects in nature, although it will eventually turn out to comprise both the beautiful and the sublime in both nature and in art; and the third of them is teleological judgment, initially presented as concerning only purposiveness in the internal organization of organisms although it will later turn out to include judgment about the purposiveness of nature as a whole. But the first form of reflecting judgment that Kant considers, which is not subsequently treated in the main body of the book at all, is judgment about the systematicity of the body of our scientific concepts and laws itself. Here Kant's argument, presented in Sections IV through VII of the first draft and in Sections IV and V of the published version of the Introduction, is as follows. The *Critique of Pure Reason* is taken to have assured us that we can always bring the particular items in our experience under some concepts and laws, and to have provided us with the most general forms of concepts for the objects of our experiences in the categories or pure concepts of the understanding (concepts such as those of substance or causation) as well as with the most general laws of nature in the form of the principles of empirical thinking (such as the principle that every event has a cause). But all of this still leaves us the task of finding more particular concepts under which to subsume our experiences – for example, more concrete concepts of causation such as the concepts of crystallization or reproduction – and of organizing these concepts and the natural laws associated with them into a system with various formal properties that Kant spells out.³⁶ The tasks

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of seeking such particular concepts intermediate between the categories and our actual observations or empirical intuitions and of organizing them into a coherent system are assigned to the reflecting power of judgment as an instance of its general task of seeking to find universals for given concepts, and Kant assumes that reflecting judgment has to have an *a priori* principle by which to be guided in carrying out these tasks. But he is careful to make clear that this *a priori* principle of reflecting judgment is indeed of a different character from the *a priori* principles of understanding or reason. It does not directly determine what kinds of properties our experiences must have in order to represent objects (e.g., being experiences of enduring substances) or what our maxims of action must be like in order to be morally acceptable (i.e., universalizable). Instead, it amounts only to the general assumption, supposed to be necessary for guiding and encouraging the conduct of our scientific inquiry, that nature itself has the kind of systematic organization that we seek to find in it. As Kant puts it in the first draft of the introduction, the *a priori* principle of reflecting judgment is simply that “Nature specifies its general laws into empirical ones, in accordance with the form of a logical system, in behalf of the power of judgment.”³⁷ This principle merely confirms our authorization to seek for systematicity in our concepts and laws, or is what the published Introduction calls a principle of the “heautonomy” of judgment, a law prescribed not so much to nature as to judgment itself.³⁸

One question that suggests itself at this stage in Kant's argument is just how much of a model this sort of *a priori* principle can provide for the *a priori* principles of aesthetic and teleological judgment that are subsequently to be sought. Another question is, what has become of the connection between judgment and the feeling of pleasure that was the starting point for Kant's argument? In the first draft of the introduction, Kant does not address this question at all. In the published introduction, Kant does not address this question at all. In the published introduction, perhaps having noticed the omission, Kant does address it, arguing that since the attainment of every aim is accompanied with pleasure, success in realizing our objective of finding systematicity in our concepts and laws of nature must also have been accompanied by pleasure, although we take this success so much for granted that we barely notice this pleasure.³⁹ This argument seems perfunctory, but it provides an important premise for the account of aesthetic judgment that Kant next introduces: It implies that if pleasure is always the result of the attainment of an end, and if, further, universally valid pleasure must be the result of the realization of a universally valid objective,⁴⁰ then there must be some universally valid objective that is fulfilled in the case of our pleasure in beauty as well.

