Ecoaesthetics: Environmental aesthetics and Kant's deduction

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Abstract

This thesis is designed to develop an understanding of the problems, limitations and potential uses of Kant's aesthetic deduction. Motivated by an interest in environmental aesthetics, this thesis offers a critical analysis of Kantian aesthetics in order to expand upon the successes and failures of Kant's aesthetic deduction with particular consideration of the implications both of these have for the natural environment. I ask the following questions: firstly, why does Kant's deduction succeed or fail? Secondly, does Kantian aesthetics related to the deduction have a role in environmental aesthetics, and relatedly, in what ways do environmental considerations help deepen our understanding of Kantian aesthetics? I ask these questions in order to determine the success of Kant's aesthetic deduction and promote the importance of nuance in discussions concerning environmentalism and aesthetics. Through a process of exegesis and textual analysis, I demonstrate that, although Kant's aesthetic deduction serves as an excellent jumping-off point for broader environmental discussion, the Deduction itself fails to achieve its aims and even adds problematic dimensions to an ecoaesthetic approach in the case of the role of ugliness. Significantly, this research connects two elements of theory (Kantian aesthetics and ecoaesthetics) in order to understand both more profoundly. In deepening our understanding of these issues, the motivation for and promotion of environmentalism through ecoaesthetics will be more readily achievable in future research.

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Introduction

1. Summary of introduction

This introduction will set out the aims and central questions that will be answered throughout this thesis. I will address why these research questions are essential and what I hope will come from completing this piece of work. I will provide the necessary background to my thesis and address some interpretative issues, such as the nature of Kant's actual claims.[1] I will also give a brief overview of the rest of the thesis structure before moving on to Chapter 1.

2. Research aims and objectives

My interest in Kantian aesthetics stems from a desire to understand the intricate relationship between humans and the natural world. Whilst aesthetics might not seem like an obvious place to look for guidance, I have found it a rich source of inspiration. Aesthetics play an important role in environmental decisions; it can influence our desire to protect or save natural habitats and make us more or less likely to understand and appreciate the natural environment's complexities depending upon the perceived aesthetic value. Kantian aesthetics does an excellent job of covering some of our aesthetic experiences' most interesting aspects (particularly with nature). Therefore, Kant's *Critique of Judgment* strikes me as a natural place to begin considering the links between the environment and humans using aesthetics as our opening.[2] Since Kantian aesthetics and environmentalism are such broad issues, narrowing the area of research has been imperative. Therefore, I have chosen to focus upon the success of

[1] As opposed to the claims Kant has been interpreted as having, for instance with regards to being a traditional aesthetic formalist.

[2] Kant's approach also tries to carve a path between realist and empirical aesthetic methodologies, which allows readers to appreciate the (often) fine line between the two, whilst also appreciating the valuable and interesting aspects of both major aesthetic traditions.

Kant's Deduction of taste and the implications which issues generated by the deduction may have on the environment. The questions I will seek to answer are as follows:[3]

1. Is Kant's deduction a success?
    a. Why/why not?
2. What are the environmental implications of Kantian aesthetics (related to the deduction)?
    b. What role does ugliness play within the deduction, and what are the implications of this for environmental/ecoaesthetic application.

Ecoaesthetics is a branch of the literature that finds its home in environmental studies and aesthetics, emphasising the connections between them. It more recently focuses on the interactions between environmentalism (including activism) and aesthetics – often to justify further environmental action. I will be mentioning many writers who work in the field of environmental aesthetics (or ecoaesthetics), such as Berleant (1994), Brady (2006) and Carlson (1979). However, I do not intend to explain or defend an ecoaesthetic approach to answer the questions set out above, only to expand upon the ecoaesthetic discussion pertaining to the issues stemming from Kant's aesthetic deduction.[4] The role of ecoaesthetics within this thesis is (for better or worse) a rather minimal one. In order that I can do justice to the subject as a whole (including future research about ecoaesthetics), I must first begin with a thorough examination of Kant's aesthetic deduction: a kind of philosophical 'show your working!'. I found

[3] There is of course no way to truly disconnect the first from the second question or to properly answer the question 1 without also answering 1b. Question 2b for instance, forms part of my answer to question 1/1b. However, I have attempted to set out these questions as simply and explicitly as possible by breaking them into discrete parts.
[4] When capitalised I refer to the argument proper found at §38, whereas non-capitalised, 'deduction' refers to the deductive argument inclusive of the supporting passages. In the abstract I referred to the lowercase deduction, as I will of course be taking the supporting passages into account for the purposes of analysis.

ecoaesthetics through Kantian aesthetics, and so, it is through this alley I must traverse in order to come out the other side with a better understanding of both Kantian aesthetics and ecoaesthetics. Every aspect of my research stems from an interest in environmentalism, but rather than focusing solely on ecoaesthetics, this thesis will examine Kantian aesthetics and its potential links to nature more as a springboard for future ecoaesthetic scholarship. My interest in the environment and ecoaesthetics has helped to inform much of my approach to Kantian aesthetics and has allowed me to consider the importance of issues such as ugliness and disgust within the deduction. Likewise, researching Kantian aesthetics has opened other avenues of exploration, e.g., disinterestedness and universality, in terms of their potential for use within environmental philosophy and ecoaesthetics. In other words, whilst this is a work about Kantian aesthetics, it is motivated and appreciated through a lens of ecoaesthetic consideration.

Whilst questions concerning the success of Kant's aesthetic deduction have existed since its publication, my concerns originate from a desire to understand how these issues have broader implications for the environment. Mainly because the usefulness and application value of Kantian aesthetics are reliant upon the deduction's success; if the deduction fails to meet its aims, how useful can it possibly be to environmental aesthetics? To figure this out, I will address issues such as disinterest, conceptuality/non-conceptuality, objectivity, subjectivity, universal validity and necessity, since these are the essential aspects of a Kantian aesthetic judgment. The answers to these questions are of importance to various groups. However, they are of special importance to those willing to adopt Kantian ideas into their aesthetics (whether

they are otherwise sympathetic to Kant or not) to potentially motivate environmental protections and further activism.[5]

3. Background

As we will see later on in more detail, during his earlier work, Kant insisted that a non-empirical theory of taste was impossible, which is part of what makes the *Critique of Judgment* so fascinating to Kantians and non-Kantians alike. Kant's third *Critique* features an explicit attempt to provide a transcendental Deduction of taste, marking the appearance of a significant reversal in his prior opinion. Early criticism of the third *Critique* tended to centre upon the justification behind Kant's change of heart and the lack of cohesion between the *Critique of Judgment* and the rest of his critical work.[6] As a result, the third *Critique* suffered from not being taken seriously, especially by those who saw aesthetics as less philosophically relevant than metaphysics or ethics. Although early romantic writers were interested in Kant's notions about beauty and the sublime, the third *Critique* was usually seen as either a tool to understand the first two *Critiques* better or simply as a much less significant part of his Critical project.

Kant's insistence on illustrating that aesthetics have a place within his moral philosophy, along with a desire to synthesise pure and practical reason, has been regarded with scepticism by many. Hannah Arendt, in her *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, argues that "…judgment of the particular – This is beautiful, this is ugly; this is right, this is wrong – has

[5] This is the ultimate goal of this line of enquiry, however for the purposes of this thesis – I am going to avoid being quite so ambitious. Rather, I will answer questions pertaining to the deduction's success and the potential for certain notions to be of use (or lack thereof) within environmental aesthetics. I will leave a grand theory of ecoaesthetics until a little bit later in my career!

[6] For example, Herder was deeply critical of Kantian aesthetics, especially because he thought Kant had manufactured an a priori principle for judgment, simply because there were such principles for understanding and reason. He saw little reason for Kant's apparent 'change of heart' and found his justification of the 'a priori necessity' decidedly lacking (from Kalligone, 747-748).

no place in Kant's moral philosophy." (1992, 15) For many years, Kant himself did not think that it was possible to include aesthetics within his transcendental framework due to aesthetic judgments' inability to provide universal assent via objectivity. The type of subjective yet universal judgment central to the *Critique of Judgment* was incomprehensible to Kant in both previous *Critique*s (which is noted by Helmut Wenzel 2005, 38). Despite decades of research and interpretation, the third *Critique* is still primarily treated as a subsidiary of Kant's

principal work. Rudolph A. Makreel maintains that the third *Critique* ought to be considered as an interpretive framework for his other works rather than as the completion of his critical system, whereas the first two *Critique*s ground metaphysical systems of natural science and morals, the third *Critique* provides no "…specific metaphysical application." (1990, 3).

Today, a revaluation of the themes explored within the *Critique of Judgment* and a resurgence of interest in aesthetics have garnered Kant a place at the top of the aesthetic genealogical tree. Often cited as the father of modern aesthetics, Kant's third *Critique* illuminates (in some cases for the very first time) some of the most salient aspects of aesthetic theory.[7] The third *Critique* develops Kant's critical philosophy in ways that enrich and extend his original thinking, far from being a distinct section of work with little relevance to his significant philosophical contributions. The *Critique of Judgment* completes Kant's major philosophy, bringing metaphysical and ethical issues from the *Critique Pure Reason* full circle by applying them to issues as diverse as aesthetic taste, nature, teleology, and God's existence. Although the third *Critique* can be read as a standalone work, to analyse either the Critique of Aesthetic or Teleological Judgment in isolation from Kant's broader philosophy would risk missing significant aspects of both Kant's aesthetic theory and his philosophy as a whole. Much

[7] The significance of Kant's contribution to the field of aesthetics is hard to overstate, with most contemporary aestheticians paying homage to his influence, see Schaper (1992, 368) Cohen & Guyer (1985, 11), Scruton (2001, 79) and Osbourne (1969, 153).

of the interest in Kant's *Critique of Judgment* can be explained through its applicability and usefulness to other philosophical traditions, and whilst the third *Critique* cannot easily be disentangled from the web of Kant's wider philosophy, its broader appeal is a testament to the intellectual brilliance of the concepts it contains.

Throughout this thesis, I will focus upon the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment – its success, limitations and potential usefulness beyond Kantian aesthetics – it needs to be made

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clear that I am not discounting the importance of the connections between this and Kant's other Critical and non-Critical works. Where it is relevant, I will refer to and discuss the necessity of these connections within Kant's work whilst also exploring the implications and usefulness of these notions for my own broader aims. Despite widespread interest in the third *Critique*, its most puzzling element, the transcendental Deduction of taste, remains an elusive and ultimately still puzzling part of Kant's philosophy. Like Kant, I do not find this particularly troubling (although for very different reasons); whilst Kant's solution to this puzzle could ultimately fail, it may still be able to capture the peculiar nature of aesthetic judgment and our relationship with the beautiful. According to Kant, the following section will provide context to Kant's deduction of taste and introduce some of the central principles guiding the deduction of pure aesthetic judgments.

4. Context and potential contradictions

The evolution of Kant's thinking about the potential for a theory of taste (about the possibility of a deduction) can be seen most strikingly in a passage taken from a footnote in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, in which he explicitly renounces the project as futile:

> 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 estimation 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 judgment 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 preserve it for the doctrine, which is true science. (A 21/B 35, 36 n.)

To confuse matters slightly for a modern reader of Kant's aesthetics, the first section of the first *Critique* is titled the 'Transcendental Aesthetic'. The above footnote addresses the ambiguity of the term aesthetic, with Kant making clear that his use of the word refers only to the "…science of all the principles of a priori sensibility." (Ibid.,) and is not being used as some of Kant's German contemporaries would have done to refer to a critique of taste.[8]

Attempting to bring our judgment of beauty under rational principles is a task guided by 'false hope' of the kind displayed by Baumgarten, whose endeavour to do just this must ultimately be in vain. Kant was critical of any attempt to ground either an empirical or nonempirical account of aesthetics, maintaining that because their *source* is merely empirical, it could never result in 'determinate a priori laws' to which we (our judgment of taste) can or should conform (ibid.,). However, Kant did eventually adopt Baumgarten's use of the term 'aesthetics' more broadly in the 1790 publication of the *Critique of Judgment,* and it is this use of aesthetics we generally use today.[9] The apparent contradiction between Kant's earlier and

[8] Even more confusingly, Kant does himself use the term aesthetics, in this 'German' way, in an announcement of his lectures in 1765-66, "…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." (1765: Announcement of the Program of his Lectures for the Winter Semester 1765-1766, 2: 311). It should also be noted that (especially in earlier work) the term aesthetic is used by Kant in relation to the discussion of space and time i.e., the first part of The Transcendental Doctrine Elements is titled The Transcendental Aesthetic (A 19/ B 33) and this is the form of 'aesthetic' he conventionally used outside of his later discussion of aesthetic taste.

[9] Particularly, as opposed to the traditional rationalist approach to aesthetically judging specific works of art referred to in the first *Critique*.

later views provoked criticism from his contemporaries and continues to be the subject of misunderstandings from modern-day readers. On the face of it, Kant attempts to provide in the *Critique of Judgment* that which he deemed futile in the *Critique of Pure Reason*; should then the third *Critique* be dismissed as an anomaly and relegated to the bottom of the Kantian 'To be read' pile? In a word – no.

On careful reading, Kant's brief treatment of 'aesthetics' in the *Critique of Pure Reason* and his discussions of beauty and sublimity in *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and*

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the Sublime (1764) make it abundantly clear that the contradiction is not at all as pernicious as it first appears. Kant's discussion of aesthetics before writing the third *Critique* is not entirely inconsistent with his later work. Of course, his turnaround marks a significant change of approach, but it is not necessarily contradictory with the earlier *Critiques*. In the extract cited above, Kant's choice of wording is telling, for at no point does he state that a critique of taste is impossible – only that a priori principles of taste will not lead to rules of taste to which we must conform. Baumgarten claimed that "Aesthetics (as the theory of the liberal arts, as inferior cognition, as the art of beautiful thinking and as the art of thought analogous to reason) is the science of sensuous cognition." (1973, §1). He argued that aesthetics is analogous to rational cognition and that rational, scientific concepts could be applied to enable the recognition of the perfection of sensible cognition (beauty).

Furthermore, he recommended the education or cultivation of taste for those wishing to produce works of art and those wanting to engage in aesthetic appreciation. He claimed that both 'rules' and 'laws' were involved in the successful creation of beauty and that these could be understood through scientific means (as they relate to the objective property of an object, i.e., they are discoverable). When considering whether "…aesthetics is an art, not a science," Baumgarten argues that "…experience shows that our art can be demonstrated, it is clearly a

priori, because psychology etc., provide certain principles." (§10). On the other hand, Kant explicitly rejected Baumgarten's emphasis on the cognitive aspect of aesthetic appreciation and education, arguing that this element leads people to reference the perfection of a particular object's concept, which is at odds with Kant's brand of aesthetic non-conceptualism.

Kant is consistent throughout his work concerning the futility of creating a science of beauty or taste, drawing attention to this point in a footnote at the beginning of the *Critique of Pure Reason* as well as numerous times throughout the *Critique of Judgment*, almost as if to remind himself as much as the reader (§44, 304-305, §60, 355).[10] His criticism of Baumgarten's 'science of aesthetics' rests upon one crucial word – 'determinate', which Kant uses to demarcate his aesthetic project from those (such as Baumgarten's) whom he saw as attempting to produce determinate principles from purely empirical sources and relying on them to create a science of taste.[11]

The *Critique of Judgment* does not contradict Kant's earlier disavowal of the possibility of determinate a priori principles being derived from empirical sources. However, it does somewhat contradict his claim in the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* that there can be no a priori principles regarding judgments of taste (A21A 21/B 35). This contradiction is

[10] Unless otherwise stated, references to the *Critique of Judgment* are to the Pluhar translation (1987). This translation is based upon the second edition of the *Akademie* edition published in 1793 (Volume 5). Kant's First Introduction was taken from the first edition of the *Akademie* text published in 1790 and can be found in Volume 20 of the 1793 edition).

[11] Kant's criticism of Baumgarten focuses on the idea that Baumgarten tried to create a science of aesthetics, i.e., a way to prove that one's aesthetic judgments were valid/invalid. Kant states that Baumgarten believed that the principles of taste are a priori and that a science of taste could be derived from empirical means alone (A 21/B 35, 36 n.). Kant's critique of this line of thinking makes sense in the context of his own belief that 'proper' knowledge cannot be generated from non-determinable principles, i.e., principles of aesthetic judgment cannot determine judgment. However, Baumgarten's view is a little more nuanced, offering the possibility of a 'new science' based upon sense cognition and discovery of the perfection of sensible cognition (§10). Whilst he emphasised empirical processes to demonstrate how determinable principles can be generated, he also speaks of the superiority of intellectual (and not sensory) knowledge (§8) and how perfecting perceptual awareness complements the intellectual (more rational) faculties (§3).

rectified through Kant's later qualifications in specifying the nature of his criticism, especially concerning determinate principles and empirical sources.

It is likely that, for a long time, Kant did indeed think it was impossible to derive a priori principles of aesthetic judgment (and/or had no interest in attempting to do so). However, his earlier writings do not necessarily contradict the particulars of his later change of heart, at least if you take into account his small additions to the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*:[12]

> 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 estimation 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 <most prominent> sources are concerned, and can therefore never serve as <determinate> a priori rules according to which our judgment of taste must be directed; rather, the latter constitutes the genuine touchstone of the correctness of the former. For this reason, it is advisable <either> again to desist from the use of this term and preserve it for the doctrine which is true science (A 21/B 35, 36 n.).

This passage from the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* from 1787 highlights the development of Kant's views from 1781 and his increased sensitivity towards the possibility of a priori principles being generated by reflective (not determinant) aesthetic judgments. It is clear that without this addition to the second edition, there would be a strong contradiction

[12] Coinciding with Kant's changes to the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* (and his changes to the footnote concerning Baumgarten's aesthetics) was his 1787 letter to Reinhold claiming that he had discovered the a priori principles of a critique of taste (1999, 272).

between Kant's deduction of aesthetic judgment and his 1781 observations since in the former, he discovers the a priori principles, which in the latter he deemed impossible. Retroactively positing the notion of determinate vs indeterminate principles (and concepts) allows Kant to avoid accusations of outright contradiction. However, it is an example of Kant's evolution of opinion concerning the need to develop a critique of aesthetics in order to complete his critical system.

In the *Critique of Judgment,* Kant goes to great lengths to clarify that, although a deduction of taste is possible, judgments of taste are only ever subjectively universal, and though these judgments are necessary, they cannot be based on determinate concepts or produce determinate principles. That is, although we implicitly demand assent from others as to a judgment of beauty, under ordinary circumstances, it is impossible to actually do so since we cannot be sure that we have subsumed correctly, let alone determine whether others have also done so.[13] Whilst this is a point of contention within the *Critique of Judgment* and something I will return to in-depth, it is not at odds with his earlier view but rather a confirmation and elaboration. Throughout the third *Critique*, Kant maintains the impossibility of finding a science of taste, but contrary to his earlier view, claimed to have found the a priori principles of a judgment of taste.

5. The aims of the *Critique of Judgment*

The Critique of Judgment's central aim is to illustrate both the need for and justification of a transcendental deduction of taste. Whilst the *Critiques of Pure* and *Practical Reason* focus on metaphysics, epistemology and ethics, respectively, the third *Critique* takes as its focus the

[13] As opposed to determinative judgments which subsume a particular under a given universal, aesthetic judgments are reflective meaning that the subject only has the particular given and must 'reflect' upon possible universals. Kant goes on to claim that the guiding aesthetic principle, which must be a concept, is nature's subjective purposiveness for the power of judgment and it is by necessity – indeterminate.

faculty (power) of judgment as it relates to aesthetics and natural teleology (IX, 198). The need for a third *Critique* stems from an inability of the first two *Critiques* to offer the tools or framework necessary for Kant to incorporate aesthetic judgment into his Critical work. This is primarily because Kant proposed a new form of judgment, different either to those made in practical or theoretical judgments; whilst both of these types of judgments involve determinate concepts, judgments of taste, however, are of the merely reflective kind. In ordinary cognition, judgment involves the application of concepts to particulars, briefly stated, the faculty of the imagination 'synthesises' the information available to us via sense-perception, producing a 'manifold of intuition' (A77/B102, 104). This manifold can, in turn, be unified or subsumed under pure concepts of the understanding, leading to a cognitive experience. A determinate judgment is subsumptive because the "…universal [the rule, principle, law] is given", and it

has no "…need to devise a law of its own…" in order to be able to "…subsume the particular in nature to the universal." (*CJ*, IV 79).

A merely reflective judgment, on the other hand, works from the opposite end of the spectrum; whilst all judgments involve reflection, an aesthetic judgment is merely reflective. This means that, rather than a universal being given and subsuming the particular under a concept, only a particular is given, and the power of judgment attempts to find a universal for it. However, since this is a judgment of taste, Kant maintains that there can be no 'proper' science or objective empirical concept (§39, 292) to which we can refer to in order to determine whether a given particular fits into a universal idea/principle of what is beautiful.[14] In fact, the

[14] Kant's emphasis on using his Critical work to put metaphysics on a "…secure path of science…" (Bvii, cf. Axiii) may appear in contrast with his denial of the possibility of such science in relation to judgments of a merely reflective kind i.e., the type which is third critical work focuses upon. Kant does in fact state that, "There is no science of the beautiful [das Schöne]…" (§44, 304-305). However he is also relatively clear that the kind of science he criticises Baumgarten for attempting, is that which relies on objective empirical concepts as their determining basis (see section 1.3 above). Kant distinguishes between different types of science, with 'proper' science requiring systematicity, objective grounding and apodictic certainty as discussed in the Preface to the

unification involved in ordinary cognitive judgments, through the subsumption of the manifold of intuition presented by the imagination, under the understanding, although present in aesthetic judgments, is only present due to certain objects exhibiting the sensory manifold as being already unified. Kant maintains that a positive aesthetic judgment is brought about when an object displays this ability to be 'already unified', by an 'unexpected harmony' of the faculties of imagination and understanding (§5, 186-188). It is based on the pleasure resulting from such a harmonisation (brought about by the 'formal purposiveness' of the object in question, i.e., the unification of the sensory manifold, leading to the free play/free harmony) that an affirmative

aesthetic judgment is made (ibid.,). Thus, the third *Critique's* central aim is to explicate and justify the need for a different type of judgment, i.e., not moral or sensuous, practical or theoretical.

Kant maintains that the feeling of pleasure generated by the harmonisation of the faculties determines the judgment, aside from any practical, moral or sensuous interest in the object or vista. Most of the problems generated in the *Critique of Aesthetic Judgment* are a result of Kant's belief that not only is a judgment of taste separate to those contained in his earlier work, but that it is subjective, yet at the same time universally valid and also necessary, on top of which it is also supposed to be established a priori. The need for a separate deduction is clear from Kant's commitment to a judgment of taste being a priori, universally valid and without reference to determinate concepts. Whilst the necessity (demand for universal assent)

Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science (1786, IV). The type of 'science' involved in a critique of taste is not related to the finding of proof/examples (if this were so it would be a science instead of a critique) but instead it is derived from the possibility of making such judgments "…from the nature of these powers as cognitive powers..." (§34, 286).

I will admit that there is a certain amount of ambiguity with the language in the aforementioned passages. In §34 Kant implies that a critique of taste can involve a certain type of science, but in §44 he goes on to state there can be no science of the beautiful, as the only science of the beautiful which could exist would be based on proofs, meaning it could not also be a judgment of taste (which would rather defeat the point of the deduction at §38). I think that this ambiguity comes down to different uses of the word science, in the phrase at §44, Kant is responding to Baumgarten's specific empirical-principle-led science of the beautiful and not his own more general attempts to put metaphysics on a secure path of science.

of aesthetic judgments is an essential part of Kant's aesthetic deduction, it directly follows from the other argument's premises.

On the topic of subjectivity, it is essential to note that there are three ways to understand the role of subjectivity, especially because Kant typically only refers to two of these ways when discussing the subjective nature of aesthetic judgments. The most common way of understanding 'subjective' is in the sense of something influenced by factors specific to the epistemic agent. However, this is something that Kant explicitly wishes to avoid, instead advocating for the disinterested outlook to be the primary quality of a pure aesthetic judgment. When Kant speaks of subjectivity, he does not do so concerning the personal features of the subject but instead to the nature of the judgment as belonging to the subject (the second type of subjective) and that the judgment is not conceptually determinable (third).[15] The latter forms

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of 'subjective' do not rely upon the subject's personal features, which in the case of the former: they most certainly do.

Kant begins the third *Critique* in much the same fashion as Descartes in the *Meditations*, or more relatedly, Hume in *Of the Standard of Taste* (1757), from the point of scepticism, i.e., that there are no truth conditions in aesthetic judgments. The central question here is whether Kant is successful in demonstrating that there are in fact truth conditions involved in the making of aesthetic judgments via his deduction of taste, or whether he also falls victim to the same issues as Hume, whose account ultimately fails since it is unable to

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[15] In terms of belonging to the subject, the aesthetic judgment is based upon the free play of the faculties which does reside within the individual, but it does not depend upon the particular subject's mental constitution as these faculties are present in all subjects.

overcome the sceptical position, i.e., sceptical about the ability to ground the universal validity of taste, and also in being able to distinguish between what makes a good and bad judgment.[16]

Kant's aesthetics attempts to combine both objective and subjective elements; it is subjectivist in the sense that it is based upon a subjective mental state, i.e., the pleasure experienced through the harmonisation of the faculties, there is no rule of beauty that can be applied to objects, so each person must judge the object themselves without reference to rules or other person's judgments. However, it is also objectivist in the sense that the judgment (if adequately made) is meant to speak with a universal voice since it relies on what is universally available to all. The pleasure stems from a mode of cognition which means that the particular object will (if judged correctly) provoke the same 'reciprocal quickening' of the imagination and understanding in all who judge it. Of course, as Kant is more than aware, aesthetic

judgment rarely provokes such universal assent. However, he acknowledges this criticism and counters it by stating that only if we could ever be entirely sure that a judgment was made properly (subsumed correctly), then we would technically be able to assure the universality/objectivity of the judgment (§19, 237). That Kant's justification of the aesthetic deduction appeals to his metaphysical project, i.e., transcendentalism, makes for uncomfortable reading for those of us who approach the third *Critique* specifically as a contribution to

[16] I have two main problems with Hume's account of taste, the first relates to the unnecessary intellectualisation of beauty and taste. Hume's account relies upon the role of critics, his standard of taste aims to elucidate "…the rule by which the various sentiments of men may be reconciled." (1965, 5-6). Thus, in disputes of taste, resolution can be found by appealing to the disinterested and practised/sensitised critics. This kind of appeal to the intellectual superior is oddly anti-democratic and leaves little room for the judgments of the 'common rabble' to find equal epistemological footing. My second issue is with the possibility of discovering whom amongst the general population is worthy of the title of critic, by which I mean, whose opinion is more respectable and accurate than everyone else's? Hume's himself admits that the 'true critic' is a rare and "…few are qualified to give judgment on any work of art…" (228). Basing an entire theory of taste on the opinion of the few (probably welleducated middle/upper class white men) is problematic and is something which Kant's aesthetic theory actually circumvents with an appeal to universal validity. I further discuss the similarities and differences between Hume and Kant's aesthetic theories in Chapter 5.

aesthetics.[17] Kant himself is aware of both the limits of his own theory within his other work and the place of the third *Critique* in the broader literature.[18]

If we take as our starting point the idea that Kant never intended to refute the complete sceptic (not those who are sceptical of the ability to have meaningful disagreements about aesthetic judgments) in the same way Hume or Descartes had intended to do. Instead, only those sceptical about the ability to provide a subjective yet, universally valid a priori deduction of taste – then the task of the third Critique need not be seen as quite so mammoth.

6. Reading the *Critique of Judgment*

The third *Critique* is a bit of an unusual read, to put it mildly. It retains a roughly similar structure as the first two *Critiques,* i.e., analytic, deduction, dialectic, antimony, but it is less evident in its construction, which is saying something, considering Kant's reputation for being a notoriously impenetrable writer. This difficulty is compounded by the separation of passages that seem intrinsically connected; this is most pronounced when we try to determine the location of Kant's deduction of taste (I will return to this issue at a later point).

Generally speaking, there are two main methods of reading and analysing the *Critique of Judgment*. The first emphasises the harmony of the three *Critiques*, referring to the third

[17] For obvious reasons, I would very much like to not have to refer to Kant's many other texts in order to understand and appreciate the basics of his aesthetic theory. It would certainly suit my intentions if Kant's aesthetics were in no way connected to his transcendental idealism and could be treated entirely distinctly! Those who find Kant's metaphysical project lacking, would (I am sure) find his aesthetics far more compelling if they did not have to be defended with reference to his prior work. However, the result of them being so thoroughly entwined with the first two *Critiques* creates a level of complexity which allows for a real richness of analysis and exegesis.

[18] Hence, his effort at convincing and directly appealing to the transcendental philosophers who more likely than not, will be sceptical of his attempt to give a transcendental account of aesthetics (see the preface *of Critique of Judgment*).

Critique as both a completion of Kant's Critical work and as a bridge between theoretical and practical reasoning. The third *Critique* is seen as illuminating the issues first discussed in the *Critique of Pure Reason,* particularly, as Eva Schaper has also pointed out, on the problem of 'The Schematism', which may not have been fully matured at the time of writing of the first *Critique* (1992, 368). The second way to read the *Critique of Judgment* is as a contribution to the field of aesthetics. The third *Critique* is divided into two sections: The Critique of Aesthetic Judgment (containing discussion of both the beautiful and sublime) and the Critique of Teleological Judgment; the second approach focuses on the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment. The second part of the *Critique*, with its focus on 'final causes' of nature, is generally considered as a self-contained section of the *Critique*. It does, of course, have many connections to the first part of the *Critique*, involving discussions of nature's purposiveness, but it also goes on to discuss potential teleological justifications for the existence of God.

Kant himself, in both introductions to the *Critique*, recapitulates his first two *Critiques* and spells out the essential relationship between the three, inasmuch as the *Critique of Judgment* mediates the 'Connection of the Two Parts of Philosophy to [Form] a Whole" (III 176). This systematic approach to the third *Critique*, although legitimate, is not one I will be taking. During this work, I will focus mostly upon Kant's aesthetics and, thus, the third *Critique's* first part.[19] I choose to read the third *Critique* (the aesthetic) as a contribution to aesthetics, which is not to say that it does not have profound implications upon other aspects

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of Kant's work (especially the moral implications, which will be discussed at a later point) only that my main focus will be concerning the legitimacy and broader implications of the deduction of taste.

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[19] Unless otherwise stated, when I refer to the '*Critique'* I will generally be referring to the third *Critique* throughout the rest of this thesis.

7. Thesis structure

This thesis contains an introduction, eight chapters and a conclusion. I will begin with a chapter illustrating some of my concerns about aesthetics and the environment. In this chapter, I hope to convince the reader that aesthetics and environmentalism have an interesting and meaningful relationship. More fundamental to this thesis, however, is convincing the reader that beauty, as it is frequently understood, is problematic for environmentalism and that understanding the relationship between aesthetics and nature may have many positive consequences. I will move on to discuss Kant's deduction and offer my reading of the four moments, peculiarities and the Deduction itself in §38. I will then focus on specific issues thrown up by the deduction. For instance, Chapters 3 and 4 will concentrate on Kant's claims about disinterest, including its importance to the deduction and its potential usefulness within environmentalism.

Chapter 5 and 6 will focus on Kant's justification and defence of subjective universalism; I will touch upon conceptual objectivity, the particularity problem and communicability (amongst other things) in an attempt to discover whether the grounding of Kantian (pure) aesthetic judgments makes a whole lot of sense.

I will bring the discussion full circle in Chapters 7 and 8 by returning to the issue of ugliness (or lack thereof) in aesthetics. I have a sneaking suspicion that Kant's deduction may not provide a particularly compelling account of ugliness. If this is so, then this has implications on the success of the deduction (as I understand it) and the practical application of Kantian aesthetics to the environment (especially if the deduction fails).

8. Summary

This introductory chapter has set out the main objectives of the thesis and has already begun to address some of the interesting elements of Kant's aesthetics, including the potential of Kant to be accused of contradicting his earlier work. This thesis will seek to answer questions

concerning the success of Kant's deduction and the implications Kant's aesthetics may or may not have on the environment. Whilst these are indeed my main concerns, I am aware that there is much, much more which can and should be said about Kant's deduction (and his aesthetics in general); however, by focusing on the specific issues highlighted above, I hope to answer the questions which are most pertinent to my current research aims.

Chapter 1: The limitations of beauty in the environment

1.1 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I argue that our focus on beauty may not prove beneficial to the environment or even be the most interesting or compelling account of aesthetics available to us (whether we wish to apply it to the environment or not). When applied to the natural world, aesthetics has

the potential to perpetuate harmful behaviours and cover up potentially beneficial ones. This chapter will illustrate beauty's tendency to obfuscate issues relating to nature and environmental decision-making, in addition to reiterating the importance of disinterest.

The protection of non-human nature is often grounded with an appeal to beauty. Focusing on the beauty or aesthetic value of nature often means basing the decision of whether to preserve an environment on whether or not it is beautiful. In this chapter, I will argue that basing environmental protections solely upon aesthetic value is not only insufficient in providing an adequately robust foundation for protecting the environment but potentially deleterious to this aim. I will demonstrate the need to problematise our understanding of beauty and its role in motivating environmental preservations. In justifying this, I will appeal to the subjectivity of beauty standards and the tendency for human conceptions of beauty to mask crucial environmental relevance issues, leading to shallow and inappropriate decision-making. Cases of environmentally harmful beauty and potentially beneficial ugliness are particularly at risk of being overlooked if beauty is used as the primary justification for environmental protectionism. In this chapter, I will argue that the notion of aesthetic disinterest is a useful tool in helping to background our most obvious self-interested motivations and preconceptions about both nature and beauty. However, it is only with a cognitive component that the purely aesthetic approach would be able to provide an epistemologically sound strategy for reliably grounding the protection of non-human nature.

1.2 Societal aesthetic experience

Positive aesthetic experiences are an essential part of life, and the natural environment is a primary source of such experiences. These positive aesthetic encounters contribute to individuals' happiness and well-being and can promote social cohesion and economic prosperity within a community. The foundation of positive aesthetic responses relies upon the perception of beauty, this much is uncontroversial, but I want to posit that one's perception of

beauty should not be the sole basis for justifying environmental protections.[20] This point may seem self-evident to many environmentalists, but the overwhelming evidence suggests that beauty is still given precedence when it comes to persuading people of the need to make specific changes in order to protect nature.[21] Negotiating environmental disputes and justifying certain natural protections through the lens of beauty leads to the protection of things we find aesthetically valuable and the dismissal or avoidance of things that we do not. This approach poses significant problems for environmentalism and ecoaesthetic theory, yet it has a long historical precedent in environmentalism and politics.

Throughout history, the human preference for a certain kind of beauty, i.e., unspoiled natural landscapes, has been a primary factor behind environmental protectionism, as well as the avoidance or disregard of ugliness. We can observe this in advertisements, parliamentary policy documents, political speeches, charity appeals, literature, television and the like. For instance, the Sierra Club was designed to promote wilderness, The National Trust was set up to protect places of natural beauty, and Greenpeace and the WWF regularly make emotional

appeals based on the destruction of beautiful scenery/creatures (National Geographic 2019; The National Trust 2017; Harvey 2011, respectively). Additionally, so-called 'beautiful legislation' is passed in Papua New Guinea, The Ocean Foundation claims that development must be slowed down to preserve natural beauty, and even businesses pay lip service to an obligation to pass on the beautiful environments to future generations (Woods 2019; Harvey cited in

[20] The way in which the perception of beauty works and how feeds into the making of a positive aesthetic judgment are the subject of much discussion, but it is not my intention to discuss them here. See Guyer (1979), Allison (2001) and Ameriks (2003) for broad overviews of a Kantian approach to the issue.

[21] In the context of climate change, the most obvious reason for protecting the environment is having an interest in humanity's continued survival. I do not wish to deny this; I would only claim that the 'final persuasion' of a call to action most often lies in an appeal to beauty – a tool used to convince even those sceptical of the climate crisis. However, the focus of this chapter does not concern how to correctly justify taking action on climate change – at this point, the subjective reasons for why people take action are less important than the action-taking itself. My discussion here is focused on understanding how we come to distinguish between the various parts of nature and how this leads us to decisions leading to the destruction of parts of nature. I take it for granted that parts of nature will always be destroyed to accommodate new buildings etc., and used to advance aesthetic ideals, in this light it becomes necessary to rely on something other than beauty (for reasons which will be elaborated).

Whittaker 2019; Pacific Engineering Corporation, n.d. again respectively). The U.S. Endangered Species Act of 1973 does not cite intrinsic worth or instrumental value as reasons for protecting the environment, but instead explicitly recognises that endangered and threatened species are of "… [a]esthetic … value to the Nation and its people." (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 1973).

It is not merely the appreciation and preservation of existing natural beauty that organisations like The National Trust are advocating; it is also creating an even more beautiful environment (The National Trust 2017). Humanity's infatuation with beauty extends to the categorisation and classification of natural beauties, to the point of creating specific checklists to denote the requirements of natural beauty, which are 'deserving' of protection.[22] Under this model, ugliness is either an irrelevance or something to be avoided at all costs. In 1965, President Lyndon Johnson gave a special message to Congress on the subject of conservation and the restoration of natural beauty; he went so far as to say, "Ugliness can demean the people who live among it. What a citizen sees every day is his America … If it is ugly, it can degrade his existence." (Johnson 1965).[23] Aside from the patriotic overtones, if what was meant here is that living in environments made up of only human-made buildings and objects *may* reduce a person's quality of life, then I am in agreement. However, the interpretation of this message hangs upon the definition of ugliness, and it is only through understanding what is meant by beauty (and non-beauty) that we can begin to unravel this complicated relationship.[24]

[22] Good examples of this are the AONB and UNESCO: at the moment nearly 1/5th of the landmass of the UK has been designated as outstandingly beautiful, and a total of 46 Areas of Outstanding Beauty (AONB) are protected by legislation (The National Association Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, 2017). Additionally, in order to become a UNESCO World Heritage Site, an area of nature must meet specific criteria, one of which is that it '… contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance." (UNESCO 2017).

[23] One such account can be found in Chapter 8, where I discuss the issues associated with taking disgust as Kant's logical opposition to beauty, i.e., that it becomes a matter of avoidance at all cost as there is no consideration of potential value – aesthetic or otherwise.

[24] The philosophical discussion of ugliness is multi-faceted and wide-ranging; I cannot hope to do it justice in the space I have here. Instead, I refer to ugliness in order to highlight the insufficiency of non-cognitive aesthetic approaches to nature, but it should be noted that the dismissal of ugliness and/or its conflation with

Promoting beauty and minimising ugliness is the central aim of a governmentally established independent organisation (up until recently chaired by the former Birkbeck professor, philosopher and aesthetician Roger Scruton) called the 'Building Better, Building Beautiful' Commission. The Commission is tasked with acting "… as champions and advocates for the Government's commitment to beauty in the built environment." (GOV.UK 2018). Interestingly, the document gives some real insight into the government's motivations for commissioning such an initiative in the first place. On one (perhaps cynical) reading, the Commission appears as no more than an attempt to discover how to mitigate public disagreement about state-funded building developments. The UK government likely has little interest or desire in making council estates beautiful, but it certainly does have an interest in minimising public backlash to changes that they wish to make. The 'Terms of Reference' state that the Commission is tasked with discovering what would deliver greater community/popular consent about decisions concerning land, which is "…brought up for development…" (2018, 1). Of course, the assumption here is that there is a consensus to be discovered in the first place and that one only needs to go out and pluck from the minds of the British. If the aim is to learn what the majority of people think beauty is, then a survey would probably be less costly and provide more conclusive results than a group of architects and academics. Even so, what would happen should (as is likely) there be no consensus? What if 52% of the population prefer postmodern designs while 48% have more brutalist leanings? Ultimately someone (government,

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evil/harmfulness etc., is deeply problematic for both ecoaesthetics and nature in general. I will elaborate upon this, but only with the limited intention as expressed above, to highlight the limits of beauty and the need for a cognitive account of environmental aesthetics.

land developers, architects, i.e., those with the money) would be left with the problem of having to decide which option is better based upon arbitrary or financial criteria combined with their aesthetic sensibilities.

1.3 Overcoming differences in judgment

Aesthetic value plays an essential role in many people's emotional attachment to nature and thus their justification for wanting to protect it, but this does not mean that it can provide an adequate framework through which we can decide why some nature deserves to be protected and other parts do not. Founding environmental policy on natural beauty tends to imply that we all have the same idea about what constitutes 'beauty', which is very far from the truth – even when we are discussing beauty within nature.[25] In this context, one's conception of beauty defines the policy-related parameters by which we operate, but if no single account of beauty exists, how can we be confident that environmental policy, resting on such aesthetic consideration, will stand the test of time or even last into the middle of next week? It is wellknown that when the economy suffers, so too does the environmental movement (Gallup News 2015). Basing an environmental ethic on beauty alone does not necessarily provide the moral impetus to do much about it, especially when times are tough or other self-interests override aesthetic considerations.

One's upbringing undoubtedly influences one's conception of beauty; an economically disadvantaged person, for instance, is less likely to have experienced beauty in the natural environment or in as wide of a variety of settings (i.e., music, film, theatre, opera, art) than those who are college-educated (Ipsos MORI 2010, 19). A study conducted by Ipsos Mori in

[25] Invoking ‘natural beauty’ as the sole reason for making a decision which impacts the environment, implies that there is a version of natural beaty which can reliably be ascertained (whether by public consensus or expert opinion) and used to base these decisions upon.

Sheffield, England, discovered that 65% of people had experienced beauty in the natural environment, which increased to 82% amongst the more socially advantaged members of the study.[26] Beauty is invariably connected to the environment; in fact, the two words most commonly associated with beauty (amongst the 1043 respondents) were 'natural' and 'clean' (2010, 19-22). The socially and economically advantaged are significantly more likely to favour beauty over either affordability, sustainability or functionality in their local environment. However, on average, when it comes to deciding what type of new buildings are built, more people are likely to agree that affordability, sustainability and functionality should be prioritised over beauty and/or ethical obligations to the environment (2010, 49), suggesting that aesthetic considerations are less central to people's decision-making process than economic necessities, and feelings of ethical obligation towards the environment. For instance, in areas that rely on environmental destruction for employment, such as Oregon State, USA (where the logging/timber industry is essential to the local economy), people are more likely to be supportive of anthropogenic policies which favour traditional forest management over biocentric/preservationist policies, favoured on a more nationwide scale (Steel et al. 1994, 150).

Differing conceptions of natural beauty vary not only according to economic and social status but also the geographical location and ethnic identity. North American and European emphasis on wilderness, as the optimum form of the natural environment, is not necessarily shared by the rest of the world. Studies have shown that race is a far stronger predictor of the type of natural landscape people prefer than either age, class or gender. A study conducted in 2009 explored the differences between native-Dutch persons and immigrants from Islamic

[26] Amongst the more socially and economically disadvantaged group the figure was 55%. The more socially advantaged group were also more likely to have experienced beauty in a larger variety of settings (Ipsos MORI 2010, 9-10).

countries and found significant differences between their versions of the image of nature and, subsequently, their landscape preferences (Buijis, et al., 2009). It was found that among the predominantly white native-Dutch population, a more ecocentric, wilderness image of nature

made them more likely to favour natural landscaping models. In contrast, the non-Dutch natives expressed a more functional and anthropogenic view of nature and preferred more managed landscapes (2009, 221) over wild and unmanaged landscapes, like marshes and dunes.[27] This result replicated earlier studies conducted in North America and Europe, which found that Anglo-Americans tend to prefer a more wild, natural environment, whereas African Americans and Latin-Americans prefer a more developed and managed setting (Virden and Walker 1999; Kaplan and Talbot 1988). Different preferences in landscape management, probably stemming from varying images over 'ideal nature', have been linked to research showing that African Americans and immigrants are less likely to visit nature reserves than Caucasian American people (Johnson et al. 2004).[28]

The often-implicit assumption running through much of ecoaesthetic discourse is that 'naturalness' is the primary tool by which we can assess beauty, but this seems only valid when viewed through a particular social and cultural framework. Living in a multicultural and diverse social landscape means that environmental policy based on preserving natural beauty, often culminating in conservation projects, risks alienating those who do not adopt the same narrowly defined conception of beauty. It also means that the outcomes of projects like the 'Building

[27] In this study, immigrants also expressed less interest in non-urban landscapes, as well the 'wilderness image' of nature. A finding which is reflective of the use of nature in urbanized areas in the Netherlands, and the ruralagrarian cultures, which many of the surveyed immigrants (from Turkey and Morocco) had lived in (Buijis et al. 2009, 115).

[28] This probably has more to do with economic circumstances and geographical distance than with the aesthetic preferences of people with African heritage living in the USA. Applying the aesthetic preferences from relatively small sample groups to whole sections of society categorised by their racial or ethnic heritage is problematic, but the above examples do successfully highlight the complexity of the issues involved and the risks involved with their oversimplification.

Better, Building Beautiful' Commission will ultimately come to reflect the views of those holding the purse strings.[29] Of course, it may be possible to find a middle ground between polarised views or enact a first-past-the-post system to decide which aesthetic idea 'wins', but

the problem of the relativism of aesthetic standards still stands, likely meaning that everyone ends up only 'halfway happy'. Class, ethnicity, location, upbringing, nationality etc., all influence how a person conceives of beauty and what level of importance they attach to aesthetic considerations. In all likelihood, our beliefs and interests are affected and informed by a combination of genetic and environmental factors; this is not a problem in and of itself (it is hard to imagine it being any other way), but it becomes an issue when we are making interestinfluenced decisions which affect other humans, animals, as well as non-human nature.

1.4 Uses and limitations of disinterest

A potential solution in overcoming the relativism of beauty standards or at least the parts influenced by self-interested desires is through the application of aesthetic disinterestedness. Aesthetic disinterest is not a new concept; it has existed in various guises for centuries, but mostly concerning the traditional arts (discussion concerning disinterest can be found in Chapters 3 and 4). Aesthetic disinterest has formed a significant part of the philosophy of art and aesthetics since the mid-to-late eighteenth century.[30] Aesthetic disinterest has featured in the works of Schopenhauer, Mendelssohn and Nietzsche, but it is Immanuel

[29] There is also the issue of framing to consider i.e., are decisions being made on an individual, local, national or international level? It becomes even more challenging to overcome the differences and reach a middle ground the higher up you go and the more people it affects. This often leads to prevarication, inaction and stagnation in the taking of positive action.

[30] Aesthetic disinterest was influenced by the works of Dennis, the third Earl of Shaftesbury, Addison, Alison and Hutcheson, and although these thinkers may not have used the term explicitly, they certainly influenced those who did. Miles Rind offers an interesting critique about the traditional account of disinterest's genealogy (Rind 2002) noting that these thinkers were not using 'disinterest' as it is currently used in aesthetics, namely as a mode of perceptual awareness (2002, 67).

Kant's version of disinterested judgment which has dominated Western aesthetics since its publication, and his definition of disinterest is the most commonly referenced:

> ... only the liking for taste in the beautiful is disinterested and free; since we are not compelled to give our approval by an interest, whether of sense or reason. (Part 1, §5, 210) … Taste is the ability to judge an object, or a way of presenting it … devoid of all interest. (Part 1, §5, 211).

The role of interest distinguishes aesthetic judgment from judgments of other kinds. To be clear, disinterest does not necessarily denote a 'lack of interest' in the object of contemplation; instead, it requires the backgrounding of one's subjective desires and interests. Contemplating an object of art requires a different approach than the one we take in contemplating our refrigerator's contents. The specific phenomenological experience of aesthetic contemplation has been associated with a certain level of disinterestedness in the perceived object. We look at the contents of our refrigerator because we are hungry (or bored), and, after carefully considering the potential utility of each item of food, we choose which foodstuff would most satisfy our given level of hunger and boredom. The theory suggests that viewing a piece of artwork, or listening to a recorded symphony, with the same self-interested tendency ought not to be a feature of aesthetic judgment. In fact, under some interpretations, the experience would only be branded as 'aesthetic' if it meets the condition of being disinterested, i.e., the judgment is not dependent upon the artwork's ability to satisfy one or more of a person's non-aesthetic interests.

There are compelling reasons for thinking that a Kantian aesthetic disinterest can (and should) be applied to human approaches to the environment. In an age that will be defined by our relationship with non-human nature, its potential import to environmental philosophy,

ecoaesthetics and environmentalism has meant an increased amount of research in the area. Far from being a trivial or frivolous way of exploring our relationship with non-human nature, environmental aesthetics offer a possible method of grounding an ethics of the environment without relying on an abstraction of moral duty. The concept of disinterested judgment could have profound normative implications when applied to environmental preservation issues. The prevalence of self-interested environmental decision-making is the primary reason for the continued increase in the rate of environmental damage to our planet (Jones 2015). As the world falls behind on pledges to decrease CO^2 emissions and governments back out of sustainable energy solutions, the need for a non-instrumentalised[31] and non-self-interested view of nature becomes increasingly vital if we are to meet targets designed to prevent further environmental degradation.[32] Since aesthetic value can be a deciding factor in environmental, ethical decision-making, how we determine aesthetic value is a necessary process to understand; and making this determination disinterestedly could help both our understanding of this process and the process (i.e., determining aesthetic value) itself.

Aesthetic disinterest requires removing one's self-interested desire in order that we do not predicate properties onto natural phenomena, especially ones that are motivated by the amenity value of nature. When I speak of being disinterested in nature, I do not mean that I do not care for it, but rather that, when contemplating nature, I refrain from imposing my own desires upon it or viewing it in terms of its potential utility.[33] Applying the notion of disinterest

[31] When I speak of instrumentalising nature, I am generally referring to the habit of humans to commandeer nature for their own purposes. In terms of aesthetic judgment, taking an instrumentalised view would mean judging nature for what it could do for humankind (i.e., in what ways it could be used).

[32] Canada is likely to miss the 2020 Copenhagen target, whilst Australia falls behind on the Paris agreement. In October 2017 Pruitt confirmed that the Trump administration will roll-back Obama's clean power plan in the USA (Friedman & Plumer 2017).

[33] Of course, it is entirely possible to foster an instrumental approach to the environment and even succeed in meeting the aforementioned targets. Such an approach would prioritise human interest over that of the environment, meaning that environmental protections would be adopted through fear of the consequences of inaction for humankind. Moreover, whilst a self-interested approach is possible, it is human self-interest that has led to many of the environmental problems facing the world today. So, perhaps a non-self-interested approach (although not technically necessary) is the best course of action to take when it comes to making future decisions involving the environment?

to nature would theoretically make judgments about the beauty of nature more objective and allow for more consensus and agreement in making decisions about the environment.

The successful application of disinterest to the aesthetic judgment of nature is limited by the degree to which one can set aside personal interests and desires. Some biases are so profoundly concealed in our subconscious that we could not (at least without incredible difficulty) become aware of them in order to 'set them aside' in the first place. This is a familiar criticism to proponents of aesthetic disinterest, but it stems from a misunderstanding concerning the level of disinterest required in making an aesthetic judgment, i.e., it rests on the

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assumption that the bar is set unrealistically high. However, disinterest does not require a complete eradication of desire or an instantiation of willlessness in order to be useful for environmental considerations.[34] The value of disinterest lies in the 'simple' task of checking one's motivations and desires when engaging with nature and artwork. My aim is not to offer a defence of disinterest but to illustrate one of the significant inadequacies of an aesthetic approach to the environment that cannot be solved through an appeal to disinterest and offer the beginnings of an alternative. If, for the sake of argument, we assume that it is possible to background selfish desires in order to make aesthetic judgments and that, by doing so, a greater consensus about what constitutes beauty can be reached, then where does this leave nature?

Disinterest has a negative role in the making of aesthetic judgments, i.e., it theoretically maintains the purity of the judgment but adds nothing to it.[35] It is a self-checking mechanism through which a person can come to realise whether their judgment is being clouded by

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[34] This stems from a misunderstanding of disinterest as the blank cow-like stare. See Emily Brady's work for more discussion of this and other common misconceptions surrounding disinterest (1998). Also see Chapters 3 and 4.

[35] Some commentators attach more of a positive dimension to the notion of disinterest. For instance, Jerome Stolnitz regards it not only as involving a backgrounding of egoistic desire but also an ability to approach the aesthetic art object or nature with a kind of sympathetic attention by meeting it on its own terms (1960). Although I am sympathetic to this interpretation, I am wary of the metaphysical implications of statements of this sort and the epistemological dilemmas which an attempt to justify this link would create, i.e., the problems thrown up by reconciling sympathetic attention and disinterestedness, as well as the what sympathetic attention and meeting nature on its own terms actually means or entails.

selfinterested desires, e.g., interest in the potential utility value of the object of contemplation. When applied to the environment, disinterest serves as a useful but ultimately limited tool, especially as a solution to understanding and tackling environmental degradation. The role of beauty is still central to disinterested aesthetic judgments of the natural environment. Disinterest helps to reduce the amount of subjectivity in these aesthetic responses, meaning that natural beauty is more easily recognised, and it is easier to draw a consensus in environmental decision-making. However, without understanding the scientific, social and historical factors related to a particular natural phenomenon, we cannot hope to have adequate epistemological grounding for reaching decisions relating to the environment. Deprived of such

knowledge, many necessary environmental protections will not be implemented, and actions that damage nature will be overlooked, as I will discuss in the following section. This is why in order for ecoaesthetics to be a viable tool in motivating environmental protections (at this point, only making use of Kantian disinterest), another element is required. However, because of Kant's non-conceptualism, this is also at least partly why the use of Kant within environmental discourse and ecoaesthetics is necessarily limited.

1.5 Problems with beauty in nature

A knowledge-based approach to aesthetics, reinforced by a healthy dose of disinterestedness, works to illuminate the impact of human behaviour on beautiful phenomena (whether natural or human-made) by promoting awareness of potentially harmful human actions. Without an understanding of the damage which noise pollution from aircraft causes in the Grand Canyon, regulations would still not reflect this issue.[35] Ever-increasing numbers of tourists are drawn to the Canyons' beauty, but a lack of knowledge about potential degradation means that this area

[35] Although recent changes in regulation mean that more aircraft will be allowed to fly in the Grand Canyon, incentives are being given to 'quiet' planes/helicopters (Dungan 2017). The original regulations, and no-fly zones, were also influenced by several plane crashes in the area.

of outstanding beauty may not be around for future generations to appreciate. The effects of seemingly innocuous actions are left unchecked, and even measures taken to curtail noticeable degradation may ultimately be misguided.

Roger Clark of the Grand Canyon Trust states that "Our greatest challenge is making people understand just how truly vulnerable this place actually is." (Fedarko, 2016). The scale and grandeur of the National Park lull visitors into thinking that it is somehow invulnerable to damage, yet the consequences of constant tourism mean that it has been subject to noise, water and air pollution. Native flora and fauna compete against non-native plants, uranium mining erodes the landscape and contaminates drinking water, nearby power stations drift air pollution into the Canyon, and a 22 mile

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stretch of land with unlimited air traffic, known locally as Helicopter Alley, shatters the peaceful solitude of the area. Although much has been done over the past thirty years to reduce the effects of tourism, increased economic pressure and an inability to comprehend the potentially devastating damage that seemingly harmless activities have on the landscape mean that environmental damage has become the rule exception.

Taking a 30-minute helicopter ride over the Grand Canyon to further appreciate the reserve's natural beauty may seem inoffensive, especially if the ride takes place in a new 'quiet' type of aircraft. However, the consequences amount not only to a contribution towards noise and air pollution, but also to an increase in the demand for such services to be continued, whilst also supporting the expanding tourist industry in the area.[36] Our need to appreciate this beauty (from a distance, that is) may become a case of loving something to death, as investors and developers cash-in on this supposedly harmless desire.

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[36] Including plans for hotel resorts, tramways, more cafés, restaurants at the top of the tramline, holiday complexes etc., This is in addition to the increased tourism resulting from the 2007 opening of the Skywalk at Eagle Point (Dungan 2017).

The need for using a determinative or conceptual cognitive component in aesthetic judgment is also present in more traditional settings.[37] On a visit to the Vatican, these were the words of a sign: 'Silencio. No photo. No video.' The whispers of a confused tourist make it clear that they do not understand why they have been stopped from taking a photo inside of the Sistine Chapel, especially since there are no rules about photography throughout the rest of the Vatican. Despite signs and security officers making it clear that photography is not allowed in the chapel, many people still

attempt either surreptitiously or blatantly to take a photo. Lack of knowledge concerning the potential damage caused by hundreds of flashbulbs going off daily means that ignorance will continue to inspire stupidity. Even if it can be proven that flash photography does not damage paintings, knowledge concerning one's environment and even one's fellow visitors must be factored into the decision-making process.[38] In this instance, not taking photographs in a chapel, which could potentially disturb the aesthetic experience of others, combined with the knowledge that damage could be caused to Michelangelo's work, would result in fewer people attempting to take photographs, both in order to preserve the work for future generations and out of respect for ourselves and others – to help to enrich the general aesthetic experience.

The insufficiencies of a beauty-only account of the environment (even if supplemented by disinterest) are further highlighted when we consider instances of 'harmful' beauty and 'helpful' ugliness. From childhood, we are taught not to judge a book by its cover; we are told

[37] The term 'cognitive' here of course refers to the application of determinative rules to particulars found in the world For Kant, allowing a determinative and conceptual cognitive component to be involved in making a judgment of beauty, would destroy any claim to universal (but subjective) validity. However, it is technically possible for the initial aesthetic judgment/response to be pure in a Kantian sense but become impure (not necessarily bad) in a second phase which applies an aesthetic component to knowledge about a given object. The initial response requires no 'outside information' and can still be democratic but we must concede to impurity in the second phase – at least if we want to remain Kantian.

