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Reading Kant’s Third Critique:
What the Beautiful Can Teach Us About Judgment

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Philosophy

by

Josef Nicholas Cressotti

March 2017

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Dispersit superbos mente cordis sui.

To my parents, Frank and Anne Cressotti, who have helped me to see the beautiful in art and nature.
ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Reading Kant’s Third Critique: What the Beautiful Can Teach Us About Judgment

by

Josef Nicholas Cressotti

Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Program in Philosophy
University of California, Riverside, March 2017
Dr. Pierre Keller, Chairperson

In the Critique of Judgment, Kant argues that judgment, our faculty for thinking particulars under universals, is governed by what he calls the “principle of purposiveness.” This principle states that we must look at the world as if it were made for our faculty of cognition. The purpose of this principle is not merely that we increase the systematicity of our knowledge, but that we achieve our highest end as rational agents. For Kant, this is the realization of a world in which happiness perfectly accords with morality. Ultimately, all of our activity—including our theoretical scientific pursuits—is directed toward this end. Poor judgment is not a matter of representing something that fails to correspond with the way the world is independent of our point of view. Rather, poor judgment consists in our engaging in the world in such a way that we fail to notice its relevance to any of the ends a human being could justifiably pursue for the sake of our ultimate end. To improve our judgment, we must learn to free ourselves from our
particular, and often private, ends in order to see the full significance of objects. This principle of purposiveness is best illustrated by our judgments of taste, which we cannot justify on the basis of articulable rules. Careful analysis of these judgments shows how we must rely on a fundamental capacity to determine what is significant to other points of view, what Kant calls the “common sense.” The normativity of this faculty comes from our shared commitment to the highest end of reason, which compels us to consider how other people see the world. It finds its fulfillment not in our thinking something true about an object but in our taking pleasure in an object that is universally shareable. This experience is made possible not through the perfection of our faculty of cognition, but, as Kant says, “the way of thinking needed to make a purposive use of it.” This “broad-mindedness,” so apparent in our evaluations of beauty in art and nature, is equally necessary for sound theoretical and practical judgment.
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INTRODUCTION: Aims of the Dissertation

My dissertation has two aims. First, I aim to provide a compelling account of Kant's *Critique of Judgment*, which clarifies its relation to his other "critical" works, the *Critique of Pure Reason* and the *Critique of Practical Reason*. In executing this task, I will be speaking to persons familiar with and dedicated to studying the Kantian corpus. I offer my reading in contrast to a family of views, which, I will argue, subtly misrepresent the larger significance of Kant's work. Secondly, I aim to share what I have learned in this scholarly project with a more general audience, one which may be unfamiliar with the particular philosophical questions with which Kant was engaged. Specifically, I hope to communicate a new picture of judgment, a picture that I have come to adopt through my study of this work.

The *Critique of Judgment* is divided into two parts: a "Critique of Aesthetic Judgment" and a "Critique of Teleological Judgment." Originally, I was drawn to the *Critique of Judgment* on account of the first part, in which Kant analyzes judgments of beauty (what he calls "judgments of taste") as well as judgments of the sublime. I hoped that Kant could teach me what the beautiful was. The *Critique of Judgment*, as I understood it, promised an aesthetic theory, the job of which was to explain why we judge things beautiful, ugly, sublime, etc. I thought that Kant could explain how it is that we err in our aesthetic judgments and why we end up disagreeing with each other about aesthetic matters, often very deeply. As someone who was interested in the arts, I eagerly studied the *Critique of Judgment*, hoping perhaps for artistic insight and instruction. My
hope may have been encouraged by knowing that the *Critique of Judgment* had been admired by artists such as Goethe and Schiller and art critics such as Clement Greenberg.

Kant's strategy, as I originally understood it, was to show what a reflection on judgment could tell us about beauty (as well as the sublime and biological organisms, which are also examined in the work). For me, judgments were things that happened, as it were, "in the mind." They were the product of what Kant calls "cognitive faculties" [*Erkenntnisvermögen*]—the understanding, imagination, and sensibility—working together to produce a "representation" [*Vorstellung*] that the world is a certain way (that an object has a certain empirical character, that an action is good, etc.). I thought that by understanding how these faculties worked together to produce representations, we might understand how we judge things to be beautiful. I thought that by achieving this understanding, we could articulate the conditions under which it was proper (or not) to call something beautiful.

Unfortunately, by reading the *Critique of Judgment* in this way, I found it exceedingly difficult to understand Kant. Kant's description of different mental and cognitive faculties is notoriously difficult. His language is often figurative and seemingly inconsistent. Rarely does he give an explicit definition of his canonical terms; even when he does, it is often very obscure. When I turned to the secondary literature for help, mostly I became even more confused. Commentators seemed to offer widely varying interpretations of what Kant meant. While each reading seemed to say something right and important, taken together they offered a conflicted view of Kant's project.
Gradually I began to rethink my approach. What became more and more clear to me was that I did not have a good handle on what judgment was. I began to suspect that for Kant, judgment was a more subtle notion than the representational picture I had assumed. What is more, it appeared inextricably tied to our agency. Perhaps if I reflected on our common-sense experience of the beautiful, I could get a better sense of what judgment was and how it was philosophically significant.

There were many clues that Kant himself took something like this approach. First of all, there was the obvious fact that Kant's analysis of beauty was but one part of a "critique of judgment." This in itself implied that Kant aimed to clear up misconceptions about judgment, just as he aimed to clear up misconceptions about pure and practical reason in the *Critique of Pure Reason* and *Critique of Practical Reason* respectively. It was plausible that Kant's analysis of our judgments of taste was meant to serve this end alongside similar analyses of judgments of the sublime and teleological judgments. Another point that caused me to reconsider my approach was Kant's implication that he was not offering a theory of taste but what he called a "critique of taste" [*Kritik des Geschmacks*].\(^1\) Throughout the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment, Kant explicitly dissociates himself from those philosophers who spelled out the conditions under which it would be proper to call something beautiful on empiricist or rationalist grounds. Moreover, he claims that his "investigation into the faculty of taste" is undertaken "only from a transcendental point of view" and not "for the formation and culture of taste (for

\(^1\) Cf. 5: 216, 227, 278, 286, 337, 346.
this will go its way in the future, as in the past, even without any such researches).”

In making this point, Kant was distancing himself from figures like Alexander Baumgarten and Georg Friedrich Meier, who devoted considerable effort at laying down principles that could distinguish true from apparent beauties.

Another important clue can be found in a letter Kant wrote to Carl Leonhard Reinhold at the end of 1787, three years before the Critique of Judgment's publication. In this letter Kant mentions work on a "critique of taste." He writes,

My inner conviction grows, as I discover in working on different topics that not only does my system remain self-consistent but I find also, when sometimes I cannot see the right way to investigate a certain subject, that I need only look back at the general picture of the elements of knowledge, and of the mental powers pertaining to them, in order to make discoveries I had not expected. I am now at work on the critique of taste, and I have discovered a new sort of a priori principles, different from those heretofore observed.

This letter is striking not just because it expresses Kant's confidence in the coherence of his system, which Reinhold had been working to popularize. Kant seems to be saying that reflection on "the general picture of the elements of knowledge, and of the mental powers pertaining to them" has given his critique of taste a point, which until he reflected on the bigger picture he missed. Specifically, it has revealed a "new sort of a priori principles."

There is good reason to believe that the principles to which Kant is referring include the "maxims of the power of judgment," which he discusses in both the

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2 5: 170.
3 Cf. Georg Friedrich Meier, Anfangsgründe aller schönen Wissenschaften, §1.
5 In Reinhold's 1786-7 Letters on the Kantian Philosophy.
6 10: 514.
7 5: 182.
published and unpublished introductions to the *Critique of Judgment*. These maxims are those “pronouncements of metaphysical wisdom,” which are found scattered about in our "research of nature."⁸ Among them are sayings such as "nature takes the shortest route - she does nothing in vain - she makes no leaps in the manifold of forms (*continuum formarum*) - she is rich in species but sparing with genera, etc."⁹ Common to all of these principles is their clearly subjective nature. After all, what would count as something done "in vain"? That would depend upon the inquiring subject for whom something appeared without purpose. The same thing could be said about the "shortest route" or "leaps in the manifold of forms." While it is difficult to render these principles in more precise and less figurative terms, their normative force is hard to deny: we can all recall cases in which we transgressed such principles. In doing so, we did not, it would seem, violate reason but rather our "better judgment."

Yet how could a reflection on aesthetic experience, including our experience of beauty, have revealed such principles of judgment to Kant or showed them to be a "new sort of *a priori* principles"? The connection is hardly obvious. When we behold and take pleasure in a beautiful object or a work of art, we are not performing “research into nature.” We are not seeking to categorize the object nor are we trying to make sense of its appearance. Of course, we could treat a beautiful object in this way; but then we would no longer be treating it simply as an object for aesthetic reflection. As Kant puts it in the “Analytic of the Beautiful” section of the *Critique of Judgment*, our judgments of taste

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⁸ Ibid.
⁹ 20: 210. (Kant’s emphasis omitted.) Cf. 5: 182 for different formulations.
are characterized by their "contemplative" and "disinterested" nature.\textsuperscript{10} We take pleasure in the object's mere appearance, without troubling so much about the why of the matter.

The aim of this dissertation is to show the relevance of aesthetic experience to judgment. It is meant to show not how judgments happen, including our judgments of taste, but rather in what judgments consist. Or, to put it another way, it is meant to show what it \textit{means} to say that we have made a judgment. Part of the problem with the term 'judgment' is that, like so many terms used by Kant—'understanding', 'reason', 'sensibility', etc.—its ubiquity, especially in academic scholarship, belies its complexity. Under normal circumstances, we simply take it for granted. We say that we have judged $x$ to be $y$ (e.g., that $x$ is just, causally responsible, poisonous, beautiful, etc.)—and then we ask ourselves whether we have judged correctly and on what grounds. To ask in what the judgment consists is, for the most part, extraneous to this process. What matters is whether we were right to have made the judgment we did. We can argue about this question without ever questioning what it means to say that we have made a judgment in the first place.

But we \textit{could} ask this question and it is important that we do so. For judgments are clearly things that distinguish us as human beings. We judge in a way that inanimate objects, plants, and even animals do not. By thinking more clearly about judgment, we can think more clearly about ourselves. Given that the term appears so frequently in our philosophical discussions, we should ensure that we are using it in a clear and coherent way. Otherwise, we risk being misled by a crude picture.

\textsuperscript{10} 5: 209.
As we will see, aesthetic judgments are important because they betray the limitations of a certain way of thinking about judgment. This is the representational picture of judgment that I sketched above. According to this picture, a judgment consists in a private, internal representation that things are a certain way and a correct judgment is simply a matter of having a representation that accords with the way the world is. Judgment considered as a "faculty" [Vermögen] or "power" [Urteilskraft] would be our capacity to produce such representations. While this picture of judgment is generally problematic, its difficulties appear especially pronounced when we reflect on aesthetic judgments, including our judgments that an object is beautiful. What after all is being represented when we judge that an object is beautiful? It cannot be that something is a certain kind of object. The beautiful comes in infinite shapes, sizes, and forms. Moreover, there appears to be a necessary connection between aesthetic judgments and feeling. It seems as though I cannot judge an object to be beautiful unless I also take pleasure in it. To say that I judged something beautiful while it was also displeasing to me would seem, at least at first blush, to be dishonest or confused. Yet if this is true, if aesthetic judgments do have a necessary connection to feeling, how could a representational view of judgment accommodate them?

The point of this dissertation is to argue for a new picture of judgment, using Kant’s *Critique of Judgment* as both a guide and inspiration. This picture is the outcome of thinking hard about aesthetic matters. In doing so, I have taken our experience of the beautiful to be as much a fact of our existence as our experience of the true and the good (about which we argue in theoretical and moral matters). I acknowledge that one might
question this starting point and insist that judgments of taste do not deserve to be called judgments or that they are judgments only in a secondary or derivative sense. While my starting point is a fair object of criticism, I recommend to the reader that he suspend criticism until he has seen the picture that emerges from it. Does it in the end give us a more systematic grasp of all judgments, including those we treat as unexceptional (like theoretical and moral judgments)? If not, then we certainly have reason to criticize the starting point. But if so, then perhaps we should think about aesthetic experience in a new way.

Under the picture of judgment that I am recommending, judgments are not so much made as they are shown. Judgments are not the product of some psychological mechanisms working together within us. Rather, they are the various stances that we, as purpose-guided creatures, take on the world by determining what matters to us. As human beings, there are limitless ends that we could pursue to find fulfillment and give our lives meaning. Reason gives us but limited assistance in determining what we should do; were we to defer action until we had a rational guarantee that we were doing the right thing, we would be waiting forever. At the risk of “doing nothing”—which would itself reflect our judgment—we must use our discretion and decide what is the best use of our talents. The propositions that we affirm, and which we say express our judgments, do not stand for something that happens within us and to us. Rather, they stand, be it truthfully or deceptively, clearly or obscurely, for our commitments to ends. Judgments are not things that happen privately, inside of us, to which we have privileged access but which
others can only infer. Rather, judgments are the very public imprints that we leave on the world at large, whether or not we are explicitly aware of them as our judgments.

Once we look at judgments in this way, it is possible to see how they are governed by a principle, as Kant claims they are in the *Critique of Judgment*. For judgment refers first and foremost to the way we commit to ends in the world when reason leaves it up to us how we do so. This is something we can do better or worse. What makes judgment good or sound is not that we represent things as they are; we may misrepresent things and still demonstrate good judgment, just as we may represent things correctly and demonstrate bad judgment. Rather, good judgment consists in seeking out ends that develop our fullest potential as a human being. In order to do this, we must believe that nature has been designed for our purpose, even if our limited understanding does not enable us to see how this is possible. Kant calls this the "principle of the purposiveness of nature."

We violate this principle of judgment when we seek out some end (or ends) in such a fashion that we fail to see the relevance of things to other ends that we have and that we should care more about realizing. For those who do care about these ends, we display poor judgment in our insensitivity to what they think (i.e. what they judge) matters. This insensitivity is like a blindness in that we may fail to notice something that, to others, stands right in front of us. But this poor judgment is different from blindness in that our insensitivity is not due to the failure of any particular organ. Instead, it is a consequence of choices that we have made and are making in the pursuit of ends. We may be so focused on some end that we fail to notice that which is not immediately
relevant to that end, even when it seems that we should. This may be the case even when our perceptual faculties are sound and our understanding of the world around us is entirely adequate.

Judgment is displayed in everything we do—intellectual or otherwise. We show our judgment regardless of the propositions we express or the ‘judgments’ we pronounce.\textsuperscript{11} We violate the principle of judgment insofar as we neglect ends that, given our capacities and opportunities, we can be fairly expected to promote. While this may certainly correspond to a failure to represent something properly, such a failure is merely a symptom of poor judgment not what poor judgment consists in. Likewise, poor judgment does not consist in the failure of our cognitive faculties—including our imagination and understanding—to act properly. Instead, poor judgment consists in our failure to make proper use of these faculties as we pursue our ends. Of course, what counts as the proper use of these faculties—indeed of all our faculties—is not something we can determine ahead of time. It requires action and experience and a continuing reflection on what it means to be a human being. The person of good judgment is the one who looks carefully at the results of his action and considers the way it brings him closer to this end. The person of poor judgment ignores these results, preferring instead to apply his faculties in the same manner as before even as he becomes ever more separated from others.\textsuperscript{12}

\textsuperscript{11} At the same time, our propositions—both what we say and how we say them—ultimately betray our judgment, though not in the way that we think. Still, this may only be apparent to one with great wisdom and knowledge of us and our circumstances.

\textsuperscript{12} It is instructive to consider that experiri, the Latin root of the term “experience,” means to test or to try.
Judgments of taste make the principle of purposiveness so apparent since good judgment cannot be explained merely in terms of the mastery of rules. When we argue about aesthetic matters, it can never be enough to defend an object on the grounds that it satisfies some criterion. Instead, we must argue about the harmony that the object displays to us. Specifically, we must argue about the way the object accords with our full panoply of ends as a human being. Failure to appreciate an object’s aesthetic value occurs not because we mistake the way the object satisfies some condition but because in our commitment to ends, we overvalue some aspect of the object at the expense of others. This attitude—this stance upon the world—sets us apart from others who, in their own commitment to ends, see the object as more or less satisfactory than we do. True agreement occurs when we can say with confidence that we get on together in a way that human beings, with their broad but in principle unifiable range of ends, should.

What is so noteworthy about the person of taste—the person of sound aesthetic judgment—is that he can display that taste regardless of the size and power of his cognitive faculties. A person may have a deep understanding, a lively imagination, and powerful sensible faculties and still misjudge the aesthetic value of an object. This occurs when in his commitment to a particular end he overlooks other important ends. This is a common occurrence especially among those with rare talents. Given our human nature, the exercise of our talents, especially those that are uncommon, is always pleasing. It is very easy in the use and display of our skill to lose sight of its point or significance. When we fail to acknowledge other areas in which our attention and efforts are called for, we display poor judgment. Genius—whether displayed by the artist or by the critic—
must always be tempered by taste. This does not mean having certain faculties (or having them be in a certain state) but knowing how to use them. The person of good taste is the one who does this in a way that brings him into accord with others and ultimately, since man is a social animal, with himself.

\[13\] Cf. 5: 312.
CHAPTER ONE: The Principle of Purposiveness

I. An Unfathomable Gap

The Critique of Judgment (1790) is the third and final of Kant's critical works. It follows the Critique of Pure Reason (1780) and the Critique of Practical Reason (1787). These works are critical in the sense that they are concerned with showing how traditional claims about metaphysics, morality, aesthetics, and teleology are the products of certain illusions endemic to philosophical reflection. Kant's aim is not so much to deny the truth of these claims as to put them in their proper place. That is to say, Kant does not say that philosophers are wrong to make such assertions that God exists, the world has an end, or beauty is a matter of taste, but that they often misrepresent the significance of such claims. His aim is to argue against dogmatism not dogma and, as he liked to say in his lectures, to teach people to philosophize, not to teach them philosophy. The Critique of Judgment, like Kant's other critical works, promotes the enlightenment slogan: "Think for oneself." 14

With this end in mind, it is interesting that Kant should make the following remark, which concludes the preface to the third Critique. Referring to the completion of the work, Kant says, "Thus with this I bring my entire critical enterprise to an end. I shall proceed without hindrance to the doctrinal part, in order, if possible, to win yet from my increasing age some time still favorable to that." 16 Although Kant had already written a largely doctrinal work, the Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science (1786), another

14 A 838/B 866. Cf. also Wiener Logik, 24: 813. Cf. also Vorländer's biography, Immanuel Kant: Der Mann und Das Werk, 83.
16 5: 170.
doctrinal work had yet to appear. Kant's *Metaphysics of Morals* was published in 1797. In contrast to the *Critique of Practical Reason*, whose topic is also morality, the *Metaphysics of Morals* goes into particulars about the way we (as human beings) should act and how states should be organized. This may have been the project Kant had in mind when he made the above comment. Another possibility is that Kant had in mind the work that would be released posthumously, what is now referred to as the uncompleted *Opus Postumum*.

Aside from distinguishing his critical from doctrinal work, this remark is interesting for another reason. It announces the completion of Kant's critical enterprise. But in what way does the *Critique of Judgment* accomplish this? What has Kant just done so that he can now move on with confidence to his doctrinal part? What has the *Critique of Judgment* achieved that the *Critique of Pure Reason* and the *Critique of Practical Reason* left unfinished?

Kant addresses this question in the subsequent introduction. Here he describes the *Critique of Judgment* as "a means for combining the two parts of philosophy into one whole."\(^{17}\) By the two parts of philosophy, Kant has in mind moral and theoretical philosophy. According to Kant, these two fields of philosophy are distinct in that they are concerned with entirely different concepts. Moral or practical philosophy is concerned with "concepts of freedom," of which we make use in our judgments about how to act and what ought to be. Natural or theoretical philosophy is concerned with "concepts of nature," of which we make use in our judgments about what is. These concepts are

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\(^{17}\) S: 176.
distinct from each other in the sense that we err when we allow concepts of nature to
determine answers to our moral questions or when we allow concepts of freedom to
determine answers to our theoretical questions.

To help make this clear, Kant uses the metaphor of two states that occupy some
common land. While they share the same "territory" \([\text{Boden}]\) natural philosophy has one
"domain" \([\text{Gebiet}]\) over which it legislates that is separate from the domain over which
moral philosophy-legislates.\(^{18}\) Although the metaphor may not be as helpful as Kant had
hoped, the point seems to be this. Both natural and moral philosophy are concerned with
articulating the principles which bind us as knowers and doers. In a certain sense, these
different principles concern the same objects: anything that can be an object of
experience can be regarded as having either theoretical or moral significance. For
example, an individual human being may be regarded as subject to two very different
legislations. On one hand, he may be regarded as a member of a natural kind, constituted
by physical matter, subject to the laws of physics and chemistry, etc. On the other hand,
he may be regarded as a self-determining moral agent, capable of seeking out purposes,
and being praised and blamed according to norms he shares with others. The principles to
which we refer in determining what this person is are categorically distinct from those
principles to which we refer in determining what he ought to be (or do). Because we use
the same language to articulate both types of principles, it is important to be aware of

\(^{18}\) S: 174.
these separate legislations lest we misunderstand the competing claims we make with each other.¹⁹

In the introduction to the _Critique of Judgment_, Kant points out that an argument for the separateness of these two domains of philosophy can be found in the _Critique of Pure Reason_.²⁰ Presumably, Kant is referring to the third antinomy and its resolution, in which he argues that both the person arguing for freedom of the will and the person arguing for causal determinism are motivated by valid concerns but draw the wrong conclusions. For the person who defends the thesis—i.e., there exists a free causality independent of natural laws—the idea of an unlimited sequence of causal conditions makes no sense. In order to make the particular claim that \( x \) caused \( y \), one must assume an exhaustive series of causal conditions to be able to determine that \( x \) is precisely what made the difference to \( y \). If we allow an infinite sequence of causal conditions, there will always be the possibility that by tracing those conditions far enough, we might discover that \( x \) did not make the difference we thought. Consequently, the party arguing for the thesis appeals to the idea of a first cause from freedom, in order that explanation be possible. For the party arguing for the antithesis, this appeal to a free causality is equally senseless. An action that was spontaneously caused is one of which we could have no experience. For in order for us to make a causal claim, one must see that \( x \) was the thing that made the difference—that it effected \( y \)—as opposed to something else. However, unless \( x \) is itself part of a causal sequence, we could not think of it as an object and

¹⁹ Not only human beings but also their artifacts can be regarded in this dual manner. A table can be regarded from the theoretical perspective—its material constitution, historical origin—and from the practical perspective—its utility, quality as a table, etc.

²⁰ S: 175.
attribute to it causal powers in the first place. Consequently, the party arguing for the antithesis concludes that everything that happens does so in accordance with laws of nature.

According to Kant, the conflict between the two sides only occurs when we regard objects of which we have experience as things-in-themselves—i.e. as context independent objects for which perfect cognition is possible. If instead, we see objects as appearing to us in spatial-temporal contexts that are a function of our own activity, then there is no problem. For in that case, we can see how both the causality implicit in the laws of nature and causality from freedom are only meaningful in relation to each other. In order for us to be able to seek out our ends, or begin a state “spontaneously” or “from oneself” [von selbst], we must represent the objects of experience as governed by lawful regularities that are not up to us. The claim that I did something—or that I did something well or poorly—implies a fundamental stability of the world around me. My claim to competent action depends on a basic understanding of how things work. If I could not know how things responded under certain conditions, then I could not distinguish between my effect on the world and the effect of other things. And that just means I would be unable to have any sense of myself—or experience at all.

Conversely, the causal connection that I represent among events equally presupposes my own agency—i.e. causality from freedom. When I make the judgment that $x$ caused $y$, I take for granted a fundamental capacity to navigate that context in which $x$ appears as the cause and $y$ as the effect. In order for me to represent this causal

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21 A 533/B 561.
connection, I must be able to identify \( x \) as opposed to an infinite number of things that made the difference to \( y \) just as I must be able to see \( y \) as something that happened, and warrants explanation, in the first place. All of these distinctions that I draw are only possible in light of my purposive activity; were it significantly different, so too would be the way I carved up the infinite manifold of intuition.\(^{22}\)

Now for Kant, causality from freedom is a “pure transcendental idea, which, first, contains nothing borrowed from experience, and second, the object of which also cannot be given determinately in any experience . . . .”\(^{23}\) As I understand him, Kant is saying that, first, the fact that we are free is not something we infer from experience. Instead, it is already written into our experience, as I tried to sketch in the paragraph above. Secondly, that which is free—the acting subject—is something of which we can have no determinate experience. That is to say, the acting subject is not something of which we can assert empirical propositions as we do of theoretical objects. It is not a matter for investigation and hypothesis. To treat it differently would be to deny the universal law of experience which states that "everything that happens must have a cause, and hence that the causality of the cause, as itself having happened or arisen, must in turn have a cause."\(^{24}\)

Both of these points are admittedly obscure. Kant clarifies them to some degree by describing the two “characters” we have as acting subjects. On the one hand, we have an *empirical* character, through which our actions "as appearances, would stand through

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\(^{22}\) On this point I have learned much from Larry Wright, who in an unpublished manuscript details (and helpfully demonstrates) the fundamentally agential presuppositions of causal explanation.

\(^{23}\) A 533/B 561.

\(^{24}\) Ibid (Kant’s emphasis).
and through in connection with other appearances in accordance with constant natural laws, from which, as their conditions, they could be derived; and thus, in combination with these other appearances, they would constitute members of a single series of the natural order.\textsuperscript{25} To illustrate, we are, among other things, a species of animal, significantly distinguished from other mammals and characterized by particular causal properties unique to our kind. Equally, we are physical bodies, governed under determinate physical laws that make us an appropriate object of theoretical reflection just as any other object in nature understood in these terms. Under each of these empirical descriptions, among many others, we can be seen as belonging to a causal chain in which our being—however it is described—is dependent upon antecedent conditions.

On the other hand, we can be regarded as an acting subject that has an\textit{ intelligible character}, "through which it is indeed the cause of its actions as appearances, but which does not stand under any conditions of sensibility and is not itself appearance."\textsuperscript{26} Despite the mysteriousness of this claim, the idea that the acting subject, in its intelligible character, is not an appearance is one to which we are committed in our ordinary experience. It is also, importantly, expressed in the grammar of our evaluations of people's behavior. If I were to blame someone for hitting me, I am not blaming the person's body or part of his body. I am blaming the person, which we take to be categorically or grammatically distinct from the body. Because of this distinction, which we so naturally make, we are able to accept as an excuse the claim that the person did not hit me, he was pushed. Or perhaps he had a violent muscle spasm that caused his fist to

\textsuperscript{25} A 539/B 567.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid.
come into contact with my chest. In either case, the person's body may have come into contact with my own in the same way as it would had he intentionally hit me. We accept the excuse because we take the thing responsible—the agent—to be categorically distinct from its body. It is to this intelligibly understood subject that we refer 'ought' and 'should', not the body, fist, flesh, or molecules.²⁷

Now the claim that somebody has done something they should not have done obviously depends on the person’s physical capacities, and consequently, such judgments presuppose an understanding of how the world works. However, these capacities that we attribute to people are always capacities to do something—i.e., to be the source of a relevant change in the world. It is not enough for a person to say he was not responsible for hitting me because he lacked the capacity of controlling his muscle spasms. Even though it may be true that he lacked this capacity—for which he could provide empirical evidence—to the extent that he disclaims responsibility, he implies that there are things that he can do, and be legitimately held responsible for. One of these capacities may be avoiding those situations in which his spasmatic behavior causes harm to people or property.

By making such an excuse, the person is making the case that he is being held to the wrong standard or that, for some specific reason, the standard does not apply in this case. Now these standards by which we judge a person’s behavior cannot themselves be revealed by investigating nature, at least not solely. In order to determine what a person

²⁷ Of course, in a certain context, we could say of such things that they ought or ought not to do something. Ordinarily, such contexts are ones in which we attribute to these things a certain disposition. However, we do not take these things to be responsible for their disposition in the way that we do with human agents.
should do or what standard he should meet, we cannot look for models in nature. First of all, the standards we apply are only valid to the extent that they fit the context. I may unjustly blame someone for hitting me precisely because I am treating him as a person who possesses the normal control of his limbs when in fact he does not possess this capacity. Secondly, in looking for models in the first place, we already bring with us a sense of how things should be. If I were to scour nature in search of a proper model of human behavior, by what justification would I pass over the one who cannot control his behavior? I do so because I cannot see the good that it does. Such a judgment already reflects my own commitment to what is good or what should be.

For Kant, these standards which we apply to experience make out the ideas of reason. Now these ideas are not particular models against which we compare appearances in some vague way. More helpfully conceived, they are the expressions of a sense of fittedness to which we are committed as rational agents and which we carry around with us at all times. As Kant puts it, “It, reason, is present to all the actions of human beings in all conditions of time, and is one and the same, but is not itself in time, and never enters into any new state in which it previously was not.”28 Such a sense of fittedness is necessarily context dependent. For all I know, the person who hit me could have an excellent reason for doing so. If I were in his shoes, perhaps I would see that immediately. However, from my perspective it may be awfully difficult to imagine how this could be. Consequently, I ask for justification. This justification I will find satisfactory to the extent that it points out features of the world that show the fittedness

28 A 556/B 584.
was not violated in the way that I thought. If the person tells me he thought it would be a
good joke, I will not be so persuaded. If he tells me he thought it would scare off the
pickpocket reaching into my pocket, perhaps I will be.

I accept a person's justification not because he has satisfied my understanding.\(^{29}\) I
do so because he has satisfied my reason. This means that I was not looking for the causal
antecedents of some action, I was looking for its end or purpose. Now certainly, a person
may appeal to antecedent conditions in order to justify his behavior. However, I will
accept such an explanation only so far as I see these conditions as giving him a good
reason to act. If a person appealed to antecedent conditions to demonstrate that he was
necessitated by laws of nature in order to act precisely in this way, I would not know
what to say. It is no longer clear that we are talking about his action. Normally, such
appeals are made to show that some action—despite appearances—is not one's own. As a
person made ill might put it, "Don't get the wrong impression. That wasn't me. It was the
x acting." In cases such as these, a physiological story—such as the brain's sending out
electrical signals to the relevant muscles to contract—would be appropriate in a way that
it would not be in other cases. "I'm sorry," we might say, "I didn't want to do that."

The difference between our empirical and intelligible character as acting subject
is perhaps most obvious when we reflect on our own behavior. Take those situations in
which we physically struggle to do what we think is right. From the point of view of
reason, the world would be better if we acted one way rather than another. At the same
time, we doubt our physical capacity to realize that state of the world. Even without

\(^{29}\) At least not merely. Certainly my understanding of the world enables me to judge the appropriateness of
an action.
trying to analyze the psychology of such a dilemma, one should see that there are two very different kinds of questions here to which we are already providing an answer. One of these is a question of the understanding: What am I? What can I do? What is the scope of my powers? The other is a question of reason: Who am I? What should I do? How ought I to use my powers? Interestingly, we may be wrong about both answers we give to these questions. We do, frequently, misunderstand the nature of our powers. We are just as frequently wrong, despite our best intentions, about what we should do.

For Kant, this leaves us with a fundamental dichotomy between the domain of nature and the domain of morals. Theoretical philosophy articulates the necessary principles of the understanding, which determine the limits of what we can know as appearance—what is. Principles such as the “principle of the permanence of substance”\textsuperscript{30} and the “principle of succession in time, in accordance with the law of causality”\textsuperscript{31} govern our investigations into our empirical nature, including investigations into what we are. Moral or practical philosophy, on the other hand, articulates principles of reason, which determine the limits of what we can know as things-in-themselves: what ought to be. The categorical imperative, reason’s ultimate command, is the bar against which we measure all of our claims about what is right, good, or just. By stressing the fundamental difference between these two domains of philosophy, Kant is warning against the temptation to let one’s moral concerns influence one’s theoretical concerns, and vice versa. For example, while Kant thinks that practical reason commits us to ideas of God and the immortal soul, he thinks it is a mistake to try to prove they exist as some

\textsuperscript{30} A 182/B 224.
\textsuperscript{31} A 189/B 232.
theoretical entities. Equally, from our empirical observation of how things are in the world, we are not entitled to infer how things ought to be. "With respect to moral laws," Kant claims, "experience is (alas!) the mother of illusion, and it is most reprehensible to derive the laws concerning what I **ought to do** from what **is done**, or to want to limit it to that." From the fact human beings do lie, we cannot infer that it is permissible to lie. For Kant, both inferences are fundamentally confused.

II. Bridging the Gap

Although the way in which we determine the truth of moral and theoretical propositions may be fundamentally distinct, practical principles and moral concepts are nevertheless applied to nature by natural beings. The ultimate aim of practical reason is not that we *know* what the right thing to do is; it is that we *do* the right thing. Consequently, we should be able to connect the domain of morality with the domain of nature. As Kant says in the introduction to the *Critique of Judgment*,

> Now although there is an incalculable gulf fixed between the domain of the concept of nature, as the sensible, and the domain of the concept of freedom, as the supersensible, so that from the former to the latter (thus by means of the theoretical use of reason) no transition is possible just as if there were so many different worlds, the first of which can have no influence on the second; yet the latter **should** have an influence on the former, namely the concept of freedom should make the end that is imposed by its laws real in the sensible world; and nature must consequently also be able to be conceived in such a way that the lawfulness of its form is at least in agreement with the possibility of the ends that are to be realized in it in accordance with the laws of freedom.\(^3^3\)

\(^{32}\) A 318-9/B 375 (Kant's emphasis).
\(^{33}\) 5: 175-6 (Kant's emphasis).
Kant repeats this point at the end of the introduction. Here he says that the "effect [of freedom] is to take place in the world" and, further, that it must accord with both the natural laws of things and the "formal principle of the laws of reason."\(^{34}\)

In order to realize our ends, whatever they may be, nature has to be amenable to those ends. These include the highest end of reason, which for Kant is the perfect accord between happiness and morality, to which all our lower ends—eating, drinking, procreating, contemplating, etc.—are subordinated. However, it is not obvious that nature is so amenable to our ends. Even if we are successful here and there in the fulfillment of our ends, the world often appears so inhospitable that it is easy to doubt that the full achievement of our ends is possible.\(^{35}\) Even if reason tells us that we are not obligated to do anything that is not within our power—i.e. that 'ought' implies 'can'\(^{36}\)—it is difficult to understand how the full range of our ends is possible for beings like us. It is easy to give up hope that our ends should be realized in the world. This includes especially the highest end of reason itself wherein our individual ends and the ends of others are perfectly harmonized.\(^{37}\)

This turn to hopelessness is facilitated by the difficulty of seeing how the efficient causes uncovered by theoretical reason hook up to the final causes that practical reason commits us to. In our theoretical stance on the world, we take all appearances—including

\(^{34}\) A 807/B 835.
\(^{36}\) In his writing, Kant frequently refers to both the harshness of the world and the "weakness or impurity of human nature." Cf. *Critique of Judgment* (5: 430), *Critique of Pure Reason* (A 808/B 836), "Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim" (8:19 - 20, 23).
\(^{37}\) Rachel Zuckert describes the need for a transition between freedom and nature as a practical or moral one, in that the gap between these two realms “might constitute a source of alienation and/or despair” (Zuckert 370-1).
our actions—to be explainable in terms of antecedent causes. These explanations seem to be indifferent to our ends—what we want to happen or be the case. Whether I act in accordance with an end that reason compels me to realize or I act in opposition to that end, a theoretical explanation of my action could be given that showed why the action occurred and took the form that it did. Given the necessity implicit in our explanations, it is easy to think that had things been different, we would have failed to realize our end. Without a clear connection between antecedent conditions and final causes, the success of our ends may appear to be a matter of chance. As far as we can tell, it is entirely possible that things could have been different. Consequently, we are inclined to worry that in the future, things will be different and, despite our best efforts, we will fail to achieve our ends.