Kant's ensuing account of aesthetic judgment is thus the third main stage of both introductions. Section VIII in the first draft and Section

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VII of the published introduction present a capsule summary of the account that will be expounded in detail in the “Analytic of the Beautiful” of the main text. Kant begins by connecting aesthetic judgment or the judgment of taste to what he calls “subjective” purposiveness, a condition in which a fundamental purpose of the cognitive subject is fulfilled, but fulfilled in such a way that it is accompanied by a feeling of pleasure, the only kind of sensation that we do not automatically transform into a predicate of objects and thus interpret exclusively as a sign of our own mental condition.⁴¹ Kant’s basic idea is then that when the free play of the imagination with the representations offered to us by an object, unguided and unconstrained by any predetermined concept of what the object is or ought to be in order to serve any particular theoretical or practical purpose, nevertheless seems to us to satisfy the general aim of the understanding to find unity in all of our experience, we respond to this fulfillment of the underlying aim of cognition with pleasure, and a pleasure that is noticeable and enduring because the satisfaction of our general cognitive aim in these circumstances seems contingent and is not taken for granted by us. This is Kant’s famous conception of the response to beauty as a free and harmonious play of imagination – our ability to take in and reproduce sensory impressions and images – and understanding.⁴² Kant then signals that he intends to argue in the main text that since we all have the same cognitive faculties and they can be expected to work in the same way – this premise is, in fact, the *a priori* principle of aesthetic judgment as a form of reflecting judgment – it is reasonable for us to expect that at least in ideal circumstances others will have the same responses to objects that we do, and thus we can claim universal validity for our pleasure by means of a judgment of taste.⁴³

After this brief account of the judgment of beauty, Kant moves directly (in Section IX of the first draft and Section X of the published version) to the last of the three main forms of reflecting judgment that he considers in the Introduction, teleological judgment on the purposiveness of some objects in nature, the ones we now call organisms but that Kant tended to call “organized beings.” Here Kant does not tell us as much about what is to follow as he does in the case of aesthetic judgment; he contrasts aesthetic judgment on the *form* of particular objects as such with teleological judgments about the “correspondence of [an object’s] form with the possibility of the thing itself, in accordance with a concept of it which precedes and contains the ground of this form.”⁴⁴ What this means is obscure, and we have to wait until the main body of the text to learn that Kant means that organisms have a kind of internal organization that is for various reasons difficult for us to understand unless we see it as the product of an antecedent concept of the object on the part of a designer of it, and that once we introduce

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the idea of a designer it becomes inevitable for us to see the organism and even nature as a whole as having some sort of rational purpose – although the principle that nature has a purpose, which is the unstated *a priori* principle of teleological judgment, can only be a regulative principle for reflecting judgment, not a constitutive principle for determining judgment that actually contributes to our scientific knowledge of nature. (It may also be noted that neither here nor in the body of the text does Kant attempt to draw any special connection between teleological judgment and the feeling of pleasure.)

In the published introduction, Kant concludes with the claim already alluded to at the end of the previous section, that the faculty of judgment allows us to bridge the gulf between the legislations and domains of theoretical knowledge on the one hand and freedom on the other.⁴⁵ What he means by this is again unexplained at this stage, although the sequel will show that he has a number of claims in mind: that our disinterested affection for beauty prepares us for the non-self-regarding respect and love for mankind that is required of us by morality; that the existence of beauty in nature gives us a hint that nature is hospitable to human morality; and that we can only give content to the idea of a purpose for nature that we are led to by our reflection on the purposiveness of organisms by thinking of human moral development as the ultimate end of nature.⁴⁶ These links between beauty and purposiveness on the one hand and Kant's moral vision of the place of mankind in the world on the other are the substantive links between aesthetics and teleology that lie behind and give importance to their superficial connection by means of the technical conception of reflecting judgment.

Having discussed only the judgment of beauty in the body of the introduction, Kant surprises us at the end of the first draft by dividing aesthetic judgment into judgment on the beautiful and on the sublime, and teleological judgment into judgment on the internal purposiveness of organisms and on the relative or external purposiveness of them, or their contribution to the purposiveness of nature as a whole.⁴⁷ The first of these distinctions is reflected in the division of the “Critique of the Aesthetic Power of Judgment,” the first main part of the whole *Critique*, into two books, the “Analytic of the Beautiful” and the “Analytic of the Sublime.” The second distinction is not reflected so explicitly in the organization of the second main part of the *Critique*, the “Critique of the Teleological Power of Judgment,” but in fact underlies the division between its “Analytic” and its “Methodology” (which are separated by a “Dialectic”). We will now briefly describe the contents of these parts of the main text of the *Critique*.