[38] Although recent evidence suggests that damage caused by flash photography has been grossly overestimated (Evans 2013). In the case of Sistine Chapel, there have been other reasons, namely Nippon TV's photography exclusivity – but the copyright has long since elapsed.

that the book's real value lies within, and it is only through reading the words on the page that we will be in a position to judge it properly. This should also apply to how we make environmental decisions, but if we let beauty be our sole guide, then many things which are incredibly harmful to the environment will be left to proliferate unchecked, and those things which are enormously beneficial will be unknowingly destroyed.

The degradation of nature can sometimes be beautiful or have effects that are considered beautiful; the most obvious example of finding beauty in a degraded environment is in so-called pollution-sunsets. Sunsets are often made redder by aerosol gases, which are released into the atmosphere (Ballantyne 2007). Some aerosols occur naturally (forest fires, volcanic eruptions, sandstorms, dust), but in big cities, human use of aerosols vastly outnumber

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the impact of aerosol gases from natural sources. The beauty of a crimson sunset is directly related to the degradation of the environment. However, without understanding the scientific nature of light refraction, sunsets, and aerosols and applying this information to our experience of a sunset, we would remain none-the-wiser about the damage created in the process. Knowing that our beautifully watered, manicured lawns are not as harmless as they first appear and then changing the way we behave accordingly relies on our application of scientific facts. Our perfect lawns, not only wastewater (which becomes a bigger problem in areas prone to drought) but also release a considerable amount of CO^2 into the atmosphere, whilst pesticides disturb local ecosystems, and fertiliser run-off enters the water table, contributing to eutrophication and hypoxia.[39]

As important as it is to consider that beauty itself may be the result or the cause of environmental degradation, it is not only beautiful environments whose disturbing and often

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[39] Every year the Gulf of Mexico hypoxic zone, in part resulting from excess nutrients from fertilisers entering the Gulf (Environmental Protection Agency 2017).

damaging causes are overlooked by beauty-alone approaches to nature but also the ugly, disgusting and non-beautiful phenomena. Not only can knowledge help to illuminate why certain things we do not think are bad for the environment actually are, but also that things which do not appeal to our subjective sense of beauty can be interesting, important and essential to maintaining an ecosystem (and perhaps beautiful in their own way). The late botanist and ecologist, Sir Harry Godwin, said: "Any fool can appreciate mountain scenery. It takes a man of discernment to appreciate the Fens." (Coles & Coles 1989, 58). Whilst it doesn't necessarily take a fool to appreciate the beauty of a mountain-scape, it does (more often than not) take an informed mind to appreciate the beauty in something which is not typically beautiful. Just as a romantic attraction is not necessarily dependent upon a person's physical attributes, aesthetic appreciation need not be entirely dependent upon whether or not we find something physically

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appealing. By itself, beauty cannot provide a stable environmental ethic, and neither can an imagination- or emotion-based account, but the combination of these, plus scientific knowledge, can help open us up to the plurality of aesthetic responses. In popular culture, swamps and marshes are often portrayed negatively, whether it is *Labyrinth's* Bog of Eternal Stench, or the 'Dead Marshes' in Tolkien's Lord of the Rings: swamps are the place of monsters, demons, and the dead. Holmes Rolston III saw the main challenge for environmental aesthetics not as having to provide adequate reasons to protect the naturally beautiful (which seems to happen anyway without much effort on our part), but to motivate the protection of things we don't find aesthetically beautiful (Rolston III 2000). Rolston claimed that with "… increased ecological sensitivity, the system takes on the qualities of a kaleidoscope…" (Rolston III 1987, 260). The same can be said for any natural phenomena (including humankind) which do not meet the 'criteria' of beauty; this includes that which is non-beautiful, ugly, disgusting, dull and uninteresting. Swamps and marshes are hives of ecological activity, with a wide array of

biodiversity on display (due to increased levels of nutrients) yet they are at best dismissed and at worst destroyed.

1.6 Going beyond beauty

The aesthetic appreciation of traditional art objects can help to illustrate how knowledge can be applied when making an aesthetic judgment. For instance, we are capable of looking at 'ugly' art and appreciating it, perhaps because of our emotional response to it or because of the meaning behind it. Having more knowledge about a particular piece of art or natural object has only ever enhanced my experience of art and nature, especially where I would otherwise have dismissed it out of hand. On a visit to the Tate Modern, I visited Sheela Gowda's 2009 installation *Behold*; I must admit that I found it underwhelming upon first inspection. Most likely, a combination of sore feet, hunger, and worry over what time I needed to get my train contributed to an 'interested' approach to the artwork. It certainly is not a 'beautiful' piece by traditional standards, and admittedly I still do not regard it as a particular favourite, but there is no doubt that learning more about the installation (as well as backgrounding my own selfinterested concerns) helped me to appreciate the artwork on a level which I would not have done, had I not taken the time to gain more knowledge about the piece, and the artist who created it. It would have been easy to disregard *Behold* as an underwhelming piece of modern art and walk through the installation to find something more appealing or easier to grasp. However, knowing that the installation was inspired by Gowda's life in Bengaluru, where talismans of human hair are regularly knotted around car bumpers to supposedly ward off bad luck (Tate Modern 2017), appreciating the intense effort involved in its creation (4000 metres of hair were hand-woven) and the social and political observations behind it, enriched my aesthetic experience immensely.[40] Knowing more about an art object often enhances our

[40] The hair comes from local temples, where it is cut off as a sacrificial offering when pilgrims fulfil sacred vows. "The fragile hair supports the stronger, heavier metal, just as it is believed to protect the technologically advanced

appreciation of it, and the same should also be true for our aesthetic experience of the natural world, especially as it pertains to making decisions that affect the environment.

Only a (disinterested) cognitive model of the aesthetic appreciation of nature can overcome the issues which focusing on the beauty of the natural environment can lead to, i.e., relativism and decisions based upon inappropriate or shallow interpretations of aesthetic response. Allen Carlson is perhaps the best-known proponent of the cognitive model of the aesthetic appreciation of nature; he states that "…[t]o aesthetically appreciate nature, we must know the different environments of nature and the systems and elements within those environments." (Carlson 1979, 273). Moreover, although I agree that cognition is an integral part of aesthetic appreciation of nature, I am not convinced that it is a necessary condition for making an aesthetic judgment; there are many ways to appreciate nature aesthetically, a lack of knowledge does not invalidate them. There are several compelling non-cognitive approaches

to the environment, including those which focus on the roles of emotional arousal (Carroll 1993) and the imagination (Brady 1998). These approaches are helpful to the making of aesthetic judgments generally, but their usefulness is limited when it comes to environmental decision-making.[41] They also highlight the importance of taking a disinterested perspective, without which utility-driven judgments will continue to instrumentalise nature, leading to further degradation. However, a solely imagination or emotion-based approach to environmental aesthetics cannot capture nature's full 'picture'. Undoubtedly, it is insufficient to utilise an aesthetic response to conserve natural landscapes and prevent further degradation.

machine … the … process-driven approach highlights the precarious state of manual labour and human effort in an increasingly globalised and interconnected world." (Tate Modern 2017).

[41] For instance, applying an emotion-based approach to real-life scenarios becomes incredibly problematic when emotions cloud judgments (making them essentially interested).

1.7 Criticism

I will briefly consider two potential objections to the cognitive account of environmental philosophy, which I have argued should be preferred over a model of environmental appreciation which focuses solely upon beauty. The first objection relates to the age-old concern that understanding precisely how a piece of art was created, the materials used, the methods enacted etc., could devalue the aesthetic experience by demystifying the artistic process. This potential demystification ought not to decrease the potential pleasure or appreciation involved in making an aesthetic judgment. At least no more so than understanding how the refraction of light affects the formation of a rainbow – has a negative impact on one's aesthetic response to a rainbow. However, some would still hold that understanding the process or the creative vision of the artist is detrimental to the aesthetic experience, in the same way that scientific explanations of natural phenomena detract from their beauty, e.g., the formation of rainbows.[42] My own aesthetic experiences have only ever been enhanced by learning about the science and/or background of the object I am responding to, e.g., learning about the complexity of the honeybee waggle dance only adds to my aesthetic admiration for bees and their hives. Knowledge adds a new layer to our collective and individual appreciation, which in 'ordinary' aesthetics is valuable, but when applied to environmental aesthetics, is invaluable. The ability to differentiate between harmful beauty, helpful ugliness and everything in between – is essential to utilising aesthetics for environmental aims. Without this, serious questions about the viability of ecoaesthetics and environmental philosophy would be raised, with no satisfactory answer.

[42] Keats famously wrote: "Philosophy will clip an Angel's wings, / Conquer all mysteries by rule and line, / Empty the haunted air, and gnomèd mine—/ Unweave a rainbow, as it erewhile made." (Keats 1884). This is a commonly held view throughout historical writing; William Blake is also known to have commented that "… art is the tree of life. Science is the tree of death." (Blake 2014). For a 'beautiful' reply to this criticism of cold philosophy see Richard Dawkins' Unweaving the Rainbow (Dawkins 1998).

A second and related objection concerning the over-intellectualisation of aesthetic judgment holds far more weight than fear about the potential for knowledge to impoverish the aesthetic experience. Any cognitive, aesthetic account is subject to the same criticism: the idea that taking something which taps into a deeply personal part of our emotional life and making it cold and clinical by applying logic and science to it is somehow doing a disservice to what it means to have an aesthetic response, i.e., as mentioned above, it removes some of the 'magic'. This leads to the problem of elitism within aesthetics.[43] One of the primary advantages of disinterestedness in aesthetic judgment (and Kant's brand of non-cognitivism) is that it has an enormous democratising effect on the making of aesthetic judgments. Each person has the same capacity to recognise beauty, as it is not reliant on having knowledge of the object in question. If we require knowledge to inform the aesthetic judgment, the fear is that this could lead to a kind of class system of responses: resulting in an elite group of aestheticians whose responses are deemed correct and all those which are in disagreement merely incorrect for not having the right kind of knowledge and being able to apply it in the right kind of way. This is not a problem to take lightly, and I agree that if the above were true, then it would be problematic.

However, this is not the kind of account I am advancing. The initial aesthetic response does not actually have to conflict with a secondary level of response informed by knowledge. It is possible that a person's immediate response to a piece of art (or natural object) would be left intact and unaffected but is afterwards supplemented with the addition of knowledge aiming at the further appreciation of the object. This supplement is not a necessary criterion of making a judgment about an aesthetic object; one can certainly make a judgement without it, but it is

[43] See Eaton (1998) for more about her defence and development of Carlson's cognitive/science-based approach (Carlson 1993).

available to the subject as a way of making a more informed judgment.[44] I make no claim as to the 'need' for a cognitive component to be present at each and every instance of aesthetic response, only that within ecoaesthetic discourse (which generally has the aim of motivating environmental protections), knowledge should be used alongside our initial intuitive responses to inform them better, enrich our aesthetic experiences and ultimately protect the environment by informing our decision-making process.

1.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued for the need to go beyond beauty in our approach to nature. Whilst the results of misunderstanding or misjudging a piece of artwork are minimal (a disagreement with a friend perhaps), the consequences of underestimating certain natural phenomena are potentially profound. Appeals to beauty cloud the stark and often damaging realities of human action (and inaction) on the natural world and lead to overlooking potentially important phenomena. The subjectivity of beauty standards and the tendency for a focus on beauty to mask crucial instances of harm mean that a more complex ecoaesthetic approach

must be invoked. The aesthetic appreciation of the environment requires us to approach nature without the baggage of our desires, i.e., disinterestedly. However, making this adjustment is not sufficient, and we must also look beyond beauty if we hope to make use of aesthetics in motivating environmental protections and prevent further degradation to the human and nonhuman world alike. I have argued that going beyond beauty in aesthetics (especially related

[44] To be clear, there are several types of knowledge which are discussed by commentators, from knowledge about the aesthetic experience itself to the knowledge involve in the artistic and ecological judgment. My primary concern is with the first type of judgment and the knowledge which can contribute to the making of such a judgment in the first place. The knowledge involved in determining whether an object is in fact an art object or whether an element of the environment (beautiful/ugly or otherwise) was the result of something harmful or beneficial for the environment: neither of these types of knowledge are ones I am particularly interested in further addressing (at least for the purposes of this thesis). Instead, my interest lies in problematising aesthetic judgment of the environment and addressing where some understandings of aesthetic judgments fail and could be improved upon. However, I do recognise and care about what we do with the aesthetic judgment made about art objects and the environment, and how these judgments inform our decision-making, whilst I do comment on these issues – they do not form a major part of the thesis or my answers to the questions set out in the introduction.

to nature) requires a cognitive component.[45] Otherwise, it is impossible to make sense of instances of harmful beauty, helpful ugliness and the vast amount of non-human nature which fits somewhere in between.

This chapter has set out why issues related to beauty and ugliness have relevance to the environment; it has also begun to point out areas of Kant's aesthetics that may prove problematic for its application within environmental discourse. The rest of this thesis will explore how Kant's aesthetics (as pertaining to the deduction) succeeds in its aims and can help understand and navigate the complex relationship between humans and the natural environment. In the next chapter, I will go into the detail of Kant's aesthetic deduction and clarify several essential aspects of Kant's aesthetic account.

Chapter 2: An introduction and analysis of Kant's Deduction of Taste

2.1 Chapter summary

In the previous chapter, I illustrated why aesthetic accounts focusing on beauty sometimes reinforce negative stereotypes about the environment and, as such, can negatively influence

[45] To be clear, my intention is not to provide this cognitive account in the thesis itself, only to answer the questions set out in the introduction. I believe that there is a need for determinative concepts (which is often referred to simply as 'cognitive' in non-Kantian literature) to be included in an aesthetics of the environment. However, my aim throughout this thesis is to understand the implications of Kantian aesthetics upon ecoaesthetics, i.e., where conflict exists and where it does not, of course central to this is discovering whether Kant's deduction succeeds in the first place.

environmental decision-making when utilising ecoaesthetics. Since the purpose of this thesis is to understand the relationship between nature and aesthetics better and to ascertain how far Kant's aesthetics (pertaining to the Deduction) can be useful for ecoaesthetics. Before I get into the finer details of these issues, I must first determine whether Kant's Deduction is successful and why or why not this is the case. Therefore, this chapter will offer an introduction to Kantian aesthetics and the aesthetic deduction. I will begin by exploring how Kant's changing views about aesthetics resulted in the addition of a third *Critique* and why these changing views resulted in criticism from other scholars. I will address accusations of contradiction by highlighting the consistent nature of Kant's writings, even if a qualification/s is/are required to show this consistency. I will go on to set out the aims of the critique of aesthetic judgment, with a particular focus on the Deduction (§38) by undertaking exegesis of the deduction of judgments of taste, as well as other supporting passages (concerning the four moments and the two peculiarities). I will first address a common misunderstanding about the relationship between Kant and traditional formalism, i.e., Kant is a traditional formalist. This chapter will highlight both the uniqueness of the challenge posed by aesthetic judgment and the unusual nature of Kant's proposed solution, as well as raising several important issues which will be expanded upon in subsequent chapters.

2.2 The analytic of the beautiful: the four moments

The Critique of Aesthetic Judgment (Part I of the *Critique of Judgment*) is divided into the Analytic of the Beautiful, the Analytic of the Sublime, the Deduction of Pure Aesthetic Judgments, and finally the Dialectic of Aesthetic Judgment.[46] In this section, I will address the first book of the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment, that is, the Analytic of the Beautiful, which focuses on introducing aesthetic judgment and presenting the four elements which make up a

[46] The order of these contributes to a lack of clarity regarding some of Kant's main arguments, especially concerning the role of morality (and its place within the deduction). See section 2.7 for more information about the difficulties associated with locating the deduction.

judgment of taste. Here Kant uses the same structure present in the *Critique of Pure Reason* to identify the logical functions of judging the beautiful, i.e., quantity, quality, relation, and modality (§9, A70, B95). I will go on to address each of these four 'moments' in turn but briefly stated, a judgment of beauty involves a type of disinterested pleasure (first moment), which we are able to describe as being of universal pleasure (second moment), displaying subjective purposiveness (the third moment of relation is between the subject and object, rather than the object and its predicate). The pleasure resulting from the judgment of beauty (the harmonisation of the faculties) is not only universal but necessary, without reference to concepts (fourth moment). Individually, the moments involved in an aesthetic judgment are not sufficient, but together they capture the essence of the judgment; although not providing the deduction itself, they help supplement it.

The liking which we experience in the judging of a beautiful object is generated without an interest in the existence of the object in question; it is, in fact, devoid of all interest (§5, 211). In other words, a judgment of taste is not based upon any interest, and it does not give rise to an interest. Kant claims that not only should an aesthetic judgment be devoid of interest (in terms of our approach of the aesthetic object) and that we should have no interest in the 'real existence' of the object, but also that no interest is generated in the aesthetic object (§5, 210).[47] In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the first logical function of the understanding in

judgments is the quantity of the judgment in question. However, in the third *Critique,* with its aim of providing an account of beauty, Kant argues that the quality of an aesthetic judgment must be considered first since this is the point at which we first begin our judgment. The

[47] The nature of these comments regarding the lack of generation of interest has warranted much criticism. There is a certain perversity in claiming that a judgment of beauty does not even produce a smidge of interest in the mind of the subject. Kant's answer is twofold. Firstly, this is because properly speaking judgments of beauty are not about the object so much as they are about the formal purposiveness of the object, i.e., the form of the relation between the faculties which produces the pleasure. Secondly, and perhaps confusingly, Kant does go on to discuss

emphasis which Kant places on disinterestedness, through its placement at the beginning of the First Book, and as the first moment, supports the reading that disinterest is the most critical element of Kant's critique of taste. Against the idea that disinterest is the defining feature of Kantian aesthetics is the impossibility of disinterest providing anything like a comprehensive account of aesthetic judgment or a deduction of taste on its own. For Kant, it is a necessary but certainly not sufficient condition for making a judgment of taste. Kant contrasts the disinterested quality (and non-conceptuality) of a judgment of taste with the interest involved with the making of judgments on the good and the agreeable (§3 and §4). Whereas both the agreeable and good refer to one's own desires and our practical relationship with the object, a judgment of taste is 'merely contemplative' (§5, 209) and thus must be disinterested.

The second moment of a judgment of taste regards the quantity (that to whom the judgment ought to apply). Kant claims that a pure judgment of taste is subjectively universal (§6, 211) and so ought to be valid for everyone. Since this type of judgment is devoid of all interest and does not rely on any 'private conditions' (ibid.,), it must only be based upon the free-liking (not bound by concepts or desire) of an object's presentation to the subject. It is important to state here (albeit briefly, as it will be addressed in other chapters in more depth) that Kant does not call for the actual universal agreement of aesthetic judgments; it is only the possibility of such agreement (in theory) which Kant insists upon (§8, 216).[48] Whilst the

interest with regards to our experiences of the beautiful (§41-§42). Whilst I will go on to discuss these counterpoints further, suffice it to say here that Kant, in his discussion of an aesthetic deduction being devoid of interest, he is referring specifically to judgments of pure beauty, and the interest in beauty he describes is of an empirical and intellectual variety, i.e., it is not sensuous interest which would be more associated with the agreeable.

judgment is universal in the sense that theoretically (if we could guarantee that both ourselves and others were making a judgment correctly, i.e., that the subsumptive process had been made

[48] In addition, agreement here only relates to a particular instance of an aesthetic object and not to all instances of a kind e.g., a particular tree and not all trees. If the aesthetic judgment was made into a logical judgment then we

correctly), we should be able to demand universal assent to a pure aesthetic judgment, it also remains subjective. The apparent paradox between claiming both universality and subjectivity in judgments of taste generates much of the debate surrounding the *Critique of Judgment*, and Kant's acknowledgement of this takes up a significant amount of space in terms of his attempts to justify this position. Kant's discussion of the subjectively universal nature of aesthetic judgments captures the strangeness of making a judgment about beauty.

On the one hand, we often feel that an aesthetic judgment is entirely personal; yet, on the other, we do find ourselves having serious disagreements about particular aesthetic objects or vistas – as though there is something objective about beauty. When we claim an object to be beautiful, it is, according to Kant, as though we a making a logical judgment, in other words, as though we are making a judgment which is universal and based upon determinate concepts, although we have no objective standard to which we can refer to (§6, 211-212). Kant's insistence on the subjective universality of aesthetic judgments ties directly into the third moment of a judgment of taste, primarily because it makes explicit that the liking for the object and the subsequent judgment of beauty is not positing a universal code of objective beauty which must be adhered to by all. Instead, the universal validity of the judgment is derived from the universality of the subjective mental state, which is based upon perceiving the object as purposive to our faculties, which in turn produces a feeling of pleasure (harmony).

The third moment refers to the manner of the relation between the subject and object, or rather, in the case of aesthetic judgments, subject and the form of purposiveness of an object (§11, 221). The pleasure taken in an affirmative aesthetic judgment involves the "relation of

would have to determine whether a particular object met the necessary conditions of the 'kind' in question (§8, 216) e.g., determine whether a particular tree lived up to the general conception of the perfect beautiful tree.

the presentational powers to each other, insofar as they are determined by a presentation." (Ibid.). The pleasure which generates the judgment of beauty is based solely upon the object's

ability to appear purposive to our cognitive faculties, even though it does not have any verifiable purpose. It is this purposiveness without purpose, which accompanies a judgment of taste, that makes up the third moment. §10-18 of the Analytic of the Beautiful focus on the third moment; Kant covers a lot of ground whilst explaining the notion of subjective purposiveness, spending more time on this moment than the three others. Kant makes clear the distinction between an aesthetic judgment and a judgment based upon charm or emotion (§1314). He goes on to explicate how a beautiful object, which displays purposiveness without purpose, is wholly independent of concepts, including that of perfection (§15). It is in §16, however, where Kant makes a rather controversial distinction between two kinds of beauty: free and adherent/accessory. Much has been made of this distinction, but I will refrain from commenting here in too much detail for fear of diverting from the course of this chapter. Suffice it to say that this distinction allows Kant to get away with a lot more than he would have been able to if he had been trying to justify an a priori foundation for all aesthetic judgments. By focusing his argument solely on instances of free/pure instances of beauty, Kant avoids much potential criticism because he can claim (and remain internally consistent) that most counterexamples are not counterexamples to his theory at all – just examples of judgments based on adherent beauty, which could not, therefore, be considered as pure.[49]

[49] In §17 Kant goes on to discuss the idea of an 'Ideal of Beauty', which appears to go against the main thrust of his argument, i.e., that aesthetic judgments are non-conceptual/cognitive, and do not involve reference to a concept of the perfection or ideality of the object in question. Again, to go into too much detail here is beyond the parameters of this chapter but I would be remiss not to make a note of the oddness of the section. Kant claims that we must distinguish the standard idea of beauty from "…the ideal of the beautiful, which for reasons already stated must be expected solely in the human figure." (§17, 235) is more of a comment about the notion of moral perfection in humans, rather than aesthetic perfection in the physical form. However, it is not entirely clear what Kant means by the "…visible expression of moral ideas…" especially in how they relate to "…bodily expression (as an effect of what is inward) …" (Ibid.,). This could be dismissed as an oversight on Kant's part, but this would be largely missing the point. Kant's discussion of ideal beauty only being applicable to the beauty of the human figure (§17, 235), does not go against the non-conceptuality clause of aesthetic judgment, especially if one takes into account the previous section (§16) concerning free and accessory beauty. The type of ideal beauty which may be possible in our judgment of the human figure (whether this is meant literally or in terms of moral perfection)

The final moment of a judgment of taste concerns the modality of the judgment, i.e., whether it is contingent, necessary, essential etc., Kant claims that a judgment about the beautiful (without reference to concepts) is "…cognised as the object of a necessary liking." (§22, 240). The necessity of the judgment then ties in very closely with that of universality (the 2nd moment), with Kant claiming that it is a result of the judgment being based on what is available universally, that the judgment must also be necessary. It is in his discussion of the modality of judgments of taste where Kant refers to the critical notion of 'sensus communis' or common sense, which he claims we must presuppose in order to make a judgment of taste in the first place (§20, 238). Kant's use of the term common sense does not map on to our ordinary understanding of having common sense, which by definition appeals to specific rules, regulations or concepts. By common sense/sensus communis, Kant refers to the basis of aesthetic judgments themselves, i.e., the feeling of pleasure generated through the free-play, or harmonisation, of our mental faculties. Kant posits that we have good reason to think that subjective mental states are universally communicable (I will address this in more depth further on) and that as a result, not only can aesthetic judgments be deemed universal (2nd moment) but necessary. Since such judgments are based upon a common rather than private feeling (§22, 239), we not only desire them to be universally assented to, but we demand it as a necessary implication of Kant's theory – at least if he is to be internally consistent. Again, Kant makes clear throughout his discussion of the 4th moment of a judgment of taste that the 'ought' in aesthetic judgments is not the ought of a moral imperative since it is based on no determinate concepts; it can only offer the possibility of agreement.

Whilst the notion of a universally valid judgment is offered in principle, in reality, such a thing could not be ascertained, despite aesthetic judgments being subjectively universal, as

is not an example of Kant's pure judgment of taste, thus it cannot be subject to the same criteria and further discussion of this here does not advance my thesis.

there is no way of definitively knowing whether such a judgment has been made correctly. The ought of aesthetic judgment offers the possibility for the agreement, but it does not entail that everybody will, in fact, agree.[50] This fact alone severely limits the ability to apply Kant's theory of aesthetics or to overcome the scepticism concerning a theory of taste, discussed at the beginning of the *Critique of Judgment*. If Kant is subject to the same criticism made of Hume, i.e., that ultimately, he provides no way of determining a good from a bad judgment of taste, then the relevancy and value of the third *Critique* is called into question.[51] However, Kant and Hume have different levels of expectancy regarding the role of a theory of taste. Whereas Hume requires more conclusive resolution to aesthetic disagreement, Kant is relatively happy to prove only that the principle of resolution is possible, i.e., he does not require factual agreement.

The four moments of a judgment of taste can be roughly divided into two categories. The first category includes those moments that stipulate when a judgment qualifies as an aesthetic one, namely, the first (disinterestedness) and third moments (subjective purposiveness/pleasure resulting from the perception of an object's purposive form). The second category is of those moments, which refer to what is claimed in a judgment of taste, namely universality (the second moment) and necessity (the fourth moment). In other words, the moments can be divided into the before and after, what precedes (or ought to precede) a pure judgment of taste, and what stems from such a judgment.

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[50] Here, I am not commenting on Kant's ability to show that even the possibility of universal validity is viable (or meaningful in any practical sense) but suffice it to say – that this is up for debate! I will address this more directly in Chapters 5 and 6.

[51] Critics such as John Fisher and Jeffrey Maitland (1974) have argued that Kant's aesthetics does not defeat the sceptical position. Specifically, they argue that since there is no possibility of falsifying an aesthetic judgment (under Kant's theory) it cannot overcome scepticism, and so is incapable of distinguishing what is a good from a bad aesthetic judgment. I will, however, discuss this in more detail, when I come to deal with the critiques of Kant's deduction of taste.

Henry Allison makes a useful, although not entirely supported, distinction between the *quid facti* and the *quid juris* of a judgment of taste, drawn from Kant's own distinction between

the two in the first *Critique* (A 84/B 116).[53] Under this interpretation, the four moments of an aesthetic judgment are all concerned with the *quid facti*, which Allison understands as the conditions under which such a judgment can be pure. In contrast, the Deduction of Taste at §38 is concerned with the *quid juris,* which is concerned with whether a judgment meeting the conditions specified by the *quid facti* can 'rightfully' demand the assent of others (2001, 67 and 82).[52] In the next section, I will address the *quid juris*, that is, the deduction of a pure judgment of taste, first by illustrating the two peculiarities Kant specifies before addressing the deduction itself.

2.3 The deduction: two peculiarities

Here, we must once again return to the issue of location. First, it is unclear why the deduction of aesthetic taste is placed in the second book, regarding the sublime, and not, as would perhaps have made more sense, in the section consisting of Kant's discussion of the analytic of the beautiful, especially given that the deduction refers only to instances of pure beauty.[55] Whilst

[52] Kant does not use the terms *quid facti* and *quid juris* in the *Critique of Judgment*, and although it may be interpreted in the way Allison suggests, his analysis could also be used to justify ignoring the connections between the moments of aesthetic judgment, and the importance of the section in the *quid facti* in helping to explain and the 'official' deduction. In other words, Allison may inadvertently be helping to side-line the Analytic (*quid facti*) as less important or relevant to the deduction (*quid juris*) since he divorces them so completely from each other.

[55] In §30 (5:280) Kant refers exclusively to the need to provide a deduction for the beautiful in nature – this combined with his distinction between free and adherent beauty (artistic beauty falls into the latter camp and thus fails to be a pure form of beauty) may lead some to think that Kant's account of taste cannot be applied to artistic beauty. This issue will be addressed in more depth at a later point, but Kant's distinction between fine and agreeable art (§40) serves to show that this is taken into consideration by Kant, who attempts to distinguish between aesthetic art which is fine art (and could be included within the parameters of a judgment of taste) and aesthetic art which is merely pleasant (§44, 306). It should also be noted that in §30, Kant is specifically justifying why the sublime does not need a separate deduction, and thus states that only the beauty in natural things (and not the sublimity) will need a deduction of taste. This does not necessarily mean that the deduction cannot also apply to artistic beauty. Nevertheless, the continued ambiguity of this issue although troubling is not directly pertinent to my current research, and although I will touch upon this at a later point, it will not be the focus of my inquiries.

the sublime is technically a pure aesthetic judgment, and it fits within the Kantian style to present the Deduction, only after the Analytic has been completed, there is still confusion

[53] We can also think of the division of the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment as being between Kant's exposition (The Analytic in Book I) in which he sets forth the argument and in the argument itself (The Deduction of Pure Judgments of Taste in Book II) where it is justified. This supports Kant's contention that the purpose of the *Critique* is to "…set forth and justify the subjective principle of taste as an a priori principle of the power of judgment." (§34, 286).

concerning where the deduction begins and ends (which I will discuss in my analysis).[53] The Deduction present at §38 is hardly sufficient to meet Kant's aims for the *Critique*, yet he claims in the Comment immediately following the Deduction that it was at this point that it is not only completed but also that the Deduction is 'easy' (§38, 390-391). I take Kant at his word here, and so my discussion of the deduction focuses on its completion in this section of Book II, although it must be supplemented with arguments from §21, §22, and the discussion after the Comment at §39-40.

With Kant's discussion of a judgment of aesthetic taste, a deduction of a pure judgment of taste may seem redundant; and this would certainly be true if Kant were not a transcendental philosopher. However, Kant must (if he is to convince the idealists and, moreover himself, of the possibility of an a priori basis for a theory of taste) provide a transcendental deduction of such a theory. It is because an aesthetic judgment claims that it is universally valid that it must also provide the *quid juris* or proof of the legitimacy of this claim. In order to provide the actual

[53] Although a judgment of the sublime is technically a pure aesthetic judgment, according to Kant it does not require a separate deduction (§30, 5:279-80), so the deduction at §38 applies only to the pure judgments (involving no reference to the perfection of an object or other concepts or sensation). The reason that a judgment of the sublime does not require a separate deduction is primarily because the deduction itself is completed within the Analytic of the Sublime, in other words the exposition of the sublime is sufficient to demonstrate the universal and necessary validity of these judgments. The sublime differs substantially to the beautiful, especially in terms of its apparent 'formlessness'. There is nothing subjectively purposive in objects of the sublime, so, correctly speaking when we speak of the sublime, we speak only of ourselves. Sublimity is only a way of speaking about our 'way of thinking' and not about nature itself. When analysing a judgment of the sublime we add nothing more to our understanding, by positing a deduction, all that is contained within the judgment and its entailment is contained in the exposition itself. Strictly speaking, we do not make a judgment of the sublime about an object, and so what we judge as purposive is not the object, but our reflection upon the object (ibid.,).

deduction, Kant first discusses what he calls the two logical 'peculiarities' of a judgment of taste: universality and necessity. Although these notions have been discussed earlier in the *Critique*, §30-37 recapitulates and develops these peculiarities, whilst, in this section, Kant also successfully captures the strange nature of judgments of taste, namely, that it is universal and necessary, but also somehow subjective.[54] Furthermore, the basis of these peculiarities do not

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rest on determinate concepts but rest only on a singular judgment and cannot be proven by practical methods which would compel people to agree with a given judgment. Kant (rather succinctly) summarises the two peculiarities in §31 and §32, maintaining that, in making a judgment about the beauty of an object, we are simultaneously making a claim to universality *as if* it were an objective judgment, and *as if* it were 'merely' subjective (cannot be determined by a proof).

This is the essential paradox which Kant aims to resolve in the Critique of Aesthetic Taste; the deduction aims to resolve these two peculiarities.[55] Although we can already anticipate Kant's steps, drawn from his rough sketch of the deduction in his discussion of the 'Four Moments', the deduction necessarily formalises the argument, albeit in an abbreviated manner. Kant's rather odd claim, that "…[i]f we resolve these logical peculiarities…" then we shall have "…done all that is needed in order to deduce this strange ability we have…" (§31, 281), lends support to the idea that the deduction may be redundant. As Jens Kulenkampff has pointed out, if resolving the logical peculiarities is the resolution to the problem of taste, then the deduction itself becomes merely a "second analytic" (1994, 97). However, as Kant makes

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[54] Apart from discussing the two peculiarities in the section preceding the actual deduction at §38, Kant properly introduces the idea of autonomy as being an essential component of a pure aesthetic judgment. Kant does mention autonomy in his General Comment on the First Division of the Analytic (§22, 240-242) where he observes the

[55] Kant's deduction attempts to resolve an apparent contradiction of this 'strange ability' to judge as if objective and subjective at the same time. Resolution is required for Kant as the instantiation of both universality and necessity seem to suggest a sort of contradiction (at least not as Kant understands them). In other words, because universality is only of a singular judgment yet the necessity of such a judgment means that we could compel people to agree that a judgment of taste is for everyone (§31, 281).

clear throughout, the deduction reformulates the Analytic of the Beautiful in such a way as to emphasise the a priori nature of pure aesthetic judgments and the necessity of a transcendental account of pure aesthetic judgment in order to be a priori in the first place.

apparent contradiction between claiming that the imagination is both free, and a law unto itself, i.e., autonomous (§22, 241). This relates more broadly to the 'contradiction' of such a judgment being able to be free (not on concepts) and yet universally (and a priori) valid. Kant's use of the term 'autonomy' from §30 onwards is meant to clarify the way in which a judgment is universally valid, yet it cannot be grounded by taking a survey of opinion: it must rely solely on one's own feeling of pleasure (§31, 281).

2.4 The Deduction

Kant's aim in the deduction itself is to justify what he has already outlined in previous sections regarding our ability to make pure judgments of taste. Here, I will first set out Kant's Deduction at §38 taken from Werner Pluhar's translation, in three steps, before providing my own fivepoint breakdown of the deduction and addressing each point in turn:[56]

> [A] If it is granted that in a pure judgment of taste our liking for the object is connected with our mere judging of the form of the object, then this liking is nothing but [our consciousness of] the form's subjective purposiveness for the power of judgment, which we feel as connected in the mind with the presentation of the object.
>
> [B] Now, as far as the formal rules of judging [as such] are concerned, apart from any matter (whether sensation or concept), the power of judgment can be directed only to the subjective conditions for our employment of the power of judgment as such (where it is confined neither to the particular kind of sense involved nor to a[ny] particular concept of the understanding), and hence can be directed only to that subjective [condition] which we may presuppose in all people (as required for possible

[56] This separation of the deduction into three steps is also used by Henry Allison (2001,175).

> cognition as such). It follows that we must be entitled to assume a priori that a presentation's harmony with these conditions of the power of judgment is valid for everyone.
>
> [C] In other words, it seems that when, in judging an object of sense in general, we feel this pleasure or subjective purposiveness of the presentation for the relation between our cognitive powers, then we must be entitled to require this pleasure from everyone (§38 289-290).

In order to add further clarity, I have broken down Kant's argument into five steps using more straightforward language:

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1) In a pure judgment of taste, our liking for an object is brought about by our awareness of the object's form, specifically its subjective purposiveness for the power of judgment.
2) The power of judgment can only be focused on the subjective conditions for our employment of judgment (not involving any particular kind of sense or concept of the understanding).
3) It can thus, only be focused on the subjective conditions which we can presuppose in all people (as it is necessary for all cognition).
4) A presentation's harmony with these conditions of the power of judgment is valid for everyone (a priori)
5) When feeling pleasure, through the judging of an object (the subjective purposiveness of the presentation for the relation between our cognitive powers), we must be entitled to require it of everybody.

Kant first restates the third moment of the analytic (§17, 236) concerning the relation between the object and subject, or rather the subject, and the subject's awareness of the form of judgment generated by the mind's presentation of the object. The judgment is brought about *only* through this; the pleasure subsequently generated is only based upon our awareness of the object's subjective purposiveness for our judgment (1). The act of judging is only concerned with the subjective conditions of such a judgment, meaning that it must be disinterested and untroubled by reference either to our conceptual or sensuous understanding or interest (2). Because it is without interest that we make such a judgment, it must be the case that everyone has access to the same subjective conditions which allow a pure judgment of taste in the first place: especially because if this was not the case, then human cognition, in general, would be impossible (3). As a result, we can also assume that if a presentation of such harmony occurs, it must also occur for everybody else, i.e., be universally valid yet subjectively based (4).

Finally, a pleasure which is derived in such a way (that it is pure) must also be necessary for everyone, i.e., the pleasure must be demanded of all (5).

In the Dialectic of Aesthetic Judgment (from Division II §55), Kant presents an 'antinomy of taste', and although this does not form part of the actual deduction, it does, once again, capture the singularity of a judgment of taste. However, it also emphasises that the problem (as asserted in the antinomy) is only one of illusion (§57, 339). The antinomy is presented as follows:

> (1) Thesis: A judgment of taste is not based on concepts; for otherwise, one could dispute about it (decide by means of proofs).
>
> (2) Antithesis: A judgment of taste is based on concepts; for otherwise, regardless of the variation among [such judgments], one could not even so much as quarrel about them (lay claim to other people's necessary assent to one's judgment) (§56, 338-339).

Kant aims to resolve this 'apparent' conflict by first admitting that a judgment of taste does refer to some type of concept (339); of course, this appears wildly contradictory to Kant's insistence that a judgment of taste is not based upon a concept. However, he goes on to explain that this is not, in fact, contradictory because the thesis and antithesis each refer to a different type of concept: determinate (former) and indeterminate (latter). As Kant has already maintained throughout the *Critique*, pure aesthetic judgments do not reference concepts, by which he means to clarify, determinate concepts (provable). However, if no concepts *at all* were involved, we would not be able to show the a priori basis of the judgments as being subjectively universal and necessary (339-340).[57] Without a concept (in this case, the

indeterminate concept generated from the judgment itself), Kant's deduction would have nothing to latch onto, i.e., nature's subjective purposiveness, in order to demonstrate why aesthetic judgments can be subjectively universal legitimacy. However, the concept involved must be indeterminate as it does not allow us to "…cognise or prove anything concerning the object…" (340).

What is problematic about this somewhat opaque solution to the antinomy is that Kant does not make use of nor try to develop the notion of free play (harmony of the faculties) as the indeterminate concept involved in making an aesthetic judgment, which would have been the more intuitive idea. Instead, Kant refers to the unfathomable "…supersensible substrate of humanity…" (ibid.,) as the basis of the determination of the judgment, which is available to all. It is rather curious that Kant chooses this moment to direct us back to his broader ontological project by referencing the language of the first *Critique*. It comes as a surprise to the reader,

[57] Without any concepts at all, the entirety of the Deduction would fail to make sense, instead it would be a big outpouring of words on a page without any rhyme or reason. Indeterminate concepts are a necessary part of Kant's deductive argument, but it is also the case that determinate concepts cannot be relied upon as they would require a more strenuous element to judgments of taste and thus invalidate its claims to universal (subjective) necessity.

who, up until this point, has only been asked to follow Kant's aesthetic argument, using terminology and 'concepts' independent from the rest of Kant's philosophy.[58] What is most troubling about this passage is that it does not particularly help justify Kant's contention, and it is unclear why he would choose to use this line of reasoning when there are other intuitive and less loaded solutions. Appealing to an indeterminate concept in order to justify the basis of another indeterminate concept is certainly puzzling.[59] Although Kant is clear about the distinction between the two types of concepts, it is unclear how one could even know about an 'indeterminable concept' – which by its very definition it is unprovable – but that is a problem that relates to the transcendental project at large, and the possibility of synthetic a priori knowledge in the first place.[60] This (perhaps) unnecessary metaphysical element distracts us from the aesthetical theory, which up until this point has remained mostly independent (at least, explicitly) of Kant's doctrine of phenomena and noumena. However, since this is not part of the formal deduction, I will put a pin in this discussion here, though this issue will tie into my broader discussion of whether Kant's deduction can successfully answer the sceptic.

2.5 Judging the successes of the deduction

To even begin analysing the deduction's success, we need to point out several assumptions made by Kant, which ultimately add further steps to the argument, or at the very least, offer a necessary supportive backbone. Kant himself would most likely think it unnecessary to include them in the deduction, for they are implicit within the steps of his argument. Having said this,

[58] This comes as a surprise to many, but especially to those who are unfamiliar with any of Kant's other works and/or those who up until this point could have found Kant's argument internally justified without having to appeal to outside (of the third *Critique*) concepts. It should go without saying that all three *Critiques* are intrinsically connected and that due to the nature of Kant's systematic philosophy – he refers to notions from the first two, both explicitly and implicitly throughout the third.

[59] I also briefly discuss the supersensible substrate of humanity in Chapter 5.

[60] At the very least, the *Critique of Judgment* brings Kant's critical work full circle. For those who are persuaded by Kant's transcendental deduction, the third *Critique* represents both the unification of his critical thought but also the enrichment of ideas presented in the first *Critique*.

Kant does reiterate them in §39-40, where he discusses the communicability of sensation (and subjective mental states) and taste as a kind of *sensus communis*; Kant also implicitly refers to the autonomy of aesthetic judgment. In Kant's footnote at the end of the Deduction proper, he stipulates that in order to be justified in claiming universal assent to aesthetic judgments resting on a subjective basis, all that needs to be granted is the following. First, that the subjective conditions of the power of judgment exist in everyone and can be communicated (or else we could not communicate ideas or knowledge at all). Secondly, we must be able to grant that the judgment takes into account only these formal conditions of the judgment and that it is pure. Kant clearly thinks that through the deduction itself, he has shown both of these things, and thus that we are justified in accepting the conclusions of the aesthetic deduction

One of the primary concerns regarding Kant's deduction is the need to include another step regarding the assumption of the universal communicability of subjective mental states (the subjective conditions necessary for the act of judging). Both that people are capable of

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experiencing the same subjective mental states (based upon the shared condition of such states) in the act of making an aesthetic judgment, and that we can communicate these shared states (steps 3 and 4). In order to make sense of Kant's claim that, for the purposes of the Deduction, we only take into account the subjective conditions "…which we may presuppose in all people…" and, moreover, that these subjective conditions are "…required for possible cognition." (§38, 290), we must refer back to §21 and ahead to §39-40. The particular relation between one's faculties, which we can call the 'free harmony' resulting from a judgment of the beautiful, and that which generates the feeling of pleasure associated with this judgment, is assumed by Kant to be possible for all human beings, and furthermore that it may even be required for all cognition in the first place (§9, 219).[61] These statements, which will be

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[61] See my discussion in Chapter 5 and 6 concerning the objections and issues with free play/harmony.

addressed in more detail later on, generate much of the concern regarding the deduction's success. However, before proceeding to Chapter 2, where I will explore the importance of disinterest to pure aesthetic judgments, I first want to address a common misunderstanding about Kantian aesthetics.[62]

2.6 Formalism

According to Kant, aesthetic judgments do not extend to the object, so when he refers to the form of the object, he is actually referring to the form of our judgment of the object. Despite Kant's clarity on this matter, as seen in the restatement of the third moment (relation – subjective purposiveness) in the first step (1/A) of the deduction (§38, 290), there remains a persistent misreading of Kant as a traditional formalist. Some writers have appealed to Kant's discussion of aesthetic ideas (Zuckert 2003, 202), the distinction between free and adherent beauty (Zangwill 1999, 610) and even his references to the 'form' of an object, in order to justify Kant's supposed formalist tendencies. However, even considering the broader Critique of Aesthetic Judgment, I find little reason to assert that Kant is a restrictive formalist. The question, as it relates to the deduction, is whether a restrictive-formalist reading is warranted and if it is, then does this invalidate the deduction? My response to the first part of this question is a firm no, which means that the second part of this question never even rears its head. Whilst Kant certainly endorses a type of formalism, he does not adopt the traditional-style formalism of Clive Bell, Roger Fry and Rachel Zuckert.

Significant form, of the kind proposed by Bell and Fry, refers only to the lines, shape, volume, and colour of visual art, i.e., the formal properties (Bell 1913, 15). Bell posits that only these features stir within us 'aesthetic emotions' without which we would not be able to make a

[62] I have included this short section about formalism at the end of this chapter, to avoid unwanted confusion about my position on the matter. The issue of formalism is deserving of more space, but it does not directly connect to the themes which I am using this thesis to explore, hence the section's brevity.

legitimate claim of an object as a work of art. Bell states that people who experience 'pure' aesthetic emotions do not refer to the subject of a painting (as a person incapable of such emotions would do) but instead draw attention to the colour, shapes and line formations. Bell claims that their attention to these details wins them a far more profound aesthetic experience than could possibly result from focusing on the subject of the artistic work. Clement Greenberg's influential contribution to aesthetics (1960, 85), most noted for its formalist approach, was majorly influenced by his reading of Kant. Unfortunately, Greenberg's interpretation and use of Kant's work has contributed to the view that Kant advances the same type of formalist agenda. Even the *Encyclopaedia of Aesthetics* refers to Kant in a chapter on formalism, as an essential source for the idea that "all artworks are to be primarily valued for their formal properties […an idea that] can be found in the aesthetics of Immanuel Kant." (Krukowski, Batkin, and Davis 1998, 213). Of course, there can be no objection as to the influence of Kant on the field of aesthetics and on formalism in general, but it is the conflation of Kant's position with that of strict-formalists like Bell, Fry (1914) or Greenberg which is problematic.

More recently, Rachel Zuckert has contributed to the debate of Kant's formalism, proposing that Kant can be considered as a 'whole-formalist' (2006, 601).[63] This she defines as a formalist position, claiming that the 'whole arrangement' of the sensible properties of an art object is responsible for its beauty (602). She contends that beauty is found (as understood through whole-formalism) if its parts "…harmonise to form a whole." (Ibid., 601). Zuckert correctly states that for Kant, when we judge an object as beautiful, we are basing this on the

[63] Zuckert distinguishes between three types of formalism, whole, property and kind. Briefly put, property formalism is the idea that the form of an object can be understood in terms of a set of "…specific spatial or temporal properties" (2006, 600). On the other hand, kind-formalism, describes the form of an object as that which makes it "a (good) exemplar of its kind." (Ibid., 601). Zuckert correctly claims that Kant cannot be considered as either a property or kind-formalist but goes on to explain that he can be thought of as whole-formalist.

object's 'purposive form' (2007, 181). However, she is incorrect in claiming that the form we should be concerned with is that of the object's actual form and its real existence; Zuckert states the following:

> Kant's claim that beautiful objects are beautiful in virtue of their purposive form can, I submit then, be taken to mean that beautiful objects are beautiful in virtue of all (or indeterminately many of) their sensible properties (2007, 194).

Zuckert admits that this type of formalism is considerably vaguer than either property or kindformalism (2006, 601), but it is the very ambiguity of whole-formalism, which helps obscure its erroneous nature. Zuckert rejects two types of formalism for being too restrictive; wholeformalism avoids having to justify such restrictions, i.e., having to describe the objective spatio-temporal properties which induce judgments of beauty or the criteria which the object meets to be considered an exemplar of its kind. Understanding Kant as a whole-formalist supposedly helps reflect "…the fact that aesthetic experience is a deep engagement with an object as the particular object that it is." (2007, 195). Zuckert's attempt to categorise Kant as a formalist stems from a desire to interpret Kant as an objectivist in order to avoid falling into a

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relativistic quagmire. Zuckert wants to read Kant as an objectivist, as she incorrectly determines that the only other alternative would be relativistic chaos. This rather misses the point of much of the third *Critique*, where Kant struggles with the peculiarity of judgments of taste: in order to find a middle ground between subjective and objective understandings of beauty. Zuckert's misinterpretation stems mostly from her reading of Kant as object-oriented when as a matter of point, he is concerned *almost* exclusively with the subject.[64] Formalism takes the object to

[64] Whereas in Kant's discussion of the sublime, he is *exclusively* concerned with the subject. Technically, the sublime is not a term we can use to describe an object, because it refers only to our human ability to transcend the sensible realm.

be the most crucial part of the judgment of taste, which relies on the object's sensible properties. Of course, the object's form provides the stimulus for the judgment, but to consider Kant as being primarily concerned with the form of the object, should patently be false. Confusing Kant as a traditional-type of formalist is easily done, though; his emphasis on disinterestedness and non-conceptuality does encourage a formalist reading. In some ways, Kant could be considered as the father of modernism, particularly in his insistence on not taking into account the history, genealogy, motivation or intention behind an artwork or its supposed representation, and, by contrast, his insistence on being concerned only with the work itself, which fits well within a formalist approach.[65]

Within the deduction, Kant refers to 'our awareness of the object's form' bringing about our liking for said object, but taking this out of context would be to wilfully misinterpret Kant. He clearly specifies that it is the form of the subjective purposiveness of the object, for our cognitive powers, which we should be concerned with, and not the formal qualities of the object itself. If we were to base aesthetic judgment on spatio-temporal properties only, we would theoretically be able to adopt an entirely objective theory of beauty. This is, however,

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something which Kant explicitly rejects, and although Zuckert's interpretation of Kant as a whole-formalist avoids the common criticisms which are directed to significant form(alism), like all types of formalism, it is primarily concerned with the sensible formal properties of the object itself.[66] However, Kant's justification of the universality and necessity of a judgment of taste relies upon an appeal to the form of the judgment. More specifically, he refers us to the

[65] Many consider Kant to be the 'father of modern aesthetics' and an important contributor to aesthetic theory but considering Kant as a precursor to modern art itself is a far more distinct claim. Ayn Rand (1971, 77) and Clement Greenberg both consider Kant the original modernist: "Because he was the first to criticize the means itself of criticism, I conceive of Kant as the first real Modernist." (1998, 7).

[66] One of the results of Zuckert's analysis is that it wrongly emphasises Kant's discussion of works of art, making Kant seem far more interested in fine art than he really is.

subjective conditions used in such a judgment, which are both universally available and communicable. Thus the pleasure of judging a beautiful object could (at least) partially be derived from our knowledge of being aware of this communicability. In describing an object as beautiful, I am not applying a determinate concept to it; this would involve picking out a specific feature that makes it beautiful, which could then be used to identify other beautiful objects; again, this is a view Kant explicitly rejects. Paul Redding points out that, although we generally think of beauty as being contained within the object, "…the ground of the judgment […] is found in those inter-subjective relations mediating the community of subjects." (2007, 180). Kant expressly excludes references to any concept of the understanding or any 'particular kind of sense' (step 2) in making a judgment of taste.[67] Instead, he argues that it is the purposiveness of the form of an object to our mind, i.e., the fact that it looks as if it were designed for our cognitive faculties, which induces our pleasure. Henry Allison appeals to Paul Guyer's distinction between restrictive (referring only to spatio-temporal properties) and broader formalism to illustrate that there is room for Kant to move within the borders of formalism (2001, 287-288). Allison claims that "…the sensible data must provide something on which to reflect, and this can only consist in a certain order or arrangement, which counts as 'form' in Kant's sense"; moreover, he adds, "[c]onsequently, only an engagement with form

could occasion a free harmony of the faculties." (288) Here, Allison is perhaps bending a little too much towards a version of traditional formalism, but as he is clearly not merely referring to spatial/temporal properties, we can be a little more forgiving. Indeed, Kant is a formalist, but it is the form of the judgment with which he is primarily concerned, the object of beauty

[67] A passage from the Critique of Teleological Judgment, supports this argument: "Hence the concept of the purposiveness that nature displays in its products must be one that, while not pertaining to the determination of objects themselves, is nevertheless a subjective principle that reason has for our judgment, since this principle is necessary for human judgment in dealing with nature." (§75, 404)

(or its representation) is an 'instrument' which presents a purposiveness of form to our faculties, which results in free play/harmony.

2.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I set out the basics of Kant's deduction of aesthetic taste taken from the *Critique of Judgment.* I first discussed the four moments (quality, quantity, relation and modality) which are involved in the making of such a judgment before exploring the two peculiarities of taste, i.e., that they are made *as-if* both objective and subjective. I presented the Deduction from §38 and began to highlight potential problems with this deduction as it relates to issues of communicability and particularity. Finally, I addressed the misconception of Kant as a traditional type of aesthetic formalist here so that I do not have to return to this at a later point. This chapter has been necessary to set the rest of the thesis in context, but it also sets up some of the main problems with the deduction and Kant's aesthetic project as a whole (at least as it relates to pure beauty). Contextually, this chapter has been a necessary part of the thesis in terms of setting up the basics of Kant's aesthetic deduction and addressing a couple of interpretive issues to prevent future misunderstandings, i.e., the location of the deduction and the role of formalism/traditional formalism. In the next chapter, I will argue that disinterest is an indispensable element to the critique of taste, which, aside from being an essential part of his own theory, has potential application outside of Kantian aesthetics (e.g., in ecoaesthetics) despite significant criticism.

Chapter 3: The importance of disinterest in aesthetic judgment

3.1 Chapter summary

In Chapter 2, I set out the basics of Kant's aesthetic deduction and addressed a couple of interpretive issues such as the location of the Deduction and objected to interpreting Kant as a traditional aesthetic formalist. This chapter will explore this connection and the necessity of disinterestedness in the success of Kant's deduction of judgments of taste before addressing

some of the criticism surrounding Kant's version of disinterested judgment. Kant's use of disinterest has a significant role in his third *Critique*, helping to ground Kant's philosophy of beauty, which, in turn, plays directly into his Critical philosophy of morality.[68] Understanding Kantian disinterest ought to also touch upon its links and implications with the role of morality within Kantian aesthetics, as it is a crucial part of what makes disinterest so necessary to pure aesthetic judgments. Kant's use of disinterest is not exclusive to the *Critique of Judgment*, but it is in the third *Critique* where the most thorough use of disinterest can be found, and it is to this which I shall now turn.[69]

3.2 Basics of disinterest

Kant's aesthetics can (very) broadly be separated into two categories: his writings on the sublime and those on the beautiful. However, my focus in this chapter will rest with the beautiful, which is more relevant to my inquiry into the legitimacy of aesthetic disinterest. Kant himself states that the concept of the sublime in nature "…is not nearly as important and rich in implications as that of the beautiful in nature." (§23, 246). Whilst the beautiful leads to the

need to seek a basis outside of ourselves, the sublime requires only that we look within. As a result, the sublime cannot (according to Kant) be useful in the establishment of particular and objective principles. Therefore, the sublime remains a 'mere appendix' to the aesthetic judgment of the beautiful (and purposiveness) of nature, since being coloured by subjective interest, the

[68] Taking a disinterested approach to aesthetic experience was imperative for Kant, as he needed to ensure the universal validity of aesthetic judgment in order to preserve the morally valuable nature of beauty. Without disinterestedness, aesthetic judgments can no longer claim universal validity, which would also mean that the symbol of morality (i.e., beauty) can no longer claim to give sensible form to moral ideas (§60, 356). My idea here, is nothing more than an observation about the necessity of disinterest to the subjective universality of aesthetic judgment and that without disinterest, such universality would be impossible. In turn, this would mean that using or referring to aesthetic judgment as a way of bridging the gap between freedom and nature (Second Introduction, II, 175-176) would be made exponentially more difficult (if not impossible).

[69] Disinterest is also referenced in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, which is where Paul Guyer searches for justification of Kant's use of disinterest, which he claims cannot be found in in the *Critique of Judgment* (Guyer 1978, 457).

sublime cannot provoke universal assent or provide support for Kant's moral doctrine. Kant argues that aesthetic judgments must be made independently of any prior interest in the 'real existence' of an object, nor should such a judgment ground any interest in the object at all (§2, 205). In stating that disinterested judgment should not be concerned with real existence, Kant means that we should not base an aesthetic judgment upon any prior knowledge of the object in question or bring any type of emotional attachment to bear on the judgment.

According to Kant, there are two types of aesthetic judgments: pure and impure. Impure or adherent judgment is unfree, in the sense that it is directed by knowledge, a detail that prevents it from having a more significant role in Kant's work. An essential feature, in fact, the defining feature of pure aesthetic judgment, is that it be free from cognitive restrictions. Only a judgment of beauty that is free from conceptual interference can be classified as 'free beauty' (§16, 230); thus, pure judgments are, by definition, disinterested and non-conceptual. Only judgements that are free from emotional constraints (§13, 223) and are in no way grounded in a desire for the actual existence of an object can be non-subjective and thus stand up to the test of universalisability. The potential for universal assent forms a crucial part of the *Critique of Judgment*, especially as it links to morality, with Kant arguing that beauty is the symbol of morality (see Section 3.7). Cognitive influences ought to be avoided entirely if a pure aesthetic judgment is to be reached, and if we arrive at an aesthetic judgment of the Pyramids of Egypt, based upon the slave labour used to create them, we are conceptually restrained and as such cannot provide a free judgment. The beautiful, according to Kant,

"…prepares us for loving something, without interest." (§30, 267), and it is only the liking expressed through a taste for the beautiful which can be free, since "…we are not compelled by any interest, whether of sense or reason." (§5, 210).