The problem with disbelieving that the world is amenable to our ends is twofold. On the one hand, it becomes easier to ignore the moral law and the commands that follow from it. Practical reason can make many difficult demands on our behavior. If we think the world is not amenable to our ends, we have more room to question or even ignore those demands. In Kant's terms, we can write them off as "empty figments of the brain." On the other hand, we would have less of an incentive to search for theoretical explanations of the world around us. If the success of our ends depends upon antecedent conditions over which we have no control, what purpose do we have for investigating those conditions? If anything, such an increase in understanding would only make us feel

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38 A 811/B 839.
more helpless.\textsuperscript{39} In both cases the development of human reason suffers: practically in the former case, theoretically in the latter.

In light of these worries, Kant sees the need for articulating "a ground of the unity of the supersensible that grounds nature with that which the concept of freedom contains practically, the concept of which . . . makes possible the transition from the manner of thinking in accordance with the principles of the one to that in accordance with the principles of the other."\textsuperscript{40} Until we appreciate the connection between the mechanical laws of the understanding and the end of reason itself, we will continue to be tempted to give up on reason in both respects. In the preface to the \textit{Critique of Judgment}, Kant articulates the importance of this project to a "critique of pure reason" as a whole when he writes,

> For if such a system [of pure philosophy], under the general name of metaphysics, is ever to come into being (the complete production of which is entirely possible and highly important for the use of reason in all respects), then the critique must previously have probed the ground for this structure down to the depth of the first foundations of the faculty of principles independent of experience, so that it should not sink in any part, which would inevitably lead to the collapse of the whole.\textsuperscript{41}

The "depth of the first foundations of the faculty of principles" to which Kant is referring contains our faculty of judgment. As we will see, the faculty represents the meeting point

\textsuperscript{39} I am reminded here of Hegel's (imprecise) quotation from Goethe's \textit{Faust} in the \textit{Philosophy of Right}. Although Hegel uses it for a slightly different purpose, it alerts us to a similar danger:

Do but despise reason and science
Highest of all the human powers,
Let yourself, through magic and delusion,
Grow strong through the spirit of deception,
Then it's certain I will get you! (\textit{Faust I}, 1851-1855)

\textsuperscript{40} 5: 176 (Kant's emphasis).

\textsuperscript{41} 5: 168.
of deterministic and purpose-guided explanation. In a certain sense, judgment is our starting point: through the exercise of our judgment, we have matter upon which to philosophically reflect. Until it is properly examined and understood, any metaphysical system built on the principles of reason and understanding is in danger of collapse. This is not because those principles are unsound but because, to continue the metaphor, they have not been properly linked together.42

III. The Faculty of Judgment

In order to appreciate what Kant means by our faculty of judgment, one must see it in contrast to our faculties of understanding and reason. For Kant, understanding, reason, and judgment make up the three "higher faculties of cognition."43 In the Critique of Pure Reason, he describes the understanding as "the faculty of rules" and reason as "the faculty of principles."44 By our understanding, we are able to see things as kinds of objects, which, as such, are subject to certain rules. For example, part of my understanding of water is that it freezes at 32 degrees Fahrenheit. By our reason, we are able to determine that something is necessarily the case by "derivation from principles."45 That is to say, we can prove that something is such and such given what we know. For example, given an understanding of principles of thermodynamics, I could explain why water freezes at 32 degrees Fahrenheit (as opposed to some other temperature). For Kant,

42 Here it is instructive to keep in mind Kant’s dedication to Baron von Zedlitz in the Critique of Pure Reason, in which he expresses his desire to contribute to the “growth of the sciences.” A iv. The historical significance of Kant’s philosophy—and of philosophy in general—is discussed at much greater length in Pierre Keller’s “Cassirer’s Retrieval of Kant’s Copernican Revolution in Semiotics.”
43 They are "higher" in that they "contain an autonomy" (5: 196).
44 A 132/B 171; A 299/B 356.
45 20: 201.
"All cognition starts from the senses, goes from there to the understanding, and ends with reason, beyond which there is nothing higher to be found in us to work on the matter of intuition and bring it under the highest unity of thinking."\textsuperscript{46} 

For Kant, the faculty of judgment is the "intermediary between the understanding and reason."\textsuperscript{47} In order to show that something follows from a general principle, we have to be able to judge when that principle applies to it. Kant describes this as a matter of "thinking the particular as contained under the universal."\textsuperscript{48} Without such an ability, all we would have would be a general understanding with no way to make it effective. In the \textit{Critique of Pure Reason}, Kant illustrates the indispensability of judgment when he imagines persons for whom this faculty was noticeably absent:

A physician therefore, a judge, or a statesman, can have many fine pathological, juridical, or political rules in his head, of which he can even be a thorough teacher, and yet can easily stumble in their application, either because he is lacking in natural power of judgment (though not in understanding), and to be sure understands the universal \textit{in abstracto} but cannot distinguish whether a case \textit{in concreto} belongs under it, or also because he has not received adequate training for this judgment through examples and actual business.\textsuperscript{49} 

The problem with such persons, Kant suggests, is not that they lack an understanding of things nor even an ability to unite their understanding under systematic principles of reason. They might be quite articulate about what they know and, as he says, be fine teachers. What they lack is the ability to connect this knowledge to the world, to know when a concrete particular instantiates an abstract universal.

\textsuperscript{46} A 298/B 355.  
\textsuperscript{47} S: 177.  
\textsuperscript{48} S: 179.  
\textsuperscript{49} A 134/B 173.
Now one might wonder why the failure to apply some rule correctly should be attributed to a lack in some faculty of judgment. After all, could one not say that the problem with the incompetent physician, judge, or statesman is that he did not understand the rules in the first place? In other words, despite appearances, they did not possess the understanding requisite to be a physician, judge, or statesman. While this is a natural response, there is something deeply problematic about it. It would seem extreme to deny that these persons possess the relevant understandings. As Kant says, it is perfectly imaginable that they know quite a bit about the respective science, which they could discourse about and teach others. The problem is that, for reasons good or ill, they have not been able to put that understanding to good use. Of course, we might complain that given their poor judgment, they cannot really have understood their sciences: medicine, law, government. However, one ought not be misled by the hyperbole implicit in such a claim. Our complaint is not that they lack understanding but that they have not made it count for much.\(^{50}\) Often our frustration is motivated precisely because a person makes poor judgments despite having a deep understanding of the matter.

In his lectures on logic, Kant had made a very similar point. The understanding, by itself, cannot be the cause of error. The reason for this, Kant claims, is the understanding’s essential rule-governedness. Although this point might strike one as perverse, it may appear so only because of its obviousness. One could describe it as the principle of the science of logic itself. “For there can be no doubt at all: we cannot think,

\(^{50}\) “They might as well know nothing,” we could say.
we cannot use our understanding, except according to certain rules.”

Kant likens the understanding to a kind of universal grammar, which we at first apply unconsciously and only become aware of later on. The very possibility of self-reflection presupposes the understanding’s lawfulness. And so Kant writes,

But it is hard to comprehend how error in the formal sense of the word, i.e., how the form of thought contrary to the understanding is possible, just as we cannot in general comprehend how any powers should deviate from its own essential laws. We cannot seek the ground of errors in the understanding itself and its essential laws, then, just as little as we can in the restrictions of the understanding, in which lies the cause of ignorance, to be sure, but not in any way the cause of error.

Now, we often do attribute a person's error to ignorance or a particular misunderstanding. Still, that is very different from saying that the person's understanding was the source of the error. To illustrate, I may make the mistaken judgment that the yellow dust on the ground is gold. Such a judgment may certainly be made out of ignorance. Had I known the difference between gold and iron pyrite, perhaps I would not have made that judgment. Nevertheless, it would be awkward to place the blame solely in my understanding. Indeed, part of the reason why I make that judgment in the first place is because my understanding was sound enough for me to be deceived. Had I not known what gold was, I would not have been in a position to be misled by the iron pyrite's gold-

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51 9:12.
52 Ibid.
53 9: 53 (Kant’s emphasis). Kant had made a similar point in the Critique of Pure Reason when he says that the understanding, as a “force of nature,” cannot “of itself depart from its own laws.” A 294/B 350. Cf. also 9: 11-13.
54 And yet even knowing this difference, I may still be deceived. One can imagine a person who knows quite a lot about gold who erroneously judges something to be gold even while a person who knows quite a bit less makes the right judgment.
like appearance. In another context, in which the yellow particles really were gold, I would have made the right judgment.

In a certain sense, Kant's insistence on a *faculty* of judgment is a way of preserving the normativity of our judgments themselves, that is, the fact that we may make correct and erroneous judgments. It also shows why reason, which aims to uncover rules and principles in the first place, could only provide limited assistance in helping us make the right judgments. It can help us understand the nature of our failures (or successes) but it could not ensure that we avoid them in the future (or replicate our successes). Whether we make judgments out of ignorance or understanding, *we* are the ones responsible for wielding the understanding and the rules it entails. This means being able to make the determination when our understanding is adequate to a particular case. Part of our complaint against the incompetent physician, judge, and statesman is that they continue to do their job despite the fact that they are not suited to it. It is no matter that they possess a deep understanding of the body, the legal system, or the government. For whatever reason, they have not been able to make that understanding serve the ends proper to being a physician, judge, or statesman.

IV. Determining vs. Reflecting Judgment

In the published introduction to the *Critique of Judgment*, Kant describes two ways in which we may think "the particular as contained under the universal.” Either the universal is "given" and we must subsume the particular under it. Or the particular is
given and we must "find" the universal for it.\textsuperscript{55} In the first case, the power of judgment is "determining" [\textit{bestimmend}]. In the second case, it is "reflecting" [\textit{reflectirend}]. This distinction thus stated is difficult to parse: in what way is the universal given in one case, but must be found in the other? In his unpublished introduction to the \textit{Critique of Judgment}, Kant spelled out his point more fully:

\begin{quote}
The power of judgment can be regarded either as a mere faculty for \textbf{reflecting} on a given representation, in accordance with a certain principle, for the sake of a concept that is thereby made possible, or as a faculty for \textbf{determining} an underlying concept through a given \textit{empirical} representation. In the first case it is the \textbf{reflecting}, in the second case the \textbf{determining power of judgment}. To \textbf{reflect} (to consider [\textit{Überlegen}]), however, is to compare and to hold together given representations either with others or with one's faculty of cognition, in relation to a concept thereby made possible. The reflecting power of judgment is that which is also called the faculty of judging (\textit{facultas diiudicandi}).\textsuperscript{56}
\end{quote}

The point that Kant is making, seems to be this. In some cases, we may be committed (for whatever reason) to a certain concept in such a way that we seek to classify experience in terms of it. Here, our particular understanding—and the rules that this understanding implies—frames the way in which experience is presented to us. In reflecting judgment, on the other hand, we are presented with some object or objects without our being committed to any concept that frames the way we see it. It is, as it were, left to us how we interpret or "conceptualize" it.

Among the concepts that we are in a position to take for granted in determining judgment are the pure concepts of the understanding—i.e. the categories. Substance, causality, necessity, etc. are all concepts presupposed by us in experience: we see things

\begin{footnotes}
\item[55] 5: 179.
\item[56] 20: 211 (Kant's emphasis).
\end{footnotes}
as *persisting* through change, as being the *cause* of other things, as being *necessarily* the way they are, and so forth. As Kant argues in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, we cannot but look at the world in these terms. In the "Schematism of the Pure Concepts of the Understanding," Kant describes the regular ways in which we subsume intuition under these concepts, what he calls the "transcendental schemata." These schemata, or "general procedures of the imagination," require that intuition be given to us with a certain temporal order so that concepts may be applied to them. For example, the schema of causality requires that we be presented with "the real upon which, whenever it is posited, something else always follows." The schema of substance requires that we be presented with something that persists in time while everything else changes. Unless intuition fits these patterns of the imagination, we could not see it as manifesting the corresponding concepts. For example, if I discovered that what I thought was the cause of some effect took place *after* the effect and not before, I would no longer see it as the cause. This is not something I would consciously infer but would see immediately.

For Kant, in our use of the determining power of judgment, we proceed "schematically" or "mechanically" [*unabsichtlich*]. "The law is sketched out for it *a priori*, and it is therefore unnecessary for it to think of a law for itself in order to be able to subordinate the particular in nature to the universal." If this is all that judgment came to, we could not make full sense of the way we subsume particulars under universals. While the schemata of the imagination restrict the way we bring the categories to

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57 A 140/B 179-80.
58 A 144/B 183.
59 Ibid.
60 20: 213-4.
61 5: 179.
experience, they leave undetermined the particular forms that intuition take. Things may
be temporally related in all kinds of ways. We cannot determine when some event
happened if we are not already in the position to see it as an event—i.e. as something that
"happened." Consequently, we need to be able to see things as kinds of objects.

Yet how do we acquire empirical concepts in the first place? That is to say, how
do we see numerically distinct objects united under general principles that determine their
behavior? On what grounds are we able to say that something is a tree, an animal, or an
inanimate object in the first place? We cannot refer our judgments to particular rules since
these rules would themselves call for justification. To put the point another way, how do
we know that our understanding of different objects—in relation to which things appear
as significant—is correct? It would seem as if we have some primitive capacity for rising
from the particular to the universal. If our understanding is not to be subject to
skepticism, in which case all of our explanatory practices would be called into question,
there has to be a way in which we exercise this capacity better or worse. In short, there
would have to be a principle for reflecting judgment.

V. The Principle of Purposiveness

Kant articulates the principle for reflecting judgment in section IV of the
Introduction. Here he writes the following:

Now this principle can be nothing other than this: that since universal laws of
nature [allgemeine Naturgesetze] have their ground in our understanding, which
prescribes them to nature (although only in accordance with the universal concept
of it as nature), the particular empirical laws [die besondern empirischen
Gesetze], in regard to that which is left undetermined in them by the former, must
be considered in terms of the sort of unity they would have if an understanding
(even if not ours) had likewise given them for the sake of our faculty of cognition, in order to make possible a system of experience in accordance with particular laws of nature.62

The universal laws of nature [allgemeine Naturgesetze] to which Kant is referring are surely the principles of the understanding according to which we are able to think of an object of cognition in general. These are the principles, already mentioned above, that Kant laid out in the first Critique. As I indicated above, they leave undetermined the "particular empirical laws" that we see as governing objects. It is entirely possible that the behavior of some object could be explained by two accounts which, although they contradict each other, are perfectly coherent in themselves. Consequently, one must do more than consider the internal consistency of the accounts in order to prefer one over the other. As Kant seems to imply, one must consider how they "make possible a system of experience in accordance with particular laws of nature" for "our faculty of cognition."63

Kant calls this principle the principle of the "purposiveness [Zweckmässigkeit] of nature."64 According to this principle, we must investigate nature as if it were designed (conceived by an "understanding") for the sake or purpose of our understanding. This does not mean we ought to take the particular forms of nature to be purposive in the strict sense; for Kant, that would mean they owe their existence to an end that makes them possible.65 Rather, these forms must be thought of as purposive "in their relation to one

62 5: 180.
63 Ibid.
64 Ibid.
65 "Now since the concept of an object insofar as it at the same time contains the ground of the reality of this object is called an end, and the correspondence of a thing with that constitution of things that is possible only in accordance with ends is called the purposiveness of its form . . ." (5: 180). Cf. also 5: 219-20.
another and their fitness, even in their great multiplicity, for a logical system of empirical concepts. In other words, we must take there to be a systematic relationship among the heterogeneous empirical concepts through which we represent objects as well as the particular empirical laws implied by those concepts.

In order to appreciate this need for a systematic relationship among the heterogeneous forms of nature, one must consider the way in which concept formation is tied to our purpose-guided activity. To have a concept of something is to say that it is the kind of thing that makes a rule-governed difference to the world. However, that there has been a difference in the first place can only be seen in light of our various ends. The world can be seen as changing in an infinite number of ways. Unless, we had divers ends that guided our behavior, we would have no reason to see some changes as significant and worthy of understanding but other changes as insignificant and better ignored. In short, we would have no occasion for explanation and the concepts that it gives rise to.

To understand this point, consider the fact that the very same object can be subject to different descriptions (and accordingly explanations) depending upon the ends of the agent intuiting that object. Let us take as an example a particular house on a particular street. That house can be understood as, among other things, a fire hazard, an investment opportunity, an important landmark, and an obstacle to traffic. Each description employs very different concepts that could apply equally to other houses on other streets. These concepts—and the rules that they imply—are applied by people with very different ends. Of course, it is possible that a person may have multiple ends and see an object as subject

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66 20: 216.
to different descriptions. But without pursuing at least some end, the person will not see it as an object, let alone one with a certain kind of description (i.e. a certain kind of object).\footnote{In fact, this point does not go far enough. Even to see the house as a house presupposes certain purposive activity for which it would be necessary to represent and distinguish buildings.}

It is in virtue of a person’s ends that different features of an object stand out as significant. Consider the house as it is seen by the fire marshal. For him, the relationship of the house to its neighbors, its position in respect to the wind, and its distance from the fire station are all going to be noteworthy in a way that they would not be for someone with a different concern. Given what the fire marshal understands about the spread and containment of fires, these are all important features of the house. For a real estate agent, the house's nearness to the beach, its connection to the town's sewer system, and its old windows would appear as significant. Meanwhile, a civil engineer would see the house's foundation, its network of gutters, and the topography of the plot as significant. Now certainly each person might notice the same features as each other; however, if they do, it will be on account of their sharing the same ends or having other ends for which such features are also significant.

As the rational agents that we are, we bring to experience a wide range of different ends and concepts that serve to further those ends. At any moment of our existence, any number of things could appear that catch our attention and call for explanation. The explanations that we find to be the most compelling will be those which bring a unity to our, as it were, disconnected understandings and promote the totality of our ends. In other words, the best explanations will be those which "make possible a
system of experience in accordance with particular laws of nature.” Those explanations that would not provide such a system or in fact undermine it we will regard as worse, even if they are, strictly speaking, logically possible.

In order to appreciate this point, let us consider a relatively straightforward case of explanation. Imagine that I am a homeowner who takes great pride in the appearance of my lawn. Upon returning from a two-week vacation I discover that my lawn has turned an ugly brown. After considering the facts, I come to the conclusion that the lawn did not receive any water while I was gone and consequently died. In coming to this conclusion, which I do with perfect confidence, I am putting to use many levels of understanding—and corresponding concepts—some of which are only distantly related to the putative object of the judgment: the lawn. This can be seen if one considers alternative explanations of the grass's turning brown. One story a person might tell is that the grass was actually alive but had been painted brown by someone who wanted to play a trick on me. Another story is that the grass was affected by a rare disease. According to another story, the grass died because it received contaminated water. In still another story, the grass turned brown naturally, because it was a special kind of grass that did that kind of thing sometimes. What makes these stories poor explanations is not their logical impossibility but the way they strain or call into question my understanding at so many different points. When I infer that a lack of water killed the grass, I do so not just because of what I know about grass. I rely equally on my understanding of persons, animals, plant-affecting diseases, not to mention my own powers of recollection. To take seriously

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68 5: 180.
a story in which the grass was painted by a mischievous neighbor would require that I radically amend my understanding of such things. On the other hand, the story I favor confirms and strengthens my understanding.

Now one might wonder why this alternative state of affairs is so undesirable. What, after all, is the cost of having to reconsider and revise our understandings? It is not enough to say that we would be inconvenienced or that our self-esteem would be hurt, although this is true to a degree. But it is true only because our ability to realize our ends would appear to be challenged or even undermined. The reason why we develop our understanding is to realize our purposes—to act as reason would have us act. The "logical system of empirical concepts" to which we aspire is not something we desire for its own sake. We desire it because only then are we capable of realizing our various ends, which are themselves subordinated to each other in a system. We may not always know what these ends are nor how an object is relevant to them. Still, they are always there in the background, quietly guiding our explanatory activity.

In order to compare different explanations, theories, or concepts one must attend not to their logical possibility but to the way they contribute to a system of cognition that serves our ends. These ends include both practical and cognitive ends. By practical end, I mean the end of making something, which we desire, actual. By cognitive end, I mean the end of contemplating something in its truth. Scientific investigation is motivated by cognitive ends inasmuch as we abstract from any particular good that we may aim to

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69 20: 216.
70 This can be seen in the normative assumptions that invariably underlie our investigations: we see objects as things that should act a certain way such that when they do not, we have an occasion to investigate.
realize.\textsuperscript{71} In respect to our cognitive ends, the best explanations will be those which contribute to the systematicity of our understanding.\textsuperscript{72} This is an important point to keep in mind since it is easy to prefer an explanation that makes sense of local phenomena (which capture our attention) even while it creates serious tension in our more remote understanding, which is no less important. Consequently, we must pay close attention to our higher cognitive ends if we are to exercise well our capacity for reflecting judgment.

According to Kant, this principle of purposiveness is expressed in what he calls the "maxims of the power of judgment, which are laid down \textit{a priori} as the basis for research into nature . . . ."\textsuperscript{73} These maxims can be understood as general guidelines for the practice of scientific investigation. They do not give any objective criteria for distinguishing good from bad explanations; instead, they express, roughly, what counts as "good judgment" within the different sciences. Among the maxims are:

"Nature takes the shortest way" (\textit{lex parsimoniae}); "it makes no leaps, either in the sequence of its changes or in the juxtaposition of specifically different forms" (\textit{lex continui in natura}); "the great multiplicity of its empirical laws is nevertheless unity under a few principles" (\textit{principia praeter necessitatem non sunt multiplicanda}); and so on.\textsuperscript{74}

That these maxims express the principle of purposiveness is revealed by their clearly subjective nature. What counts as "the shortest way," "a leap," or "unity under a few principles"? Each of these maxims is going to have different significance depending on our cognitive ends. While these principles do not give any specific advice as to how to

\textsuperscript{71} Of course, one might say that in science we aim for the good of understanding although this good is desirable only so far as we can use it.
\textsuperscript{72} For Kant, this is a matter of turning an aggregate of technical understanding into a science—of making a "rhapsody" into a "system." Cf. A 832/B 860 - A 833/B 861.
\textsuperscript{73} 5: 182. Cf. also 20: 210.
\textsuperscript{74} Ibid.
proceed in any science, they nevertheless emphasize the importance of the systematicity of our understanding. We are not obligated to investigate nature on the assumption that it really does not take leaps. It is hard to imagine what that could mean. Nevertheless, it does seem right to think that we will be unsatisfied so long as our understanding contains "leaps" in it. To leave our understanding in that state does not violate any principle of the understanding; nevertheless, it does go against our impulse to investigate and achieve that complete unity of the understanding that reason strives for.

VI. Creating a System of Experience

Central to my reading of Kant is the idea that judgment proceeds from us, purposive agents, not from some mysterious psychological mechanism within us. More specifically, judgment stands for the way we direct our understanding at the world around us in our pursuit of ends. The principle of judgment describes the way we may do this better or worse. In other words, it says what it means for us to show good judgment.

It is possible to see the principle of judgment in a quite different way. One might see it as describing what must happen in order for us to make the particular judgments that we do. That is to say, we might take the principle as being explanatory as opposed to constitutive. Under this picture, we must look at the world as if it were designed for us in order to see things with the empirical character we impute to them. Without seeing the world as ordered for our faculty of cognition, we could not see things as tables and chairs, horses and grasshoppers. The world would appear, as it were, a jumbled mess, not the continuous experience that characterizes our ordinary existence. But clearly we do see
things in clear and coherent ways so then we must take nature to be designed for our judgment.

It is easy to read Kant in this way, partly due to the way that he writes. Frequently he speaks of the faculty of judgment as if it had its own end. For example, in distinguishing judgment from reason and the understanding, Kant writes "The power of judgment . . . has in itself an a priori principle for the possibility of nature, though only in a subjective respect, by means of which it prescribes a law, not to nature (as autonomy), but to itself (as heautonomy) for reflection on nature . . . ."75 In brief, judgment gives itself a law whereas the understanding and reason give a law to nature. This could be read as saying that the faculty of judgment, like the faculty of understanding and the faculty of reason, does its own thing for its own purpose. The purpose of the faculty of judgment, one might suppose, is to produce judgments, be they of the "determining" or "reflecting" kind. (The purpose of the understanding and reason would be, analogously, to produce concepts and inferences respectively.)

While Kant does speak of the cognitive faculties as having their own ends, we ought not to be misled by his use of synecdoche. For the faculties, in German Vermögen, are nothing but capacities that we have as living beings. These faculties are developed by us for a purpose. While they each have their own end, these ends are subordinate to the higher end of living a human life. Just like other capacities that we have, the value of the cognitive faculties depends upon the use to which we put them. To distinguish among their ends is simply to point out the differences among these capacities. It is not unlike

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75 5: 185-6.
distinguishing the end of playing the piano from the end of speaking a foreign language. This is not a trivial point: the two activities have different criteria for success. If we are not sensitive to this point, it is easy to be misled by their similarities and think that the mastery of one activity should imply mastery of the other. The same point holds for the cognitive faculties that Kant has described. If we do not see judgment as having an end different from the ends of the understanding or reason, we may expect good judgment to be a matter of cultivating a strong understanding or reason. But, as Kant points out by his reference to the incompetent "physician, judge, and statesman," this is not the case. No matter how many rules one may have learned, one must still develop good judgment so that those rules are put to meaningful use.

The conflation of judgment with the understanding and reason is facilitated by a view of the human being according to which our highest end is cognition or knowledge. But cognition is not sought for its own sake. We do not seek cognition merely to have it; we seek it in order to do things and ultimately find satisfaction in our activity. The incompetent physician, judge, and statesman may each have the best understanding of their topics of interest but still be unable to put that understanding to good use. Something else is needed. Even a theoretical scientist, whose proper end is not practical, does not seek a particular understanding simply to have it. Properly speaking, he seeks the understanding because he enjoys contemplating the truth of things. \(^76\) Indeed, it is possible to possess a fine understanding while at the same time being unable to make use of it on account of internal or external hindrances.

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\(^76\) Naturally he may be motivated, or simply distracted by, other ends.
That Kant rejects this view of the human being can be seen in his tripartite division of the human mind or soul.\(^77\) In opposition to those who would "reduce all faculties [of the human mind] to the mere faculty of cognition," Kant divides the mind into three: "the faculty of cognition, the feeling of pleasure and displeasure, and the faculty of desire."\(^78\) By dividing the mind in this way, Kant is implying that cognition is significant only in relation to our faculty of desire, which he described in the *Critique of Practical Reason* as the "faculty to be by means of [one's] representations the cause of the reality of the objects of these representations."\(^79\) Like the faculty of cognition, the faculty of desire can be cultivated: we can, through training and habituation, develop particular desires or appetites. However, without the relevant know-how which cognition provides, these desires will not be effectively (or competently) fulfilled by us. Neither faculty is cultivated for its own sake; they are cultivated so that we might find success in our properly human activity. That is to say, they are cultivated so that we can achieve our ends as humans.\(^80\)

When we think about judgments, we must not think about them simply in relation to our faculty of cognition; rather, we must think about them in relation to both our faculties of cognition and desire insofar as they find union in activity. Judgments are not the product of some cognitive faculty that operates of its own volition for its own end.

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\(^{77}\) In this division, Kant uses the terms *Gemüth* and *Seele* interchangeably. They are translated respectively as *mind* and *soul*. Guyer and Matthews, Pluhar, Bernard, and Meredith all follow this convention. To simplify, I will generally prefer the term *mind* (and *mental*) although sometimes I will use the term *soul* disjunctively in order to emphasize the fact that, at least in this context, Kant treats these terms synonymously, even though contemporary readers may be inclined to distinguish them sharply.

\(^{78}\) 20: 206.

\(^{79}\) 5: 10.

\(^{80}\) The feeling of pleasure and displeasure will be discussed in the next chapter. As we will see, as judgment mediates between reason and the understanding, the feeling of pleasure and displeasure mediates between cognition and desire.
Rather, judgments express the way that we apply our faculty of cognition to the world when there is an infinite number of ends that we could be pursuing at any time. They express our discretion in seeking ends in a world that is—regardless of our cognition—infinitely complex. This is an important point since for any end we are pursuing, it is possible to systematize the manifold of intuition in a way that makes this end appear possible. Our imagination is a powerful tool which, as Kant showed in the first *Critique*, plays an indispensable role in the way we perceive the world. With patience and creativity, we can take anything given to us in experience and make it cohere with empirical principles that constitute our understanding. However, if we fail to notice what is most relevant for our end as a human being, then despite the power of our understanding, we have showed poor judgment.  

Once we look at judgment in this way, we can understand why we must look at the world as if it were designed "for the sake of our faculty of cognition, in order to make possible a system of experience in accordance with particular laws of nature." This is not so that things might be presented to us in a coherent way, that is, in a way that accords with our phenomenal experience. Rather, we must proceed in this way so that we might realize our ends as a human being. The more systematic our cognition, the more fully we can achieve our ends. Violation of the principle of judgment consists in our focusing so intently on some end (cognitive or practical) that we fail to recognize the way the world is fitted (or not) to other equally important ends that we have. This does not

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81 Just what is most relevant is a difficult question to answer but one I will attempt to explore in the proceeding chapters. As I will try to show, it depends upon our social environment according to which it is appropriate to seek varying ends.
82 5: 180.
mean that we have a representation that fails to accord with how things actually are; rather, we simply fail to notice something that to a person properly attuned would appear as significant and worthy of investigation. The point of this investigation is not merely to bring unity to our understanding but to achieve a system of ends. If our investigation leads to the "discovered unifiability of two or more empirically heterogeneous laws of nature under a principle that comprehends them both" we will, Kant claims, feel a "very noticeable pleasure."\footnote{5: 187.} This is not because the faculty of cognition has achieved an end it has of itself; it is because we, as purposive creatures, see our ends as realizable given what we know about the world. We are, as it were, more free in exercising our will on the world.

That Kant sees judgment as something like a sensitivity to the way the world accords with our ends finds support in the Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View. Here Kant distinguishes the cognitive faculties of the understanding, judgment, and reason in a very helpful way. They are, he says, concerned with three separate questions. The understanding asks, "What do I want," which, according to Kant means, "What do I want to claim as true?" Judgment asks, "What does it matter [Worauf komms an]?" And reason asks, "What comes of it [Was kommt heraus]?"\footnote{7: 227} Judgment's question, "What does it matter?" or "On what does it depend?" or "What is at stake?" gets to the question of what we are, as particular individuals, trying to do. It is important to ask this question lest we get carried away investigating or defending some proposition for purposes that are—at least at the moment—not fully in our interest. The failure to take this question

\[83\] 5: 187.
\[84\] 7: 227
seriously risks our pursuing some end in vain. Even if we are ultimately successful in achieving that end, whatever it is, we may undermine our capacity to achieve other ends that we have more reason to pursue.

In that same section of the Anthropology, Kant gives a neat illustration of persons who answer the question of judgment well or poorly. He considers a lawyer who wants to prove a certain assertion to a judge (for example, that someone is guilty or innocent of a crime). The difficulty the lawyer faces is that there are so many ways of proceeding to his end but it is left to him which he thinks is best. If he comes to the judge merely with "many principles [Gründen] that are supposed to prove his assertion," then he makes the judge's work very difficult since he is only "fumbling around" [nur herumtappt]. If, however, he clarifies what he wants to say and then "knows how to hit the point of the matter" [den Punkt zu treffen . . . worauf es ankommt], "the issue is quickly settled, and the verdict of reason follows by itself."\(^8^5\) Although the lawyer may at first be engaged in some meaningful activity, without presenting his understanding in a purposeful, systematic way, he makes it hard for the judge to appreciate the significance of whatever evidence he brings forward.\(^8^6\) Consequently, the judge—who can be seen as symbolic of reason itself—does not know what to do. Only after the lawyer has "clarified what he wants to say" and knows how to "hit the point of the matter" will the judge be able to make the right verdict. To do this, the lawyer must reflect on these "many principles"\(^8^7\) and understand how they fit together in an organized whole that makes his point.

\(^8^5\) 7; 228. (Translation modified)
\(^8^6\) Like the scientist mentioned above, he may be motivated or simply distracted by ends alien to that of being a lawyer.
\(^8^7\) Louden translates Gründen as 'principles'. It could also be translates as 'reasons' or 'grounds'.
We are all, in our own way, like the lawyer "fumbling around" with many principles in front of a judge. What we need to do on occasion is to think about where we are ultimately headed (where reason would have us go) and consider how our present behavior (our explanatory endeavors) is taking us to that point. This involves the "clarifying of what we want to say" \(\text{nach der Erklärung dessen, was er will}\) or, as it were, putting the claims of our understanding into their proper context. To do this, we must acknowledge that the things that we know and to which we are committed as being true are, in the full scope of reason, subordinated to a higher point. But acknowledging this is very difficult; it requires something like intellectual humility. We may be so capable of thinking of something under a certain concept (for example, doing mathematics, physics, biology, etc.) that we might try to make everything fit the same concepts (for example, of numbers, physical bodies, organisms, etc.). And while this approach may certainly have positive effects on the sciences themselves, it leaves the faculty of cognition of the individual only partially developed. Until we step back and consider what it is that we know and how it "matters," puzzles will continue to emerge since reason finds "peace only in the completion of its circle in a self-subsisting systematic whole."\(^90\)

\(^{88}\) Interestingly, Kant makes the rather Aristotelian claim that of this "point" that the lawyer aims to hit, there is only one. 7: 228.

\(^{89}\) Ibid.

\(^{90}\) A 797/B 825.
VII. Conclusion

How then does this consideration of the faculty of judgment, and our representation of nature as purposive for our understanding, address the question raised in Section II? Namely, in what way are the antecedent, efficient causes to which we are committed in our theoretical explanation of the world connected to the final end that we represent as practical reasoners? Why is our commitment to the final end of reason—a world in which moral behavior stands in perfect accord with happiness—not in the least bit threatened by the fact that the laws of nature which we uncover in our investigation of the world seem cruelly indifferent to our intentions, whatever they may be?

The main answer to this question is that we develop our understanding, with the empirical principles that it implies, for the sake of our properly human activity and the ends that this imposes on us. The better our understanding, the more effectively we can do things. Had we not some ends that we were pursuing, we would not be motivated to develop our understanding. Nor would we see things as needing to be explained in the first place. These ends include both our practical ends and the cognitive ends presupposed in purely theoretical scientific activity.

Our worry that the world is not fitted to our ends—including the highest end of reason itself—may be assuaged when we consider the possibility that we are not looking at the world correctly. This occurs when we are so fixated on some end that we are insensitive to things that should matter to us (or matter more). Of course, a greater understanding might help us see more clearly how the world conduces to our ends. Yet too often, we use our inability to understand as an excuse not to act. We tell ourselves that
it would be foolish to act until we have addressed the gaps or conflicts within our understanding.\footnote{Cf. \textit{Nicomachean Ethics}, I.4.6.} For instance, practical reason may command us to do something the possibility of which we fail to understand and so we hesitate to do it. What is easy to forget is that the cognitive puzzles that arise are themselves a function of our own activity. They emerge in relation to the ends that we are pursuing. Unless we turn ourselves, in some sense, to new ends—especially ones we may be avoiding—we will continue to have the same problems, no matter how many principles we add to our understanding.