“Critique of the Aesthetic Power of Judgment”: “Analytic of the Beautiful.” The twenty-two numbered sections of this part of the

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Critique present the detailed account of judgments on beauty that Kant sketched in the Introduction. The argument is organized into four “moments,” mirroring the four headings for functions of judgment and categories that Kant introduced in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, namely quality, quantity, relation, and modality; this organization illuminates what Kant has to say in some ways and obscures it in others. Under the rubric of “quality,” Kant begins his discussion by premising that judgments of taste are disinterested, that is, arise solely from the contemplation of their objects without regard to any purposes that can be fulfilled or interests that can be served by their existence (§ 2). In this way, judgments of taste differ from judgments about the mere agreeableness of the sensory stimulation offered by objects and the consumption of them, which do create an empirical interest in the existence of (more) objects of the relevant type (§ 3), and also from judgments about the goodness of objects, which depend upon antecedent concepts of the mediate or immediate use or the moral value of objects, and also create an interest in their existence (§ 4). Kant does not think that aesthetic judgments involve a different *kind* of pleasure from judgments about the agreeable and the good, but a different *relation* of their objects to pleasure, that is, a difference in the way in which objects produce pleasure (§ 5).

The disinterestedness of judgments of taste is not an uncontroversial premise for Kant's entire argument: although it had been given prominence earlier in the century by the Earl of Shaftesbury and Francis Hutcheson, it had by no means been universally accepted.⁴⁸ It also does not lead to Kant's next point as seamlessly as Kant would like: Kant infers the “quantity” of judgments of taste, their “universal subjective validity,” from their disinterestedness (§ 6), even though this does not strictly follow – a judgment could be disinterested and yet still be arbitrary or idiosyncratic. But Kant introduces two key independent arguments under the heading of “quality,” and in many ways this part of the “Analytic of the Beautiful” (§§ 6–9) can be considered the real starting point of Kant's entire account. First Kant appeals to common parlance to support the claim that in judgments of taste we speak with a “universal voice”⁴⁹ while in judgments of agreeableness we do not: we can say, “This wine is agreeable to me,” thus defeating any expectation that others must also find it so; but we do not add “to me” when we say, “This flower is beautiful” or “This painting is beautiful” (§ 7), and thus allow the claim to interpersonal agreement that we ordinarily imply in our description of objects to stand. Thus in aesthetic judgments we claim “subjective universal validity,” that is, although we can never claim that every object in a certain class – a certain kind of flower, a certain kind of poem or musical composition – is beautiful just because it fulfills the criteria for membership in that class, and thus

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cannot claim “objective universal validity” for judgments of taste, we can reasonably claim that at least under appropriate circumstances (which of course cannot always be realized) everyone else who experiences an object that we find beautiful should experience the same pleasure in it that we do. In the section that he describes as “the key to the critique of taste” (§ 9), Kant then introduces his theory of the free play of imagination and understanding as the cause of our pleasure in beauty. A subsequent “deduction” of judgments of taste (§§ 21 and 38) will then argue that because of the shared nature of human cognitive capacities, this free play can be expected to occur in the same way in everyone, and so the judgment of taste’s claim to speak with a universal voice can be sustained.