Before I begin to explore in-depth the role of disinterest in Kant's third *Critique*, I will first examine why the concept of disinterest is so important to Kant in the first place. As has

already been stated, Kant places great emphasis on the link between morality and free beauty, but in order to better understand why disinterest is so central to his account of a judgement of taste, there is much more we need to unpack.[70]

3.3 The necessity of disinterest

One of the least intuitive elements of Kant's theory of aesthetic judgment is the insistence upon disinterest as necessary for the formation of a pure judgment of taste.[71] Prima facie, taking an unbiased approach to aesthetic judgments sounds like a sound strategy, but Kant's use of disinterest goes one step further – taking it beyond ordinary rationale. Not only should we "not to be in the least prepossessed in favour of the existence of a thing", but we must also "…be quite indifferent in this regard." (§2, 205). In other words, during the aesthetic experience, we ought to have no desire for the continued existence of the object, as this could influence the basis (and thus purity) of the aesthetic judgment. Kant maintains not only that an aesthetic judgment must not be made with a prior interest in mind; he also insists that it does not provoke any interest. Kant states that moral judgments do give rise to an interest (although they are not based upon an interest) "But judgments of taste, of themselves, do not even give rise to any interest." (§2, 205n). The idea that a natural or artistic object of aesthetic appreciation ought not only to be judged without prior interest but that it also must not inspire any interest itself seems more than a little counterintuitive. After all, beauty is one of the main reasons we have

for taking an interest in something in the first place. So, how could it be comprehensible to think that interest is neither given nor taken from the experience of the beautiful in nature, as expressed by Kant? The answer, as ever, is not obvious.

[70] See Section 3.7 for more discussion of universality and morality.

[71] Kant also emphasises natural beauty over artistic beauty. This often leads to the assumption that Kant regards the natural as the basic form of beauty, this is not necessarily so (see Rueger 2007). Rather Kant's emphasis on natural beauty relates to the need to universalise the subjective experience of taste, in order to make it morally significant.

One of the most well-known and vocal critics of the notion of disinterest (and Kant in general) was Nietzsche, who found the entire idea of disinterested contemplation a 'conceptual nonsense' (GM III, 12). What is clear, however, is that if even an influential commentator such as Paul Guyer can find no redeeming feature regarding Kant's preference for natural and not artistic beauty (1979, 268), and little in the way of justification (at least in the *Critique of Judgment*) for the idea that a judgment of beauty can ground no interest in the object (1978, 456-7) then those that are generally unsympathetic to the work of Kant are going to find these conclusions baffling.

The problem straightforwardly put, is how on earth can an experience of beauty provoke no interest within us? The second issue, which for some will be the more pressing concern, is how is it possible to take a subjective 'emotional' experience of the beautiful and extrapolate from that something which can be universally agreed upon? This second problem will be addressed in more detail further on; for now, I will focus on the first, which seems to contradict our ordinary, everyday experience of beauty and the natural world. Kant opens the *Critique of Judgment* with a discussion of the importance of disinterestedness, beginning 'The Analytic of the Beautiful' with an exploration of the 'First Moment of a Judgment of Taste' specifically with reference to its quality. Kant emphasises that a judgment of taste is not one involving cognition (§1, 203), but preferably one that involves the imagination connected with the understanding. Kant defines interest in terms of taking a liking for the presentation of an object's existence (§2, 204); this type of liking is not, however, conducive to providing a judgment on the beautiful, which ought to be based upon our mere contemplation of the object.

Judgment about the beautiful is derived in spite of our personal opinion of the object in question, for Kant: it simply does not and should not matter what our personal view of an object is, because this would mean that we take an interest in the actual existence of the thing (§2,

205). Taking an actual interest in an object's existence would make any judgment an impure (influenced by cognition) judgment of taste. However, given that we experience certain specific pleasurable responses when making a judgment of beauty, Kant's position seems counterintuitive. Surely Kant does not mean to deny our taking pleasure in the beautiful? Here Kant begins to make a distinction between different types of sensations in order to not fall into this trap of having to deny any form of 'interest' whatsoever. In Section Three of the third *Critique*, Kant clarifies the use of the word sensation to allow for a disinterested judgment to be more than an unrealistic ideal (at least in theory).

3.4 Making judgments of beauty

Kant's clarification also begins to address the second problem, of subjectivity in aesthetic judgments, by presenting three different forms of aesthetic liking: agreeable, good, and judgment of tastes. Kant maintains that the feeling we experience in relation to something being beautiful can be a pleasurable sensation of something agreeable (§3, 206), which is conditioned pathologically by stimuli (§5, 209). That which is subjective, i.e., feeling, is the reason we find something agreeable (or not); judgment of this sort is already loaded with interest. Kant argues that a judgment whereby something is found to be agreeable involves a type of gratification of inclination; agreeableness is simply a mark of whether something satisfies a particular need or desire—finding something agreeable means having an interest in it from the beginning. It does not merely express a liking for the said object but a desire to see more of the same. Therefore, it can never be a pure aesthetic judgment of taste since this requires the judgment to be made, free from any and all cognitive and emotional influences.

Another form of liking, identified by Kant, is a liking for the good, which can take two forms, that which we deem good intrinsically, and that which we consider good because it is useful, and thus we like it only as a means (§4, 207) to some other end. The good is a practical liking, brought about not only because of the object's representation but also because of one's

connection with it, i.e., for instance, we like the actual existence of the object, not just the object itself. Both types of liking, for the agreeable and the good, involve interest in the existence of the object, which does not allow for the merely contemplative character required of a pure judgement of aesthetic taste. The object of a liking 'devoid of interest' (§5, 211) is called beautiful, and it is only this (i.e., not connected to the interested) which can give rise to the universality of judgment. Any form of judgment connected, even in part, to desire, interest or that which is influenced by concepts cannot be pure (by definition) and cannot ground a universal judgment, which Kant requires for an aesthetic judgment of taste.

The necessity of basing a theory of aesthetic taste on a liking for the beautiful and not on a liking for the agreeable stems from a need to find universal agreement, which cannot be found in the agreeable as it is merely based upon the pleasure of sensation. Kant maintains that if a judgment of beauty is made devoid of all interest, one cannot help but think that the judgment must also have a basis for being liked by everyone else (§5, 211). This type of judgment is not based upon private intuitions; instead, it is based upon what is common to all humans; it can claim to be universal. Kant claims that whilst judgments of aesthetic taste are universal, they cannot be universal in the sense of an objectively universal rule. Instead, they are what he labels as subjectively universal. Kant in no way underestimates the enormity of that he is asking his readers to believe, especially the transcendental philosopher (§8, 213) and goes to great lengths to justify this claim.[72]

Kant is quick to dismiss any conclusions derived from a shallow interpretation of this theory, making sure to note that it does not exclude the possibility for differences of opinions regarding, for instance, one person's preference for grunge music and another person's

[72] Kant is expressly aware that bringing judgments of taste and aesthetics into his Critical philosophy is made more difficult through his commitment to transcendentalism, as he states, the universality of aesthetic judgment

preference for heavy metal. It would be absurd to say that these differences cannot and/or ought not to exist; Kant clearly states that a person may have different feelings about items of aesthetic interest, but that these opinions form part of a liking or disliking based upon the agreeableness of an object. Insofar as senses are concerned, 'everyone has his own taste' (§6, 212); importantly though, this is not the same as an aesthetic judgment of reflective taste, which is what Kant believes to be subjectively universal. Differences certainly exist between people over what they find to their liking in the agreeable, and thus no one is subject to pressure as to what their liking for an object ought to be. With regards to the agreeable, everyone is more than entitled to make up their own minds about what they find agreeable; it does not demand that everyone think in the same way about a particular stimulus; by contrast, a judgment of aesthetic taste demands agreement, unmediated by concepts or personal preferences. When we deem an object to be beautiful, we demand universal assent to this judgment so that we may speak with a universal voice (§8, 215).[73] A judgment of taste carries an aesthetic *quantity* of universality, meaning that in order to be valid, it must be the kind of thing that we can demand to be universal for everyone. Theoretically, a person should be able to demand universal assent if they have

"…is a remarkable feature, not indeed for the logician but certainly for the transcendental philosopher." (§8, 213). Whereby the discovery of what allows us to make a priori judgments in the first place is its chief aim. Of course, in an aesthetic judgment the predicate is not already contained within the subject (which is the case in analytic judgments). This means that we would usually, at least in the beginning, start with our external experience and determinate concepts. However, in the case of aesthetic judgment the existence of the aesthetic object is not what we are actually referring to when we insist that aesthetic judgments claim subjective universal assent and we have no concepts of reason to fall back on. In other words, justifying the universality of a subjective liking, is inherently more difficult as an appeal to the purely empirical experience (or determinate conceptuality) is impossible. There are other reasons why the third *Critique* is more difficult 'especially' for the transcendental philosopher, e.g., that even once the a priori principles of the power of judgment has been shown, it must then be subjected to transcendental critique, hence the existence of the Critique of Teleological Judgment. I am sure that other reasons could be made but then this takes us away from the main thrust of this chapter.

excluded those feeling or views that belong to that of the agreeable or the good (in addition to meeting the requirement for disinterestedness). Of course, in reality, it is much more

[73] Making a judgment about the good also makes a claim to universal validity; however, the main difference between this and aesthetic judgments of taste is that judgments of the good employ concepts, and thus remain interested, in the sense which Kant wishes to avoid.

complicated than this, especially with regards to making sure that the basis of such a judgment has been made only with that which is common to us all (§19, 237).

If aesthetic taste and judgments of the beautiful have universal communicability, based upon a subjective determination, i.e., not based on conceptual understanding, then they must be based on something else. Kant maintains that this 'something else' is the mental state which we find between the powers of understanding and imagination, which Kant labels the 'free play' between these two faculties, as the only way of explaining how it is possible to have universal communicability without the involvement of determinate concepts (§9, 217-218). One may, with good reason, ask whether the pleasure involved in a judgment of beauty is one which is a result of the judgment or if it precedes the judgment of beauty being bestowed upon a particular object. The answer to this question is two-fold, firstly if a person is approaching an aesthetic object for the first time, already with a sense of pleasure, this is likely to be a feeling of agreeableness to one's own preferences (i.e., interested) and thus not a pure aesthetic judgment. Secondly, Kant maintains that the pleasure experienced in a pure judgment of beauty occurs as a result of the harmonisation of the mental powers of understanding and imagination, which, in its turn, is a result of the judgment process. A pure judgment of taste is not influenced by charm and/or emotion but is instead the result of the 'free play' (or free harmony) between the faculties. The desire to linger in our experiencing of a beautiful object occurs because this mode of contemplation reproduces and reinforces itself (§12, 222). The pleasure experienced in the aesthetic judgment of taste is only contemplative, and thus it does not create an 'interest' and can still be considered 'pure'.

Objects which we deem beautiful (through a pure judgment of taste) are thought of as having a purposiveness without purpose. Purposiveness without a purpose is possible as we "…observe a purposiveness as to form and take note of it in objects – even if only by reflection – without basing it on a purpose…" (§10, 220). A pure liking cannot be based upon a purpose,

because a purpose always carries an interest; whereas an aesthetic judgment involves only the "…relation of the presentation powers to each other, insofar as they are determined by a presentation." (§11, 221) This relation produces a sort of pleasure, which Kant maintains is valid for everyone.[74] The idea of purposiveness without purpose is essential for Kant in order to uphold the distinction between cognitive and aesthetic judgments. Kant maintains that when we approach a beautiful object, our mind tries to apply a conceptual framework to it, but aesthetics are not a thing which one can conceptualise easily (§10-§12, 220-222), and so we fail in this task. This is the root of the pleasure (sometimes referred to as intellectual, contemplative or reflective pleasure) experienced through beauty. When we are unable to find a concept that fits the object of beauty, our mind flickers quickly back and forth between the faculties of imagination and understanding, trying to find a concept to capture it – provoking the mind into a free play. It is this potential for free play which means that it is possible to understand "…objects, states of mind, [and] acts…" which simply cannot be apprehended otherwise (§10, 220). This creates an apparent paradox, in that it is the absence of an available concept when experiencing the beautiful, which defines the experience of the beautiful, i.e., it is the very resistance of beauty to conceptualisation that makes it endlessly fascinating. Ultimately, beauty is something that avoids easy comprehension or intellectualisation and needs to be experienced rather than simply rationalised.

[74] Kant refers to purposiveness as, the "…causality that a concept has with regard to its object…" where a concept of a thing is "…what sort of thing it is [meant] to be." (§15, 227). On the other hand a purpose is defined as the "…object of a concept insofar as we regard this concept as the object's cause (the real basis of its possibility)." Kant also refers to purpose/purposiveness, when speaking of the way in which nature (for instance) seems to have a purpose, it appears as though it is there for a reason, almost as if it were designed for the explicit purposes of producing such a reaction within us. This is something which will be more relevant to our discussion of Kant's connection between morality and aesthetics.

Kant makes a point of distinguishing beauty from both goodness and perfection. In the first instance, the concept of goodness, which requires an objective purposiveness (as opposed to the subjective variety necessary for judgments of beauty), involves determinate purposes, which contravenes the requirements of disinterestedness: since determinate purposes/concepts require interest. Perfection, on the other hand, which has often been linked with beauty (Kant refers to Baumgarten), is explicitly denied by Kant as a way of properly judging beauty (§15).[75] In judging the perfection of an object, we must know what the object is and what it does; we must also have an idea of what a perfect version of this object ought to be in order to judge the level of perfection which a particular object possesses. This would mean approaching an object with interest, as we would be attempting to fit it within a particular conceptual framework.[76] Kant argues that, since aesthetic judgments do not involve concepts, and perfection is itself a concept, it is impossible to think that an objective purposiveness could exist without purpose. Since this is what using perfection in the judgement of beauty would entail, it is incomprehensible. Aesthetic judgments are not logical, but rather, they are based upon a feeling

[75] Specifically, intrinsic purposiveness, in contrast with extrinsic purposiveness which refers to an object's utility (§15, 227). There are two types of objective purposiveness: intrinsic and extrinsic. Extrinsic purposiveness can be described as a type of purposiveness where "…one thing of nature serves another as a means to a purpose." (§82, 425) whereas intrinsic purposiveness is concerned with an object's perfection. Judgments of taste are not objectively purposive in either of these ways. In the first case it does not base itself on an object's utility value (which would be extrinsic purposiveness) and secondly it does not base itself on whether an object meets certain concepts of perfection (intrinsic objective purposiveness). Aesthetic judgments are instead bound to a merely formal purposiveness without need for reference to determinate concepts.

[76] Such a judgment may fall into the category of adherent beauty. There is an interesting a discussion to be had about whether judgments of impure or adherent beauty can be considered beautiful at all, and if they can – then in what sense. The problem stems from adherent beauty's apparent dependence upon judgments of taste, which cannot involve determinate concepts such as perfection. Simply put, how can adherent beauty be a judgment of taste at all (or even be beautiful) if beauty (even impure) cannot involve reference to the notion of an object's perfection? If beauty involves the harmonisation of the faculties, and such a harmony is independent of perfection, how can anything be beautiful unless it is also independent of concepts such as perfection? See Rueger (2008) for more elaborate analysis of the issue and potential solutions. I will also discuss adherent beauty briefly on the next page.

of harmony created between the faculties of understanding and imagination, in response to only the formal presentation of a given object.

Whilst judgments of taste are referred to as being free and unfree (pure or impure), Kant also makes a further distinction between two types of beauty: free and adherent (or accessory) beauty (§16). An accessory or adherent beauty is one that is subsumed under certain concepts of purposes, whereas free beauty is self-subsistent, i.e., it does not rely upon a particular concept to understand it. A tree or flower, for instance, would be an example of free beauty, as would music (with no lyrics) and certain birds. In order to judge these objects as beautiful, we require no reference to an outside source in what these objects are meant to be. Rather we like them "…freely and on their own account." (§15, 229).

On the other hand, the beauty of buildings or people is not made without reference to certain concepts of how a human or particular building is 'supposed' to appear. In other words, we have to refer to a specific criterion in order to determine whether an object fulfils its intended purpose. Kant argues that many of the disagreements concerning judgments of beauty are actually the result of individuals concerning themselves with the two types of beauty: free and accessory. In a surprisingly simple summation of this circumstance, Kant states that one person is judging "by what he has before his senses, and the other by what he has in his thoughts." (§16, 231). Thus, it is perfectly possible for two people to be observing the same object and come to two separate conclusions. This is because one of them is looking at the ability of an object to fulfil a certain purpose, and the other is looking only at the presentation of the object.

In order to understand Kant's position on beauty, it is essential to understand that there can be no objective imperative for the judgment of beauty based upon concepts. A universal and

objective criterion of beauty is not just difficult to find: it is impossible (§17, 231). The ability for universal communicability of the sensation of liking or disliking for certain objects (without concept) points to the possibility of a deeply embedded basis for taste, which is common to all humans (§17, 232). However, using a standard of ideal beauty cannot lead to a pure aesthetic judgment of taste (if it were possible to do this in the first place) as it relates to conceptual understanding and utilises determinate concepts (§17, 236).

3.5 Pleasure and interest

In terms of Kant's position on interest, it is perhaps easier to see how it is possible to approach an object without interest than it is to see the possibility of no interest being provoked in the object afterwards. One of the prime reasons people seek out beauty is because of the interest and pleasure provoked in experiencing it. Does Kant really wish to deny this? Simply put – no. Kant does not deny that there is a sort of pleasure involved with aesthetic judgment. However, he does maintain that pleasure has a more concrete link with the agreeable, as it directly gives rise to pleasure, whereas the beautiful can be better described as having a 'necessary reference to liking' (§18, 237). This necessary liking is neither cognitive nor practical but rather refers to the way in which it is exemplary, i.e., it is the necessity of universal assent. However, since this necessity cannot be based upon a universal rule or conceptual understanding, it must be based on a subjective principle, motivated by a feeling rather than determinate concepts (§20), which nevertheless results in a universally valid judgment.

Kant refers to this as common sense, or as it is more often referred to in the relevant literature: sensus communis. Kant states that it is only under this 'common sense' that judgments of taste can be made. However, common sense does not refer to an outwardly perceived thought or action but rather the effect created from the free play between imagination and understanding. The universal communicability of this free play presupposes this type of common sense (§21, 239); furthermore, the presupposition of common sense helps to explain

and justify the normative element of aesthetic judgments of taste. The underlying feeling which we base such a judgment on is one which Kant regards as being public rather than private; this is not to say that everyone will agree with the judgment of taste we come to, but that they ought to (ibid.,). Judgments of taste are subjectively universal, and so they demand universal assent if an individual has gone about acquiring the judgment in the correct manner, i.e., without interest or concepts and with reference to free beauty, then they ought to reach the same conclusion as we have (assuming we have also done this). Judgments of taste combine a 'free lawfulness of the imagination' (§57, 341) with a harmony of understanding, producing a liking which is a result of the mere contemplation of the object, and not because of an object's ability to fulfil a particular use or purpose. However, Kant argues that not only should we approach an object of potential beauty without interest, but also that the object itself should produce no interest within us, arguing that our judgment is "…not based on an interest and also gives rise to none." (§42, 300). According to Kant:

> A judgment we make about an object of our liking may be wholly disinterested but still very interesting, i.e., it is not based on any interest, but it gives rise to an interest; all pure moral judgments are of this sort. But judgments of taste, of themselves, do not even give rise to any interest. (§2, n205).

This seems wholly contradictory to our everyday experience of beautiful things. When we judge something as beautiful, we wish to see more of it and thus take an interest in it; but Kant would say this is an example of an impure judgment of taste, or more likely, that it is based upon a judgment of the agreeable. Whilst the agreeable provokes a reaction of liking based upon sensation, and thus the 'actual existence of an object', a judgement of the beautiful is based upon contemplation and the mere representation of the object and is therefore not concerned with its actual existence (§1-§2, 204-205). A pure judgment of taste is necessarily disinterested

when interest is explicitly defined as "…pleasure in the existence of an object." (§40, 296). However, in other work, Kant claims that "…pleasure is what directly prompts me to maintain [my] state (to remain in it)." (Guyer's translation from *Anthropology*, 1978, 456). Even in the third *Critique,* Kant admits that pleasure in response to the beautiful, "…does have a causality in it, namely, to keep [us in] the state of [having] the presentation itself, and [to keep] the cognitive powers engaged [in their occupation] without any further aim." (Pluhar's translation §12, 222). Guyer understands this as Kant admitting that pure judgments of beauty produce a pleasure which wishes to continue, "…preserving the condition of representation itself." (§12, 222). Whilst this may well be a liberal interpretation of Kant's writing, the point raised remains compelling. If pleasure is experienced in relation to making an aesthetic judgment, and pleasure is something which, as humans, we desire to prolong, does it not make sense that some interest is generated in the existence of the aesthetic object itself? Especially since we depend upon the object in order to experience this formal pleasure in the first place.

Such a reaction seems to indicate a type of desire of the kind denied by Kant, who maintains that desire is in no way connected with pure aesthetic judgments. It is not too much of a stretch to think that a desire to preserve the representation of an object leads to a desire for the continued existence of the actual object. In order to experience the representation of an aesthetic object, there must first be an actual object, on whose representation we rely upon making a determination of the beautiful. In this sense, there seems to be a real 'interest' created in the experience of the beautiful. Even if there is no interest in our approach, interest appears to be created in the process. Kant's denial of this possibility works against our natural intuitions that we do indeed experience an interest in the beautiful because we are interested in the beautiful object to continue to exist.

There is very little in the *Critique of Judgment* to counteract this inconsistency in Kant's aesthetic doctrine. Guyer comes to the conclusion that if one looks only to the third *Critique*:

then, no justification can be found (1978, 456). Perhaps this apparent inconsistency has so little influence on the overall impact of Kant's aesthetic doctrine that it can be overlooked, but when we focus specifically on the comprehensibility of disinterest, this issue becomes more prominent. If there is no solution to this problem, it does not necessarily sound the death knell of disinterestedness, but it is a tricky element of Kant's version of the theory, especially since it is not entirely clear why it is necessary to maintain that judgments of aesthetic beauty, produce no desire or interest in the first place. It is understandable that Kant wishes to avoid interest beforehand; after all, being interested in an object before we have made a judgment about it would make it harder to make an unbiased judgment, but why should disinterest be demanded afterwards, too? Guyer looks to the *Critique of Practical Reason* in order to defend Kant's position because if we use only the *Critique of Judgment*, then he argues that Kant's theory actually "…entails rather than precludes interest in the object." (1978, 457).

Guyer turns to the second *Critique* in order to make sense of this apparent inconsistency, claiming that in the *Critique of Practical Reason,* Kant defines interest as "an incentive of the will so far as it is presented by reason" (*CPR* 79) and how "a determining ground of the will is also defined as the conception of an object and its relation to the subject, whereby the faculty of desire is determined to seek its realisation." (*CPR* 79, these quotations are translated by Guyer in 1978, 456-457). Guyer argues that this can help us understand the apparent pleasure 'generated' through aesthetic judgments of pure beauty, as it is no longer pleasure resulting from a determinate concept. Since interest (as defined in *CPR*) is determined by concepts to serve an incentive, interest cannot be created in an aesthetic judgment as it does not involve concepts at all. This is to say that Kant is not overly concerned with the feeling of pleasure per se, but rather the relation between this pleasure and our conceptual understanding. Kant maintains that pure aesthetic judgments should be free of any and all conceptual restraints, which includes those that could occur as a 'result' of the actual existence of the object. Kant is concerned that

an aesthetic object ought not to offer a promise of pleasure, primarily because this could, unbeknownst to the subject, influence a determination of beauty. Guyer's point is that interest is essentially linked to concepts, and because concepts are not involved in judgments of pure beauty, interest (of the kind Kant is concerned about) cannot be generated from such judgments. This solution does also help to circumvent the supposed problem of being interested in the continuation of an object, as this could potentially be allowed as long as the kind of interest generated is not determinative, i.e., it does not influence the judgment itself.

On a more technical note, Kant also contends that judgments of beauty only apply to a single object and not a class of objects (§8, 215). For instance, if a tree is judged to be beautiful, this judgment only applies to the first tree, and not all trees; if we were to apply this judgment to other trees, then this would involve reference to a concept, i.e., we would need to refer to the original tree (or a particular class of objects) for comparison. By using the definition provided in *Practical Reason*, Guyer contends that we do not need to deny any of our intuitions about beauty or pleasure, which seems to be entailed from the third *Critique,* i.e., interest is the desire for the continuing existence of an object. Kant does not deny that a type of pleasure results from aesthetic appreciation, but any pleasure ought to be independent of "desires that can be attached to determinate general concepts." (1978, 458). The version of disinterest implied by this addition is necessarily a limited one; however, it does help to overcome some of the limitations of looking to the *Critique of Judgment* alone. It allows for a possibility of pleasure, or even desire for an object's continuation, as long as the judgment is made in a correct manner, and the desire is not based on general concepts but upon an intuition-based upon a singular object.

Perhaps then, the desire for the continuation of an object would only be truly problematic if the desire were based on concepts and/or it was a desire for the continuing existence of an entire class of objects. For instance, if we come to a judgment of beauty about

a particular piece of art, we cannot hold that all artwork depicting similar scenes will be beautiful, and we cannot say that we care for the continued existence of a particular class of artwork. Guyer concludes that there is nothing particularly unKantian about taking pleasure in the beautiful (1978, 458-459) and indeed that, as humans, we do often seek out the fulfilment of this desire, although this desire must be indeterminate if one's aesthetic judgment is to remain pure.

Of course, this argument only works if you are open to using the second *Critique* in order to accurately pinpoint Kant's definition of interest and are also willing to accept that the type of interest Kant discussed in relation to practical reason is the same interest being referred to in the case of aesthetics. The problem in the first place was that Kant says no interest is generated from a pure aesthetic judgment, but on an anecdotal level, interest does seem to be created. In order to explain this in a sympathetic manner, Guyer changes the third *Critique'*s definition of interest from "…what we call the liking we connect with the presentation of an object's existence." (§2, 204) to something along the lines of 'that which we have a determinate desire for its continued existence'. This argument certainly helps to alleviate any pernicious contradictions inherent in Kant's discussion of interest in the aesthetic object, but it also relies on a bait-and-switch that feels a little convoluted. Whilst I agree that relating this discussion back to the issue of determinate and indeterminate concepts helps to emphasise what Kant's intention might have been, it is also completely possible that Kant did not wish to relate aesthetic judgment back to the anecdotal experience of a layperson in all ways, i.e., with reference to a judgment involving interest in *any* way. That being said, Kant does discuss interest relating to aesthetics in a very specific way, i.e., intellectual interest (see Chapter 6.4), where he clearly mentions the possibility of the provocation of indirect interest from pure aesthetic judgments. These judgments are still considered pure because any concept involved must be indeterminant, and any interest generated is indirect – only occurring after the

judgment itself has been made. Ultimately, Kant's solution to the issue of 'zero interest created or destroyed' idea is not going to convince anyone that does not also appreciate the difference between determinate and indeterminate concepts or direct/indirect interest (see Chapter 5). The idea that some interest but not other interest may be generated from a pure judgment of beauty when Kant states otherwise is confusing and something which I believe Kant failed to address explicitly in the third *Critique.*

3.6 Singular vs general judgments

It is necessary here to address a point of concern regarding Kant's distinction between the making of singular and general judgments. Kant demands that judgments of taste make no reference to concepts and that judgments can only apply to an instance of singular beauty: this appears to contravene the way we tend to think about beauty. When describing a rose as beautiful, I usually mean two things, first that this individual rose is beautiful, and second, that other roses of a similar appearance are beautiful too. Whilst I may be directly referring to a single rose, I am also making an implicit statement about roses in a more general sense. This leap from a singular rose to a more general 'class' of roses is classified by Kant as going from an aesthetic judgment to a logical one (§8). To confuse matters slightly, Kant also states that this logical judgment is derived or based upon a number of singular aesthetic judgments (§8, 215). Ted Cohen discusses his concerns about this issue in 'Three Problems in Kant's Aesthetics' (2002), where he also draws attention to the lack of clarity regarding the symbolism of beauty, but here I am going to focus on the discussion of singular vs logical judgments. According to Kant:

> I compare many singular roses and so arrive at the judgment, Roses in general are beautiful, then my judgment is no longer merely aesthetic, but is a logical judgment based on an aesthetic one. (§8, 215).

Kant's theory of taste implies that we cannot let a singular judgment of beauty apply to an entire class of objects. Or rather, that this type of judgment, when made, cannot be considered a purely aesthetic one. Cohen notes that Kant goes from a judgment of taste to a logical judgment (2002, 5); whilst 'this rose is beautiful' is a singular judgment, 'all roses are beautiful' is a general logical one. Cohen claims that this is impossible since Kant cannot get from an aesthetic judgment which by necessity is free of determinate concepts, to a logical judgment that is necessarily concept-dependent. Cohen claims that this can be illustrated in the following way:
I. R1 is P. [Rose #1 has petals], R2 is P, . . . , Rn is P.

Therefore, Rs in general are P.

Since judgments of beauty follow the same logic, Cohen posits that:

II. R1 is B. [Rose #1 is beautiful], R2 is B, . . . , Rn is B.

Therefore, Rs in general are B.

However, according to Cohen, these two instances are not comparable, and the conflation of the two by Kant is an example of high-order 'sloppiness' (2002, 6). Cohen argues that the first generalisation is perfectly legitimate because, in each instance (R1, R2, R3, etc.,) P represents the same predicate concept, i.e., petals. By contrast, in the second generalisation, B is unable to stand for any determinate concept since each instance of judging B is an independent judgment of taste, which according to Kant, must be disinterested (especially in terms of the absence of conceptual influence). Cohen maintains that if B does stand for the same thing in each instance (and is not just a logical mistake), then there really is no reason to claim that the premises are aesthetically based, whilst the conclusion is logical: since both the premises and the conclusion would be based on concepts. In other words, "…the premises will be on a par, epistemologically, with the conclusion." (2002, 7), as nothing new seems to be generated in the conclusion. Cohen maintains that stating 'all Rs are B' is the same as simply saying that: R1 is

B, R2 is B, R3 is B, etc., and thus there is no need to make the distinction between aesthetic and logical judgments. If this were true, then why bother with aesthetic judgments at all if they are really just logical judgments in disguise?[77]

An alternative approach to this issue is presented in Townsend's response to Cohen's original paper. In it, he argues that much of Cohen's criticism stems from a translation issue in Werner Pluhar's translation of *The Critique of Judgment* (2003, 76). As previously mentioned, Kant states that the logical judgment is *based upon* the aesthetic judgment (ibid.,), Nevertheless, Townsend believes that Cohen's objection to this is based upon a misunderstanding. In the Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews translation, the wording is far more literal and is less prone to misinterpretation:

> By contrast, the judgement that arises from the comparison of many singular ones, that roses, in general, are beautiful, is no longer pronounced merely as an aesthetic judgement but as an aesthetically grounded logical judgement (2000, 100).

Pluhar's 'misleading' translation leaves it open to misinterpretation, whereas the above translation makes it clear that we are not simply basing the logical (general) judgment on the aesthetic (singular) judgments.[78] The conclusion is not a repeat of the premises, and it does not contradict the requirement for disinterestedness whilst making a judgment of taste. Instead, Kant's discussion of singular vs general judgments is meant to illustrate the difference between saying 'This rose is beautiful.' which Kant categorises as a purely aesthetic judgment and

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[77] One potential way of addressing this, which Cohen mentions but then fails to elaborate on, is the adaptation of an insight from J.L. Austin, regarding 'performative utterances' (2002, 7). Austin himself, eventually abandoned the idea, but Cohen (in discussion with Miles Rind) believes that it still may help to shed light on this issue within Kant. Possibly by helping to make explicit "what act is being performed by the judge" in order to "understand its function in the conclusion to be to describe the acts indicated in the premises". Of course, this line of enquiry is dependent upon the idea that Kant does not make a logical mistake, Cohen is not of this opinion, and, as such, does not pursue this further.

[78] The German passage reads: Dagegen ist das Urtheil, welches durch Vergleichung vieler einzelnen entspringt: die Rosen überhaupt sind schön, nunmehr nicht bloss als ästhetisches, sondern als ein aus einem ästhetischen gegründetes logisches Urtheil ausgesagt. Kant's gesammelte Schriften (1913, §8, 215).

saying: ‘All roses, in general, are beautiful.’ which is a logical judgment that is grounded in an

aesthetic one. Kant’s entire point in §8 of the third *Critique* is to explain why general judgments of beauty are not pure judgments of taste. Cohen’s objections would be far more damaging if Kant claimed that they were one and the same, but as it is, Kant does nothing of the sort. To reiterate, judgments of taste are singular, disinterested, and they have the potential to be universalised. We can think of them as beauty ‘proper’, whereas logical judgments are general, rely upon the comparison of several singular judgments and are not pure aesthetical judgments.[79] The former requires only an individual’s experience, but the latter requires the use of concepts, making it an interested judgment and not something relevant to the rest of our analysis.

3.7 Universality and the symbol of moral goodness

There remains another obvious cause for concern which we have not yet adequately addressed, that is, how does a feeling result in a judgment which is universally applied when feeling is subjective? Although this does not have a direct impact on the veracity of the notion of disinterest, it does have the potential to undermine Kant’s entire aesthetic theory. Therefore, I will address this concern (albeit briefly). Just as it seems not only counterintuitive but also unnecessary to maintain that interest is not generated in a judgment of the beautiful, the idea that judgments of taste must be universally valid may seem unreasonable too. However, both of these elements are necessary to Kant’s theory of taste, especially concerning the connection between beauty and morality.

[79] Townsend clarifies Cohen’s examples, by stating that it is more accurate to state that “R1 is beautiful’ is compared to ‘R2 is beautiful’ is compared to ‘R3 is beautiful’ . . . is compared to ‘Rn is beautiful’, taking each element as an aesthetic experience that grounds a judgement of taste.” (2003, 77). Townsend’s version of this generalisation emphasises the relational aspect of a logical judgment.

> I maintain that the beautiful is a symbol of the morally good; and only because we refer the beautiful to the morally good naturally (we all do so naturally and require all others also to do so as duty) does our liking of it include a claim to everyone else's assent (§59, 353).

Here I should be more explicit about Kant's understanding of the connection between morality and aesthetics, as it may not be clear why the need for disinterest (and thus universality) is involved with Kant's belief in the connection between beauty and morality. The *Critique of Judgment* marks the completion of Kant's critical work in at least two distinct ways. Firstly, it determines the scope and aims of the faculty of judgment which has its own a priori principle.[80] Secondly, it attempts to unify the freedom of the will with the necessity of nature in a way which, as Kant states: "…concludes the critical enterprise." (Preface to the First Edition of the *Critique of Judgment*, 170). Beauty as the symbol of the morally good (§59, 353) is not (to me at least) an immediately obvious analogy. Certainly, the natural symmetry of beauty and morality lends itself to romantic comparison, but it is not instantly apparent why Kant states not only that beauty is *a* symbol of morality but that it is also *the* symbol.

According to Kant, only free beauty can provoke human intellectual interest in such a way as also to provoke an interest in the morally good. It is nature's purposiveness without purpose, i.e., the ability of nature to look as though it were designed for the purpose of the harmonisation of our faculties, which makes it such an enticing analogy. The apparent 'accidental' agreement

[80] A *Critique* is required of Kant's 'new-found' belief (see Introduction and Chapter 1) in an a priori principle which guides aesthetic judgment, in order to complete his critical work, which left unsubstantiated would simply be a gaping hole for critics to poke at. Although the power of judgment is discussed in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, it is not until the third *Critique* that we see it taken seriously as its own faculty with an a priori principle behind it.

between the beauty of nature and morality, which involves the free play of the faculties of imagination and understanding, provides a sign that nature is not necessarily opposed to the realisation of our moral ideas (§42, 300-301). However, Kant goes further than

simply making a connection between beauty and morality, as he also finds a person's ability to appreciate beautiful and free nature as a good indicator of his or her moral worth: We consider someone's way of thinking to be coarse and ignoble if he has no feeling for beautiful nature (which is what we call the receptivity for an interest in contemplating nature) and sticks to the enjoyments of mere sense that he gets from meals or the bottle (§42, 303).

Judgments of the morally good differ in a few key respects; for instance, the beauty we like directly, as opposed to being based on a concept; it is also not connected to any interest, whereas a judgment of the morally good does have a relation to interest (but only insofar as it is produced by the judgment and does not precede it). The main difference between moral judgment and one of beauty is that the former is both objective and universally valid, whereas the latter, although still universally valid, is based upon a subjective principle. Moral judgments are universally valid in part because they are able to draw on determinate concepts (not only subjective mental states), meaning that the type of universality implied is valid for all subjects in all instances (§59, 354). In light of these differences, it is difficult to see why Kant chose beauty as *the* symbol of the morally good.[81] Cohen's analysis of the issue focuses on the

[81] In other words, the main difference between the two forms of judgment is that moral judgments are not conceptfree, but the similarity is that they shared a sense of disinterest. In refusing to base judgments on potential agreeableness; both aesthetic and moral judgments are similarly inclined. Therefore, an inability to appreciate beauty (notice that Kant speaks of beauty and not of aesthetic judgment in general) perhaps denotes a lack of propensity or sensitivity to moral thought and action.

technicality of indirect and direct presentations of concepts.

According to Kant, a symbol is used to describe an indirect representation of a concept (Kant via Cohen's interpretation). More specifically, Kant makes a distinction between symbols and schemata, the former being indirect presentations of concepts, the latter direct

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(§59, 352). Symbolic exhibition makes use of an analogy by applying the concept of an object of 'sensible intuition' and then applying the rule of such an intuition to a different object. Kant illustrates this idea by comparing a hand mill to a despotic state. Whilst there is no direct similarity between the two things, there are similarities between how the two operate, i.e., as a mere machine. Therefore, a hand mill serves as a symbol of a despotic state by way of an analogy, i.e., it contains a symbol of the original concept, which we can reflect upon. Cohen is rightly critical of the way in which Kant uses the example of the hand mill to illustrate that it is *a* symbol of a despotic state and yet refers to beauty as *the* one and only symbol of the morally good, apparently to the exclusion of anything else.

> Even if it made sense to say that beauty symbolizes morality, Kant would still be overstating the point […;] if it makes sense to call beauty a symbol of morality, there is no reason to call it *the* symbol (2002, 12).

Even so, Cohen appears to be missing the point; to my understanding, one of the main reasons why Kant goes to such lengths to justify the subjective universality of taste and the importance of disinterest is that he is trying to connect beauty to the morally good. Now, this may be a tenuous connection, and Kant is quick to acknowledge the differences between the two, but there is no vagueness in Kant's statement about beauty as the symbol of morality. Whilst we may disagree with his argument, it seems disingenuous to accuse him of having no reason at all to call beauty the symbol of the morally good. It is very clear throughout the *Critique of*

Judgment, perhaps at times too clear, that Kant has an ulterior motive (other than a love of aesthetic theory) for writing the third *Critique*. It should be clear to even a cursory reader that there is something significant about Kant's insistence on the symbolic nature of the relationship between beauty and morality. Beauty is the symbol of the morally good for a crucial reason: it is an 'example' of the way in which it is possible to like something freely without a basis in mere charm (§59, 354). Kant maintains that taste allows us to make the change from sensible charm to moral interest, without it being too 'violent' of a leap: there is something in our response to the beautiful, which is analogous to the response, i.e., the mental state, produced by moral judgments. Kant views taste as a physical representation of moral ideas, and it is for this reason that a universally (subjectively based) valid judgment of beauty is necessary, and for this reason that it must be disinterested. Aesthetic response is perhaps best thought of as a tuning fork to our moral sensibilities since experiencing and judging beauty increases our moral awareness and makes us more receptive to moral ideas (§60, 356). Now that I have addressed why Kant makes such intuitively difficult statements about the nature of aesthetic judgments of the beautiful, I will turn to Kant's justification of subjectively based yet universally valid aesthetic judgments and their relation to standards of beauty.

3.8 Subjective universalism and beauty standards

Kant cannot (and does not) demand that judgments of beauty be objectively based, but he does maintain that because the methods of coming to a judgment are common to all and do not rely on any private intuitions, they can be deemed universally valid. The experience of beauty is universally felt as satisfying, which suggests a type of objectivity (or intersubjectivity) in spite of the fact that individual experiences of beauty may be responses to different objects. Aesthetic judgments are both universal and necessary, but Kant cannot argue in favour of either a practical or theoretical justification. The justification of aesthetic pleasure and the universality of taste must be based solely in the realm of the aesthetic, without references to concepts

contained elsewhere. As mentioned earlier, the common sense (sensus communis) available to all is an important aspect of justifying the universal nature of aesthetic judgment.

> In all judgments by which we declare something to be beautiful, we allow no one to be of a different opinion, without, however, grounding our judgment on concepts, but only on our feeling, which we, therefore, make our ground not as a private feeling, but as a common sense (§21, 239).

Since all humans have access to the faculties involved in the free play created in the judging of beauty, it is universally available, but Kant maintains that it is universally communicable too. This does not mean that everyone will agree with our judgment, but, according to Kant, they ought to agree with our judgment. This is because judgments of aesthetic beauty are based upon objective mental processes; therefore, they must be communicable too, for otherwise, they would have no correspondence with the object: they would all be a merely subjective play of the powers of representation, just as scepticism insists. (§20, 238).

When there is disagreement about a judgment, this may lead us to think that it cannot be universally acknowledged, perhaps even that Kant has made a logical error somewhere between the making of a judgment and applying it universally. However, as we have seen, Kant's theory does not rule out the possibility for a difference of opinion, although Kant does claim that these differences should technically not occur if judgments were subsumed correctly (§19, 237). Most differences of aesthetic judgments are a result of improperly approaching an object, which generally invalidates any claim towards it being a universal judgment of taste, i.e., if one is not disinterested, or if one is judging the goodness or agreeableness of an object instead of making a judgment of beauty. When Kant claims that judgments of taste demand universal assent, he is not naïvely expecting a sameness of opinion regarding all matters of taste; attempting to find a universally objective basis for determining what is and what is not

beautiful is de facto impossible. Whilst there is no objective standard of taste, the pleasure or satisfaction attending the observation of the object is universally available and communicable since we expect others to experience the same accompanying sensations when aesthetically evaluating the same object.

However, because we do 'universally' have the capacity to experience and judge beauty, it is often the case that certain forms of an aesthetic object can be agreed upon as beautiful, or rather, the attendant feeling created in an experience of judging the beautiful. Kant argues that this is why some products of taste can be regarded as exemplary (§17, 232), although one cannot 'imitate' the taste of someone else since it is something which comes only through one's own feeling of pleasure generated in the presentation of the object, "I must feel the pleasure directly in my presentation of the object, and I cannot be talked into that pleasure by means of any bases of proof." (§35, 287). In spite of this, it is still possible to have an ideal of beauty or an ultimate standard of taste (§12, 223). Although this claim may sound a lot like Kant's attempting backtracking on the prior claim that a judgment of taste should contain no reference to concepts, it is not so cut and dry. In order to keep this from becoming a contradiction, Kant is keen to make it clear that whilst there can be no objective standard for saying this-or-that is beautiful, there is a type of agreement regarding an ideal beauty based upon the way judgments are made (in the same way that they can be subjectively universal). When a person makes an aesthetic judgment by removing all subjective preferences and interferences, they can achieve a certain level of freedom, and it is almost as if they are able to speak for all of humankind.

> Of whose judgment I here offer my judgment of taste as an example and on an account of which I ascribe exemplary validity to it, is a merely ideal norm, under the presupposition of which one could rightfully make a judgment that agrees with it and the satisfaction in an object that is expressed in it into a rule for everyone. (§5, 239)

There might, however, be a temptation to misinterpret or take out of context Kant's discussion of 'ideal beauty'. With regards to a judgment of beauty, the 'exemplary' does not provide any specific rule to follow in order to judge correctly, but it does create a standard that might be used to distinguish between good and bad judgments (at least in regard to the human form). It is important to point out, for fear of misinterpretation, that, when Kant speaks of ideal beauty, he very pointedly refers only to 'man' as being capable of an ideal of beauty (§17, 233).

Furthermore, an ideal of beauty by definition refers to a very particular concept (in Kant's terminology, this would be a fixed rather than vague version of beauty) of an object, meaning that this type of beauty cannot belong to the category of a pure judgment of taste (§16-17, 232233). An ideal of beauty must be governed by determinate concepts; hence there not being an ideal beauty for flowers, but instead only "…that which has the purpose of its existence within itself – man." can admit to an ideal of beauty (§17, 233). For the sake of relevancy, I will refrain from pursuing (in-depth) this line of enquiry; instead, I will emphasise the way in which Kant's discussion of ideal beauty continues to underline the connection between morality and beauty.

Kant distinguishes the ideal of beauty from the 'standard idea of beauty', or rather, he makes the distinction between two component parts of the ideal: the standard idea, and rational idea, both play an important role in this concept. The standard idea of beauty manifests itself as a kind of 'averaging' process; through the use of personal intuition, one can determine whether a person fits within the accepted average of beauty, in the sense that they "do[es] not contradict any of the conditions under which alone a thing of this kind can be beautiful." (§17, 235). The standard idea of beauty for a human, will, however, be different depending upon the cultural reference points available to an individual. Kant maintains, therefore, that an African, Chinese and European person will have three different standard ideas of beauty (of the human form), specifically because it is based upon experience (§17, 234). The second part of an ideal of

beauty (alongside the standard idea) is the rational aspect: Kant maintains that by using only the standard idea of beauty, one can generate only a negative type of liking, whereas the more rational element involves the recognition of the 'expression of the moral' (§17, 235). An ideal of beauty can only be applied to the human figure, but more specifically, the ideal in this figure consists in the expression of the moral (§17, 235), which is the reason that the object pleases universally; if it were not for this moral aspect, the object would not be found universally pleasing:

> …it is true that this visible expression of moral ideas that govern man inwardly can be taken only from experience. Yet these moral ideas must be connected, in the idea of the highest purposiveness, with everything that our reason links with the morally good (235).

The beautiful human form is the only type of fixed standard of beauty because it represents human moral perfection: but this seems a nonsensical claim to make, especially considering that Kant insists on the non-conceptual and disinterested element of judgments of taste. We know that the ideal of beauty observed in the human form is correct, as it does not rely on the realm of the sensible or that which merely charms (§17, 236). This judgment cannot be considered as a pure aesthetic judgment since it is not disinterested, but it does link closely with moral judgment. The term beauty is often used to describe not only a person's physical appearance but their moral goodness. Throughout history, there has been a tendency to equate physical beauty with inner beauty, as though external beauty is the mark of a good soul. Zuckert describes this as the 'beauty is good' stereotype (2005, 108), which can be seen in (for instance) religious iconography.[82] For Kant, beauty symbolises moral goodness (at least in part) because of its ability to parallel the perfection of moral character. One concern regarding this

[82] The Virgin Mary is routinely portrayed as beautiful, whereas demons, the Devil, and Judas as hideous. Zuckert points out that in contemporary cinema, the 'good guys' can most often be distinguished from the 'bad guys' based solely upon appearance (2005, 108).

interpretation of Kant, and in fact, this entire section of the *Critique of Judgment* (§17), is that it appears to contradict the spirit (if not the letter) of much of the *Critique*. Elsewhere, Kant insists that judgments ought to be made without interest, including moral interest, but Kant seems to contradict his claim that disinterestedness is necessary for judgments of taste, in making the ideal of beauty, reliant on an interest in morality.

Although Kant acknowledges the interested nature of this type of beauty, it is not obvious why he should argue for an ideal kind of beauty, which is far from easy to justify and ultimately requires much more discussion than the limited argument which Kant provides. For the purposes of this chapter, further analysis of this issue would take us away from my objective here, i.e., to understand Kant's position and motivation for the necessity of disinterest in judgments of taste. It is important to note that the section in which Kant discusses the ideal human form does not form a part of his aesthetic deduction and would not be regarded as a judgment of pure or free beauty. Since the argument for an ideal form of beauty does not form part of Kant's 'doctrine of disinterestedness' it is not entirely relevant to my current aims in this chapter, but it does highlight the connection which Kant makes between beauty and morality: it also provides further illumination upon the symbolic nature of this connection, and the importance of this within the third *Critique*.

3.9 Conclusion

Now that I have gone some way towards illustrating why disinterest plays such an important role for Kant in a pure judgment of taste and the links between moral goodness and beauty, I will go on to consider problems with the notion of disinterest. In this chapter, I have expanded upon the role of disinterest within Kant's deduction, highlighting both its necessity (for Kant) and some of the less obvious issues with the notion taking such a prominent place in the third

Critique, i.e., what exactly it entails and how it can be justified. I have also drawn attention to the potential connections between disinterest (and aesthetic judgment generally) with moral judgment and the importance of understanding a little of Kant's approaches to morality in order to fully appreciate the role of aesthetic judgment in completing his Critical project.

To be clear, my aim in this thesis is to both illustrate the flaws of Kant's deduction of taste and to explore the potential connections between elements of Kantian aesthetics (specific to the deduction) and the environment. Thus, in the next chapter, I will further consider the role of disinterestedness in aesthetic judgment by underscoring the importance of disinterest in environmental aesthetics. I will begin to consider how Kant's aesthetics can be used as a springboard to discuss ecoaesthetics and why disinterest may be problematic in practical application. I will demonstrate how disinterest adds a useful dimension to ecoaesthetics whilst also showing why it has limitations – both as a 'concept' itself and in its broader application.

Chapter 4: The problem of disinterest and its usefulness for environmental aesthetics

4.1 Chapter Summary

To answer the questions set out in the Introduction (in this case, I refer to question 1/a) concerning the success of Kant's deduction, I must first examine the nature of the deduction in the first instance. In the previous chapter, I illustrated the role of disinterest in Kant's aesthetic deduction, explaining why its role in the third *Critique* is so crucial to Kant's interpretation of the deduction as successful. Primarily, disinterest helps to ensure the necessary quality of a pure aesthetic judgment. Disinterested aesthetic judgment helps to ensure the purity of such a judgment by side-lining selfish interest and desire for the aesthetic object in order to provide the best possible basis for forming an aesthetic judgment. In this chapter, I will be continuing to consider the role of disinterest, addressing concerns about both the notion itself and its applicability to the environment. The potential usefulness of aesthetic disinterest in the realm of ecoaesthetics will help to support my overall thesis aims, as I illustrate the severe limitations (and eventual failure) of Kant's aesthetic deduction as well as the potential for some of the notions within Kantian aesthetics to be either extremely helpful to environmental aesthetics or (at the very least) serve as a useful starting point for further discussion. This chapter is needed to move forward in addressing whether Kant's deduction is successful and especially whether disinterest has applicability within ecoaesthetics. In this chapter, I argue that the notion of disinterest helps navigate the complexities of environmental decision-making, albeit in a limited manner. I will address three central objections to utilising disinterest in environmental ethics before illustrating how Kant's version of the concept can overcome these challenges. The

Critique of Aesthetic Judgment offers several resources for dealing with the problems of passivity, detachment, subjectivity and potential universality (or lack thereof).[83] I will argue

for the necessity of problematising the notion of disinterest, with a view to both expanding its potential usage beyond Kantian aesthetics and recognising that some of its flaws may lead to a partial rejection of the notion: if it is to be useful as a Kantian tool in tackling the global problems caused by the climate crisis. However, this should not prevent it from being useful to ecoaesthetics and environmental ethics more broadly construed.

Kant's use of disinterest has a significant role in his third *Critique*, helping to ground Kant's philosophy of beauty, which, in turn, plays directly into his Critical philosophy of morality. However, this chapter will not focus on the analogous relationship between beauty and morality in Kant's work, as mentioned in the previous chapter: Kant places great emphasis on this connection, maintaining that the beautiful is a symbol of the morally good (§59, 353 *Critique of Judgment*). Instead, my aim here is to elucidate upon Kant's use of disinterest in order to determine whether its flaws outweigh the usefulness of its application in ecoaesthetics, or indeed, whether disinterest is comprehensible in the first place. The growing literature in environmental aesthetics beginning in the early-to-mid 1990s has led to a resurgence of concern in the notion of disinterest as applied to the environment. This chapter will explore the nature of Kantian disinterest and why it is relevant to environmental ethics by examining some of the most common misconceptions and objections to the application of aesthetic disinterest to instances of both art and non-human nature.

[83] This chapter will focus on how these issues relate to making environmental decisions and the applicability of disinterested aesthetic judgment to these decisions. See Chapter 5 and 6 for more detail on the potential objectivity/subjectivity and universality of a judgment of taste and their part in the success of Kant's aesthetic deduction.

4.2 Interest, nature and beauty

Taking an interest in the environment often feels like the most 'natural' thing in the world, but there are many circumstances where interest can play a detrimental and even damaging role in the making of environmental decisions.[84] On the most basic level, taking an interest in an object of aesthetic contemplation, which can result from subconscious self-interested desire, is a problematic foundation for making environmental judgments. Parts of nature that display attributes found interesting to humans are more likely to be protected, whereas other 'less interesting' parts are ignored or exploited. Being able to take interest out of such judgments (to whatever extent this is possible) would help to make them less self-interested and subjective, which, in terms of the environment, has the potential to be enormously beneficial. Although Kant often gives examples of nature throughout his discussion of beauty, it is undoubtedly not with the aim of helping to guide decisions about the environment. Instead, Kant's interest lies in illustrating the correct procedure for making pure aesthetic judgments, whether these are of natural or artistic origins. Kant's problem with the inclusion of interest in aesthetic judgments lies in its ability to sway the purity of the process, making an aesthetic judgment no more valuable than making a statement about whether or not you find something agreeable.[85]

Influenced by the works of early aestheticians, the notion of aesthetic disinterest has played an essential part in aesthetics for several hundred years. However, it is Kant's version of disinterest that has had the most influence on modern-day aesthetic literature:

[84] The connection between interest and beauty remains one of concern, especially since focusing on the beautiful can yield shallow aesthetic judgments and result in inappropriate environmental decisions. Focusing on beauty to the detriment of all else often means overlooking beneficial instances of non-beauty (or even ugliness) and harmful examples of beauty (Kings, 2020).

[85] Concerning interest more generally see Chapter 3.2 for discussion on the distinction between pure and impure beauty. Judgments about beauty which involves interest are classed as impure, however (according to Kant) they can still refer to objects which are beautiful – they will just be an impure type of beauty instead of pure.

> [O]nly the liking for taste in the beautiful is disinterested and free; since we are not compelled to give our approval by an interest, whether of sense or reason. Taste is the ability to judge an object, or a way of presenting it […] devoid of all interest. The object of such a liking is called beautiful (Part 1, §5, 210-211).

While disinterest plays a pivotal role in making aesthetic judgments, it also presents itself as one of the most head-scratching additions to Kant's aesthetic theory. Of course, it is easy to see why making a negative judgment about a piece of art or nature simply because you are having

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a bad day might be an inappropriate approach to making an aesthetic judgment. Nevertheless, insisting upon the inclusion of a 'disinterest clause' into every instance of aesthetic appreciation may place an unnecessarily high burden on the subject, making true Kantian aesthetic judgments difficult, if not impossible, to achieve. However, the usefulness of Kant's theory of aesthetic disinterest and its potential import to environmental aesthetics rests upon understanding the role and requirements of disinterested judgment, which after further examination, may reveal themselves to be less philosophically demanding than they at first appear.

Before it is possible to determine the extent to which aesthetic disinterest can and ought to be applied to environmental ethics and how it can help promote the protection of nature, it is necessary to address some of the most popular misconceptions surrounding the idea of disinterest, as well as some of the stickier issues which have plagued the concept. One of the primary misunderstandings about aesthetic disinterest regards the common use of the word disinterest to connote a lack of interest in something. To state that one is disinterested is often (mis)understood as meaning that a person holds no interest in or does not care about a particular issue or entity. This misunderstanding has influenced some of the discussion surrounding aesthetic disinterest, especially as it pertains to environmental ethics, where a lack of care and

interest in nature has had less than desirable consequences. Understandably, environmental ethicists are eager to avoid using theoretical tools which could lead to further passivity and distancing from the environment, but the extent to which disinterest calls for such distancing can be brought into doubt. Whilst much of the misinterpretation of 'aesthetic disinterest' has been resolved, there remain issues, particularly regarding the accusation of passivity and distancing.[86]

4.3 Misconceptions about aesthetic disinterest: The myth

George Dickie vigorously addresses the 'myth' of the aesthetic attitude in a 1964 chapter with the same name, in which he simultaneously attacks the notions of disinterestedness and physical distancing.[87] Dickie's understanding of aesthetic disinterest, which is based upon Jerome Stolnitz's (1960) use of the term, refers only to aesthetic attitude towards various forms of art: either painting, music, poetry, theatre etc., and is not applied to nature.[88] Despite focusing on artistic beauty, Dickie's critique gets to the very core of the debate surrounding aesthetic disinterest, allowing for a thorough analysis of the issues involved. Dickie is fundamentally concerned with the 'confusion' surrounding aesthetic attitude and the creation of a myth which, whilst at one time may have helped move aesthetics away from a sole concern with beauty (1964, 56), has now run its course in terms of the usefulness it can provide. Dickie's critique revolves around his belief that 'aesthetic attitude' is not a special type of attention but rather an example of inattention to the aesthetic object.