Reflecting judgment aims at bringing our particular understanding into a system. As Kant puts it, it is meant to provide the "systematic subordination of empirical principles under one another."\footnote{5: 180.} The point of this is not that we might merely perfect our understanding or represent things as they actually are. That would be the case if our highest end were cognition. But our highest end is not cognition but putting cognition to good use. The reason why we aim for a systematic understanding is that we might achieve more fully our ends. This is what makes reflecting judgment \textit{reflection}. For we must look back at ourselves to consider what it is that we "want to say" and why we want to say it. In other words, we need to reflect on the ends that we are pursuing and, correlatively, the ends that we are neglecting. Until we do this, we might make excellent progress analyzing the world in relation to some concept (or as Kant puts it, "determining" the concept); however, whatever understanding we accrue will be inadequate to meet all of our ends (both cognitive and practical).
In the end, we can see that the obstacle to good judgment is nothing but we ourselves. For we are the ones who choose either to submit our cognitive commitments ("what we want to say") to self-reflection or to continue determining some concept without considering its end. The difficulty with submitting our cognitive commitments to self-reflection is that we often have an interest in preserving the system of understanding that we have established: a way of life, one which we are reluctant to give up, is dependent upon it. When experience fails to conform with that system of understanding, we may dig in our heels and try to plug the gaps in our understanding. And while we may find success in this approach, too often we are blind to the things most obvious. This is not because we have a poor understanding but because we have, in a certain sense, chosen not to look. And so Kant writes in his lectures on logic, “In the restrictions of the understanding then lies only the responsibility for ignorance; the responsibility for error we have to assign to ourselves.”

93 9: 54.
CHAPTER TWO: Aesthetic Experience

I. Searching for a Principle of Judgment

In the introduction to the *Critique of Judgment*, Kant defines judgment as the "faculty for thinking of the particular as contained under the universal."\(^{94}\) That is to say, judgment is our ability to take something given in experience and see it as instantiating a more general rule. This rule could apply just as much to other particulars, which could be thought under it in different judgments. For example, I might take the animal that stands before me (the particular) to be a dog (the universal). Equally, I might take the number 457 (the particular) to be a prime number (the universal). For every judgment, I make a claim that I take to be valid not just for me but for anyone. My judgment is in principle falsifiable. I cannot *a priori* rule out the possibility that someone might show me that I am mistaken even though my judgment expresses my confidence that I am correct.

For Kant, a faculty of judgment is required to apply the concepts presupposed by our understanding to experience. Without such a faculty, all we would have would be the possession of rules—which perhaps we could contemplate and impart to others—but no way to make them truly effective. In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant imagines individuals—a physician, judge, and statesman—who, though rich in understanding, are "lacking in natural power of judgment."\(^{95}\) While they "understand the universal *in abstracto*" they are unable to "distinguish whether a case *in concreto* belongs under it."\(^{96}\)

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\(^{94}\) S: 179.
\(^{95}\) A 134/B 173.
\(^{96}\) Ibid.
Such a lack, Kant writes, cannot be rectified by our being "taught" [belehrt]. Instead, whatever “special talent” we have for judging can only be "practiced" [geübt].

In saying that the faculty of judgment cannot be taught, Kant does not mean that judgment cannot be improved. He means that judgment cannot be improved merely through the learning of rules. His reasoning for this is very simple: if the faculty of judgment were to be instructed by rules, there would still be the question whether or not these rules were properly applied. And this question would again give rise to the need for a faculty of judgment, which, at the risk of falling into an infinite regress, could not be explained in terms of the application of a rule. In making this argument, Kant is not demeaning the importance of rules. He is only making the point that, in the end, "the faculty for making use of them correctly [i.e. the faculty of judgment] must belong to the student himself, and in the absence of such a natural gift no rule that one might prescribe to him for this aim is safe from misuse."  

If good judgment does not consist in the following of rules that we learn, what then does it consist in? What does it mean to say that one person has better judgment than another, or that a person's judgment has improved? What does it mean to say that a person has made an erroneous judgment? In the previous chapter, I considered Kant's answer to this: our faculty of judgment is governed by a special, subjective principle which he calls the "principle of the purposiveness of nature." According to this principle, we must take the particular empirical laws by which we understand nature to be unified just as if "an understanding (even if not ours) had likewise given them for the sake of our

97 A 133/B 172.
98 A 133/B 172 - A 134/B 173.
faculty of cognition, in order to make possible a system of experience in accordance with particular laws of nature." To paraphrase, we must look at nature as if it were designed for the sake of our faculty of cognition, so that a system of experience is possible for us.

In the previous chapter, I argued that this principle cannot be understood as merely explaining how we judge. That is to say, we must not understand it as describing the conditions under which we make the particular judgments that we do. It is easy to read the principle in this way if we take judgments to be the product of some psychological mechanism that acts of its own volition. As I pointed out, Kant partly encourages this reading by the way he personifies the faculties. Nevertheless, this reading contradicts the spirit of Kant's writing, as Kant himself, on occasion, makes abundantly clear. Speaking of the "maxims of the power of judgment," which are nothing but various expressions of the principle of purposiveness, Kant stresses their normativity.

If one wants to give the origin of these fundamental principles and attempts to do so in a psychological way, this is entirely contrary to their sense. For they do not say what happens, i.e., in accordance with which rule our powers of cognition actually perform their role and how things are judged, but rather how they ought to be judged.

The principle of judgment does not say what happens when we judge, as if there were some mystery in the way that we form the particular representations we do, i.e, with the phenomenal content we attribute to them. While how we form the particular representations that we do is an interesting question, this is not the question Kant is interested in answering. For him, the question is what it means to say that a person has

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99 5: 180.
100 5: 182.
101 Ibid.
good judgment. We ask this question because we care about making good judgments and want to avoid, as much as possible, falling into error.

As I argued in the previous chapter, in order to appreciate the normativity of the principle of judgment, we must not look at judgments as standing for particular representations that the world is a certain way. Rather, we should look at judgments as expressing our commitment to ends. Through our faculty of judgment, we notice what is significant to our purposive activity. What makes judgment poor is not that we have a representation that fails to accord with the way the world actually is. Rather, we fail to notice what is most relevant to our human activity. While this insensitivity may sometimes be a result of our lacking an understanding of the world, there is always a deeper cause. The very possibility of an understanding presupposes our taking steps to develop it. This means committing ourselves to ends so that our understanding may develop on its own. The more we open ourselves to new ends, the more systematic our understanding will become. The more systematic our understanding, the more capable we are of realizing the full range of ends that we have as human beings. And consequently, the more at home we will feel in the world.

According to Kant, this principle of judgment is most clearly seen when we reflect on those judgments we call aesthetic, including our judgments that an object is beautiful or sublime. The reason for this is that we are less inclined in these cases to justify our judgments on the basis of a particular concept. Consider those objects we regard as beautiful. Because beautiful objects take so many different forms and are found in so many different contexts, it is generally understood that there is no use trying to
prove that an object is beautiful. More so than in other cases, it is hard to propose objective criteria for what should count as good judgment without raising the question how we know those criteria apply. More so than in other cases, we take our competence in making judgments to be based on something other than a grasp of rules. Kant expresses this point when he writes in the preface to the *Critique of Judgment*,

This embarrassment about a principle [Verlegenheit wegen eines Prinzips] (whether it be subjective or objective) is found chiefly in those judgings that are called aesthetic, which concern the beautiful and the sublime in nature or in art. And likewise the critical investigation of a principle of the power of judgment in these cases is the most important part of a critique of this faculty.102

In referring to this "embarrassment" about a principle, Kant does not mean that judgment has no principle. Inasmuch as judgments can be better or worse and we can improve our faculty for judging, there must be some principle. The embarrassment or "perplexity"103 that Kant mentions simply concerns our difficulty articulating this principle when we cannot do so in terms of a rule. This embarrassment is most evident in the case of aesthetic judgments, since these judgments seem so obviously normative despite the fact that they resist our efforts to base them on rules. We therefore have good reason to believe that an examination of these judgments might reveal the nature of the principle of judgment.

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102 5: 169.
103 This is how Pluhar and Bernard translate Verlegenheit. Meredith prefers "difficulty."
II. Aesthetic Judgments

At the start of the Analytic of the Beautiful, Kant states that a judgment of taste—by which he means a judgment that an object is beautiful—is an "aesthetic" as opposed to a "cognitive" judgment. The difference between an aesthetic and cognitive judgment consists in what Kant calls its "determining ground" [Bestimmungsgrund]. Whereas a cognitive judgment is based on our faculty of cognition (i.e., our capacity to know or understand objects), a judgment of taste is based on "the feeling of pleasure and displeasure."

In order to decide whether or not something is beautiful, we do not relate the representation by means of understanding to the object for cognition, but rather relate it by means of the imagination (perhaps combined with the understanding) to the subject and its feeling of pleasure or displeasure.104

Following this statement, Kant helpfully illustrates the distinction between cognitive and aesthetic judgment. A building may be judged either according to determinate concepts grasped by our faculty of cognition or according to the way it affects us. We may, for instance, judge it as a solidly built Victorian badly in need of a paint job or we may judge it as a charming house, which captures our attention and stimulates our imagination. In the latter case,

the representation is related entirely to the subject, indeed to its feeling of life [Lebensgefühl], under the name of the feeling of pleasure or displeasure, which grounds an entirely special faculty for discriminating and judging that contributes nothing to cognition but only holds the given representation in the subject up to the entire faculty of representation, of which the mind becomes conscious in the feeling of its state.105

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104 5: 203.
105 5: 204.
If someone challenged the former judgment, we could provide clear evidence which, we believe, would give them reason to think the same thing of the house. We could refer to principles of mechanics, building materials, the history of architecture, etc. If, however, someone challenged the latter judgment, it would be much harder to provide evidence of this sort. Our judgment seems to be based, in some way, on subjective conditions.

The claim that aesthetic judgments in general—and judgments of taste in particular—are not based on concepts but rather on feeling is one that Kant makes often in the *Critique of Judgment*. Unfortunately, the significance of this claim is easy to misinterpret. It is tempting to take the feeling of pleasure and displeasure to which Kant refers as a kind of inner sensation, on which we base our aesthetic judgments. So, for example, I judge the house to be charming because seeing it caused a certain kind of feeling in me. Had I not been affected in this way, I would not have judged it to be so charming. Such an interpretation is problematic, not only because Kant rejects this reading insofar as we judge something to be beautiful and not just "agreeable." When we judge something to be beautiful, we expect other people to share our judgment and we criticize them when they do not. It is not clear how we could account for this claim if our judgment was based on a feeling we perceive within us. After all, another person may be affected quite differently by an object for entirely innocent reasons; it is hard to see how we could legitimately rebuke them for not expressing the same judgment if this is all that judgment came to.

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106 Cf. 5: 190, 193, 228, 239, 285-6.
107 What Kant means by ‘agreeable’ shall be discussed in chapter 3.
More importantly though, such a reading prevents us from seeing what is so important about judgments of taste. Specifically, it prevents us from seeing how reflection on aesthetic experience reveals a principle for judgment in general. In order to see this, we need to realize that the term "feeling of pleasure or displeasure" (or elsewhere "feeling of pleasure and displeasure") plays a systematic role in Kant's larger critical project. For Kant, the feeling of pleasure and displeasure is a faculty or power of the mind or soul [Vermögen des Gemüths, Gemüthskräfte, Seelenvermögen].

Further, it is one of the three faculties to which "we can trace all faculties of the human mind without exception back." In order to understand the way in which the feeling of pleasure and displeasure can serve as a determining ground for aesthetic judgments, we need to understand the functional role Kant sees it performing. With respect to the mind or soul in general, what would the feeling of pleasure and displeasure do?

III. The Faculty of Feeling Pleasure and Displeasure

As I read Kant, the feeling of pleasure and displeasure stands for our capacity to notice out of the infinite manifold the relevance of objects to our purposive activity. We are pleased when the world appears to conduce to our end; we are displeased when it appears to frustrate our end. This understanding of the feeling of pleasure and displeasure is suggested by Kant's definition of pleasure in the Critique of Practical Reason. This definition makes explicit the need of such a faculty for living organisms.

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108 5: 177, 196; 20: 245, 246.
Life is the faculty of a being to act in accordance with laws of the faculty of desire. The faculty of desire is a being's faculty to be by means of its representations the cause of the reality of the objects of these representations. Pleasure is the representation of the agreement of an object or of an action with the subjective conditions of life, i.e., with the faculty of the causality of a representation with respect to the reality of its object (or with respect to the determination of the powers of the subject to action in order to produce the object).\(^{110}\)

In describing the faculty of desire as the faculty “to be by means of its representations the cause of the reality of the objects of these representations,” Kant is articulating a kind of causality distinct from the mechanical causality presupposed by the understanding. Living beings are distinguished by a capacity to be the cause of the things they want. For living beings, the existence of food, shelter, protection, companionship, and many other objects depend upon their will. That is to say, the existence of these things, and the form that these things take, depends upon the creatures having the proper desire for them. Had these creatures not had the relevant desires, these things would not have existed or they would have taken a very different form. Only in relation to such desires can we say that a creature has been successful in his activity; indeed, only in relation to such desires can we say that a creature, as a creature, has done anything at all. In this context, pleasure stands for a creature's representation that the world accords with its end. Depending upon the kind of creature it is, an individual will have different desires (or needs) for which the

\(^{110}\) 5: 9 (Mary Gregor translation with Kant's emphasis). Cf. also Kant's description of the feeling of pleasure and displeasure in the Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View, 7: 153. There Kant describes the feeling of pleasure and displeasure as the feeling of the “receptivity of the subject to be determined by certain representations to preserve or repulse the state of these representations.” (my translation)
world will appear more or less satisfying. In this way, an “object or action” may be seen as agreeing with “the subjective conditions of life.”

Now one might resist this interpretation of Kant's definition of the faculty of desire and the corresponding feeling of pleasure on the basis that it is overly inclusive. One might think that Kant's discussion of “representations” indicates that he has a narrower understanding of the faculty of desire. Representations, we might think, are something like internal reproductions of the world that may or may not correspond to how things actually are. According to this picture, we must first have an image of something—which we see as desirable—before we can take steps to realize it. Since it would be awkward to say that creatures such as paramecium or other lower organisms represent in this way, it would be improper to credit them with a faculty of desire and, correspondingly, a feeling of pleasure and displeasure. Or, at the very least, if we do credit such creatures with these faculties, then it is only on the basis of an analogy with human beings. They act as if they were seeking out an object that they represented as desirable. Or they act as if they took pleasure in some object.

The problem with this interpretation is that it distorts what Kant means by "representation." The German term that Kant uses is Vorstellung, which might be better translated as "presentation." More literally, it means the "the standing before us" of something. To say that a person has a "representation of an object" is to say that he is presented with an object in a particular spatial and temporal context whereby his cognition of that object is limited by his point of view. Every living creature can have a

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111 Ibid.
112 Werner Pluhar translates Vorstellung in this way.
representation of an object insofar as it can perceive something from a distinct point of view and possibly misperceive it. In this sense, even an organism as simple as a paramecium can have a representation of an object: it may perceive something that other paramecia, because of their point of view, do not. A paramecium can be said to "cause the object of its representations" in the sense that the very being of certain objects—for example, bacteria, algae, yeasts—is lawfully affected by the paramecium, for which these things appear as food. Had paramecia not existed, or had they different desires, these things would have taken a different form. So even though a paramecium cannot be said to visualize these things or hold them in the mind's eye, it is entirely proper to attribute a faculty of desire to it. And to the extent that the paramecium sees its desires as being fulfilled on occasion, we can equally say that it is pleased by the world around it.

For Kant, the faculty of desire analytically distinguishes living organisms from lifeless matter. In the _Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science_, Kant makes the point that the law of inertia only applies to lifeless matter and is not meant to characterize the activity of living beings, whose capacity to change their state is determined by an "internal principle." He writes,

> Life is the capacity of a substance to determine itself to act from an internal principle, of a finite substance to change, and of a material substance [to determine itself] to motion or rest, as change of its state. Now we know no other internal principle in a substance for changing its state except desiring, and no other internal activity at all except thinking, together with that which depends on it, the feeling of pleasure or displeasure, and desire or willing.\(^{113}\)

\(^{113}\) _Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science_, 4: 544.
It would thus seem that for Kant the faculty of desire characterizes any being capable of changing its own state from within. In other words, any being whose behavior cannot be explained merely by reference to mechanical laws has a faculty of desire, be it a paramecium, slug, or eagle. For these beings, we can only make complete sense of the different forms that they take—e.g., their size, location, shape, velocity etc.—by referring to ends that they have in-themselves. Consider a goldfish moving about in an aquarium.\textsuperscript{114} While the goldfish is just as material as the gravel on the bottom of the tank, the toy treasure chest, and the little flecks of fish food, its behavior—i.e. the forms that it takes—cannot be adequately explained simply in terms of mechanical principles. In order to satisfactorily explain why the goldfish does what it does, we must speak in terms of its ends. For example, we say that the goldfish is rising to the surface because there is food up there. If the goldfish did not have this desire, it would not have done this. This purposive behavior is reflected by the terms we use to describe its motion: for example, we say that the goldfish \textit{swims} to the top whereas the air bubbles only \textit{float} to the top.\textsuperscript{115}

The idea that a living creature's feeling of pleasure and displeasure is equivalent to its sense that its end is promoted or frustrated corresponds closely with our experience of animals and the circumstances in which they express pain and, perhaps less obviously, pleasure. Consider a fish caught on a hook, a dog receiving a shot from the vet, or a fox clamped in a trap. It would be perverse to deny that these creatures were in pain in such cases, let alone that these experiences were unpleasant for them. If they could, the animals would remove themselves from those situations as quickly as possible.

\textsuperscript{114} I borrow this example from Larry Wright.
\textsuperscript{115} These terms also mark the difference between a live and dead goldfish.
Interestingly, the pleasure which animals express is not as striking. At least, we less frequently think of animals as feeling pleasure. Nevertheless, it would seem entirely appropriate to regard as pleasant for some animal a situation in which its removal from a certain state would be the source of annoyance: we can think of an animal contentedly feeding, mating, or lying in hibernation. Were it disturbed from its activity, it would express irritation and would try to return to that activity as quickly as possible.\footnote{116}

The feeling of pleasure and pain is expressed similarly in human beings. Just like animals, we take pleasure in objects or actions that seem to promote our end just as we find unpleasant objects or actions that frustrate our end. Just like animals, we would prefer to remain in the state we find pleasant (wherein the world appears to promote our end) and we would be irritated were we removed from that state prematurely; correlatively, we would prefer to leave the state we found unpleasant and do what we could to make that happen. We would be relieved when that state disappeared, be it a toothache, hunger, or coldness. In the \textit{Critique of Judgment}, Kant expresses this point in the following way.

\begin{quote}
The consciousness of the causality of a representation with respect to the state of the subject, \textbf{for maintaining} it in that state, can here designate in general what is called pleasure; in contrast to which displeasure is that representation that contains the ground for determining the state of the representations to their own opposite (hindering or getting rid of them).\footnote{117}
\end{quote}

\footnote{116} The usefulness of attributing to animals such a mental state can be readily appreciated when one considers the fact that we do so only on special occasions when some kind of intervention would be the cause of irritation. This understanding of pleasure also makes sense of Aristotle's claim that the life of a grazing animal would be full of pleasure (provided it has all the grass it needs to eat). Cf. \textit{Nicomachean Ethics}, I.5.2.

\footnote{117} 5: 220 (Kant's emphasis).
Now the fact that we would prefer to remain in the state we regard as pleasant does not mean that the object or activity which occasions that pleasure is objectively good for us. Nor does the fact that we would prefer to leave the state we regard as unpleasant entail that the object or activity which occasions that displeasure is objectively bad for us. As Kant puts the point in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, pleasure "is merely the "representation of the agreement of an object or of an action with the subjective conditions of life."

It may seem to us that our end is being promoted—and that life is truly being furthered; nevertheless, this is only how things appear to us. Although Kant does not indicate what the objective conditions of life would be, it is reasonable to think he means those conditions that must in fact obtain beyond the creature's subjective point of view in order for it to realize its potential as a certain kind of agent. It is natural for a being to misrepresent the degree to which an object or action furthers its end on account of its finite and fallible point of view.

The distinction between subjective and objective conditions for life holds for both non-rational and rational animals. Both beasts and human beings may take something to be good that is not really good for it. However, humans, as rational creatures, are capable of reflecting on this distinction. We are capable of reflecting on our desires—what it is that we want—in a way that animals cannot. Such a capacity is implicit in Kant's distinction between the free and animal power of choice (*arbitrium liberum* and *arbitrium*

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118 5: 9 (my emphasis).
119 An animal might, for instance, take pleasure eating some food which is, unbeknownst to it, poisonous. That the animal still perceives its end as being fulfilled is seen from the fact that it continues, willfully, to eat the food.
An animal is necessitated to act "by sensible impulses." A human being, on the other hand, is able to "overcome impressions on our sensory faculty of desire by representations of that which is useful or injurious even in a more remote way." Such an ability, Kant claims, depends on reason, which "also yields laws that are imperatives, i.e., objective laws of freedom, and that say what ought to happen, even though perhaps it never does happen." In relation to these "laws of freedom," it makes sense to praise and blame one another in a way that it does not make sense to praise or blame mere animals, for whom reason has no command.

In saying this, however, I do not want to imply that what distinguishes animals from humans is that animals act in order to feel pleasure or avoid displeasure. While there is something right about this, it is also very misleading. After all, such a claim would be more appropriate as a description of a certain kind of human behavior. It would be better to say that animals act instinctively while human beings act in accordance with principles, which they can articulate to themselves and one another. Unlike animals, we are in a position to justify our behavior. We can explain in general terms why a particular action is right or wrong or why an object is properly desirable. But the feeling of pleasure or displeasure will play little or no role in this explanation. If we criticize someone for his behavior, the heart of our complaint consists in the fact that the person failed to live up to his potential: he failed to do something that he could and

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120 A 534/B 562.
121 Ibid.
122 A 802/B 830.
123 Ibid (Kant's emphasis).
124 Namely, when we act according to subjective principles that prioritize pleasure over other things. That this is different from saying that, generally speaking, we act for the sake of pleasure is argued by Andrews Reath in “Hedonism, Heteronomy, and Kant’s Principle of Happiness.”
should have done (or he did something that he could and should have refrained from doing). If the person wants to defend his action, he must show either that the action was, despite appearances, appropriate in the circumstances or that it was not within his power to act otherwise. The fact that the alternative action would have caused the person great displeasure is not directly relevant.

It is natural, however, that we should see the feeling of pleasure or displeasure as giving us a reason to act and that we should make reference to it in the justification of our behavior. Kant makes precisely this point in the Critique of Practical Reason when he describes this tendency as an “optical illusion in the self-consciousness of what one does as distinguished from what one feels—an illusion that even the most practiced cannot altogether avoid.”125 As I understand him, the illusion to which Kant is referring consists in our taking the way that an action feels to have a kind of objective significance which in some way motivates our action. Under this picture, the pleasure or displeasure that an object promises is treated as a factor to be considered when deciding what to do. So, for example, a person sees the unpleasantness of an action as outweighed by other factors in one case, though not outweighed by other factors in another case. While this picture is very natural, it misleadingly suggests that the way an action feels can have more than subjective significance. The feeling of pleasure or displeasure is not so much caused by an action or object as it is our representation of the degree of success in our activity. And what we regard as success (an action or object) may be regarded as failure by another. In

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125 5: 116.
this way, the same action or object can be said to feel differently for people even if they have the same obligation to realize it.\textsuperscript{126}

The feeling of pleasure and displeasure stands simply for our capacity to see our end as promoted or hindered when we look into the infinite manifold of the world around us. Now by 'end' I do not mean any particular, finite end—what we might describe as a determinate object of our desire. Rather I mean something closer to our final end according to which we aim to be something, not to have something. It is in relation to this final end that we are motivated to pursue local, proximate ends, the achievement of which pleases us. However, sometimes the achievement of our local ends does not please us—or does not please us in the way that we thought it would. And this is because, despite what we originally thought, the achievement of these ends does not appear to bring us closer to our final end. We acquire the job, spouse, honor, or whatever else we long desired (and saw as necessary for our happiness) yet we find ourselves just as unsatisfied as before. Of course, this does not mean that such things were not good or that we should not have sought them in the first place. It simply means they are valuable only in relation to a higher end which reason (continually) compels us to seek.

When we look at the feeling of pleasure and displeasure in this way, we can begin to appreciate why it is appropriate to regard it as a faculty which bridges cognition and desire. Only because we have the fundamental capacity to represent our end as more or less inhibited are we in the position to subject our own behavior to the critical scrutiny of

\textsuperscript{126} A similar point, I believe, is made in Plato's \textit{Phaedo}, when Socrates claims, "When the feeling of pleasure or pain in the soul is most intense, all of us naturally suppose that the object of this intense feeling is then plainest and truest: but this is not the case."
reason. From the point of view of reason, there is nothing wrong in our taking pleasure in an object or activity (nor could there be anything right in our finding displeasure in an object or activity). As finite, sensible creatures, we are naturally inclined to respond to the world in various ways just like any animal who is attracted or repulsed by different kinds of objects that it perceives around it. However, unlike mere animals we are capable of reflecting on our final end and considering how far from it we are. Unlike animals, we are able and even obliged to articulate the way in which our end is promoted.

The reason why we must do this is not to feel pleasure (or feel more pleasure) but simply to realize our end. It is easy to forget that the finite things that we desire—food, shelter, companionship, health, etc.—are not good absolutely but only in a context. Our feeling of pleasure and displeasure provides us, in a sense, a reminder of this. We are surprised when we achieve some desired end but are not as satisfied as we think we should be; our understanding tells us that we should be happy but we are not.\(^{127}\) This feeling that something is not right (even without our being able to say what it is) prompts us to reflect on the concrete situations in which we act and consider how we ought to modify our behavior. No matter how clear we are about our moral obligations as human beings, the world is infinitely complex and each situation in which we act is unique. As it is with any living creature, we cannot help but rely on a faculty to see our end as promoted or hindered.

\(^{127}\) Alternatively, we may take pleasure in something that we do not take ourselves as having desired.
IV. Our Representation of Purposiveness in Aesthetic Experience

When Kant says that the determining ground of a judgment of taste is pleasure (or the feeling of pleasure), he does not mean that we infer from a particular sensation that something is beautiful. What he means rather is that judgments of taste are made from our fundamental capacity to see the world as conducing to our end or purpose. Now, in an important sense, all judgments depend upon this faculty. As I tried to show in the previous chapter, judgment consists in the way we ascribe significance to the world insofar as we see it as relevant to our ends, including both our practical and cognitive ends. What makes judgments of taste special is that their correctness does not depend upon any particular end that we have. After all, those objects that appear to us as beautiful, ugly, ordinary, or with whatever aesthetic value we ascribe to them do so irrespective of any particular ends we are pursuing. Indeed, one of the distinguishing characteristics of beauty is the way that it may catch us unawares: we stumble upon something that arrests us and reveals a harmony between us and the world. Because we are aiming at no particular end in these situations, we cannot justify our judgment on the basis that the beautiful object conduces to some end (although it may). Still, insofar as the object pleases us and touches our "feeling of life," we can say that it conduces to our sense of purposiveness as a whole. The world, at least as it is localized in a particular object, appears fitted for our ends without privileging one end over another.

This fundamental ability to see things as conducing to our sense of purposiveness is presupposed in all of our experience, whether we are investigating the world or making moral evaluations. Aesthetic experience just makes this ability most explicit since there is
no particular concept to bound our judgment. So many different kinds of objects may be judged beautiful: a piece of music, a rug, a rose, a swan, a landscape. No particular understanding is required to judge all of these things beautiful. Instead, we must be sensitive to a seemingly infinite number of factors whose agreement with each other we find satisfactory. If someone were to ask us why we like an object we thought especially beautiful, we would be hard pressed to articulate determinate reasons. Certainly, we could say many particular things in praise of the object. We could point out those features that capture our loving attention. However, each of these features contributes to our satisfaction with the object only because of the context in which it is presented to us. Were the context different, then the features that appear so necessary to the aesthetic value of the object would not appear so significant or might even appear to detract from its value. Again, this sensitivity to the way context affects the objects presented to us is a skill we rely on generally; it is simply most evident when we judge things to be beautiful or not.

The purpose of the skill—the reason why we ought to develop it—is not so that we look at the world correctly or that we represent it as it actually is. That might be the case if cognition were sought for its own sake. But, as I argued in the previous chapter, cognition is only desirable insofar as it helps us realize our ends (both cognitive and practical). More importantly, it is sought for the sake of the highest end that we have, that end to which all other ends are subordinate. For Kant, this is the perfect accord between happiness and morality.\textsuperscript{128} That is to say, what we want above all is not that we are

\textsuperscript{128} Cf. A 814/B 842; 5: 110-3.
virtuous nor that we are happy but that we are happy insofar as we are worthy to be happy. In order to realize this end, we must create a world in which we can pursue our various ends in harmony with others. In such a world, each person would be able to pursue his or her ends in a way that preserved the freedom of others to pursue their own ends. In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant describes this world as a “*corpus mysticum* [mystical body] of the rational beings in it, so far as the free will of each being is, under moral laws, in complete systematic unity with itself and with the freedom of every other.”

For Kant, the idea of such a world can have only practical significance. That is to say, we cannot know what it would look like (“we cannot even think of such a thing”) but we are nonetheless obligated to realize it in the “sensible world.” Our recognition of such a world is necessarily limited by our finite point of view. Not only are things presented to us in a unique spatial and temporal context, but our very own desires influence the way we look at the world. Consequently, any representation that the world corresponds to this idea is going to be, in principle, falsifiable. In short, it remains our judgment. In making this judgment, we must abstract from our point of view and consider how the world accords not with our private ends, but ends that we can pursue with others in a self-sustaining system (the “*corpus mysticum*”). What makes our judgment go wrong is not that we misrepresent the world—or see it as something that it is not—but that we misplace its purposiveness. We give some things too much importance while giving other things too little importance. This is what we mean when we claim that someone has made

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129 A 808/B 836.  
130 Ibid.
the wrong judgment or, more broadly, shown poor judgment. In the case of those objects we judge aesthetically, this difference in judgment is expressed by the way we feel differently towards some object than someone else. In such cases, we are inclined to think twice about the object—to reflect upon it—and articulate what it is that we like or do not like about it. If, however, we take ourselves to feel the same about an object as another person, then we see no need to explain or justify our liking. We are, as it were, two members of the same corpus mysticum getting on together in harmony.

The idea that we can share the same feeling for an object as another person may strike the reader as counter-intuitive. I think, however, that this is only if we take the paradigm of feeling to be what Kant refers to as "sensible" pleasures and displeasures [die sinnliche Lust], which consist in what he calls "enjoyment" and "pain" [Vergnügen, Schmerz].\(^{131}\) Naturally, if I feel a pain in my body, I do not expect that you will feel it too; indeed, I may blame you for not appreciating the pain I am experiencing. "If only you knew the kind of pain I am experiencing!" I say, and I regret that my feeling is not shared by you and others. Equally, I might take a private pleasure in something: I enjoy a fine meal or a glass of beer. Or, to use an example from Kant's Anthropology, I enjoy a pipe of tobacco, which Kant apparently enjoyed with his breakfast tea.\(^{132}\) In such cases it would be quite puzzling to say that I could share such feelings with others and be surprised or disappointed that others did not feel the same way as I.\(^{133}\)

\(^{131}\) 7: 230.
\(^{132}\) Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View, translated and edited by Robert Louden, 53n.
\(^{133}\) Of course, we may share the same feeling insofar as we are participating in the same activity, as when we are sharing a meal together. In fact, in the Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View, Kant describes this as one of the highest pleasures.
It is, of course, entirely natural that we should treat such feelings in this way. Nevertheless, we should not take such instances as representative of all the feelings of pleasure and displeasure we are inclined to express. First of all, that would vandalize ordinary language wherein we commonly express kinds of feelings the shareability of which is implicit in their meaning. Secondly, such a picture would prevent us from seeing that underneath the feelings we are inclined to express lies a faculty of the mind or soul which gives meaning to those feelings. This faculty, as I have been arguing, consists in our capacity to represent the world as according with our end. We are drawn to (or repelled by) some object because we take it to promote (or hinder) our activity as a human being, even if we have only a vague and indeterminate understanding of how that is. In order to represent an object or activity as pleasing or displeasing to me alone requires the explicit awareness that we are involved in activities different from those of others. When we know that our particular ends are different from the ends of others, we do not expect that they should respond in the same way to that object which we regard as promoting (or hindering) our particular ends. This is why we do not expect that others share our sensible pains and pleasures since here we have distinct bodily ends.

However, if we do take ourselves to share the same ends as others, then we generally expect that others feel the same way that we do in relation to objects relevant to

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134 This is a point Kant seems to express in the Anthropology when he writes, “the expressions for what pleases or displeases [was gefällt oder misfällt], and for what is in between, the indifferent [dem Gleichgültigen], are too broad; for they can also refer to intellectual pleasure and displeasure, where they would then not coincide with enjoyment and pain.” 7: 230.

135 One might say that two people could share the same physical pain when they are equally committed to the preservation of the same body. Consider the pain a mother might take in the suffering of her child. Certainly, the mechanisms by which each feels pain will be different although the significance of the pains may be the same (or very close).
those ends. Furthermore, we expect that such feeling is shared immediately, even without our being able to justify this expectation on the basis of rules. Of course, we may be able to explain after the fact what it is about some object or activity that is pleasing to us; however, this is, as it were, a separate skill, one which involves reflecting on our own activity and treating it as an object of cognition. Moreover, the ultimate point of such an explanation is not to say what caused us to feel a certain way, as if our question were merely a theoretical one. Rather, such explanation aims at our gaining a clearer understanding of what, in fact, is promoting or hindering our end, an understanding we seek precisely because we have an ongoing interest in achieving our end.

This is the reason why we rebuke people when they disagree with our aesthetic judgments. What bothers us in these cases is not that a person is affected differently by some object, as if they had some inner sensation that was different than our own. Rather, what bothers us is that the person attributes fundamentally different significance to the world. The person betrays a different sense of what matters to him or her. This is communicated through the feeling that the person expresses for some object, in both the words he uses to describe it and the affection or repulsion he shows for it. It is not unlike the joy or grief that a person expresses watching his favorite team win or lose a sporting event. The feeling that we attribute to the person does not stand for some private mental state that is unique to him but only inferred by others; rather, it stands for the person's attitude towards the game and whether or not he sees his desires being fulfilled. That this is what we ultimately care about can be seen from the way we may misinterpret the feeling expressed by someone: we wrongly think a person wants a team to lose because
we misunderstand the gloom written on his face. Perhaps he just shows his emotions differently or he is distracted by other concerns. Despite appearances, he may be just as glad as we are about the result of the game. In respect to the game, we may feel the same way, even though we might describe our inner experience very differently.