In the next part of the “Analytic,” on the moment of “relation” in the judgment of taste, Kant makes some of his most controversial but also some of his most revealing points. Kant’s general claim here is that our pleasure in a beautiful object is related to our perception of the form of purposiveness in it (§ 11). This makes it sound as if a beautiful object is one that at least appears to us to have been designed, as if there were some characteristic way that designed objects look. But Kant does not mean this; rather, he just means that a beautiful object satisfies our subjective purpose in cognition without serving any other, more concrete purpose. However, by what appears to be a sleight of hand, Kant equates a beautiful object’s form of purposiveness with the “purposiveness of its form” (§ 13),⁵⁰ understood as a property of the spatiotemporal form of objects narrowly understood. Thus Kant maintains, for example, that in the pictorial and plastic arts it is always the design but never the color that is beautiful, while in an art like music it is the formal structure of the composition but not the tones of the instrumentation that is crucial (§ 14).⁵¹ This “formalism” has dominated the popular conception of Kant’s aesthetics, but it is not justified by anything in Kant’s premises nor motivated by anything other than his desire to minimize sources of disagreement in the objects of taste; moreover, when Kant later turns to his detailed discussion of the fine arts, he clearly takes this narrow version of formalism back, arguing that a work of art is beautiful when we respond with a free play of our imagination and understanding to a harmony among *all* of its perceptible features as well as to its content and intellectual associations as well.⁵² The tenuousness of Kant’s commitment to formalism is also evident in the last two sections of this third “moment,” which instead hint at fundamental connections between works of art and moral significance. In § 16, Kant introduces a distinction between “free” and “adherent” beauty: the former is beauty that is found in an object without any concept of its purpose at all, while the latter is a form of beauty that is perceived when the form of an object is felt to cohere

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freely with its intended purpose, as in a work of architecture, or even its moral end, as in the case of human beauty. There is a difference between these two kinds of beauty, to be sure, but Kant couldn't call the latter a kind of beauty at all if he held rigidly to the view that beauty always concerns the form of an object alone. Finally, in § 17 Kant discusses what he calls the "ideal of beauty." An object is an ideal of beauty when it is not merely one among many that are beautiful for everyone, but is in some way uniquely or paradigmatically beautiful. Kant argues that only the human figure seen as an expression of the incomparable worth of human morality can be seen as an ideal of beauty.⁵³ Again, Kant could not call this a form of beauty at all unless the harmony between the perceivable form of a human being and the abstract idea of moral worth were a fit subject for the free play of imagination and understanding.

In the fourth and last part of the "Analytic of the Beautiful," Kant discusses the "modality" of the judgment of taste. In part, this discussion reiterates what Kant had already said under the rubric of quantity: the modality of the judgment of taste is "the necessity of the assent of **all** to a judgment that is regarded as an example of a universal rule that cannot be given."⁵⁴ But this formulation also introduces a theme that Kant will emphasize more later, namely, that in aesthetic judgment upon nature and art but also in the production of works of art we do not have *rules* that we can mechanically follow, but at most *examples* that can, especially in the case of art, provide us with models not for imitation but for inspiration.⁵⁵ This is what Kant calls the "exemplary" necessity of the aesthetic – of beauty itself as well as the judgment on beauty. Kant then goes on to make explicit the argument that underlies the earlier "key to the critique of taste," namely the argument that we can speak with a universal voice on matters of taste because of the underlying similarity of our cognitive faculties (§ 21). Kant will return to this argument later in the *Critique* – obviously he felt it needs more support than it gets here, which it certainly does, although whether he succeeds in proving it is another question of continuing debate.

"Critique of the Aesthetic Power of Judgment": "Analytic of the Sublime." Here Kant expands upon the theme of the sublime, which was a well-established topic in eighteenth-century aesthetics, but which he had hardly mentioned in the introduction.⁵⁶ Once again Kant says that he will organize his discussion around the four headings of quantity, quality, relation, and modality,⁵⁷ but this division is overlaid with another distinction, that between the mathematical and dynamical sublime, which may make it hard at first to see how Kant is using the four original categories. In fact, his account of the mathematical sublime is organized around the concepts of quantity and quality while the

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discussion of the dynamical sublime represents the application of the concepts of relation and modality.