[86] Here it is important, to make clear that there are different levels of disinterest which can be endorsed. An extremely strong version of aesthetic disinterest may well preclude the possibility of interest in the subject of
[87] The theory of physical distancing as employed by Edward Bullough (1912) and defended by Sheila Dawson (1961).
[88] Stolnitz defines aesthetic attitude as disinterested and sympathetic attention to, without ulterior purpose and on its own terms otherwise known as intransitive vivas (Stolnitz 1960, 35-39).

Dickie argues that in order to understand what I mean by saying 'I walked quickly', you must also have an understanding of what it would mean if I said, 'I walked slowly'. The same, he believes, is true for the notion of disinterested contemplation. To understand what is meant by disinterested, we must first have a conception of what is meant by viewing something interestedly. Perhaps this is better understood as a criticism when it is in relation to art and not nature. What do we mean when we say that we look at a piece of art or watch a play interestedly? Here, it is essential to refer back to our definition of disinterestedness, which is characterised not by a complete withdrawal of self or lack of interest in the piece of artwork.

contemplation, but this is not the generally accepted version of disinterested judgment, and for the sake of argument (and brevity) I will not attend to those differing accounts here.
Instead, it is experiencing the work devoid of self-interested desire or, in Stolnitz's terms, viewing it on its own terms, with no ulterior purpose.[89]

When a person goes to a gallery and stands in front of a painting only for them to realise that the subject of the painting looks enormously like a good friend and they start reminiscing about their friend, Dickie believes that they fail to have an 'interested judgment' because it is in fact, just a type of inattention/distraction and that, as such, 'attitude-aestheticians' referring to aesthetic disinterest must be mistaken since there is no special kind of aesthetic attention to speak of, or to contrast this so-called disinterested attention with (1964, 58). The main issue here is that Dickie believes that this is an example, which an 'attitude-aesthetician' would use to illustrate aesthetic interest. He erects a strawman in order to illustrate that an apparently 'interested aesthetic attitude' is nothing more than a distracted subject. He conflates distraction with interest and then accuses the proponents of disinterest of not being capable of

[89] Schopenhauer perhaps held the strongest form of disinterest, which advocated contemplation completely devoid of desire, to promote will-lessness (1969). It is this ascetic version of disinterest which is so strongly criticised by Nietzsche, who is himself committed to a version of disinterest (Rausch), despite his criticism of the notion of disinterest (1971).

distinguishing between the two.[90] I would agree that the example given is an instance of distraction, but not one that would invalidate the idea of disinterest.

At another point, Dickie refers to an example of distancing given by Bullough about a jealous man attending a performance of Othello (56-57).[91] I will adapt this to suit my discussion of aesthetic disinterest, rather than referring to psychical distancing, as the example is applicable to both types of aesthetic attitudes. In the original example discussed by Bullough

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and Sheila Dawson, the man is 'under-distancing' himself from the production of Othello because he is only able to keep his attention on the performance due to his own jealousy of his wife's suspicious behaviour. In this instance, the man is too involved with a specific aspect of the performance to make a fair assessment of the play. In other words, the man's interest incapacitates his ability to make a disinterested judgment of the aesthetic 'object' in question.

Just as Dickie argued that the example of the interested gallery observer is really an example of distraction; he also argues that being over-, or under-distanced from the play is not a sign of 'interest' per se, but rather a sign of being more or less attentive, and is, therefore, a case of simple distraction. Dickie could have used the same example to criticise aesthetic disinterest, but in the case of the jealous husband watching Othello, this would either be a case of simple distraction or an example of interested judgment (and not over- or under-distancing). If the jealous husband is thinking about his wife and her potential lover during the play, it would likely be a case of inattention. However, it would be the opposite of disinterested judgment if

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[90] Whilst I do not take Kant to be a true aesthetic attitude theorist, in the sense that we can conjure up an aesthetic attitude whenever we need to judge or appreciate an aesthetic object i.e., if we approach an object with an aesthetic attitude then the object becomes aesthetic. However, there is no doubt in my mind that Kant involves the aesthetic attitude within the third *Critique* and that having a specific aesthetic attitude towards aesthetic objects is an essential feature of the aesthetic deduction.

[91] This is part of Dickie's critique of Bullough's theory of aesthetic distance as a defining feature of the aesthetic attitude but is applicable to his criticisms of aesthetic disinterest. It is also an example of how Dickie's argument misrepresents the issue of aesthetic attitude and fails to critique the fully developed version of the arguments in favour of such an attitude.

the husband's opinion of the play or its performance was influenced primarily by thinking about his wife and her potential lover, e.g., he thought the actress playing Desdemona was not very good, or if he walked out of the theatre half-way through because he despised the subject matter.

Dickie would (I presume) claim that the above example is not about interest/disinterest but rather about lack of attention to and distraction from the play. Since there is no special phenomenological aesthetic experience, certainly not one which involves aesthetic disinterest, interested judgments are simply instances of distraction and not in opposition to a specifically disinterested consciousness.[92] This is not, by necessity, correct. I certainly do not think that the

concept is flawless, but that Dickie's representation of it does not fairly reflect the full workings of the idea. The example of the jealous man does not need to be an example of inattention; of course, it could be – certainly, Dickie assumes this scenario for the benefit of his argument, without attending to the alternative. For the sake of argument, let us say that the husband is incredibly interested in the play but draws conclusions about its merits and the individual performances based upon his own selfish desires and concerns. When we say that a person is having an 'aesthetic experience', is this really what we have in mind? Or do we (even if we do not realise it at the time) have some other requirement? Dickie argues that there is no such thing as a kind of 'special attention' to art objects and that all we really mean by interest/disinterest is simply whether the play/painting/poem is being attended to or not.[93] If the aesthetic attitude is to be likened to whether or not an object is being attended to, then aesthetic disinterest

[92] Dickie's interpretation also does not seem to take account of situations where interested judgment is insufficient for aesthetic experience. Anecdotal evidence suggests that it is possible to 'miss something' but not because we are not paying attention/attending to the object.

[93] Stolnitz refers to this as the "…the attitude of practical perception." (1960,18).

represents an empty and replaceable concept, as we can just replace the idea with attention/lack of distraction.

Dickie assumes that merely being able to pay attention to a work of art can be enough to result in an aesthetic judgment, but this seems at odds with his conclusion that no special mode of attention is required for aesthetic judgment. Especially as this form of attention to artwork seems to suggest that it actually is the kind of special attention which Dickie is keen to reject. Dickie rejects not only disinterest but also the idea of the aesthetic attitude and aesthetic appreciation altogether, based primarily upon a misunderstanding of the concept as he finds it in Stolnitz's work. Reducing disinterest to the notorious 'blank-cow like stare' (see Brady 1998, 2003), which characterises so much of the criticism of aesthetic disinterest, misses an essential part of Stolnitz's interpretation of this concept.

Importantly, Stolnitz does not claim that there is a specific quale related to aesthetic attention, which is disinterest, but rather that aesthetic attention comes with a kind of motivation different to our motivation when we look at something in a non-aesthetic manner. Central to Stolnitz's interpretation of aesthetic disinterest is the idea of viewing the object on its own terms, and, in order for this to occur, disinterest requires an element of sympathetic attention. Here, Stolnitz uses the term sympathy to refer "…to the way in which we prepare ourselves to respond to the object…" (1960, 21). If we are to appreciate it, we must accept the object "on its own terms." (Ibid.,). The idea of sympathetic attention and disinterest appear to offer conflicting approaches, but, if one understands Stolnitz's version of disinterest as a way of approaching an object, rather than an experience produced by the object, then the two elements of aesthetic attitude not only co-exist but also depend upon each other for a full

realisation of aesthetic consciousness. To be more precise, sympathetic attention requires that the subject approaches the 'art' in a way that would allow the work to be appreciated, not only devoid of self-interested desire but also on its own terms. If one attends a play or visits an exhibition but refuses to 'enter' into the particular world of that artwork by not approaching the exhibits or play sympathetically, for instance, if you are not able to suspend your sense of disbelief due to the 'silliness of the play' – then your aesthetic experience is likely to be nearimpossible, or at best greatly diminished. The role of sympathy in Stolnitz's account of aesthetic consciousness is mostly disregarded by Dickie, who focuses his critique on a half-developed version of aesthetic disinterest.

However, Dickie is correct in claiming that drawing a conclusion about one type of art and *assuming* that it will hold true for all of the arts (1964, 65) is a recipe for epistemic disaster. One of the reasons certain concepts fail is because they are applied beyond the parameters by which they can possibly be successful. However, in the case of disinterest (and sympathetic attention), nobody is merely assuming that it has application value beyond the particular.

Instead (in a very unKantian fashion), this is being tested out in other fields for its ability to help in the making of more reliable and epistemologically sound judgment-making. Whilst Dickie maintains that aesthetic disinterest *might* only be applied to music, Stolnitz's account makes clear that disinterest can be applied to both art and non-art objects alike (Stolnitz 1960, 24). In looking interestedly at a grandfather clock, for instance, I am looking at it only to determine the time, whereas taking a disinterested approach would involve taking in its distinctive structure, shape, colouring and perhaps admiring the beauty of the clock itself. There

is nothing inherent within the concept of aesthetic disinterest, which would preclude its application to the way we approach other non-art objects, including the natural environment.[94]

4.4 Dickie and Kantian disinterest

As an objection to Kantian disinterest (as opposed to Stolnitz's), Dickie's critique also fails to find its mark. The idea that interest/disinterest is simply coding for attention/inattention does not make sense within the context of the *Critique of Judgment.* Kant takes for granted that the person making a pure aesthetic judgment is adequately attending to the aesthetic object in question. By definition, when a pure aesthetic judgment is made, it is based upon the universally communicable feeling of pleasure generated by one's faculties in relation to said object. In order to be considered as a purely aesthetic judgment, one must have attended to the aesthetic object in the proper fashion, i.e., disinterestedly. An improper level of attention would never be able to generate a pure judgment of beauty, as attention on the object is an unwritten prerequisite for such a judgment in the first place.

Kant does not consider types of distraction or inattention specifically, but in a later section of the third *Critique*, Kant does make a brief comment on the nature of Muzak (background or elevator music) played for the enjoyment of guests at a dinner table or feast.

Of course, such music is relegated to background noise in favour of dinner conversations with fellow guests, so no one is "…paying the slightest attention to the music." (§44, 305-306). The music is simply being used to fill in gaps between conversation and to provoke a cheerful atmosphere; anyone capable of appreciating the music is currently distracted with (hopefully) good food, good wine and good company. This lack of attention precludes the possibility of a pure aesthetic judgment (i.e., an assessment of free beauty) or, more accurately, it fails to even

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[94] Of course, one of the chief objects of beauty (especially for Kant) is nature, so it should be immediately apparent why disinterest has a major role to play in ecoaesthetics. However, disinterest could also serve as an important factor in environmental decision making – especially when the decisions relate to the aesthetics of the nature.

reach the necessary first stage of making a pure aesthetic judgment of beauty. As it happens, Kant is using the example of table music to illustrate the difference between agreeable arts and fine arts (with table music being the former). The purpose of such music is merely to fill any silences in conversation and is designed to be effectively ignored by the guests in attendance. If at any point guests do notice the music being played in the background, then the experience would be one of agreeableness rather than a purely formed aesthetic judgment, not least because (in all likelihood) the music is not actually being listened to at all.[95]

Interest (as the opposite of a disinterested judgment) is not simply a case of inattention or distraction. Apart from making little linguistic sense (under Dickie's interpretation, disinterest would counterintuitively be classified as attention and interest as inattention), Dickie's argument fails to grasp that the core use of the term aesthetic disinterest has very little to do with a lack of interest. As is highlighted above, inattention is one reason a judgment would fail to be a properly aesthetic judgment, but this is just one reason of many. The concern shared by many aestheticians (environmental or otherwise) is not that people making aesthetic judgments are distracted, but rather that their interest in an aesthetic object makes it impossible to adopt a mindset of impartiality.[96]

If interest really is equivalent to distraction or inattention, and there is no such thing as an aesthetic attitude, why do we ask our friends to set aside personal and political feelings when making a judgment of taste? If paying attention and avoiding distractions is enough, why do art and movie critics attempt to put aside personal preferences in making a reflective judgment of beauty? When we ask someone whether they find something beautiful, we are not asking

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[95] More precisely speaking, a distracted judgment could still be a type of aesthetic judgment (aesthetic with a lowercase a) but it could not be considered as a pure Kantian judgment of taste.

[96] In the case of Kant's example of table music, the guests would either not notice the music at all or notice the music but only have interest in it with regards to how much or little it contributes to the ambience of the party or event, e.g., is it too loud, brash, quiet, appropriate for all guests etc.,

about their subjective preferences or how agreeable they find the aesthetic object in question, but instead whether simply looking at the object provokes a feeling of pleasure (as promoted by the faculties). Kant maintains this exact point early on in the third *Critique* when he argues for the need for a) a judgment of taste to be separate to a judgment of liking and b) a judgment of taste to be disinterested. Kant argues that disinterest is an intuitive gatekeeping device, which we already use when making aesthetic judgments or asking other people to make aesthetic judgments:

> Suppose someone asks me whether I consider the palace I see before me beautiful. I might reply that I am not fond of things of that sort, made merely to be gaped at […]. The questioner may grant all this and approve of it; but it is not to the point. All he wants to know is whether my mere presentation of the object is accompanied by a liking, no matter how indifferent I may be about the existence of the object of this presentation (§2, 204-205).

Disinterest requires more than simply paying attention to the object. Likewise, a lack of attention is considered just that – a lack of attention – and not an interested judgment. Kant assumes an adequate level of engagement (attention) with the aesthetic object in order to make an aesthetic judgment in the first instance. To reiterate, I do not think that disinterest implies a lack of interest, nor does it refer to the level of inattention/attention from the observer. Disinterest is crucially related to impartiality and the potential for judgments to be subjective yet universally valid. Ultimately, aesthetic judgments have nothing to do with a person's relationship with an aesthetic object and everything to do with how we judge the object through the mere reflection of it.

4.4 Applying disinterest to the environment: detachment

Arnold Berleant is perhaps the most vocal critic of the place of aesthetic disinterest within environmental discourse (1994). His primary concern proceeds from a fear of a method of art

appreciation traditionally reserved for the fine arts becoming the de facto model for appreciating nature. In discussion with Ronald Hepburn, Berleant follows Dickie in his critique of disinterest, noting the supposed separation of subject from object, leading to the potential objectification of nature. Berleant holds that 'the aesthetic' is a distinctive but not separate mode of experience and accuses Hepburn of isolating art from life, detaching the subject from externality, to exist within their own mind. Applying the methodology of the arts to nature results in the privileging of pure contemplation and visual sense-perception, leading to mental and physical distance, detachment and objectification (1994, 244). Berleant's critique focuses on a misrepresentation of disinterestedness, particularly in his characterisation of disinterest's promotion of a detached and passive attitude towards the environment. This misunderstanding stems from a construal of disinterest as it would (more likely) have been referred to in the 18th Century. The version of aesthetic attitude, which those such as Dickie and Berleant find so unappealing, is based upon a 'picturesque' model of the environment, whereby nature would be *literally* viewed as if it were a landscape painting. This is exactly the type of judgment that we ought to avoid and one which is not necessitated by the taking of a disinterested attitude. In fact, an interested attitude is far more likely to foster a detachment or passivity and encourage the assignment of instrumental/amenity value to natural environments.

Rather than restricting the mode of outlook to one's visual experience and reducing nature to its visual appeal, Berleant proposes an 'aesthetics of engagement' which promotes a multi-sensuous approach to nature (1994). Historically speaking, the concept of disinterest has never been defined as a form of pure detachment, but it was used to describe a view found in a particular school of thought endorsing a 'picturesque' model of nature. Berleant presents his aesthetics of engagement as being in direct opposition to a disinterested approach, yet this is based on disinterest as the 'picturesque model' and not as it has come to be understood in the later 20th and 21st Centuries.

In order to make a pure judgment of beauty, Kant argues that we must not care for the object or its continued existence: "In order to play the judge in matters of taste, we must not be in the least biased in favour of the thing's existence but must be wholly indifferent about it." (205). This statement seems to contradict the way advocates of environmental protection would like us to attend to the environment. Usually, appeals are made to proactive engagement and connection with the world – the opposite of indifference. Yet, there is no inherent contradiction between taking a disinterested approach and being actively engaged with the object of one's contemplation: it is certainly not passive and does not require a detached viewpoint.[97] Schopenhauer's version of disinterest is taken to the extreme limit of detachment, but this is an exception (Schopenhauer 1969, p. WWR 2, 5). Kant's own form of disinterested judgment involves the active role of both imagination and understanding in sparking a 'free-play' (otherwise known as the harmony of the faculties) between the two. The idea that one cannot be both disinterested and engaged rests on a fallacy: taking a disinterested approach to artwork or natural environment requires that one's judgment be not primarily motivated by self-concern and partiality, not that one remain passive.

For all his critique, Berleant still commits himself to a type of separation between our appreciation of nature and our appreciation of artwork, noting the distinctive psychological

differences between the two phenomenological experiences. There is something distinctive about the way in which we perceive artwork in order to maximise an aesthetic experience, and it is also entirely possible that we can apply this to the way we view nature.

[97] Allen Carlson (1993) and Emily Brady (2003) have both convincingly rebuked Berleant's critique of aesthetic disinterest, and his belief that one cannot be actively engaged with nature, if taking a disinterested approach towards it. Their papers offer a thorough and decisive examination of the topic, and there is little point in my reiterating them here.

4.5 Subjectivity and disinterest

Closely related to the issue of detachment and passivity is the issue of objectivity within the aesthetic attitude, or rather the lack thereof. This critique rests on the assumption that in order for an aesthetic judgment to be valid, it must be both objective and universal (and also nonpassive). Since a disinterested aesthetic judgment cannot be objective and universal, it cannot be valid and is, therefore, unable to be applied to nature or contribute towards improving humanity's relationship with the environment. The first thing to say here is that the assumption that an aesthetic judgment cannot be valid if not objective, universal, and engaged is not a given.[98] It is also not to be assumed that a 'valid' aesthetic judgment is what we are aiming for in this instance, or that in order for an aesthetically disinterested appreciation of nature to be valuable, it must also fit within a traditionally established framework, e.g., Kant's deduction of taste. The subjectivity of the experience of beauty informs the need to seek other foundations on which to build an ethic of the environment, but if taking a disinterested view of nature is subject to the same relativistic tendency, then how can it be of value to this project? The short answer is that it cannot be of value if it is indeed subject to these same tendencies. The real answer is that it is not subject to the same relativism.

Whilst beauty may well be in the eye of the beholder, disregarding the aesthetic attitude results from misunderstanding the role played by disinterest and asking too much from the concept. Disinterest does not necessitate disengagement or passivity, nor does it require that we are able to separate ourselves entirely from our desires, but only that our interests are

[98] Indeed, Kant's aim throughout the first half of the third *Critique* is to subvert this expectation, by justifying the subjective (yet universal) basis of aesthetic judgments.

backgrounded when contemplating an object aesthetically.[99] The inability to background these desires remains a central concern within the relevant literature, particularly as it pertains to our relationship with the natural environment. However, discounting the aesthetic attitude on this basis represents a failure to engage with the nuances of the concept and its potential value in the application. It is important to distinguish between aesthetic appreciation of art and the aesthetic appreciation of nature. Even if we accept that objectivity is possible within the appreciation of art, this does not mean we can translate this to our appreciation of nature. The 'objectivity problem' is a very serious one for the aesthetic attitude towards the environment, primarily because if we accept that objectivity is not possible in determining what is beautiful (or potentially ugly), we will have no objective aesthetic basis on which to motivate environmental protectionism. However, understanding the level of objectivity required and what we mean by taking an objective stance towards nature (as part of our disinterested account) is necessary if we are to circumvent the objection.

A key component to removing (or at least seriously diminishing the argumentative effect of) the 'subjectivity obstacle' from the environmental aesthetics is showing that some aesthetic responses are more appropriate than others, and thus that there is objectivity in aesthetics – capable of guiding environmental decisions. The relativist account of environmental aesthetics relies upon the perceived impossibility of objectivity, which in turn relies on the impossibility of aesthetic disinterest and the universalizability of aesthetic responses. As is illustrated above, the impossibility of objectivity is by no means a foregone

[99] It should go without saying, that this is dependent upon one's definition of aesthetic disinterest, and the strength of the version being advocated. The version of disinterest I refer to here, is not of the type which is devoid of self, but one which characterises a general approach to art or nature, requiring the backgrounding of selfish desires and amenity value.

conclusion; the importance of understanding what is and is not required by objectivity cannot be overstated. If we demand some kind of complete will-lessness or for decisions to be made

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inside of a vacuum, then we would not be able to meet the criteria for objectivity, but we will also not be able to provide a good reason as to why aesthetic response has a place within an environmental discourse. Fisher and Budd (2003 and 2000 respectively), amongst others, have emphasised the inability for an aesthetically disinterested judgment to be applied universally and thus, that objectivity is impossible.

Recently, whilst visiting a friend in Llanrug (Wales), I noticed some pretty yellow flowers growing up the garden path; later in the day, my friend walked into the kitchen with a can of weed-killer, and on asking why she was using it (as her garden was completely pristine, with not a weed in sight), she told me it was 'for the weeds of course - the ugly little blighters!'. The next day those beautiful little yellow flowers, which I later found out were Welsh poppies, were dying, and my friend was preparing to rip them out of the soil. Welsh poppies are grown in gardens up and down the country, but obviously, the belief that they are pretty, and not in fact weeds, is not a universally held opinion. In the first place, this is not an example of a sympathetic and disinterested judgment, but for argument's sake, let us assume it was. One of the chief criticisms faced by proponents of the aesthetic attitude in environmentalism is that judgments are subjective: by which two things are meant. Firstly, in order for an aesthetic of the environment to be defended, it must be possible to show how an aesthetic response can be objective. Secondly, it ought to be possible to show that the objectivity of such a judgment can be determined through its ability to be universalised. A wholly subjective judgment cannot be seen as a basis for founding specific environmental protections, but this analysis rests upon the assumption that subjectivity and universality are not compatible, which of course, they are not if one requires individuals to have identical responses towards any given aesthetic object. Just

as aesthetic disinterest has been misconstrued as encouraging the detached and passive observation of nature, so too has universality been subject to misunderstanding. The requirement for universality is imperative, as is the need to emphasise that universality refers not necessarily to the content of any given aesthetic response but to the form which said response takes.[100]

A Kantian method of aesthetic judgment demands a disinterested approach to aesthetic objects, and whilst I do not intend to endorse a fully Kantian account of the aesthetics of nature, the concept of disinterest is essential to an ethic of environmental protection via aesthetics. A sympathetic yet disinterested approach to nature means that we avoid imposing our own desires on nature by allowing nature (or the piece of art) to 'speak' to us on its own terms. When Kant states that aesthetic judgments speak with a universal voice (§8, 216), he does not mean that the content of such judgments is identical, but rather that the way in which they were derived relies upon what is universally available to humans.

> It is not pleasure but the universal validity of this pleasure perceived in the mind as connected with the mere judging of an object that is represented in a judgment of taste as a universal rule for the power of judgment, valid for everyone. (Ibid.,)

Understood in this way, universality has the capacity to democratise aesthetic judgment, as it is reliant upon the cognitive faculties (imagination and understanding) inherent in humankind (and not upon the cultivation of aesthetic awareness or an artistic education), meaning that all humans have the potential to appreciate nature aesthetically. It is the possibility of disinterestedness that allows for this democratisation and potential agreement.

The question here is not necessarily whether it is possible to be objective but whether this supposed lack of objectivity constitutes a good enough reason to reject the approach

[100] See section 2.6 for more discussion pertaining to Kant's position on form vs content in aesthetic judgment.

altogether. Perhaps when speaking of disinterest, it is easier to imagine taking a more or less objective standpoint in relation to the making of certain moral judgments. For instance, we tend to take for granted that when we attend a doctor's appointment, we will be treated

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disinterestedly; we do not regard this as an impossible or negative aspect of our experience, much to the contrary: most of us would think it was necessary. A doctor approaching a patient in a disinterested manner does not require (or encourage) a lack of empathy or detachment, but it does entail an ability to view the patient on their own terms and to background subjective interests. A doctor foregrounding selfish interests, e.g., financial bonuses for not making referrals, may result in patients being denied essential tests and finding themselves unable to gain access to the necessary treatment. The ability to sideline subjectivity is paramount to the equal and fair treatment of patients, and essential to this 'sidelining' is the concept of disinterest. We expect a hospital manager to be as objective as possible when making decisions that affect life/death and a therapist not to bring their own baggage into a session with a client. We require a jury to consider the facts of a case and not allow their own prejudices to unduly influence their judgment; jury selection attempts to disqualify those who are unable to background these interests. This is not to say that this is a perfect system, or that mistakes are not made, but that it is important to recognise that minimising selfish desire is to be preferred in many circumstances, and that simply aiming for this ideal, even if we sometimes miss – is not to be sniffed at.

A central feature of the relativist argument and one which distinguishes the experience of art from nature is the notion of framing. Hettinger notes that we do not tend to touch the painting, or look around the back of it, or wrap our knuckles against the side of the frame to find out what noise it makes: all of which we may do when appreciating a natural object, such as a tree (2008, 419). When we approach a painting, we are literally provided with a frame

through which to view the piece of artwork, and we also have a certain 'frame' of reference by which to make an aesthetic judgment about the painting. An artist frames a painting to show what they wish to be viewed and to hide what they do not want to be taken into consideration, whereas nature comes with no such frame. Malcolm Budd and John Fisher have both argued the case for relativism, contending that since we are able to adapt the focus of our lens to accommodate our particular framing of a natural phenomenon, "…there is no such thing as the appropriate aesthetic appreciation of nature (as there is with art)." (Budd 2002, 109).

There is also no appropriate 'level of framing' nature as there is with art; when we appreciate a painting in a gallery, we see it at the scale and size which the artist intended for it to be viewed. However, in nature, there is no standard level at which to make observations; we can look at it from a distance, or close up, we can see the individual cells which make up a flower, or we can observe an entire continent from the International Space Station. When viewing nature (as opposed to art), we can choose which senses to utilise in our method of appreciation, whether we want to smell, taste, touch, hear and/or look. We can choose to ignore (and thus frame out) the whirring of the ski-lift, the smell of exhaust fumes, or a large hotel complex. Our experience of nature is, thus, relative to the way in which we have chosen to frame the environment and the senses we have used to perceive it. Or at least, this is how the argument is presented by relativists such as Budd and Fisher.

Aesthetic judgments about nature also depend upon scale. Godolovitch argues that the human-scale is 'sensorily parochial' and consequently makes our aesthetic judgments arbitrary (1994, 18). We are simply too little to see the big picture and too big to see the minute detail, bringing us back to the original problem of subjectivity in aesthetic judgments. Amongst others, Hettinger notes that the most problematic part about relativism in environmental aesthetics is not necessarily the kind of relativity related to framing but rather a type of relativity that affects our judgment of aesthetic value (2008, 424). Relativity in judgments of aesthetic value leads to

a stand-off between groups of people who have different aesthetic responses. A hotel developer may genuinely find the sight of a large building (a potential hotel) embedded into a natural landscape beautiful, and the sound of aeroplanes flying overhead whilst rambling through the Lake District would perhaps be welcome to a plane enthusiast. Likewise, the sound of birdsong just before dawn, when you have yet to fall asleep, is likely to be more irritating than soothing. On the other hand, your partner may find that a natural birdsong alarm clock fills them with the spirit of Julie Andrews after having a refreshing and restful night's sleep. If aesthetic responses simply come down to saying boo/ha, how can we regard aesthetic judgment as being important for motivating environmental protections? These examples, which are arguably not examples of aesthetic judgment at all, illustrate both the importance of a disinterested appreciation of nature and the need to understand what makes one aesthetic response in/appropriate or better/worse than any other. The relativity of aesthetic response has been too much taken for granted in reasoning as to why environmental aesthetics is either a trivial or futile pursuit.

Those such as Carlson, Eaton, Hettinger, Carroll and Brady have thrown doubt on the assumption of the subjectivity of aesthetic responses to the natural environment, albeit by different methods, in justifying the importance of aesthetics in protecting nature. Central to the relativist account and the inability to make objective judgments about nature is the idea that aesthetic responses are not subject to universalisability and, as such, cannot possibly be objective.[101] Part of this misunderstanding stems from the conflation of objectivity, with the idea that everyone would make the same judgment and/or have the same aesthetic response.

The notion of aesthetic disinterest is limited in its potential application to environmental ethics. However, this does not stop it from being useful in the foundation of an eco-aesthetic

[101] Of course, if it possible (as Kant thinks it is) to have subjectively universal aesthetic judgments, then there may be no need to contrast relativist accounts with purely objective accounts – as there could be suitable middle ground on which to agree.

framework promoting environmental protectionism. Kant's version of disinterest offers solutions to some of the most pressing and commonly voiced concerns over the use of disinterest in environmental discourse, namely the problems of detachment, objectivity and

universalism. Kant claims to offer a way of producing subjectively universal aesthetic judgments through universalising the form of such judgments and making sure that they are made freely and disinterestedly.[102] Concerns centred upon detachment or passivity come from a legitimate worry about the further division and alienation of humanity from the natural world, but, under a Kantian lens, it is clear that disinterest does not imply an inability to enjoy, love or care for nature, only that the basis of judgments ought to be free from (self-)interested desires.

More serious concerns stem from confusion surrounding the ability of an aesthetic judgment (about the environment or otherwise) to be taken beyond the individual level on which it is first made. Disagreement about the potential for such judgments to be objective and/or universal is unlikely to be resolved through a limited discussion over the role of disinterest. However, Kant's emphasis on disinterest throughout the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment does help to shed light on the nature of his proposal for a non-objective type of aesthetic judgment which has the potential for universal application. In the realms of environmental ethics, finding ways to motivate the protection of nature is a primary goal; the benefit of an approach that utilises disinterest is that self-interest can be eliminated (as much as possible) while also allowing for the potential of universality. Importantly, the potential for judgments to be universally applicable does not mean that all judgments will be exactly the

[102] It is the form of the judgment not necessarily the judgment itself which (for Kant) is the most objective part of the account. See Chapter 1 for a more through discussion about the degree to which Kant can be considered a formalist.

same (even Kant allows for this reality), but instead that judgments are all identically formulated (that they have the correct basis). In theory, of course, assuming that the basis of all judgments is pure, then the judgment ought to be the same, and we ought to be able to demand it of everyone. However, because objectivity and universality stem from the form of

judgment itself (its reflectivity) and we cannot ensure that our basis (or anyone else's) is pure – it does not necessarily result in the objectivity and universality of the aesthetic response.[103]

4.7 Conclusion

It is important to state that the usefulness of disinterest (in this case, modern versions of disinterest inspired by Kant) does not need to depend upon the rest of Kant's aesthetic theory. Aesthetic disinterest can and should be extracted from Kant's deduction of taste if the rest of the theory fails to be useful in environmental aesthetics. I do not pretend that my approach is a Kantian one, but it is interesting (not to mention useful) to understand how elements of Kant's work can be utilised in modern-day aesthetics. The usefulness of aesthetic disinterest can be applied regardless of whether Kant's deduction succeeds in meeting its own aims, especially since the environmentalist has very different aims. Ultimately, I do not believe that Kant's deduction is successful, either at achieving Kant's aims or when considered more broadly. However, this should not stop contemporary environmental aestheticians from excising useful, interesting and inspiring elements from authors or theories that are not traditionally sympathetic to their aims.

Other writers have begun to explore how aesthetics and the environment can work in tandem to produce helpful theories of protectionism, and some of the most compelling are those

[103] Kant contends that in an ideal world aesthetic response would be the same. However, this seems only to be possible if one can first be sure that one is making a pure judgment in the first place, which Kant agrees cannot be guaranteed (§19, 237).

that focus on comprehending the relationship between universality and objectivity in ecoaesthetic judgments. Understanding the degree to which either universality or objectivity is necessary and the level at which both become helpful in guiding appropriate aesthetic judgments of the environment are crucial avenues of further exploration. Aesthetic disinterest serves an important role within environmental ethics by helping to make self-interested, biased and completely relative judgments less common. However, this is only one resource within

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Kantian aesthetics and only one part of a much broader project in ecoaesthetics and environmental philosophy, but it is a useful starting point and one which has been the subject of much confusion, which this chapter has hopefully clarified. In clarifying this issue, I have also begun to answer questions pertaining to the success of Kant's deductive argument for judgments of taste and where and how elements from Kant's aesthetics could fit into ecoaesthetic discourse. In the next chapter, I will further my aim of determining the success of Kant's deduction by untangling the thorny issue of subjective universalism, which, as has been highlighted in this chapter (through discussion of disinterest and objectivity/subjectivity) – can create some problems for Kant's account.

Chapter 5: The legitimacy of the deduction of pure taste: the success of subjective universalism

5.1 Chapter Summary

In examining whether Kant's aesthetic deduction succeeds in achieving its aims and how this success has implications for the environment and ecoaesthetics, I have thus far focused upon the importance of disinterest as an essential part of Kant's understanding of pure judgments of beauty and how it is used by Kant to partially bolster his claims about the subjective universality of aesthetic judgments. In the previous two chapters, I argued that disinterest has potential for application within ecoaesthetics and environmentalism more broadly construed but only has a supporting role with regards to the deduction. Kant's discussion of the necessity of disinterest helps to tease out important elements of aesthetic contemplation which are relevant to environmental aesthetic discourse. However, the issue of Kantian disinterest cannot be extricated from issues of subjectivism, and it is to this that I will now turn. In moving on from the notion of disinterest, I will further explore Kant's deduction of pure beauty to help establish answers to the two primary questions of this thesis. Firstly, is Kant's judgment of taste successful in achieving its aims, especially regarding natural beauty, and, secondly, can Kant's deduction of taste be useful in understanding our aesthetic relations with the natural environment – or does it do more harm than good? In this chapter, I will consider the role of subjective universalism within Kant's deduction of taste, focusing on its use in legitimising and

founding a judgment of taste as universal despite its subjective basis. I will illustrate the importance of subjective universality in Kant's Critique of Taste and critically discuss whether Kant is successful in proving that judgments of taste are a priori subjectively universal. In other words, does the third Critique achieve its primary aim?

5.2 Peculiarities of taste

This chapter will expound upon subjectivist and objectivist interpretations of Kant's judgment of taste and the implications which Kant's subjective universalism has on the legitimacy of his theory of taste. Ultimately, I will argue that the deduction does not achieve what Kant thinks it does, namely, that it does not succeed in justifying the claim of universal assent to pure aesthetic judgment with a priori subjective basis.[104] The success of Kant's argument for subjective universalism (which determines the success or failure of the deduction as a whole) is limited both in terms of its internal coherence and in its attempt to find truth conditions in judgments about beauty. Of course, this is not to say that there are no truth conditions in aesthetic judgments, only that Kant's argument for the a priori subjective universality of such judgments does not establish any. Whilst he does establish the necessary (but not sufficient) conditions of pure aesthetic judgment, in the end, we are not hugely closer to distinguishing between 'correct' or 'incorrect' judgments or even in establishing the ability to make a genuinely pure aesthetic judgment of beauty (and importantly, know that it is correct or incorrect. In itself, this need not be problematic, but Kant claims much more than this, and so determining its success becomes important. Although Kant offers substantial insight into the psychology of taste, his ambitious deduction does not fare any better than Hume's theory of taste in being able to account for and solve disagreements in matters of taste. The failure of

[104] Kant explicitly argues that the third *Critique* aims "…to set forth and justify the subjective principle of taste as an a priori principle of the power of judgment." This, in its turn, justifies the universal validity of a pure judgment of taste (§34, 286).

the deduction is made more apparent by claims made throughout the third *Critique,* which highlight Kant's belief in its success.

The peculiarity of Kant's theory of taste is that it attempts to capture both subjective and objective dimensions of aesthetic judgments. Kant maintains that a judgment of beauty is made as if it were simultaneously objective and subjective. Humans make judgments of beauty 'as if' the judgment was a logical one, i.e., cognitive; we often speak as though beauty were a property of the object itself, which should be universally agreed upon. We do not make judgments about beauty in the same way we do about, for instance, our favourite ice cream

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flavour. I do not demand that you share my love for Rum & Raisin ice cream above all others, and I certainly do not question your 'taste' if you prefer vanilla.[105] However, in an aesthetic judgment, I do (implicitly) expect you to agree with me when I find a particular painting or vista beautiful because in judging something beautiful, I am implying that that is universally beautiful. According to Kant, although we make an aesthetic judgment 'as if' it should apply to everyone, we also make this judgment of taste 'as if' it was merely subjective, in the sense that we do so without reference to concepts or a basis of 'proof'. Once I have formed a view on the beauty (or lack thereof) of an object, I am going to remain unconvinced about changing my mind, even if I find a hundred people who disagree with me. Whilst I may doubt myself and the underpinning of my judgment and may even wish that I could agree with the majority's view - if I think the object is beautiful, I will continue to think that the object is beautiful despite a thousand voices shouting their objections. This, Kant contends, is because there is no

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[105] If food is considered as an artform then this example becomes problematic, however for the sake of this chapter and thesis – I do not take food as an instance of art. Whilst it is possible to have an aesthetic response to food, it would be a step too far to plonk food within the arts, especially in relation to Kant and the making of pure aesthetic judgments (see Telfer 2008 for more discussion of the issue of taste and food). However, there is a potentially interesting line of thought related to food (as art) and environmental philosophy, which boils down to understanding the role of consumable animals and their role in this gustatory artwork. Perhaps an argument for vegetarianism can be found here?

conceptual/cognitive basis for a judgment of taste, and thus no justification or 'proof' will ever be sufficient in changing a person's mind. I cannot convince you by empirical or a priori means that Rum & Raisin ice cream is delicious; you must taste it for yourself to determine this, i.e., it is an autonomous judgment.[106]

So, how can we reconcile these apparently conflicting intuitions about aesthetic judgments? Normally (away from Kantian philosophy), when we demand universal assent to a judgment, we can appeal to empirical proofs, but in this case, we have no such recourse. How, then, is it possible to coherently maintain that we demand universal assent to our pure judgments of taste, yet this universality rests solely on a subjective basis?

5.3 Historical context

When so much depends upon the terms involved, it is of paramount importance to ensure that the historical nuance of these terms is not lost through modern interpretation. To better understand Kant's positioning on the issue of objectivity, it is important to situate the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* within a historical context. The third *Critique* was written at a time when the study of aesthetics (as we understand it) was in its infancy, as it had only been introduced by Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten in the *Aesthetica* (1750-58). Before the mid-18th Century, the term 'aesthetics' was almost exclusively used to refer to that which pertained to the senses (Wessel 1982). This meant that the study of beauty and art were both parts of philosophy as a whole and not as we have come to comprehend it today: as its own distinct branch of philosophy. In the first *Critique,* Kant himself used the term 'aesthetics' to refer to

[106] In using the example of ice cream I am illustrating why aesthetic judgments are likened to gustatory taste by Kant, however, in reference to actual taste, Kant is clear that a pure judgment of taste only applies to the senses of hearing and sight and cannot accommodate sense of smell or taste of the tongue (§7, 212). Kant argues that in the case of olfactory or gustatory taste, judgments are only ever subjective and only ever relate to the agreeable (rather than the beautiful). In this instance ice cream would be considered as an instance of the agreeable, the terms I use here are meant in a more colloquial sense than in reference to formal definitions.

the entire field of sensory experience and not the new-fangled way (A 19-49/B 33-73).[107] Kant is critical of the new 'German' trend for using the term 'aesthetics' to mean a critique of taste; he maintains that the word implies a 'false hope' for the discovery of rational principles of beauty (ibid.,). Kant later reverses (at least part) of this view in writing the third *Critique*, where he claims to demonstrate the very thing he earlier believed to be impossible: an a priori deduction of taste.[108] The narrower focus of Kant's most mature aesthetical work reflects the changing nature of the term 'aesthetics' and the development of a specialised area of philosophy with its own distinct metaphysical and epistemological quagmires.[109] Kant's views

substantially differ from those expressed in the *Aesthetica*; in fact, the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment could be read as a wholesale rejection of Baumgarten's aesthetic theory.[110] Baumgarten maintains that whilst making an aesthetic judgment, we make use of our rational faculties, making it not dissimilar to a cognitive judgment. Although this cognitive element is not fully developed (Wenzel 2005, 4), it would still be hypothetically possible to create rules and regulations to determine what is and is not beautiful. Concepts can then be applied to an aesthetic object in order to assess how well it meets specific criteria relating to its perfection. In other words, beauty is objective. Kant rejects this objective-cognitivist line of thinking from the very beginning of the *Critique*, in which he is quick to make clear the impossibility of either

[107] Given Kant's apparently changing position about the possibility of an a priori principle of taste (B 35-36/A21; footnote) and the viability of a third *Critique* in its entirety – it seems likely that the evolution of his thought occurred alongside further familiarity with Baumgarten and Meier's work (1754).

[108] Much has been made of Kant's reversal of opinion, but it must be emphasised that he specified that no 'determinate a priori' laws of taste were possible, which does not conflict with Kant's later claim that a nondeterminate a priori deduction is possible. Of course, this does not diminish the significance of his contribution to the subject of aesthetics. I have discussed in this in more depth in Chapter 2.3.

[109] This is not to say that other philosophers immediately began to use the term 'aesthetics' in this way. The British philosophers and writers of the 18th Century e.g. Hume, Burke, Shaftesbury, Kames, Hutcheson did not necessarily

[110] Kant does accept that sense perception is not identical to thought (this is a necessary element to his theory of taste) and that such perception can be 'perfected' without reference to thought (Pluhar 1987, XLIX-LI) which are both central tenets of the Baumgarten/Meier position.

a science of the beautiful or the inclusion of a cognitive element in an aesthetic judgment – which instead must rely on nothing but a subjective basis (§44, 304 and §1, 204).[111]

It is easy to understand why debate and confusion surround the third *Critique* since Kant has been interpreted as a subjectivist, an objectivist, a cognitivist and a non-cognitivist, and he has also been criticised for being too extreme or not extreme enough in his position on each of these issues. In attempting to capture both elements of a judgment of taste, Kant's position is located in such a way as to draw criticism from both sides of the subjectivity/objectivity debate. For traditional subjectivists, Kant's appeal to the *a priori* universal and necessary validity of a pure judgment of beauty violates the relative nature of such a judgment. On the other hand, a straightforward aesthetic objectivist will (in the first place) be unable to accept the subjective underpinnings of Kant's theory of taste, i.e., the autonomous experience of pleasure as forming the basis of the judgment itself. Considered against a background of objectivist aestheticians, Kant has historically been characterised as a subjectivist and being responsible for the subjectivist turn in aesthetics (Fisher and Maitland 1978). Characterising Kant as a 'pure' subjectivist, however, would be to leave out a central part of his theory of taste, which, although based on subjective purposiveness, is clearly supposed to demonstrate the universal nature of a pure aesthetic judgment.[112] A judgment of taste, according to Kant, does not apply only to the person making the judgment but is instead meant to be valid for everyone. It is a synthetic a priori proposition, which is based upon a feeling of pleasure. In other words, a judgment of (pure) taste is based upon a subjective mental

adopt Baumgarten's label of aesthetics but they did contribute substantially to the study of 'taste' and the psychology of beauty (Mothersill 1984, 153).

[111] Find more discussion of this issue in Chapter 2, specifically 2.2.

[112] See Introduction section 5 for a distinction on the main three types of subjectivity and the kind which Kant refers to in aesthetic judgment. [116] This judgment is in fact 'X is beautiful', where 'being beautiful' refers to harmonious free play and the feeling of pleasure produced.

state, but because every human has the cognitive capacity to experience the indeterminate mental state-specific to pure aesthetic judgments (that of the harmonious free play of the imagination and the understanding) the final judgment is one which makes a claim on other people to agree with us.[116]

Kant's theory can perhaps be most clearly seen as a reaction against the rigidly rationalist philosophers, who argued in favour of the universality of aesthetics by reducing the aesthetic experience to a cognitive one. Kant's insistence on the non-objective nature of aesthetic judgments makes sense in a historical context; his focus on non-conceptuality, in particular, makes sense in comparison with his contemporaries (and those who had gone before) where rule-based approaches to aesthetics were more commonly theorised (Ameriks 2003, 339). Rationalists such as Baumgarten, who sought to establish a science of aesthetics, could explain the universality and necessity of judgments of taste with an appeal to perfection. That is, they utilised an idea about what beauty ought to be in its perfect form and then compared particular instances of potential beauty to see if these rules or criteria have been

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adequately met. Their method appeals to the idea of 'rules of perfection' in order to establish the legitimacy of the judgment; universal necessity is further implied by an appeal to the symmetrical experience of moral judgments – which according to Kant, fails to explain the subjectivity of aesthetic judgment. Such symmetry relates back to the connection between the perfection of moral goodness and beauty, i.e., both judgments are considered to be legitimate (or not) based upon the degree of perfection of the particular action or object. In both cases, the

legitimacy of the judgment is centred around whether an action or object exhibits the rules of perfection according to either a particular moral or aesthetic code.[113]

Empiricists, on the other hand (such as Hutcheson, Hume and Burke), attempted to preserve the subjectivity of aesthetic judgments by noting that beauty is not a property of objects and is instead just a feeling (Hume 1757).[114] Kant argues that such an approach fails to distinguish judgments of beauty from judgments of the merely agreeable. In other words: judgments of the agreeable cannot be universalised since they rest upon only a privately held liking (§18, 237). Much like Kant's overall philosophical approach, in which he mediates between rationalist, empiricist and sceptical positions, his Critique of Aesthetic Judgment presents a distinctly transcendental argument with a unique flair: subjective universalism. Kant's aesthetic deduction lives or dies with the success of his justification for subjective universalism, which makes up the heart of Kant's aesthetic theory.

5.4 Hume and Kant

One cannot discuss the historical context of the debate surrounding subjectivity in aesthetics without also addressing the work of Hume, especially the short 'Of the Standard of Taste'

(1757). Although Kant's third *Critique* is often discussed in direct contrast with Hume's *Of the Standard of Taste*, it is unclear whether Kant was familiar with this work and whether he would have disagreed substantially with much of what Hume had to say about aesthetics.[115] Whilst they ultimately come to different conclusions on this topic, Hume and Kant are far closer in

[113] A claim to universal necessity is made because the idea of perfection is not applicable to one person but can be universally expected and applied. See Beiser (2009) for an in-depth discussion of German rationalist aesthetics and his attempt at defending aesthetic rationalism.

[114] Empiricists, such as Hume, argue that, whilst judgments of beauty may be subjective, issues of taste are normally objective in the sense that they can be discovered through empirical means, i.e., the opinion of the majority or the opinion of the educated observer (who has studied changing tastes throughout history).

[115] However, Kant was certainly familiar with Hume's *Moral and Political Essays* (§34, 286).

outlook than Kant was with many of his German contemporaries. The scope of this section restricts me from developing an in-depth account of Hume's approach, but there are several observations I would like to make here to highlight the uniqueness of Kant's positioning further. Hume is an especially important figure (if only briefly mentioned in the *Critique*) because Kant claims to do the very thing which Hume deems impossible, and which Kant also believed to be impossible in the *CPR,* i.e., the achievement of an *a priori* deduction of taste (OST 1757, 219).[116] To reiterate, I do not use the comparison between Kant and Hume to try and illustrate the drastic differences between the two, so much as to highlight the positioning of Kant's aesthetics within the broader literature and to emphasise some of its more unique properties (and problems).

Hume and Kant both desired to address the sceptical position regarding aesthetic judgments, which hypothetically maintains that there can be no truth conditions in such judgments. Therefore, there can be no real disputes in issues of taste or beauty since aesthetic judgments are merely expressions of an opinion of a liking or disliking. Hume responds to the sceptical position in an ultimately objectivist-sounding fashion, arguing that there is a way of determining correct from incorrect aesthetic judgments because beauty is what the majority says it is.[117] The 'majority' in this case refers not to the majority of the population but rather

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the "joint verdict" of critics, who are educated in recognising great works (228). Since an a priori principle of taste is impossible (according to Hume), the justification for an aesthetic judgment must lie in the phenomenal world, which means that it is discoverable a posteriori.

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[116] I address this issue in Chapter 2.3 where I states that whilst Kant may have originally believed that this was impossible when first writing CPR, he later updated this to reflect his newfound belief; this revision allows Kant to avoid the charge of contradiction or internal (to the critical works) inconsistency.

[117] At least this is my reading of Hume's *Of the Standard of Taste,* although it may be more accurate to call the type of objectivistic-sounding approach – normative realism. Of course, I am aware that Hume is not advocating aesthetic objectivism but rather his own brand of subjectivism, but the objectivist leanings are apparent within OST.

As a result of this, Hume maintains that critics are in a better position to determine what the empirical criterion ought to be, and their judgments are to be considered superior to that of the layperson (228-229).[118] Hume maintains that "critics can reason and dispute more reasonably than cooks" (1822, 217; originally published in 1741-42) and whilst Kant agrees, Kant also argues that both critics and cooks share the same fate (§34, 286). In other words, since there can be no principle of taste founded on objective proofs or rules, critics must rely on the subjective experience of pleasure to determine their judgment, just like everybody else – making them no more or less capable of making a pure judgment of beauty.[119]

Despite their differences, many similarities exist between Hume's and Kant's approaches to the theory of taste; in fact, at some points, one would be hard-pressed to distinguish between the two. Both Kant and Hume agree that the determining ground for judgments of taste is subjective, but that we also have a right to claim universal validity for them. Hume maintains (in a rather Kantian fashion) that just as the notion of finding a 'real sweetness' or 'real bitterness' is a nonsense, so too is the idea of discovering a 'real beauty' (*OST* 1757, 218). More specifically, both Kant and Hume agree that beauty is not a property

[118] There is much debate about the importance of Hume's *Of the Standard of Taste* in terms of where it fits within Hume's aesthetic theory, and how much it can be taken to represent his true thoughts on the matter. Some writers find the apparent move away from subjectivism problematic and others argue that it does not contradict his earlier work (see Costelloe 2007 and Shelley 1994). There is also debate about whether Hume actually endorses the idea of 'true critics' as the standard of taste, instead for example the 'rules of art' (again, see Costelloe 2007). I have chosen to focus on OST specifically because it represents his final word on the subject before his death, and also because I do not want to engage in any kind of full analysis of Hume's aesthetics, but rather offer some context to Kant's aesthetics and highlight the differences/similarities between the two where these are interesting or relevant to my aims. In acknowledging the debate within Humean aesthetics I hope to alleviate concern that I am intentionally ignoring the controversies surrounding OST or misrepresenting this work to suit my ends. Rather, I am choosing to not focus on these elements as they don't serve my ends.

[119] This does not mean that critics are superfluous in Kant's theory of taste. Critics still have an important role in helping to broaden our judgments of taste (§34, 286).

of the object in question but rather that it exists only in the mind of the perceiver: a judgment of beauty stems from the pleasure experienced by the subject (ibid., 222). Hume states that:

> …this sentiment [of beauty, or deformity] must depend upon the particular fabric or structure of the mind, which enables such particular forms to operate in such a particular manner, and produces a sympathy or conformity between the mind and its objects. (§8, 218).

Aside from anticipating Kant's proposal of the free play of the faculties, Hume also emphasises the importance of disinterest (although he does not refer to it as such).[120] He maintains the need for the critic to keep his mind free from all prejudice, allowing nothing but the object itself to be brought into consideration (*OST* 1757, 226). This is close to Kant's description of the first moment (the quality) of a judgment of taste, in which Kant also emphasises the importance of such a judgment being devoid of all interest (*CPJ* §5 211). Hume's emphasis on the pleasure involved with a judgment of the beautiful, along with the need for disinterest, combined with his disavowal of the idea that beauty is a quality of the object – makes for a rather subjectivist approach. In addition to these similarities, Hume also highlights two notions that take centre stage in Kant's elaborate justification for the a priori subjective universal validity of a judgment of pure taste: non-conceptuality and autonomy. Hume asserts (just like Kant) that, in attempting to justify one's own aesthetic judgment to another person, you will be

[120] This is a point which has, to my knowledge at least, not been sufficiently explored; however my aim in this chapter is to establish whether Kant's deduction is successful, and I do not want to digress too much from this focus. In Hume's *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, he does use the term disinterest, to delineate moral decision-making. Disinterest serves in direct contrast with 'self-love', which makes finding agreement for a moral judgment unlikely, i.e., due to the biased nature of the any judgment which is self-interested in the first instance (EPM, 1975, 296 AND 272). Hume also mentions the need to have 'serenity of mind' and pay 'due attention to the object' when making aesthetic judgments (OST, 220), without which the justification of such judgments would likely be fallacious.

hard-pressed to find a satisfactory reason for your judgment, beyond simply referring to your own taste (1741-42, 217).[121] Judgments of taste are autonomous since a person cannot be convinced of another viewpoint based on another person's reasoning but must judge for oneself.[122] Arguably here, Hume admits to a type of non-conceptuality in holding that we cannot refer to anything other than our subjective mental state (i.e., pleasure) to justify said judgment.[123] Hume claims that the aesthetic judgment rests in an 'agreeable sentiment' produced in a particular mind, which is unique to the structure and constitution of that particular mind (ibid.,).

The preceding discussion seems at odds with Hume's contention that the achievement of a standard of taste is possible along more objective lines, and since he maintains that this cannot be achieved via a priori methods, it must be done through empirical ones, which does not sit well with his claims about the relativity of the subjective mental state of pleasure (174142, 217). Whilst both Kant and Hume argue that it is impossible for objectivity to result from a purely subjective mental state, their methods diverge substantially in terms of how they attempt to justify the subjective universalism and a standard of taste, respectively. It is important to briefly note that although Kant does place great emphasis on pleasure as the root of the judgment of taste, he (like Hume) does not think that this allows for objectivity. It is for

[121] Or as is the case in Hume, by making reference to the consensus of 'true critics'. However, as the critic is really only distinguished by their ability to identify great works of art, yet these same great works of art are only

[122] Kant's definition of autonomy when it is used in aesthetics, has a different emphasis than his use of the term elsewhere. Autonomy of taste refers to the lack of guiding factors or influence of the utility of the object or even its actual existence.

[123] Hume goes even further at one point when he states that whilst beauty is not a quality of the object (it is instead a product of sentiment) we must allow that "certain qualities in objects, […] are fitted by nature to produce those particular feelings" (*OST*, 222). In this passage Hume comes close to Kant's notion of the purposiveness (without purpose) of nature and some art objects, by which Kant argues that nature displays the purposive form which provokes the 'correct' play of the faculties needed for aesthetic judgment (§5, 182). Both philosophers are pointing to the *apparent* ability of nature to act in accordance with some causal concept, in this instance, that nature *seems* conducive to the promotion of the harmonisation of the mental faculties. To be clear, I am not claiming that Hume really does proceed down this path of entwining nature and purpose, only that there is a slight similarity in the language used here between Kant and Hume.

this reason that Kant turns to subjective universalism, whereas Hume opts for a more pragmatic, empirically objective outlook. Hume accepts the subjective nature of pleasurable

determined as great works of art by the true critics. This creates an epistemological quandary which is further compounded by the issue created by disagreement amongst the panel of critics which may or may not be blameless/ or caused by the prejudice of the critic (*OST* 228-229).

sensations but also attempts to explain why people experience different sentiments in response to the same object and why some judgments (namely those of the true critic) can be considered as more correct than other judgments.

Despite a diversity of opinion with regards to aesthetic objects, as a result of a variety of different social and environmental factors, there are certain principles that hold true across the board (*OST* 221). More specifically, there are some judgments that remain true over a long period and which people tend to agree with, and then there are judgments that draw criticism and do not stand the test of time. Essentially those judgments which are 'correct' are those that the majority agree with over the longest period of time; opinions, for instance on the Odyssey, remain constant, whereas a newcomer's work may appear beautiful due to some specific cultural trend, but it may not stand the test of time because "its faults will appear in their true colours." (Ibid., 220). Hume argues that critics, i.e., those with more refined taste, are in a better position than ordinary folk to recognise true beauty and anticipate its longevity. We rely on those with more specialised knowledge in areas such as medicine, car mechanics and hairdressing to take the lead when it comes to deciding what is wrong with our body, our car or hair – since prescribing ourselves medicine, fiddling about with a car's engine or giving oneself a haircut is likely to have disastrous consequences. Hume maintains that the same holds for aesthetics, that some people are more specialised in the field of the identification of beauty, and that we can and should defer to them when possible in the creation of a standard of beauty

(*OST*, 228).[124] Although it is technically possible for all persons to share the same principles of taste, only a few have a sufficiently refined taste as to qualify to give judgment on a work of art or for his to be considered as the standard of taste (ibid.,). Hume's account of taste stumbles, in its attempt to distinguish between critics who have the necessary cultivation of

taste, and those who do not. As a result, Hume's standard of taste suffers from its inability to justify how an aesthetic judgment differs from any other type of judgment or provide any falsifying conditions (beyond a certain amount of disinterest) for a correct or incorrect judgment of taste: in other words, it does not escape from a position of relativism. Having said this, Hume's answer to the question of what the judgment of beauty is, namely, what the aesthetically cultivated majority says it is, is easily applicable and has a certain intuitive appeal.[125] Whilst his theory is epistemologically challenged, it never pretends to be anything other than it is, in that it does not proclaim to offer an objective a priori or even a posteriori methodology for aesthetic judgment. However, he does offer a best practice approach to the standard of taste understood as something which explains why some judgments may be seen as more valid than others.[126] Instead, it offers a very pragmatic way of determining a standard of human taste, which, to my mind at least, is different from claiming to have established the

[124] Although this does conflict with some of Hume's earlier observations, I take *Of the Standard of Taste* to be his last say on the matter.