A similar story could be told about our experience of objects that we judge beautiful or not. The big difference, however, is that here we are taking pleasure in an object irrespective of any particular ends we desire. Since our liking is not contingent upon an end that separates us from others, we expect everyone more or less like ourselves to respond to it in the same way that we do. Of course, this does not mean that they must show the same feelings as we do or be in the same mental state. What matters is that they see the world as harmonizing with their ends in the same way that it does for us, although no end in particular. And while a person's emotions are undeniably indicative of his representation of purposiveness, the true test is how the person acts more broadly in relation to the object of his judgment. Would the person change that object if he could? Does the person return to it for contemplation? Does the person recommend this object, or objects like it, to others? To say that an object is beautiful means much more than to say that it emotionally affects us in a certain way. Rather, it is to say that it broadly accords with our purposes as a human being without privileging any particular purpose. This is why Kant says that the beautiful displays a "purposiveness without a purpose" [Zweckmäßigheit ohne Zweck].\(^\text{136}\) Correspondingly, an object that does not seem to

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\(^\text{136}\) Cf. 5: 220, 226, 241, 301, 306.
accord with our purposes or even seems to oppose them, without appearing relevant to any particular purpose of ours, would be regarded as not beautiful or even ugly.

The difficulty in proving such a judgment consists not in the fact that we have nothing to say in favor of some object; there is, as it were, too much to say. Precisely because an object that we judge beautiful is not framed in the context of a specific activity, we have no easy way to exclude factors that are irrelevant to that activity and that do not directly promote or hinder our various ends. This, in a way, makes everything relevant in our judgments of taste, even things of which we might not be particularly conscious. If someone feels differently about an object, we have no obvious, independent standard against which we can measure our judgments. It is insufficient to point out features about an object that one likes or dislikes since these features will only be significant in view of a certain way of looking at the object. In order to argue with someone in a meaningful way, we need to compare our ways of looking at the object. Agreement is achieved only when we are satisfied that we feel the same way and are no longer compelled to defend our judgment. In short, agreement is only achieved when we are confident that, with respect to some object, we simply "go on together."

To illustrate this point, imagine that someone disagrees with my judgment that a certain pre-Renaissance painting is beautiful. To get me to give up my judgment, the person must do more than point out features of the painting that he dislikes. Imagine the person calls my attention to the crude perspective, the stiffness of the poses, and the

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137 At least, the object is framed by no activity beyond the very activity of taking it to be an object and contemplating it. Accordingly in the *Metaphysics of Morals* Kant calls aesthetic pleasure “contemplative pleasure” (6: 212).

138 In a certain sense, these things stand for that way of looking at the object.
repetitive profiles. I may be fully aware of each one of these features that the person points out. Yes, there is a way in which the perspective is crude, the poses stiff, and the profiles repetitive. I can, after all, stand this painting in contrast to other paintings (such as those of the later Renaissance) which are distinguished by their mastery of perspective and the more natural and varied representation of the human body. Nevertheless, I can still see this painting as beautiful and take pleasure in looking at it. This does not mean that I overlook or ignore features of the painting I find unpleasant. Rather, I simply have a way of looking at the painting according to which these features do not stand out as unpleasant. If I wanted to defend my judgment, I would have to show him that this is the proper way of looking at the object. To do this, I might show him other paintings of this kind, the similarity of which emphasized its virtues. Or I might point out aspects of it of which he was ignorant: perhaps the religious content was unfamiliar to him. In time, perhaps, the person could come to look at the painting in such a way that he too took pleasure in it, though there is no guarantee of this. After all, from his point of view, I am the one who is looking at the object in the wrong sort of way. He has just as much the right to show me that I ought to see the painting in a context wherein I would be dissatisfied with it.

Needless to say, arguing about matters of taste is a slow, arduous, and somewhat haphazard process. For we are arguing about much more than a particular object. We are arguing about our way of looking at the world generally. Or, to put it in terms of the earlier part of this chapter, we are arguing about our representation of purposiveness, i.e., our capacity to see the world as conducing to our end as a human being. The particular
aesthetic object about which we disagree merely makes the discrepancy of our perspectives readily apparent.\textsuperscript{139} When we judge an object to be beautiful, we do so against a backdrop of a range of interests that color the way we look at the world. These interests do not \textit{disappear} when we judge something to be beautiful; they are still part of us and clearly influence how an object appears to us. Nevertheless, we are capable of abstracting from them so that they do not distort the way that we look at an object. Our judgments of taste are based on this capacity to orient ourselves—to find the appropriate context in which to look at an object—without which we would not presume to demand the agreement of others or criticize the judgments they express. I exercise this very capacity when I judge that pre-Renaissance painting to be beautiful, even though I could, if I wanted, hold it to a standard that did not fairly apply to it.

This capacity to reflect on our ends and consider the context in which an object appears to us is something we rely on generally. The integrity of each science presupposes such a capacity in that it focuses the explanatory activity of each member on the furtherance of that science while jealously guarding its products (i.e., its cognitions \textit{[Erkenntnisse]}) from the meddling of outside agents with different cognitive ends. What makes aesthetic experience unique is the fact that when we stand in front of an object we judge beautiful, sublime, great art, etc., we need not be involved in any specific activity, including any explanatory activity that is part of science. Consequently, there is no particular end against which we can compare our ways of looking at the world and identifying significance within it. We have nothing but the idea that we can engage with

\textsuperscript{139} In fact, it is in virtue of our perspectives that the object appears to us in the way that it does.
the world in a similar way with others in spite of our differing perspectives, an idea presupposed by our commitment to the highest end of reason. If a person disagrees with my aesthetic assessment of an object, I do not blame him for failing to share my way of looking at the world; rather, I blame him for failing to share what I take to be our way of looking: mine, his, and any human being's. After all, central to my judgment is the belief that anyone could take pleasure in the object, regardless of what they know or care about. For I take the object to harmonize with the fundamental ends we share as human beings.

For this reason, the idea that we might have misjudged an object we take to have aesthetic value challenges us in a very personal way. For it calls into question this fundamental capacity to direct our cognitive faculties to their appropriate ends. That is to say, it calls into question our capacity to find order and significance in the world so that we can seek out our end—and realize our potential—with confidence. This is why, I think, people have such strong claims regarding what is beautiful or not and why we approach arguments about taste with a certainty we lack elsewhere. It is almost as if we would sooner deny that an object was really in front of us than we would deny that it was beautiful. For the idea that we have been deceived by the appearance of an object is easier to accept than the idea that we are looking at it (and the world more broadly) in the wrong way. In the former case we can attribute the source of our deception to the object itself or something external to us. Anyone in our shoes, we think, would have been just as deceived as we were; it is a common mistake. However, in the latter case, the object of our judgment is the very way that the object appears to us. The possibility that the object does not have the aesthetic value we think it has challenges our way of looking at the
world generally. Insofar as we have a social incentive to get along with others, this can be quite unsettling. If we disagree about an object of taste, it is reasonable to think we would disagree about much else.

This also explains the deep bond felt among people who share the same taste and the looming gap felt by people whose tastes differ. In the former case, there is the sense of shared purpose even though our particular interests and understandings may be quite different. There is no perceived need to defend one's way of looking at the world. If anything needs to be said, it is only to find a fitting way of praising the object or to point out aspects of the object that might complement or expand the other person's appreciation. In the latter case, however, there seems to be a clash of purpose. By that, I do not mean we must have different interests which prevent us from taking pleasure in the same object. Indeed, two people with similar interests and understandings may disagree very deeply about the aesthetic value of an object. What separates them is the way they direct their understandings, according to which the object appears to them in the way that it does. As we will see in the next chapter, it is this question of the proper use of one's cognitive capacities that offers a kind of standard for our judgments of taste and makes it possible to talk about error in taste.

V. Conclusion

Both non-rational animals and human beings possess a feeling of pleasure and displeasure. As I argued above, this means that both animals and humans have a capacity to represent their ends as being more or less fulfilled. Humans, however, are different
from animals in that we can be aware of ourselves as feeling pleasure and can reflect on its significance. What is more, we can take ourselves as feeling pleasure for something that we should feel pleasure for. This means that we can take our end as being truly promoted and not just appearing to be promoted. This is a judgment that we make with the aid of reason. Given what we know about the world and our proper ends as humans, we can consider whether we are pleased for the right reasons. In other words, we can consider whether we are living as we should. If not, we recognize an obligation to modify our behavior even if doing so should cause us some pain or lack of pleasure.

This is true for the pleasure we take in objects we judge beautiful. Yet, the pleasure that we take in those objects we judge beautiful is special in that we cannot measure our action against any particular end. Consequently, we cannot prove that we are wrong to like an object on the basis that, given what it is, it does not further our end or even hinders it. For judgments of taste may be expressed irrespective of any particular end we are pursuing. And yet, we may still be wrong about our judgments of taste. This is clear enough from experience. We take some people to have better taste than others. We take ourselves to have made poor judgments of taste in the past. Even while we age, some things remain as beautiful as they have always been while other things appear to be not as beautiful as we thought. Moreover, we think that taste can be cultivated through an education.

Yet what does it mean to improve our judgments of taste? What would an aesthetic education consist in? It cannot mean that we learn a particular rule or set of rules since the learning of rules can never ensure that we make good judgments of taste.
A person might assert all kinds of rules meant to show that some object is rightly pleasing and yet make a judgment that appeared barbaric to everyone else. Rules are only meaningful with respect to aesthetic judgments to the extent that they accord with the things that appear pleasing to us. If an aesthetic object does not appear as pleasing to us, we will sooner throw out the rules that affirm its aesthetic value than search for ways in which we are mistaken in our judgment.

As I have tried to show, judgments of taste are undermined by a failure to abstract from the interests that influence the pleasure or displeasure we take in objects. We may be so committed to an end, even an important and noble end, that we fail to notice aspects of the world that are worth our concern. Consequently, the feeling that we have for some object (the pleasure or displeasure) is not one that we should expect everyone to share. Certainly, others who are equally committed to the same end may share the same feeling for it. For them, their activity will appear to be promoted or inhibited just as much as it is for us. However, for those who are not so committed to this end or are more committed to other ends, the object will affect their feeling of pleasure—their "feeling of life"—very differently. To the extent that we wish to speak with a universal voice and express judgments that hold for anyone, we need to overcome the corrupting influence of our private interests in order to look at the object in the right way. This requires achieving a kind of just proportionality among our interests whereby no particular care prevents us from appreciating the full significance of the object. To put it another way, it requires
developing a way of thinking, what Kant calls the *Denkungsart*,\textsuperscript{140} that would lead us and anyone else to our proper human end.

\textsuperscript{140} 5: 295. Cf. also Kant's remarks in the *Anthropology* in which he describes character as a way of thinking (7: 292).
CHAPTER THREE: Abstracting from Interests

I. An Analysis of the Beautiful

Kant's analysis of aesthetic experience differs from the rationalist and empiricist treatments of aesthetics offered by the philosophers who preceded him. In contrast to the rationalist projects of figures like Alexander Baumgarten and Georg Friedrich Meier, Kant does not presume to prescribe the circumstances in which it is proper to call something beautiful (or sublime). While Kant's treatment of taste (i.e., our faculty for judging things beautiful) naturally reveals his aesthetic sensibilities and predilections, he explicitly disclaims the aim of contributing to the formation and cultivation of taste by laying down rules\textsuperscript{141}; the models of beauty and the sublime that he holds up are meant to serve a philosophical, not dogmatic end. In contrast to the empiricist projects of figures like Burke and Hume, Kant also does not aim to explain why we make the aesthetic judgments we do. While Kant shows sympathy with these latter projects, he cautions that a purely empirical "exposition" [Exposition] of taste could only be of psychological or anthropological significance. As such, empirical investigations of the conditions under which we make judgments of taste could never do justice to their normativity, i.e., their claim to the necessary agreement of others. Insofar as we want to articulate a critique of taste, in order to "guide the judgments of others and make claims to approve or reject them with even a semblance of right," we must approach aesthetic experience from the transcendental point of view.\textsuperscript{142}

\textsuperscript{141} Cf. 5: 171.
\textsuperscript{142} 5: 278.
To say that Kant looks at aesthetic experience from the transcendental point of view is to say that he looks at it in order to see what it can tell us about the human mind (or soul) itself. More specifically, reflecting on aesthetic experience is meant to reveal what it means to judge: What does it mean to say that in judgment we think "the particular as contained under the universal?" Just as the first two critiques aim to show how the understanding is underwritten by a faculty of cognition—a capacity to know an object distinct from ourselves—and reason is underwritten by a faculty of desire—a capacity to be the cause of an object we represent—the third critique aims to show how judgment is underwritten by a third mental faculty: the feeling of pleasure and displeasure. As I argued in the previous chapter, this feeling does not amount to a mere capacity to feel sensible pleasures and displeasures—what Kant refers to as "enjoyment" and "pain." Rather, the feeling of pleasure and displeasure amounts to our capacity to represent the world as fitted for our end. To say that something pleases us is to say that we perceive it as furthering our end as a human being. This representation is fallible in that we can wrongly think our end is being truly or fully promoted. This is why Kant calls the feeling of pleasure the "feeling of life."

Aesthetic experience reveals the nature and end of this fundamental faculty through the implied shareability of our feelings for objects we judge as beautiful or not. Only in light of the idea that we may feel the same about an object as others does it make sense to argue about matters of taste; we criticize the person who feels differently.

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143 5: 179.
144 7: 230.
145 5: 204.
146 The term that Kant uses is Mittheilbarkeit, which is usually translated "communicability."
about an object than we do (just as we look favorably upon the one who agrees with us). This is true whether the person likes something we dislike or dislikes something we like (or even likes something at a different degree than we do). We believe that the person is missing something important, even if we cannot put our finger on precisely what that is.

The idea that we can (and ought to) share the same feelings for an object implies that we possess what Kant calls the common sense or “sensus communis.” This idea is presupposed by all of our judgments, even those we are not inclined to call "aesthetic." Even our theoretical and moral judgments depend upon it. Nevertheless, our judgments of taste—i.e. our judgments that something is beautiful—make this common sense particularly explicit since it is not possible to defend these judgments simply on the basis of a concept of the object. Instead, we must rely on a capacity to abstract from our point of view and consider the way the object of our judgment appears to other persons. Certainly concepts are relevant inasmuch as we are presented with an identifiable object with identifiable features, something we can recognize and point out to others. However, even if some intuition accords with a concept, it is possible to imagine ways that it can be more or less beautiful depending on how that intuition is presented to us. Without imagining how the world might accord with the purposes of others, we could say no more than that the object of our judgment is pleasing to me. And that means we could not say that the object was beautiful, since such a claim implies that others ought to like the object as well.

147 5: 293.
Kant aims to lay bare the common sense in his analysis of our judgments of taste. In order to do this, Kant must distinguish judgments of taste from other judgments that are relevantly similar. In the section of the *Critique of Judgment* entitled the Analytic of the Beautiful, Kant distinguishes judgments of taste from what he calls "judgments of the agreeable" and "judgments of the good." Each of these three judgments expresses a satisfaction we take in an object. As Kant puts it, "The agreeable, the beautiful, and the good therefore designate three different relations of representation to the feeling of pleasure and displeasure, in relation to which we distinguish objects or kinds of representations from each other."¹⁴⁸ In a judgment of the agreeable, we find an object to be sensibly pleasing: the object "gratifies" [vergnügt] us.¹⁴⁹ Things we judge to be agreeable include the taste of some wine, the sound of a musical instrument, or the color of a meadow. In a judgment of the good, on the other hand, the object effects a "pure practical satisfaction" in us.¹⁵⁰ That is to say, we regard it as a rational object of our desire—an object we have reason to see realized; the object is "esteemed" [geschätzt] or "approved" [gebilligt] by us and we call it good.¹⁵¹ However, in a judgment of taste, our liking is merely "contemplative" or "disinterested."¹⁵² In contrast with the former judgments, we like the object without our satisfaction being due to a representation of the object's existence.¹⁵³ As Kant puts it, the judgment "merely connects [the object's]
constitution together with the feeling of pleasure and displeasure."\(^{154}\) Correspondingly, the beautiful is what we "merely like" [was uns bloß gefällt].\(^ {155}\)

The point of this threefold classification is not to describe acts that we perform at different times but to articulate the distinguishing features of judgments of taste and bring into clearer view a fundamental aspect of our human experience. By distinguishing judgments of taste from judgments of the agreeable and judgments of the good, Kant isolates a dimension of our experience that most effectively reveals the importance of the common sense. In doing so, Kant does not imply that an object is properly viewed one way rather than another. It is not as if we should view an object as beautiful as opposed to good or agreeable. As we will see, the same object could be judged in each of these three senses, even, in a certain sense, simultaneously.

Judgments of taste and judgments of the agreeable are similar in that they both imply an immediate relation to an object that sensibly affects us. However, unlike judgments of taste, judgments of the agreeable do not make a claim to the necessary agreement of others. I may judge some wine to be agreeable in that I do not demand that others also take pleasure in that wine. The acknowledgment that liking for the wine may justifiably vary among individuals is expressed by our saying, “It is agreeable to me.”\(^ {156}\) However, when we judge something to be beautiful, it does not make sense to say that something is beautiful "for me."\(^ {157}\) Our claim that an object is beautiful generally implies our belief that anyone who is confronted with the object ought to be satisfied with it. As

\(^{154}\) 5: 209.
\(^{155}\) 5: 210.
\(^{156}\) 5: 212 (Kant's emphasis).
\(^{157}\) Ibid.
Kant puts it, the person who judges an object to be beautiful "judges not merely for himself, but for everyone, and speaks of beauty as if it were a property of things."  

In their claim to universal agreement, judgments of taste are similar to judgments of the good. However, unlike judgments of the good, judgments of taste cannot be proven according to determinate concepts. "In order to find something good, I must always know what sort of thing the object is supposed to be, i.e., I must have a concept of it." Such need not be said about objects we judge to be beautiful. As Kant points out, we may take pleasure in "flowers, free designs, lines aimlessly intertwined in each other under the name of foliage" even though they "do not depend on any determinate concept." Now, this does not mean that we can judge such things without having some kind of understanding of them; obviously, the very fact that they are presented to us at all entails that we have some concept of them, according to which we can identify and refer them to others. What Kant means is that we can take pleasure in these things without concerning ourselves with their ends. The beauties of nature make this point readily apparent. A person may judge a flower to be beautiful, while having very little understanding of its natural end and how its perceived form conduces to that end. Despite this ignorance, such a person could still argue about the flower's aesthetic value with a person who had a deep understanding of its function and who could explain, from a botanical point of view, why

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158 Ibid.
159 5: 207.
160 Ibid.
161 For Kant, ends or purposes are related to concepts in the following way: "An end is the object of a concept insofar as the latter is regarded as the cause of the former (the real ground of its possibility)" (5: 220). In other words, concepts presuppose purposes, which they make possible.
it was better than other flowers. Insofar as the argument concerned the flower's beauty, such reasons would not be immediately relevant.

This analysis of judgments of taste is so important precisely because the same object may be viewed as agreeable, good, or beautiful. Without specifying the different ways in which we can take satisfaction in an object, it is easy to misrepresent our reasons for liking an object and subsequently the principle according to which a critique of taste is possible. This is the problem with both the empiricist and rationalist approaches. For the empiricist, the fundamental aesthetic judgment takes the form of a judgment of the agreeable. The beautiful is explained primarily in terms of how it affects the body. The problem with such a view is that it makes it hard to account for the normativity implicit in judgments of taste. An empirical investigation into the causes of our judgments of the beautiful and sublime can have very little bearing on the question how we are entitled to demand the agreement of others. Consequently, the person who takes such an approach will be in an awkward position if he tries to justify a claim to the agreement of others, just as he would if he appealed to the unanimity of our judgments or the commonality of our physical nature.

A quite different problem affects those who would offer a rationalist account of judgments of taste whereby judgments of taste are explicated in terms of the perfection of an object. The problem with such views is that they imply that judgments of taste can be proven. For to say that an object is perfect is to say that it fulfills its end—it is what it is

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162 Cf: Edmund Burke: "And, since [Beauty] is no creature of our reason, since it strikes us without any reference to use, and even where no use at all can be discerned, since the order and method of nature is generally very different from our measures and proportions, we must conclude that beauty is, for the greater part, some quality in bodies, acting mechanically upon the human mind by the intervention of the senses." *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Sublime and Beautiful*, 146.
supposed to be. However, in order to make such a claim, we would need to compare the object against a determinate concept of the object. To say that we have only a "confused" concept of perfection does not address this problem, Kant argues, because then there would be no "specific difference" between the beautiful and the good.\textsuperscript{163} Rather, "a judgment of taste would be just as much a cognitive judgment as the judgment whereby something is declared to be good—just as when the ordinary man, when he says that deception is unjust, grounds his judgment on confused principles, while the philosopher grounds his on distinct ones, but at bottom these are identical principles of reason."\textsuperscript{164}

Presumably, this judgment of the ordinary man counts as an example of confused cognition because, though he is right that deception is unjust, he lacks the capacity to articulate this judgment according to distinct principles. If this is true, then judgments of taste do not deserve to be called "confused cognition" since that would imply at least the possibility that they could be proven, just as the ordinary man could potentially demonstrate his judgment that deception is unjust.

To say that a judgment of taste is distinct from both judgments of the agreeable and judgments of the good is to say that our reasons for liking the object extend beyond its being personally gratifying or its being desirable from the rational point of view—i.e., that we can provide reasons for desiring its existence. Still, this does not preclude the possibility that we can also find an object we judge beautiful to be agreeable or good. For example, I may have many personal reasons for liking a painting that are unique to me: I may have a preference for the color scheme, I may be fascinated by the subject

\textsuperscript{163} 5: 228.
\textsuperscript{164} Ibid.
represented, or the painting may evoke fond memories from my childhood. Each of these factors would make the painting personally agreeable. Equally, I might have reasons for being satisfied in the existence of the painting. Perhaps it plays an important functional role in a community: it may be a valuable artifact that has historical or anthropological significance. Or it may have unique religious significance for people. For these reasons I could esteem it and I would be rightly upset were its existence threatened. In this way, I would see the painting as good, insofar as I would expect anyone else to appreciate the painting for these reasons.

However, if I also judge such a painting to be beautiful, I am saying that it has a value independent of these reasons. By expressing such a judgment, I would be saying that even people for whom the color scheme is not pleasing or for whom it does not evoke happy memories could take pleasure in its appearance. Equally, I would be saying that people who are unaware of its cognitive significance could still take pleasure in its appearance. By abstracting from these factors, we are left with a judgment that attributes to an object nothing but a "formal subjective purposiveness" or, as Kant puts it elsewhere, "the form of purposiveness." By this, he means that we judge an object simply on the basis of its sensible form, without attributing that organization to a particular will that had a reason for it to be that way. The object appears as if it were designed, although we cannot posit any determinate end that motivated it. By not attributing this organization (or lack thereof) to any particular will, we see that order as something we represent. This is why it displays a "subjective purposiveness." The object

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165 5: 228.
166 5: 221.
appears just as we would have it if we were responsible for organizing or constituting it. For example, I may not know why the far-off nebula appears the way it does. All I know is that it did not have to appear so pleasing to me; I can easily imagine other ways that it might have appeared (and as other nebulae do appear) which would have made it not so pleasing to look at.

Such judgments may be made about both nature and art. Even if we know that an object is the product of a specific will, we may judge it simply according to its form of purposiveness. When I evaluate the beauty of a piece of music, I know implicitly that it was the product of a particular individual (or individuals) who had various motives for creating it a certain way and intentions they hoped to achieve. My judgment, however, need not concern itself with the question whether these intentions were achieved. For even if they were, the question would remain whether—from the aesthetic point of view—the artist should have sought them in the first place. Ultimately, my judgment will turn on whether I find the work pleasing in its overall appearance. If I judge it to be a beautiful piece of music, I am saying that it would have been less satisfactory had it been arranged in any particular respect differently—which I can easily imagine—even though I have no rules to adduce in demonstration of my judgment.

What is remarkable about judgments of taste is that we can share them with one another and argue about them despite the fact that we have no particular end against which to measure them. This reveals an important source of normativity, upon which we rely generally. This is the idea of a common sense mentioned before—the idea that we are capable of assuming the same point of view as another whereby the world appears
equally fitted (or not) for our end. It is in virtue of this idea that we are capable of communicating to each other our thoughts about the world. If we did not presuppose such a common sense, we could never speak about objects without the skeptical worry that, because others are so different from us, we are not referring to the same thing. But in fact we do presuppose such a common sense and our judgments of taste make this apparent. For if someone disagrees with us that an object is or is not beautiful, we cannot but consider his point of view to understand why it appeared to him in the way that it did. If it seems that his point of view is unique to him and not shareable, then we will take his claim to our agreement to be unjustified. Now this does not mean the person was wrong to like or dislike the object: if he takes pleasure in it, then the object must in some way harmonize with his purposes. The person is only wrong to the extent that he thinks everyone should respond to it in the same way as him. This is a mistake we frequently make inasmuch as we wrongly assume that others share our point of view. When we commit this mistake, we fail to live up to this idea of the common sense.

II. Treating Judgments of Taste as a Kind of Act

Now it is important that when we think about Kant's analysis of judgments of taste, we do not take him to be describing a kind of activity that we perform and that we may do better or worse. By that I mean we must not take a judgment of taste to be something that we do at some moments and not at others or that we do in place of or in addition to other kinds of judgments that we also make. It is very tempting to read Kant in this way since judgments of taste are clearly normative and this implies that we have
some level of control over them. My judgment that an object is or is not beautiful is one for which I am uniquely responsible. This can be seen in the way that we can take pride in our taste or, alternatively, be ashamed of it. Further, we look at our taste as something that can be improved through experience. It is natural that we should regard our judgments as similar to activities like walking, swinging a bat, or saying a prayer. That is to say, it is easy to regard them as things that we can practice and which require a level of energy and focus.

Yet it is misleading to think of judgments of taste in this way since unlike each of these activities, judgments of taste are not defined by the purposes they are meant to achieve. While I may walk, swing a bat, or say a prayer in order to achieve some particular end, I do not judge something beautiful for the sake of anything. I simply see (or do not see) something as beautiful, regardless of what my particular purposes are. While it may seem as though there are cases in which we try to see something as beautiful, these are special cases in which we feel that the aesthetic value of an object escapes us for some reason. For instance, I may struggle to understand why people find a certain poem beautiful. I read it over and over, trying to understand what is special about it. But actually, such cases are no different than any case in which we believe we are misinterpreting the significance of an object. It is not unlike my frustration when I fail to solve a puzzle or get a joke which seems so obvious to everyone else. The idea that I failed to make the correct judgment of taste—just like the idea that I failed to solve a puzzle or get a joke—presupposes that there is something to be "gotten right." This
indicates an uncertainty on my part which may or may not be warranted. It does not, however, imply that I have failed to make a judgment or even the right judgment.

By assimilating judgments of taste to activities, we fail to see what is significant about aesthetic experience and why Kant considers a reflection on it to have an important role to play in his critical project. Judgments of taste imply a certain competence that we have as judgers which is a prerequisite for action. In order to act in the world—and ultimately realize the highest end of reason in it—we first have to see the world as inviting our activity. This means we must be able to sense how the world conduces to our purposes. Our judgments of taste are based on nothing but this skill. If someone disagrees with my judgment that an object is beautiful, I cannot prove that he is mistaken on the basis of a concept. I can only argue that he is looking at the object in the wrong way. This means I must show him that he fails to recognize the way in which the world, at least at this instant, is (or is not) conducive to his purposes. In making this judgment, I am relying on a fundamental capacity to orient myself and to notice the things that matter. This is something that we can do better or worse inasmuch as we can learn to overcome our involvements—that is, our pursuit of various ends—that influence the way the world appears to us.

In order to appreciate this temptation to treat the judgment of taste (and other aesthetic judgments) as a kind of act, it is helpful to consider a reading of Kant that is representative of this tendency. This is the reading offered by Henry Allison in his book *Kant's Theory of Taste*. Allison’s view is particularly revealing because it is right in so many respects. In particular, Allison recognizes that the a priori validity of judgments of
taste is based on a transcendental capacity required for any judgment. In this way, Allison is sensitive to the broader significance of the *Critique of Judgment*. It would seem that Allison sees Kant's work as doing more than illuminating our capacity to judge things as beautiful: it says something about our capacity to make judgments in general, including those judgments we make in the practice of science. Unfortunately, Allison fails to make this capacity adequately clear because he treats judgments of taste analogously to purpose-guided activity. In his attempt to articulate the normativity of judgments of taste, Allison treats judgments as a kind of act over which we have direct control.

This picture of judgments of taste comes across in Allison's account of what Kant calls "erroneous judgments of taste." As Allison reads Kant, error in taste consists in "mistaking one's de facto judgment of taste for a pure judgment." The term “de facto judgment of taste” (or elsewhere “judgment of taste simpliciter”) is Allison's own; it refers to what one might call our actual judgment of taste. The term “pure judgment of taste” [*ein reines Geschmacksurteil*], on the other hand, is Kant's. He uses it to describe a judgment of taste that is free of an interest. By this, Kant means that our judgment is determined neither by an interest in the agreeable—what pleases the subject in sensation—nor by an interest in the good—what pleases the subject in accordance with principles of practical reason. Instead, “[t]he judgment of taste has nothing but the form of purposiveness of an object (or of the way of representing it) as its ground.” Although what Kant means by this expression is not obvious, a judgment of taste would not be pure

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167 5: 216.
168 *Kant's Theory of Taste*, 190.
169 5: 221.
if we allowed a concept of the object—i.e., our understanding of what the object was supposed to be—to influence our evaluation. Equally, a judgment would be impure if we grounded it at least partly on a feeling of pleasure—as when “charms or emotions” \([\text{Reiz oder Rührung}]\) influence our evaluation.\(^{170}\) According to Allison, error occurs when we mistakenly think we have judged an object independently of any such interest: we wrongly regard the aesthetic judgment that we have made to be pure.\(^{171}\)

In support of this view, Allison refers to section 8 of the Analytic of the Beautiful. In this section, Kant describes the way in which, in judging an object to be beautiful, we do not “\textbf{postulate} the accord of everyone”; instead, “nothing is postulated except such a \textbf{universal voice} with regard to satisfaction without the mediation of concepts, hence the \textbf{possibility} of an aesthetic judgment that could at the same time be considered valid for everyone.”\(^{172}\) In elaborating on the distinction between these two options, Kant makes the point that the universal voice is an \textit{idea} and the fact that we cannot be certain that our judgments correspond with the universal voice is consistent with their claim to universal agreement.

Whether someone who believes himself to be making a judgment of taste is in fact judging in accordance with this idea can be uncertain; but that he relates it to that idea, thus that it is supposed to be a judgment of taste, he announces through the expression of beauty. Of that he can be certain for himself through the mere consciousness of separation of everything that belongs to the agreeable and the good from the satisfaction that remains to him; and this is all for which he promises himself the assent of everyone: a claim which he would also be justified in making under these conditions, if only he were not often to offend them \([\text{nur wider sie nicht öfter fehlte}]\) and thereby make an erroneous judgment of taste \([\text{ein irriges Geschmacksurteil}]\).\(^{173}\)

\(^{170}\) 5: 224.
\(^{172}\) 5: 216 (Kant's emphasis).
\(^{173}\) Ibid.
As Allison reads this passage, Kant is saying that although we can be certain that we are making a judgment of taste *simpliciter*, we cannot be certain that this judgment is pure. That is to say, we may be conscious of having “separated out from [our] liking everything pertaining to the agreeable and the good” and in so doing we have *attempted* to make a pure judgment of taste. However, this consciousness does not make our judgment invulnerable to error. Allison writes, “For no matter how careful I may have been, there always remains the possibility either that my judgment has been corrupted by some quirky and unnoticed liking . . . , or that I have failed to abstract completely from factors that I believe myself to have set aside.”\(^1\) In such a case we “offend” or “fail to observe” the conditions of a pure judgment of taste and in this way our judgment of taste is erroneous.

An important feature of Allison's reading is that our judgments of taste are always susceptible to such error. Because our judgment is based on feeling rather than concepts, he believes we can never be certain that we have made a pure judgment of taste. In this regard, Allison sees an important analogy between matters of taste and morals for Kant. According to the moral law, we must always act not simply in accordance with duty but *from* duty. At the same time, we can never be sure whether in any particular case we have acted from duty, since it may be the case that some hidden incentive motivated our action. However, this uncertainty does not undermine the force of the moral law. Regardless of our underlying motivations, reason commands us to *strive* to act from duty.

\(^{174}\) *Kant's Theory of Taste*, 109.
alone. Allison sees our judgments of taste in a similar light. Even though we can never be sure that a hidden interest has not corrupted our judgment of taste, we ought to strive for aesthetic purity, “which involves the sincere effort to abstract from all extraneous, that is, interested, grounds of liking, even though we can never be certain that we have succeeded in attaining it.”175 So even though we can never know whether an interest in the good or the agreeable spoils the purity of our judgment, and so we can never know if our judgment is not erroneous, we ought to strive for such purity.

Now it is certainly true that an interest, of which we are unaware, may prevent us from appreciating the aesthetic value of an object. And it is no less true that we should try to rise above these interests insofar as they prevent us from judging an object properly. However, Allison's reading of erroneous judgments of taste is problematic. In fact, Allison's reference to Kant's moral philosophy helps make this clear. Despite uncertainty about the motives for our actions, we must always strive to act from duty alone. Here the uncertainty that Kant refers to is relevant because it gives us something to consider when we reason about what we should do. The certainty that we have in fact acted from duty would be equivalent to moral complacency and a failure to take seriously reason's commands. But judgments of taste are not themselves acts. They are not done for the sake of an end. Consequently, it is not clear what it would mean to try to make a pure judgment of taste, since it is not clear what failure would amount to.

For Allison, “. . . my consciousness of having separated out from my liking everything pertaining to the agreeable and the good concerns merely the attempt to make

175 Kant's Theory of Taste, 109-10.
a pure judgment of taste. Being a sincere and discriminating lover of the beautiful I make every effort to do this, because I recognize that it is a necessary condition of the conformity of my judgment to the universal voice.” Although there is definitely some truth in what Allison says, talking about a pure judgment of taste as something we attempt to make (and that error consists in our failure to achieve that aim) is very misleading. As Allison seems to see it, the term 'pure judgments of taste' plays a prescriptive as opposed to descriptive role for Kant. That is to say, a pure judgment of taste is a judgment which we ought to make instead of a judgment which philosophical reflection reveals we do make. But this does not seem right. When Kant talks about pure judgments of taste, his aim is to distinguish judgments of taste from judgments of the good and judgments of the agreeable. Because these judgments also involve a liking (or disliking) for an object, they are easy for the philosopher to confuse in his articulation of a principle of taste. This is especially true when we consider examples for which multiple reasons for our liking can be given. However, we no more aim to make pure judgments of taste than we aim to make judgments of the agreeable or judgments of the good. For the term 'pure' only marks an analytic distinction.

As Allison sees it, a judgment of taste’s claim to the agreement of others depends upon its purity. That means if a judgment of taste is even partly interested, then we are not entitled to demand the agreement of others nor to blame them for disagreeing with us. While this may be true when our judgment is at least partly based on the object's satisfying a personal desire that we have, it cannot be true for those impure judgments of

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176 Kant’s Theory of Taste, 109.
taste wherein our liking depends upon the object's satisfying a rational end. When we judge as beautiful those objects Kant calls "dependent beauties," it seems right that we should see our judgment as holding for everyone. Indeed, when Kant illustrates the "subjective universality of judgments of taste," he gives as examples both pure and impure judgments of taste. It would be ridiculous, he says, if we said that "the building we are looking at" or "the clothing that someone is wearing" were "beautiful for me."177 Clearly, Kant thinks that even impure judgments of taste carry with them a claim to universality. After all, buildings and clothing are nice examples of dependent beauties since it would be unnatural to evaluate their appearance without considering the way they conduce to an end of ours, even if our judgment is not exclusively based on this consideration.