The experience of the mathematical sublime (§§ 25–6) arises when we try to get a grasp of something vast, not by the ordinary mathematical means of quantifying it with an arbitrarily chosen unity of measurement reiterated as often as necessary, but rather by taking it in, aesthetically, as if it were a single, absolutely great whole.⁵⁸ In fact, this is an impossible task, but the very fact that we even try it reveals that we possess not just imagination and understanding, the faculties we ordinarily use for mathematical tasks like measurement, but also the faculty of reason, which is what gives us the idea of an absolutely great whole in the first place.⁵⁹ And this is what leads to the special quality of the experience of the sublime: unlike the experience of beauty, it is not an unalloyed pleasure, but a complex feeling, consisting first of frustration at the inability of the understanding to grasp an absolute whole with the assistance of the imagination, followed by pleasure at the realization of the fact that our imagination also reflects the demands of our reason (§ 27). This complexity of the feeling of the sublime is akin to the complexity of the moral feeling of respect,⁶⁰ and leads Kant to the discussion of the dynamical sublime.

The dynamical sublime (§ 28) represents the application of the concept of relation to the experience of the sublime. The experience of the dynamical sublime is produced by the experience of vast forces in nature, such as those of towering seas or mountain ranges, in relation to which we realize that our own physical powers are puny. At the same time, however, the experience of our insignificance in relation to such physical forces also leads us to the realization that there is another force in us, the faculty of practical reason and the freedom of the will that it gives us, which gives us a value that cannot be damaged even by forces which would suffice for our physical destruction.⁶¹ This again produces a complex mix of displeasure and pleasure, which is even closer to the moral feeling of respect. Finally, under the rubric of modality, Kant argues that we have ground to expect universal subjective validity in the experience of the sublime as well as in that of beauty (§ 29), although in the case of the sublime Kant emphasizes that the ground of agreement lies in a potential for moral sensitivity that each of us has innately but that each of us must actively *cultivate*⁶² as part of our moral development. Commonality in the experience of the sublime is thus a product of our active effort to a degree that agreement about the beautiful apparently is not.

Kant's account of the sublime has drawn a great deal of interest in recent years, especially among European philosophers as well as both European and American literary theorists,⁶³ who have taken the Kan-

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tian sublime to provide an image for the quintessentially postmodern experience of the incomprehensibility of the world by any traditional model of rationality. It should be clear from what has just been said, however, that Kant's insistence on the complexity of the experience of the sublime precludes enlisting him in this postmodern cause: any feeling of incomprehensibility belongs only to the first stage of the feeling of the sublime, to be followed and replaced by a deep feeling of satisfaction at the power of our own reason to create moral order in the world. This should also be evident from the "General Remark" on both the beautiful and the sublime that follows § 29, in which Kant argues that "the beautiful prepares us to love something, even nature, without interest; the sublime, to esteem it, even contrary to our (sensible) interest."⁶⁴ This is Kant's first intimation of a deep connection between aesthetics and teleology in their common support for morality, which does not depend upon the abstract idea of reflecting judgment – which, as we have now seen, plays virtually no role at all in the details of Kant's accounts of the beautiful and sublime.

"Critique of the Aesthetic Power of Judgment": Deduction and Theory of Fine Art. The next twenty-five sections of the first part of the book, although they look like a continuation of the "Analytic of the Sublime," do not belong to that at all, but return to the question of the universal subjective validity of judgments of the beautiful (§§ 30–40), and then, switching gears entirely, develop Kant's theory of the fine arts (§§ 43–54). The first part of this discussion seems to go over ground well trodden in the "Analytic of the Beautiful," but the second part is a rich trove of insights for aesthetic theory that is often overlooked under the spell of the formalism of the earlier "Analytic."