[125] Admittedly, this is not the be-all and end-all of Hume's aesthetics, nor is it as simplified as I have presented it here. There is much debate in the literature concerning the interpretation of Hume's aesthetics (including Savile 1982, Carroll 1984, 189-191, Gracyk 1994, 175–177). Some commentators wholesale reject the idea that the joint verdict of is Hume's actual standard of taste, and instead endorse Hume's 'general rules of art' as the real standard (Costelloe 2007, 2-14). Whilst there is debate as to the very nature of Hume's argument, I refer to Hume as I find him in *OST* in order to highlight aspects of Kantian aesthetics (or aesthetics in general) which may help to further my own argument. However, within the *OST* it is clear (to me at least) that any universality to find in aesthetic judgments is found by the "true critic" who has the "delicacy" of the imagination (*OST*, 224). These true judges are few and far between, but they should be of "Strong sense, united to delicate sentiment, improved by practice, perfected by comparison, and cleared of all prejudice." (228). These characteristics tend to reside in those with much experience of aesthetics but could technically be found in even the layperson. However, if any of these criteria are not met then the subject will not be able to make the judgment of universal beauty (220).

[126] Hume's theory is epistemologically challenged in the sense that the justification for each of the characteristics necessary for the making of a judgment of beauty are vague. However, this is not so much a problem for Hume as he is not claiming to have found the universal a priori basis for pure aesthetic judgments.

criteria of real, true or pure beauty. Hume claims that this latter task would be impossible to realise, and all that we can hope to establish is how human beings come to make a claim of taste and who is best placed to make this judgment.

In theory, Hume's standard of taste could be coherently objective as judgments of taste refer only to what is *likely* to cause subjective feelings of pleasure; it relies upon the comparison between other aesthetic objects and a prediction of its potential to appeal to those who share

similar cognitive faculties, i.e., humans.[127] Hume acknowledges that it is only those who have a particular 'delicacy of taste' who can properly make an aesthetic judgment, and thus the normative element of such a judgment is only necessary for the true critic, even though the principles of taste are potentially universal. Kant, on the other hand, argues that a pure judgment of taste is both necessary *and* universal; confusingly, however, he also maintains that the justification of this judgment can only be made through reference to the subjective sensation of pleasure caused by the free play of the cognitive faculties. It is this combination of subjectivity and necessary universalism, which generates the need for such a sustained effort on Kant's part in order to justify this via an a priori transcendental deduction.[128]

[127] By this I mean that it would in theory be possible to determine what is beautiful by conducting some kind of worldwide survey of art historians, critics, aestheticians etc., In doing so, one would hopefully find out what the beautiful art objects in the world are and everyone else could attempt to cultivate their taste accordingly. This is one objectivist interpretation of one element of Hume's aesthetics – it is not a suggestion but an observation about the potential for the practical application of Hume's theory.

[128] As opposed to Hume, who does not make bold statements like Kant does in the third *Critique*. Hume's short work 'Of the Standard of Taste' presents a succinct account of a theory of taste: positing that a theory of taste is discoverable via objective and empirical means. Whilst Hume does not necessarily (and conclusively) discredit the sceptical position, this is likely because he never had the intention of doing so in the first place. Here I am thinking of the difference between a standard of taste (which can to a certain extent be measured in the agreement of true judges) and the rather different task of discovering the a priori principles of beauty. Whilst Hume intended to address the sceptic of the former, the sceptic of the latter was never going to be satisfied by Hume's approach. Of course, there have been many interpretations of Hume's aesthetics (see footnote on previous page) and the level of objectivity aimed for/obtained but this is my own take on the topic as it fits into my research concerning the *Critique of Judgment.*

5.5 Whose argument is it anyway?

Before moving on to further explore Kant's explanation and justification of the aesthetic deduction, as grounded by a necessary subjectivity universality, it is essential to make clear two very different approaches to Kant's aesthetics. The first approach involves asking the question: 'What/why does Kant say/it?' (interpretation and exegesis), and the second approach involves asking: 'Was he right?' (critical analysis).[129] The second approach can be broken down into understanding whether Kant's argument is internally coherent, and whether it is successful away from his system, or whether there are more successful alternatives. Often these two approaches are used in tandem, but they ought to be pulled apart for the sake of clarity or at least acknowledged before moving on. It is especially important to acknowledge this here, given how easy it is (for both reader and writer) to confuse an interpretation of Kant's work with a judgment of the success of his argument, and vice versa. There is also a difference between stating that Kant's argument is successful as it stands and making a claim about whether or not you agree with what he demonstrates (successfully or otherwise). Kant's argument may be perfectly internally consistent, but this does not mean it must also be externally so. I will briefly highlight two examples to illustrate this before returning to the main theme of this section.

The strong subjectivism of Kant as presented by some writers (such as Ginsborg) has been criticised (by those adopting more objectivist narratives), with more of the critique being aimed at the writers than the veracity of Kant's argument as understood through the lens offered. The real debate is at times obfuscated, and, as Ginsborg herself has stated, if readers have an issue with her interpretation, they need to take it up with Kant and not herself (1998).

[129] Some, such as Andrew McGonigal, take some of the basic principles of Kant's work in order to support their theories; whilst acknowledging that it is not a Kantian account, he also states that it should be considered Kantthemed (2006, 346).

On the other hand, one of the most notable and controversial theorists on Kant's aesthetics has been Karl Ameriks, who presents his self-proclaimed 'mildly revisionist' interpretation (which I will further explore later) of the deduction to highlight its objectivity (2003, 326). Ameriks argues that Kant is best interpreted as an aesthetic objectivist; as such, his position is often seen (by those holding more subjectivist views) for both being an incorrect interpretation of the third *Critique* and for conflating his own opinion with that of Kant's (this is aside from any objections to objectivity in the first place). However, the only error Ameriks can be fairly accused of is in not adequately clarifying his position throughout his work. In *Interpreting the Critiques,* Ameriks clearly states that his interpretation of Kant is not one which Kant would necessarily share; nevertheless, Kant should be interpreted as a straightforward objectivist if we are to treat his work sympathetically. Whether or not Ameriks is correct in this interpretation is not at stake here; rather, it is the importance of clarification both in our reading of others and in our writing. Much of the criticism Ameriks has drawn for his account has been directed to his interpretation of Kant (and to be fair to his interlocutors, Ameriks does not maintain clarity on the point), rather than his normative statement of this interpretation. This is why it is important to understand whether writers such as Ameriks are advocating their view of a work or whether they are in fact arguing that the original writer (in this instance, Kant) actually meant a particular thing (in this case, objectivism in aesthetic judgment).[130]

To be clear, I am offering an interpretation of Kant's deduction as being necessarily intersubjectively universal, but I do not think that it is either internally or externally coherent. In other words, I take Kant at his word when he claims to demonstrate the a priori nature of the aforementioned universality of aesthetic judgments, but I do not think that he is successful in achieving this aim. Even if we were to grant Kant all of his presuppositions, he would still fail

[130] See Chapter 6, especially 6.2-6.3 for more discussion about Ameriks take on Kant's conceptual objectivity.

to satisfactorily address the concerns of the sceptics, which Kant argues that he successfully rebuts. In other words, I try not to revise Kant's theory of aesthetic judgment in order to suit my own ends or to make Kant more or less sympathetic to the neutral reader. Yes, I am concerned with understanding why Kant claims certain things (and even considering alternative explanations), but I am more concerned with whether Kant is correct in his argument, and especially whether his argument is correct as it stands, without having to jump through neverending revisionist hoops.

5.6 Subjective universalism in Kant's third *Critique*

Since I have already placed Kant's position into some historical context and highlighted some of the most important aspects of his account, I will go on to further explore the implications of Kant's deduction. As I see it, one of the best ways to further explore Kant's unique positioning in the debate surrounding objectivity in matters of taste is to address some of the most important

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conflicts in the interpretation of Kant's aesthetics. One of the most common misunderstandings concerns the sharp binary drawn between objective and subjective interpretations of the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment (and aesthetic theory in general) as if this is all there was available. Whilst more objectivist writers attempted to create a science of the beautiful, e.g., Baumgarten, fiercely subjectivist interpretations of both Kant and aesthetics, in general, are far more prevalent in modern society. Historically, beauty was considered to be a quality of the object, which (often influenced by religious understandings) ought to be recognised as beautiful by all. Beauty was judged by its perfection, uniformity, symmetry and instantiation of religious or spiritual ideals (see Plato, Symposium 210a–211d). From Ancient Greece to the 18th Century, beauty was often thought to be provable mathematically; Aristotle in the *Metaphysics* writes: "The chief forms of beauty are order and symmetry and definiteness, which the mathematical sciences demonstrate in a special degree." (1078 a36). Moreover, Francis Hutcheson, an influential British moral philosopher, wrote that "[w]hat we call beautiful in

objects, to speak in the mathematical style, seems to be in a compound ratio of uniformity and variety…" (2008 §2, 29). Hutcheson went on to try and prove that certain mathematical formulae, such as Euclid's propositions, could be used to justify why things can and should be considered beautiful (ibid.,).

Subjectivists reject this line of thinking entirely and instead locate the experience of beauty within the subject only. The oft-quoted phrase 'beauty is in the eye of the beholder' captures much of modern-day opinion about the relativity of beauty, i.e., it is theoretically possible for anyone to (potentially) find any 'thing' beautiful.[131] Connected with a liberal humanist outlook, followers of the mantra that 'beauty is in the eye of the beholder' attempt to

avoid the snobbishness often associated with an objective approach to art and beauty by democratising aesthetic experience. Beauty is associated primarily with human feelings, not objective measurements. For the most part, this position can be considered as a reaction to the dominance of objective accounts of beauty. The main problem with this approach is that it does not reflect the way in which we (or at least I) ordinarily think about beauty; so, whilst we may on occasion flippantly remark to someone who disagrees with our aesthetic judgment, 'Oh well, beauty's in the eye of the beholder, I guess.' the aesthetic choices we make in day-to-day life seem fairly consistent across a broad range of people. On the other hand, objectivists posit the existence of an objective standard by which we can determine whether any given object is beautiful, which intuitively makes little sense. We do not perform, for instance, a mathematical

[131] We see examples of subjective beauty standards all time, from modern art to body positivity (every *body* can be beautiful). The idea that anyone or anything can potentially be beautiful (to someone) conflicts with traditional (and more objective or rationalist) interpretations which hold certain standards of beauty, that prevent certain things from being classified as beautiful.

equation or run through a checklist of necessary attributes before deciding whether or not an object is beautiful; we look at it and seem just to know whether it is beautiful or not.[132]

It is difficult to associate Kant with either of these two groups, yet as I have earlier discussed, for Kant - there can only be a subjective foundation for a pure aesthetic judgment. Surely this makes him an out-and-out subjectivist, then? Simply put, no, it does not. Kant categorically did not think that beauty is just in the eye of the beholder; if he had, then there would have been no need for a special deduction of taste – especially since such a deduction would have been unnecessary in the first place.[133] It is because a judgment of taste does not rely solely on the subjective sensation of agreeableness (and of course, because he aims to

establish its a priori validity) that a deduction is possible (in theory), and such a judgment can be considered both necessary and universal. Kant's theory of taste does not fit neatly into either objective or subjective categories because it is not strictly one or the other – but both and neither at the same time – it is something new (at least in terms of its application).

Whilst humans have experienced objective and subjective realities since the dawning of their consciousness: the ability to create and share in collective fictions is thought to have been pivotal to the cognitive revolution of Homo sapiens. Early humans would generally categorise things as either being based purely upon subjective feeling or objective reality:

[132] Of course, it could be argued that there are such formulations going on, but that we are not aware of them at a conscious level. The checklist element is far more apparent in the objectivist/normative realist-leanings of some writers, such as Hume (I should emphasise that I am not endorsing a fully-objective interpretation of Hume, only that this is how it can come across) who provided a list of characteristics which an 'ideal critic' would exhibit in *OST*.

[133] There would undoubtedly be no need for a special deduction as Kant would not be claiming that there is some new a priori, subjectively universal form of judgment. The fact that he is claiming this to be a priori means that a deduction is necessary. Rather than implying that the deduction would be impossible if it were purely subjective, it might be more accurate to say that the deduction would be impossible without a degree of subjective universalism (universalism being the objectivising factor) as the deduction/judgment of taste which Kant desires to create requires such necessary universalism to meet its aims.

which exists independently of such subjective feeling.[134] However, things began to change when they started to create realities that did not objectively exist, e.g., the value of money, religion, and concepts like justice, honour, bravery.[135] If we take the notion of the unicorn, this mythical creature does not exist objectively (it is not independent of humans), but it is also not completely subjective. If I ask one hundred adults to give me a description of a unicorn, I will receive one hundred similar answers, with some variation; the basic description of four legs and a horn will be iterated time and time again. Imaginary though it is, there is an intersubjective reality to the concept of a unicorn, and as such, there is the potential for universality concerning the bare minimum of what the concept of 'unicorn' entails. If someone were to change the design of the unicorn, giving it two legs instead of four, then this would no longer be recognised as a unicorn.[136] Although utterly different in terms of its application, this intersubjective space is where Kant supposes that aesthetic taste resides.

In summary, Kant's theory of taste supposes that a pure judgment of beauty is a priori in nature, and yet it is based on a subjective mental state common to all humans, i.e., pleasure caused by the harmony of the faculties. The judgment is made disinterestedly and nonconceptually; thus, it can be applied universally and necessarily: hence it is valid for all humans. This judgment must be made completely autonomously and also without reference to either other people or some determinate concept or principle of taste.

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[134] At one point in time intersubjectivity was a brand new (thanks to our growing brains) and it became a fantastic catalyst for the future development of the human species e.g., linguistic development and the rise of intersubjective awareness go hand-in-hand (see Zlatlev 2014).

[135] In his hugely commercial bestseller Harari states that "Meaning is created when people weave together a common network of stories." (2014, 170). He claims that it was this cognitive leap towards a shared imagined space, which allowed earlier H. sapiens to cooperate effectively between large groups, and in turn this contributed to global human dominance.

[136] The example of a unicorn is not necessarily useful in a Kantian sense, as it may be considered as more of an empty concept (although perhaps the convention around the concept of the unicorn of could be falsifiable). However, it is still a useful illustration of the issue at hand. Arguably, the unicorn is not analogous to aesthetic

I will now move on to discuss some of the more specific conflicts between varying interpretations of Kant's critique of aesthetic judgment, which include some of the main objections to Kant's brand of intersubjective universalism, as well as relating to the success of Kant's aesthetic project more broadly construed. The issue which I will address in the next section is the particularity problem, which concerns the inability of Kant's aesthetic account to provide for anything other than the general form of aesthetic experience of the beautiful. Before going on to address conflicting interpretations of Kant's aesthetic deduction, focusing on Karl Ameriks' objectivism and Hannah Ginsborg's subjectivism.

5.7 Problems of particularity

The problem of particularity refers to a serious limitation of Kant's aesthetic deduction, meaning that it cannot be used to explain why specific objects are beautiful whilst others are not. The grounding of universal subjective particular judgments appears to be one of the primary aims of the deduction and one of the most pressing reasons for the necessity of a deduction in the first place. So, if the deduction cannot show how or why particular aesthetic judgments (pure) are subjective and also universally valid, then the success of the deduction is

experience of beauty, most notably because it has certain 'objective' properties i.e., we make reference to a concept of what a unicorn is supposed to look like, before determining whether a given depiction is indeed a unicorn. Courage, bravery etc., are perhaps a better comparison, since they all display a certain amount of ambiguity in definition, but also contain a certain objectively normative component. On the other hand, the unicorn does a better job of ascertaining intersubjective validity than beauty because it is falsifiable (at least to a layperson) with reference to the generally understood conception of a unicorn.

threatened. The problems relating to particularity have been discussed by many authors, although it is not usually explicitly referenced as such, and tend to focus on the veracity of Kant's subjective universalism and whether the deduction can be used as a real-world guiding aesthetic tool. In fact, most of the authors mentioned in this thesis have grappled with these issues at one point or another, but here I would like to draw attention to the very explicit discussion of the particularity issue found in a paper by Andrew Chignell. Chignell states:

> Kant manages only to justify the imputation of the same form of aesthetic experience to everyone; he does not show that this experience will universally occur in response to the same objects. This is what I call Kant's Problem of Particularity (1998, 18).[137]

In other words, whilst Kant may be able to demonstrate that all humans can theoretically make an aesthetic judgment of taste, he does not prove either that they will make the same judgment in response to the same object or even that they will ever make any judgment at all. Similarly, just because I *can* move my legs in such a way as to make them run does not mean that I will make them do so in order to run to the same object (unless Yorkshire puddings are involved, in which case I will immediately run to them) or more importantly, that other people would respond similarly to myself, in response to the same object (more fool them!). A Kantian judgment of taste, according to Chignell, cannot be applied any further than being able to say that a certain response is possible for all people, i.e., the form of the judgment is universal.

Why would this be a problem for Kant and his aesthetics, though? Well, if we cannot tell a good aesthetic judgment from a bad one, or even an aesthetic judgment from any other type of judgment – what good is a theory of taste at all? If we cannot both judge the same object and come to the same judgment, or at the very least be able to figure out which one of us made a mistake if the judgments are different – what does Kant's deduction offer us that we did not already have? If we can only ever make a judgment that applies to ourselves, how is it also got a claim to universal validity? How could the deduction possibly achieve its aims of providing justification for a subjective and universal form of aesthetic judgment if it cannot account for any particular instance of aesthetic judgment which can be replicated universally?

[137] Also see Chignell 2007 for more discussion concerning the potential role of aesthetic ideas in the relation to the particularity problem. In this paper Chignell also defines the particularity problem as Kant's account shows only that the "…form of the subjective experience of beauty is universal, while leaving open the possibility that the set of particular objects experienced as beautiful will differ relative to different human subjects." (2007, 417).

I think there are (at least) three separate kinds of claims circling discussions of particularity. Firstly, there is a problem with Kant being able to demonstrate that two people judging the same object will have the same aesthetic response, and then there is the problem of being able to distinguish between the correct aesthetic judgment and the incorrect judgment. Then there is a third issue of whether Kant's deduction can actually be applied to particular objects successfully.[138] These issues are intrinsically linked, and a discussion of one of these issues tends to touch upon all of the others. Although much of my discussion here centres around Chignell's version of the particularity problem, it will also touch upon the other issues which are of fundamental importance to understanding the debate.

Kant argues that Hume, who gives precedence to the judgments of critics, is ultimately subject to the same problem as all similar aesthetic theories, namely, in that they can provide no ultimate proofs by which we can objectively demonstrate the beauty of any given object because we must rely only on a subjective mental state (§34, 285). Hume's account may find a way to address the particularity problem, by giving power of decision to the critics, he can provide particular examples of beauty and make sense of aesthetic disagreements between critics and non-critics (the critic is right).[143] However, Kant is critical of the Humean approach

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and does not want to embrace its level of objectivity, but he does want to address the sceptical position which would deny that there are any truth conditions in aesthetic judgments at all (and hence cannot be universalised) whilst at the same time – avoiding the relativistic quagmire of outright subjectivity. Therefore, Kant must either deny the possibility (and the need) of coming

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[138] There is also the issue of those who do not have an aesthetic response to a particular aesthetic object at all, despite knowing that other people are able to experience an object aesthetically. This is less of an issue for Kant, as we are supposed to take into consideration the role of disinterest and whether this may be the cause of failing to appreciate something aesthetically. However, there is still the issue of whether the deduction succeeds at all, and if it does not (as I am suggesting) then it would also not be able to account for particulars in any case. [143] However, Hume's theory of taste fails to properly account and adjudicate for disagreements between critics in *OST*. In case of disagreement, he provides no way of discovering which is the 'correct' judgment - this is especially

to particulars or instead find a way of coming to particulars without violating the judgment is a priori or subjective nature: Kant appears to choose the former.

Henry Allison denies that the possibility of coming to particulars was ever up for grabs in the first place (2001, 177). Kant claims that the deduction of taste aimed to "…set forth and justify the subjective principle of taste as an a priori principle of the power of judgment." (§34, 286). Allison maintains that the subjective principle of taste involves the establishment and justification of a 'sensus communis' but that it does not (and perhaps could not) come to particulars without first abandoning the claim to subjectivity or non-conceptuality. Allison does not find this result problematic since Kant only ever claims to have proven that the form of a judgment of taste is subjectively universal – it does not delegitimise the deduction.[139] It is true that Kant does focus on the form of the judgment in the deduction, and that he also claims that the only substantive goal of the judgment is to demonstrate that "…the principle of judging validly for everyone from subjective bases is correct." (§38, 291). He also asserts that whilst the sensation of pleasure experienced by viewing a particular object is non-universalisable (since it is empirical), it is the proclamation that I find the object beautiful that draws necessary

problematic because his entire theory proclaims to make sense of this conflict. One could argue that critics ought not to differ in their views, and if they are different – then it is because one of them is judging incorrectly (this is could be similar to having disinterest as a pre-requisite). But this is not a line of thinking which he develops (at least in *OST*) beyond providing a list of attributes good critics should have, making them superior to bad critics (228). There is debate within the literature about whether real disagreement about beauty/non-beauty can occur in the first place amongst true judges, or whether it is only the degree to which an object is beautiful which critics find themselves disagreeing. This discussion usually centres around whether the notion of true critics make sense in and of itself and/or suffers from a circularity or vicious regress (see Savile 1982, Carroll 1984).

universal agreement. In other words, I am entitled to demand that liking from everyone (§37, 289). This demand is subjectively universal, i.e., we only ever make this judgment for ourselves, but it is supposed to apply to everyone. Hence, my liking for the particular aesthetic

[139] Kant insists that it is only ever the particular object which we make an aesthetic judgment about, i.e., we only ever refer to this particular rose, when judging it to be beautiful – we do not refer to roses in general (§8, 215). This particular is obviously particular to the individual rose, but it cannot solve the 'particularity problem' as it does not address the issue of how this particular judgment applies universally.

object should be your liking for the object, but intuitively it is unclear in what way this can be motivated without an appeal to objective properties or determinate concepts.[140] Whilst it is understandable that occasionally someone may not agree with my judgment due to a failure to be disinterested (for example) but why *should* anyone agree with my judgment, by which I mean have an identical response?

It would seem rather odd for Kant to make this discovery of an a priori theory of taste and then fail to provide any illustrative examples of beauty deduced from this theory.[141] Confusingly, Kant does, in fact, reference many examples of beauty throughout the entire third *Critique*: "Flowers are free natural beauties." (§16, 229), "A flower… e.g., a tulip is considered beautiful…" (§17, note 236), "…the beautiful shape of a wildflower, a bird, an insect…" (§42, 299), "…beautiful formations in the realm of organized nature… Consider flowers, blossoms, even the shapes of entire plants…" or "…consider the grace we see in the structure of various types of animals…harmonious combination of colours…pheasants. Crustaceans, insects, down to the commonest flowers (§58, 349). Kant also points to the beauty "…in both the shape and the colour of flowers, plumage, and sea-shells." and further specifies "…mineral crystallisations, e.g., spars, hematite, and aragonite, often result in exceedingly beautiful shapes." (§58, 349).

These numerous examples found in Kant's third *Critique* are often incredibly specific; you will notice, however, that the examples I have pointed out relate only to the beauty of

[140] See my discussion about the flaws with motivating this with an appeal to harmony of the faculties at 6.2 and also in Chapters 7-8 in my discussion about trying to take the harmony of the faculties as a basis for building an asymmetrical disharmonious state to accommodate ugliness.

[141] In Lectures on Anthropology Kant is stated as saying that whilst the good is considered in its universality, "…the beautiful is considered in particularity." (Mrongovius, 25:1333). Although Kant insists that a pure judgment of taste is universally valid, it holds true only for particular cases hence being subjectively based.

nature. Although Kant does give examples of fine art, his focus is almost exclusively directed towards natural beauty; and this is by no means a mistake.[142] Kant's emphasis on natural beauty stems from a distinction between pure and impure forms of beauty (or adherent/accessory and non-adherent depending upon the translation chosen). This distinction between the two forms of beauty means that that artistic beauty is much more difficult to 'appreciate' as pure (§51) and since the deduction of taste attempts to prove the a priori nature of pure judgments of beauty, this is where I too will maintain my focus.[143]

Kant's examples of natural beauty may seem to put a pin in the argument that he does not wish to extend his aesthetic account to particular instances of beauty. Nevertheless, even if it were true that Kant does not give specific examples of beauty, this would still leave open the question as to whether he ought to have accounted for them. The epistemological value of a theory that claims to deduce an a priori judgment but ends up being unable to give concrete examples (and is ultimately unknowable regardless) is, for all intents and purposes – negligible. If all that Kant's deduction proves is that people can find things beautiful, what does this add to our current level of understanding? As it is, Kant argues for the autonomy and singularity of judgments of taste (which lends credence to Allison's interpretation) whilst at the same time giving many very specific examples of objects which are beautiful (which appears to conflict with the idea that he did not intend his theory to come of particulars). I see this conflict as a manifestation of the subjectivity/objectivity debate, those who would have Kant come to

particulars or would discount his theory as fatally flawed because it cannot appear to find

[142] Kant quotes Frederick the Great, Homer and Wieland are mentioned specifically, (§47, 309) poetry in particular captures his imagination, "…must confess that a beautiful poem has always given me pure delight." (Note 63, §53, 328).

[143] This has been contested by (for instance) Kemal who argues that artistic beauty for Kant is the paradigm object of aesthetic contemplation (1986). Yet, artistic beauty can rarely be seen as an example of pure beauty, since pure beauty must make no reference to concepts, and this is an essential element of artistic beauty (see §48, 311 in particular). Artistic beauty is most often adherent (and therefore impure) and when Kant refers to non-adherent artistic beauty it is nearly always in reference to non-figurative work e.g., filagree or floral wallpaper (§16, 229).

Kant's lack of objectivity in general to be a flaw. Likewise, those that do not see the 'particularity problem' as a problem at all are amongst those more willing to accept that this is a necessary limitation of any subjective theory of taste. The options are that Kant does not come to particulars and this is not a problem (Allison), or Kant does not come to particulars, and this is a problem that needs to be resolved (Chignell).[144] These are two of the main positions with regards to this issue, but there is a third option that attempts to show that Kant does come to particulars and that he is successful in doing so. If this argument is successful, then it would significantly increase the intuitive appeal of Kant's theory, given that it would now have a way to discriminate between judgments and to point to particular examples of universally valid beauty, which is Chignell's specific issue.[145]

5.8 Potential particulars

Paul Guyer contends that although Kant demonstrates the capacity for human aesthetic experience in all cognitively functioning persons, he does not show that all such humans should have the same response to any particular object, i.e., that the particular judgment must be assumed as being universally a priori (1997, see pages 277-330). Guyer is also dismissive of any attempt to bring Kant's theory to bear on particulars through a discussion of proportionate attunement (282-283), which would simply push the problem back a step, i.e., Kant is still unable to demonstrate the success of subjective universalism and the possibility of coming to

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[144] Although Chignell sees the failure of coming to particulars as a serious issue for Kant's theory, he also thinks that the deduction can be saved by appealing to the idea of the 'universal voice' (2007, 432).

[145] For the sake of clarity, I would like to make it clear what I mean by 'coming to particulars'. In terms of Chignell's argument and the responses it has generated, particulars refer to an aesthetic judgment which can be universally (yet subjectively) valid. When I use this phrase, I am referring to the idea of finding a particular aesthetic judgment which can justifiably (within Kant's deduction) demand universal assent i.e., that others will have an identical response as myself (assuming that my judgment follows Kant's deduction). I ought to also make a distinction between disagreement over the justifiability of universal assent in a given instance (which would rely on understanding whether a judgment is pure or not) and the adjudication of conflicting judgments in particular cases. Coming to particulars in the second way (judging conflicts in judgment) is not something which Kant can account for, beyond trying to make sure that the judgment is pure in the first place (which is perhaps easier said than done).

particulars for oneself and then have this to be universally valid.[146] In earlier work, Guyer also claimed that the deduction of taste must be considered apart from any analogies between beauty and morality (1979, 261) and, as such, any attempt to rescue Kant from the particularity problem by such means results in failure. However, in later work, Guyer reconsiders this position, especially in reference to Anthony Savile's approach, which is to be found primarily in *Aesthetic Reconstructions* (1987).[147]

Savile's approach attempts to demonstrate how people could justifiably demand agreement about an object's beauty by appealing to the notion of aesthetic ideas and their relationship with moral ideas. (1987, 170). Guyer notes that Savile's approach shows considerable promise, stating that "…only one author has directly confronted the issue of how a connection between aesthetics and morality…" could allow Kantian aesthetics to come to particulars (1993, 17). Chignell takes Guyer's brief discussion of this alternative approach to symbolise some kind of advocacy of Savile's position (1998, 19), but there is nothing to suggest that this is any more than an acknowledgement of a particularly notable line of enquiry. The basic thrust of Savile's argument is as follows; an art object has a certain subject matter or

[146] Chignell, Guyer and Savile are all commenting on Kant's ability to justify subjective universalism, all referring to (in the first instance) the possibility of coming to particulars for oneself and then to have this be universally valid. Their discussions of particularity all centre around the problem of subjective universalism and how it is possible for one's subjective experience to provide grounding for particular aesthetic objects being a priori universal. Whilst all of these authors approach the issue from slightly different perspectives; the crux of their discussion remains the same i.e., where is Kant's justification for this and does it make sense? Questions of could, would and should are bundled into the discussion depending upon the interest of the writer, but these distinctions need not be a major concern to my aims, because if Kant had demonstrated either that we actually do, should or would have justification for the universal validity of pure aesthetic judgments then I would happily admit to this flaw being less pernicious than originally anticipated. As it is, Kant only demonstrates that pure aesthetic judgments are possible for the individual and not that the judgment can command universal assent actually, hypothetically or normatively. Admittedly, there is more room to believe that this could be possible hypothetically in certain circumstances, but Kant's 'proof' of this is limited to "Well, everyone has the same cognitive powers, so in theory…" which does demonstrate the veracity of universal (a priori) validity.

[147] The same can also be said for Guyer's views on disinterestedness, which change substantially between earlier and later work (see Guyer's 2012 'Kant and the Experience of Freedom').

theme, this theme relates to an aesthetic idea (which also then relates to a moral idea), and this is what allows the judgment to be demanded of everyone else (1987, 168). This requires a bit

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of unpacking, especially because (even at first glance) it appears to violate Kant's demand for non-conceptuality. Surely Savile cannot be advocating such a wholesale disregard for such an important part of Kant's theory whilst also maintaining that it is consistent with Kant's position? For Kant, maintenance of concept-neutrality is an essential part of ensuring the purity of aesthetic judgments; the introduction of aesthetic ideas and themes sounds intuitively like the introduction of some kind of conceptuality, especially of the problematic determinate kind. If we must refer to an aesthetic idea (which sounds pretty conceptual) in order to justify the universal validity of a subjective judgment of taste, then the concern here is – how can it also be Kantian?

Savile argues that successful artwork involves a given theme and that this theme presents an aesthetic idea (1987, 181). An aesthetic idea offers a unique way of thinking about a rational idea (it is a rational idea represented physically) which makes it valuable to human experience; it is our awareness of this presentation of a rational idea that will be shared by other people, and this leads to an agreement about certain specific aesthetic objects (177-181). Savile claims that this does not lead to a cognitive account of Kant's aesthetic theory; he distinguishes between determinative cognition (associated with reason) and the indeterminative involvement of concepts in taste (2006, 452). He argues that whilst determinate decision involves an appeal to proofs and rules, and this is "…laughably far from being the case here." (Ibid.,). In this later article, Savile also moves in a more nuanced direction, stating that "The beautiful object is thought of as one that invites the active construction of a thought-saturated representation." (448). Here, Savile still makes use of the notion of aesthetic ideas and themes, noting that "Kant envisages the typical beautiful work of art (a poem, a statue, a painting) being structured around

some large theme of significance for our inner lives." (451). Therefore, we can come to particulars because there exists a sphere of common sense shared by all humans, and this is what contributes to a demand for universal necessity. Guyer also notes that "… Kant thinks that our aesthetic experiences and judgments can bridge the gulf between our…intellectual understanding of the requirements…of morality and a palpable, sensuous representation of those requirements and conditions." (2006, 429).

The link between aesthetics and morality is one which Kant repeatedly stresses throughout the third *Critique*, maintaining, for instance, that beauty is not just *a* symbol but *the* symbol of morality (§59). Savile claims that an object which expresses aesthetic ideas is both a reason that people should engage with it and a basis for claiming it to be beautiful (1987, 169). Thus Savile argues, any cognitively normal person, under ideal conditions, will react positively to an artwork that displays a unique presentation of a rational idea (Savile links this to moral ideas) and this reaction (of claiming it to be beautiful) about a particular object could be a priori imputed to everyone else (1987, 185).[148] Part of this argument is in line with Kant's thoughts, i.e., all people who (under ideal conditions) come to see an object as beautiful can demand universal assent. Kant holds that theoretically speaking, under ideal conditions, i.e., disinterested and pure, people would have the same response to the same objects, but in reality, there is no way of determining whether even our own response is pure, let alone anyone else's response. Kant seems unable to demonstrate the veracity of the intersubjective validity of pure judgments of taste, in part because the basis of a pure judgment lies in a subjective mental state,

[148] Savile posits that an idea of reason (1987, 168) is offered in a successful object of beauty. But what does this mean? For Kant a rational idea includes moral ideas, and Savile uses this to claim that we have an interest in aesthetic objects (and aesthetic ideas which represent moral ideas) because they relate to our interest in ethics and practical morality. Chignell extends this to "almost all" rational ideas, as he sees no reason that we must reference only the specifically moral (2007, 420). The issue with Chignell's linking of *almost all* rational ides to aesthetic ideas, is that Kant is only truly explicit about the link with moral ideas, for instance in the last paragraph of the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment Kant states "Taste is an ability to judge the way moral ideas are made sensible." (§60, 356) and that the intersubjective universal validity relates not only to the individual pleasure but also to our increase in receptivity to moral feeling, arising from the expression of moral ideas through aesthetic attributes and the like (ibid.,).

i.e., pleasure. This, in turn, rests upon the formal purposiveness of the presentation of the object to our cognitive faculties, specifically the imagination and the understanding when they are in free play. Savile tries to avoid this horn of the dilemma by positing that the pleasure comes

about in response to the concrete manifestation of an aesthetic idea (i.e., moral idea) that can and ought to be recognised by all.[149]

This approach is problematic for several reasons, most obviously because it flies in the face of Kant's insistence on non-conceptuality and disinterestedness. In order to make a pure aesthetic judgment, one must not have an interest in the existence of the object in question or have to appeal to any determinate concepts. Under Savile's interpretation, we would surely have to take a direct interest in the object if we are to establish whether or not an object exhibits the successful manifestation of a rational idea? Our interest would already be piqued given the very explicit connection Savile makes between aesthetics and morality, meaning that we would have a direct interest in appreciating beauty based on its instantiation of moral ideas.[150] Relatedly, when making an aesthetic judgment based upon the success of an artwork's presentation of aesthetic ideas, we would have to refer to a framework of rules. No longer is the judgment based upon the formal purposiveness of the object but upon the content that said object displays and its ability to present a rational idea successfully. Savile argues that the pleasure which is

[149] To be clear, I do not require that any of these accounts or solutions definitively prove that the aesthetic judgment actually will be guaranteed universally. This is not something which Kant claims to prove, and so any interpretation of Kant which attempts to show that this can be derived from Kant's deduction. The question at stake here is not whether the actual agreement is guaranteed, but whether we can justify the intersubjective universality endorsed by Kant, i.e., how does a pure judgment about a specific object become a declaration "…valid for mankind"? (§60, 356). Coming to particulars about aesthetic judgment involves illustrating and explaining why you and I should have the same response to the same aesthetic object. Just because we share the same cognitive capacities and are observing the same object, does not mean that we will come to the same judgment, especially if this judgment is founded only on our individual experience of pleasure. This is why Savile, Chignell and Guyer are so keen to find clues in other parts of Kant's third *Critique*, which can help justify the intersubjective validity. In Savile's case, he draws our attention to the potential of moral ideas residing in successful art, in the hope of supplementing the gaps in the deduction.

[150] Savile almost exclusively focuses on the 'rational idea' being a moral one (1987, 170). However, as Chignell also points out there is little reason for this to be the case (2007, 420). This is also part of why Savile's argument lacks plausibility (by maintaining the moral connection).

involved in an aesthetic judgment does not arise because we can recognise that the aesthetic ideas presented help to meet a need (which would make it interested). Instead, he argues that it is a pleasure in the object "…as it presents itself to us in meeting the need…What is so pleasing about it is the thought it offers in meeting the need it does." (1987,

177). The substantial distinction Savile proposes to offer fails to materialise, and we are left with a distinction that is far too tenuous to provide any real escape from the problem of interest.[151]

Chignell himself, although critical of Savile's attempt at coming to particulars via a connection between aesthetics and morality, still believes that this is the correct way to go about it but disagrees about Savile's appeal to aesthetic ideas – because of its incompatibility with Kant's insistence on disinterest and non-conceptuality. Chignell instead appeals to the notion of aesthetic attributes to illustrate the possibility of coming to particulars about aesthetic judgments. Chignell acknowledges that under a Kantian framework, aesthetic pleasure is derived from the representation of the object's subjective purposiveness for our cognitive faculties and does not directly involve any moral or empirical interests (1998, 20).[152] However, he also claims that we can better understand the free play of imagination and understanding through the notion of aesthetic attributes and, in turn, their relationship with moral ideas. Chignell maintains that aesthetic attributes, which relate to the rational theme of an aesthetic object (CPJ, §5: 315-16). Pleasure is derived from the experience of running through the representations, i.e., the aesthetic attributes, through one's imagination in relation to the

[151] Kant identifies aesthetic ideas as being a form of intuition which prompts much thought, they do not involve determinate concepts. Aesthetic ideas stand in direct contrast to rational ideas which cannot be understood solely through intuition (§49, 314). Savile's argument has problem with remaining non-conceptual and disinterested, most obviously because an appeal to rational ideas brings with it an implicit appeal to determinate concepts which by their very nature invalidate a subject's ability to be disinterested.

[152] Chignell does acknowledge that whilst empirical interests are involved in our experience of beauty, they are technically external to the aesthetic judgment itself (1998, 20).

understanding, "…this is what is it is to have an aesthetic idea, and it is what gives us characteristically aesthetic pleasure." (Ibid., 427).[153] Chignell's interpretation contrasts with Savile's inasmuch as he tries to maintain the non-conceptuality of aesthetic judgments in a way that Savile simply cannot due to his conceptual understanding of aesthetic ideas. How Savile understands an aesthetic idea necessitates an awareness within the subject that would

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contravene the requirement of disinterestedness. Savile connects the aesthetic attribute to the rational idea, which in turn, he thinks of as necessarily moral (1987, 170-171).[154] Whereas Chignell, who still makes use of the notion of aesthetic ideas, can avoid this problem by more loosely interpreting it and linking it more closely with aesthetic attributes and the harmonisation of the faculties.[155] Chignell also maintains that the rational ideas involved do not need to be linked to the realm of morality but could be extended to nearly all rational ideas (2007, 420). Still, though, the question remains, how is this supposed to help us come to particulars about aesthetic judgments?

Chignell holds that although a particular object may provoke different people to cite differing aesthetic attributes as being 'responsible' for its beauty, a judgment of an object's beauty may legitimately be imputed to everybody because it is rich enough in aesthetic attributes to provoke some set of these associations in each person who was to view it (1998,

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[153] Crowther has a similar account in 'Defining Art' (2007, Chapter 3, 67-87).

[154] As Savile endorses a content interpretation of the third *Critique's* deduction, his approach will always be in conflict with Kant's emphasis on the form of the aesthetic experience, rather than the aesthetic object's actual existence. More pressingly in this instance, is the problem of interest generated by Savile's focus upon the themes, ideas and attributes contained within a work of art. Savile himself admits that when a subject considers her thoughts about an aesthetic object, that they "…shall not be able to do so without making reference back to the detailed embodiment that [the rational idea] is given in the work…" (170–1). It just so happens that in this instance the rational ideas are also moral ones which have added interest due to our moral and ethical nature as humans.

[155] Chignell uses two of Kant's examples (the Creator-God Jupiter painting, and a poem written by Frederick the Great) to illustrate how this interpretation allows for a superior understanding of them (1998, 22-23). In the case of the poem, which Kant declares to be beautiful and universally valid (we must people to impute this judgment to everyone) there are a myriad of aesthetic attributes presented, often as logical attributes e.g., sunsets, human death, which to the reader under ideal conditions will stimulate the imagination to run through a sequence of attributes, which more broadly associate with the theme of the work – a rational/moral idea (Kant's discussion of the poem is at §5, 315).

23). Chignell gets away with maintaining Kant's non-conceptuality because he does not insist that each person will experience the same set of 'non-exponible' associations only that, if an artwork is beautiful, then it will contain a myriad of aesthetic attributes, and everybody (under ideal circumstances) will also find the particular object beautiful. If he had insisted that everyone will (or at the least, could) experience the same set of associations, then he would have been hard-pressed to find non-determinative reasons to justify this. The role of the

disinterested art critic (the only legitimate type) under Chignell's interpretation is to help others recognise the attributes displayed in any given aesthetic object, whilst pointing out various prejudices which might make an interested observer err in making their judgment (1998, 23).[156]

This is an interesting idea, which is based upon a compelling interpretation of the third *Critique;* however, there are a number of problems that still befall Chignell's interpretation – superior though it is to Savile's. One of my concerns with this account of pure aesthetic judgments is that it relies far too heavily on the connection between morality and aesthetics in order to justify the subjective universality of particular aesthetic judgments.[157] As I have stated in Chapter 2.3, Kant insists in the Comment at §38 that the deduction has been completed. This does not easily reconcile with Chignell's attempt to justify particular aesthetic judgments by referencing Kant's writing after this point. Of course, it could be conceded that Chignell is not attempting to defend Kant's justification of the deduction of taste as a whole (which he takes for granted) but only to illustrate how, under his interpretation, particular judgments can be considered as legitimately subjectively universal. Nevertheless, can the two issues be pulled

[156] The critic holds no special epistemological place in Kant's system, as they do in Humean aesthetics, they can offer guidance, but the judgment must be autonomous for each individual.

[157] Chignell relies upon the notion that aesthetic ideas relate to rational ideas and that the rational ideas are somehow expressed through aesthetic attributes. Beautiful art (for instance) contains so many of these attributes that people will find it beautiful, whether or not they can (unconsciously) identify one or twenty of these attributes – there are enough present to demand universal assent/justify intersubjective universality.

apart in such a way? I would answer in the negative. On its own, the appeal to aesthetic attributes makes much sense, particularly in reference to works of art, but it fails to provide a solution to the particularity problem, as it merely restates the problem in a slightly new form. In other words, we now have to justify the intersubjective validity of the aesthetic attributes (and their counterparts: the rational ideas) involved, as well as the intersubjectivity validity of the aesthetic judgment itself.[158]

The problem briefly stated is that Kant's deduction shows how everyone can find some aesthetic objects beautiful, but not that people will find the same object beautiful. The deduction does not guarantee that people will have the response to the same object, primarily because the purity of a person's judgment can never be taken for granted. In other words, whilst theoretically, people under ideal conditions will agree on the beauty of a particular object – this does not tend to happen in reality. Chignell's approach fails to change the outcome of the deduction substantially; we still cannot demonstrate that the assent of others will be similar when it comes to particular aesthetic objects. Chignell does illustrate why it is that certain objects are likely to be found beautiful, but he cannot go any further than this without appealing to the involvement of determinative concepts. Chignell argues that we can 'particularise' pure judgments of beauty because certain objects are so rich in aesthetic attributes that even though people will respond to different attributes, they should still find it beautiful. However, this does not address the problem of purity, as it relates to universalising particular judgments. The reason that judgments cannot be universalised practically (as opposed to theoretically) is that the purity of the judgment cannot be ensured: this remains the case under Chignell's interpretation. In order to be able to justify his position, Chignell comes dangerously close to

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[158] We also create the issue of trying to avoid objectivising aesthetic judgment with regards to aesthetic attributes and rational ideas. It would be exceptionally easy to lapse into making a mental checklist of the aesthetic attributes we need to identify in order for an object to be considered beautiful. In fact, it is hard to see how any appeal to aesthetic attributes can completely avoid lapsing into borderline objectivity.

incorporating a determinative conceptual element into a pure judgment of taste.[159] Chignell's interpretation also leans towards objectivism (and formalism), if aesthetic attributes are responsible for the pleasure derived from an aesthetic experience, and these are discoverable. Then why is it not possible for a disinterested critic to discover them, and then label the artwork as beautiful, and for this to be considered objectively valid? It is difficult to see how

successfully appealing to the notion of aesthetic attributes in order to solve the particularity problem can be done whilst maintaining non-conceptuality and disinterestedness. In the end, even if we concede much of the argument to Chignell, we still find ourselves in much the same position as we started.[160]

5.9 Conclusion

The claims Kant's deduction makes about the nature of aesthetic judgments are unusual within much of the literature; this can be seen when contrasting his theory with both rationalists and empiricists, including Hume. In this chapter, I have provided some context to the notion of subjective universalism and highlighted why Kant's advocacy of this approach causes serious problems for the veracity of the deduction. I have considered one specific problem to Kant's brand of subjective universalism, namely, the particularity problem. This problem boils down to justifying how aesthetic judgments about particular instances of beauty can speak with a universal voice. As it stands, I am unconvinced that Savile or Chignell's approaches help to

[159] Chignell does not argue that we must be aware of the aesthetic attributes and the rational ideas which they represent, in any given aesthetic object (this would be closer to Savile's position) only that it is the aesthetic attributes which invokes the free play of a faculties. Nevertheless, basing the subjective universality of aesthetic judgments on the idea of aesthetic attributes (which Kant never seeks to establish a priori) is hugely problematic. What work are these aesthetic attributes doing in a pure judgment beauty? How do we establish their existence? How do we know that, if people are responding to different aesthetic attributes, that they are still going to come to the same conclusion? Do all aesthetic attributes have to be beautiful? All of these questions are left unanswered, but I will not press them here, given that I have already established the limitations of this interpretation of Kant's aesthetics.

[160] Both Savile and Chignell prioritise human-made art over natural beauty, which contradicts Kant's focus on natural beauty in the third *Critique*. Chignell does acknowledge the limitations of his interpretation (1998, 23-24) whilst maintaining that his approach is better able to understand the aesthetic ideas which beautiful nature generates and make sense of Kant's prioritisation of natural over artistic beauty.

explain how (in a Kantian way) a judgment of pure beauty can be intersubjectively valid (as claimed by Kant). Appeals to aesthetic attributes, aesthetic ideas and rational ideas appear to create more questions without readily available answers. At the same time, these approaches potentially fail to maintain Kant's strict disinterestedness and non-conceptuality. In the next chapter, I will continue to explore the issues created by Kant's adherence to the subjective universality of aesthetic judgment – in an attempt to find a satisfactory answer to the questions generated.

Chapter 6: Conceptual objectivity, communicability, and the continued particularity problem

6.1 Chapter summary

In the previous chapter, I focused on the necessity of subjective universalism for Kant's aesthetic deduction. I highlighted the unusual nature of Kant's combination of objectivity and subjectivity before discussing the failure of Kant to accommodate instances of particular beauty which can be justified as universally valid. Since Kant's deduction claims to uncover the a priori basis of aesthetic judgment and prove the universal validity (§34, 286) of such judgements, the inability to do so would provide pretty compelling evidence for its failure as a whole. In this chapter, I will further explore the role of subjectivity and objectivity, with specific reference to the notion of conceptual objectivity. I will consider several interpretations of the veracity and coherence of Kant's position, particularly those discussed by Ameriks and Ginsborg, who lie on different ends of the spectrum. My aim in this chapter is to understand whether the particular brand of aesthetic judgment endorsed by Kant can be defended against claims of its failure, especially against a background of understanding the role of subjectivity/objectivity. I will explore whether Kant's aesthetic deduction can succeed through

the abandonment of one or more of its (non-essential?) tenets or whether such relinquishment undermines Kant's deduction in the first place. I will also consider whether Kant's deduction implicitly requires a preliminary step or whether the notions of harmony, pleasure and communicability offer a way to interpret the deduction as successful in achieving its aims and overcoming the particularity problem.

6.2 Potential revisionism

In the previous chapter, I noted the importance of distinguishing between interpretations of Kant which attempt to adhere to Kant's methods and intentions, compared to those (such as my own) which prefer to salvage what can be salvaged rather than acting as a Kantian apologist. I mentioned Karl Ameriks' 'mildly revisionist' approach in order to illustrate this difference, but I mention Ameriks again now to explore his position as it relates to Kant's potential objectivity.[161] Karl Ameriks approaches the problems surrounding Kant's third *Critique* in a pragmatist fashion (as it is commonly understood and not the philosophical position). Ameriks potential solution gets around the problem of particularity (and the success of the deduction more broadly) by promoting the objectification of judgments of taste. Ameriks offers an interpretation of the *Critique of Judgment* which gives judgments of taste the same epistemological status as empirical judgments, leading to the categorisation of Kant as an aesthetic objectivist. Despite Kant's best efforts to stay clear of objectivism, Ameriks claims that the most sympathetic way to understand Kant's deduction is through applying an objectivist lens to the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment. He maintains that the need for a

[161] In this instance I take Ameriks to be a classic revisionist. Although he describes himself as only performing mild revisionism, it is difficult at times to reconcile this with the suggestions he is making (1998, 43-47). [167] His position diverges sharply from Kant's own, yet Ameriks himself admits that interrogating the disinterestedness of our judgment may be "…handy as a short-cut…" to determining the purity of the judgment (1983, 5). Although he is quick to emphasise the limitations of such an approach, and the trivial nature of any inclusion of disinterest in an aesthetic account. To be clear, there is nothing intrinsically wrong with being interested in the outcome of a judgment, clearly, we have an interest in moral judgments, and this is not seen as problematic within Kant's moral philosophy. Even in Kantian aesthetics, taking an interest in the judgment is not forbidden or impossible, it is only in the making of a pure aesthetic judgment where interest would be a hinderance. Kant distinguishes between the merely sensuously, rationally or conceptually interested (sensuous and moral

deduction of taste is better explained with reference to an objective conception of taste rather than the brand of intersubjectivity endorsed by Kant (2003, 285). Kant's adhesion to neither objectivity nor subjectivity but rather an unusual combination of both draws much criticism, but it is Kant's commitment to non-conceptualism which Ameriks finds most in need of sympathetic revision.

Although Ameriks acknowledges that the bedrock of Kant's deduction of taste lies upon the conditions of non-conceptuality and necessary universality (1983, 5), he also argues that it is possible to maintain a universally valid form of aesthetic judgment without stressing the nonconceptuality, particularity (individual cases) or disinterestedness of the judgment: all of which Kant insists upon (ibid., 16).[167] Instead, Ameriks argues that aesthetic features can be

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considered at least as objective as ordinary secondary qualities like colour, and as such, the judgments themselves can be considered at least as objective as this (2003, 320). Ameriks holds that the requirements of non-conceptuality and subjectivity can be abandoned, and whilst decreasing the significance of Kant's aesthetic account: it can still help it to maintain its universality – albeit without the usual Kantian trimmings.

He argues that Kant's comments about non-conceptuality should not be taken at face value, by which he means that we should not ascribe modern-day meanings to terms Kant used but instead read them as complicated shorthand for notions that require much unpacking (2003, 309). Ameriks is primarily concerned with finding a way of retaining many of Kant's insights into aesthetics (including the justification of the deduction) whilst incorporating a more pragmatic analysis in order to avoid some of the problematic parts of his aesthetics, including the problem of particularity and in explaining how a judgment can be declared universally valid yet not conceptual or resting on sensual or moral grounds.

Ameriks claim that judgments of taste can be reconciled with the use of concepts contradicts Kant's contention that the pleasure in an aesthetic judgment is a result of the mere act of judging prior to the use of any concept (§37, 289). So, what exactly is left of Kant at the end of this revised account, when the product of Ameriks' tinkering potentially bears little resemblance to the conclusion Kant makes after the Deduction at §38? [162] The next few sections of this chapter will elucidate Ameriks' position and argue that introducing non-conceptuality to a judgment of taste violates certain tenets of Kant's deduction and is thus unsupported by my reading of the third *Critique*.

judgments respectively) but the purpose of the third *Critique* is to establish a distinctly different type of judgment. However, in the case of pure judgments of taste then if interest is involved, it becomes impure i.e., it cannot be applied universally a priori, or at least this is my reading of Kant.

6.3 Ameriks' understanding of Kant's non-conceptuality

Kant repeatedly emphasises that a judgment of taste ought to involve no concepts whatsoever. Early on in the third *Critique,* Kant states that what makes an aesthetic judgment so unique within his systematic philosophy is that it claims universal validity whilst also being based solely upon the subjective feeling of pleasure (Introduction VII, 187). In §5, Kant restates the following, which I have quoted at length, given its centrality to the discussion about objectivity and non-conceptuality.

> A judgment of taste, on the other hand, is merely contemplative, i.e., it is a judgment that is indifferent to the existence of the object: it [considers] the character of the object only by holding it up to our feeling of pleasure and displeasure. Nor is this contemplation, as such, directed to concepts, for a judgment of taste is not a cognitive

[162] Kant also argues that the third *Critique* aims "…to set forth and justify the subjective principle of taste as an a priori principle of the power of judgment." which in turn justifies the universal validity of a pure judgment of taste (§34, 286).

> judgment (whether theoretical or practical) and hence is neither based on concepts nor directed to them as purposes (§5, 209).

In this passage, Kant makes it clear that the basis of an aesthetic judgment involves more than just disinterest and subjectivity. In addition to these two necessary conditions, there is an added element – that of non-conceptuality. It is this non-conceptuality that Ameriks finds to be an even more radical part of Kantian aesthetics than either the requirement for disinterestedness or the necessity of sourcing the pure aesthetic judgment from a solely subjective mental state.[163] The idea of non-conceptuality is so far removed from our everyday understanding of the way things work that Kant could not possibly expect us to begin adopting a completely new and unintuitive set of rules in order to make an aesthetic judgment? Could he?

Ameriks posits that Kant's doctrine of non-conceptuality is much more extreme than 'straightforward' non-objectivity since our application of determinate concepts is a part of daily human life, the very 'idea' of non-conceptuality is non-intuitive (2003, 313). He argues that we must, therefore, try to resist the temptation of applying our "…common contemporary understanding of the term…" non-conceptuality to the term as it was used by Kant in the 1700s (ibid.,). Instead, Ameriks encourages readers to reconsider Kant's non-conceptualism, conceiving it not as a strict disavowal of the involvement of any type of concept in the making of an aesthetic judgment but rather as a claim about pure aesthetic judgments having more than a merely conceptual foundation.[164] Accordingly, the involvement of concepts (as long as they

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[163] Ameriks consideration of non-conceptuality as a radical part of Kant's aesthetic approach is perhaps slightly exaggerated for the sake of his argument. Kant does not insist upon total non-conceptuality. As only determinate concepts are excluded from a pure judgment of taste, Ameriks argument perhaps also becomes a little more plausible.

[164] Ameriks fails to properly explore the role of determinate and indeterminate concepts, which is partially why he finds Kant's non-conceptualism so radical. In other words, Kant's non-conceptualism is radical to Ameriks

are not applied in a determinate manner) does not have to comprise of a violation of the purity of an aesthetic judgment.

Furthermore, Ameriks argues that aesthetic qualities are objective, in the way secondary qualities, such as colours, are objective (2003, 320). Thus, making a judgment of an object's beauty makes reference to a quality of the object which can be objectively understood, in the same way as the colour green is used to describe the colour of grass. It is also necessarily universal since there can be no genuine disagreement about the colour of the grass in my garden. If a person describes it as blue, despite being the only one who thinks so, we can dismiss this view as an aberration. The objective basis of colour lies in its reference to our perception of electromagnetic waves, e.g., green is light with a wavelength of approximately 495 – 570nm (Helmenstine, 2020). Whilst we cannot (yet) determine whether someone sees the same thing we are, i.e., that our perception of green is identical, we *can* demand universal agreement about what wavelength roughly corresponds to the perception of green under ideal circumstances

(perfect human eyesight). Colour does not technically exist independent of experience, but wavelengths and photons exist whether we (or another animal/organism) exist or not.[165] The electromagnetic spectrum is capable of being measured (whether or not we have the capacity to do so), and therefore we can objectify (and conceptualise) the experience of colour.

The parallel drawn between colour (and other secondary qualities) with the human experience of beauty is clear: as neither exists independently of our experience, and we rely on intersubjective validity to derive objectivity for both of them. Of course, the obvious difference

because he appears to be taking Kant as denying the possibility of any conceptual involvement at all (when in reality it is only non-conceptuality with regards to the determinate kind).