Allison seems to be aware of this difficulty and accordingly distinguishes between "an impure judgment of taste" and a "judgment of beauty that is not purely a judgment of taste."178 In Allison's reading, the aforementioned judgments would not be considered "purely judgments of taste." However, they still would rightly make a claim to the agreement of others provided that the "purity of the taste component" remains.179 This distinction is unclear to me. What does Allison mean by the "taste component" and what makes it pure? Presumably, Allison means that our aesthetic satisfaction must not be influenced by an interest in the object. However, in the case of adherent beauties, such as the ones I just mentioned, it seems that an interest is very relevant to our aesthetic

177 5: 212 (Kant's emphasis).
179 Kant's Theory of Taste, 141.
evaluation and that reference to an end, provided it is not merely private, is appropriate. Of course, we could abstract from that end and still judge it aesthetically. Nevertheless, in either case we would be justified in demanding the agreement of others. If something is going to prevent us from demanding agreement with our judgments of taste, it would seem to be something other than an interest we have in the object.

A further difficulty with Allison's reading is that it is hard to reconcile with Kant's later claim that "dependent beauties" (objects of impure judgments of taste) rank higher than "free beauties"\textsuperscript{180} (objects of pure judgments of taste), at least in so far as they are estimated “in terms of the culture that they provide for the mind . . . ”\textsuperscript{181} According to this latter standard, music, which is among the freest of beauties (and, presumably, objects of the most pure judgments of taste) would rank at the bottom. However, when considered from the point of view of “agreeableness,” Kant says it ranks among the highest.\textsuperscript{182} Indeed, Kant describes beauty in general—both in nature and in art—as “the expression of aesthetic ideas.”\textsuperscript{183} If this were to give us a kind of standard for measuring beauty, then free beauties would seem to be the least valuable. And this would seem to call into question the idea that we \textit{ought} to make pure judgments of taste, especially if we considered ourselves a “sincere and discriminating lover of the beautiful.”\textsuperscript{184} If, in contrast, one sees Kant's discussion of pure judgments of taste as simply an analytic distinction meant to illustrate the unique territory of judgments of taste, then there is no conflict.

\textsuperscript{180} 5: 229.
\textsuperscript{181} 5: 329.
\textsuperscript{182} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{183} 5: 320 (Kant's emphasis).
\textsuperscript{184} \textit{Kant's Theory of Taste}, 109.
III. The Young Poet

The problem with Allison's reading can be readily seen when we consider an example in the third *Critique* that he sees as representative of erroneous judgments of taste.\(^ {185} \) In section 34, Kant illustrates the autonomous nature of judgments of taste through the story of a young poet who does not let the conflicting opinion of others influence his evaluation of his own poetry. He writes,

Hence a young poet does not let himself be dissuaded from his conviction that his poem is beautiful by the judgment of the public nor that of his friends, and, if he does give them a hearing, this is not because he now judges it differently, but rather because, even if (at least in his view) the entire public has a false taste, he nevertheless (even against his judgment) finds cause to accommodate himself to the common delusion in his desire for approval. Only later, when his power of judgment has been made more acute by practice, does he depart from his previous judgment of his own free will, just as he does with those of his judgments that rest entirely on reason. Taste makes claim merely to autonomy. To make the judgments of others into the determining ground of one's own would be heteronomy.\(^ {186} \)

According to Allison, this is an example of someone mistaking his *de facto* judgment of taste for a pure judgment of taste. In other words, the poet fails to realize that his satisfaction is at least partly constituted by an interest in the object. Until he is able to recognize this interest and overcome it, his judgment of the object remains erroneous. However, in what sense could this poet have an unrecognized interest in the object?

In the *Critique of Judgment*, Kant defines an interest as "the satisfaction that we combine [verbinden] with the representation of the existence of an object."\(^ {187} \) Kant means to say that we like some object because we see it as realizing a certain end of ours. If the

\(^{185}\) *Kant's Theory of Taste*, 190.

\(^{186}\) 5: 282.

\(^{187}\) 5: 204.
end is subjectively or privately grounded, then we say the object that fulfills the end is "agreeable." If the end is grounded on reason, then we say the object that fulfills it is "good." It is not obvious how a poet's judgment of his poem could be interested in either sense. Nor is it obvious how he could mistakenly think his judgment was free from such an interest, thinking it to be a pure judgment of taste.

To say that the poet's satisfaction in the poem is interested, even if the poet is unaware of this interest, implies that the poem satisfies some particular end of his. For this interest to undermine his claim to the agreement of others, the end would have to be private to him, since otherwise he could base his judgment on rational grounds that held universally. But what might such an end be? It is difficult to say, since poems are generally created for people to enjoy in their mere contemplation of them. Still, two possible scenarios come to mind. In one scenario, the poet finds some aspect of the poem to be sensibly agreeable. The poet takes pleasure reading it or hearing it read because he has an inclination for objects of its kind. Here it is not so much the poem as a whole that pleases him as some sensible aspect of it that pleases him. In the other scenario, the poet takes pleasure in the poem because it establishes him, at least in his own eyes, as a poet (or perhaps someone with talent). His pleasure in the poem amounts to nothing but a pride in his own creation.

While these are plausible accounts of the poet's liking of the poem, it does not seem right to describe them as cases in which he mistakenly thinks his judgment is free of an interest, i.e. pure. In both of the scenarios that I sketched the poet still ascribes

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188 Poetry, according to Kant, is a member of what he calls the "beautiful" or "fine arts" [schöne Kunst]. 5: 321.
aesthetic value to the object, which he regards as independent of an interest. In the first case, where the poem has some feature that the poet finds sensibly pleasing, the most that could be said is that the poet overvalues the importance of this feature. But the poet’s judgment could not be based on that—at least not exclusively—lest we think every poem that has this feature should satisfy him, which seems unlikely. The same point could be made with respect to the poet who sees this particular poem as flattering his self-image as a poet. This story only makes sense if the poet already ascribes aesthetic value to the object independently of an interest. We need a way to distinguish this poem as a source of pride as opposed to other poems that the poet might create. Otherwise, we cannot explain how the poet could be satisfied with the existence of this poem as opposed to another one.

While there may indeed be cases in which we want to say that a person was unaware of an interest he had for an object he judged satisfactory, it is very misleading to say this is what error in judgments of taste comes to. For one thing, it suggests that our judgments should improve the more sensitive we become to our interests. This need not be the case; the poet may be extremely self-aware and still make an erroneous judgment of taste. Equally, a poet who was not particularly self-aware and who did not realize the extent of his interest in the object could still display good judgment in his aesthetic appraisal of the poem. So if the poet judges his poem erroneously, his error would seem to consist in something other than mistakenly thinking his judgment to be free of any interest.
Kant provides a hint what this error amounts to when he says the poet modifies his judgment (and presumably corrects it) only when "his power of judgment has been made more acute by practice ['Ausübung']." As Allison would seem to have it, such sharpening of the poet's judgment would be a consequence of the poet's greater self-awareness. Through practice, the poet becomes more aware of the way the poem satisfies his various desires, which shows that he is not justified in claiming the agreement of others. While this may be a desirable state of affairs, increased self-awareness may make little difference in improving the poet's judgment. What is more important, indeed central to the poet's improvement, are the skills he learns in his "practice" of being a poet and doing the kinds of things that poets do: writing poems, reading the work of others, presenting one's work to an audience, etc. In this activity, the poet will be confronted with different ways of thinking about and making poetry as his choices—reflected both in his creation and criticism of poetry—put him in conflict with others. If this experience leads him to change the way he judges poetry, it need not be on account of his discovering hidden interests in the object. It may come simply because he has developed new tools with which to write or criticize poetry. For example, the poet may discover through the work of others or by the criticism lodged at him that rhythm could play a more important role in his poetry. This discovery may reveal new possibilities to the poet and cause him to look at his old work with a more critical eye. But he need not look at his old poetry as impure or "corrupted" by an interest; more likely he will look at it as naive or immature.\(^{189}\)

\(^{189}\) Cf. R. 1498: "Judgment is formed through practice and criticism, the understanding is instructed through
Now, central to the picture that I am offering is the possibility that a poet may erroneously judge his poem to be beautiful even if he is not particularly blameworthy for his judgment. In other words, we can say the poet misjudges the beauty of the poem—and ought to judge it differently—even if we could not have expected him to judge differently. For it seems entirely possible that the poet might innocently lack certain cognitive faculties without which he would have a hard time seeing how the poem could be improved. These faculties may include, among other things, a broad vocabulary, deep conceptual understanding, subtle ear, and lively imagination. One might claim that because the poet lacked these faculties, he presumptuously declared his poem to be beautiful and expected that others agree with him. But this cannot be right. For only by expressing this judgment, which conflicts with the judgments of others, is the poet in a position to see himself as lacking certain faculties. Only because his claim to the agreement of others is rebuffed does he have an incentive to see if his judgment might not be improved.

Even if the young poet lacks these faculties, and so misjudges the aesthetic value of the poem, his judgment may remain pure provided there is no end that the poet sees the poem as fulfilling. Allison disagrees with this view. As he sees it, a pure judgment of taste cannot be erroneous. Furthermore, he thinks that if everyone's judgments of taste were pure, there could be no aesthetic disagreement. In apparent support of this position, Allison obliquely refers in an end note to a passage at the end of section 16 of the Analytic of the Beautiful. Here Kant imagines a case in which two persons aesthetically rules." (my translation)

190 Kant’s Theory of Taste, 189.
judge the same object in two different ways. One person judges the object as a free beauty, according to which he does not let a concept of the object influence his judgment; the other person judges the object as a dependent beauty, and so does allow a concept of the object to influence his judgment. Kant then states,

By means of this distinction [between free and dependent beauties] one can settle many \textit{manche} disputes about beauty between judges of taste, by showing them that the one is concerned with free beauty, the other with adherent beauty, the first making a pure, the second an applied judgment of taste.\textsuperscript{191}

As Allison seems to see it, Kant is saying that disagreement has arisen because one of these parties mistakenly thought his judgment is pure. However, Kant's point is more modest: if we are more sensitive to the way in which we are judging, we are less likely to argue at cross purposes. In other words, we can better identify those cases in which we really disagree with each other—and see each other as in error. This is very different from saying that we will agree about our judgments of taste. After all, Kant says only that we could settle \textit{many} disputes by means of this distinction, not all of them.

IV. Judging in Accordance with the Common Sense

As I mentioned earlier, there is a way in which our judgments of taste should be “pure.” That is to say, there is a way by which we should attempt to make judgments of taste that are not corrupted by an interest, which would prevent us from demanding the agreement of others. However, this is not because we are mistaken about the nature of our satisfaction. As I already pointed out, Allison claims that error would occur if we

\textsuperscript{191} 5: 231.
overlooked some “quirky and unnoticed liking” for an object. Rather, error occurs because in our pursuit of some end or ends, we fail to appreciate the full significance of the object. An interest prevents us from judging the object correctly not because it gives us some extra-aesthetic reason for taking satisfaction in the object (making our judgment of taste impure) but because our involvement or engagement in the world predisposes us to look at the object in a way that obscures its harmonious form (or lack thereof).

This point about the corrupting influence of an interest applies no less to any judgment, including theoretical judgments and even impure judgments of taste. For in our consideration of any object, our pursuit of an end may prevent us from recognizing the limited validity of the judgment we express. If we intend to speak for everyone—as we do when we declare something to be beautiful, good, or true—we must be capable of overcoming our limited point of view. We must be aware of the way our pursuit of ends influences the way things are presented to us. What appears as significant, pleasing or displeasing, depends upon our aims. If we fail to see the relevance of an object to us—indeed, if it does not even appear as an object—we may say of it, “Non mea interest.” In Latin, this means something like, “It is not part of my affair,” or, more idiomatically, “It makes no difference to me.” If our judgment is to hold for everyone, we must ensure that it would hold even for persons who are engaged in different activities and for whom the object would appear differently significant. In short, we must ensure that it would hold for those with different “interests.”

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192 Kant’s Theory of Taste, 109.
193 Moreover, such engagement with the world might have nothing to do with the object at the center of the disagreement (at least not directly).
For Kant, our ability to free ourselves from our interests and consider the way an object would appear to persons engaged in different activities is a faculty that we may develop. The term for this faculty is the “common sense” or “sensus communis.” As Kant points out in section 40, he does not use the term as it is ordinarily applied. For most people, he says, the term is used to indicate what he calls the “common human understanding,” that is, the general understanding, shared among the multitude, of how things work. For Kant, the term has a quite different meaning.

By "sensus communis," however, must be understood the idea of a communal sense, i.e. a faculty for judging that in its reflection takes account (a priori) of everyone else's way of representing in thought, in order as it were to hold its judgment up to a human reason as a whole and thereby avoid the illusion which, from subjective private conditions that could easily be held to be objective, would have a detrimental influence on judgment.194

Earlier in the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment, Kant had argued that the sensus communis is presupposed by the universal communicability of cognitions—not just the beautiful.195 In the deduction of pure judgments of taste, Kant had argued that it is simply this capacity which justifies the a priori necessity of pure judgments of taste and, though he does not say it explicitly, not a theoretical or practical interest of reason. And although the sensus communis is what uniquely justifies the claim to universal agreement in a pure judgment of taste, it is still employed in all judgment. In order to make any judgment, one "[holds] his judgment up not so much to the actual as to the merely possible judgment of

194 5: 293.
others, and [puts] himself into the position of everyone else, merely by abstracting from the limitations that contingently attach to our own judging.”  

That Kant thinks that this capacity is equally employed in all judgment is further supported by the proceeding reference to the three maxims of the "common human understanding." These maxims are, respectively, "1. To think for oneself; 2. To think in the position of everyone else; 3. Always to think in accord with oneself.” The second maxim corresponds closely with the way in which Kant articulates the exercise of the common sense. In fact, Kant refers to this maxim as the maxim of the power of judgment. If we take the "common human understanding" which Kant refers to here as concerned with more than matters of taste, then we have good reason to think that the idea of a common sense—and the postulation of a universal voice—is just as relevant for other judgments as it is for judgments of taste (both pure and impure).

To the extent that we do blame the young poet for his poor judgment, it is not because he has failed to recognize his interests in an object. We blame him because we think he has not lived up to the "maxim of judgment" and "thought in the position of everyone else." Nevertheless, it is important to bear in mind that this is our judgment, and the young poet could equally make this claim of us. The only way to settle this disagreement is by comparing our points of view, and equally those of others. The poet (and correspondingly each critic) must look at those objects—in this case those poems—that others prefer to his own. Only by exposing himself to this work can he see how his

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196 5: 294.
197 Ibid.
198 5: 295. The first and third maxim refer to the faculties of understanding and reason respectively.
own judgment can be improved. So long as the poet aims to speak with a universal voice, and be respected as a poet, he has a certain obligation to take seriously this other work. If he does not do this, his poetry may retain a certain value; however, it will be a limited value, one that will only be appreciated by himself and perhaps others like him.

The poet who fails to take seriously the criticism of others, and more importantly, the work that such criticism implicitly speaks for, is in an important sense demeaning his own judgment. For he is saying, in effect, that he has so little faith in his own judgment—and the value of his poetry—that he is unwilling to stand it in relation to that of others. In order to reveal the rightness of his judgment, the poet must welcome the challenge presented by those models and exemplars that his critics hold in high esteem. This is by no means an easy thing to do; it can be very demoralizing for the poet—as it is for all of us—to discover the gap between his work and that of those superior to him. However, only by honestly confronting this gap could he give his judgment the opportunity to grow, or as Kant says of the young poet, to "be sharpened" [geschärft worden].\(^{199}\) Regardless of how much talent or even genius that the poet possesses, until he does this he will not have demonstrated great taste or, what is the same, judgment.

When we look at taste in this way—that is, when we see it as a "kind of sensus communis"\(^{200}\)—we can better understand why Kant would think that a reflection on aesthetic experience would help us understand purposive activity in general. After all, so long as a person does not attempt to compare his activity or products to the activity or products of others, he is in no position to say that he cannot do better. It can never be

\(^{199}\) 5: 282.
\(^{200}\) 5: 293.
sufficient to point to principles of reason (either theoretical or practical) in order to justify his activity or the products thereof, since there would always be the question whether or not they were well applied. With enough ingenuity and craftiness, a person could make any activity of his appear justified by pointing to features of a context that seemed to satisfy those principles. Such justification, however, would only be meaningful to that person alone or perhaps those who shared his similar perspective. So long as reason calls him to fulfill his full potential as a human being and achieve ends that are absolutely universal, the person always has an obligation to look beyond himself in order to see how his judgment might be improved. Without doing this, a person runs the risk of being, as Kant puts it, "narrow-minded" [borniert] regardless of the extent of his talents.\textsuperscript{201} On the other hand, if the person "sets himself apart from the subjective private conditions of the judgment, within which so many others are as if bracketed, and reflects on his own judgment from a universal standpoint (which he can only determine by putting himself into the standpoint of others)" then he shows himself as a person of a "broad-minded way of thinking."\textsuperscript{202} This does not mean that the person displays a well developed faculty of cognition; rather, it means he makes "purposive use" of this faculty as a human being.

\textbf{V. Conclusion}

For Kant, judgments of taste are distinct from judgments of the agreeable and judgments of the good. Although each kind of judgment implies a relationship to our

\textsuperscript{201} 5: 295.
\textsuperscript{202} Ibid (Kant's emphasis).
feeling of pleasure and displeasure insofar as we find satisfaction in an object given in experience, judgments of taste are distinguished by their disinterested character. By that, Kant means our satisfaction is not connected with "the representation of the existence of the object," as it is when we take a liking in the agreeable or in the good. With the agreeable, we take a liking in an object because it sensibly pleases or "gratifies" [vergnügt] us. As a result, we may form a desire for more objects of its kind. With the good, on the other hand, we take a liking in an object because we see something rationally desirable about the object. The object is "esteemed" [geschätzt] or "approved" [gebilligt] by us. In both cases, we measure an object against an end of ours for which we would take pleasure in "the representation of the existence of the object." In the former case, we could see the object as promoting an end of our body just as when we take pleasure in nourishing food. In the latter case, we could see the object as promoting an end that is commanded of us by pure practical reason. In a judgment of taste, however, we take pleasure merely in the "form of purposiveness." The object appears to promote our ends in general but no end in particular.

When Kant discusses "pure judgments of taste," he means to separate out those judgments of taste in which our liking is at least partly justified in relation to a particular end. These include what Kant calls "applied judgments of taste" [angwandtes Geschmacksurteil] and those aesthetic judgments that have "charm" or "emotion" as

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203 5: 204.
204 5: 210.
205 Ibid.
206 5: 221.
207 5: 231.
part of their justification.\textsuperscript{208} In the former case, we could refer to a determinate concept to help ground our satisfaction in the object.\textsuperscript{209} In the latter case, something sensibly pleasing about the object would partially ground our satisfaction. In both cases, our judgment depends at least partly on the way the object is seen to promote a particular end of ours (although to the extent that the object has aesthetic value, this cannot be its sole ground). Now, in the case of pure judgments of taste, we have nothing but our capacity to refer our judgment to a universal voice. By calling our attention to pure judgments of taste, Kant makes it harder for someone to argue that all judgments of taste are based on purely sensible (as with the Empiricists) or rational (as with the Rationalists) considerations. Pace Allison, Kant's aim is not to argue that our judgments of taste should be pure lest our claim to the universal agreement of others be unjustified. Rather, his aim is to show that we cannot make sense of judgments of taste—and indeed any judgments—without this fundamental capacity to consider the points of view of others and abstract from the interests that influence the way we perceive objects.

It is certainly true that we should not let an interest in an object prevent us from appreciating its aesthetic value. Allison is right to say that we should strive to speak in conformity with a "universal voice" when we express a judgment of taste; to do this, we must be sensitive to the way that an interest in an object may bias our judgment. But this is no less true for any judgment.\textsuperscript{210} In our ordinary existence, we have a wide range of different interests that affect the way we see the world. This is simply the consequence of

\textsuperscript{208} 5: 226.
\textsuperscript{209} For example, we might judge a horse or a chair to be beautiful. In both cases, our liking would be partly grounded on our sense of what horses and chairs should be.
\textsuperscript{210} This includes applied judgments of taste, whereby we evaluate "dependent beauties," not just the "free beauties" of pure judgments of taste.
being living creatures with ends we are at all times pursuing (and which we are unconsciously drawn toward), whether we realize it or not. Because we commit ourselves to some ends and neglect others, objects will naturally appear as more or less pleasing when we perceive that our preferred ends are being promoted or frustrated. In itself, there is no problem with our having an interest in an object, and taking satisfaction in it. Having an interest is only problematic if it prevents us from seeing the way the world conduces to other important ends of ours. And that means we fail to recognize that we have or could have other interests in objects. But this is not at all the interest's fault: it is our fault since it is we alone who commit ourselves to (or invest ourselves in) particular ends and, as the case may be, refuse to give them up even at the expense of others.

In order to speak with a universal voice, we cannot, as it were, do away with our interests. Rather, we have to be sensitive to the way that they both separate us from and connect us to other people. This shared sensitivity to the world—what Kant calls the "common sense" or "sensus communis"—must be cultivated not just so that we make better judgments of taste. Rather, it must be cultivated so that we might live in such a way that our end as a human being is promoted in the way that we think it is (or as we "feel" it is).

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211 It is interesting to reflect on the Latin root of ‘neglect’: neglegere means literally not to pick up or not to choose.
CHAPTER FOUR: The Need for Examples

I. The Purpose of Judgment-Talk

The problem with looking at judgments of taste as a kind of activity we perform is that it obscures the way in which a reflection on aesthetic experience can illuminate purposive activity in general. It is unhelpful to compare judgments of taste to purposive activity precisely because purposive activity is what we are trying to get a better grip on. That this is Kant's project in the *Critique of Judgment* is by no means obvious: on the surface, the topics of the work are, respectively, judgments of beauty, judgments of the sublime, and teleological judgments. At least in the body of the text, nothing about the way we do things is mentioned. This might give one the impression that everything relevant to agency is discussed in the first and especially second *Critiques*.

A close reading of the preface and introduction, however, makes it hard to hold this view. As we have already seen, Kant has described the *Critique of Judgment* as completing his critical project and showing how theoretical and practical philosophy may be combined into one whole.\(^{212}\) The question that Kant is interested in answering is how the ends that reason commits us to, including the final end of reason itself (human happiness in accordance with virtue), may be realized in nature.\(^{213}\) In the first chapter, I tried to unpack the meaning of this question: basically, Kant is trying to show how something that happens in nature can be regarded as the effect of *my* action—and for which I may be praised or blamed—even though that same effect could also be explained according to deterministic causal laws.

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\(^{212}\) 5: 176.

\(^{213}\) Cf. 5: 195-6.
The *Critique of Judgment* provides a response to this question by making explicit the concept of purposiveness [*Zweckmäßigkeit*] or "end-measuredness" which underlies all of our judgments. In every case in which we think "the particular as contained under the universal,"\(^{214}\) whether it be a matter of judging something to have theoretical, practical, or aesthetic significance, we take for granted the fact that the world is amenable to our end. It is in virtue of this presupposition that we regard ourselves as capable of noticing the relevance of objects to our purposes even in cases in which we are not directly (or consciously) engaged in a specific activity. We see the world, as it were, as inviting our activity even when we are unable to say precisely what it is that we should do. This feeling of purposiveness is logically prior to our deliberate pursuit of particular purposes in that the very possibility of successful action (whatever that action may be) presupposes an acute sensitivity to the context in which that action would be appropriate. This sensitivity to context is essentially inarticulable since any attempt to explain it in terms of rules would only raise the question what makes those rules appropriate. In an important sense, this concept of purposiveness makes possible the articulation of rules and principles that we regard as constitutive of reason in both its theoretical and practical use.

This feeling of purposiveness is most clearly manifest in judgments of taste in virtue of their aesthetic character. When we evaluate an object in terms of its beauty, we focus our attention on the way that the object is sensibly presented to us, without letting ourselves be persuaded by explicit rules and discursive thought about the object. The fact

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\(^{214}\) 5:179.
that an object meets a certain condition seems to play little role in our determination of its beauty or, more generally, its aesthetic value. This is made explicit in the way that we insist on submitting the object to our own evaluation before declaring our opinion, no matter how convincingly someone may speak of its beauty. As Kant expresses this point,

If someone reads me his poem or takes me to a play that in the end fails to please my taste, then he can adduce Batteux or Lessing, or even older and more famous critics of taste, and adduce all the rules they established as proofs that his poem is beautiful; certain passages, which are the very ones that displease me, may even agree with rules of beauty (as they have been given there and have been universally recognized): I will stop my ears, listen to no reasons and arguments, and would rather believe that those rules of the critics are false or at least that this is not a case for their application than allow that my judgment should be determined by means of a priori grounds of proof, since it is supposed to be a judgment of taste and not of the understanding or reason.\(^{215}\)

Aesthetic experience, therefore, seems to reveal the inescapable autonomy of our judgment and the fact that we do not submit our judgment to a rule, but rather give the rule through our judgment. Although this autonomy ultimately applies to all judgment, even our theoretical and practical judgments, judgments of taste make the autonomy of our judgment so explicit because we have no room to hide behind the authority of rules, so to speak. In order to make a judgment about the aesthetic worth of an object—the beauty of a painting, a piece of music, or even a sunny day—one must submit that object to one's own appraisal. Until we do so, we simply have not judged the object, regardless of what we have said in favor of or in opposition to it.

If it is misguided to think of judgments of taste (as well as any other kinds of judgments) as acts of judgment, how ought we to think of them? It is important to have

\(^{215}\) 5: 284 (Kant’s emphasis).
something to say in response to this question since it is so easy to read Kant as assuming such a picture, as many commentators have shown.\textsuperscript{216} Kant clearly distinguishes judgments of taste from judgments of the good and judgments of the agreeable. How else are we to draw this distinction except in terms of different things that we do, which we might do better or worse, and which we are ultimately responsible for? Are these things not analogous to acts that we might regard in the more full-blooded sense—like striking a match, shaking someone's hand, and writing a letter? Might we not say that the only difference is that, unlike the aforementioned acts, judgments are done independently of the body? For we certainly can imagine any of these judgments being made regardless of the kind of physical activity in which we are involved. Can we not imagine ourselves to make a judgment while involved in no obvious physical activity at all?

While there are no doubt similarities, the reason to avoid assimilating judgments and acts understood in the more natural, full-blooded sense has already been mentioned.\textsuperscript{217} Acts like striking a match, shaking someone's hand, and writing a letter are all done for the sake of an end. It is in relation to that end along with other ends we have, that we are in a position to determine whether our action was appropriate or has been done well or poorly. Judgments, at least as they are understood in the normal sense of the term, are not things done for the sake of an end. Instead, they describe our mental state in relation to some end. They are not acts although they are implied by our acts. They get their special significance (their content) in view of particular activities in which we are

\textsuperscript{216} Three such commentators, including Henry Allison, who was already considered, will be looked at in the next chapter.

\textsuperscript{217} See the previous chapter.
involved. For example, in baking, I may decide that it is time to take the cake out of the oven. Whether or not I regard myself as "making a judgment," it is perfectly appropriate to say that I have "judged" that the cake is ready. After all, the very possibility of my becoming a good cook depends upon my becoming aware of the judgments I make, especially those that are mistaken. For example, I can learn that I made the wrong judgment because I misinterpreted the color of the cake or failed to compensate for the deep pan. In such an event, a judgment of mine is brought to my attention for the purpose of instruction. However, the point of this instruction is not so much that I make better judgments but that I make better cakes, or more broadly, become a better cook. This is what I am trying to do. It is also, most fully, the object of my thought.

The problem with referring to judgments as acts is not so much that we thereby mischaracterize judgments but that, from the philosophical point of view, we needlessly complicate the picture. If a judgment is an act, it is natural to ask what such an act looks like or how it is expressed. Equally, we might be tempted to explain how it came about or for what purpose it was made. Worse still, we risk raising the question when it is appropriate to make the judgment, the very thing we were trying to avoid. If we focus on these questions, we risk ignoring the more important question of why we distinguished kinds of judgments in the first place. For the philosopher—especially a contemporary analytic philosopher—this is very easy to do, partly because the term 'judgment' is so commonplace. It is easy to forget that 'judgment' is, for the most part, a technical term rarely used in ordinary language. Most commonly, the term 'judgment' is used in

\[218\] Indeed, one could attribute to me simultaneously other judgments depending upon other ends that I have.
reference to a craft or skill and speaks to a person's level of proficiency or competence. We speak broadly of the good judgment of a doctor or mechanic and more specifically of those particular instances in which that good judgment is applied (in the prescription of a treatment or diagnosis of a problem). It is important to reflect on such cases now and again to remind ourselves of the natural significance of the term and to show us how far we have strayed for the sake of a philosophical end.

Therefore, when we examine Kant's analysis of judgments of taste, it is worth reflecting on the use to which he puts the term. Why does he distinguish theoretical, moral, and aesthetic judgments? Why does he distinguish judgments of taste from judgments of the agreeable? Why does he distinguish judgments of perception from judgments of experience? And so on. Kant's distinction of different kinds of judgments is at the heart of his critical project. In the dedication to the *Critique of Pure Reason*, he says that the purpose of that work is "the growth of the sciences itself." By distinguishing kinds of judgments and then analyzing those judgments, Kant thinks that he can uncover principles of the three faculties of cognition: the understanding, judgment, and reason. The usefulness of such principles, as far as I see, is to help us systematize our cognitions and develop the faculty of cognition itself. They do this not so much by telling us what is the case but by giving us the means to subject our claims to criticism.

Distinguishing theoretical, moral, and aesthetic judgments (along with other kinds of judgments) helps make clear the limits of reason giving and shows how we are inclined in various circumstances to misinterpret the sources of our disagreement with

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219 A iv. This includes both the *Critique of Practical Reason* and the *Critique of Judgment*. That this is Kant's intention is made clear in the introductions to both works. See 5:12 and 5: 194.
one another. By distinguishing the circumstances in which a particular argument—or form of reason-giving—is significant, we can become more sensitive to those conditions in the future and avoid arguing at cross-purposes. Such cases in which we are inclined to argue at cross-purposes include disagreements about the existence of God, the goodness of a particular act, and the beauty of an object. While pointing out the differing significance of our judgments may not in itself eliminate disagreement, it does help us see more clearly where disagreement is real or meaningful.

In order to feel the force of this point, let us consider some instance in which it would be helpful to identify disagreement between the aesthetic judgments of two persons. Imagine that I am walking along a path in the mountains with a friend. As we are going along, I am struck by a flower. I stop to admire it as my friend continues up the trail. Noticing that I have not kept up, my friend calls out to me. I explain that I stopped to look at a certain flower. After returning to see what I am looking at, my companion expresses puzzlement that I should find this flower so interesting. It is not clear to him why I stopped to look at this flower.

By telling my friend that I find the flower beautiful, I am identifying the special kind of significance that the flower displays to me. I do this while at the same time being able to identify other kinds of significance that the flower has. Just why I remark upon its beauty (or pleasant appearance) as opposed to its theoretical or practical significance is a matter concerning our particular ends and my relation to my friend. By saying that the flower is beautiful, I am implicitly ruling out certain kinds of reasons that my friend could adduce in support or opposition to me. For example, it would be rather beside the
point for my friend to contradict me by saying that the flower was very common, or that
it was an invasive species, or even that he did not care for its color. To the extent that I
am being sincere and using the term 'beautiful' in its normal sense, I am claiming
implicitly that I have abstracted from such concerns. I am, for whatever reason, bringing
attention to my aesthetic judgment just as I could have, for other reasons, brought
attention to other judgments I have made about the object. Consequently, I expect my
friend to respond along those lines (if at all) and I will be frustrated if he does not.

By distinguishing aesthetic judgments from moral and theoretical judgments and
by saying that different principles govern them, Kant is saying that the kind of
argumentation that applies to one does not apply to the others. Or to put the point another
way, an aesthetic judgment is not reducible to either moral or theoretical judgments. I can
disagree with somebody's aesthetic judgment about some object regardless of whether I
agree with his moral or theoretical judgments about the same object. My judgment about
the flower is aesthetic to the extent that it would be wrongheaded for my friend to argue
against it in theoretical or moral terms. If I have judged that the flower is beautiful, then it
would be largely irrelevant for my friend to say that the flower was not as rare as I
thought or that I was letting a personal interest in the object get the better of me. From
my point of view, such arguments miss the point. For even if it were true that I was
misinformed about the rarity of the flower or that I was immodestly inclined to it, I could
still legitimately insist that the flower had a certain value and think that my friend should
be able to see that too.
What Kant is showing is that reason giving in aesthetic matters is importantly different from reason giving in moral or theoretical matters. If someone disagrees with my judgment that the flower has aesthetic value, I cannot defend my position in the way that I can when I think the object has moral or theoretical value. In the latter case, I can point out facts in order to demonstrate that something is a certain way; in so doing, I take it for granted that a person's understanding or reason will show him that he is compelled to accept the truth of the contended proposition. In such a case, we can prove to someone something—for example, that you cannot form a regular pentagon with only a compass and a straight edge or that downloading pirated software is a form of theft—whether the person likes the result or not. This form of reason-giving is of little use in aesthetic matters.

Nevertheless, we often do treat reasoning about aesthetic matters the same as reasoning about cognitive, non-aesthetic matters. It is very tempting to regard a person's conflicting judgment as a result of ignorance or confusion. Had the person known better, we think, he would have arrived at a different conclusion. For example, consider my claim that the flower on the mountain path is beautiful. My friend, who is not impressed by the flower's appearance, may be inclined to argue against the claim that it is beautiful on the basis that there is a better explanation of my liking of the flower. He may think, for example, that I am attracted to the flower because of my fondness for botany or because it is my favorite color or because of some other personal connection that I have to the object. As he sees it, I only say the flower is beautiful because I am not sensitive enough to these facts about myself and my relationship to the object. But now that these facts
have been brought to my attention, I should not think that the flower is beautiful; at the very least, I should be more restrained in expressing my liking and expecting his agreement and that of others. To use the framework of Henry Allison, which we considered in the previous chapter, my friend has demonstrated that my judgment of taste was not as pure as I thought it was.

Now, as I mentioned in the previous chapter, it may be true that I am not as sensitive to these facts about myself as I should be. And it could be the case that my friend's drawing my attention to them moves me to reevaluate the object and to judge the flower less beautiful than I did initially. Nevertheless, we have to be careful about how we understand the role that these reasons—i.e., what my friend says in objection to my claim that the flower is beautiful—play. Most importantly, we must not overlook the fact that these points are indirect support of my friend's own position that the flower is not beautiful (or as beautiful as I think). They betray his judgment just as much as they reveal the true nature of my own. My friend offers this explanation of my judgment because he can see little that is beautiful about it. However, if he is committed to the possibility of aesthetic judgments, and that it makes sense to say that there are flowers more beautiful than this one, then it has to be the case that more could be said about the object. In other words, it has to be the case that my having a personal connection to the object of which I am not aware is not in itself a reason to deny that it is beautiful or that it is as beautiful as I take it to be.