Formalism plays a role in Kant's introduction of this part of the work, in which he argues that judgments on the sublime, unlike judgments on the beautiful, do not need any deduction beyond their initial exposition because they are induced by the formlessness rather than the form of their objects, and thus in a way are not about objects outside us at all. This would carry weight if the point of the following deduction were to prove that we are justified in applying a certain predicate to objects, or even to proving that objects of a certain sort (e.g., beautiful objects) must exist – but it is not, since Kant specifically abjures any attempt "to explain why nature has spread beauty so extravagantly everywhere."⁶⁵ Instead, the point of the deduction is to prove that we are justified in expecting agreement in judgments of taste because of the shared character of our cognitive capacities, and it would seem that if this still has to be shown in the case of judgments about the beautiful that it would also still need to be shown in the case of judgments on the sublime. In fact, it is not clear that this still needs

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to be shown at all, nor that Kant's official "deduction of judgments of taste" in § 38 adds very much to what was earlier argued in § 21.

Yet there is much in this part of the work that clarifies even if it does not substantially augment what has already been said. In §§ 32 and 33, Kant simplifies the previous four moments of aesthetic judgment into two "logical peculiarities" of judgments of taste. Such judgments are peculiar first because they claim the agreement of everyone even though they concern mere feelings of pleasure (§ 32) and second because they claim such agreement even though they cannot be proven by any traditional rules of criticism (§ 33). Both of these peculiarities can be understood, Kant argues, if we understand the pleasure in beauty as the product of the free play of the faculties of imagination and understanding (§ 35, which reiterates the arguments of the introduction and § 9). In the next two sections, Kant then clarifies the kind of apriority that is involved in a judgment of taste: we can never know in advance of the experience of an object that we will find it pleasing, thus the connection of pleasure to the object is empirical; but if we do think that our pleasure in an object is due to the harmony of imagination and understanding, then we feel justified in expecting that pleasure in everyone else, and *that* expectation is *a priori* (§§ 36–7). Then, in § 38, Kant repeats his assertion that under ideal circumstances an object that produces the harmony of our cognitive faculties in one person can reasonably be expected to do so in everyone else, because it must be assumed that our cognitive faculties all work in the same way. Kant does not in fact add to his previous reasons for assuming this somewhat dubious premise, but he does usefully clarify one point, namely, that errors in assigning particular experiences of pleasure to the harmony of the faculties as their cause need not undermine our general right to make aesthetic judgments, any more than the occasional error in any kind of empirical judgment or even in mathematics undermines our right to make that sort of judgment altogether.⁶⁶ Kant's distinction between what is empirical and what is *a priori* in a judgment of taste has prepared the way for this clarification.

Kant also clarifies the point that in making judgments of taste we do not just expect agreement *from* other people but to a certain degree also expect agreement *of* them, that is, regard it "as it were a duty."⁶⁷ To explain this, some connection between taste and morality must be found, although this connection cannot be so direct that it would undermine the freedom of imagination that is the essence of the experience of beauty by any obvious didacticism. Kant considers two possible bases for this connection. First (§ 41) he notes that beautiful objects naturally gratify our inclination to sociability: we like to agree with other people, so we like objects about which we can agree. Kant dis-

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misses this as the basis for a merely “empirical interest in the beautiful”; and although he has not explained why an interest in (as opposed to a judgment about) the beautiful has to be *a priori*, this topic does provide him with a useful occasion for pointing out how easily a perfectly natural desire to agree with others can degenerate into a rather disagreeable tendency to pride ourselves on the beautiful things that we own. However, he does argue that we can find a ground for a more purely “intellectual interest” (§ 42) in the beautiful insofar as we take the natural existence of beautiful objects, which serve our fundamental cognitive purpose, as a kind of evidence that nature is hospitable to the realization of our ultimate moral purposes as well.⁶⁸ This is obviously a deep point of connection between Kant's aesthetics and his teleology.