[165] For all I know, my experience of the colour green may be experienced by everybody else as red. Yet, even if this were true, I would have no way of discovering the discrepancy. This relates more broadly to the problem of other minds generally, but it also highlights the problem of objectifying aesthetic judgment when it is so bound up with the subjective experience without reference to determinate concepts.

between beauty and other secondary qualities concerns their respective measurability.[166] Whilst we can point to the electromagnetic spectrum in order to pinpoint the wavelengths of certain colours, beauty resists such an empirical conceptualisation. Under Ameriks interpretation, we come close to saying that beauty (like colour) is at its most basic level, simply what the majority of true critics say it is - à la my interpretation of Hume in *OST*.[167]

One of Ameriks primary concerns with Kantian aesthetics is that the demarcation between aesthetic qualities and other types of properties is inadequately presented in the *Critique of Judgment.* In reality*,* aesthetic experience does not need to be considered as so far removed from our everyday ethical and empirical judgments. In other words, the deduction

probably seemed necessary to Kant precisely because he distinguished between properties, despite their potentially being little difference. When we consider that aesthetic experience is not so vastly different from non-aesthetic experience, the need for a separate deduction seems redundant. Even the apparent non-measurability of the aesthetic is not "…sufficient proof of its distinctiveness…" (2003, 301).

Ameriks argues that rather than trying to justify this demarcation between the aesthetic and non-aesthetic, we ought to admit that the difference between the two is not so wide, especially

[166] Beauty is also distinguished from colour in terms of its normative component (necessary universality) compared to colour's role as a descriptor. The problem with drawing such a distinction here however is that we still expect those who have the same cognitive faculties as ourselves to come to the same judgment about green apples being green and red ones being red. Whilst there is no deduction about judgments of colour, this does not mean that it is free from normativity. In an illuminating article, Ginsborg considers the idea of 'perceptual normativity' and the implications for Kant's aesthetic account (2006). Ginsborg argues that a subject may have experiential access to 'concepts' which help to determine the 'appropriateness' of a judgment about a particular object (403). This idea could equally apply to descriptive judgments about colour as much as about judgments about beauty, and although Ginsborg's account is far more complex than the simplistic version I have outlined above, it helps to illustrate my concern about pigeon-holing normative and descriptive judgments when much of the discussion takes place in a much 'greyer' area.

[167] Aberrations can also be confidently excluded from the discussion under this interpretation, e.g., colour-blind individuals need not impact the majority consensus, just as the opinions of those without taste cannot be held up as examples of disagreement within aesthetics.

if we are to retain the universal nature of a pure judgment of taste. Ameriks claims that there is no good reason to separate aesthetic qualities from secondary ones or to label the former as subjective and the latter as objective – based on a distinction that does not hold up (301-2). If we admit that the difference between the aesthetic and other types of judgment is not as wide as previously thought, and thus that they share similar kinds of conceptuality and objectivity, then we can avoid the problems associated with subjectivity. But at what cost? For Ameriks, it certainly entails the abandonment of the notion of non-conceptuality, along with the claim to subjectivity. He maintains that whilst it is true that we cannot determine beauty by concepts alone (no phenomenal features are determinable with reference to concepts alone), it would be impossible to make a judgment of taste without reference to any concepts whatsoever (1983, 12 and 2003, 301-2). According to Ameriks, the abandonment of the non-conceptuality clause ultimately helps to make more sense of the deduction, partially ridding it of its nonintuitive appeal. The deduction envisioned would be similar to those in the first *Critique*, which are comparatively less controversial.

6.4 Conceptuality in aesthetic judgment

There are a number of passages from the third *Critique* which seem to support Ameriks' interpretation of the deduction. In the case of interest, Kant famously differentiates between empirical and intellectual interest (§41-42), noting that whilst a pure judgment of taste must not have an interest as its determining basis, interest may be associated with a judgment of beauty after the judgment has been made (§41, 296). It is specified that the interest must, however, remain indirect, i.e., the interest arises after we have made the judgment only on the basis of the object's own account (namely the form of its subjective purposiveness to faculties).

Any interest, whether intellectual or empirical, ought to occur after the mere contemplation of an object's form has instantiated a judgment of beauty.[168]

This bears a noticeable similarity with the issue of conceptuality, specifically in Kant's differentiation between determinate and indeterminate concepts, which he uses in order to resolve the antimony of taste at §57 (see Chapter 1.4 for more information on Kant's distinction between types of concepts). Whilst concepts should not be the sole determining factor of aesthetic judgment, they do not necessarily have to be excluded completely. In the solution to the antinomy, Kant states that "A judgment of taste must refer to some concept or other, for otherwise, it could not possibly lay claim to necessary validity for everyone." (§57, 339). Concepts must be involved in an aesthetic judgment because without any concept whatever, the judgment would be incommunicable, and the universal theoretical validity would be unable to demand the necessary universal agreement which such a judgment requires in order to be a priori deduced. The only thing capable of being communicated universally is cognition, meaning that the basis of aesthetic judgment must, at its core, must, in some manner, be based upon cognition (§9, 217). However, Kant is clear that our experience of aesthetic presentation

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is only objective in the way that it relates to cognition, i.e., the mental state we find in relation to the presentational powers relates to cognition in general.

[168] An empirical interest in beauty, refers to an inclination inherent in human nature towards sociability, i.e., being able to communicate our feelings to other human beings (§41). Whereas an intellectual interest in beauty makes reference to the ability of such a judgment being determinable a priori by reason (§42). Rather confusingly, Kant also maintains that beauty ought not be based on interest or give rise to one, which seems to contradict the notions of empirical and intellectual interest occurring after the judgment of beauty is made. Here, it is important to again reiterate the distinction between indirect and direct interests, the latter of which cannot be involved with a pure judgment of taste. Problematically for Kant, this does not resolve the discrepancy, especially with his emphasis on disinterested judgment forming such a central part of the deduction. Under a sympathetic interpretation, we must lean heavily on the Kant's reliance on indirect interest, and its occurrence after the judgment has been made. Of course, the simple solution to this issue, would be to deny the purity of the judgment if an interest is involved, but Kant's claim that interest can be connected with a pure judgment of beauty prevents this from being a workable option.

However, Ameriks interpretation of this and other related passages is highly selective. According to Kant, a judgment of taste is not cognitive and thus cannot involve the use of determinate concepts; the concepts involved in a pure judgment of beauty are not ordinary empirical concepts of the understanding, related to an object's perfection but rather indeterminate ones.

> We have a merely aesthetic power of judgment, an ability to judge forms without using concepts and to feel in the mere judging of these forms a liking that we also make a rule for everyone, though our judgment is not based on an interest and also gives rise to none (§42, 300).

If we wish to admit Kant as a conceptualist about aesthetic judgments, then it can only ever be with reference to the very specific indeterminate concepts involved in aesthetic judgments, namely the supersensible substrate underlying all intuition (§57, 339). This would not satisfy the aesthetic conceptualist, who would demand more than indeterminate concepts as the conceptual basis of an aesthetic judgment. Of course, Ameriks wishes to claim more than this, arguing that Kant should be interpreted as a conceptualist in terms of there being an actual cognitive component to the judgment (2003, 302). Whilst an aesthetic judgment does involve an indeterminate concept, it cannot be based upon this or involved with the proving or objectivising of a judgment of taste. Ameriks reduces the use of an indeterminate concept to a form of cognitivism within Kantian aesthetics. This is an interpretation that must be resisted if Kant's intentions are to be respected, whether we agree with them or not. Kant flatly refuses to involve concepts on a determinate level, even though this means that the deduction's reach is limited in its ability to be proven beyond doubt or applied to particulars. In fact, Kant is adamant that the provability of aesthetic judgment is impossible via conceptual means. The extension of judgment to other people:

> …must be based on some concept or other, but this concept must be one that no intuition can determine, that does not permit us to cognize anything and hence does not permit us to prove a judgment of taste; such a mere concept is reason's pure concept of the supersensible underlying the object (as well as underlying the judging subject) as an object of sense and hence as appearance. (§57, 340).[169]

The kind of concepts involved in making an aesthetic judgment are only concepts in the broadest sense of the term. Aesthetic concepts may involve aesthetic and rational ideas (that is, rational ideas presented as aesthetic ones). The former being based on a subjective principle and the latter on an objective one. Neither of which has the capacity to yield cognition about an object: an aesthetic idea cannot become cognition because "…it is an intuition (of the imagination) for which an adequate concept can never be found." and rational idea (referred to a transcendental concept) cannot yield cognition either because it "…it contains a concept (of the supersensible) for which no adequate intuition can ever be given." (57, 343). The reluctance of Kant to come to any particulars about judgments of taste, in providing no specific realised examples and his vagueness about the ultimate justification for the aesthetic deduction (as lying in the supersensible metaphysical realm) ought to provide a major clue as to his awareness of the overall limitations of aesthetic philosophy.[170]

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[169] Kant's discussion of the 'supersensible substrate of humanity' as I have already touched upon (Chapter 1) is a point of controversy within the literature. I will not pursue this further here, but I do not think that it can be dismissed as a mere confusion or unnecessary addition on Kant's part, as it is intimated by those such as Eva Schaper (1992, 380). One point worthy of note is that since the only concept which Kant does involve in aesthetic judgment is an indeterminate one, its introduction presents far more questions than it answers. Here, I think Kant is aware of the limitations of aesthetic philosophy, but the question remains – why introduce a new 'concept' which is by its very nature unprovable, in order to justify a type of a priori judgment formerly considered as impossible by Kant, which at its core involves judgments which are also unprovable. However, further discussion on this point will not benefit my analysis about the conceptuality of Kant's deduction.

[170] Of course, there would be no issue for Kant to declare this or that object as beautiful, as he does multiple times throughout the *Critique of Judgment* (usually hypothetically) The problem here is that Kant cannot come to

6.5 The objectivity of qualities

I will now return to a discussion of the potential objectivity of secondary qualities. This is necessary in order to further highlight Kant's position about the potential objectivity of judgments of taste. As previously discussed, Ameriks believes that Kant is best interpreted as being a conceptual objectivist; in particular, he asserts that aesthetic qualities ought to be considered at least as objective as colour. It is important to note that Kant makes a crucial distinction between aspects of the quality of colour, which prevents us from applying this parallel to beauty, and indeed, prevents colour from being fully objective. The actual colour belongs to the realm of objective sensation, but our response to the colour involves an entirely subjective sensation, i.e., that of the agreeableness of feeling (§3, 207).[171] So too, in making an aesthetic judgment, the object in question is not what we find beautiful; instead, it is the form of its subjective purposiveness to our cognitive faculties. In other words, the judgment is based upon the subjective sensation of feeling rather than the objective sensation of the perception of the object. Although in the case of beauty, it is not the agreeableness that matters, but the purity of the judgment of pleasure garnered through the free play of the faculties (ibid., 207-208).

Kant's discussion of other secondary qualities such as gustatory taste and smell helps to highlight this distinction. Kant argues that our sense of smell does not carry with it the aesthetic quality of universality, i.e., its claim to universal liking (§8, 215). A judgment of beauty is universally valid because it necessitates common assent; to say that something is beautiful is to simply repeat the claim of a universal liking of the object (§32, 281). Whereas a judgment about smell or taste amounts to stating whether we find a certain smell or taste agreeable, and we cannot demand agreement from others. Just as we cannot be sure that we see the same colour when looking at a particular object, we cannot be certain of other sensations being

[171] I will discuss Ameriks objection to regarding feeling as entirely subjective further on.

particulars about the aesthetic object itself, because this is an object of the imagination. The added issue as continues to be discussed in this chapter is the ability of the deduction to successfully justify how multiple people will have the same aesthetic response to the same object.

universally experienced in response to the same object, especially when the basis is purely subjective, as is the case in a judgment of taste.[172] But if it is the case that we lend a certain notion of objectivity to our experience of colour, and it is also true that colour and aesthetic taste are similar in being neither entirely subjective nor objective, why then can we not apply the same level of objectivity to judgments of taste?

Ameriks would hold that we can and that we ought to mildly revise Kant's positioning in favour of this new interpretation. He dismisses the appeal to limited intersubjectivity (as opposed to objectivity) of beauty, arguing that since Kant treats ordinary secondary qualities as intersubjectively valid too: we cannot appeal to this in order to justify the unique nature of aesthetic judgment. In other words, according to Ameriks, the special nature of aesthetic judgments and their claim to subjective universality require more than the limited intersubjective validity Kant is read as endorsing. Instead, Ameriks argues that it is better to think of aesthetic qualities as at least as objectively valid as other ordinary secondary qualities (1983, 12). But are ordinary secondary qualities identical to the quality of beauty? Kant's discussion in §39 On the Communicability of a Sensation becomes helpful in answering this question.

Much is made of the notion that feelings are subjective and, thus, that a judgment entirely based on a feeling can never be considered objective. Ameriks argues that this is not necessarily the case (1983, 14). Kant distinguishes between sensation proper (*Sinnesempfindung*) and a sensation based on feeling, which is not a sensation proper based upon the fact that it does not have its own 'sense', as opposed to eyesight, smell, taste (§39 291, and note 19). Aesthetic

[172] See Chapter 4.2 for a brief note on food as art.

judgment is based upon a subjective feeling of pleasure, and it is not a sensation 'proper' as Kant would understand it since the sensation proper refers to what

is material as opposed to formal (ibid.,). In a judgment of a sensation proper, we might expect that the only way we can be assured of the universal communicability of the sensation is by assuming that everybody's sense is like our own. However, we cannot assume this in all instances of even sensations which do involve a special perception system. For example, those who are anomic or colour blind cannot communicate smell or certain colours. Pleasure derived through instances of the agreeable/disagreeableness of a scent cannot be universalised/demand agreement because they are based only upon a passive enjoyment, which is not the same in all persons. The experience of beauty is also based upon a feeling and is not considered 'sensation proper', but it is universalisable because it is only based on mere reflection and that which is common to everyone, i.e., the subjective conditions of cognition in the first place. Aesthetic (and, for that matter, moral) qualities are not like secondary qualities such as those mentioned above. The qualities themselves do not cause a particular response in the subject; instead, the object elicits an appropriate kind of response due to the nature of the mind and its responsivity to purposiveness without purpose.[173]

A rose has a certain fragrance (it has the property of having a scent); this much is objective, but how that scent is perceived by each individual cannot be a necessary universal requirement. For one person, the scent may be sickly sweet; for another, it may be delightful, and for others still - no scent may be detected at all. Should we then think of beauty in the same way? If beauty is a property of the object, and our sense perception being what it is, does this means that its

[173] Both Wiggins (1998) and McDowell (1998) go further than this, claiming that aesthetic properties do not simply elicit a certain response but in fact deserve it i.e., the response is owed in virtue of the aesthetic properties on display.

potential beauty is interpreted differently by everyone? Kant also asks whether we should have to adapt ourselves (as opposed to the beauty of a flower adapting to our perception) in order to be able to pass judgment on a rose's beauty (§32 282) since the scent of a rose is a property of the rose, should beauty also be considered as a property of the rose? This

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adaptation could occur in a number of ways, most easily by comparing one's own response with that of other people's and adapting one's judgment accordingly. However, this type of heteronomous adaptation would be antithetical to the aims of Kant's aesthetic deduction and result in something more akin to a Humean account of aesthetics. Kant does not offer us a comparative account, whereby what the majority of people (or more precisely, true critics) experience as beautiful is beautiful and should simply be accepted as such. Instead, we must come to the judgment of our own accord, and we certainly cannot claim objectivity based on what the majority agrees upon. Although we can (and often do) estimate other people's aesthetic responses fairly successfully, Kant's deduction of taste makes far more of a claim than this in proposing that the discovery of a principle of taste is both a priori in character and autonomous (§32, 282).[174]

Ameriks' argument relies on the idea that we should treat 'aesthetic properties' as if they were secondary qualities of objects and that as a result: aesthetic judgments can be made at least as objective as judgments concerning secondary qualities of objects. However, Kant does not allow for the level of conceptualisation necessary in order to distinguish the various secondary qualities of an aesthetic object. An aesthetic object should not be considered in the same way that one may focus upon the form and colour combination of a painting in a gallery (at least

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[174] Ameriks specifically claims that pleasure in the beautiful is a mode of awareness of an actual property, in the same way a sensation of greenness amounts to an awareness of the property of green (2003, 307). Paul Guyer also adopts a form of objectivism about the property of beauty, but one which has more of a relational modality. He argues (rather than treating beauty exactly like a secondary quality e.g., colour) that beauty is what, under ideal circumstances, we can predict as being found beautiful by everyone (1979, 130).

not if one intends to make a pure aesthetic judgment). In the first place, it is not clear how one should even begin to use the idea that aesthetic qualities are akin to secondary qualities such as colour in order to make an aesthetic judgment. If abandoning non-conceptuality actually made it easier to apply Kant's deduction to real-life aesthetic judgment, then this would be a significant step forward, albeit not a Kantian one! As it is, removing non-conceptuality

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makes Kantian aesthetic judgments impossible, but more than this: it removes a significant part of what makes Kant's approach unique.

The success of Kant's bold statements at the beginning of the *Critique of Judgment* requires that the deduction also succeeds, and any problems with the notion of nonconceptuality are, to my mind, at least, one of the lesser issues within the deduction. Indeed, the necessity of non-conceptuality is even more apparent when we consider what Kant is actually trying to prove, namely, the (subjective) universal validity of pure aesthetic judgments. Ameriks argues that non-conceptuality is an even more radical part of Kantian aesthetics than subjective universalism or disinterest and although it may certainly appear unusual given our everyday experiences of applying concepts to almost everything: Kant's non-conceptuality is actually one of the most beautifully intuitive parts of his aesthetic doctrine. Kant's emphasis on both disinterest and non-conceptualism has an essentially democratising role in the making of aesthetic judgments, which gives the same authority to a working-class manual labourer as to a middle-class art critic. The ability to disinterestedly appreciate beauty is an intrinsic part of all cognitively capable human beings and cannot, therefore, be based in any way on a determinate conceptual understanding of aesthetics or beauty. As previously stated, indeterminate concepts do not relate to secondary qualities or notions but instead the kind of 'concept', which refers to a type of representation involved in cognition (§23, 244). In pure aesthetic judgments, this 'concept' refers to the free play of the faculties. Therefore, Kantian

beauty refers not to any particular determinate concept related to an object but the felt representation in the mind (stimulated by the form of the aesthetic object), which also happens to be subjectively universal. It is this addition to a Kantian aesthetic theory that I find far more perplexing than any degree of non-conceptuality or disinterest. Kant's peculiar insistence that pure aesthetic judgments are both objective and subjective, universal, and autonomous creates unique problems which Ameriks seems no closer to solving through his abandonment of nonconceptuality.[175]

6.6 The continued appeal of objectivity and the poet

Hume claims that the durability of artwork is a reliable indicator of its beauty (1910 §10-11) and that those works that have drawn admiration from countless generations display a posteriori discoverable (and objective) features of beauty which "…maintain authority over the minds of men." (Ibid.,). This understanding of beauty cannot co-exist with a Kantian emphasis on the subjective and autonomous nature of a judgment of taste, especially given the necessary application of concepts that such a method would entail. In an interesting passage, Kant addresses the point made by Hume, arguing that historically favoured works of art, which critics have long approved of, are to be taken as a helpful guide. Whilst we might refer to the precedent set by others, this cannot be the basis of a pure judgment of taste, which ought to be derived autonomously, without reference to 'concept or precept' (§32, 383). One of the reasons that 'taste' is such an apt word to describe aesthetic reflection and judgment is because it too is autonomous; meaning that no matter how many people tell me that they enjoy a particular dish and that I will too because I enjoy all of the ingredients individually, I must "…try the dish on my tongue and palate, and thereby (and not by universal principles) make my

[175] At least this is the case if you are looking to maintain a strictly Kantian vision of aesthetics and/or trying to work out how the deduction can justify subjectively universal aesthetic judgments without making revisions to Kant's original argument. However, if you are unconcerned by these issues, then Ameriks account does help to adapt Kant's aesthetics in a pragmatic and more intuitive manner.

judgment." (§33, 285). It is a matter of personal decision, and not even a hundred voices to the contrary will sway my opinion but, it might lead me to interrogate whether my response was made in a manner befitting of a pure aesthetic judgment.

The appeal of the objectivist position primarily rests upon its ability to explain why certain judgments should be deemed aesthetically proper and others as not so. In other words,

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there is some reason or concept as to why we take aesthetic pleasure in some objects and not others, whereas a subjectivist can only point to the subjective feeling as demonstrating the form of an aesthetic response. The subjectivist interpretation is more in line with Kant's own position (which should not be confused with relativism), and it is one which has been defended by (amongst others) Hannah Ginsborg. One of the key supporting passages Ginsborg and others have relied upon to show the subjectivity inherent within Kantian aesthetics is the section concerning the stubborn young poet in §32 (282) who refuses to adapt his aesthetic judgment to the opinion of those around him. In the case of a judgment of colour, we are willing to take another person's word for it that a particular object is green, even if we have not seen it ourselves. But a judgment of beauty requires us to actually see the object in question before being able to respond to it aesthetically.[176] Kant holds the young poet up as an example of what we ought to do in a similar situation since we cannot (and should not) make a pure aesthetic judgment by tallying up the votes of other people. We must instead stay true to our own subjective response until it changes (if it ever does). Ultimately taste lays claim merely to autonomy. Kant states that:

> I shall stop my ears, shall refuse to listen to reasons and arguments, and shall sooner assume that those rules of the critics are false, or at least do not apply in the present

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[176] An interesting exception to this may be conceptual art, which relies more on the story/meaning behind the artwork than the physical manifestation of the artwork itself.

> case, than allow my judgment to be determined by a priori bases of proof; for it is meant to be a judgment of taste and not one of the understanding or reason (§33, 284).

The young poet may at a later point come to agree with those whom he had originally disagreed with, "…when his power of judgment has been sharpened by practice." (§32, 282). One question most noticeably presents itself in light of the example of the young poet: are both judgments equally correct? Does the original judgment about the beauty of the young poet's poem hold as much epistemological and aesthetic value as the later judgment of its nonbeauty?[177] There appears to be no way of determining which would be the correct judgment, or even if one is better than the other, but this seems at odds with Kant's claim that 'practice' will improve the young poet's ability to make such judgments (ibid.,). If practice improves one's ability to make correct aesthetic judgments, it must have something to improve upon. The latter response may be better because the poet has become increasingly sensitised to the aesthetic ideas presented in art.[184] This seems to imply that there is something conceptual about aesthetic experience, and moreover, that theoretically, an objective account of taste is possible. If there were nothing conceptual about the judgment, both would be equally valid, but this is obviously not a conclusion which Kant could tolerate. A sympathetic analysis would emphasise that the improvement of the poet's judgment does not necessitate the involvement of concepts; it simply points to his ability to better disassociate from self-interested judgment. Moreover, we have no way of knowing who has the correct aesthetic judgment in the first place, so the improvement may not be a real improvement at all. We know that the judgment

[177] Kant seems to purposely avoid contrasting beauty with ugliness, see the next chapter for more detailed analysis of the problem of ugliness in the Kant's deduction of taste (and his aesthetics more broadly construed). [184] Brian Watkins makes a similar point, but he goes on to claim that a person's aesthetic character can be developed through training, the kind of which does not exist for other ordinary secondary qualities (2001, 323). His point about the distinction between aesthetic qualities and other secondary qualities notwithstanding, my concern with this interpretation is its emphasis on aesthetic education, which moves us away from the democratic intentions of Kantian aesthetics, which does not privilege the responses of 'cultivated' individuals.

"this is beautiful" and "this is not beautiful" cannot both hold true for the same object, at the same point and time (this would be relativistic), but we also have no practical way of distinguishing between the two, as it only relies on a feeling of pleasure (or lack thereof). This leads us back to a more subjective if ultimately unsatisfying account of taste.[178] It could be said that we are left a little better off than we began in that we have been provided with a non-subjective basis

for determining correct and incorrect judgments. However, problems arise when we try to use this theoretical tool in a practical and meaningful manner.

In the next section, I will address in more detail Kant's particular brand of subjective universalism as it relates to the harmony of the faculties and whether his justification for this is successful in achieving its own aims and in addressing the sceptics.

6.7 Harmony, pleasure and subjectivity

The role of pleasure in Kant's aesthetic deduction holds somewhat of a contested place within the literature, although prima facie, it seems simple. A judgment of taste is based upon a subjective feeling of pleasure, which is aroused by the harmony of the faculties of imagination and understanding when responding to nature's purposiveness for our powers of judgment. At a second glance, however, the exact nature of the relationship between pleasure (and perhaps displeasure), harmony (or disharmony) and the judgment itself is rather opaque. This ambiguity has serious consequences, both for the success of the deduction and for our understanding of the level of subjectivity, intersubjectivity, or objectivity which it involves.

[178] A Kantian aesthetic judgment of free beauty is ontologically as well as epistemologically subjective, in contrast with statements which can be proven as a matter of fact e.g., the earth is round. Whilst Kant does believe that these judgments can also hold as universally valid, this does not make them either epistemologically or ontologically objective. In other words, beauty does not exist 'out there' ready to be discovered and it does not exist independently of human experience.

Does pleasure result directly from the harmony of the faculties (the free play), or is the pleasure simply the state of harmony itself? If it is the former, then we seem to have pushed the argument back a step since now we have to explain the distinction between a subjective mental state (harmony) and a subjective sensation of feeling (pleasure). If it is the latter, then we seem to have overcomplicated the pleasure process. Surely if the pleasure is identical to the mental state of harmony, then there is no need to posit such a distinction?[179] In either case, the question remains: how can we know that the pleasure we are experiencing has anything at all to do with our response to an aesthetic object? In other words, what makes the pleasure

aesthetic rather than merely related to something we find agreeable?[180] This speaks to our discussion of the failure of the deduction to provide for particular instances of beauty since the sole basis of the judgment of beauty is the pleasure it arouses within us, we have no way of discovering whether we are experiencing the 'right' kind of pleasure, let alone whether somebody else is.[181] More to the point, just because a person can experience pleasure in response to an aesthetic object does not mean that on any given occasion, I am doing so or that anybody else is doing so either.

Whilst Ameriks admits to Kant's failure to solve the particularity problem and justify subjective universal validity (also as-if objective and as-if subjective). He disagrees that we need to settle for this conclusion and revises Kant accordingly. However, Kant would have no problem in accepting the ultimate conclusion of his deduction, or rather what he believed to be

[179] There is the additional issue of what the role of universal communicability plays in the making of an aesthetic judgment and whether it is the basis of the pleasure involved, or just a consequence of the judgment being a priori necessary.

[180] Of course, if we are aware of the fact that we are basing our judgment upon, for instance, moral evaluation: then we can potentially know that we are not disinterested (thus it is not a pure aesthetic judgment). The point here is that we often do not recognise such things in ourselves, so even if we think we are disinterested then we may very well not be.

[181] However, we are at least heading in the right direction if we are able to recognise when our judgment is made with moral interest, agreeableness, charm or such like in mind.

the conclusion of his deduction: namely, the justification of some form of aesthetic experience in all persons. The simple fact of the matter is that the deduction (even if successful) does not make use of determinate concepts and cannot be proven empirically; the best we can do in order to try and ensure that a judgment is aesthetic (and pure) is to make it disinterestedly with reference only to our mental state. Kant claims that when making a judgment of beauty, we feel a pleasure which we must also be entitled to require from everyone (§38, 290). The pleasure involved here is supposed to be distinct from the pleasure involved in judging something to be agreeable. Yet, aside from it somehow involving the harmony of the imagination and the understanding, the role (and distinctness) of pleasure in a judgment of taste is still about as clear as ditchwater.

Ginsborg claims that the act of judging (the reflection in taste) is both responsible for the pleasure itself and its claim to universality (1990, 71). [182] This provides a relatively straightforward answer to the question concerning the discovery of whether the pleasure we are experiencing is aesthetic. Simply put, if we are making a judgment about an aesthetic object, then the pleasure is aesthetic. This is in contrast with the more involved interpretations of (amongst others) Paul Guyer, who posits that pleasure is derived in two stages, and it is only in the latter stage whereby a response can be considered truly aesthetic, i.e., has a claim to universal validity (1979, 129-130).[183] Guyer offers a compelling interpretation, especially since

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[182] This is contrary to her earlier claim that the reflection in taste is not necessarily responsible for the pleasure itself, but only for the clam to universality (1990, 64).

[183] Guyer discusses the stages of making an aesthetic judgment, in terms of first feeling the pleasure and secondly determining that the pleasure has resulted from the harmony of the faculties. This latter stage obviously depends upon a person's ability to make this determination in the first place, but in theory (if we are able to) then this is where the universality is derived from, and not from the pleasure itself. In other words, Guyer identifies two 'acts' of reflective judgment, the first involves the production of pleasure from free play and the seconds stems from reflecting on the pleasure in the judgment itself (which validates the claim to universality) (1979, 110-119 and 151-156).

it addresses the problem of the ambiguity of the relationship between pleasure and the harmonisation of the imagination and understanding, whilst also avoiding Ginsborg's problem of having no practical way of distinguishing between types of pleasure (if her interpretation is correct). Guyer can draw upon Kant's claim about the subjective feeling of pleasure being the same in all circumstances, only differing in how it is generated (drawing from the *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* 2006, §67). According to Kant, pleasure in the agreeable feels exactly the same as pleasure in the aesthetic, but where pleasure in the agreeable is sensuous, that in an aesthetic judgment is merely reflective. As such, the former cannot claim necessary universality, whereas the latter, which is derived through a disinterested and merely reflective process, demands universal agreement. Of course, this interpretation rather complicates our ability to discover whether the basis of our pleasure is rooted in the aesthetic or, instead, something more idiosyncratic. At the very best, it leaves us in no better position as we try to

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determine whether our judgment is pure and aesthetic. At worst, we are left significantly worse off because we now have to explain how the free play of the faculties, which exists separately from our experience of pleasure, can be discovered. According to Guyer's interpretation, we are only aware of the fact we are experiencing pleasure, but we cannot know whether it is the kind of pleasure associated with aesthetic judgment. But this is a problem with Kant's account in general though, and Guyer's should not be blamed for highlighting a problem already present within Kant's aesthetics. He does, however, emphasise the problem and, in doing so, makes an already fuzzy idea, i.e., the relationship between pleasure and harmony, even fuzzier.

Kant's discussion in §9 helps to illustrate why Guyer's two-step suggestion or Beatrice Longueneusse's discussion of first and second-order pleasures (2006) are not able to accommodate Kant's views on the pleasure involved in an aesthetic judgment. In Kant's investigation about whether pleasure in a judgment of taste precedes the judgment or comes

afterwards, he determines that the pleasure cannot precede the judgment; otherwise, it would hold only private validity (§9, 217). If, as Guyer suggests, we experience pleasure but have no way of knowing whether the kind of pleasure we are experiencing is of the aesthetic variety (except constraining ourselves to disinterestedness), then we have established only a secondorder pleasure, and we are left with a first-order pleasure which is non-discoverable. This twoact vision of pleasure seems to have to put the basis for universal validity in something intangible, but Kant places it directly upon the universality of the subjective conditions for judging objects (ibid., 218).[184] Kant claims that the judging of an aesthetic object precedes the sensation of pleasure; it is a pleasure derived from the harmony of our cognitive powers (ibid.,). Perhaps a better way of thinking about this pleasure is as if it were conjoined aspects of the

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same pleasure; we experience pleasure in the judgment caused by the harmony of the imagination and understanding. The second aspect of the pleasure involves an awareness of the universal validity of this judgment, as it is based on subjective conditions which are common to all.[185]

Kant explains that a subject's awareness of the "…reciprocal subjective harmony between the cognitive powers." occurs through one's awareness of the sensation caused by this relation's effect upon the mind (219). How we can be sure that the sensation we are aware of is the same sensation upon which we are making the aesthetic judgment, i.e., that it corresponds to the harmony of the faculties, is not further addressed by Kant. In fact, Kant claims that determining how we become aware of the nature of the pleasure experienced is a "…lesser question…" but

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[184] Here I claim that it appears that the basis of such first-order pleasure in the unknowable primarily because this not discussed or justified in the deduction itself, nor can it be deduced from analysing the four moments of aesthetic judgment. Therefore, we are forced to find such justification ourselves. Having said this Kant's discussion over the 'supersensible substrate of humanity' (§57, 340) is the nearest to a justification for this firstorder pleasure, but as discussed above (note in Chapter 5.4) it proves ultimately unusable.

[185] It is important to note here that Ginsborg does not believe that the judgment and the pleasure involved with the judgment, are temporally distinct (1990 73-74). They occur at the same time, but technically the pleasure is a 'consequent' of the universal validity of the judgment.

this section could certainly have benefited from a more in-depth analysis; in order to establish how we are to know that the pleasure we base or judgment on, is not based upon a merely sensuous pleasure. Ultimately, this is a natural outcome of a subjective account of aesthetics and one which Kant does not shy away from; however, it does make objective interpretations lose their appeal. However, Kant does specify that the phenomenologically distinct character of pleasure derived from agreeableness may be intuited by an awareness of the presence of desire (First Introduction XX, 207). Of course, there is no guarantee that we will notice the presence of pleasure in our experience of any particular instance of beauty, but Kant accepts this as part of the subjective nature of aesthetic judgment. This is why disinterest can only ever serve as a constraint upon our judgment: a necessary but not sufficient criterion. However, in an interesting passage, Kant emphasises the role of disinterest, stating that whereas we cannot be certain about another person's basis for their judgment, he can for himself at least, "… he can attain certainty on this point, by merely being conscious that he is separating

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whatever belongs to the agreeable and the good from the liking that remains to him after that." (§8, 216).

This passage appears to be claiming at least two things; first, that mere awareness of one's mental state as not being related to the agreeable or the good automatically means it must be a judgment of taste. And secondly, that our mental state and its foundation are completely transparent and available for us to interrogate. However, Kant does not set out a justification for either of these contentions and, in fact, goes on to consider the possibility of the transparency/possibility of the judgment to the subject (§38, 291). In the passage above, Kant implicitly emphasises the role of disinterest, but at other points, makes it clear that

disinterestedness cannot guarantee (since nothing can) that a judgment is aesthetic.[186] Checking one's disinterest serves as an opportunity to discount a judgment that we discover is obviously interested, but this does not rule out the possibility that our desire-based interest is not buried more deeply in our unconscious.[187] The above passage could be viewed as a confusion on Kant's part, but it is more likely that he never intended the passage to be read in this way. Instead of claiming that we are able to ascertain the purity of our judgment of taste, we are instead simply able to be certain of our conformity with the universal voice (§8, 216).[188] Kant does make this seem as though it were easy though, he claims that we can do this "…by paying attention solely to the formal features of our presentation or of our presentational state." and that there is nothing particularly difficult about doing this, noting that "…nothing is more

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natural than abstracting from charm and emotion when we seek a judgment that is to serve as a universal rule." (§40, 294). But even with this qualification (of only being certain of our conformity to the universal voice), Kant's claim is a bold one, and my two concerns are still valid, both my issue with assuming that if a judgment is not involved with agreeableness or goodness, then it is aesthetic. Secondly, the assumption that we have access to and are able to distinguish between various mental states/pleasures.[189]

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[186] To be clear, the fact that humans are infallible does not immediately invalidate the claim to universality if the cause of such fallibility can be identified. However, there remains significant questions about whether Kant does provide solutions for the problems posed by determining correct from incorrect judgments.

[187] Disinterestedness does not guarantee that the judgment will be universalisable, Guyer also makes note of this (see Longunesses's discussion in 2003, 152).

[188] Such conformity is understood by Kant as stemming from the necessary conditions of cognition in the first place and the sensus communis underlying aesthetic judgment. According to Kant, if we are a human, and we make an aesthetic judgment then we can theoretically 'know' that we are speaking with a universal voice when we say something is beautiful. The problem here however, relates to 'knowing' that we are making a pure aesthetic judgment i.e., knowing that the judgment is necessarily universal based. If this is not ascertained then we are left with only with a feeling of pleasure, which all humans are also capable of feeling – but this does not mean that they will feel this pleasure in the response to the same object or that they ought to.

[189] These assumptions are problematic because they take for granted something which is in no way explicit throughout the deduction or its supporting sections. Assuming that the aesthetic judgment is implied if it is not rooted in the agreeable or moral, ignores other factors such as disinterest and non-conceptuality. Also, assuming

There is a further point related to Ginsborg's interpretation regarding her construal of what the formal act of aesthetic judgment succeeds at showing. She maintains that the demand for agreement does not refer to the specific response which each person makes about a particular aesthetic object, i.e., that this sunset is beautiful (1990, 72). Instead, she suggests that the demand is 'completely indeterminate' in nature; all that is required of other people is that they judge the object in the same manner as I do, with no reference to concepts and with a mind towards the disinterested pleasure of universal validity.[190] She states that "…the demand for agreement is not reducible to the demand that they have this or that specific response to it, or that they perceive it as having this or that property." (Ibid.,). I find this interpretation troubling: it echoes a similar position taken by Allison (in the face of the particularity problem), which contends that Kant only wishes to posit that the form of an aesthetic judgment is universal. However, Ginsborg's interpretation is more extreme since it does not even appear to the form of the aesthetic judgment (the subjective purposiveness of the object to our faculties) but instead refers only to the way the subject approaches the object. Whereas Allison argues that

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the coming down to particulars about aesthetic objects was never on the cards for Kant's critique of taste, he also holds that under ideal conditions - we are making a demand for universal assent about the beauty of an object – even though Kant does not guarantee that in any given situation that this actually happens (2001, 177). Ultimately, this could be a non-issue brought about by phrasing, which is not ideal. It may well be the case that Ginsborg's point

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that we are able to distinguish between types of pleasure does so without basis, even the idea that we are able to access and interrogate our mental states is not transparent.

[190] Ginsborg describes this type of judgment as "…formal and self-referential." (1990, 72 and 73). The term selfreferential refers to the non-vicious circularity of the judgment, since a person refers to their own subjective mental state of pleasure, which ought to be shared by everyone else, as its basis for demanding its universal validity. The judgment itself is the basis for universal validity, and the pleasure is part of this (ibid.,).

amounts to the same thing, yet is worth pointing out since the particular language chosen, somewhat contradicts Kant's positing of a judgment of taste that it:

> …merely requires this agreement from everyone, as an instance of the rule, an instance regarding which it expects confirmation not from concepts but from the agreement of others. (§8, 216).

In other words, when making a judgment about the beauty of an object, we are making it for everyone, i.e., anyone (under ideal conditions) will come to agree with your judgment about the particular instance of beauty. The subjective basis of the judgment means that another person can only agree with your assessment – if they experience the object for themselves (they cannot just take your word for it or vice versa). However, the judgment is also universal because everyone must reach the same outcome – since the only basis of such a judgment rests upon a disinterested response, the form of which is universally available (common to all).

6.8 Cultivation of taste

Perhaps the solution to the problem of coming to particulars and being able to determine whether a judgment really is aesthetic or not comes down to giving authority to those who have already cultivated their aesthetic sensibilities. Kant appeals to the *sensus communis*, which is not to be confused with ordinary empirical and conceptual understandings of the term common sense. By sensus communis, Kant refers instead to the sense which is shared by everyone, "…a power to judge that in reflecting takes account (a priori), in our thought, of everyone else's way of presenting [something]." (§40, 293). Moreover, it can also be construed as an "…ability to judge something that makes our feeling in a given presentation universally communicable…" without reference to concepts (§40, 295). Earlier, we saw Kant's praise of the young poet, who refuses to be swayed by the opinions of those around him, but could nevertheless come to agree with his critics when his taste "…has been sharpened by practice…" (§32, 282). If practise increases one's certainty in the purity of one's judgment and the ability to recognise the

aesthetic attributes/ideas displayed by artwork, then surely those who spend their lives looking at and reacting to aesthetic objects are those to whom we should seek guidance? In other words, the increased aesthetic sensitivity of critics puts them in the perfect position to be able to provide the 'best of all possible' judgments (i.e., the most accurate). But as we have seen, referencing other judgments as a basis for our own violates the need for autonomy in taste. This does not, however, necessarily rule out the possibility of referring to an expert or critic's opinion at all, just that their judgment must not be the reason for our own.

There is some support for this idea in the *Critique*, aside from Kant's discussion of the potentially improved taste of the young poet due to a greater familiarity with poetry, Kant references the ability of certain individuals to be more attuned to aesthetic ideas, and thus technically more authoritative in their judgments. In the *Appendix on the Methodology Concerning Taste*, Kant discusses how an art student learns from their master how to create works of beautiful art:

> It seems that for all fine art, insofar as we aim at its highest degree of perfection, the propaedeutic does not consist in [following] precepts but in cultivating our mental powers by exposing ourselves beforehand to what we call *humaniora.* (§60, 355).

In this passage, Kant clearly refers to the artist's aesthetic education (propaedeutic) as involving our exposure to the humanities (*humaniora*) which helps to cultivate the mental powers connected to the making of aesthetic judgments (presumably that of the imagination and the understanding). The connection between aesthetics and morality rears its head in a proceeding passage, with Kant again reiterating the importance of their involvement with making a judgment of taste. Ultimately, Kant emphasises the expression of aesthetic ideas as representing moral ones; as such, increasing our receptivity to moral feeling will also help us to better identify beauty in artwork (§60, 356). Therefore, "… the propaedeutic that will truly

establish our taste consists in developing our moral ideas and in cultivating [Kultur] moral feeling…" (Ibid.,). The relationship between morality and aesthetics involves a positive feedback effect: in increasing our moral sensitivity, we make it easier to recognise and appreciate beauty but cultivating one's aesthetic appreciation also increases a person moral sensitivity. Our appreciation of aesthetics and morality mutually encourage each other; it also makes sense to say that those people with a greater sensitivity towards moral ideas are in a better position to recognise beauty. However, in spite of Kant's discussion of the importance of the development of a person's sensitivity towards both beauty and morality, and the ability of some people to be better attuned to recognising instances of both: this does not mean that we can make a judgment of beauty based upon the opinion of another person (however sensitive to these things that person may be). Whilst we can use the critique of experts in order to be drawn to elements of an artwork that we may otherwise have been oblivious to, we must make the judgment with reference only to our subjective mental state.[191]

Christopher Janaway has argued that the emphasis on an 'empty cognitive stock' is completely absurd and that we should allow experts to shape our feelings towards aesthetic objects (1997, 85). In other words, Janaway believes that too much emphasis has been placed on disinterestedness, and removing oneself from all desire and concepts, so much so that

knowing nothing about an aesthetic object is often the level of consciousness aspired to, much like some kind of Schopenhauerian will-lessness. Janaway argues that knowing nothing about a particular aesthetic object does not improve one's appreciation or judgment of it (ibid., 80). Instead, we should be open to the possibility of being guided by those with increased aesthetic

[191] Contrary to this interpretation, Anthony Savile argues that the reason Kant believes the deduction (§38) is so easily achieved, is because it only applies to those people who have already developed their sense of taste (2006, 153). The explanatory power of this analysis is certainly attractive, but ultimately it has a distinctly unKantian flavour, which we would be remiss to ignore.

experience. An informed critic, for instance, excels at authoritativeness and can help to ensure the purity of your own judgment without reference to concepts (ibid.,). Accordingly, this does not need to violate the subjective basis of one's judgment or threaten the genuineness of or aesthetic judgment but allows into the equation aesthetic education, which simply "…enlarges the scope of the pleasure…" whilst allowing us to increase the authority of our judgment (ibid., 85).[192]

Janaway is right to state that having an 'empty cognitive stock' does not necessarily improve one's appreciation of an aesthetic object. In fact, I agree wholeheartedly that a lack of knowledge is in no way an admirable quality when it comes to making aesthetic judgments.[193] But where does Kant say that it is? Janaway's claims about the absurdity of an 'empty cognitive stock' misrepresent the nature of Kant's argument, presenting the model of aesthetic consciousness as an almost blank state of mind – when this couldn't be further from the truth. Increasing the authority of one's judgment (in other words, reason-giving) has no place in a pure judgment of beauty. The emptiness of mind is not a necessary condition of making such judgments, and knowing 'nothing' does not increase one's ability to appreciate an aesthetic object. However, adding a conceptual or cognitive element into one's judgment contravenes

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the very nature of a pure judgment of beauty. It is not that we *should* desire or aim for low cognitive stock. It is just that in virtue of the kind of judgment an aesthetic one is – determinate conceptual cognition is irrelevant to the judgment itself and its universal basis. Whilst Kant

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[192] Jerrold Levinson concurs that nothing precludes a realist interpretation of a judgment of taste; he notes that beauty is able to be better recognised by a person with a degree of sensitivity (see discussion in Schellekens 2009, 738). The longer the person has been exposed to aesthetic objects with a view to critiquing them, the higher their degree of sensitivity and the more authority their judgment will have. Moreover, the more reason we have to take their judgment seriously (by allowing it to guide our own).

[193] In many cases, having increased knowledge of an aesthetic object can help to increase one's appreciation rather than diminish it (although this is not very Kantian). See Chapters 6 and 7 for more analysis of the potential implications and importance of knowledge in aesthetic judgments, particularly in relation to environmental aesthetics. To be clear, this is certainly not a Kantian approach, but then I never said it was going to be!

does emphasise the importance of disinterest, i.e., self-interested thoughts and desires are put to the side in favour of non-conceptuality. This is not because a lack of knowledge is aimed for, but rather that it is simply the natural result of an indeterminate process. Kant's aesthetic deduction is not so much a shopping list detailing the normative conditions for an aesthetic judgment as an account of what Kant believes actually happens during the making of a pure judgment of beauty.

One of the main highlights of Kant's approach to aesthetics is that it does not require any special abilities or knowledge in order for an aesthetic judgment to occur. Accordingly, any normally functioning human being is able to make a pure judgment of taste, no matter their level of expertise or amount of aesthetic knowledge. Kant's democratises aesthetics instead of privileging the experience of an elite few (a la Hume) or requiring a high level of aesthetic education in order to recognise objective properties of aesthetic objects (ala Baumgarten). The judgment of the 'uneducated' mind is just as valid as that of the highfalutin art history professor, provided that both are made disinterestedly, with reference only to the subjective formal purposiveness of the object for our cognitive faculties.

6.9 A quick note on the communicability of taste

The ability to communicate subjective mental states is a key component of Kant's aesthetic deduction. In §9, there is an odd passage that highlights the important role of universal communicability of mental states:

> …it must be the universal communicability of the mental state, in the given presentation, which underlies the judgment of taste as its subjective condition, and the pleasure in the object must be its consequence. (§9, 217).

In this passage, let us assume that Kant states that the pleasure involved with an aesthetic judgment is derived from the universal communicability of our mental state. The mental state

being referred to here is the harmonisation of the faculties of imagination and understanding. The free play of the faculties is the mental state, which we gain pleasure from the universal ability to experience the harmonious free play of the faculties. Pleasure is the consequence of our ability to share in the subjective conditions of our judgment. However, the introduction of universal communicability also introduces its own problems – namely, that we must first be able to recognise our mental state before we can effectively communicate this with other people, i.e., I recognise that I am experiencing the universally communicable 'X-State' and can share this with others who will recognise the exact mental state of X. This added complication looks especially problematic in light of our inability to always (or ever) accurately determine the cause of our own mental states.

This problem is further exacerbated because, unlike some other types of judgment, an aesthetic judgment is a priori and subjectively universal – meaning that we cannot refer to empirical observations or determinative concepts. If we were able to do so, we could much more easily attain certainty that the foundation of our pleasure was rooted in the free play of the imagination and the understanding – since we would be able to compare our judgment against a determinative conceptual framework of the ideal judgment. However, we are not able to do this, and the notion of universal communicability, even if we concede that it is possible to communicate such a subjective mental state, we would still be unable to satisfactorily explain how we become aware of the basis of our pleasure in the first place. Of course, we can link the notion of universal communicability with Kant's discussion of the *sensus communis*. However, in doing so, we are still left unclear as to how this will work within a subjective account of aesthetics, maintaining coherency whilst also justifying how we can determine the type of pleasure we are experiencing at any one time. The issue of communicability will be further discussed in Chapter 7.

6.10 Conclusion

In this chapter, I explored the idea that Kant could be a conceptual objectivist and why this may be preferable to his version of subjective universalism. In simple terms, conceptual objectivity is far easier to prove, and as a method of aesthetic judgment, it is also easier to communicate and converse about with others. The notion of a subjectively universal type of judgment does not easily mesh with a conceptual style of thought, making it often unintuitive and difficult to discuss. Although in other respects, it can feel intuitive, especially as it appeals to our very subjective and particular experiences with beauty.

I have illustrated the unlikelihood of Kant as a conceptual objectivist and that although much of the literature supporting this interpretation only attempts to make Kantian aesthetics a more sympathetic alternative to a straight-up aesthetic objectivist position: it still fails to maintain Kant's commitments to non-conceptuality and disinterest. Whilst I am in no way opposed to the idea of adapting Kantian aesthetics for alternative uses (and have no shame in doing this myself), one cannot add conceptuality or objectivity to Kant's deduction and continue to call it Kantian.

Aesthetic judgments are unlike other types of judgments: they are subjectively universal. This subjective universality means that an aesthetic judgment is made subjectively but applied universally. What makes this type of judgment so unique is that it is subjectively universal without involving an appeal to either empirical observations or concepts. The limitations of a Kantian account are plain: it cannot provide for particulars or point to specific examples of things that are beautiful.[194] It also fails in being able to distinguish between two

[194] Other than natural beauty, which could arguably be considered by Kant as necessarily beautiful (see Chapter 7 for further discussion on this point).

opposing judgments, except if one is obviously interested or conceptually based, in which case, it can be disregarded. It also fails in being able to help individuals to discover whether or not they are, in fact, making an aesthetic judgment since the foundation of the pleasure in our response is not transparent.

All we have to be able to distinguish an aesthetic judgment from the agreeable or the charming is that the judgment is disinterestedly made and holds intersubjective validity. Whereas judgments about the agreeable or charming are both interested and only privately valid. However, Kant provides little in the way of explanation as to how we are supposed to understand or discover 'purposiveness' or lack thereof in any given case.[195] We can, of course, check whether we are basing a judgment on sensuous desire, but there is no guarantee that we are not fooling ourselves.[203]

At this point in the thesis, I have explored several ways in which Kant's Deduction at §38 fails in the aims "…to set forth and justify the subjective principle of taste as an a priori principle of the power of judgment." in order to justify the universal validity of a pure judgment of taste (§34, 286). I have focused on the issues generated by adherence to subjective universalism, namely the inability to practically distinguish between judgments or reach particulars. I have also highlighted the positive aspects of Kant's deduction, especially the notions of disinterest and non-conceptuality in terms of their ability to democratise aesthetic judgment. My secondary aim within this thesis (apart from determining the success of the deduction) has been to explore potential connections between Kantian aesthetics and the environment. Since both of the aforementioned notions have a potentially beneficial role in

[195] Donald Crawford has made a similar point (1970, 508).
[203] Which is something Kant freely admits (§38, 291).

making eco-aesthetic (or just plain environmental) judgments, Kantian aesthetics can unquestionably contribute to this line of enquiry.

In the next two chapters, I will illustrate the broader problem of beauty within Kantian aesthetics. I will argue that in addition to being unable to differentiate judgments and provide particulars, Kant's deduction also has at least one more fatal flaw: failing to properly account for anything other than beauty. In the next chapter, I will explain how this focus on beauty relates to Kant's deduction and its problem of failing to account for true ugliness. This will include more discussion on the subject of the universal communicability of subjective mental states and the role of pleasure and displeasure. Ultimately this should highlight the failure of the deduction to achieve its aims but also the myriad of implications this has for ecoaesthetics.

Chapter 7: On the possibility of ugliness in the deduction of aesthetic judgment

7.1 Chapter summary

In the previous chapter, I addressed complications surrounding Kant's aesthetic deduction concerning the notions of conceptual objectivity and particularity. I argued that the deduction's inability to differentiate between multiple aesthetic judgments or provide for universally valid instances of specific beauty makes Kant's 'proof' of aesthetic judgment feel empty. Kant's deduction of aesthetic judgment claims to justify the a priori subjective yet universal basis of such judgments, yet only appears to show that under the right circumstances, people are capable of finding objects beautiful. In the previous chapter, I explored why, under some interpretations, Kant has been revised as some kind of conceptual objectivist in an attempt to make his argument more intuitively appealing; I also addressed why doing this is a mistake. Primarily because adding a conceptual objectivist component violates Kant's strict nonconceptualism (i.e., the requirement that judgements of beauty do not determine their objects conceptually). I also argued that the particularity problem has no satisfactory answer, i.e., the deduction fails to show the veracity of subjective universalism, especially in justifying how one aesthetic object provokes the same aesthetic response in more than one person. Furthermore, the ability to even distinguish between two different aesthetic responses to the same object is brought into question when the only basis of such a judgment is the subjective feeling of pleasure. However, my concerns about the deduction are not limited to its focus on subjective universalism. I am also concerned about the lack of provision for ugliness (plus the emphasis on beauty) and the potential implications this may have for the environment. The ability of Kant's aesthetics to succeed in demonstrating the subjective universality of

judgments of taste is imperative to the success of the deduction as a whole. As will be discussed further on in this chapter, the deduction seeks to show the a priori subjective (yet universally valid) nature of aesthetic judgments and not (as many tend to think) judgments about beauty. Aesthetic judgment surely must also include a negative counterpart to beauty?

In Chapter 1, I addressed why a focus on beauty to the exclusion of ugliness throws up many obstacles for environmental aestheticians and those working for the protection of the environment. This chapter will focus on the lack of clarity regarding the role of ugliness in the third *Critique,* specifically, the problem of the deduction not providing for ugliness despite Kant's belief in true oppositions. I will first set out the problem before considering potential ways of coming to terms with this, including the roles of harmony and proportionate attunement. I will then consider whether the problem of ugliness is actually just a problem of misunderstanding how Kant conceives of ugliness; for instance, it may be possible for ugliness to have a bigger part in the deduction if we allow for the possibility for ugliness to involve pleasure too. In the later sections of this chapter, I will explore the idea that real ugliness, as understood by Kant, is more akin to disgust. Ultimately, however, I argue that this type of 'aesthetic' reaction does not provide a more compelling alternative to either the 'no ugliness' or 'ugliness as pleasure' solutions. I will also highlight where the lack of ugliness in Kant's *Critique* could present problems for ecoaesthetics.

Kant's deduction of taste attempts to prove that a pure aesthetic judgment, which rests only upon subjective bases, lays claim to universal assent. The Deduction itself, if taken as found §38, leads to the problematic conclusion that making a pure judgment about the ugly is impossible. In what follows, I will address potential solutions to this paradox, which, although more in-keeping with Kant's aims in the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment – ultimately fail as a way of saving the deduction from this inconsistency.

7.2 The impossibility of ugliness

Kant does not allow for the possibility of pure judgments of ugliness, and this is problematic for any number of reasons, but most pressingly because Kant did think that some things can and ought to be regarded as ugly. Why then, does his deduction not allow for this, and why should we care? In order to answer these questions, it is necessary to sketch out the problem before addressing potential solutions in their turn: which range from denying that there is a problem in the first place to conceding that the absurdity (and its solution) diminishes the significance of Kant's deduction of taste. I argue that none of these solutions adequately respond to the scale of the problem, and any attempt to offer a revisionist approach to Kant's work rather misses the point. This is not to say that the deduction, and indeed, the entire critique of aesthetic judgment, does not offer an incredible springboard for our discussion in almost every area of aesthetics or offer insight into the way we make judgments of beauty or ugliness. However, it does mean that the deduction fails to deliver on its promise, namely, to justify pure judgments of taste as subjectively universal; and part of the deduction's failure stems from an inability to account for experiences of the ugly.

Ugliness in the third *Critique* is most noticeable in its absence; despite forming an important part of our ordinary experience with some aesthetic objects, the terms 'ugly' and 'ugliness' appear only five times throughout the main text (version translated by Pluhar 1987).[196] It is clear that Kant is primarily interested in how we can justify the necessity and universality of judgments of pure beauty, but without a justified negative counterpart, we run the risk of succumbing to scepticism: which is what Kant explicitly wanted to avoid. Such scepticism seems unavoidable in the face of being unable to distinguish between aesthetic judgments, either in cases of disagreement about beauty or non-beauty or in cases of potential

[196] Disgust, which has been posited as the real alternative to beauty in Kantian aesthetics, is only referenced to once throughout the third *Critique* (§48, 312).

ugliness and beauty/non-beauty. Without this ability to distinguish (or potentially even have a pure aesthetic judgment of ugliness in the first place), the risk of returning to a place of no truth conditions seems ever more likely.

The Deduction itself (§38) not only fails to mention negative aesthetic judgments, but it also makes their existence under a Kantian framework impossible (shown throughout the subsequent chapters). Pure judgments can only ever be those of the beautiful; importantly, though, this does not mean that ugliness does not exist in Kantian aesthetics or that everything is beautiful: only that the deduction does not allow for pure judgments of the ugly. The following is my step-by-step breakdown of the deduction at §38:

1) In a pure judgment of taste, our liking for an object is brought about by our awareness of the object's form, specifically its subjective purposiveness for the power of judgment.

2) The power of judgment can only be focused on the subjective conditions for our employment of judgment (not confined to any particular kind of sense or concept of the understanding).

3) It can thus, only be focused on the subjective conditions which we can presuppose in all people (as it is necessary for all cognition).

4) A presentation's harmony with these conditions of the power of judgment is valid for everyone (a priori)

5) When feeling this pleasure (the subjective purposiveness of the presentation for the relation between our cognitive powers), we must be entitled to require it of everybody.

Leaving aside (for now) the possibility of the communicability of subjective mental states, we must first reiterate how Kant reaches this deduction in clearer language than even that which is offered above. A pure judgment of beauty is based upon the ability of an object to appear purposive to our cognitive faculties, but because aesthetic judgments are universal, necessary

and subjective, they cannot be based upon a personal liking or by a reference to the perfection of the object to a particular concept, which would negate it being universal and non-cognitive. Thus, the universality (and necessity) of such judgments must be justified in some other way, and Kant identifies this as being the subjective conditions of such a judgment. Where, in instances of the beautiful, the presentation of the aesthetic object harmonises with these subjective conditions to produce a feeling of pleasure. Roughly stated, the problem with this account is that for Kant to meet his internally imposed conditions of aesthetic judgment (primarily their subjective universal validity and non-conceptuality), he commits himself to offering only an account of the beautiful. In fairness, Kant most likely felt that there was no need to produce a separate deduction of the ugly since the deduction of the ugly ought to run parallel to that of the beautiful. However, the fact that it does not is a serious cause for concern, which cannot be revised out of Part I of the *Critique*.