If it is the case that my friend's bringing my attention to an interest I have in the object leads me to re-evaluate the object and to find it no longer pleasing, it is not
because I have become conscious of a fact that compels me to change my mind. Rather, it is because I am moved to look at the object in a new way. Such criticism on the part of my friend can therefore be interpreted both positively and negatively. It is negative if it is meant to deny outright any aesthetic value in the object by providing a more correct explanation of the liking I expressed. It is positive if it is meant to stimulate my attention and to lead me to look at the object in a new way, without denying the reality of the aesthetic value I originally perceived.

By distinguishing aesthetic judgments from moral or theoretical judgments, Kant is saying that there is a source of disagreement in judgment that is subjective and not reducible to a question about the proper understanding of the object. It is awfully tempting in situations such as the one above to regard disagreement about purportedly aesthetic matters to be a result of people having drawn the wrong conclusion about an object because they lacked the appropriate evidence or misinterpreted whatever evidence they did have. The problem with this view is that it downplays the significance of our disagreement. It leads us to believe that by pointing out the interests we have in an object, we can secure agreement about the aesthetic value of the object. As I said before, it may be true that in stopping to admire the flower I failed to note some personal connection I have to the object that could explain to some degree why I took pleasure in it. However, we should not think that this is what caused me to judge the flower differently than my friend. At least, we should not think that my becoming aware of this interest obliges me to retract my claim that the flower is beautiful. For that would dismiss prematurely any
aesthetic value that the flower *did* have and deny what seems like an obvious truth: that our disagreement was a subjective matter—i.e., a matter of *taste*.

II. A Subjective Source of Disagreement

The idea that our disagreements about the value of an object may have a subjective source does not mean that argument in those cases is misguided. All it means is that the way we go about arguing in those cases will be fundamentally different from those cases in which we argue about the cognitive (or logical) significance of an object. When it comes to aesthetic matters, we cannot simply provide evidence in the hope that a person will recognize his mistake and see that he is compelled by reason to give up his former position. We can, however, encourage a person to look at the object in a new way in the hope that he comes to feel the same way about it as we do. In most cases, such a change of judgment does not occur right away. It is a process that extends well beyond our perhaps brief confrontation with the object. It occurs even when we are no longer thinking about the disputed object. If the person who originally disagreed with us finally comes to share our judgment, he has done so not for the sake of any particular reasons but because he has grown to see the object in a new way.

Consider, for example, the following case. Imagine that my friend and I disagree about the value of a movie: I really like it but he is less impressed. Let us stipulate that in our discussion of the movie it becomes clear that our disagreement is a consequence of a difference in taste. By that, I mean that it seems to be the case that neither of us is evaluating the movie on the basis of its moral or practical significance. Nor does it appear
that our disagreement is the result of one of us watching the movie in a prejudiced state. Nor has either of us watched the movie in such a way that our fair appraisal has been compromised: we were both sober, saw the whole movie, could equally well understand the dialogue, etc.

It is tempting to say in cases such as these—when disagreement cannot be bridged by traditional reason-giving—that we must "agree to disagree." Now this resolution might express a certain modesty and recognition that the other person is looking at the object so differently that continuing to argue in the previous manner would be pointless. However, it might also express a certain skepticism or distrust of our own judgment. For Kant, the analogous expression would be "Everyone has his own taste," which he describes as a "proposition by means of which everyone who lacks taste thinks to defend himself against criticism." The problem with this proposition is that it wrongly suggests that continued argument in such matters is not just difficult but misguided. This involves a failure to recognize that taste can stand for more than just a private liking (as in the case of judgments of the agreeable); it can also indicate a kind of competence or skill, which we are committed to defending, even if only implicitly. When we look at taste in this way, we can understand how a disagreement with a subjective source can still be a matter for argument. For the issue about which we are arguing really concerns the way we are looking at the object, rather than the object itself. And that we are looking at the object in the right sort of way is undeniably something we want to do, just as we want to look at the world generally in the right sort of way.

220 5: 338.
The expression that a difference in taste explains our disagreement might be made by saying, "That's simply not my kind of movie" or "I like different kinds of movies." Such a statement is a natural, significant remark. It can, however, be understood in two separate ways. Under one interpretation, my friend is describing a kind of physical reaction he has to the movie, analogous to a repulsion from certain tastes or smells. In such a case, his dislike of the movie would be the direct consequence of its not being the kind that he likes. Any time he sees a western, for example, he gets sick. Now if this is what my friend means, then it is probably not appropriate for me to argue that he should like it. His own, idiosyncratic taste—understood rather literally—would make it unreasonable to seek agreement. Given his unique pathology, it would be difficult for him ever to like the object. However, in most cases this is not how such a statement should be interpreted. By saying that he likes different kinds of movies, my friend more likely means that, for whatever reason, he is broadly familiar with different kinds of movies and so has a hard time appreciating this one. When we look at the matter in this light, the difference in judgment appears to be other than the result of our differing natural predispositions. It is quite possible that our disagreement is the result of faculties we have variously developed as watchers of movies. Because I have been exposed to different kinds of movies than my friend, I am able to make evaluative distinctions that he is presently unable to make. Given the films that I have seen, this movie has a value that I can appreciate but my friend cannot. In short, I can see the movie in a way that he cannot.

When I watch a movie, look at a painting, or listen to a piece of music I have an object that I could, in a certain sense, interpret an infinite number of ways. Because I
evaluate the object not on the basis of how well it serves some purpose but rather on how it merely appears to me, my liking is restricted by nothing but the limits of my cognitive faculties. For Kant, the two cognitive faculties most relevant to aesthetic judgment are the understanding and imagination. My understanding restricts my judgment by the kind of data that it presents me. For example, when I watch a movie, I do so with a certain cognitive experience that allows me to recognize things and make distinctions, to articulate various elements, and organize material in a way that makes sense to me and others. Because of my particular understanding, I am in a position to make distinctions between different movies, as well as distinguish a particular movie—the object of judgment—from those things that surround it but are not relevant to my judgment: the previews, credits, curtains, audience, etc. My imagination, on the other hand, restricts my judgment in a different sense: it determines how far I can imagine the movie being different than it actually is. Because of my imagination, I can conceive of how the film would be if it were different in various respects: that is, I can imagine how it could be improved or made worse. When I like a film—indeed when I find it beautiful—I do so because I find it surpassing other films that I know. I have a hard time seeing how it could be improved but an easy time seeing how it could be made worse.

However, as I have been arguing, the “limits” of the cognitive faculties are themselves determined by the way we see fit to use them.

Sensibility would also be relevant. Clearly, a person who was color blind or tone deaf would have difficulty fully appreciating a painting or piece of music. Unlike the understanding and imagination, however, sensible faculties are not easily developed.

Distinguishing the contributions of the understanding and imagination in a precise way is difficult since they clearly presuppose one another. Still, it is generally useful to do so as they give us tools to explain discrepancies in our representations of objects.
As we will see, Kant uses the relationship between the imagination and the understanding to articulate the significance of the beautiful. I will consider this in more detail later. For the time being, all I want to point out is the way in which our aesthetic evaluation of objects is influenced by our understanding and imagination, subjective sources of cognition, which vary greatly among individuals. Because my friend is not as familiar with the genre of westerns as I, he may not notice those features that I think make the film stand out from other films; at the same time, he may be bothered by certain features that I do not even notice, since for me they are elements common to the genre.

Consider the classic western *Shane* (1953). An interesting feature of the film is the way that it represents violence in a more realistic and harsher light than other westerns. One way that it does this is by minimizing the number of gunshots heard on screen and making the sound considerably louder than normal. Although this is only a small aspect of the film, I take it to contribute to the value of the film. However, a person unfamiliar with the genre—one who did not have the understanding that I have—could not notice this subtle difference or other aspects that required a certain understanding. To them the film would appear as just another western.

A similar story could be told about the disagreement between my friend and me concerning the aesthetic value of the flower. My friend might agree with me that the flower stands out in a striking way from its surroundings (other plants, rocks, creatures, the shape of the terrain, etc.). He can appreciate why I stopped to admire it and he might not even presume to offer an alternative explanation of my liking. We might both agree

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224 See Chapter 6.
that the flower has clear aesthetic value and yet his enthusiasm for it may be less than mine. In short, we would feel slightly differently about the object even though we both could truthfully say we like the way it looks. As in the case of the film, our disagreement may largely be accounted for by a different way of looking at flowers. It is easy to imagine that given his experience, those features that I see as particularly noteworthy escape his notice. The color, shape, and other things that excite me about the flower may, from his point of view, be perfectly ordinary. Meanwhile, those aspects that escape my notice—the fineness of the petals, for example—may appear as especially important to him.

Although subjective differences may help explain aesthetic disagreement, they do not prevent our reaching agreement about aesthetic matters or imply that it is misguided to try. After all, both the understanding and the imagination are faculties that we are capable of developing and putting to their proper use. I was not always able to watch *Shane* in such a way that I would find pleasure in it; that was a consequence of a lifetime of watching movies, reading novels, learning to speak a language, and doing many other things. Only with this rich background of activity am I able to see it in the way that I do now and derive the pleasure from it that I do. Consequently, it would be silly to expect that a person who disagreed with my judgment should immediately be able to derive the same pleasure from the object simply by my mention of certain facts of which he was ignorant. But I could, with some justification, defend my judgment and argue that there was a better way for him to look at the object. I do so on the basis of my own experience. As I said, I developed this capacity to see the film over a lifetime and, by and large, I take
it to be an improved point of view. By recommending the film's aesthetic value, I am defending the notion that this is a superior way of seeing the film just as I am recommending that my friend adopt this point of view. With time, he too could come to see that the film was more than "just another Western."

Now when I argue in this way, I do so on the basis that my way of looking at the film is correct. I believe that I am not distracted by things that do not matter and that I do not overlook things that do. But now, just as I presuppose the capacity of looking at the object in the right way, so too does my friend. From his point of view, the things that I see as significant are not as important as I take them to be. For example, he could accept my story about the novel representation of violence in *Shane* and still legitimately insist that this does not give him any reason to modify his judgment. From his point of view, I am the one who should look at the film in a different way.

When we watch a film, read a poem, listen to a piece of music, and so on, we implicitly compare that object to relevantly similar objects from our lives. By expressing a judgment of it, we are saying that it is better or worse than other films, poems, pieces of music, and so forth. The confidence with which we make such a claim comes from a lifetime of watching movies and having our taste develop. 225 As I said, I was not always able to watch *Shane* in the way that I do now. Had I seen this film when I was very young, I would not have been able to notice the subtle features that distinguish it from other westerns, let alone other movies. Of course, I could still have enjoyed it. However,

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225 In many cases, our understanding of an object or context may be so limited that we would not be inclined to argue for the validity of our judgment. The most obvious case of this is when we are presented with an object from a culture significantly different from our own.
given the limits of my experience, it would have been very hard for me to articulate why this film was aesthetically superior to other films. Only when I could distinguish films in all kinds of new ways was I in a position to see why it was special. I came to have a skill that I lacked before and, like all skills, it enabled me to participate in an activity with others: here conversing about film (and other relevant objects). At the same time, in order to participate in this conversation in a meaningful way, I have to accept that there are better and worse ways of seeing it. Regardless of how dear the film is to me, and how much I want others to agree with me, I am implicitly committed to the idea that my way of looking at it could be improved. Ironically, it is precisely because of my commitment to an independent standard—what Kant calls the "universal voice"—that I argue for the aesthetic value of this film with the confidence and enthusiasm that I do.

This skill—and the confidence with which I express my liking or disliking—is developed in a social environment in which I am constantly being confronted with different ways of looking at the world and the particular objects within it. My taste has been formed because of countless disagreements just like this one, which, on a certain level, challenge my taste. Only because people once disagreed with me about my aesthetic evaluations—for example, when they disliked something I liked—did I begin to see my evaluations as deserving to be defended or in need of modification. In either case, I was motivated to develop a deeper capacity to distinguish better and worse objects of different kinds and to articulate the value in what I saw. However, whatever new means of description that allowed me to praise or criticize an object could only be significant against a backdrop of the objects the value of which I was trying so hard to articulate.
Therefore, I could not prove to someone why I was right to like an object. I could only offer the person an invitation to look at the object in a way closer to my own.

If I disagree with someone's judgment, it is generally unhelpful for me to say that the person is wrong to like or dislike a certain object and that his praise or criticism is unwarranted. In order to attain real agreement about an object, I must be ready to show him that there is a better way of looking at it. This is very hard to do if I fail to acknowledge that the judgment with which I disagree has some truth in it. Yet when we are so committed to the superiority of our taste, this is the very thing we are inclined to do. For example, if I wanted to criticize much of contemporary, popular music, I might complain that it panders to listeners' more basic drives through its use of thumping bass beats, insinuating and repetitive themes, and narcissistic lyrics. However, so long as I imply that these are the real reasons why a person likes a certain piece of music, then it is not clear that I am arguing about aesthetic matters. For at this point, the question has become psychological and any agreement reached along these lines will have theoretical or possibly moral significance but not—at least not obviously—aesthetic significance.

One problem with saying that a particular song is liked only because of one or a mixture of certain elements is that it does not account for the fact that many songs also characterized by the same elements are not so well liked. So there would seem to be an aesthetic value in the song which the person is responding to. In order to appreciate that value, we ought to get a sense of the contrast to the object judged, as unpleasant as this enterprise may appear to us. What is the music with which the person is familiar such that this music is regarded as aesthetically valuable? Even if the person is unable to express
this difference in words, he is committed to defending the validity of this judgment on behalf of his history of making distinctions between better and worse music.

When someone denies there is value in that which we judge aesthetically and implies that we are mistaken in liking the object, it is very natural to retreat behind the claim that "Everyone has his own taste." After all, it is easier to think that our disagreement is a contingent or private matter than to think that our judgment is the product of gross ignorance or self-deception. So long as we argue about aesthetic matters in these latter terms, there can be no real aesthetic agreement. For as long as you claim that someone's failure to agree with you is caused by a single factor $x$ of which the other person was unaware then there is the implicit assumption that your judgment is the correct one and somehow not influenced by factors which you too are in the dark about. But then, if that is how you argue, you are implying that your position is correct because it is your position.

When it comes to arguing about aesthetic matters, real agreement can only occur through the sharing of examples and encouraging one another to express honestly one's judgment. This is different from the case of cognitive judgments in that one cannot simply provide evidence that demonstrates a person's understanding of an object is mistaken. If I dislike an object that another person likes and want him to share my opinion, I have to provide examples that I think show how the particular object could be improved and why it should be negatively considered in its current state. If I like an object that the person does not like and want him to like it too, I have to provide examples that show how this particular object is an improvement over others that are
similar in many respects but not as pleasing. Only in this way can the person develop that very skill—the way of looking at the world—that allows him to see an object with the same pleasure or displeasure that we take in the object. Until this happens, any purported agreement about the aesthetic value of an object would be an illusion; the true divergence (or disharmony) of our judgments would be revealed as soon as we responded differently to future objects, especially those similar to the one just judged.

Now, showing someone examples in order to influence his or her judgment is obviously insufficient. After all, the showing of objects can only be meaningful if the other person is willing to look. A person who has just been told that there is no aesthetic value in that which he has called beautiful will probably not be inclined to take seriously the person who offers him competing examples. In order to get someone to look at an object—to really look at it—one must, in a way, inspire that person. By this I mean a person must want to look at it because he feels that he has something to learn and that his former way of looking was inadequate. This feeling that our way of looking at something is inadequate is not something that can be communicated by words alone. It is more the result of our seeing people *behave* differently with respect to the objects of our disagreement. When we see someone smile at, care for, or unashamedly praise an object we are unmoved by, we want to know what we are missing. Our very judgment, of which we were once so certain, compels us to do so. Equally, if a person is unmoved or even repulsed by an object dear to us, we respond in the same way. The attention that we give to an object is largely inspired by the deepness and sincerity of the feelings expressed by others in relation to that object. The problem with the person who would dispassionately
reject the validity of our judgment by disputation is that he has not presented us with any alternative way of looking at the object, at least none we are moved to adopt ourselves.

However we get someone to look at something differently, what is special about aesthetic argument is the marked necessity of shared examples. Anything said in praise or criticism of an object will have little meaning without reference to an object, since we ultimately have to make up our own mind whether that praise or criticism is warranted. Those books of art criticism most successful at influencing taste do not work because they illustrate our ignorance or irrationality in evaluating an object but because they enable us to see art in a new way. So too do books describing the beauty of nature influence our judgment by inspiring us to look more carefully at the natural world around us, not by logically demonstrating why nature is more beautiful than we think. Indeed, if you measure the worth of an art critic by how much he influences taste, perhaps the greatest critics are poets. After all, the poet’s gift is to uncover the significance hidden in everyday objects and to help us see the world with awe and wonder.

Unless you allow a central role for examples in argumentation about aesthetic matters, you cannot do justice to the autonomy of judgments of taste. The problem with reasons stated discursively about an object with imputed aesthetic value is that they get their significance from a liking or disliking that precedes articulation. For a person to appreciate such reasons, he must already share that liking or disliking. But a person can only come to feel the same way with respect to an object if he learns to look at it in the same way as you. And this requires that the person be exposed to many different examples upon which he can practice his own judgment. Perhaps in time, the person will
come to see the object in the same way as you just as the apprentice carpenter will come
to see the piece of wood stock in the same way as his master. Until this happens, however, any proposition compelled from the person on the basis of reasons will simply not express his aesthetic judgment.

III. The Impact of Examples on Our Judgment

That Kant believes that examples [Beispiele] are indispensable to the development of taste and the reaching of aesthetic agreement is easy to miss for a couple of reasons. First of all, in the Critique of Judgment, Kant does not often speak in these terms. It is true that Kant frequently points out that judgments of taste are not subject to proof [durch Beweise Entscheiden], in contrast to theoretical and moral (i.e., cognitive) judgments, although we may still argue [streiten] about them. However, he does not say much about the way argument about judgments of taste is carried out. Furthermore, in the Critique of Pure Reason, Kant appears rather dismissive of the importance of examples. For instance, in the section on the transcendental power of judgment, Kant describes examples as the "go-cart" [Gängelwagen] of judgment, which "he who lacks the natural talent for judgment can never do without." This might seem to imply that examples are dispensable or simply that they ought to be given up as soon as one is able. Indeed, in the

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226 This distinction between disputing (proving) and arguing is made at 5: 338-9.
227 A 134/B 174. By translating 'Gängelwagen' as 'go-cart' rather than 'leading-strings' I have modified the Guyer/Wood translation so that it accords more closely to the original German. 'Go-cart' is also the term chosen by Kemp Smith in his translation.
same section, Kant speaks of the damaging effect of examples, despite the fact that they
"sharpen the power of judgment."\textsuperscript{228}

For as far as the correctness and precision of the insight of the understanding is concerned, examples more usually do it some damage, since they only seldom adequately fulfill the condition of the rule (as \textit{casus in terminis}) and beyond this often weaken the effort of the understanding to gain sufficient insight into rules in the universal and independently of the particular circumstances of experience, and thus in the end accustom us to use those rules more like formulas than like principles.\textsuperscript{229}

Earlier, in the preface to the A edition of the \textit{Critique}, Kant talks about his own decision to limit the use of examples in that work. While he acknowledges the usefulness of examples in clarifying difficult points, he also believes they can clutter a work and prevent one from seeing the overall system.\textsuperscript{230} Altogether, these points might lead one to believe that Kant does not see an important place for examples in his critical philosophy, of which the \textit{Critique of Judgment} is the completing part.

Still, one need only read the aforementioned passages carefully to see that Kant has little intention of demeaning the use of examples in general. After all, as Kant makes clear above, it is only with respect to "correctness and precision of the insight of the understanding" that examples can be harmful. The problem with examples is that they may give us the false impression that we understand a higher principle. This happens when we use them in order to test how well we understand a principle. We take a rule that we think we understand and then apply it to a particular case to see if it gives us the right result. After a number of successes, we may take ourselves to have mastered the

\textsuperscript{228} A 134/B 173.
\textsuperscript{229} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{230} A xix.
principle. However, such success means very little if we have applied it to a set of cases too limited to reflect the rule's universality, let alone if we have applied it to inappropriate cases. The choice of appropriate examples presupposes the very understanding of the principle we are trying to establish.

However, building a systematic, universal understanding on the one hand is very different from exercising one's judgment about particulars on the other. In the former case, one seeks what Kant calls "discursive (logical) clarity." Diskursive clarity is achieved by abstracting from the particular; it consists in a coherent understanding of the whole. This is what the philosopher (or someone with an intellectual end) aims at. To the extent that examples may get in the way of this end, it is natural that Kant should avoid relying on them in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. In the latter case, however, one seeks "intuitive (aesthetic) clarity." Intuitive clarity is achieved by carefully focusing one's attention on a particular matter presented to a person in space and time, i.e. intuition [Anschauungen]. It consists in the proper sensitivity to all of the things that matter about the object. Or, as I put the point in the previous section, intuitive clarity involves seeing a particular object (a person, an animal, an event, an action, etc.) in the right way.

And so it is the case that for the sake of intuitive or aesthetic clarity examples are indispensable. In fact, this is precisely the point that Kant is making in the section on the transcendental power of judgment mentioned earlier. The way to improve a person's judgment is not by learning new rules but by practice. Examples are the "go-carts"

\[\text{231 A xvii.}  \\
\text{232 Ibid.}  \\
\text{233 A 133/B 172.}\]
To the extent that we want to improve our judgment, we need to exercise it on different cases. An example gives us the means for doing this. To become a better judge of wine, one ought to drink a lot of different wine. To become a better judge of court cases, one ought to hear many different cases. To become a better judge of human health, one ought to treat many different patients. Now, it is certainly true that, with respect to certain activities, people may show good judgment right from a young age; in every field there are geniuses who seem to make the right judgment without requiring a lot of practice. As Kant might put it, they have the "natural talent." However, for those not so naturally talented, examples are especially necessary. And this is why Kant makes what seems to be an obvious point. After all, it is easy to deceive ourselves into thinking that good judgment can be achieved by further study, especially when we want to avoid the hard work and the embarrassment that may come with inevitable failure.

Now clearly, judgments of taste are different from those judgments that get their significance from our striving after particular ends (being a doctor, a baker, or a judge). After all, judgments of taste are not determined by any particular end. When we argue about a judgment of taste, we abstract from all the particular purposes that we may have and do not consider how the object conduces to those purposes. Instead, we consider that object in relation to what Kant calls "purposiveness without a purpose." That is to say, we consider it in relation to no end but the mere end of being human, a creature to whom

[234] A go-cart is an apparatus once used to teach kids to walk or run. Perhaps the contemporary metaphor would be training-wheels for a bicycle.
we could attribute all kinds of purposes. Those objects that we judge as beautiful are those that seem to conduce best to our overall sense of purposiveness, without privileging any particular purpose. Nevertheless, just like those judgments we make in relation to a particular end, judgments of taste can only be improved—or, as Kant puts it, "sharpened"—by exposing ourselves to examples—in this case, to those objects judged aesthetically by others. Since aesthetic judgment is concerned precisely with things as they are intuitively presented to us, it stands to reason that unless we are confronted with examples (of music, painting, flowers, etc.) upon which to practice our judgment, our taste cannot develop—no matter how advanced our understanding may be.

Still another reason why one might overlook the necessity of examples for the improvement of our judgments of taste is the worry that a reliance on examples would undermine their claim to universal agreement. If the improvement of our judgment requires that we be exposed to examples—which, by definition, are given in experience—then how can we demand that others, who may not have had the same experience as we, agree with our judgment? In response to this worry, one need only consider that our judgments of taste are not based on examples. That is to say, we do not judge something beautiful or a great work of art because we see it as similar to an object so judged by others. And while it is certainly true that we may talk about the beautiful in this way or defend an object's aesthetic value by asserting its similarity to or difference from other works of art or beautiful objects, aesthetic judgments are not mediated by reasons. A person may acknowledge that an object is similar to another object he finds

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236 A 134/B 173.
beautiful in so many ways without feeling compelled to assert that it is beautiful. The only similarity that is relevant is whether or not he finds it equally beautiful. And this is precisely what the judgment of taste asserts, immediately.²³⁷

Examples do not influence our aesthetic judgment by giving us evidence but by giving us a model. That is to say, they do not give us data from which we are compelled to draw a certain conclusion. Rather, they show us what can be done. If a work of art—or even an object of natural beauty—impacts our taste, it does not show us that we were wrong in our previous aesthetic judgments. Instead, it shows us what is possible and thereby helps us see objects we previously evaluated in a new light. Without examples, we would not be forced to try new things or consider the possibility that there are other ways of thinking about, and creating, the beautiful. Examples are so necessary because they provide a contrast by which we can assess and articulate the value of those works of art—as well as natural beauties—that we like. Indeed, without a clear contrast—either physically in front of us or merely in our imaginations—we may no longer be impressed by an object that in another situation deeply moved us. To appreciate this point, imagine a museum full of beautiful paintings. In relation to each other, each painting may appear rather ordinary. Their beauty is not fully apparent unless one compares them to paintings or other relevantly similar objects outside of the museum. Moreover, if I come across a still more beautiful painting in the context of the museum, I may suddenly look at the other paintings with a touch of dissatisfaction. All of these artworks upon which I

²³⁷ As before, comparing judgments of taste to judgments of those practicing a certain trade is helpful. Both the craftsman whose expertise is a natural talent and the craftsman whose expertise is a product of great practice will pronounce their judgment about an object of their trade with the same expectation that others agree with them. The fact that one person required an abundance of examples to develop his expertise does not make his judgment any less valid than that of the prodigy.
exercise my judgment are examples, which, for the development of our taste, sketch the parameters of what is possible.

Those great works of art and objects of natural beauty regarded as canonical are examples that challenge and invite us at the same time. They challenge us by making us reconsider the value of those objects we already judge to be beautiful. A young poet laboring in the solitude of his study and admired by a small but sympathetic audience may be demoralized when he discovers the work of a truly great poet. All of a sudden, his poetry may appear much less impressive than before. At the same time, the poet could see this new poetry as an invitation. For the judgment that his poetry appears inferior to this new poetry is not one he is compelled to accept through reasons, including the fact that people esteem this other poetry higher than his own. Instead, he makes this judgment entirely of his own accord, albeit with a sense of regret. It is one thing to be told that a work of art is great when you cannot see what is special about it; it is quite another thing to see its greatness for yourself. To the extent that the poet has accepted the superiority of this new poetry, he has at the same time discovered a creative source or potential within himself of which he was formerly unaware. Of course, this new work cannot tell him precisely what needs to be done in order to improve his poetry. However, it can tell him that more can be done. And to the extent that he wants to be a better poet, more should be done.

One of the places where Kant is most explicit about the impact of examples on judgments of taste is section 32 of the Critique of Judgment. In this section, Kant argues that classical models [Muster] may influence our judgment without undermining the
autonomy of our judgments of taste.\textsuperscript{238} If we looked at models as giving us rules to follow in our creation or criticism of art, then indeed we could not wholeheartedly declare our judgments of taste our own. For we would be deferring to the judgment of another, a person who, given the particular context in which he was working, saw fit to create something a certain way. However, we ought not look at the work of others as matter for "imitation" \textit{[Nachahmung]}; we ought rather to look at it as matter for "succession" \textit{[Nachfolge]}\textsuperscript{239}. Shakespeare, for example, is deservedly studied by those who want to become better writers. However, one errs if he thinks he can create great poetry simply by replicating those external characteristics that mark Shakespeare's work. One does better to follow his example and, with the forms and matter unique to his time and place, to aim to realize his own potential as a poet.

This section of the \textit{Critique of Judgment} is particularly important in that here Kant reveals the importance of judgments of taste to his broader critical project. \textit{All} judgments, even those "of reason," are built on the models of others. Every one of our "faculties and talents," Kant writes, is "in need of the examples \textit{[Beispiele]} of what in the progress of culture has longest enjoyed approval if it is not quickly to fall back into barbarism and sink back into the crudity of its first attempts."\textsuperscript{240} Judgments of taste, because they are "not determinable by means of concepts and precepts," simply make this reliance on examples especially apparent.\textsuperscript{241} By carefully considering the way examples

\textsuperscript{238} 5: 282.
\textsuperscript{239} 5: 283.
\textsuperscript{240} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{241} Ibid.
influence our judgments of taste, we are better able to see their impact on all of our judgments. Kant sketches this general impact when he writes,

There is no use of our powers at all, however free it might be, and even of reason (which must draw all its judgments from the common source a priori), which, if every subject always had to begin entirely from the raw predisposition of his own nature, would not fall into mistaken attempts [fehlerhafte Versuche] if others had not preceded him with their own, not in order to make their successors into mere imitators, but rather by means of their method to put others on the right path for seeking out the principles in themselves and thus for following their own, often better, course.242

In saying that without the models of others we would fall into "mistaken attempts," Kant does not mean that our works (as mathematicians, natural scientists, artists, etc.) would be flawed or incorrect. Clearly, even with examples our work is often very flawed. Instead, what Kant seems to be saying is that our use of our faculties (including reason) would be "substandard" or "defective" in the sense that we would not be acting, as human beings, to the best of our ability.243 If this is right, then we clearly have an incentive to pay close attention in everything that we do to that which is loved, esteemed, and studied by others.

The idea that without examples the use of all our faculties would "fall into mistaken attempts" [fehlerhafte Versuche] is not an empty counter-factual. Rather, it expresses a very real tendency that we have whenever we argue with someone and try to persuade him or her of our point of view. No matter what the object of disagreement is, it is easy to think—especially when we feel certain about the rightness of our position—

242 Ibid.
243 In my view, "substandard" or "defective" would be better translations of "fehlerhaft." These are consistent with the German and avoid the awkward English expression "mistaken attempt." The term 'mistake' would be better suited to a determinate result (such as a calculation), which Kant does not seem to be referring to here.
that a person who disagrees with us is overlooking something. In such cases, we encourage the person to look at the object more carefully and we point out facts that hopefully provide the missing piece of the puzzle. And while this may be effective in certain circumstances, more often our disagreement is too deep to be dissolved in this way. What I regard as clear cut evidence may not be able to play that same role for the other person. After all, whatever it is I point out—whatever word, mathematical symbol, element of a painting, physical gesture, etc.—is only noticeable by me because of a context in which it makes a difference. So long as this context is not one that another person shares or can imagine, then pointing out this element will not help.

Examples are so valuable because they provide a kind of necessary touchstone enabling us to harmonize our seemingly opposed judgments in argumentation with each other. Of course, they cannot tell us who is right or arbitrate our disputes; if they did that, then we would not have any problem in the first place. However, they are very effective in revealing our differences with others and helping us understand the nature of our disagreement. Regardless of where our disagreement is located—in mathematics, natural science, taste, morals—we cannot settle particular disputes without making a concerted effort to understand how another person looks at the world. If you do not like the particular music that I like, I need to know what kind of music you do like. If you deny that the shortest distance between two points is a straight line, I need to know how you understand the concepts of straight and point. If you do not think that it is ever lawful to kill a living being, I need to have a better sense of what you mean by law and life. In emphasizing the need for examples, Kant is expressing the limitations of our own
articulateness. It is not for nothing that somebody has said something that we find absurd or repulsive. We do well to remember how hard it can be to express clearly the point we want to make. Consequently, we need examples to help us understand what motivated a person to express a point a certain way or take a position that we find objectionable.

By refusing to take seriously the examples or work of others (no matter what the scope of activity) we violate, as it were, the principle of judgment: the principle of the purposiveness of nature. After all, the principle of the purposiveness of nature states that we must look at the world as if it were designed for us; in other words, we must see the world as according with our purpose as a certain kind of creature—a human being—hence the German "Zweckmäßigkeit" or "end-measuredness." It is exceedingly tempting to pay attention only to that with which we are most familiar. This attitude constitutes a lack of belief that the world is fully conducive to our purpose, at least the world beyond our narrow concerns. We restrict our attention to the sciences we understand, the activities we partake in, and the art and beautiful objects that we most enjoy. And while this way of living is perfectly consistent with a coherent experience and even a meaningful life, the full range of our faculties remains undeveloped. This does not thereby make our particular judgments wrong or mistaken. After all, the truth of our judgments depends upon the end to which we are striving. However, our way of thinking as a whole [Denkungsart] will remain, as we saw in the last chapter, narrow. In order to overcome this condition and develop a "broad-minded way of thinking" [eine erweiterte Denkungsart], we ought to look carefully at the world around us, being sensitive to the

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244 5: 295.
truth in everything that we see, especially that which frightens or mystifies us. This truth we will only see clearly provided we abstract from our individual ends and other "subjective private conditions of the judgment" and put ourselves "into the standpoint of others." 245

IV. Conclusion

In judgments of taste, we can see more clearly the fundamental autonomy of our judgment. Without having rules to arbitrate our disagreement, it is harder to deflect our unique responsibility for them. In order to resolve disagreement about aesthetic matters, we must reflect on our own purposive behavior to consider whether an inordinate commitment to some end is preventing us from taking the proper enjoyment in some object. In order to modify our judgments—and bring them in line with others—we must do more than reason over that object. We must make an active effort to modify our lives, to seek out new ends or pursue neglected ends with more vigor. For this reason, aesthetic disagreement is not something that can be resolved quickly. It requires continual work. Examples are so essential to this process because they provide touchstones upon which we can try our judgment. When we like the same object as another, we have the sense that, in our broader lives (that is, beyond our beholding of the object), we get on together. 246

245 Ibid.
246 Of course, this is by no means proof that we get on together. There could be all kinds of ways in which our purpose-guided activity is at odds with others. Nevertheless, this feeling is very significant as it sketches for us what is possible and what may be reasonably hoped for in all of our activity.
But this autonomy that we can see so easily in judgments of taste is no less present in any of our judgments. For a judgment can only be said to be our judgment if we can say that it comes from us and that we are responsible for it (which is implied by the very possibility that we could be commended or faulted for it). In cognitive judgments, it is easy to think we cannot help but see something a certain way on the ground that some rule compels us. This, as it were, obscures the autonomy of our judgment. In truth, we must freely make the determination that the rule applies to the particular case in the first place. In practical terms, this means we think our understanding—with the rules that it contains—is fit for the case and that we can count on its results. Normally, we don’t remark upon this use of our judgment except in those cases we regard as exceptional—where it seems that the ordinary, common understanding is stretched to its limits. But in fact we are always applying our judgment. For any case it is possible that some factor has escaped our notice and counting on our understanding would only lead us astray. Our determination that this is not one of those instances—that it is an “easy case”—is itself our judgment. But because we do not take such a determination to set us apart from others, we do not think of it as our judgment. For we do not see ourselves as more right or wrong than anyone else. For better or worse, our activity harmonizes with those around us.