The next main part of the work is Kant's treatment of fine art, in which he radically revises the apparent formalism of the “Analytic of the Beautiful” by making clear that what is essential to all art is that it result from and produce a free play between the imagination, understanding, and even reason, not that it restrict our response to the perceptual form of its products in any narrow sense. Kant begins by distinguishing fine art from nature (§ 43), handicraft (§ 44), and natural science (§ 47), but the heart of his argument lies in his claim that fine art is always a product of genius (§ 46). This discussion, although deeply influenced by the popularity of this topic in the eighteenth century,⁶⁹ is given a characteristically Kantian twist. Kant argues (§ 49) that genius is what gives a work “spirit” or “soul” (*Geist*),⁷⁰ and that it does this by finding for a work an “aesthetic idea” – a central image – which on the one hand makes palpable and animates a “rational idea” such as a moral concept and on the other leads to an inexhaustible wealth of more concrete sensory images and experiences.⁷¹ Genius thus consists in the ability to come up with both content for works of art and forms for the expression of this content that will at the same time manifest the freedom of the imagination of the artist and yet leave room for and stimulate the freedom of the imagination of the audience⁷² – a tall order, of course, which is why genius is rare.

Kant stresses that genius is a gift of nature,⁷³ which raises the question of why the existence of artistic genius isn't as much evidence of nature's hospitality to mankind as the existence of natural beauty, and thus why art isn't just as appropriate a subject for the intellectual interest in the beautiful as nature. Kant does not answer this question. Instead, the last few sections of his treatment of the fine arts classify them (§ 51) and compare their merits (§ 53) on the basis of their varying potential for the expression of aesthetic ideas. This was an exercise of longstanding fascination for Kant,⁷⁴ and his final version of

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it should dispel any assumption that Kant supported a formalist theory of art.

“Critique of the Aesthetic Power of Judgment”: “Dialectic.”

The inclusion of a “Dialectic” in Kant’s treatment of judgments of taste seems like an arbitrary imposition upon it of the form of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, and it seems as if Kant is once again just going over well-trodden ground. He sets up the dialectic as an “antinomy” between two “commonplaces” about taste, on the one hand that “Everyone has his own taste” and thus that there can be no “disputing” about taste (deciding about it “by means of proofs”), on the other hand that it is certainly reasonable to “argue” about judgments of taste, which must imply some sort of connection to concepts.⁷⁵ Kant says that this antinomy can only be resolved by showing that judgments of taste depend on an *indeterminate* concept, which makes debate reasonable but does not provide any criteria for evaluating objects that can be mechanically applied to them.⁷⁶ One would have thought that the concept of the free play of imagination and understanding was just such a concept, which does not offer us any way to prove our judgments of taste but still makes it rational to expect agreement in them and to seek it by means of discussion; but now Kant instead introduces the idea of a supersensible substratum of both human nature and nature at large – a thing in itself lying behind the appearance of our difference from each other and from the rest of nature – as that which plays this role.⁷⁷ This step seems unmotivated, but is another anticipation of the argument of the “Critique of the Teleological Power of Judgment,” in which Kant will argue that the experience of organization in nature inevitably leads us to the idea of a designer and purpose beyond nature, which has no scientific value but has great moral value in leading us to see our own moral development as the only possible ultimate purpose of nature.

The “Dialectic” is also valuable for its concluding section (§ 59), in which Kant argues that the beautiful is a symbol of the morally good because our *experience* of beauty is an experience of the freedom of the imagination that is in many ways similar though by no means identical to moral freedom, of which we do not have any direct experience at all.⁷⁸ Here aesthetic experience again seems to prepare us for morality by making the possibility of the freedom that we have to exercise in morality palpable to us, although in the one-section “Methodology” that follows and concludes the “Critique of the Aesthetic Power of Judgment” Kant seems to contradict this claim by saying that “the true propaedeutic for the grounding of taste is the development of moral ideas and the cultivation of the moral feeling.”⁷⁹ In the end, it seems that Kant can only possibly conclude that the development of taste and the development of morality are mutually supportive and reinforcing.