The universality of pure judgments of the beautiful rest upon the universal communicability of the subject's mental state, which cannot simply amount to the pleasure felt by the subject.[197] Rather, a judgment of beauty is made when the subjective purposiveness of the object's presentation leads to the harmonious free play of the cognitive faculties, which results in a feeling of pleasure. The crux of the problem is that the only type of non-determinate (nonconceptual) judgment, which is universal, according to Kant, is a (pure) judgment of the beautiful. All universally available judgments of pure beauty are based upon the stimulation of the imagination and understanding. The harmonisation of these two faculties leads to (or, according to some, simply is) pleasure. However, if all pure judgments, by definition, need to involve a harmonisation that leads to pleasure, how can we ever have meaningful

[197] Which would be hard to distinguish from the experience of the pleasure of mere charm or pleasantness. Of course, as discussed in earlier chapters focusing upon disinterest (3 and 4), a person can sometimes know when they are making a judgment interestedly. However, this ability does not amount to very much in the face of larger problems with the deduction.

disagreements about aesthetics? Since any pure judgment must necessarily involve this harmony and harmony involves pleasure, pure aesthetic judgments of taste can only be those of the beautiful.[198] A theory that purports to have refuted scepticism in matters of taste must surely be able to provide a non-paradoxical account of negative aesthetic experiences? A

philosopher such as Kant could certainly have avoided this problem, or at least made it less pressing, by clearly illustrating how aesthetic judgments of ugliness operate within his aesthetic framework. His failure to do so is not only problematic for his aesthetics but also his philosophy as a whole, especially if you take the view that the third *Critique* helps to justify the possibility of synthetic a priori knowledge in the first place.[199]

David Shier presents his version of the 'nothing is ugly' argument in a 1998 paper, in which he emphasises the universal communicability of mental states. Shier argues that what is true for judgments of beauty must also be true of judgments of the ugly, and since it is the universal communicability of subjective mental states (1998, 415) which operate in the former, they must also operate in the latter. However, the only subjective mental state which Kant identifies as being both universal and subjective is that of the harmonious free play of the cognitive faculties. Kant does not specify a subjective (yet universal communicable) mental state of the ugly. Thus, we have no choice but to find the deduction fundamentally flawed since it accommodates only one half of normal aesthetic experience, that of affirmative judgments of taste. Before it is possible to address some of the potential solutions to the problem of ugliness in Kant's

[198] As previously stated, this is not the same thing as saying that everything is beautiful, or that there are no ugly aesthetic objects: only that instances of ugliness, cannot be considered as a pure aesthetic judgment.

[199] The third *Critique* provides additional justification for the existence of judgments which are synthetic a priori. Therefore, if one wants further justification of this Kantian mechanism than found in his earlier work, then one can use the third *Critique* as a fantastic (or not) educational device. If the deduction fails to be successful in proving this then the ability to have synthetic a priori knowledge in the first place may be brought into question. This is not the subject of this chapter, nor this thesis, therefore I will not linger upon this further here, but it is an important issue to be raised elsewhere.

deduction, it is necessary to first touch upon the 'non-solution solution' proposed by, amongst others, Theodore Gracyk, and it is to this which I will now turn.[200]

7.3 No ugliness…no problem?

One method of circumventing a problem is to simply refuse to accept that the problem exists in the first place. Although Gracyk acknowledges the existence of the issue, he does not consider it to be a problem, rather he argues that "Faced with the complaint that the third

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Critique commits him to the view that every object is beautiful, Kant might be only too happy to agree." (1986, 55). To be clear, Gracyk is not only claiming that (a) Kant's deduction precludes the possibility of ugliness, but also that (b) every object is beautiful. Furthermore, he posits that this does not lead to absurdity. The conflation of two distinct arguments (a and b) leads Gracyk to advocate for the most extreme version of an argument which claims Kant cannot accommodate ugliness. Gracyk appeals to the notion of subjective time-orders, in order to defend the position that Kant would have found the 'nothing is ugly' or 'everything is beautiful' argument, a completely acceptable consequence of his theory. The appeal to timeorders, does not require much in the way of analysis here, given its irrelevance to my main argument but, put briefly, Gracyk argues that in order for us to make a judgment of the ugly, we must appeal to objective time-orders, and since Kant precludes the appeal to any objective rules or concepts in a judgment of taste, we cannot make such appeals and therefore cannot make judgments of ugliness. Instead, Kant can find everything beautiful, whilst avoiding the accusation of absurdity. Gracyk argues that aesthetic judgments are made only with reference to subjective time-orders (as opposed to first-order as per Kant's distinction made in the first *Critique*), he claims that "…subjective purposiveness, resulting in aesthetic pleasure, is the recognition of a sustained formal unity in the subjective time-order only." (55). Moreover,

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[200] This argument has appeared in various guises, including Kuplen (2013) and Feloj (2013). I refer to Gracyk's paper here, as it illustrates much of the problem with this approach, in an extremely absurd way.

objects which are not thought of as beautiful may nonetheless be beautiful, in virtue of the fact an observer is failing to appreciate the objects unity in a particular subjective time-order. As finite beings, unable to appeal to objective rules or determinative concepts: we only have access to one instance in time. For Gracyk, this explains why disagreement occurs over the same aesthetic object and why some aesthetic objects are considered as ugly for potentially large swathes of time.

Something which appears ugly is minimally unified, which means that we cannot continuously apprehend said object. We judge objects as 'ugly' because we cannot apprehend them in a way that conforms to our understanding; they do not exhibit the form we need in order to experience (even if unconsciously) the necessary subjective purposiveness, which results in pleasure. As it stands, under Gracyk's interpretation, ugliness has far more in common with the 'formlessness' of the sublime than with beauty. However, in the case of the sublime, this formlessness (and lack of unity) is able to be overcome with an appeal to moral ideas. In the case of ugliness, it could be argued that under Gracyk's interpretation, the 'ugly objects' in question are not actually objects at all, if as Gracyk states, an object is "…so chaotic that it in no way conforms to understanding…" then it "…simply do[es] not count as an object[s] for Kant." (Ibid.,).

Whilst each person approaches an aesthetic object from a subjective time-order, this does not contradict the idea that everything is beautiful. It only demonstrates that not everybody can appreciate said object at the same time (1998, 43-44). Gracyk claims that it is a misfortune of humanity brought about by the limitations of our imagination and our ability to make cognitive judgments in general (55). This 'everything is beautiful' account of Kant's aesthetics, with its appeal to subjective time-orders, attempts to justify why under a Kantian interpretation everything could actually be beautiful, and we just might not realise it in the present moment. Although Gracyk's appeal to time-orders is rather bizarre and unKantian, it certainly offers a

unique way of defending Kant from absurdity.[201] Gracyk's solution attempts to explain how it may be possible under a Kantian framework to justify the non-existence of ugly objects, but he fails to adequately explain why an appeal to subjective time-orders does any more than show why people might not agree about the beauty of a particular object in a particular instance of time. Unfortunately, attempting to incorporate the 'everything is beautiful' idea within Kantian aesthetics fails as a way of saving the deduction from this issue since Kant did very clearly

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have a conception of ugliness and did not intend for all objects to be considered as beautiful.[202] I do not find Gracyk's argument compelling and believe it is unable to show anything more than why some people may have different aesthetic responses to the same object.[203] I will now move on to consider why ugliness cannot be easily abandoned by Kantian aesthetics.

Kant does not focus on ugliness in the third *Critique*, but he alludes to it continuously throughout. He also gives specific examples of ugliness as "The Furies, diseases, devastations of war…" (§48 312). His discussion of the sublime heavily features the idea of the immediate unpleasantness or uneasiness of making such a judgment (§27, 257), and although this is separate to a Kantian understanding of ugliness, it lends support to the idea that Kant never intended for his account of taste to lead to the conclusion that only beautiful objects existed. Part of the reason for such a misinterpretation is arguably a lack of clarity on Kant's part concerning the idea that a lack of beauty does not equate to ugliness. Misconstruing Kant, as an advocate of this idea, leads to the unwarranted criticism or interpretation that what is not

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[201] Allison explicitly dismisses Gracyk's argument and also appears to dismiss other attempts at showing a lack of ugliness in the third *Critique*, including Shier's (2001, 185 and page 71n11 respectively).

[202] One way in which Gracyk could have avoided absurdity, would have been to emphasise Kant's distinction between pure judgments of taste, and those that are impure. Although Gracyk does mention this in a footnote (5, p.56) his lack of emphasis on this area makes his argument appear more outlandish than it (perhaps) really is. I also do not claim to have definitively proven the complete failure of Gracyk's argument, only that it is rather unKantian and unlikely to address the problems which Gracyk identifies.

[203] Although the more likely reason (than subjective time-orders) is that one person is incorrectly making a judgment or even that there does actually exist objects which are ugly.

beautiful must, by extension – be ugly. However, this is patently not what Kant had in mind. In Kantian aesthetics, those things which lack beauty are not necessarily ugly but rather merely ordinary. Kant favours 'proper' opposites, i.e., a negative judgment does not simply mean that it lacks that which would make it positive. Rather it contains something which makes it uniquely negative. Kant claims that "…opposition is not only something negative but something positive, which in mathematics would have the minus sign." (Dohna-Wunderlacken Logic 9th hour: 711). In Kant's *Lectures on Logic* (2004 translation), the following is stated:

> …opposes ugliness <deformitas> to beauty {ugliness is just as positive as beauty - an object that I hate, the maximum disgust} [;] but there is a middle term, dryness <jejunum> {it is a grade of perfection that mathematics possesses, because it has dryness} … (Dohna-Wunderlacken Logic, 8th Hour, 708).[204]

For Kant then, there should be three ways of responding to an aesthetic object:[205]

Ugly	Dryness (Ordinary)	Beauty
-1	0	+1[214]

If we take ugliness to be a lack of beauty, then the gulf between beauty and ugliness is not wide enough to incorporate the level of disgust which Kant believes we can hold for certain objects.

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[204] It should be noted that lecture notes are a fairly unreliable source for establishing Kant's views on particular issues. This is why I have not relied on them too much throughout the thesis, but here they seem especially relevant and backed up by Kant's Critical writing.

[205] Of course, we can experience the mere charm of an object, or the sensuous pleasure/displeasure. Here I am making reference to what we should be able to do with a Kantian understanding of pure judgments of taste. [214] This emphasis on proper oppositions, can also be seen in Kant's pre-critical essay 'Attempt to Introduce the Concept of Negative Magnitudes into Philosophy' (1763) where he states, "Two things are opposed to each other if one thing cancels that which is posited by the other. This opposition [Entgegensetzung] is twofold: it is either logical through contradiction or it is real, that is to say, without contradiction." (AA 2:171). A translation of this essay can be found in the volume*: Theoretical Philosophy, 1755–1770 (1992).*

It also does not provide any genuine opposition to beauty which, to meet Kant's aim of addressing the sceptic, needs to prove that it is possible to make a meaningful distinction between what is and what is not beautiful.[206] In order to do this, we need to have something to compare beauty to (and to have real debates about aesthetics), and we must not confuse a lack of beauty with ugliness: if we do, then we commit a type of fallacy.[207] We would not seriously want to claim that experiencing a lack of bodily pleasure is what we mean when we say, 'I am in pain'. Whilst we could be in pain, we could also be perfectly comfortable. Thus: a lack of

pleasure is a necessary and not sufficient criterion for ugliness. We mean something much more than 'not experiencing pleasure' when we refer to pain, whether it is mild physical discomfort or agonising suffering. Pain is the 'real' opposition to pleasure, in the same way ugliness is to beauty.[208]

7.4 Disharmony in aesthetic judgments

If the only type of pure (non-determinate) aesthetic judgment involves a harmony of the faculties (and is pleasurable), then there is only one legitimate judgment that we can make about an aesthetic object – that of it being beautiful. As such, any object which does not meet these conditions can only be categorised as not beautiful.[209] However, if a successful interpretation of Kant's deduction could lend credence to the idea that there is a disharmonious counterpart to the harmonious free play of the faculties, then the possibility of making

[206] It is interesting here that Kant mentions ugliness in the same breath as disgust. Kant discusses ugliness in this context, in exceptionally visceral terms, defining it as a 'hatred'. Of course, the *Lectures on Logic*, cannot be taken as Kant's definitive view but there is enough within to support this within his own writing.

[207] Namely, equivocation on the terms ugly and beautiful. The idea that ugliness could mean not-beautiful and vice versa, seems to adopt a different definition than that which is customarily used. This can be used to create ambiguity in the argument and make it appear stronger than it really is.

[208] This comparison does highlight an interesting issue within the deduction, and the aesthetic *Critique*, namely, that of degrees of beauty (or ugliness). If the deduction does not allow for pure judgments of the ugly, does it at least allow for the possibility of varying degrees of beauty? Donald Crawford (219, 1980) answers the question in the negative, unfortunately it is beyond the scope of this chapter to adequately address this here.

[209] Giving us only us the theoretical possibility of such a subjectively universal judgment i.e., that it could hypothetically happen, not that it actually ever does. This is the most which Kant can prove in the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment.

judgments of the ugly becomes a reality, and the problem of ugliness in the deduction evaporates. One criticism of Shier's approach to the problem of ugliness is that he focuses entirely on the harmonious free play of the faculties, which he takes as standard for all pure aesthetic judgments, and the only way in which a pure judgment is possible in the first place. The deduction does not set out to prove the basis for pure judgments of beauty but rather for aesthetic judgment in general. Thus, the absence of ugliness is made all the more conspicuous. In light of this, the idea of disharmonious free play is intuitively appealing and may even have been part of Kant's original intention, but a philosopher such as Kant would surely have made mention of disharmony if this were indeed the case? As it is, there is no explicit mention of such a concept within the *Critique of Judgment***. E**ven so, authors such as Christian Wenzel

have attempted to show how negative judgments of taste are possible a priori within Kantian aesthetics, akin to their positive counterparts.[210] Wenzel claims that, with a little tweaking, the Analytic of the Beautiful can also be read as the Analytic of the Ugly (1999, 420). In the following, I will reconstruct his account of Kantian ugliness, which I ultimately find unpromising.

Aside from the relatively revisionist strategy of retrospectively adding to an element to Kant's argument, the main problem with this approach is that it fails to refer to the Deduction at §38, which is supposed to prove the a priori subjective universality of judgments of taste. Instead, Wenzel refers to some of Kant's earlier work, but all that is proven by these supporting references is that Kant had an idea of ugliness: which is a perfectly reasonable conclusion. However, it does not go any way towards proving that Kant could actually accommodate negative judgments within his deduction of taste. Wenzel argues that the 'real' purpose of the

[210] Steenhagen argues that the disharmony of the faculties has the same subjective sources of the judgment on the beauty (2010).

Analytic of Beauty is to establish the third cognitive power (purposiveness) claims that negative judgments refer to how we experience a 'negative subjective purposiveness' with regards to the object in question. According to Wenzel, whilst positive judgments involve positive purposiveness, negative ones (which involve the same free play of the imagination and understanding as in the making of a positive judgment only in this case it ends up being disharmonious) have a negatively purposive counterpart. Quite what makes this different to the idea of contrapurposiveness, which is more readily identified with judgments of the sublime, I am not sure. Wenzel claims:

> …aesthetic harmony and aesthetic disharmony are related to cognition in general in ways sufficiently similar to each other to justify on equal grounds the claim to universal validity of positive and negative judgements of taste (1999, 417).

Wenzel goes on to draw attention to Kant's preference for 'real oppositions' (mentioned in the previous section) as discussed in *Lectures on Logic* and the essay, *Attempt to Introduce the Concept of Negative Magnitudes into Philosophy* (2004, 1992 respectively). Wenzel argues that Kant meant for us to apply the same methodology to disharmonious aesthetic judgments as we do to their harmonious counterparts. He argues that the:

> …disharmonious relationship is not suitable for the possibility of subsuming the representation of our imagination (intuition) under a concept of the understanding. Hence the disharmony might be regarded as opposing such a subsumption… There would then be in this sense some sort of 'negative purposiveness' (-P2) in the relation between the disharmony of the faculties and a 'negative purposiveness' (-P3) regarding the possibility of cognition (1999, 421).

The subsumption being referred to here is the subsumption of an intuition under a determinate concept, which cannot be involved in an aesthetic judgment. Wenzel claims that one can

experience the free disharmonious play of the imagination and the understanding, similarly as we experience the non-conceptual harmonious free play. He claims that because determinate concepts are not necessarily involved in the non-purposive feeling of displeasure arising in respect to the ugly, this means that it could be counted as logical opposition to a judgment of beauty. However, just because it is possible to experience a negative aesthetic reaction that is seemingly non-reliant on concepts – does not mean that they should be considered as a natural extension of the subjectively universal judgment of pure beauty.[211] Again, Kant does not present this argument himself or even one that looks remotely like it within the third *Critique*. Yet, Wenzel claims that:

> …there are good reasons for believing that Kant thought of negative judgements of taste 'along the same lines' …as he did about positive judgements of taste (417).

If this were true, I feel confident in stating that Kant would have made mention of this somewhere – at least in passing. The fact that he did not ought to raise suspicion regarding Kant's belief in the possibility of discovering the a priori grounds for negative judgments of taste. However, Wenzel's discussion of 'negative purposiveness' does lead to some interesting ideas about the role of contrapurposiveness within the *Critique of Judgment.* Further understanding of how an aesthetic object can be 'contrary to purposiveness' may provide insight into the place of ugliness within the third *Critique*. However, the role of

[211] Bizarrely, Wenzel also claims that judgments of dryness or ordinariness (based upon neither harmonious nor disharmonious aesthetic reflection) can also justify universal validity (1999, 422). I find this claim distinctly unhelpful as arguments such as this often seem to posit the idea that the purity of aesthetic judgment simply comes down to disinterest, and if a judgment can be shown to be disinterested then it must be seen as having universal validity. The purity of aesthetic judgment involves not only taking interest off the table, having no desire for the aesthetic object in question goes some way towards making a judgment pure but it is certainly not the only important element at play.

contrapurposiveness within a deduction of taste appears somewhat clear cut throughout Kantian aesthetics. When contrasting the fine arts to those of mere entertainment, Kant claims:

> …For the pleasure we take in purposive form is also culture, and it attunes the spirit to ideas…in the case of the matter of sensation, however, the aim is merely enjoyment, which leaves nothing behind as an idea and makes the spirit dull, the object gradually disgusting, and the mind dissatisfied with itself and moody because it is conscious that in reason's judgment its attunement is contrapurposive (§52, 326).

Therefore if the purposiveness of form is what we understand as pleasurable/harmonious in a judgment of beauty, then it makes intuitive sense to suppose that it is an object's nonpurposiveness which is responsible for displeasure/disharmony, and thus our judging of an object to be ugly.[212] In the passage cited above, Kant describes the human response to an object

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designed for mere enjoyment, i.e., it does not demonstrate the purposiveness of form necessary to stimulate the cognitive faculties in any other direction. Kant discusses contrapurposiveness as being in some kind of opposition to a judgment of taste, i.e., a judgment of agreeableness in sensation. Our mind is dissatisfied with itself and experiences a feeling of displeasure bordering upon disgust. However, Kant's discussion of contrapurposiveness relates not to the beautiful (or to the ugly) but rather to that of the sublime found in Book II of the *Critique of Judgment* in the Analytic of the Sublime. The contrapurposive nature of some objects for our imagination results in a feeling of displeasure, which can eventually lead to a judgment of the sublime (§23 245). Kant also claims that contrapurposiveness cannot be involved in judgments of taste, where our disliking should only stem from the mere contemplation of the object to maintain its

[212] Wenzel distinguishes between cognitive harmony (underlying all cognition) and aesthetic harmony (underlying a positive judgment of taste) in order to show that aesthetic disharmony is not so far away from its positive counterpart, and also that it relies upon the same underlying cognitive harmony. Wenzel disagrees with Shier's

purity (242). We may like or dislike an object because it is contrapurposive to our cognitive faculties, but this is most likely to be an impure (unfree) judgment; alternatively, it may relate to the potential sublimity of the object: but it is not going to be part of a pure judgment of taste, which is what is at stake here.[213]

If disharmony cannot be understood as being contrapurposive, then what exactly is it?[214] However, even if it is possible to give an adequate account of disharmony using Kant's third *Critique*, this does not necessarily save the deduction itself, which focuses entirely on pleasure and beauty. It also does not deal with the problem of disharmonious free play, namely that Kant

approach (see 7.2), especially as Shier fails to adequately distinguish between the two forms of harmony (1999, 421). However, Wenzel's distinction between these two forms of harmony fails to justify why either the cognitive harmony underlying all cognition works to prove an a priori subjectively universal negative aesthetic judgment, or why pointing out this separation makes aesthetic disharmony more persuasive.

only ever identifies *harmonious* free play as being able to lay claim to subjective universality. Kant himself states that the aim of the *Critique* is not only to set forth but also to justify the subjective principle of taste as being an a priori principle of the power of judgment (§34 286). Does taste only refer to the beautiful?

Simply positing that Kant 'must-have' had an analogue to pure positive judgments is nowhere near enough to justify that there was one. Of course, if Kant only ever wanted to prove that there was one subjective a priori principle of taste, then he certainly went some way towards this (even if he was ultimately unsuccessful) since technically he only ever attempted

[213] The sublime does not however, focus on ugliness, as much as the immediate displeasure felt by the subject, which is ultimately overcome, by his or her powers of reason.

[214] Several commentators have tried to argue that Kant can account for ugliness in the deduction, including Hud Hudson who claims that the root of Kant's so-called 'Analytic of the Ugly' can be founded within Kant's understanding of contrapurposiveness (1991). Hudson also offers an analysis of the deduction which accommodates the judgment of ugliness but also leads one to conclude that one cannot cognize a beautiful (or ugly) object without the accompaniment of pleasure or (displeasure). Which seems too strong of a requirement, given that it is in theory possible for an aesthetic object to be cognitively considered without any subsequent harmonisation (or disharmonisation) of the faculties.

to set forth and justify the a priori principle of beauty. However, the issue at stake here is whether the deduction can allow for pure judgments of the ugly; the version of disharmony presented by Wenzel certainly does not persuade me to believe that this is a possibility. All that can realistically be taken from Wenzel's discussion is that Kant had an idea of ugliness and may have wanted to incorporate it into the third *Critique*, but at some point, decided against including an analytic of the ugliness. Presumably, because he could not offer the subjectively universal 'guarantees' for ugliness which he had found for beauty. Wenzel's approach is intuitive and pragmatic, but unfortunately not justified (at least on my reading) by Kant's deduction or in the deduction's supporting passages. My concern with Wenzel's approach mostly stems from him making disharmony the 'obvious' opposite to the harmony involved in pure judgments of beauty, for the sole reason that 'Kant must have meant to have done it himself' (my phrasing). In other words, even though Kant did not see fit to make mention of the fact that disharmony works similarly to harmony, and we can use this to make judgments of ugliness which are a priori subjectively universal, we can still take him to have meant to say this. As it stands, Wenzel's discussion of disharmony and displeasure sounds far more in line with Kant's analysis of encounters with the sublime, which are related to the feeling of displeasure associated with the sublime. Even if we take Wenzel to be correct about Kant's intention to provide a disharmonious counterpart to harmony, this does not ensure that this is a subjectively universal judgment of ugliness – only (potentially) of non-beauty. This latter point is perhaps the most pertinent to my further discussion of beauty and ugliness. Disharmony, as Wenzel presents it, does not address my central concern over ugliness but rather (as I read it), at most, non-beauty – which does not help to alleviate my worries over beauty and ugliness in either Kant's deduction or the environment.

Kant identifies two ways of achieving a harmony of the faculties of imagination and understanding, one does not involve concepts (aesthetic harmony), and one does (cognitive

harmony). Separating (as Allison does) free play from the harmonisation of the faculties only allows us to state that free play can result in harmony without the use of concepts, or it can result in a harmony that is dependent on determinate concepts, in the first case this is a judgment of beauty, and in the latter – a negative, impure judgment.[215] Kant does not give any indication that another type of relationship between these two faculties is possible (that of disharmony between the imagination and understanding); in fact, he expressly precludes the possibility, through his insistence of harmony being the only subjectively, universally valid form of a priori judgment. Therefore, whilst ugliness is not a logical impossibility for Kant (in pure judgments of taste), it is an epistemological one: which necessarily follows from the *Critique of Judgment*. The absence of harmony is not necessarily disharmony, just as the absence of beauty does not entail ugliness, and since the only non-conceptual yet subjectively universal judgment is that of the beauty, disharmony (which would require a separate deduction) does not allow for judgments of pure ugliness.[216]

7.5 Proportionate attunement

One way of trying to solve the problem of ugliness in Kantian aesthetics is by choosing to use another instantiation of the deduction; generally, the only alternative to the Deduction at §38 is the supplementary passage found at §21. Although the reconstruction is certainly dubious as a representation of the actual deduction, it can serve as a preliminary draft of the deduction

[215] Allison's discussion of this subject can be found in *Kant's Theory of Taste: A Reading of the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment* (2001).

[216] It is true that Wenzel's proposal accepts this distinction. He admits that lack of beauty is not necessarily ugliness (just as a lack of harmonisation is not ugliness). In fact, his argument rests on the idea of logical opposites, which is why he posits that a deduction of disharmony can be 'read off' of Kant's deduction of harmonisation. However, positing disharmony (as being non-harmony) is very different from showing that disharmony proves Kant's account does allow for subjectively universal judgments of ugliness. Of course, disharmony would not have

'proper' and could help illuminate the problem caused by its lack of ugliness. The following reconstruction is taken from Karl Ameriks, with reference to Paul Guyer (1979, 296-297):

1) Cognitive judgments are communicable (sentence 1).

2) Each cognition has an accompanying subjective state (sentence 2).

3) If cognitions are communicable, then so are their accompanying subjective states (sentences 2 and 3).

4) These subjective states involve various proportions in the activities of our faculties, and there is some such proportion which is "most beneficial" for the relation of imagination and understanding (sentences 2-5).

5) States with such a proportion are communicable (entailed by above).

6) They are aesthetic [from (4) and other remarks].

7) Therefore, aesthetic judgment is valid (from above).

The reason that this version of the deduction is so important is that it makes something explicit, which is only referred to implicitly within the Deduction at §38. That is the communicability of subjective mental states; without Kant's explication of this here, the deduction would be

required a separate deduction had Kant mentioned disharmony in the deduction itself and justified its inclusion within the supporting passages. However, if this had been done there is still little reason for believing that it would be especially convincing, particularly given the problems which the current deduction faces in trying to justify a subjectively universal judgment of beauty.

even less defensible. Kant takes for granted the existence of these subjective conditions of experience and our ability to communicate them in the later 'official' deduction, whereas in §21, he spells out (if not justifies) this. The issue I am concerned in addressing here is whether a judgment of ugliness can be accommodated within this interpretation of Kant's deduction, namely in the appeal to proportionate attunement. Kant claims that there is an optimal

attunement of the cognitive faculties, which generates the feeling of pleasure associated with the judgment of beauty. The question then becomes whether Kant's deduction calls for some kind of non-optimal attunement for judgments of the ugly (or perhaps an optimal attunement for ugliness). It is my view that Kant does not allow for the possibility. Although he may well have had this in mind, the deduction does not accommodate pure judgments of the ugly, which I will continue to illustrate throughout the rest of this chapter.

One of the main problems in taking the §21 version of the deduction is that it generates far more problems than it solves; although it makes explicit Kant's use of proportionate attunement and the universal communicability of subjective mental states, it does not provide adequate justification for their inclusion or form a solid foundation for the deduction to rest upon.[217] There are several issues with this version of the deduction, which to more or lesser degrees impact upon the success of the official Deduction at §38. Most noticeably, there is the assumption that cognitive states are communicable; there is also a seemingly large leap from the cognitive to the aesthetic – with very little in-between.[218] What is clear is that for Kant,

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there is a most beneficial or optimal relation between the imagination and the understanding, which occurs when we make a pure affirmative aesthetic judgment (§21, 239). Reference to proportionate or proportional attunement can help to further elucidate the nature of the

[217] I will not focus on these important issues, as they relate to problems with the deduction in general and not on my specific enquiry. However, Kant's reliance on the notion of common sense (sensus communis which is mostly taken for granted throughout much of the *Critique*, is problematic especially when it comes to the Deduction proper. Kant offers little in the way of justification for the idea that we are able to presuppose a certain type of common sense, an idea which rather begs the question. It is also not self-evident that just because cognitive states are communicable, that the subjective states which accompany them are also.

[218] It does not follow that because cognitive judgments are communicable then other subjective mental states relating to aesthetic response are equally communicable (or even possible). The conditions required for cognition and their necessary attunement are universally communicable, but it does not follow that other attunements are universally communicable or the feelings which they create are universally communicable. However, this problem relates to the broader problems of deduction, rather than the more specific issues being addressed in this section.

'reciprocal quickening', which leads to the free play and harmonisation of the faculties, and the inducement of pleasure when making an affirmative judgment. However, what is less clear, is whether Kant has a negative counterpart to positive aesthetic proportionate attunement, i.e., a specific proportionate attunement which relates to making a judgment of the ugly. So far, it seems as though Kant has two options, either we can judge something beautiful which is most conducive to the reciprocal quickening of the aforementioned faculties, or we can say that it does not provoke this process, and thus – it is not beautiful. This approach may, therefore, be successful if the aim is to find a way out of having to admit that all objects are beautiful, but it does not suddenly become apparent that it can accommodate pure judgments of the ugly. Both Karl Ameriks and Henry Allison discuss the nature of proportionate attunement to further justify their position that pure judgments of ugliness can be accommodated within Kant's deduction.[219] Unfortunately, they merely recapitulate the problem of ugliness, one step removed, whilst at the same time generating new problems to grapple with, which takes us further away from finding a solution to our ultimate goal of providing an account of pure ugliness.[229]

Interestingly, Sean McConnell's account does not deny Kant's claim that the feeling brought about by the special attunement in a judgment of beauty and that the attunement itself is universally communicable as it presupposes a kind of sense which is "…the necessary condition of the universal communicability of our cognition." (§21, 239). He argues that

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because only the pleasurable (as opposed to any unpleasurable) mental state occurring in the free play of the faculties is (demonstrably) justifiably universally communicable for Kant, then

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[219] Ameriks does not go as far as Allison, as he does not use this idea to justify pure judgments of ugliness. [229] Most noticeably, the problem of having to explain and justify a second form of attunement relating to negative aesthetic judgments which is not (despite arguments to the contrary) immediately apparent from Kant's aesthetic deduction.

aesthetic responses to ugliness must be part of the same deduction. McConnell argues that feelings resulting from free play range from being maximally pleasurable to being minimally pleasurable, i.e., the feelings exist on a continuum (2008, 214). He goes on to claim that the minimally pleasurable actually feels more akin to displeasure than pleasure (ibid., 221) but that this displeasure is rooted in the harmony of the faculties. The difference between a judgment of beauty and one of ugliness lies in the degree of harmony and/or attunement. Since different objects display different degrees of purposiveness for the faculties, differing objects also demonstrate different degrees of harmony. The idea that there are degrees to harmonisation or attunement runs contrary to Kant's discussions on harmony and attunement (Kant uses these terms interchangeably), where he makes clear that the 'proportion' necessary for universal communicability is that which is required for cognition in general (§39). There is only one attunement/proportion or degree, which is necessary for the communicability of both of these types of judgments. Therefore, if the communicability of a judgment of taste was dependent upon a different degree of attunement, then Kant would not only be contradicting himself in his discussion at §39 but also creating untold problems for his Critical work as a whole.[220]

For the idea of proportional attunement to work in favour of the incorporation of pure ugliness, there ought to be an analogous attunement that counters the most beneficial relation involved with beauty. By extension, then, there ought to exist a particular proportionate attunement which is least beneficial to faculties of imagination and understanding, but how

[220] There may be some textual backing for a continuum of ugliness to exist within the Kantian framework. In §48 Kant talks about disgust in a different manner to general aesthetic ugliness, "There is only one kind of ugliness that cannot be presented in conformity with nature without obliterating all aesthetic liking and hence artistic beauty: that ugliness which arouses disgust." (312). As such there be a case for Kant's belief in a scale of ugliness from minimal displeasure (ugliness) to maximal displeasure (disgust). However, it is important to note that neither ugliness nor disgust are considered or mentioned as part of a deduction of pure taste, but this might still be an interesting subject of further research.

would this work? Surely, if our cognitive faculties are not stimulated in such a way as to provoke their harmonisation (non-conceptually speaking), then the resulting judgment is simply non-beautiful (and not ugliness). Even if we allow that there is a particular state of attunement which is unfavourable for the mutual quickening of the imagination and understanding, this does not necessitate that it is also a judgment of the ugly, much less that of the purely ugly. If we construe free play as being the actual harmonisation of the faculties, with its resultant feeling of pleasure, then by definition, there can be no account of pure ugliness. Appealing to the notion of proportionate attunement, whose arrival in the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment comes rather out of the blue, simply pushes back the problem one stage.[221] Instead of having to 'simply' justify how there can be a negative counterpart to the harmony of the faculties, perhaps resulting from a negative version of the free play involved in positive judgments. Now we have the added challenge of not only having to justify the idea that the attunement of cognitive powers vary in their proportion (and these are somehow communicable) but also that this theoretical appeal can help to legitimise the existence of pure non-affirmative aesthetic judgments within Kant's deduction of taste. However, the epistemological problem persists and trying to justify the notion of proportionate attunement only takes us further away from solving this dilemma.

Kant's discussion of attunement in the *Critique of Judgment* never references the potential for a negatively proportioned attunement; instead, he repeatedly emphasises the relationship between an optimal attunement and the harmonisation of the faculties. This lends further credence to the idea that free play (involving the optimal proportioned attunement) is

[221] Miles Rind makes a similar point in addition to criticising attempts to revise Kant's aesthetics of beauty and ugliness (2002).

directly linked to the harmonious relationship between the imagination and the understanding, and not as has been claimed, is it capable of resulting in a disharmonious relation which can

lead us to make a pure judgment of ugliness. Kant states that cognition (especially to be communicable) requires that the relationship between the cognitive faculties be one that is characterised as harmonious (§40, 295).[222] If it were not so, then it would be unlikely that such judgments would be universally communicable since the harmony involved with aesthetic judgments creates a free play – and it is this which allows us to make the judgment at all.

One way of saving the deduction from its failure to incorporate judgments of pure ugliness has been to admit to the idea of proportioned attunement, degrees of attunement and special capacities. Unfortunately, this reading is not supported by Kant, and it subjects us to the further problem of having to explain our way out of an apparent violation of a central tenet of Kant's aesthetic doctrine, namely that of universal subjectivity. One way to get around the ugliness problem is to claim that people have different capacities for aesthetic appreciation, so for instance, the harmonisation of the faculties does not always arise in relation to the beautiful (Guyer 1979, 296). Guyer admits that this would mean sacrificing the claim to universal necessity, but he sees this as the only way of circumventing the problem of ugliness (or lack thereof).[223] However, leaving aside universal necessity not only decreases the significance and scope of the deduction but fundamentally stops this kind of judgment from being a pure one.

[222] Kant states that "…the mental state in which we are when imagination and understanding are in free play (insofar as they harmonize with each other as required for cognition in general)." (§9, 218). And in another passage further on, that "…where reflective judgment finds itself purposively attuned in relation to cognition in general." (§25, 249). Kant re-emphasises that we must judge the beautiful "…according to the purposive attunement of the imagination that brings it into harmony with the power of concepts as such." in the Critique of Teleological Judgment (§57, 344). Much has been made of the idea that Kant supposedly states that a free play of the cognitive faculties is required for all cognition, although at certain points it is ambiguous, this interpretation is rooted in a misunderstanding, which also relates to the conflation of the 'everything is beautiful' arguments.

[223] Ameriks sees a slightly different way of overcoming the absurdity, he prefers to specify the 'special proportion' as referring to special objects or features, and not as Guyer construes special people or faculties (1983, 299). The

The issue at stake here has never been about the existence of impure judgments of taste, which are undoubtedly possible for Kant; rather, the question I have relates to judgments of the pure kind. Taking away either the universality or the necessity requirement puts these judgments firmly in the domain of the impure – which I take no issue with here.

The aforementioned draft deduction (at §21) helps to elucidate the implicit reference to the communicability of mental states in §38. However, it does not help us to justify either the inclusion of ugliness within the deduction or even the universal communicability of the aesthetic judgments about beauty in the first place. The problem stated again is as follows, if the universal communicability of aesthetic judgment stems only from the universal communicability of the shared mental faculties of cognition in the first place, then what is it that makes the judgment aesthetic, and why do we require a separate deduction? Under this reading, it seems that shared cognition in general (in this case, the presence of both imagination and understanding in all 'correctly functioning' human beings) is enough to justify the universality of the communicability of the aesthetic judgment. The free play of these faculties is also no more than the ability for these faculties to 'interplay' with one another (on some unspecified level), which is available to everyone (due to the underlying universality of cognition in general). There is a certain circularity within this argument as to make it (to my mind at least) difficult to accept. Why is this free play universally communicable? Because the underlying subjective conditions of cognition, in general, are universally communicable? Why does this make aesthetic judgments universally communicable? Because the free play of the

problem with this interpretation lies mainly in its appeal to subjectivity, and its explicit disavowal of Kant's insistence on formalism being in relation to the form of the arrangement of cognitive powers, i.e., the demonstration of subjective purposiveness for our senses and not in the object itself. A particular issue with Ameriks specific approach is his appeal to 'normality' in which he argues that the subjective formal conditions of aesthetic judgments are shared by all ordinary or 'normal' people in ordinary circumstances. This, of course, demands that we define both normality and abnormality, and if we use the idea of the optimal attunement as representing the normal response to beauty, in ordinary circumstances, we still have to justify the notion of attunement in the first place, and how a negatively proportioned attunement can come to be. In the end, the solution throws up more problems than it solves. That is, if it solves anything at all.

faculties relies upon the conditions upon the universal conditions of cognition in general. These responses are not satisfactory. Therefore some kind of justification for this universal communicability (which will be discussed further in the next chapter) is necessary. Kant acknowledges this in §21, where he explicitly discusses why the particular attunement or proportion associated with aesthetic judgment (the one most favourable to such judgment) is also universally communicable. Whether or not he succeeds in doing this is not so much my concern here, but rather the way this potentially creates room for unfavourable proportions/attunements and thus ugliness within the deduction.[224]

Kant asserts that there is some proportion between the faculties which is most beneficial to the relation between imagination and understanding. This is the free play of harmonisation of the faculties, which is associated with pleasure and judgments of beauty. If one wishes to claim that free play is simply a relation (harmony or not) between the faculties, then what is the purpose of Kant's discussion at §21? In my reading, it is either the case that free play is involved in all cognitive judgments, or it is something specific to the harmonisation of the faculties in pure aesthetic judgments. If the first case is true, then writers advocating the 'everything is beautiful' version of Kant's argument would be correct (if the deduction succeeds). If the latter case is true, then Kant's positing that the underlying conditions of cognition are the reason aesthetic judgments are universally communicable is not prima facie compelling. The problem being that just because I can demand agreement about an object's primary qualities does not mean that I can also demand agreement about a judgment that involves the free play (something more than generally shared cognition) of the faculties,

[224] Although I am sure it is no surprise that I do not find Kant's addition at §21 particularly persuasive, in terms of justifying the universal communicability of the sub-mental state associated with free play/harmonisation of the relevant faculties. In order to justify these assertions, Kant falls back upon the notions of a universal substrate and sensus communis within humanity. These are thorny issues which are heavily reliant on the first *Critique* and mean that the ability of the deduction's ability to stand on one's own is called into question. See the next chapter for more discussion on this subject, but bear in mind that this will only be discussed in relation to my thesis aims.

especially because this free play is not necessitated simply in virtue of having these faculties, to begin with. Free play involves more than having the faculties of imagination and understanding; it is fundamentally connected with the beneficial relation/harmonisation of the relevant faculties. Therefore, it makes sense for writers to fall back on the notions of

attunement/proportion in order to posit the possibility of pure ugliness in Kantian aesthetics (as pertaining to the deduction).[225]

However, this approach suffers from two main problems. Firstly, the justification for even the universal communicability (let alone the universal validity) of judgments associated with the free play of the faculties is limited at best. Kant does not offer sufficient reason (even when taking §21 and §38 together) to believe that these subjective mental states can be communicated effectively (especially when one considers the difficulties of trying to establish whether one's judgment is pure in the first place). The second problem is that Kant only ever discusses the attunement necessary for a beneficial relation between the faculties in the deduction and its supporting passages. However, his discussion of attunement at all does seem to suggest that other non-beneficial attunements are possible, but when the free play (on my reading) is so connected with the harmonisation of the faculties: there is little to refer when it comes to justifying the disharmonious counterpart. Other writers have attempted to circumvent the problems posed by Kant's opaque discussion surrounding communicability, harmony and free play. As has been seen in previous chapters, some have tried to interpret Kant as an

[225] It is important to remind readers that the free play of the faculties is about a mutual quickening of these powers and not a 'slowing down' of the relation, which intuitively speaking would appear to be more of a baseline, i.e., non-beauty and not ugliness. In other words, if we take Kant to be correct, we would presumably already start with a 'slowed down' relation between the imagination and the understanding, speeding this up involves the free play and harmonisation which we associate with beauty.

objectivist in order to overcome these issues, which are exacerbated by the necessity of subjective universality.[226]

The ideas of harmony/disharmony and proportionate attunement as methods of proving Kant's inclusion of pure ugliness suffer from the same problems, and they both ultimately fail because they encounter an epistemological impossibility. If we take away the harmonious relation between the imagination and understanding, what are we left with? Surely not

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ugliness? Since harmony is the only possible type of non-determinative, cognitive yet universally subjective relationship between the faculties of imagination and understanding, a disharmonious relationship (or one which is negatively attuned) is distinctly unlikely. Furthermore, in order to be able to cognise an object, there must be a harmonious relationship between the intuition and the concept; if we try to posit the possibility for a disharmonious relation between these two faculties, we would then be unable to properly appreciate the object in question.[227] This would certainly be an absurd and bizarre foundation for a universally subjective and necessary judgment to rest, and one which Kant does not endorse. Allison claims that appealing to proportionate attunement does not have to undermine Kant's demand for the universal necessity of pure judgments, in agreement with Shier, who states that negative judgments are as universalisable as positive ones, Allison argues that the subumability of concepts is a necessary but not sufficient condition of such a judgment. The subsumption must occur in a particular way, that of a free play between the imagination and the understanding.

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[226] For example, Ameriks claimed that Kant only intended for claims of aesthetic judgments to be universal generally, and not in particular instances. Whereas other authors have taken the opposing view, e.g., Gracyk.

[227] Disharmony as relating to contrapurposiveness does not work as a solution either. The power of aesthetic judgment stems from the subjective purposiveness of form, and although the idea of contrapurposiveness is discussed in relation to the sublime, in terms of its applicability to pure aesthetic judgments of taste, it is unhelpful. If contrapurposive response were genuine, they would not be able to cognise the object in question properly as aesthetic, since the necessary free play could not arise, it also faces the same epistemological issues as the 'harmony/disharmony' solution. For more on this see Hud Hudson (1991).

There is an optimal attunement, by which the reciprocal quickening of these faculties is promoted and leads to objects being judged as beautiful (2001, 186). But there are also nonoptimal levels of attunement, which do not encourage our cognitive faculties to linger any longer than necessary upon an object. Allison uses this argument to illustrate the impossibility of the claim that Kant must hold that all objects be beautiful, which I have no qualm in agreeing with.[228] There is no doubt that Kant does believe that there are various proportions of attunement, or it would not be necessary to postulate the existence of any, but Kant only

discusses one particular type of attunement, which is in line with his focus on only pure affirmative judgments. If Kant had intended to use the idea of proportional attunement to prove the legitimacy of pure negative judgments of taste, I think we can safely deduce that Kant would have given this a quick mention – even if he was getting on a bit in age![229] If we accept for the sake of argument that Kant successfully proves the existence of judgments of the purely beautiful (+1) and, by default, instances of non-beauty (0) – he has not demonstrated the existence of pure ugliness (-1). Perhaps the reason that Kant does not present a negative deduction of taste is that ugliness simply does not fit within a pure deduction of taste, and this is a finding with which he is perfectly comfortable.

[228] Allison does acknowledge (as Kant himself does) that ultimately, we cannot know whether we or anyone else have corrected subsumed concepts and are therefore making a pure judgment of taste. This decreases the significance of theory but is by no means a trivial conclusion to arrive at according to Allison and Ameriks.

[229] I anticipate that some will take the attempts to include ugliness within the deduction as an issue of complementarity rather than revisionism. It could be argued that there is nothing wrong with making additions to the deduction as long as these additions do not conflict with the original work. Aside from believing that they do create conflicts; this approach is problematic, not least because it feels too much like putting words into Kant's mouth. Especially as these words could easily have been included in the Deduction (or lowercase deduction) by Kant himself. The focus on beauty in aesthetics is to the detriment of understanding the role of ugliness. If Kant did not include ugliness in the deduction, then it signals his preoccupation with beauty and the belief that the contrast of non-beauty and beauty were enough to inform his Critical aesthetics.

7.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I considered several solutions to the ugliness problem in Kant's aesthetics, namely those positing a symmetrical type of deduction for disharmony, contrapurposiveness or a different kind of proportional attunement. I have found these 'solutions' unenlightening and difficult to reconcile with Kant's aesthetic account. In the following chapter, I will explore the idea that a lack of an account for ugliness is unproblematic for Kant's aesthetic deduction. I will also consider whether the true opposition to beauty within the third *Critique* is intended to be disgust and whether this may have potential implications beyond Kant.

Chapter 8: No ugliness - no problem? No way!

8.1 Chapter summary

In the previous chapter, I began exploring the possibility of ugliness in Kant's third *Critique*. I considered why the absence of judgments of pure ugliness is potentially problematic for the success of the deduction of taste. I considered whether approaches drawing upon Kant's discussion of proportionate attunement or contrapurposiveness could save the idea of ugliness existing with the deduction of aesthetic judgments. Before examining the idea of a symmetrical relationship between harmony and disharmony, which would allow for the possibility of aesthetic judgment (in a pure sense) to be applied equally to both beauty and ugliness. I concluded that the solutions presented do not offer a sufficiently robust methodology in terms of finding a comparable deduction of ugliness or the necessary textual support to justify their claims of Kant's intention.

In this chapter, I will first explore the idea that ugliness, as understood by Kant, may be non-universalisable and thus not technically part of a judgment of taste; yet still have an important role to play in making sense of aesthetic disagreement. I will argue that having an idea about a negative aesthetic judgment does not equate to a logical opposition to beauty (of the kind Kant posits is necessary in *Magnitudes*). I will go on to consider whether the problem of ugliness can be dissolved through an appeal to the idea of pleasure forming the basis of both judgments of beauty and ugliness. I argue that this kind of solution would undermine the deduction and prove problematic for any number of reasons as they relate to the success of the deduction in general. I will then go on to explore the idea that real ugliness, as understood by Kant, is more akin to disgust. Ultimately, however, I argue that this type of 'aesthetic' reaction does not provide a more compelling alternative to either the no ugliness or ugliness as pleasure solutions. I will also highlight where the lack of ugliness in Kant's *Critique* potentially presents problems for ecoaesthetics.

8.2 Ugliness is non-universalisable, but does it matter?

Could it be that ugliness is not universalisable, and therefore cannot be part of Kant's deduction of pure taste? This seems likely, especially if you are, as I am, sceptical about the viability of the deduction for beauty in the first place. This 'solution' would undoubtedly concern the Kantian, and it should, because Kant takes great pains to illustrate and 'prove' the universal subjective necessity of judgments of taste. The Deduction at §38 is not titled the 'Deduction of Judgments of Beauty' but refers to taste in general; thus, an account of ugliness is to be presumed. Kant claims that it is possible to have substantive quarrels over matters of taste. The question is, does it just amount to disagreeing about whether or not something is beautiful?[230]

[230] In an ideal world of course, disagreements would not occur, because everyone would have correctly subsumed intuitions under their concepts and be able to (autonomously) come to the universally, necessary judgment of an object's beauty.

Hannah Ginsborg offers an interesting argument in favour of abandoning the requirement for the universality of negative aesthetic judgments, claiming that we are no more entitled to claim the universal validity of a negative judgment as we are of having a headache (2016, 19).[231] At the same time, some writers (such as Allison) have argued that the idea of disharmony offers a way of universalising negative judgments, in the same manner as harmony works to universalise positive aesthetic judgments. Here Ginsborg and I share common ground in the disavowal of this approach. Ginsborg posits that disharmony cannot solve the problem of ugliness because she does not see that "…finding something beautiful and finding it notbeautiful as symmetrical." (2016, 13). In order to address this issue, Ginsborg differentiates between first and second-order responses, claiming that aesthetic disagreement relates to both the second-order judgment and the first (2016, 14-15). Ginsborg attempts to use the idea of first and second-order responses to illustrate that we have a non-conceptual first-order response

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to a particular aesthetic object, but we then apply a second-order response in order to differentiate objects which call for a judgment of beauty (beautiful) and ones which do not (non-beautiful). However, and as Ginsborg (later) rightly identifies, this would violate Kant's insistence on subjectivity (by involving determining concepts), and comes dangerously close to making beauty an objective property of the aesthetic object itself.[232] However, Ginsborg's attempts to circumvent the issue by proposing the following:

> We could suppose instead that one person judges the object to be beautiful and the other simply refrains from judging it to be beautiful: responding to it either with indifference,

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[231] Or more precisely, to her feeling of pleasure in the agreeable or displeasure in the disagreeable. Whilst there is no universal validity for having a headache, surely, we can agree that headaches are universally painful (to a more or lesser degree)? However, this brings us back into the territory of the subjectivity/objectivity debate, which I would explicitly like to avoid here, but it is nonetheless important.

[232] Ginsborg attempts to justify why this does not have to contradict Kant's need for subjectivity, whereas others e.g., Ameriks are more comfortable in revising Kant's position to make it more amenable to a modern-day audience, seeing little justification in avoiding a more objective account of taste (see Chapter 6).

> with dislike or perhaps with a feeling of pleasure which she knows to be based on some interest of hers (2016, 16).

Ginsborg's maintains that positive and negative judgments are not symmetrical, i.e., there is not necessarily a strict account of ugliness, as there is for positive judgments (beauty). Ginsborg maintains that her approach still preserves the necessary subjectivity of a Kantian aesthetic account. Her interpretation allows for the possibility of disagreement between observers as well as ensuring the non-conceptual, universally valid subjective nature of Kant's aesthetic deduction. Ginsborg argues that disagreement about art objects come down to the disagreements about the existence or absence of pleasure (2016, 13). Meaningful disagreement can occur through the asymmetrical relationship between beauty and non-beauty. In the case of the young poet, for instance, who thinks his poem is beautiful, whilst his friends do not (§32). Ginsborg claims that the poet's friends are not finding some sort of ugliness in the poem, but rather that "…in experiencing the object and not liking it…" they are "…resisting [the] claim that I ought to like it." (2016, 16). The contention here is that an account of 'real' ugliness

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is not necessary since Ginsborg believes that non-beauty is enough to constitute a negative counterpart to that of beauty. This leaves Ginsborg in disagreement with several leading Kantian thinkers, such as Allison, Guyer and Ameriks: all of whom attempt to find solutions to the 'problem' of ugliness in Kant's account.[243] As opposed to these writers, Ginsborg does not find the lack of a negative counterpart to beauty particularly troubling and is happy with disagreement amounting to a distinction between beauty and non-beauty rather than between

beauty and ugliness.[233] This approach does not, however, account for ugliness. At best, it can only account for a lack of beauty.

It may be the case that an asymmetrical relation between negative and positive judgments of beauty is *actually* (as opposed to intended) entailed by Kant's account of taste, i.e., it could indeed be the highest level of a pure judgment of negative taste which we can achieve. But this does not tally with Kant's *intention* of refuting the sceptic about matters of an a priori basis for judgments of taste or avoiding the trap which Hume succumbed to, namely that of not being able to have real quarrels about taste.[234] Kant conceives of aesthetic judgment

[243] Guyer's solution of differing capacities between persons at least acknowledges that the outcome is less than ideal, especially for a Kantian. By opening the aesthetic deduction to the possibility of negative judgments (and thereby making the deduction more appealing and intuitive) Guyer admits to sacrificing the universal necessity of the judgment itself: meaning that it can no longer demand universal assent. In taking away a core component of Kant's aesthetic theory Guyer diminishes the ambitious tone of the *Critique of Judgment* and essentially admits to the failure of the Deduction in achieving its primary aims. On the other hand, Ginsborg argues that the universality of negative aesthetic judgments was never going to be amenable to Kant, but that this does not stop real disagreement from taking place between people with different aesthetic judgments.

as involving the mere reflection on one's subjective state, and in doing so, he refers both to pleasure and, more importantly to our discussion - displeasure (§34, 286) which as we have already established cannot be thought of as merely as a lack of pleasure.

[233] This may be true for judgments about fine art, but Ginsborg later goes on to claim that the potential for disagreement regarding the beauty (or lack thereof) of nature falls away (2016, 21). Ginsborg posits that we need only to examine the problems associated with disagreement in the arts, primarily because aesthetic disagreement, "…belong[s] almost exclusively without qualification – in the domain of art." and "When it comes to the beauty of nature, the phenomenon of aesthetic disagreement pretty much falls away." (Ibid.,). I take this to mean that (according to Ginsborg) aesthetic disagreement over nature should not occur if judgments have been properly subsumed. It is unclear why this distinction ought to be made, between the beauty in fine art and nature – when the deduction does not specify its application only to instances of either nature or fine art. Aesthetic disagreement occurs in both realms, and thus being able to distinguish between the correct and incorrect judgments in art and nature is an important part of addressing the sceptical position. However, disagreements about natural aesthetic objects do exist and this should also be taken into consideration when trying to defend a Kantian/subjectivist position.

[234] Hume's standard of taste relies upon the joint verdict of true critics (*OST*, 1910). Which may mean that for Hume at least, true critics can disagree about judgments (although the adjudication of disagreements between critics is unclear) but that real disagreement amongst us 'common folk' is nigh on impossible – since we should simply defer to the judgment of true critics in cases of uncertainty.

8.3 Ugliness as pleasure

In direct contrast to Ginsborg's approach, some have approached the 'problem' of ugliness not as a problem at all. Instead, the absence of Kant's deduction or discussion of ugliness is seen to support the idea that for Kant, 'ugliness' is pleasurable. This is similar to the appeal to proportioned attunement; crucially, however, this approach does not aim to prove that displeasure is produced through an experience of the ugly, i.e., involves a disharmony of the faculties. Rather, the aesthetic experience of ugliness rests upon a harmonious relationship (although of a lower degree) between the imagination and the understanding, and thus pleasure is produced.

This approach does not have the intuitive appeal of some of the alternatives which we have considered since it does not track with ordinary usage of the words ugly (and by extension) beautiful. Generally, when using the word 'ugly' to describe an aesthetic experience, we do not wish to imply that the experience is a pleasurable one. For some, the experience of ugly is intuitively one involving displeasure, thus explaining the appeal to an account of aesthetic taste as being one that does involve a disharmonious relationship between the imagination and the understanding. However, as we have seen, the disharmony/proportional attunement approaches, whilst perhaps tracking better with our ordinary experiences, cannot be justified within Kant's deduction of pure aesthetic taste. In the case of ugliness and its supposed displeasure, we have no way of distinguishing between that which produces a feeling of aesthetic displeasure and that which produces a feeling of something being merely disagreeable. In cases of beauty, however, it is possible to appeal to the notion of the free play and harmonisation of the faculties as being involved in the production of pleasure: but there is no adequate equivalent for making judgments about ugliness. If we only appeal to Kant's 'Deduction of Taste' (§38), then there can be no formal grounding for an account of pure ugliness without substantially revising Kant's words. And if we appeal to other parts of the

Critique in order to make this justification, then the purity of such judgments will be brought into question, since appealing to notions such as disharmony, proportionate attunement, and contrapurposiveness often leads to questions of further justification (requiring versions of objectivism and conceptualism, see the previous chapter).

Towards the beginning of the previous chapter, I considered Theodore Gracyk's proposal for solving the problem of ugliness in the third *Critique*: his solution was to dissolve the problem itself. Although his appeal to time-orders is unnecessarily confusing and not particularly Kantian – others have followed this line of thinking, albeit without the reference to time-orders. If pure judgments of ugliness do not exist within a Kantian framework, Occam's razor would suggest that this is because Kant intended it to be the case.[235] Perhaps then it is possible to coherently conceive of Kant as reducing what would generally be described as displeasure to a form of pleasure? Of course, this would not be consistent with Kant's earlier statements about there being a need for 'real opposites' (Dohna-Wunderlacken Logic 9th hour: 711) or his discussion about ugliness opposing beauty; but if we take the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment as a standalone piece, it makes much more sense. The question, which therefore remains, is whether pure ugliness (for Kant) involves either some kind of pleasure or if, instead, it is simply non-existent (or just another form of beauty)?