We display poor judgment not when we misrepresent something or draw the wrong inference. It is quite possible to do either and still show good judgment. Indeed, our cognitive faculties—our imagination, understanding, even our sensibility—frequently mislead us in cases where it would be inappropriate to accuse us of displaying poor
judgment. The blame we must not put in the cognitive faculties themselves; indeed, often times we are misled only because our cognitive faculties are so well-developed. The person with a fine understanding, powerful imagination, or acute perceptual ability could be deceived in a way that another person without such well-developed faculties would not. What makes us guilty of bad judgment is the use that we make of these faculties. We apply our faculties in a way that does not realize the system of ends that we have as human beings and that we share with one another. Since we are so often mistaken about the way our ends are most fully realized, it is often the case that good judgment comes from doing that which, for various reasons, few would be willing to do.
CHAPTER FIVE: Representational Views of Judgment

I. Explaining Judgments of Taste

In the previous chapter, I tried to show why Kant distinguishes aesthetic judgments from cognitive judgments in the third *Critique*. By seeing judgments of taste as distinct from theoretical and moral judgments, we are able to see more clearly an important presupposition of judgment generally: our capacity to represent the world as according to our end—what Kant calls our sense of "purposiveness" [*Zweckmäßigkeit*]. Without looking at the world in this way, we could not argue about aesthetic matters, which cannot be resolved by simple discursive reasoning or disputation. If a person disagrees with my assessment that an object is beautiful or a great work of art, I cannot prove him wrong by adducing evidence or citing rules. What I can do is encourage the person to look at the object in a new way whereby he finds satisfaction in it on his own accord. As I argued in the previous chapter, I can do little more than provide the person with various examples and allow him to apply his own judgment. If we ultimately come to agree about the object’s aesthetic value, this does not mean so much that we *think* the same thing about the object. More so, we *feel* the same way about the object. For both of us, the object will be seen as harmonizing with our full range of ends as human beings. Consequently, we feel as though we get on together even though our understanding and interests may be very different from each other.

Under my reading, judgment consists in the use we make of our cognitive faculties and the way we develop our potential as a human being. It does not consist in the production of a representation that may or may not correspond to an object. We
display good judgment when, regardless of the scope of our cognitive powers, we make the most of them. We seek out ends that are worthy of our concern without at the same time abnegating our responsibility for other important ends. In this way, we notice the things that we should notice (when we should notice them) while not being distracted by those things that are less deserving of our attention. To be guilty of poor judgment would be to pursue some end in such a way that we neglected other ends one could reasonably expect us to promote. This poor judgment is made manifest in our failure to recognize what is most relevant to our activity as a human being, a failure that might be apparent to everyone but ourselves.

Now by all this, I do not mean to suggest that correctly judging something to be beautiful means pursuing the appropriate end (over other ends we could otherwise be pursuing). Judgments of taste, like all judgments, are not acts. That is to say, they are not done for the sake of our ends. However, they are implied by our acts and are, in a certain sense, the consequence of our end-seeking behavior. Because of our pursuit of different ends in our lives, an object to be judged aesthetically will stand out to us in a certain way. In some cases, we may fail to notice something important about that object because we are over- or under-committed to some end. This will cause us to like the object more or less than we should. Accordingly, we fail to see the way that the object truly inhibits or promotes our purposes as a human being. A beautiful object is one that accords with the full range of our ends without inhibiting the needs of any particular end that we have. Consequently, all of our faculties—our understanding, imagination, reason, and sensibility—are harmoniously engaged in a way which, though rare, is always possible.
Kant describes this situation as the “quickening” or “enlivening” [Belebung]\textsuperscript{247} of the faculties.

In contrast to this view of judgment is one in which judgments occur within us and stand in relation to the object judged. According to this picture, judgments are, as it were, private mental occurrences, which each person may know through careful introspection but only may be inferred by others. Here, judgments are something like internal events, which occur in a kind of private time sequence. The truth of such judgments depends upon their appropriateness in respect of the object judged. If a judgment is deemed inappropriate in respect of some object, then we must look inwards in order to see where we went wrong. What caused us, we may ask, to respond in this way? Why did we judge some object to be beautiful when it is not beautiful, or an action to be good when it is not good? What did we fail to notice about the object and why did we fail to notice it? Unlike the purposive picture of judgment that I sketched above, according to which judgments are expressions of our agency, judgments under this representational picture are things that, at least in the first instance, happen to us. In order to correct our judgments, we must attend to the mechanism that gives rise to them.

It is easy to read Kant as holding such a view of judgment. Kant often speaks of judgments of taste as the product of our cognitive faculties—specifically the imagination and understanding—working together in harmony. By talking in this way, Kant could be understood as saying that certain activities are taking place within us and that poor judgment occurs when our faculties fail to coordinate properly. Judgment falters just as a

\textsuperscript{247} Cf. 5: 219, 222, 316.
car would when some internal process malfunctions. Here the relevant processes would be the activities of the imagination, the understanding, and sensation. Under this picture, poor judgment occurs when these systems fail to act properly at the right moment.

In this chapter, I would like to consider three different readings of the *Critique of Judgment* that suggest such a picture of judgment. Each of them presents Kant as offering an explanation of how judgments of taste come about. While they each differ from one another in important respects, they share the point of view that judgments take place within us and that we have a kind of privileged access to them over others through introspection. Compare this picture to the one whereby judgments consist in the choices that we make in navigating the world and realizing our purposes. Here judgment consists not in the activity of our cognitive faculties operating of their own accord and to their own ends, but in our choices to use our different faculties (or skills or talents) to seek out our end as a human being among other human beings who share the same end.

In order to bring out this representational picture of judgment, I would like to examine a particularly difficult, yet important passage of the *Critique of Judgment*. This is section 9 of the Analytic of the Beautiful, which Kant describes as the "key to the critique of taste, and hence worthy of full attention." This is a notoriously dark passage which has given rise to very different interpretations by commentators. I will focus my attention on the readings of Paul Guyer, Hannah Ginsborg, and Henry Allison. While each of these readings has its own virtues, they are all marked by different problems, both logical and textual. As I will try to show, they are united by a tendency to treat judgments

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248 5: 216.
of taste as private mental acts deserving of explanation. Until one overcomes this tendency, it is hard to identify the special normativity of judgments of taste and, consequently, the normativity of all judgment.

II. The Key to the Critique of Taste

Kant presents section 9 of the Analytic of the Beautiful as an answer to the following question: "whether in the judgment of taste the feeling of pleasure precedes the judging of the object or the latter precedes the former." This question follows upon Kant's statement that in a judgment of taste, we declare the beautiful as an object of "universal satisfaction." When we judge something beautiful, we do not just say that I should like it; we say that everyone should like it. In this way, judgments of taste are distinct from judgments of the agreeable, whereby we assert merely a private liking. Kant describes this unique feature of the judgment of taste as its "subjective universality."

The question about the relationship between the feeling of pleasure and the judging of the object is raised in anticipation of a worry about this claim: how can we expect universal agreement about a judgment not based on objective concepts but instead based on a subjective capacity to feel pleasure or displeasure? By raising this question about the precedence between the judgment and the pleasure, Kant is implying that there are two ways of thinking about aesthetic judgment. Under one understanding, there

\[^{249}\text{Ibid.}\]
\[^{250}\text{5: 211.}\]
\[^{251}\text{For more on the distinction between judgments of taste and judgments of the agreeable, see section 1 of chapter 3.}\]
\[^{252}\text{5:212.}\]
certainly would be a conflict and the claim to universal agreement would be absurd. However, under another understanding, there would be no conflict.

Kant begins section 9 by describing the first way of thinking about aesthetic judgment, according to which we think of the pleasure as preceding the judging of the object. If this is how we understood judgments of taste, then we could not make sense of their claim to universal agreement. As he puts it,

>If the pleasure in the given object came first, and only its universal communicability were to be attributed [zuerkennen] in the judgment of taste to the representation of the object, then such a procedure would be self-contradictory. For such a pleasure would be none other than mere agreeableness in sensation, and hence by its very nature could have only private validity, since it would immediately depend on the representation through which the object is given.

While the meaning of this passage is by no means self-evident, the general point seems to be this: it does not make any sense to say that we first feel pleasure and then say that an object is beautiful on the basis of that pleasure. Since this pleasure has merely private significance—it is what I feel as some object is presented to me—then I would essentially be saying that everyone should find the object beautiful on the basis of my pleasure. That would not be a presumptuous thing to assert; it would simply be, as Kant says, "self-contradictory."

For Kant, who takes the conferring [zuerkennen] of universal communicability of pleasure to be a defining feature of the judgment of taste, we are compelled to see the

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253 Both Guyer/Matthews and Pluhar translate zuerkennen as 'attribute'. Bernard translates it as 'acknowledge'. 'Acknowledge' is preferable since it implies a right and is more normative. 'Attribute', on the other hand, implies that the universal validity of the pleasure is caused by the representation. However, what Kant wants to express is that the universal validity of the pleasure is conferred (rightly) upon the representation just as an award is given to a person by a jury.

254 5: 217 (Kant's emphasis).
judgment as having a different relationship to the pleasure. He describes this relationship as follows,

Thus it is the universal capacity for the communication of the state of mind in the given representation which, as the subjective condition of the judgment of taste, must serve as its [the judgment of taste's] ground and have the pleasure in the object as a consequence.  

In other words, only if the judgment of taste had as its ground something else—specifically "the universal capacity for the communication of the state of mind" [die allgemeine Mitteilungsfähigkeit des Gemütszustandes] or, as he says a little bit later, simply the state of mind [Gemütszustand]—and the pleasure were its consequence, would the contradiction be avoided.

Ever since the publication of the Critique of Judgment, these lines have caused perplexity among its readers. In what way does this constitute the judgment's preceding the pleasure? Kant seems to be saying different things. On one hand, he says that the "universal capacity for the communication of the state of mind" [die allgemeine Mitteilbarkeit des Gemütszustandes] (or simply the "state of mind" itself) is the ground for the judgment of taste, not the pleasure. But on the other hand, he says that the pleasure is the consequence not of the judgment but of the state of mind itself. That seems very different than saying that the judgment precedes the pleasure.

Unsurprisingly, there have been many attempts to clarify or perhaps even rescue Kant's meaning in this passage. Often times these interpretations are even darker than the original text. Reading the many conflicting interpretations even of those most

\[\text{\footnotesize 255 Ibid.}\]
sympathetic to Kant, one is almost tempted to give up on the work entirely. Roger Scruton's opinion that the third *Critique* was the product of one whose "mastery of argument and of the written word was beginning to desert him" is probably not uncommon among Kant scholars.\(^\text{256}\) To me, this seems like an overreaction. While it is true that Kant does himself no favors with his style of writing, we should not be surprised if he struggles at times to make an important but difficult point. We do well to remember that Kant is involved in a larger critical project and is not simply offering an independent theory of taste.

I would now like to consider three commentators who offer different readings of Kant on judgments of taste. Each of these commentators—Paul Guyer, Hannah Ginsborg, and Henry Allison—is sympathetic to Kant. Each has devoted considerable energy trying to read the *Critique of Judgment* in a favorable light. Standing their commentaries against each other is particularly instructive since each offers a different interpretation of the section Kant claims is the "key to the critique of taste." After I have examined their interpretations of this section, I will offer my own in the next, and last chapter. There I will hope to show that a fundamentally different approach can do better justice to this section and eliminate some, if not all, of the darkness.

III. Paul Guyer: Two Acts of Reflection

A prime example of someone who sees Kant as offering an explanation of judgments of taste is Paul Guyer. In *Kant and the Claims of Taste*, Guyer argues that for

\[^{256}\text{Roger Scruton, } \textit{Kant: A Very Short Introduction}, 97.\]
Kant, a judgment of taste is composed of two "conceptually distinct acts of the faculty of reflective judgment." First, there is what Guyer calls the act of "simple reflection." In the act of simple reflection, the judging subject "non-intentionally" reflects on the manifold of intuition in such a way that he is brought into a mental state of the harmony of his cognitive faculties. As Guyer reads Kant, this is necessary for any cognition, and corresponds to the first two steps of the three-fold synthesis that Kant articulates in the A edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. This is an aim of cognition the achievement of which, because it is not guaranteed, produces a feeling of pleasure. In the second act of reflection that makes up judgments of taste, the subject reflects on the feeling of pleasure and the situation in which it is produced. If he believes that the pleasure is not caused by an interest in the object but is instead the product of a subjective condition necessary for cognition in general, then he declares that the object is beautiful and expects others to agree with him. Such a second act of reflection is necessary, since Kant believes—according to Guyer—that all "feelings of pleasure are qualitatively identical."

As Guyer notes, Kant does not mark this distinction between these two acts of reflection with a consistent terminology. Nevertheless, Guyer finds it appropriate to attribute this distinction to Kant because of the various passages in which he seems to refer to different acts of reflective judging: "one, the 'unintentional' reflection which produces the pleasure of aesthetic response; the other, that further and quite possibly

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257 Paul Guyer, *Kant and the Claims of Taste*, 97.
258 Ibid.
259 Guyer, 76.
260 Guyer, 75.
261 Guyer, 104.
262 Guyer, 98.
intentional exercise of reflective judgment which leads to an actual judgment . . .

Guyer points to section VII of the published introduction as evidence for this view. Here, Guyer argues, Kant is referring to both kinds of reflective judgment side by side. First, Kant describes what Guyer calls "simple reflection," which has pleasure as its consequence:

If pleasure is connected with the mere apprehension (apprehensio) of the form of an object of intuition without a relation of this to a concept for a determinate cognition, then the representation is thereby related not to the object, but solely to the subject, and the pleasure can express nothing but its suitability to the cognitive faculties that are in play in the reflecting power of judgment, insofar as they are in play, and thus merely a subjective formal purposiveness of the object.²⁶⁴

Presumably, the 'its' [desselben] here refers to the object which is deemed to be suitable "to the cognitive faculties that are in play" without the apprehension of the form of the object being governed by a determinate concept. In saying that pleasure "expresses" this suitability, Kant could be seen as suggesting that pleasure is a consequence of this "apprehension of the form of the object." Now further on in this same section, Kant describes what Guyer sees as a different kind of reflecting, one which takes a different object:

That object the form of which (not the material aspect of its representation, as sensation) in mere reflection on it (without any intention of acquiring a concept from it) is judged as the ground of a pleasure in the representation of such an object—*with its representation this pleasure is also judged to be necessarily combined*, consequently not merely for the subject who apprehends this form but for everyone who judges at all.²⁶⁵

²⁶³ Guyer, 97.
²⁶⁴ 5: 189-90.
²⁶⁵ 5: 190 (my italics).
Unlike the previous act of "simple reflection," this act of judging does seem to have pleasure as its object. For Kant seems to be suggesting that the pleasure is judged as necessarily connected with the representation of the object. For Guyer, this amounts to the subject's determination that the pleasure is caused by our judging the form of the object in simple reflection. This determination, made through reflective judgment, is what makes the subject claim that the pleasure is valid for all.

According to Guyer, unless we make this distinction between two kinds of reflective judgment, Kant's position cannot make any sense. This is because he sees Kant as treating the feeling of pleasure "as both the product of judgment and the ground of determination for judgment." If there were only one act of judgment, then "this would be to say that the same feeling of pleasure both succeeded, as its product, and yet preceded, as its evidence or ground a single judgment." For Guyer, such a state of affairs would be patently absurd.

Whether or not this claim is in fact absurd depends on how one understands a judgment of taste. For Guyer, a judgment of taste is a "mental act with a particular propositional content—the assertion of the intersubjective validity of a given pleasure—which is clearly distinguishable from both the feeling of pleasure that is its subject and the production of that pleasure." Accordingly, Guyer sees pleasure in judgments of taste as "both the evidence for and the subject of the further act of the faculty of judgment which leads to the judgment of taste." However, treating pleasure as evidence and the

266 Guyer, 99.
267 Ibid.
268 Guyer, 97.
269 Guyer, 99.
judgment of taste as a "conscious conclusion"\textsuperscript{270} is very problematic. For one thing, it is hard to see how argument about judgments of taste could be significant. For if my judgment is equivalent to my claim that an object has caused me a certain kind of pleasure—one that is caused by my cognitive faculties working together in a special way—then what would it mean for someone to disagree with me? Is the person denying that the pleasure was in fact caused by the harmony of the faculties? If so, then on what basis would he make such a claim? Presumably, it would be on the basis of external factors that were equally available to both of us. If this is what our argument amounted to, then it would seem to be an empirical matter that hardly qualified as aesthetic. Certainly, it would not be necessary that the other person felt pleasure or displeasure for the object. If, on the other hand, his disagreement amounted to the fact that he felt differently about the object than I, then it would not be clear how we were arguing. For while I was claiming that my pleasure was a certain kind, he would be claiming that his pleasure was a certain kind. But neither of us would be claiming anything that would be significant—because it could not be challenged—to the other person.

From a purely textual point of view, Guyer's reading of Kant is hard to reconcile in the context of section 9. For the question that Kant wants to address is whether or not the pleasure precedes or follows the judging of the object. As Kant makes clear in the first paragraph, so long as the pleasure precedes the judging, it can have only private validity and be none other than "agreeableness in sensation." But according to Guyer's reading, the feeling of pleasure still precedes the judgment of taste. The only

\textsuperscript{270} Guyer, 101.
complication that Kant introduces is that this pleasure is caused by a logically distinct form of reflective judgment. This would be an awkward way to distinguish judgments of taste from judgments of the agreeable, which would seem to be part of Kant's aim in the present section.

A further textual problem is that Guyer's reading conflicts with Kant's claim that the "the universal capacity for the communication of the state of mind" has pleasure as its consequence. For Guyer, the claim to universality is made after one reflects on how the pleasure is caused. If one judges, in the second act of reflection, that the pleasure is caused by the free play of the imagination and understanding and nothing else, then one is entitled to demand that others feel the same way. But Kant seems to say that the claim to universality implicit in the judgment is there from the very beginning—in what Guyer calls the first act of reflection. Guyer acknowledges this problem and proposes two possible explanations. According to the first explanation, Kant allowed an earlier view about aesthetic pleasure to creep into his exposition.\footnote{Guyer, 139.} A point that Kant has frequently made is that "the universal communicability of a feeling" causes pleasure.\footnote{See note 20 on page 368 of his translation with Eric Matthews of the \textit{Critique of Judgment}.} In other words, we enjoy being able to share our feelings with each other, a point Kant makes again later on in \textit{Critique of Judgment}.\footnote{See section 41, "On the empirical interest in the beautiful."} Perhaps, Guyer offers, Kant's hastiness to complete the work led him to include this in section 9 as well. Guyer's second explanation, which is no less unflattering, is that Kant simply conflated the two acts of
reflection. For someone who declared section 9 to be the key to the entire critique of taste, either of these occurrences would constitute a big oversight.

IV. Hannah Ginsborg: The Self-Reflective Nature of Judgments of Taste

Although Guyer commends Kant for providing an explanation of aesthetic response "which invokes no faculties beyond those required for knowledge in general . . . and which also frees aesthetic response from particularities of use and interest," he denies that Kant's attempt to justify the claim to the agreement of others—its universal validity—is successful.274 As he sees it, Kant shows judgments of taste to be no more than a "qualified prediction of aesthetic response under ideal circumstances."275 For as Guyer reads Kant, a person who has judged something to be beautiful has merely expressed the claim that his feeling of pleasure for an object is caused by his "simply reflecting" on the raw form of the object, a mental activity that is supposed to be necessary for any cognition. Yet, even if we are not mistaken in this claim, it could not imply that others should also feel pleasure for the same object—and that we are entitled to demand that they do. As Guyer sees it, Kant does not provide any convincing arguments why individuals should "simply reflect" in the same way. And so he concludes, "We may not be able to say that everyone will find a given object beautiful, or, as Kant supposes, that everyone should find it so; but his theory certainly allows us to say that anyone could find it beautiful."276 This would be undeniably a disappointing result.

274 Guyer, 289.
275 Guyer, 288.
276 Ibid.
Many people unhappy with this negative assessment of Kant's attempt to justify the a priori claim of a judgment of taste have taken issue with Guyer's treatment of aesthetic pleasure as a brute sensation caused by the harmony of the imagination and understanding. For them, aesthetic pleasure is better characterized as consciousness of the harmony of the faculties, whereby the harmony of the faculties is directly sensed, not inferred from a sensation. If Kant were read in this way, there would be no need to posit a further act of reflection meant to determine whether the pleasure for a beautiful object is universally communicable. The feeling of pleasure simply is the awareness that our mental faculties are working together in a harmonious relationship.

That Kant thinks of aesthetic pleasure as the immediate consciousness of the harmony of the faculties finds support in the text. In section 12, for example, he writes that "the consciousness of the merely formal purposiveness in the play of the cognitive powers of the subject in the case of a representation through which an object is given is the pleasure itself . . . ." As Kant goes on to note in this paragraph, this pleasure may occur without our seeing the object as serving a determinate private end (as the agreeable) or a rational end (as the good). Instead, the object displays merely a formal purposiveness. It seems as if it were designed for no other purpose than our mere contemplation of it. We feel, as it were, our cognitive faculties in harmony with each other as the object is sensibly presented to us.

277 Richard Aquila argued for this position in 1979 and is referred to by Guyer in his book. Since then, Hannah Ginsborg, Henry Allison, and most recently Rachel Zuckert have held similar views about the feeling of pleasure.
278 5: 222 (my emphasis).
Other textual support for this claim—that the pleasure of judgments of taste plays an evaluative role instead of simply being the product of a certain activity of the mental faculties—can be found in the First Moment of the Analytic of the Beautiful. Here Kant distinguishes aesthetic judgments from cognitive judgments. The distinguishing feature is presented as the feeling of pleasure, which serves to evaluate the object without actually adding anything to our cognition of the object. To illustrate this distinction, Kant contrasts a person's grasping "a regular, purposive structure with one's faculty of cognition" with his "being conscious of this representation with the sensation of satisfaction." In the former case, one may judge an object as measuring up well or poorly to determinate ends; how one feels about the object is irrelevant to such a judgment. In the latter case, one judges the object precisely in virtue of the way that it affects our feeling of pleasure or displeasure. As Kant puts it,

> Here the representation is related entirely to the subject, indeed to its feeling of life, under the name of the feeling of pleasure or displeasure, which grounds an entirely special faculty for discriminating and judging that contributes nothing to cognition but only holds the given representation in the subject up to the entire faculty of representation, of which the mind becomes conscious in the feeling of its state.

This passage suggests that the feeling of pleasure is more complex than the opaque feeling Guyer describes, the content of which is only revealed by reflection on its causal history. Kant seems to be saying that pleasure is essentially evaluative and not a

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279 Sections 1 through 5.
280 5: 204.
281 Ibid. (my emphasis)
282 Other passages in support of this "intentional" reading include FI: 227, 228, and 230.
sensation qualitatively identical to all other pleasures, whose origin we assert upon reflection on its circumstances.

However, the idea that aesthetic pleasure consists in the direct awareness of the faculties harmonizing with each other may seem to run into a problem in section 9. For Kant has said that it is the "universal capacity for the communication of the state of mind in the given representation which, as the subjective condition of the judgment of taste, must serve as its ground and have the pleasure in the object as a consequence." If one takes pleasure itself to be our consciousness of the harmony of the faculties, then this would appear to imply circularity. For it is natural to think that the state of mind that is universally communicable in our experience of the beautiful is the feeling of pleasure. But then, if one takes the state of mind to which Kant is referring to be the feeling of pleasure itself, it would seem as if Kant is implying that when we judge something to be beautiful, pleasure is the awareness of the universal communicability of aesthetic pleasure.

As Henry Allison notes, the standard response to this worry is to distinguish between two acts of judging: the "judging of the object" [die Beurteilung des Gegenstandes] and the "judgment of taste" [Geschmacksurteil]. This is precisely the move taken by Guyer, for whom pleasure is a mere sensation and not a form of consciousness. A quite different approach is taken by Hannah Ginsborg. She too sees

\[\text{Footnotes:}\]
\[283\text{ Allison, }\text{Kant's Theory of Taste, }112.\]
\[284\text{ Other people who have taken this approach include Donald Crawford, Heiner Klemme, and Claudio La Rocca. A separate approach has been taken by Beatrice Longuenesse, who sees judgments of taste as involving two separate pleasures: the pleasure in the harmony of the faculties and the pleasure one takes in the universal communicability of this pleasure. See }\text{Kant on the Human Standpoint, }278.\]
Kant as implying a circular account of aesthetic pleasure. However, unlike those who would explain away this feature of judgments of taste, she embraces it as a crucial feature of Kant's account of aesthetic experience. As she puts it, "There is only a single act of judgment required for a judgment of taste: one which is responsible, both for the feeling of pleasure in the object, and for the claim that the feeling of pleasure is universally valid."  

According to Ginsborg, the pleasure felt in relation to a beautiful object "can embody a claim to its own universal validity." This is because she sees pleasure in the beautiful as the phenomenological expression of our judging ourselves to be in a universally communicable mental state when we are confronted with a beautiful object. Here is how she represents her view:

I take my mental state in perceiving an object to be universally communicable, where my mental state is nothing other than the mental state of performing that very act of judgment, that is, of taking my mental state in the object to be universally communicable. And in addition, let us suppose that, in performing this act of judgment, I am not explicitly aware of its self-referential structure, but that my act of judgment is instead manifest to consciousness through a certain experience of pleasure. In other words, the act of self-referentially taking my mental state to be universally communicable with respect to a given object consists, phenomenologically, in a feeling of pleasure in that object.

If this is what Kant means, then we can see why he takes pleasure both to be subject to a judgment that expresses its universality as well as consequent to that judgment.

In contrast to the reading offered by Guyer, Ginsborg's reading makes better sense of Kant's claim that aesthetic judgment has as its principle that same principle that
governs reflective judgment in general, including its application in ordinary empirical cognition. The idea that we are capable of judging that our mental state is universally communicable with respect to an object is one way of responding to that worry about the infinite heterogeneity of nature that I referred to in the first chapter. As a way of reminder, consider Kant's remarks on this challenge from the first introduction to the *Critique of Judgment*.

The principle of reflection on given objects of nature is that for all things in nature empirically determined concepts can be found, which is to say the same as that in all of its products one can always presuppose a form that is possible for general laws cognizable by us. For if we could not presuppose this and did not ground our treatment of empirical representations on this principle, then all reflection would become arbitrary and blind, and hence would be undertaken without any well-grounded expectation of its agreement with nature.\(^{289}\)

According to Ginsborg, if we didn't have the capacity to determine—or make the judgment—that "our perceptual states" with respect to particular objects hold good for others, then the objectivity of all our judgment would be called into question.\(^{290}\) We would not be able to make the fundamental distinction between what, in the *Prolegomena*, Kant calls judgments of perception and judgment of experience.\(^{291}\) For Kant, a judgment of perception claims that a certain object appears a certain way to us, without implying that others should agree with us. We say, "In touching the stone, I feel warmth," and in so doing leave it open that others may not feel warmth when they touch the stone.\(^{292}\) A judgment of experience, on the other hand, makes the claim that something is a certain way independently of how it appears to me. I say, "The stone is

\(^{289}\) 20: 211-2 (Kant's emphasis).

\(^{290}\) "Reflective Judgment and Taste," 70.

\(^{291}\) *Prolegomena* §20.

\(^{292}\) R3145, 16: 678.
warm." The latter claim implies the possibility of falsification in a way that the former does not and, correspondingly, is universally communicable in a way that the former is not. Without the capacity to determine that our "perceptual state" is more than just private, all of our judgments would remain mere judgments of perception, and consequently lose any significance that they have as such.

Ginsborg stresses that our capacity for reflective judgment, and moving from the particular to the universal, is not a "psychological skill." As she puts it,

it is not some natural ability which is contingently responsible for our success in recognizing similarities and differences among objects. Rather, our being capable of empirical conceptualization is a matter of right as opposed to fact: it is a non-empirical matter of our being entitled (under appropriate circumstances) to take our own perceptual states to hold good for others and hence to demand their agreement for our perceptual judgments. 

While Ginsborg is right to emphasize the way in which reflective judgment stands more for a kind of entitlement to make certain kinds of claims rather than a "psychological skill," her statement that reflective judgment, especially in judgments of taste, is phenomenologically expressed in a feeling of pleasure seems to stand in tension with this point. For this suggests that something is happening in our mind—albeit something necessary in order to make a judgment of experience—which is then felt by us. As she puts it, a judgment of taste is made "manifest to consciousness through a feeling of pleasure." It is puzzling to me how we become aware of a judgment of taste. As I tried to argue in the previous chapter, judgments (including judgments of taste) are better

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293 Ibid.
294 "Reflective Judgment and Taste," 70.
295 "Reflective Judgment and Taste," 73.
understood as abstractions made by the philosopher trying to systematize our cognition. While there may certainly be a way in which we become aware of our own judgments of taste, this seems to be a much more complicated matter than simply becoming conscious of them through a feeling. But this seems to be what Ginsborg intends. For as she puts it, "my mental state at each moment consists in the awareness that I ought to be in that very mental state." Although Ginsborg denies that Kant's notion of reflective judgment is meant to provide a "natural psychological explanation of how we come to bring objects under concepts or to regard them as beautiful," in the end that seems to be just how she reads him.

This inclination to offer a psychological explanation of judgments of taste (and their feeling of pleasure) can be seen in the most serious problem that Ginsborg's interpretation of judgments of taste faces. As Henry Allison has pointed out, it is hard to see how Ginsborg's reading would accommodate negative judgments of taste. Because Ginsborg describes aesthetic pleasure as the expression of the reflective judgment that our mental state is universally communicable, it would seem that pleasure ought to be expressed when we judge something to be ugly or simply non-beautiful. Given the way that Ginsborg presents things, it would seem that in a negative judgment of taste, our mental state would also be universally communicable just as it is when we judge something to be beautiful. Certainly, when we judge an object to be ugly or not beautiful, we believe that a person who sees it as beautiful is in error.

296 Ibid. (my emphasis)
297 "Reflective Judgment and Taste," 68.
298 Henry Allison, Kant's Theory of Taste, 114-5.
In response to Allison's criticism that her view cannot accommodate negative judgments of taste, Ginsborg claims that negative judgments of taste are disanalogous to judgments of beauty. With regard to judgments that something is ugly, Ginsborg insists that they can never be pure in the way that judgments of beauty can be. That is to say, they can never be unmixed with interests in the same way that pure judgments of taste are.299 As she points out, Kant's examples of objects that we judge to be ugly—"the Furies, diseases, devastations of war"300—are all things that we have a practical reason to avoid. As such, she sees our judgments of them as cognitive judgments instead of aesthetic judgments of their formal purposiveness. Now Ginsborg acknowledges that there are other objects that we may judge ugly, even though we see no obvious reason to avoid them. For example, we may negatively evaluate things like jewelry, furniture, and music. However, Ginsborg regards these judgments as context-dependent in a way that judgments of beauty are not. As she puts it, we judge these things as ugly because "they fail to strike us as beautiful in situations where we take a certain degree of beauty to be called for . . . ."301

Ginsborg extends this analysis to objects that, though they do not repulse us in the way that the ugly does, are still judged to be non-beautiful. As she sees it, in these cases we do not judge an object as having a certain negative quality; instead, we "say that it is not appropriate to judge it to be beautiful."302 However, the idea that we do not judge an object to be not beautiful, we only find it inappropriate to judge it beautiful strikes me as

300 5: 312.
a needlessly complicated way of putting things. After all, under such a picture it would seem that for some objects it is really inappropriate to judge it as beautiful but for others only less so. It would seem more natural simply to describe all of these as judgments of taste with the only difference being that some make positive and others negative evaluations of the object. Given the fact that Kant talks about aesthetic judgments as concerned with either a feeling of pleasure or displeasure, it also seems to fit Kant's project better. It would be strange to think that what he really meant when making these claims is that there is, properly speaking, only one kind of judgment of taste and that a negative judgment of taste is equivalent to the "conceptual or cognitive judgment which denies that the object is one with respect to which a judgment of beauty, or a feeling of disinterested pleasure, is appropriate." 303

A related problem with this view is that in suggesting that there can be no "pure" judgments of the ugly because they are context-dependent in the way that judgments of beauty are not, Ginsborg is misrepresenting what it means for a judgment of taste to be pure. For she seems to be saying that a judgment of taste can only be pure if it is made on the basis of the object's form alone and that this is something that we can appreciate independently of context. However, it is hard to imagine how the form of an object can be evaluated independently of context since an object is necessarily given to us in a context. 304 Now it is indeed true that a judgment of beauty is not made on the basis of whether an object meets some determinate need of a context. As I have already argued, a

303 Ibid.
304 This, after all, is central to Kant's transcendental idealism, which holds that it is an illusion to think that an object exists context-independently.
judgment of taste is made merely on the basis of how some object appears to us. However, the way that an object appears—and the form that it offers for evaluation—is necessarily determined by the context. So it is hard for me to see positive and negative judgments of taste as disanalogous in the way that Ginsborg suggests.

V. Henry Allison: Pleasure as the Vehicle of the Judgment of Taste

Like Ginsborg, Allison rejects the view that aesthetic pleasure is qualitatively identical to all other pleasures and so judgments of taste require a second act of reflection to determine whether that pleasure is the product of the harmony of the faculties. Instead, he claims"... the feeling or liking in a judgment of taste is more properly regarded as the vehicle through which the harmony of the faculties is apprehended rather than as a mere causal consequence of this harmony."305 Unlike Ginsborg, however, Allison does not identify the feeling of pleasure and the judgment, inasmuch as the pleasure embodies a claim to its own universal validity.306 As we have seen, Ginsborg reads very literally Kant's claim that "it is the universal capacity for the communication of the state of mind in the given representation which, as the subjective condition of the judgment of taste, must serve as its ground and have the pleasure in the object as a consequence."307 We feel pleasure because we judge our mental state to be universally communicable. Or as she puts it herself, "The formal and self-referential judgment that one's present state of mind is universally valid, [sic] precedes the feeling of pleasure in the sense of explaining or

305 "Pleasure and Harmony in Kant's Theory of Taste," 469.
307 5: 217.
accounting for it.”\(^{308}\) Allison, on the other hand, does not see the universal validity of the mental state as the object of the judgment but more as a credential that a judgment of taste is entitled to, provided it is a purely aesthetic one.

As Allison sees it, in the problematic third paragraph of section 9, Kant’s trying to make two separate points, which he unfortunately runs together. These points are as follows:

(1) that the (subjective) universality of the liking affirmed in a judgment of beauty must be based on the universal communicability of the mental state; and (2) that the latter derives its universal communicability from its connection with a universally communicable act of judging or reflection, which, in turn, explains why this judging must (logically) precede the pleasure.\(^{309}\)

In other words, Kant is claiming that the universality of the judgment that the object is beautiful is dependent upon there being a mental state which is, at least in principle, universally communicable. Further, this mental state—in this case the harmony of the faculties—is universally communicable in virtue of the fact that it is presupposed in our capacity to make reflective judgments, which as we have seen before, is necessary for cognition in general. In summary, the universality of the mental state is not itself the object of the judgment—what the judgment is about, pace Ginsborg; rather, it is what is presupposed in making the reflective judgment.

This does seem to be a more natural way of reading this passage. As Allison sees it, Kant could have avoided confusion had he simply said that the pleasure was the consequence of a "universally communicable mental state" as opposed to the "universal

\(^{308}\) “Reflective Judgment and Taste,” 73.

\(^{309}\) Kant’s Theory of Taste, 115.
communicability of the mental state." In addition to escaping the charge of circularity, Kant would have made it easier to accommodate the possibility of negative judgments of taste, in which the feeling of displeasure was also held to be universally valid. For under this reading, we could say that the feeling of displeasure was the consequence of a free judgment of reflection, but one in which we judge that the object does not harmonize with our faculties of cognition, or even positively clashes with them when we judge something ugly. As in the case of the harmony of the faculties, it would seem fair to say that the universal communicability of this mental state—i.e. its capacity to be shared among all judging subjects—was equally presupposed by our capacity for reflective judgment. By reading section 9 in this way, we would not need to worry that because a negative judgment of taste also involves a universally communicable mental state, it too must have pleasure as its consequence.