Feloj notes that although ugliness is not explicitly omitted from Kant's aesthetics, it is effectively reduced to beauty, which is presumably pleasurable due to Kant's justification of

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[235] As is argued by Guyer (2005) and Ginsborg (2003, 175-177 and also 2016), alongside those who advocate 'everything is beautiful' approaches (see Chapter 7). Ginsborg's argument is a little more nuanced, in that she admits to the existence of disinterested judgments of ugliness (of the kind Guyer thinks impossible) but acknowledges that these judgments do not involve a feeling of displeasure, but rather an absence of pleasure. Ginsborg's argument can also be categorised as the one-act view of pleasure, whereas Guyer's endorses the twoact view of pleasure, which involves the assumption that pleasure cannot lay claim to its own universal communicability, i.e., there is an extra step involved.

the harmonious free play of the faculties and not any disharmonious counterpart (2013, 179). Here, I can agree with Feloj that if ugliness is presented at all by Kant in the third *Critique*, then it has to be found within the confines of the harmonious free play of the faculties, which stems from the subjective purposiveness of form. Of course, if ugliness really was pleasurable, then we would have no way of distinguishing this from the pleasure associated with a judgment of pure beauty. This conclusion is problematic, but no more so than the similar conclusion generated by pure judgments of beauty, i.e., that there is no ugliness at all.

Since there is no way to definitively check one's own (or other people's) subjective mental state in the first place, the belief that we have correctly subsumed an object under the imagination and the understanding may well be illusory (§38, 291). This does not, according to Kant, delegitimise the a priori universal (but subjective) validity of a judgment of taste and is equally applicable to logical judgments too (ibid.,). However, whilst the judgment is hypothetically possible, we do not have a way of checking that it is really occurring in any given instance. Kant's bold statement's about discovering the a priori basis of aesthetic judgment is so remarkable due to the insistence on both universal validity and subjectivity. This is why justifying the connections between free play, harmony, and pleasure becomes an essential part of determining the success of Kant's account. The discoverability/shareability/communicability of pleasure (and its causes) are important elements to the Kantian account, but unfortunately, the connections between these aspects of aesthetic judgment remain opaque throughout the third *Critique.* This is especially problematic for someone making the kind of claims Kant is about the universal validity of aesthetic judgments (and not just judgments of beauty). In defending the idea that ugliness is pleasurable, and therefore does not demand a deduction separate from that which is already given, a

potentially promising avenue of exploration might lie in the appeal to the relationship between universal communicability and pleasure, and it is to this which I will now turn.[236]

As I have previously asserted, if there is an account of pure ugliness, it can only be based upon that which has been posited as the basis for aesthetic judgments, in general, to be possible, that is, the harmony of the faculties. It *may* be possible to coherently explain why a form of pleasure is involved with an experience of ugliness if the root of pleasure is in the ability of a judgment of taste to be made universal.[237] Before the deduction itself, Kant states that "…it is not the pleasure, but the universal validity of this pleasure…" which makes it *necessarily* valid for everyone (§37 289). On one interpretation, it could be argued that experiencing the *feeling* of pleasure in relation to an aesthetic object does not involve a demand for universal validity. Rather it is the *communicability of this feeling* which calls for universal assent. Moreover, if communicability is at the root of aesthetic judgment, then it follows that it is our ability to share an experience of beauty that makes it pleasurable. A defence of this argument (regarding the links between validity, pleasure and communicability) can be found in Ginsborg's 'On the Key' (1991), where she maintains that the feeling of pleasure "…is consequent on its own universal communicability." (299, see 299-300 especially). Ginsborg's argument reflects her own one-act interpretation of §9, which she argues is a self-referential judging that one's "…act of judging is universally communicable." (300).[238] Ginsborg also maintains that this act of self-referential judging is one and the same activity as Kant's free harmony of the imagination and the understanding. Meaning that if her argument is sound, that

[236] This will not convince anyone who doubts the validity of the Deduction itself, but I am concerned with an account of pure ugliness.
[237] Mojca Kuplen offers a compelling analysis of human fascination with ugliness, arguing that although it may not involve the same pleasure as the beautiful, it is also an inherently valuable experience, and cannot be dismissed as mere displeasure (2013, 262).
[238] §9 is the passage where Kant states that the "merely subjective judging of the object" both "precedes" and "is the ground of" the pleasure (218) rather than as would otherwise be assumed – the pleasure itself is universally valid.

there is no problem in reconciling passages §9 and §38 (by trying to justify a two-act account of pleasure preceding and resulting in and from the judgment) because they are one and the same (the pleasure and the judging).

If we take this interpretation at face value, then an interesting question surfaces concerning the role of ugliness, namely, whether an account of pleasure understood as relating to communicability could incorporate ugliness as universally communicable and thus pleasurable? An experience of ugliness could counterintuitively be found pleasurable (and still maintain coherence) because pleasure is derived from the 'shareability' of the judgment and not so much the initial feeling of pleasure itself. To be clear, this is not an argument I endorse, but considering this approach provides more space to also consider other relationships between ugliness, aesthetic judgment and pleasure. How far under this interpretation can ugliness still be considered as properly 'ugly' is a question in need of further discussion. One issue in need of further clarification concerns our ability to understand the possibility for the different phenomenological experiences of ugliness and beauty to have an equivalent outcome, i.e., pleasure.[239] This interpretation (concerning the one-act view) of the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment does find support within the text, and whilst this helps in circumventing conflict between passages in the third Critique, it helps little with understanding Kant's position on ugliness, and it certainly does not help illustrate the purity of such judgments.

[239] Alternatively, one could argue that it is not the feeling of displeasure, but rather the universality of this displeasure which makes a judgment of ugliness an a priori necessary judgment i.e., valid for everyone. However, this interpretation would run into the same difficulties in justifying the existence of a negative counterpart to the harmony of the faculties, as the argument for disharmony and proportionate attunement has been subject to.

With reference to Ginsborg's argument as illustrated above, the incorporation of ugliness definitely does not make sense. Especially, as the universal communicability Ginsborg points to is entwined with the pleasure associated with the free play of the imagination and the

understanding, and not at all with the displeasure associated with ugliness.[240] Of course, it is technically possible that (for Kant) ugliness does not exist and that what we perceive as ugly is actually pleasurable because we can universally communicate the judgment of ugliness (not because we can universalise the feeling of displeasure). However, this argument has little textual support and stands in direct contrast with typical aesthetic experience.

If we look only to the pure Deduction of taste as found at §38, there is little in the way of justification for the inclusion of pure ugliness. If we accept that ugliness involves pleasure, then the support found in §39-40 could be compelling. Kant emphasises the 'shared sense' of aesthetic judgment (293 and 295) and the importance of the universal communicability of taste, "…taste is our ability to judge a priori the communicability of the feeling (without mediation by a concept) are connected with a given presentation." (296). Furthermore, Kant contends that we can define taste as the "…ability to judge something that makes our feeling in a given presentation universally communicable." (295). Kant lends credence to the idea that pleasure is found in the universal communicability of judgments of taste, but he does not explicitly extend this to judgments of the ugly. In arguing that ugliness is ultimately pleasurable because we can share this response with other people (that is, if we accept the deduction itself), we effectively reduce ugliness to beauty, in virtue of it being indistinguishable from beauty in any meaningful way. If this approach is what Kant had in mind, then it appears to conflict with the

[240] Recall that Ginsborg does not think that there is a specific feeling of displeasure associated with ugliness: only an absence of pleasure.

Deduction (§38), which focuses on the necessity of the object's presentation of harmony with the subjective conditions of the power of judgment, i.e., the harmonisation of the faculties.[241] Conceiving of ugliness in this way is still deeply unsatisfying, and it has little intuitive appeal because it does not track with our ordinary aesthetic experiences. The reduction of pure ugliness to a form of beauty is also not consistent with Kant's discussion of ugliness as providing a substantive opposition to the beautiful.

8.4 Real Ugliness

If we look closely at the examples Kant gives of the paradigmatically ugly, such as the "furies, diseases, devastations of war…" (§48, 312), it is apparent that he is not speaking of something which is not merely 'not beautiful' but is instead describing a viscerally disturbing experience. Kant describes these instances of ugliness as 'harmful' and whilst art can describe or represent things in nature which we would find 'ugly' otherwise, there is one type of ugliness which cannot be represented in art, "without destroying all aesthetic satisfaction" (§48, 312) and it is that which arouses loathing (Meredith translation) or disgust (Pluhar's translation of Ekel).

Kant's examples of ugliness do not, in fact, seem to be relating to ordinary phenomenological experience of ugliness at all, but instead, seem to be describing instances of moral repugnance. Disease, death and war can be made beautiful by artistic means, e.g., the spirit of war in Mars (§48, 312), but on their own, they surely describe moral rather than aesthetic ugliness? War brings ugliness through the devastation which it creates, but the ugliness of war itself more readily stems from the destruction of life and liberty and subsequent moral judgment than the making of an aesthetic judgment.[253]

[241] Problematically, an appeal to the 'shared sense' of aesthetic taste *may* also violate two of the criteria for a judgment of pure beauty – that of non-conceptuality and autonomy. Appealing to how other people will respond to something could violate the autonomy requirement of the deduction of pure beauty, where Kant insists that we cannot make a judgment with reference to anyone else or with reference to determinate concepts (§31, 281).

[253] One area deserving of further research is the symbology of the morally good. If the symbol of the morally good is nature, then there is something problematic about finding it ugly. It makes sense that the ugly in nature would thus be a symbol of the immoral. Garrett Thompson (1992) argues that Kant cannot accommodate a pure aesthetic experience of ugliness, because morality precludes ugliness, and ugliness symbolises the morally bad. Elsewhere, Kant has been interpreted as stating that there is nothing ugly in nature, "…nature contains nothing monstrous (nor anything magnificent or horrid)…" (§26, 253). If we interpret the monstrous [Ungeheuer] as being able to provoke a sense of disgust within us, then perhaps this can also be interpreted as being related to the ugly. If this is so, then this passage seems to suggest that nothing in nature can be found to be disgusting or indeed ugly. See Strub, Brandt and Fricke in Parret (1996) for further outlining of this argument. I would argue that Kant's reference to monstrosity refers to disgust, which cannot be conflated with ugliness. Furthermore, the idea that ugliness can somehow be derived from disgust, which is in turn derived from the monstrous, conflicts with Kant's claims that it is ugliness which arouses disgust, and not disgust which arouses a sense of the ugly (§48, 312). This line of thinking also directly contradicts Kant's statement about fine art being able to represent that which is ugly in nature (ibid.,) i.e., that ugliness in nature exists.

In the Meredith translation of the *Critique of Judgment* (1988), the 'furies, disease and war' are described not as harmful (as in the Pluhar translation) but rather as 'evils' (§48, 312). Either way, 'real' ugliness cannot be reduced to beauty unless we drastically change the way we think about ugliness. It would be far easier to find another word to describe what Kant has in mind: fortunately, Kant does provide an alternative to ugliness as the proper opposite of beauty. If there is no room within the deduction to accommodate a pure judgment of ugliness, perhaps the true opposition to beauty is not ugliness (which could be considered as a facet of beauty and involving pleasure) but rather a sense of disgust which inspires a loathing within the subject. Kant refers to the real opposition of beauty as producing the 'maximum disgust' (Dohna-Wunderlacken Logic, Lectures on Logic, 8th Hour, p708), and in *Observations, on the Beautiful and the Sublime,* he states that "Nothing is so opposed to the beautiful as the disgusting." (§2, 233). Kant's emphasis on the importance of disgust satisfies the visceral nature which (for him) a real opposition to beauty ought to capture. This interpretation would allow for the lack of ugliness in the *Critique*'s deduction of aesthetic taste to not be an immediately discrediting factor if ugliness, as understood by Kant, was more in line with the experience of disgust.

Kant's problem with ugliness in the third *Critique* stems from its absence. Whilst ugliness exists in the form of the impure variety, the issue at stake here has been whether Kant also makes room for an account of pure ugliness. Simply put – he does not. As we have seen, there are various ways of 'saving' the deduction from this problem, but all of those considered involves the acceptance of a line of thinking which requires more justification than Kant provides (disharmony/proportionate attunement). Moreover, a judgment of pure ugliness would violate the epistemological rules which govern the faculties of judgment, which necessarily only allow for judgments of pure beauty (as justified by Kant throughout the third *Critique*). Whilst Kant does not endorse the absurd notion that 'everything is beautiful', the most he can offer in terms of a negative counterpart to beauty is to say that some things are non-beautiful or perhaps impurely ugly. The possibility that ugliness is part of our experience of the beautiful and is ultimately pleasurable provides a compelling interpretation, but it does not account for the feeling of displeasure often associated with ugliness.

The deduction of taste fails to provide a non-affirmative counterpart to beauty; therefore, there can be no pure judgment of ugliness using Kant's deduction of aesthetic judgment. A form of non-traditional ugliness, i.e., one involving pleasure, may be accommodated, but this does not come close to Kant's insistence on a proper opposite for beauty. Arguably, the instances of ugliness that are referenced by Kant do not track with typical aesthetic usage and refer more to instances of moral ugliness, which generates a sense of disgust. For Kant, ugliness is an aberration and one which is better defined in terms of disgust or loathing than in ugliness. However, the question remains as to the role of disgust within Kantian aesthetics since it does not (by necessity) have the universal a priori backing that supports a judgment of pure beauty, i.e., it cannot command universal assent or be universally communicated. If Kant ever had the intention of proving the existence of pure negative judgments of taste, then he took for granted the ability to derive this from the Deduction. Ultimately, the judgment of taste does not capture

the fullness of aesthetic experience, with its lack of account of ugliness highlighting its inability to provide an intuitively appealing (or epistemologically sound) understanding of positive and negative aesthetic experience.

Having already briefly addressed the idea that for Kant, nothing which exists in nature can be ugly, I will not linger on this for long here. Appeals to this notion are understandable in the context of Kant's inability to provide a justified account of ugliness in the third *Critique*, but they contradict Kant's admittance of the existence of ugliness in both nature and the arts. Problematically, whilst Kant does not allow for the pure experience of ugliness to form part of his deduction of taste, he does refer (albeit tangentially) to non-affirmative aesthetic responses, but these are either instances of impurity, and in any case, they are more likely to simply be instances of the non-beautiful. To be clear, Kant does find things ugly and thinks that others do too, i.e., that this is an ordinary part of the aesthetic response: he does not, however, establish the legitimacy of pure negative judgments.[242] In the case of nature, Kant technically allows for the existence of non-beauty but does not pursue this since his main aim in the third *Critique* was to prove the possibility of an a priori aesthetic judgment. But to say that nothing in nature is ugly – is a blatant falsehood – as Kant clearly references ugliness (see above) and has a conception of ugliness in nature, however undeveloped it may be in the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment.

The main issue with trying to justify Kant's approach to ugliness is that he does not supply the resources with which to do this. This is why so many writers have resorted to revising parts of Kant's account in order to accommodate negative aesthetic judgments.

[242] We could argue that Kant does indeed allow for ugliness in the arts. Simply put, ugliness is when a piece of art or music, fails at properly demonstrating the aesthetic ideas contained therein. However, this is not enough to show that Kant has a coherent account of ugliness, let alone pure ugliness. All this accounts for is the ability for artwork to be non-beautiful.

However, the non-existence of pure ugliness in Kant's deduction of taste may be made slightly less problematic with an appeal to disgust. Placing disgust into direct opposition to beauty allows for Kant's aesthetics to maintain personal intuitiveness to the ordinary phenomenological experience of aesthetic response. This may be necessary as, without some kind of accommodation for negative aesthetic experiences, Kant's deduction would be considerably less attractive. Having said this, Kant's use of the concept of disgust (as previously discussed) is only mentioned briefly in the third *Critique* and appears without deductive justification in other works. For the sake of argument, I will make a provisional assumption about the place of disgust in Kant's aesthetic framework, namely that it provides a 'proper' opposition to the beautiful. I feel that this is justified, both by the absence of a deduction of ugliness and the repetition of reference to disgust throughout the entire body of Kant's work as being the proper opposition to beauty.

8.5 A brief comparison of artistic and natural beauty

Much is made of Kant's preference for natural over artistic beauty, especially as it pertains to Kant's apparent consideration of natural beauty as the basic form of beauty.[243] Whilst Kant does explore at length the various types of artistic beauty, nature is predominant in both his discussion of the beautiful and the sublime. In the second part of the *Critique,* Kant states:

> Our judging of artistic beauty will have to be considered, afterwards, as a mere consequence of the same principles that underlie judgments about natural beauty. (XII Division of the *Critique of Judgment*, First Introduction, 251').

[243] Rueger argues that nature is not the most theoretically basic form of beauty for Kant, instead making a case for Kant's preference for poetry over even nature as the basic form of beauty (2007, 138).

It is clear that our understanding of artistic beauty stems from our appreciation of natural beauty, but its superiority to artistic beauty is also confirmed by Kant as being able to provide a direct link to the cultivation of moral feeling (§42, 300). As wonderful as artistic beauty can be, the pre-eminence of natural beauty is established from its connection with morality:

> A man who has taste enough to judge the products of fine art with the greatest correctness and refinement may still be glad to leave a room in which he finds those beauties that minister to vanity and perhaps to social joys and to turn instead to the beautiful in nature, in order to find there, as it were, a voluptuousness for the mind in a train of thought that he can never fully unravel. (Ibid).[244]

The terminology Kant chooses here is interesting, especially regarding his statement that artistic beauty serves human vanities, whereas natural beauty presumably serves the greater purpose of cultivating human morality (which may well be another project of human vanity). In light of this passage, it becomes even harder to imagine that Kant had any other intention than to place natural beauty at the top of the aesthetic pyramid. Whilst artistic beauty grapples with aesthetic ideas (and requires genius in order to be successful), which are potentially exhaustible. Natural beauty provokes the free play of the imagination and understanding in a way that is never exhaustible or truly comprehensible.[245] Art is made with the direct intention of provoking an aesthetic response (§42, 301), whereas natural beauty is simply subjectively

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[244] This is an odd choice of words, especially for someone who claims that there are no rules or concepts involved in a pure judgment of taste. Ultimately the only type of correct type of judgment is one which is made disinterestedly and from a subjective basis, beyond this we can have no assurance. Even taking into consideration these two criteria, we have no guarantee of certainty, it is simply a theoretical possibility which Kant aims at proving.

[245] In Pluhar's translation (which I have referred to throughout the majority of this thesis, unless otherwise stated) Kant contrasts artistic beauty with the beautiful in nature which exhibits a "…voluptuousness for the mind in a train of thought he can never fully unravel." (§48, 300).

purposive for our cognitive faculties, i.e., it displays a purposiveness without purpose.[246] Kant states that "A natural beauty is a beautiful thing; artistic beauty is a beautiful presentation of a thing." (§48, 311). Art strives to look as though it were natural, and the success of an artwork depends upon its ability to pass itself off as nature, i.e., that it is not premeditated or guided by purpose.[247] In this way, art can portray 'ugly' things as beautiful, whether this is through metaphorical, abstract or allegorical means (§48). In fact, "…Fine art shows its superiority precisely in this, that it describes things beautifully that in nature, we would dislike or find ugly." (§48, 312). According to Kant, there is only one type of ugliness that cannot be successfully represented through the artistic process. This type of ugliness is that which arouses the feeling of disgust within us:

> There is only one kind of ugliness that cannot be presented in conformity with nature without obliterating all aesthetic liking and hence artistic beauty: that ugliness which arouses disgust. (§48, 312).

Whether in nature or represented in a painting or photograph - disgust prevents the aesthetic process of free play from occurring. In other words, a disgusting object cannot be seen or represented without "…destroying all aesthetic satisfaction…" (Ibid.,) whereas all other forms of ugliness can be presented through art as beautiful no matter how ugly they may be in nature. By extension, if an object can be depicted in art as beautiful, then it is impossible that it also be disgusting; instead, it must simply be a type of ugliness which does not arouse disgust. In

[246] It is important to note that whilst the production of successful artwork requires 'painstaking practise' (§48, 312) the judgment of taste itself requires no special ability which is not readily available to the layperson. This fact is one reason amongst many which serves to set Kant's aesthetics apart from that of Hume's, where critics are given an elevated position in the hierarchy of taste.

[247] This is why it takes genius to produce great art, poetry, music etc., because one must make it seem as though it were a product of nature, it takes talent to be able to represent moral ideas through aesthetic ones, and to successfully communicate this to an audience.

simple terms, disgust obliterates beauty. Throughout Kant's work, then, the logical opposite of beauty may well be disgust rather than ugliness, especially if we take ugliness to simply mean non-beauty. As I have already discussed at some length, Kant's aesthetic deduction does not provide an explanation or defence of the experience of ugliness in aesthetic response. He does, however, allow for the experience of non-beauty, but whatever his intention may have been, ugliness is unable to be incorporated through the actual deduction. As a result, we are left either with a half-hearted account that does not track with our ordinary experiences of ugliness or we are forced to make room for disgust as reflecting true ugliness to the antithesis to beauty.[248]

Let me be explicit about my motivations here. Finding a coherent account of ugliness is essential both to make sense of Kant's third *Critique* but more generally in order to help understand the role and value of ugliness in nature (at least for the purposes of this thesis). The natural world is full of things that are not aesthetically pleasing; this poses a problem especially to environmentalists when the object, creature or organism in question is vulnerable to

environmental damage and/or has an important role in maintaining the equilibria of an ecosystem (see Chapter 6). Ordinarily, an appeal to the beauty of said object could be made, but in cases of ugliness, this is impossible. As such, it is even more difficult to provide motivation for its protection. The reverse is also true, for instance, in cases of harmful beauty, whether expanses of non-naturally occurring grass in Nevada or California or pollution sunsets etc., A compelling aesthetic account should be able to take into consideration the complexity of humanity's relationship with beauty, ugliness, and the natural environment. Equating beauty with the morally good and ugliness with the immoral or insignificant is problematic because it

[248] What do we mean when we say something is ugly? Do we mean that it is 'non-aesthetic'? If so, this maps better onto Kant's interpretation of disgust – which obliterates aesthetic liking. The only Kantian idiosyncrasy (perhaps) requiring more exploration is the idea that understanding true ugliness as disgust, cannot be represented as beautiful whereas other types of ugliness can (§48, 312).

implies that those things we find non-aesthetically appealing are to be disregarded as an aberration, and those things found as beautiful are taken at face value as simply beautiful. A compelling aesthetic account ought to be able to help explain situations such as these, as well as offering a way to understand the role of ugliness in nature/art, the value contained therein and the potential for its appreciation. Whilst I am not claiming that this interpretation is necessarily correct, I am simply positing that an inherent danger of Kant's opaque position on ugliness leads to interpretations such as these and that these interpretations take us even further away from forging positive links between Kantian aesthetics and the environment.

8.6 Nature, art, and disgust

When Kant does find things in nature ugly, the examples he gives are 'furies, disease' and the like, instead of things such as the blowfish, star-nosed mole, swamps and bogs, which we may expect as being more representative of natural ugliness. Disease, death, and the horrors of war are perhaps more aptly described in terms of moral repugnancy than ugliness since it offends our moral sensibilities and not necessarily our aesthetic taste in the same way the blobfish might do. Star-nosed moles are ugly, but are they disgusting? Of course, it is possible to define our way out of almost any problem by changing the parameters of our language, asking the words we use to do more or less work for us – depending upon what the situation calls for.

However, common usage of the term requires something more from us than mere dislike – it is the repugnancy, repulsion and offence which is somehow involved in our response to certain stimuli, which earns an object the label of disgust.

There is a contradiction of sorts in Kant's text here; he claims that beautiful art is able to communicate moral ideas through aesthetic ones. However, the disgusting cannot be made beautiful (as it can with ugliness), presumably even by the genius artist, which means that that it is empty of aesthetic value (or at least liking) and thus potentially moral value also. However, an undeniable part of Kant's account of disgust is its connection with morality since his

discussion of disgust is primarily concerned with objects or events offending our moral sensibilities. If this is a correct interpretation of the text, then does it not seem strange that 'the disgusting' should be excluded from the domain of aesthetics and thus potentially the moral domain as well? It seems that if what is disgusting (for Kant) does in some way constitute the immoral/amoral then, then 'the disgusting' ought to be considered at least as aesthetically valuable as the beautiful. The fact that something disgusting cannot be conveyed aesthetically as something beautiful does not mean that it does not have something to add to our understanding of the nature of beauty and ugliness (and for Kant – even morality)

It seems clear to me that Kant does not, in the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment at least, attempt to persuade the reader that disgust is the true opposition to beauty; he speaks of ugliness as if it were the logical opposite but does not provide a deduction to prove this.[249] So, if we take Kant's position on ugliness at face value, we are confronted with the following question: if ugliness can be represented as beautiful – then how is it ugly at all? Using the notion of disgust to replace ugliness as Kant's ultimate version of ugliness, as we have already seen –

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does not stand up to scrutiny. But even if it did hold a more promising place within the *Critique*, we would still be left with a critical problem, that disgust moves individuals to dismissal. Its connection with moral repugnancy makes it unsuitable for aesthetic reflection, and it is unable to be represented in artwork without obliterating all possibility of aesthetic liking. Where does this leave our ability to understand ugliness and/or disgust in the natural environment?

Fine art is able to take something ugly, death, for instance, and turn it into something artistically palatable, e.g., a wilting flower. A good or genius artist is able to express through

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[249] As I have stated elsewhere in this chapter, there is a legitimate case to be made that Kant generally thought of disgust as the logical opposite to beauty. Certainly, if there is no possibility of pure ugliness within aesthetic taste, then it makes sense for the true opposite be disgust.

the use of aesthetic attributes an aesthetic idea, which (if done well) illustrates a rational idea. Kant gives several examples of this in the fine arts and poetry: war-like spirit can be represented as Mars (§48, 312), "…Jupiter's eagle with the lightning in its claws is an attribute of the mighty king of heaven…" (§48, 315) and through poetry, he claims that Frederic the Great was able to animate his rational idea of the cosmopolitan attitude (ibid.,).[262] Although having a conceptual element may seem to contradict the strict non-conceptualism of Kantian aesthetics (at least of the pure variety, which is the only type I am considering here), it is impossible to pin down these concepts with any concrete reference.[263] Kant argues that the aesthetic idea is somehow unfinished within the representation, but the feeling aroused through viewing it "…quickens our cognitive powers and connects language, which otherwise would be mere letters, with spirit." (§49, 316). It involves a "…multitude of kindred presentations that arouse more thought than can be expressed in a concept determined by words." (§49, 315); momentum is generated in response to these objects but results in an undeveloped idea (ibid.,). Which rather begs the question, addressed in detail earlier (Chapter 5), that if we can't even put into words the subjective mental state we are experiencing (or even know for sure if we are in fact experiencing it) how are we able to universally communicate this or use this as the primary grounding for an a priori universal account of taste?

[262] The excerpt of a poem Kant quotes is as follows (taken from Oeuvres de Frederic Ie Grand. 1846 ft" x, 203): Let us part from life without grumbling or regrets, Leaving the world behind filled with our good deeds.
Thus the sun, his daily course completed,
Spreads one more soft light over the sky;
And the last rays that he sends through the air
Are the last sighs he gives the world for its well-being.

[263] Although it seems this is exactly what we are doing, i.e., when pointing out the grim reaper's scythe we know that it represents the concept of death.

So, to return to the point at hand – where does this leave ugliness? Under either interpretation, a) disgust is Kant's 'true' ugliness or b) that ugliness cannot be used interchangeably with disgust; ugliness in nature is still just ugliness. If option a) turns out to be true, then true ugliness

in nature is simply disgusting and has no aesthetic value, and if b) is correct, then ugliness is still dismissed as an aberration (or used to create beautiful art).

Art can take what is ugly in nature and make it beautiful, but can the ugly in nature ever be beautiful? This may seem to be a nonsensical question, but it is of serious concern. Unfortunately, an in-depth discussion of this issue would distract from the aims of this chapter, but I would like to make some brief comments here about the issue, which require further research. Nature's beauty relates to its purposiveness (without purpose) for our faculties. Beautiful/genius art can present this, i.e., it looks as if it were not created by an artist but was 'free' beauty – like that found in nature.[250] However, nature is entirely purposive without purpose, so what makes the beautiful in nature different from that of the ugly? Kant would say that the beautiful is that which generates the free play of the faculties of imagination and understanding and that this subjective mental state involves a universal communicability leading to an a priori applicable judgment. How one comes to determine whether the judgment is pure or not is a point of concern, but the more pressing issue here relates to there being no discernible difference between beautiful nature and ugly nature.[251] Kant does not develop a

coherent account of ugliness in the third *Critique*, so we could hypothetically take the concept of disgust as beauty's logical opposite. In doing so, we then need to look at disgust instead of ugliness to fill the gap left by a lack of an account of ugliness. In applying the idea of disgust to nature, we are (by default) applying notions of moral repugnancy to aesthetic displeasure and thus to nature. In Chapter 6, I addressed why having a coherent account of ugliness is important to ecoaesthetics, especially in terms of appreciating how beauty tends to have an

[250] In contrast, beautiful nature often appears to have been designed by the artist with the intention of harmonising the imagination and understanding.

[251] Non-beautiful art can be distinguished from and beautiful art through a lack of aesthetic attributes in its representation. However, in either case, this would become an impure judgment if the observer were attempting to find these aesthetic attributes and apply them to their judgments i.e., it would violate non-conceptuality.

obfuscating effect upon natural phenomena when it comes to understanding the dangers behind surface-level beauty. Likewise, having no account of ugliness is problematic for understanding the ecological systems behind surface-level ugliness. Being unable to account for ugliness in any meaningful way means that the outright dismissal of ugliness is much more likely than in cases where ugliness is taken into account.

Kant's aesthetics go one step further by failing to account for true ugliness, i.e., instead of non-beauty, which may make disgust the more intuitive and practical notion to replace ugliness as beauty's logical opposition. This means that instead of simply ignoring the 'ugly' in nature, ugliness is now tinged with moral repugnancy as it is not only aesthetically unappealing but also (supposedly) offends our moral sensibilities. The implications of this view for ecoaesthetics and the environment, more broadly speaking, ought to be evident. Conflating ugliness with disgust makes the phenomena associated with such disgust the subject of contempt, meaning that potentially useful natural occurrences are less likely to be protected or preserved. It also provides ammunition to NIMBYs (Not in My Back Yarder) that would prefer not to have an ecologically sustainable infrastructure in their gardens, or indeed anywhere, i.e., if the ugliness of a windfarm is morally contemptible this seems reason enough to avoid its installation. On the other hand, under a Kantian account of beauty, aesthetically pleasing natural phenomena may be left uninterrogated in their beauty. This means that potentially harmful natural beauty goes unchecked and beautiful activities, e.g., non-natural white-picketfenced lawns, are encouraged.[252]

8.7 Conclusion

Kant's deduction of taste fails on several grounds, but the absence of ugliness presents a unique and far more wide-reaching problem than, for instance, the particularity problem, which

[252] Admittedly, this is more of an issue with Kant's non-conceptuality and anti-cognitive brand of aesthetic appreciation, than the non-existence of ugliness/conflation of ugliness with disgust.

probably only draws the interest of Kantian scholars! The failure to accommodate ugliness would not spell disaster for Kantian aesthetics if the deduction applied only to judgments of beauty. As it is, the Deduction at §38 is entitled the Deduction of Judgments of Taste, thereby implying that there is more than one type of aesthetic response (or at the very least that there are different conclusions to be drawn from an aesthetic response). I argue that in not addressing the potential for pure judgments of ugliness, Kant opened the deduction up to further critique concerning the veracity of his ideas about communicability, subjectivity, particularity and the problems generated by each.

As it stands, I do not believe that Kant takes disgust as beauty's logical opposite. To be clear, I argue that Kant does not take disgust as beauty's natural opposite, but that we are left with little else if we take Kant at his own word (and especially if we take only Kant's discussions in the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment into account). Although various revisions and reinterpretations have tried to make room for ugliness within the *Critique of Judgment*, the properly ugly (as directly opposed to beauty) seems to only exist as disgust.

In this chapter, I first considered whether ugliness in Kant's aesthetics may still have an important role to play even though it is non-universalisable and therefore not technically part of a judgment of taste. I argued that Kant maintained the idea of logical oppositions, and so non-beauty does not equate to the kind of opposition Kant required. This means that Kant's deduction cannot be 'saved' with the idea of non-beauty fulfilling the role of ugliness in a coherent account. I also explored whether ugliness exists as a pleasurable aesthetic experience but found arguments in support of this thesis to be lacking. Ultimately, understanding ugliness as a type of pleasure contradicts Kant's demand for logical opposition as well as undermining the deduction as it pertains to the harmony of the faculties relating to beauty and not ugliness. I went on to argue that whilst disgust may have been meant as a logical opposition to beauty (I

do not believe this to be the case), the third *Critique* does little to justify this position. In fact, the addition of disgust may yet again create more problems than it hopes to solve, especially with regards to applying Kantian aesthetics to environmental issues. Of course, Kant was not attempting to motivate some type of environmental protectionism through his aesthetics, but for those of us who are interested in finding ways to utilise the ideas of long-dead philosophers – his ability or inability to do so is of interest. The move to disgust from ugliness as beauty's logical opposition may be a natural conclusion if one interprets ugliness as non-beauty since disgust appears to fill the gap left, i.e., it seems opposite enough to beauty. However, this approach has a distinctly unKantian flavour, and as was highlighted above, it creates further problems when trying to understand the implications of Kant's aesthetics with the environment. That being said, there is little alternative left once we rule out the success of the deduction as a whole and find further fault with its inability to account for pure negative judgments of taste—than to grasp at whatever straws remain. Kant certainly does provide many interesting and helpful ideas which can be used within the realm of ecoaesthetics, i.e., disinterest, the importance of nature. Ultimately, however, a focus on beauty to the exclusion of ugliness, and the conflation of ugliness with disgust makes it difficult to apply Kant's aesthetics in an ecological friendly manner.[253]

Conclusion

1. Summary

This section will summarise my findings and illustrate how the questions set forth in the introductory chapter have been answered. I will remind readers of the questions I tasked myself with examining and answering before giving a brief summary of the purpose of each chapter

[253] Of course, these issues exist alongside problems identified and discussed in other chapters, which contribute to the overall unpersuasive nature of Kant's aesthetic deduction.

in helping to achieve these aims. I will then make clear why I have answered these questions to a satisfactory level and explain why these answers make an original contribution to the literature. Before wrapping up, I will also address the limitations of this thesis and my findings before considering where future research could help to augment my conclusions. I will not be providing new information in this concluding chapter but will refer to the source material where necessary, having already discussed them in the main text.

2. Where did we begin?

Throughout this thesis, I have sought the answers to four questions (as set out in the introduction). To remind readers, these questions were:

1. Is Kant's deduction a success?
    a. Why/why not?
2. What are the environmental implications of Kantian aesthetics (related to the deduction)?
    b. What role does ugliness play within the deduction, and what are the implications of this for environmental/ecoaesthetic application.

3. Summary of chapters

Following the introduction, each of the subsequent eight chapters has been dedicated to exploring a particular issue pertaining to the aforementioned questions. I will now give a very brief overview of each of the chapters whilst also explaining why their inclusion helps to answer these questions. In order to determine whether Kant's deduction is a success, it is, of course, necessary to understand what exactly Kant was claiming in the first place. So, with that in mind, I began (Chapter 1) arguing for the need to consider the role of ugliness (as well as beauty) in aesthetics, as well as why focusing on beauty to the exclusion of ugliness can be problematic when making aesthetic judgments (particularly about the environment). Beauty

can often obfuscate issues of central importance to the environment, such as instances of harmful beauty and beneficial ugliness. This chapter illustrates the importance of ugliness within aesthetics and provides the necessary background to my motivations for formulating the questions set out above. This chapter provides context to my concerns about relying on beauty within aesthetics and helps to explain why the lack of ugliness in Kant's aesthetics may be doubly problematic, first for its legitimacy and second for its applicability to the environment.

Chapter 2 begins by setting out the basics of Kant's Deduction at §38, including the four moments of judgments of taste and the two peculiarities. Before I provide some exegesis of the deduction itself, this chapter highlighted some potential issues with Kant's deduction (such as communicability and particularity) before addressing the claim that he was a traditional formalist (he was not). This chapter helped to provide context for the rest of the thesis, as well as provide a springboard to some of the topics which will come up time and time again throughout the next seven chapters.

Chapter 3 focuses on the role of disinterest within the aesthetic deduction, especially with regards to its centrality in Kant's entire aesthetics (Part I). Here I explained the importance of disinterest as it relates to subjective universalism and how it connects to Kant's thoughts on morality. I also touch upon some of the problems inherent within the concept of disinterest itself and consider solutions from various sources. In addressing the problem of the generation of interest, for example, I reiterate the importance of distinguishing between determinate and indeterminate concepts despite not being entirely convinced of its success. This chapter further clarifies Kant's position whilst also illustrating some of the confusion and potential inconsistencies with his writing. This section highlights a potential flaw within Kant's deduction and also sets up Chapter 3 – where I demonstrate the probable value of disinterest to the environment and/or ecoaesthetics.

In Chapter 4, I further addressed issues with the notion of disinterest before going on to consider whether these issues prevent disinterest from being useful to environmentalism and environmental aesthetics.[254] In this chapter, I argued that whilst disinterest may have limited application potential, it can still be a useful tool in motivating environmental protections through ecoaesthetics. Kant's version of disinterest does not have to be fully endorsed for his notions of disinterest to be successfully applied, and that many of the misconceptions surrounding disinterest, e.g., distraction, lack of interest, do not hold weight. This chapter addresses both questions about the success of the deduction and its relationship with environmental aesthetics. In terms of the success of the deduction, the problems surrounding disinterest are not damaging enough to discredit Kant or to stop disinterest from being used in other areas where it may be beneficial.

Chapter 5 demonstrated Kant's position as it appears on a spectrum of objectivity/subjectivity, particularly in comparison to David Hume's position on *Of the Standard of Taste.* Understanding Kant's claims about aesthetics in contrast with Hume's helps to highlight the uniqueness of Kant's position and show where his claims go beyond Hume without reference to empirical observation or determinate concepts. In this chapter, I also begin to examine the problem of bringing Kant's deduction to bear on particular judgments, i.e., the

problem with real-world application. This chapter focuses on understanding the success of Kant's deduction in being able to meet its own aims (to show the universal validity of aesthetic judgments) but also the broader application of such judgments. Not being able to distinguish a

[254] Some of this criticism specifically related to Kantian aesthetic disinterest and some were aimed at a form of non-specific disinterest. My inclusion of this material is (to my mind at least) justified since the criticisms about disinterest which I discuss are pretty universal in their applicability to the varying forms of disinterest. Admittedly some writers do respond to an extreme form of disinterest i.e., complete will-lessness, but I actively sought to include only material relevant to Kant's conception of disinterest.

good judgment from a bad judgment presents problems for the application of Kant's aesthetics, especially as he claims that we have a right to demand assent from others (if the foundation of the judgment is correct). This chapter helps to further contextualise Kant's aesthetics whilst also highlighting problems peculiar to Kant's brand of aesthetics.

In Chapter 6, I continued to examine the issue of particularity, as well as considering a potential solution to the problems caused by Kant's combination of objectivity and subjectivity. This chapter primarily reflects upon whether Kant was a conceptual objectivist (he was not) and whether interpreting him as such makes Kant's deduction easier to accept or digest (it does but not in an internally consistent manner). The inclusion of this chapter relates back to my initial question regarding the success of Kant's deduction; however, after this chapter, it became clear that the possibility of finding the deduction a success was unlikely. Aside from an inability to distinguish between two diametrically opposed aesthetic judgments, Kant also fails to demonstrate how aesthetic judgments can be distinguished from non-aesthetic judgments in the first place.[255] This chapter also discusses the potential benefits of nonconceptuality in ecoaesthetics, especially in how it relates to disinterest, which refers back to my initial thesis question concerning the links between Kant's aesthetics and ecoaesthetics.

Chapter 7 concentrates on the problem of ugliness in Kant's aesthetics, as it relates to the deduction of judgments of taste. I argue that Kant's aesthetics fail to adequately account for

[255] If pleasure is the only indicator which individuals can look to in order to determine whether their judgment is aesthetic or not, then being able to understand the basis for pleasure ought to be straightforward, no? As it stands, the foundation of our aesthetic response as it relates to pleasure is also unclear at best, especially in terms of how it is possible to determine aesthetic pleasure from any other type of pleasure. Where this pleasure comes from, and how it can possibly produce a kind of judgment which commands universal assent causes problems because of Kant's insistence upon finding an a priori (as opposed to empirical) basis for aesthetic judgment. Whilst Kant does make the conceptual distinction between aesthetic pleasure and other types of pleasure, the ability to distinguish these pleasures for oneself is severely limited, especially if we are to know whether the pleasure is pure and not co-mingled with other pleasure or desire. Admittedly, this is an issue with Kant's philosophy in a general sense, given the transcendental underpinnings of his work. However, this brings us back to initial concerns first addressed in the Introduction and Chapter 2 over the unique nature of Kant's aesthetics and the troubles created for laying claim to the discovery of an a priori subjectively universal basis for aesthetic judgment.

instances of ugliness, which means that there can be no (pure) negative judgments of taste. I attempted to circumvent this problem by considering potential solutions, e.g., disproportionate attunement and disharmony. However, these 'solutions' introduce far more questions than they answer, especially as they call attention to Kant's lack of clarity regarding the source of pleasure/harmony and our ability (or inability) to determine the type of pleasure we are experiencing. Furthermore, Kant provides no way of actually getting to a disharmonious experience, especially if we consider the Deduction of pure taste.

Chapter 8 examines whether the absence of ugliness in Kant's deduction and aesthetics is perhaps intentional and/or is unproblematic. I argued that Kant does have definite notions of logical opposites and makes sporadic reference to ugliness and negative judgments of taste throughout his aesthetic work. I also considered whether the lack of ugliness in Kant's aesthetics is explicable through an appeal to disgust, which would make intuitive sense in terms of Kant's views on proper opposites. Ultimately, however, appealing to disgust as the true pure negative judgment in the third *Critique* is problematic, especially because it is in no way discussed, justified or defended by Kant. As it is, we must either take disgust as the opposite of beauty (but have little justification) or admit that there can be no pure negative judgments (and deal with the consequences). I argued that Kant's failure to incorporate a convincing opposition to beauty adds to the evidence gathered in this thesis, that Kant's deduction is generally unconvincing. In spite of its unpersuasive nature, its weaknesses point to new areas of research and new solutions to the problems posed in ecoaesthetics. At the very least, Kant's aesthetics (parts that are either successful or unsuccessful) provide a sounding board for a plethora of issues relating to the successful application of aesthetics to nature.

Finally, I addressed how taking disgust as Kant's opposite to beauty creates further problems for environmentalism. As illustrated in Chapters 6 and 7, ugliness and beauty must both be accounted for if an aesthetic account is to be useful to aesthetics of the environment or

in the motivation of environmental protections through aesthetics. Since Kant does not do this, and in fact, does the opposite, i.e., by further polarising beauty and its negative counterpart, Kant's aesthetic account fails (in this respect) to be helpful to ecological aesthetics. This chapter helps to answer all four of the questions asked in the introduction to this thesis, as I argue that this is one further example of the failure of Kant's deduction (1/a) and his aesthetics have potential import to ecoaesthetics but the absence of ugliness has massively negative implications for the environment in forcing either a beauty-only account or one which results in the further disregarding of ugliness in nature (2/b).

4. Questions that have been answered

I began this thesis by setting out four central questions. These central questions related to the understanding of whether Kant's deduction of taste was successful and also whether notions utilised by Kant (in his explanation and justification of the deduction) are either helpful or a hindrance to environmental aesthetics. My aim in answering this latter question is to explore the implications of using notions from Kantian aesthetics within the realm of the environment, particularly with reference to ecoaesthetics. My question concerning the environment (including the role of ugliness) was never intended to categorically establish Kant as being able to be incorporated (or not) into ecoaesthetics or to claim that Kant should or should not have a role in motivating environmental protections. The question I aimed to answer concerned what implications Kant's aesthetics could have on environmental philosophy and what the potential benefits could bring to future environmental, aesthetic discourse. Much of my decision to focus on Kantian aesthetics in the first place was due to Kant's third *Critique* providing such a fantastic springboard to discuss issues of beauty and ugliness (or lack) as they pertain to the environment. Therefore, whilst the focus has been on Kant and the implications of elements of his aesthetics, my primary goal has been to use Kantian aesthetics to consider certain problematic areas of ecoaesthetics.

5. Questions 1a

So, is Kant's deduction successful? In a word – no. After writing eight chapters on the subject of the deduction and its implications for the environment, I am left unconvinced that Kant's deduction succeeds to achieve either Kant's aims or the basic aims of a layperson for its practical application. I have addressed several of the most important issues in Chapters 2-8 (focusing on disinterest, particularity and the problem of ugliness) but have also examined some of the major themes throughout Kant's aesthetics (object/subjectivity, morality and nonconceptuality) which play into the problem of applying his aesthetics to the environment and also in creating a successful deduction of taste.

In addressing the question of why the deduction is unsuccessful (1b), I would argue that Kant's inability to convince readers that a deduction of taste is a priori subjectively, yet universally valid based only upon a feeling of pleasure (*CJ*, Introduction, 191) is proof enough.

Kant's insistence upon disinterest and non-conceptuality is not sufficient to determine that the judgment of pure beauty is ever found upon the correct basis, let alone that we can demand agreement about said judgment (§7, 213). The lack of justification for the universal communicability of taste and the lack of foundation for the particular pleasure involved with beauty are troublesome. However, the inability of Kant's deduction to account for, explain and distinguish between differing aesthetics judgments is seriously problematic and brings the theory as a whole is brought into question. Kant is quick to say that the universality does not strictly apply to the judgment itself, but more to the ability to make this judgment in the first place; he states that admitting to universal assent amounts only to agreeing "…that the principle of judging validly for everyone from subjective bases is correct." (§38, 291). However, Kant's attempt to prove even this much is unpersuasive. Firstly, it is not entirely clear why this distinction makes justifying the deduction easier, as the core problem of proving that the feeling of pleasure can be a basis for any kind of 'universality' is questionable. Secondly, how on earth

are we able to judge for everyone when we cannot even be sure of judging correctly for ourselves? The proof (if indeed there is any) is very decidedly not in the pudding. The problems Kant's deduction faces are exacerbated (or created) by the uniqueness of Kant's metaphysical positioning, whereby he insists on incorporating elements of a priori objectivity (or, more accurately, universality) and subjectivity. The unusual nature of Kant's position can be seen in relation to other writers such as Baumgarten and Hume, who take more rationalist and empirical approaches, as highlighted in the introduction and Chapter 4. Overcoming the particularity problem involves a kind of revisionism that is not textually supported by Kant; therefore, I find attempts to solve this problem through an appeal to objectivism or conceptualism unappealing and downright unKantian. These approaches may nevertheless be helpful in applying Kant's aesthetics in the real world, but in terms of justifying the 'proof' of the deduction – they are unsuccessful.

One of my biggest issues with the deduction is the almost non-existence of negative judgments of taste, in spite of the fact that the deduction pertains to taste and not only positive aesthetic judgments, i.e., beauty. My concerns surrounding the lack of ugliness also stem from a deep concern for aesthetics in general, and environmentalism in particular, to focus on the beauty in nature to the exclusion of ugliness and even disgust. The lack of ugliness in Kant's aesthetics is a major strike against the ability of the deduction to succeed in achieving its primary aims. When pleasure is the only universally communicable subjective mental state, but Kant claims that we need to agree "…that the principle of judging validly for everyone from subjective bases is correct." (§38, 291) – then it looks like we have a problem. In Chapters 7 and 8, I argue that ugliness cannot be incorporated into Kant's deduction without fundamentally changing the nature of Kant's argument (with its specific metaphysical leanings). I considered several solutions to the problem of ugliness (including disproportionate attunement, disharmony, contrapurposiveness) before going on to ponder whether ugliness

might not be a problem at all. These solutions fail to provide sufficient textual support, especially as I think Kant did have the notion of ugliness countering beauty yet failed to include this within the *Critique*. In all likelihood, Kant recognised the epistemological and metaphysical problems which would be crop up if he introduced such a distinction. Moreover, since he fails to properly justify the universality of the pleasurable basis for positive (pure) aesthetic judgments, his task would be twice as hard if he had incorporated pure negative judgments of taste (although it would have solved this particular problem). The problem of ugliness also relates to question 2, as I will briefly discuss below.

In Chapter 2 and 3, I addressed the various problems associated with the application of disinterest, and although Kant's discussion of interest and disinterest can sometimes be confusing (to the point it might sound contradictory), mostly these 'inconsistencies' can be ironed out with a little reading around the third *Critique*. This brings me on to the second part of my thesis question/s, as the issue of disinterest amongst other things (potentially nonconceptuality) could be useful within ecoaesthetics.

6. Questions 2b

Kantian aesthetics has an important place in any aesthetic discussion, including those of an environmental nature. Almost all of the issues faced in ecoaesthetics (and modern-day aesthetic in general) can in some way be traced back to Kant either directly or through the philosophical ancestral tree. Hence Kant is a good place to start looking at issues of environmental aesthetics. Kantian aesthetics can certainly be useful to environmental philosophy if only as a tool to further understand present-day issues surrounding environmental aesthetics. When I began this thesis, I was unsure whether there were any ideas, concepts or notions that could be useful to modern-day environmentalists or eco-aestheticians within Kant's deduction of taste. However, I have since found that there are several notions within his aesthetics of beauty that could be helpful in exploring nature aesthetically. Disinterest is especially helpful in aesthetic judgments

about the environment, as it helps to suppress desire or interest, which may otherwise affect the judgment. I have also taken the time to emphasise how Kant's deduction helps to democratise human ability to judge aesthetically; this is valuable in all forms of aesthetic appreciation, including that of the environment. As the deduction is theoretically based upon the powers of judgments accessible to everyone, the judgment made by a layperson can be as equally valid as an art critic. This, to my mind, is one of the more appealing parts of Kant's aesthetics and something which other aesthetic accounts, e.g., Hume's struggles with, especially when it comes to the over-intellectualisation and rarefying of aesthetic judgment.[256] Despite my thoughts about the failure of the deduction, I still have a lot of time for the kind of aesthetics Kant's did in the third *Critique* and the kind of conversations it can provoke.

In the latter stages of the thesis, I focused on the last question concerning the role of ugliness in the deduction and the implications of this ugliness (or lack thereof) for the environment. I argue that ugliness has no place within the aesthetic deduction (2) and that the implications of this have potentially very problematic implications for the environment, especially if they are applied through ecoaesthetics (2b). A judgment of taste that does not address the spectrum of taste from beauty to ugliness despite being an account of taste and not just beauty has a problem straight out of the gate. Whilst other writers have offered solutions

to this problem, they either introduce notions that are unjustified within the *Critique,* or they simply interpret Kant's words to support there are suppositions. Neither of these approaches

[256] Although not related so much to the aesthetics of nature, there is a tendency in environmentalism for the opinions of intellectuals (often Western) to dominate environmental debates/discussions to the exclusion of the opinions of those actually living alongside the natural phenomena in question. In other words, the opinions of those most affected by changing sea-levels or land use patterns are often disregarded in favour of more intellectualised, scientific expert viewpoints because they do not have the necessary scientific language to be taken seriously. Despite the fact that their knowledge of the land is far more intimate as they have lived and worked in the area since they were born (see Kings 2017 for discussion about how and why Western-approaches to environmental issues often fail to take into account the lived experiences of the people in the area affected).

succeeds in their aim and instead introduce problems, such as having to justify how disharmony (for example) can be subjectively yet universally valid when only pleasure from harmony is the only universal subjective feeling.

In terms of its implications for the environment, I am convinced that the lack of ugliness in an aesthetic theory has the potential to further exacerbate societal focus on beauty. To be clear, beauty is no bad thing, but it does have a tendency to skew environmental decisionmaking. This is likely a side effect of any aesthetic approach, but it becomes more pronounced in ecoaesthetics as it allows instances of dangerous/harmful beauty to continue unabated (through reinforcement of beauty) and instances of ugly or even disgusting phenomena to be overlooked or destroyed because they lack this quality we desire, i.e., beauty. Kant's nonconceptualism creates further issues with respect to this issue, as we cannot reach for a concept in order to alleviate the problem. The issue of cognitivism within ecoaesthetics is an important one, especially in terms of the threat it makes to the democratisation mentioned above. However, this was not a question I tasked myself with addressing, primarily because it goes beyond the subjects on which I need to focus for the purposes of this thesis. Ultimately, however, the aims/questions set out in the introduction have been sufficiently answered. Of course, there are many issues that have not been answered or addressed in this thesis, and these will be the focus of future research, but I feel that enough has been done within the subsequent chapters to satisfactorily answer the questions originally posed in a way that adds something to the existing literature.

7. Significance and implications of these answers

If Kant's deduction remains unpersuasive, then the promise of a subjective yet universal aesthetic judgment is obviously also unpersuasive. The practical application of such an account is made impossible, and the potential uses and helpfulness of such a theory are either nonexistent or minimal. Whilst Kant's deduction provokes many fascinating debates, the

deduction itself is underwhelming. If we take Kant at his word and (for the sake of argument) put to one side most of the unanswered problems with the deduction, all we can really take from his understanding of pure beauty is that all humans have the capacity to experience the pleasure provoked through a judgment of beauty. Fantastic, no? Well, not if we want an aesthetic account to have significance in our daily lives. The notion that aesthetic judgments can be (technically) universal has little justification beyond Kant's idiosyncratic methodology and cannot rightfully compete with other aesthetic theories set out by (for instance) the likes of Hume. Of course, it is not just the practical application which suffers but the theory itself; perhaps here Kant was too quick and ambitious to claim his new 'discovery' and ought to have instead made a smaller claim about the universality of harmony resulting from pure beauty. However, had this been the case, then a third *Critique* would not have been called for, and the completion of the attempt to complete the critical system could not have occurred.

The difficulties of Kant's deduction have been discussed throughout the relevant literature and from varying perspectives since the publication of the third *Critique.* The problems generated by Kant's aesthetic account are nothing new to the literature, but examining potential solutions to these problems has allowed me to offer a fresh perspective on the solutions and the problems they purport to solve. Probably the most interesting section of the thesis (to write) was that which focused upon the relationship and implications of Kant's aesthetics and the environment. This is also where I found the literature to be most sparse and in need of bolstering. The idea that focusing on beauty in aesthetics can have unwarranted and negative implications for the environment is one that I wish to explore further in my future research. Whilst many of Kant's notions surrounding aesthetics and beauty hold promise for their application to ecoaesthetics, it is clear that Kant himself would not endorse such a view and that some of his aesthetic 'tools' may actually be a hindrance. Attempting to 'green' Kant is not a new idea, but it is not what I have tried to do throughout the course of this thesis. My

desire has been to answer the very specific questions (in a hopefully interesting way) laid out in my introduction and to argue (as my argument became clearer throughout the time spent researching and writing) where Kant's deduction fails, why ugliness plays such a large part in this and whether any of Kant's notions have significance to environmentalism/ecoaesthetics.

8. Limitations

My intention throughout the thesis has never been to 'green' Kant where he cannot be 'greened' or become an apologist for Kant and the flaws found within the deduction. I've made no bones about the fact that my aims in this thesis and my research more generally are related more to environmentalism and finding ways to motivate environmental protection than to Kantianism or Kantian aesthetics. That being said, I think that some of Kant's ideas have the potential for application within ecoaesthetics, and some are just useful for environmentalism in general. However, this does not require any shoehorning of Kant's aesthetics into an environmental pigeonhole, as the success of this thesis does not rely on whether or not Kant was an environmentalist. Critiquing and analysing Kant's deduction with reference to environmental considerations does not form the basis of my argument against the success of Kant's deduction. Whilst the environmental considerations form an essential part of the thesis, my claims about the failure of Kant's aesthetic deduction are justified by highlighting textual problems, confusions, and inconsistencies and are not reliant on Kant's failure to be some kind of environmentalist.

My thesis questions were very specific, thus allowing me to focus upon a particular section of the literature (and deal with the issues therein) rather than attempting to create a new account of ecoaesthetics. Whilst this specificity has allowed me to answer the questions for the sake of a dissertation, I am aware that there are large questions relating to both Kant's broader philosophy and, perhaps more importantly (given my rather non-Kantian perspective), the role of ecoaesthetics within environmentalism. These questions are relevant to my broader research

aims but not so much to the specific questions I wanted to answer through the course of my PhD research. Many issues are created by my insinuation that aesthetics ought to retain a cognitive component in order to aid in distinguishing 'harmful' beauty and 'helpful' ugliness. One of the main positive aspects one can take from Kantian aesthetics is the attempt to levelout or democratise aesthetic judgment. However, the implications of this for ecoaesthetics may create issues or contradictions in practice, e.g., contradictions between judgments about the same objects and the re-intellectualisation of aesthetic judgment. This is an important consideration, but it is not one that weakens the arguments made throughout the thesis concerning the necessity of further understanding ugliness in aesthetics and the failure of the deduction.

I have sought to represent Kant's deduction as accurately and fairly as possible, as well as present arguments defending Kant's position in a sympathetic and charitable light. However, I am sure that there are instances when I have failed to include a relevant argument or solution or where I have been a little less charitable with an argument than perhaps I ought to have been. Certainly, were endless edits possible, I would be sure to include all relevant information and give each argument the attention it undoubtedly deserves. However, the question which must be asked is whether I have done enough to answer the questions I gave myself several years ago when I began my PhD and whether the thesis is original enough to stand on its own two feet? My answer to both of these questions is yes.[257]

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[257] Qualified in terms of the necessary limitations of any PhD thesis and the limitations specific to my own, as indicated above.

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