In offering this reading of Kant, Allison distinguishes between what Kant calls the "free play of the imagination and understanding" and the "harmony of the faculties." As he sees it, the free play describes the "relation between the imagination and understanding in the act of 'mere reflection,' that is, the 'free' reflection operative in a judgment of taste, which, as the explication of the first moment indicates, can issue in either a disinterested liking or disliking." This free reflection describes our capacity to reflect on an object without being guided by a concept of what the object should be. It is a free play because the imagination, our ability to synthesize the manifold of intuition, is not restricted by any particular concept of the understanding as it is in ordinary empirical

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310 Ibid.  
311 Kant's Theory of Taste, 116.
cognition. Now for Allison, the act of free reflection need not result in a harmony of the faculties. It could easily be the case that reflection leads to a disharmony, "where the faculties hinder rather than help one another in their reciprocal tasks . . ."\(^{312}\) In such a case, the free reflection would result in a feeling of displeasure and a negative judgment of taste. However, if the object does appear as if it were made for our powers of cognition—i.e., if it pleases us without our being able to attribute that pleasure to an interest in the object—then we are in a state of a harmony of the faculties, which is the "facilitated play of both powers of the mind (imagination and understanding), enlivened through mutual agreement."\(^{313}\)

As we saw in the third chapter, a fundamental part of Allison's reading is that Kant distinguishes between pure judgments of taste and judgments of taste simpliciter (de facto judgments of taste). Allison uses this distinction to explain how we can make so-called "erroneous judgments of taste," which he regards as cases in which we wrongly demand the agreement of others—or mistakenly think that the pleasure we feel for an object is universally communicable. As we saw earlier, a judgment of taste simpliciter is one in which we actually feel pleasure for an object—and declare it to be beautiful—even though we cannot be sure that we do not have an interest in the object and are entitled to demand the agreement from others. A pure judgment of taste, on the other hand, is one in which our actual judgment of taste is not undermined by any interests in the object. As Allison sees it, the "Deduction of Judgments of Taste" that Kant offers in §39 is meant to show that a pure judgment of taste makes a justified claim to the agreement of others.

\(^{312}\) Kant's Theory of Taste, 117.  
\(^{313}\) 5 : 219.
However, because "there always remains the possibility that my judgment has been corrupted by some quirky and unnoticed liking . . . or that I have simply failed to abstract completely from the factors that I believe myself to have set aside," I can never be sure that my judgment really is pure. Hence, "I cannot say that others ought to agree with my aesthetic assessment of an object any more than I can expect (or predict) that they will."

It might seem as though Allison comes to the same conclusion as Guyer. However, there are important differences between their views. First of all, Allison believes that Kant's deduction is a success, since he thinks that Kant only intended to prove that the claim to universal validity was justified for a pure judgment of taste, not for any particular judgments of taste. Secondly, Allison has a different understanding of what it means for a judgment of taste to be undermined by an interest. Unlike Guyer, Allison does not see interests as being causes of our pleasure that we have somehow overlooked. Instead, he sees interests as reasons we have for liking an object, so that "to exclude an interest as the ground of a liking is to exclude a certain kind of reason for it (e.g., that one finds the object agreeable or morally uplifting) rather than certain possible causes." In a way, this makes Allison's view more attractive than Guyer's since it would allow for a more meaningful public discussion about the beauty of objects. Nevertheless, Allison's view is still problematic because he insists that the pleasure is caused by a harmony of the faculties and that displeasure is caused by a disharmony of the faculties.

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315 Kant's Theory of Taste, 189.
316 Kant's Theory of Taste, 180-1.
Under this view, it would seem as if we become aware of the beauty of an object through the feeling of pleasure it causes us but then our argument about its beauty involves our reflecting on the circumstances to see if we like it for no other reason than its mere form. As I argued in the previous two chapters, such a view runs counter to the way we actually argue about matters of taste.

Although Allison rejects Guyer's claim that the feeling of pleasure is the object of reflection in a judgment of taste and instead believes that pleasure is a "mode of consciousness," he does agree with Guyer that the feeling of pleasure is caused by the harmony of the faculties. As he puts it,

> The feeling of pleasure is not simply the effect of such a harmony (though it is that); it is also the very means through which one becomes aware of this harmony, albeit in a way that does not amount to cognition.\(^{319}\)

The difference in their causal readings can be understood, I think, in the following way. For Guyer, the pleasure in a judgment of taste is, at least potentially, the product of the harmony of the faculties. However, since Guyer thinks that all pleasure is qualitatively the same for Kant, there is no way to rule out the possibility that it has a different origin than the one we think. To show the way in which he regards the causal connection, Guyer uses the analogy of a mushroom cloud, which may be caused by a volcano or a nuclear bomb. If we have reason to think the volcano did not cause it, we can infer that it was caused by the bomb. And so he conceives the pleasure of judgments of taste.\(^{320}\) Under Allison's "intentional" reading of pleasure, the pleasure is caused by the harmony of the faculties.

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319 *Kant's Theory of Taste*, 54 (my emphasis).
faculties in the sense that this harmony constitutes or provides the mechanism for the pleasure. Although Allison does not provide an analogy in the way that Guyer does, we could offer one on his behalf. Pleasure would seem to be explained by the harmony of the faculties as a certain color may be explained by an object's reflecting light at a certain wavelength. Had the object not reflected light at this wavelength, we would not have seen the object as this color. Analogously, had not the object been such that it occasioned a harmony of the faculties, we would not have felt pleasure for it.

That Allison thinks about pleasure in this way is indicated when, in his book on Kant's critique of taste, he says that Kant is "unclear regarding the mechanics of this reciprocal quickening," that is, the imagination and understanding insofar as they reciprocally enliven or animate each other, "the imagination in its freedom and the understanding with its lawfulness." Allison proceeds to paraphrase Kant in a revealing way:

The basic idea is presumably that the imagination in its free play stimulates the understanding by occasioning it to entertain fresh conceptual possibilities, while, conversely, the imagination, under the general direction of the understanding, strives to conceive new patterns of order. In any event, the important thing about this mutual beneficial activity is that it is immediately felt, and this feeling is the basis for the verdict of taste that the object occasioning the activity is beautiful (or not beautiful, if the "two friends" hinder rather than enhance one another).

As we can see here, Allison does not think that the pleasure just is the judgment, as Ginsborg does. Instead, he says that the feeling is the "basis for the verdict." Elsewhere, Allison says that a judgment of taste is made "by means of a feeling" and contrasts this

321 Kant's Theory of Taste, 171 (my italics).
322 5: 287.
323 Kant's Theory of Taste, 171.
with Guyer's view that it is "about a feeling and its putative causal ancestry."\(^{324}\) At still another place, Allison says that "feeling serves as the vehicle through which we perceive the aptness or subjective purposiveness (or lack thereof) of a given representation for the proper exercise of our cognitive faculties."\(^{325}\)

For Allison, the harmony of the faculties—and the corresponding disharmony—describes the mind as it seeks its goal of cognition. Like Guyer, Allison distinguishes that activity unique to judgments of taste from that which gives rise to normal perceptual judgments on the basis that they do not result in the application of a determinate concept. As he puts it,

\[\text{\ldots the imagination, under the general direction of the understanding, provides an apprehended content that presents itself as containing 'something universal in itself,' that is, something that appears as if it were the schema or exhibition of an 'as yet undetermined concept,' albeit no concept in particular.}^{326}\]

What it means for the imagination to provide a content that has something universal without itself exhibiting a determinate concept is unclear. One might say simply that when we judge something to be beautiful, we take our pleasure to be universally communicable—in the sense that it is not unique to us—even though we are unable to ground our claim on the basis of determinate rules. However, Allison seems to mean something more technical. As he sees it, we only see something as beautiful because the imagination and understanding "serendipitously function smoothly together."\(^{327}\) Further, he says that it is only by chance that our imagination "exhibits a pattern or order (form),

\[^{324}\text{"Pleasure and Harmony in Kant's Theory of Taste," 468.}\]

\[^{325}\text{Kant's Theory of Taste, 71.}\]

\[^{326}\text{Kant's Theory of Taste, 50.}\]

\[^{327}\text{Ibid.}\]
which suggests an indeterminate number of possible schematizations (or conceptualizations), none of which is fully adequate, thereby occasioning further reflection or engagement with the object.”328 This suggests that aesthetic pleasure—and our judgment that something is beautiful—is the result of an activity of the imagination and understanding that, in contrast to its work in producing determinate cognitive judgments, fails to "exhibit the schema of a specific concept."329

Because Allison reads Kant as seeking to explain the pleasure we feel for the beautiful, his exposition comes across as speculative and mysterious. For Hannah Ginsborg, the mental activity as Allison describes it would seem more likely to result in a feeling of displeasure than a feeling of pleasure.330 After all, if we take general cognition to be our goal, and no schematization provided by the imagination is "adequate" to that goal, such an experience would seem to have the form of "frustration," not, as Kant often puts it, contemplative enjoyment.331 Then again, perhaps Allison means something different. As Ginsborg notes, Allison also says that each of the cognitive faculties “promotes the activity of the other.”332 With this language, Allison avoids the negative implication that the harmony involves the failure to apply a determinate concept. However, as long as Allison speaks of the imagination and understanding merely as mental faculties that serve cognition, it is not clear what would constitute a promotion of their activity. As Ginsborg puts the point, “it is hard to see what could drive this activity,

328 Kant's Theory of Taste, 51.
329 Ibid.
332 Kant's Theory of Taste, 171.
other than the failure of imagination and understanding to accord in some stable and
determinate conceptualization of the manifold.”

VI. Conclusion

Ginsborg presumably takes her own view to avoid such criticisms because of the
formal way in which she understands the harmony of the faculties. Unlike Guyer and
Allison, she does not try to capture anything about the "phenomenology of aesthetic
experience," other than the "sense of its own universal validity and hence of its 'rightness'
or 'appropriateness' with respect to the object perceived.” For her, Kant's discussion of
the harmony of the faculties is his way of describing our capacity to make a reflective
judgment, which she understands as “the act of taking one’s perception of the object to be
universally valid.” According to her view, pleasure is simply felt when we regard our
mental state as universally communicable, and this is true regardless of how we articulate
the functioning of the imagination and understanding in relation to each other. While she
acknowledges the fact that Kant could have made this point more explicit in places like
section 9 of the Analytic of the Beautiful, she attributes the discrepancy between her
reading and his text to the age in which he was writing, which made use of different
"modes of philosophical expression.”

But Ginsborg's view, as we have already seen, is problematic for different reasons.
Because her view of the harmony of the faculties is so formal, it would seem to imply

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334 "On the Key to Kant's Critique of Taste," 308.
335 “Reflective Judgment and Taste,” 70.
336 "On the Key to Kant's Critique of Taste," 310.
that we should feel pleasure even in those cases in which we do not. For if pleasure is our consciousness of the universality of our mental state, then why do we not also feel pleasure in those cases in which we judge that something is not beautiful. Although Kant does not say so himself, it would appear that there can be cases in which our disliking for an object is just as disinterested as when we take pleasure in a beautiful object. For example, we hear a piece of music that fails to move us or even directly repulses us, even though we cannot give any independent reason for desiring its non-existence. It is not clear why our mental state should not be universally communicable in this state but should be when we judge something beautiful. In response to this criticism, Ginsborg might have argued that the pleasure expressed in a judgment of taste ought to be understood in such a way that it is present even in those cases in which we judge that something is non-beautiful. Naturally, such a view would also face certain difficulties. In any case, Ginsborg does not respond in this way but instead argues that only judgments of beauty count as pure judgments of taste. All other judgments of taste are somehow derivative of these judgments; as she puts it they are conceptual judgments which claim that it would be inappropriate to make a judgment of beauty with respect to some object.337

Interestingly, the suggestion that it could be "inappropriate" to make a judgment of taste reveals the fundamental similarity between Ginsborg's view and those of Allison and Guyer. She too seems to regard judgments of taste as things that we do in special circumstances. For to say that a negative judgment of taste is "to make a conceptual or

cognitive judgment which denies that the object is one with respect to which a judgment of beauty . . . is appropriate” is to say that there are circumstances in which such a response is appropriate. In other words, a judgment of taste is an act, albeit a special kind of act (what one is tempted to call a mental act). Her view differs from those of Guyer and Allison in that she does not attempt to show how such a judgment comes about. Nevertheless, she does describe the act inasmuch as she identifies the feeling of pleasure and the judgment of taste itself. Or, as she puts it at one place, the judgment "consists phenomenologically in a feeling of pleasure." This sounds much the same as saying it is pleasant to judge something beautiful.

While this might seem like a natural thing to say, closer analysis reveals a deep problem. As I have argued earlier, it conflates judgments with the purposive activity that implies our judgments. While Ginsborg's view is generally useful in showing the close connection between Kant's thought on aesthetic experience and judgment in general, this picture she seems implicitly committed to prevents her from articulating the broader significance of aesthetic experience in view of Kant's larger critical project. Specifically, it does not allow us to see how aesthetic experience can reveal an answer to the question introduced at the beginning of the third Critique: how is our theoretical view of the world reconciled with our rational commitment to ends, including the highest end of reason itself?

In the next and last chapter, I will argue that it is a mistake to regard judgments of taste as feeling a certain way (whether pleasant or unpleasant). Although this might seem

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338 "On the Key to Kant's Critique of Taste,” 299.
to run contrary to much of what Kant says about judgments of taste, I will argue that there is another way to regard his account of the harmony of the faculties. Under the view that I will suggest, the faculties are better understood not as though they were distinct mental organs of which we become aware through a feeling of pleasure but as skills or abilities that we have as rational agents. In describing aesthetic pleasure as consciousness of the harmony of the imagination and understanding, Kant is articulating the human significance of the beautiful, not offering an explanation of it.
CHAPTER SIX: The Significance of the Beautiful

I. Taking Pleasure in an Object's Appearance

As I showed in the previous chapter, Guyer, Ginsborg, and Allison all give different accounts of Kant's claim in section 9 that a judgment of taste precedes the feeling of pleasure. Nevertheless, they seem to agree on two major points. First of all, they all regard judgments of taste as an act. Secondly, they all take judgments of taste as somehow explaining the feeling of pleasure that seems to characterize our experience of the beautiful. That is to say, they seem to think that if we judge something beautiful, then we must also feel pleasure for the object; alternatively, if we did not feel pleasure for an object, we could not have judged it to be beautiful. While it is understandable that Kant should be read in this way, commitment to such a picture makes it hard to appreciate his deeper point about purposive activity in general. For as I have already argued, judgments are not acts although they are indeed implied by our acts (including what we say and do). Unless we appreciate this point, it is very hard to see how an analysis of judgments of taste can reveal a principle of judgment and contribute to Kant's broader critical project.

Now, in denying that a judgment of taste explains a feeling of pleasure (or that a negative judgment of taste explains a feeling of displeasure) I do not want to suggest that the feeling of pleasure has no role to play in aesthetic experience. Indeed, it does.

339 Unsurprisingly, the phrase "act of judgment" appears frequently in their commentaries.
340 This assumption can be seen in their criticisms of each other. According to Allison, Ginsborg's view faces the problem that it cannot account for the fact that a negative judgment of taste is not also pleasant. (Henry Allison, *Kant's Theory of Taste*, 115). Ginsborg, meanwhile, criticizes Allison for interpreting Kant in such a way that fails to account for the pleasure implicit in the harmony of the faculties ("Aesthetic Judging and the Intentionality of Pleasure," 169).
However, we need to remember that, for Kant, the term "feeling of pleasure" refers first and foremost to a transcendental faculty of the mind (or soul) that stands on a par with the faculties of cognition and desire. In fact, Kant usually refers to it by its full name: the feeling of pleasure and displeasure. In chapter two, I argued that this feeling is best conceived as our capacity to represent things as according or not to our end. When we reflect on aesthetic experience, we best keep this point in mind lest problems emerge as we struggle to account for what we might be tempted to call the phenomenology of judging.

Unless we look at the feeling of pleasure and displeasure in this way, certain puzzles arise. For example, how do we explain the fact that many of our experiences of the beautiful are seemingly unpleasant? Consider, for example, a tragic play, which we may find especially beautiful even though it causes us pain or sorrow. Or, consider a moving eulogy which might be deeply beautiful even though it is painful to listen to. The Gettysburg Address is a beautiful piece of oratory though I doubt the first people who heard it thought listening to it an especially pleasing experience. A person too may strike one as beautiful, even though looking at the person fills the beholder with anguish. These are all quite common experiences that would seem to belie the claim that the judgment of taste is necessarily expressed in a feeling of pleasure.

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[^341]: Equally, we might ask why many of our experiences of things judged not beautiful are very pleasant.
[^342]: Perhaps the most striking, poetic illustration of this can be found in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, as Satan is observing Adam and Eve in Paradise for the first time: “O Hell! What do mine eyes with grief behold” (IV, 358).
[^343]: As we saw in the previous chapter, Ginsborg says that the "act of judgment is . . . manifest to consciousness through a certain experience of pleasure." ("On the Key to Kant's Critique of Taste," 299.)
Now to these cases, one might respond that a feeling of pleasure was present despite appearances. For whatever reason, the feeling was overlooked. Perhaps, one might argue, other concurrent sensations or emotions prevented one from noticing the pleasure. One might use the analogy of a person failing to hear the phone ring because of a droning lawn mower. Had the mower not been making so much noise, we would have heard the phone. Analogously, if only we had experienced the object of our aesthetic judgment in a different context—one in which we were not beset by other feelings—we would have felt pleasure for it. If, for example, I were able to read the beautiful eulogy when the pain of mourning had faded, I would experience it with a noticeable feeling of pleasure.

However, this response seems forced and highlights what is awkward about connecting an "act" of judgment with a feeling of pleasure. While it is no doubt true that looking at paintings, listening to music, watching plays, etc. can be pleasant, it is the activity of looking at paintings, listening to music, or watching plays that is so enjoyable. And just as this activity may be pleasant, so too may it be unpleasant. But this may be true even when we look at a painting, listen to a piece of music, or watch a play that we judge to be beautiful. For looking at a painting and judging the painting are categorically distinct. The first is an activity—something that we can do intentionally; the second describes our relationship to the object. It refers to, if you will, our attitude to that object, and our commitment to defend the value we attribute to it. While our judgment may
certainly be *influenced* by our activity, as well as implied by our activity, it is a mistake to identify them.\(^{344}\)

If anything, the connection between the judgment of taste and the feeling of pleasure is analytic. That is, to say that I judge some object to be beautiful just *means* that it pleases me or, more simply, that I *like* it—albeit in a certain way. Although watching a beautiful tragedy may be deeply upsetting to me, I can still say that it pleases me inasmuch as I judge it to be a beautiful play. So too might those who first heard the Gettysburg Address have suffered while listening to it despite the fact that they were pleased by the speech. In a way, Ginsborg comes very close to making this point when she identifies the judgment of taste and the pleasure. For, as I am arguing, to judge an object to be beautiful means the same as to be pleased by it (albeit in a certain way). However, Ginsborg goes too far when she says that the judgment of taste "consists phenomenologically in a feeling of pleasure."\(^{345}\) She does this, I believe, because she regards judgments of taste as a kind of act that takes place within us and which corresponds, well or poorly, to an object judged.

When Kant connects the feeling of pleasure and displeasure to a judgment of taste, he does not do so in order to describe the act of judging something to be beautiful. Rather, he does so to emphasize that in judging something to be beautiful, we do not concern ourselves with an end of the object and that the judgment is not cognitive or conceptual. Instead, we concern ourselves merely with the way that the object is

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\(^{344}\) In the *Jäsche Logic*, Kant asserts that the will has no immediate influence on judgment but allows that it may have an influence on the "*use of the understanding*, and hence mediately on conviction itself . . ." (9: 73-4). Although Kant seems to have in mind *cognitive* judgments, it would be natural to impute to him the same view with regard to *aesthetic* judgments.

\(^{345}\) "On the Key to Kant's Critique of Taste," 299.
presented to us in a particular spatial and temporal context. That is to say, we concern ourselves simply with the appearance of the object. When we judge an object beautiful, we are saying something to the effect that we cannot imagine how the object could be better designed in its appearance. Given our familiarity with the appearance of other relevant objects, we know that the object did not have to appear this way. And so it is very easy for us to imagine how that object could be degraded in its appearance. Here, the feeling of pleasure that we express gets its significance from the fact that we may remain non-committal about the object's cognitive or practical significance (what it is and whether it is good).

If we reflect on those objects we judge to be beautiful—an animal, a painting, a piece of music, a distant galaxy—we should notice that the liking we express is directed at nothing but what we might call the “surface” of the object. If I say that a piece of music is beautiful, I limit my evaluation to the arrangement of that which I hear, which I implicitly distinguish from that which produces or is responsible for what I hear. This distinction is borne out in the way that we argue about those objects we judge to be beautiful. If someone asks me why I do not like a piece of music, I can describe to him those aspects about it that I do not like and perhaps suggest how it could be improved. Any statement that does not concern the surface of the object—what we hear—will be largely irrelevant to my judgment of taste. For example, it would be largely irrelevant if a person emphasized the difficulty of producing a certain sound as a means of defending

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346 At least, this is the case so long as I am judging the object strictly as music—what is heard. It may happen that music is only one of a number of elements relevant to our evaluation of an object. In such a case, the distinction between inner and outer will be drawn differently. So, for example, we could judge the music performed by an orchestra to be very beautiful, even though the performance was not.
the music’s aesthetic worth. No matter how impressive it might be to produce the sound—say the high note of an opera singer or trumpet player—if I do not like it in relation to the rest of the piece, that fact alone cannot make, and ought not to make, any difference to my aesthetic evaluation of the object.

Of course, it could be the case that such facts about the object are indirectly relevant, in the sense that someone’s mention of them may inspire us to look at the object differently. For example, if someone describes the technical difficulty of producing a certain tone with a musical instrument, I may be moved to reconsider my judgment. However, this will not be on account of my having attained a sudden, new appreciation of the piece of music. Instead, I have been given reason to think that there is an aspect of the object I overlooked and it becomes worth listening to again. Perhaps the quality of the tone is a more significant aspect of the piece of music than I previously thought. After all, somebody thought that such a tone was aesthetically significant enough to warrant the effort to produce it in the first place. Insofar as I want to improve my judgment, it would be worth listening more carefully to see what difference it makes; in the process I may be exposed to new kinds of music that I like. By itself, however, the difficulty of producing the tone will mean little or nothing to me. For so long as I do not see it as contributing to the quality of the music—how it holds together in my mere contemplation of it—I will regard it as vain and serving no purpose. Of course, it may be valuable and admirable for some other reason, but not because it improves the music qua music.347

347 Still, one can imagine the difficult act of producing a certain sound, for example, to be part of the performance. In that case, the act is itself part of the show and ought to be considered in its relation to everything else that appears to the audience.
Once we understand that this is what the aesthetic nature of judgments of taste comes to, we can better understand those puzzling cases mentioned earlier. That is to say, we can understand why we sometimes judge something to be beautiful even though it pains us or equally why we judge an object to be not beautiful even though it causes us great pleasure. In essence, we are using the term 'pleasure' and its derivatives in two different senses. On one hand, I could be describing my mental state—how I feel in relation to an object. It is entirely natural that an object I judge to be beautiful could cause me displeasure precisely because it is beautiful. On the other hand, I could be evaluating that object on the basis of how it is presented to me—in what Kant refers to as the "mere apprehension" of the object. Here, the feeling of pleasure that I express is significant because of its implied contrast with objective evaluations. In this sense, the terms 'liking,' 'pleasure,' and even 'beautiful' indicate that we are concerned only with how something appears in a particular context.

Another, not unrelated, advantage of looking at aesthetic pleasure in this way is that we can make better sense of how we can aesthetically judge an object despite the fact that in our sensible representation of it we may experience a great range of different emotions and feelings. For any object that requires the investment of a long period of time to evaluate it, we will undeniably feel highs and lows. For example, in reading a novel, I may be at times happy, sad, angry, remorseful, bitter, etc. Such emotions may be intentionally solicited by the author, as when he portrays an innocent man unjustly imprisoned. Or they may be, as it were, incidental, as when a character reminds me of a

348 5: 189.
long-lost love. Regardless of the nature of the feelings that I have—what I experience as I read the novel—they are in a sense irrelevant to my aesthetic evaluation. For I do not evaluate the object on the basis of how I feel but rather on the basis of how the novel holds together as a whole. In so doing, I abstract from these different feelings, and the way in which various aspects of the novel appear to conduce or hinder my particular ends. Instead, I consider the novel on the basis of how it could otherwise have appeared. If I judge the novel to be a beautiful one, I am saying that it could not have been significantly altered without making it a worse novel. And this naturally includes my affirmation that certain parts of the novel that cause me great pain must remain just as they are.

Perhaps most importantly, we can understand how we are entitled to demand that others agree with us when we judge something to be beautiful or have other aesthetic value. For we are not demanding that another person have the same sensible experience that we do: we are not demanding that they feel any of the same emotions or sensations that we may describe as pleasurable. Rather, we are demanding that they evaluate the object in its appearance in the same way that we do, a claim which is implied in our consideration of what the object would look like—the form it would assume—if it were different in various respects. As Kant puts it,

> When the form of an object (rather than what is material in its presentation, viz., in sensation) is judged in mere reflection on it (without regard to a concept that is to be acquired from it) to be the basis of a pleasure in such an object's presentation, then the presentation of this object is also judged to be connected necessarily with this pleasure, and hence connected with it not merely for the subject apprehending this form but in general for everyone who judges [it].

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349 5: 190 (Pluhar translation).
For example, if I say that the play would have been worse had Hamlet survived in the end, I do so on the basis that this part of the play serves a crucial function in the whole and that changing it would undermine its aesthetic integrity. For example, I might argue that Hamlet's survival would call into question the gravity of his earlier reflections and the difficulty he has in making a decision about how to act. In arguing for this point of view, I abstract from any particular feelings that I have for the play. Such particular feelings for characters, scenes, and other material elements of the play, are in themselves irrelevant to my aesthetic evaluation. And so I may say that it is right that Hamlet should die, from an aesthetic point of view, even though I sincerely wish that he would survive and am always upset when he does not.

II. A Subjective Purposiveness

The idea that we can judge something simply in our contemplation of it (or "mere reflection" on it) may strike one as funny. In what way is such a judgment significant? To put it another way, why would we bother to express a judgment that concerned itself merely with the appearance of an object? Kant's elaborate and often mystifying accounts of aesthetic experience—including his discussion of the "harmony of the faculties" and the "free play of the imagination and understanding"—can be read as a response to this question. A particularly good demonstration of this can be found in section VII of the introduction, which is concerned with the "aesthetic representation of
the purposiveness of nature."\textsuperscript{350} Another example is the section we just considered in the previous chapter, section 9 of the Analytic of the Beautiful.

In reading Kant's account of the significance of judgments of taste, it is helpful to see his account in relation to the popular rationalist view of his time. According to philosophers like Christian Wolff, Alexander Baumgarten, and Georg Friedrich Meier, the beautiful is the "sensible representation of the perfection of an object,"\textsuperscript{351} a perfection "thought confusedly."\textsuperscript{352} We see a beautiful object as perfect even though we are incapable of saying precisely how it is perfect. Because we have a rational desire to see the perfect brought into the world, we naturally take pleasure in it. By closer reflection on the object, we are able to discover the way in which the object is perfect. People like Baumgarten and Meier, who regarded aesthetics as a science, endeavored to uncover those rules according to which an object could be measured and judged truly beautiful.\textsuperscript{353}

As early as the \textit{Critique of Pure Reason}, Kant had expressed skepticism about such a project. The heart of Kant's complaint seems to be that judgments of taste are based on the feeling of pleasure and displeasure and as such are not susceptible to proof.

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 \textit{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.\textsuperscript{354}

\textsuperscript{350} 5: 188.
\textsuperscript{351} 20: 226.
\textsuperscript{352} 5: 227.
\textsuperscript{353} Cf. Georg Friedrich Meier, \textit{Anfangsgründe aller schönen Wissenschaften}, §2.
\textsuperscript{354} A 21/B 35.
Any "rules or criteria" articulated by a critic or "scientist of aesthetics" are only valid inasmuch as they do justice to the things that we like or dislike. However, whether we like or dislike something is an empirical matter. If an object accords with a so-called rule of aesthetics and yet we do not like it, we will get rid of the rule before we admit that the object is beautiful.\textsuperscript{355} For example, all the rules of harmony and counterpoint that Bach's music embodies so well will hardly impress a person not already partial to Bach's music.

As Kant sees it, the rationalist takes beauty to consist in what he calls the "objective internal purposiveness" of an object.\textsuperscript{356} In other words, a beautiful object is seen as fulfilling an end that it has in and of itself.\textsuperscript{357} However, if this is what judgments of taste amounted to, then it would seem as if the pleasure or displeasure we take in a beautiful object would somehow contribute to our cognition of an object. A person deemed to have good taste would be he who takes pleasure in the things that more perfectly measure up to their internal end. Even though he would be incapable of saying \textit{how} the object was perfect—because the perfection was "thought confusedly"—the feeling of pleasure (or displeasure) taken in the object would nevertheless guide his investigation of the object.

However, the idea that the feeling of pleasure contributes to cognition is one that Kant flatly rejects.\textsuperscript{358} In this way, Kant distinguishes our feelings of pleasure (and

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{355} Cf. Kant's remark at 5: 284.
\item \textsuperscript{356} 5: 226.
\item \textsuperscript{357} Kant contrasts this with "objective external purposiveness" or utility. Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{358} Cf. 5: 189, 288; 20: 222, 224.
\end{itemize}
displeasure) from our sensations of color, sound, taste and other "external" sensations.\textsuperscript{359} While both types of sensation are merely "aesthetic properties" in that they constitute a representation's "relation to the subject, not to the object,"\textsuperscript{360} only the latter can be based on or lead to a determinate concept. In section 3 of the Analytic of the Beautiful, Kant helpfully illustrates the difference. He contrasts the green color of the meadow with its "agreeableness."\textsuperscript{361} The green color of the meadow can contribute to cognition of the object presumably in the sense that my perception of it as green allows me to make cognitive claims about the object, which may be subject to dispute. My capacity to see the meadow as green as opposed to other colors allows me to make inferences about the meadow. For example, if I see it as brown, I may have reason to think that the meadow has not received rain for a while. The feeling of pleasure that I may feel for the meadow on the other hand, i.e., its agreeableness, does not seem to work in this way. It can be no more significant than what it says about me.\textsuperscript{362}

As we saw in the second chapter, what the feeling of pleasure and displeasure does indicate is the degree to which the world appears to accord with our end as a certain kind of living creature (namely, a human being). We feel pleasure for an object insofar as we see it as furthering some purpose (or purposes) we have naturally (as if by design). We feel displeasure for an object insofar as we see it as inhibiting some purpose (or purposes). Now the feeling of pleasure and displeasure, as it is a transcendental faculty of the mind (or soul), is presupposed in all of our experience. Although the feeling of

\textsuperscript{359} 5: 189.
\textsuperscript{360} 5: 188.
\textsuperscript{361} 5: 206. The former sensation Kant refers to as "objective"; the latter "subjective."
\textsuperscript{362} "In general, therefore, the concept of perfection as objective purposiveness has nothing at all to do with the feeling of pleasure, and the latter has nothing to do with the former" (20: 228).
pleasure and displeasure does not reveal anything about an object per se, it does say
something about us: namely, what we believe it means to be fully human (or to be fully
alive). This is why Kant describes the feeling of pleasure and displeasure as the “feeling
of life.” It can also be understood as our representation of an object's subjective
purposiveness [subjective Zweckmäßigkeit] (in contrast to the objective purposiveness
implied by the rationalists' view). Without the fundamental capacity to represent the
world as according with our end, we would have no phenomena to reason about. It is
because of this feeling of life that we are able to articulate both our particular ends—what
it is that we are supposed to do here and now—and the particular ways that objects
conduce to these ends—what objects are.

Now the pleasure we take in the beautiful is unique since we are not (or need not
be) involved in any particular activity. Consequently, an object that aesthetically pleases
us will not (or need not) be seen as conducing to a particular end we have. This fact
helps explain why judgments of taste are not susceptible to proof; given that we have no
determinate end against which to measure the object, we have no objective reference
point against which to measure our judgment. Lacking a determinate end that the object
could be seen as promoting or inhibiting, we have nothing against which to measure the
object except our mere capacity to represent something as an object. As Kant expresses
the point in section VII of the introduction:

If pleasure is connected with the mere apprehension (apprehensio) of the form of
an object of intuition without a relation of this to a concept for a determinate

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363 5: 204.
364 This is confirmed by the fact that people with very different interests may appreciate and enjoy the very
same object which they judge beautiful.
cognition, then the representation is thereby related not to the object, but solely to
the subject, and the pleasure can express nothing but its suitability to the cognitive
faculties that are in play in the reflecting power of judgment, insofar as they are in
play, and thus merely a subjective formal purposiveness of the object.\textsuperscript{365}

Of such a situation, we can say that the object conduces simply to our most general sense
that the world accords with our ends—whatever they may be. The pleasure in the
beautiful expresses the subjective formal purposiveness of the object not because our
ends have no impact on our liking but because we take ourselves to have abstracted from
any particular end that would restrict our judgment to a determinate rule and make
argument about that judgment a logical matter.

Now it is easy to read Kant in this passage as describing what happens when we
judge something to be beautiful. The language he uses strongly suggests that the feeling
of pleasure is caused by the cognitive faculties relating to each other in a certain way. For
example, further on in section VII he writes,

For that apprehension of forms in the imagination can never take place without
the reflecting power of judgment, even if unintentionally, at least comparing them
to its faculty for relating intuitions to concepts. Now if in this comparison the
imagination (as the faculty of a priori intuitions) is unintentionally brought into
accord with the understanding, as the faculty of concepts, through a given
representation and a feeling of pleasure is thereby aroused \textit{[erweckt wird]}, then
the object must be regarded as purposive for the reflecting power of judgment.\textsuperscript{366}

Paul Guyer sees this passage as support for his view that pleasure is \textit{caused} by the
"harmony of the faculties."\textsuperscript{367} Still, Kant need not be read in this way—at least not
primarily. Regardless of the language he employs, his purpose is to articulate the

\textsuperscript{365} 5: 189-90.
\textsuperscript{366} 5: 190 (my emphasis).
\textsuperscript{367} \textit{Kant and the Claims of Taste}, 94. Other passages Guyer sees as support for this view are 20: 223, 224.
significance of the beautiful in a way that is clearly distinct from the rationalists. The pleasure that is "aroused" is not caused by anything—neither a hidden perfection of the object nor our cognitive faculties relating to each other in a special way. Instead, the pleasure is merely our satisfaction with an object in its mere appearance inasmuch as we abstract from any determinate end.

That this pleasure refers merely to our satisfaction in the appearance of an object can be seen when we consider the fact that the very same object can be judged both in terms of a determinate end and in terms of its appearance even, as it were, simultaneously. Consider, for example, an artifact such as an ax. Insofar as we judge the ax in terms of a determinate end like chopping wood, we will pay attention to those characteristics that advance this end: the sharpness of the blade, the strength of the handle, its balance, the shape and size of its head, and so on. A person who disagrees with the satisfaction I take in the ax may call my attention to any one of these features to show that the ax is not as good as I think it is. At the same time, I may also judge the ax in terms of its mere appearance, in abstraction from any end. Here I attend not to the way that its various characteristics contribute to its performance of a certain function but rather to the way that it is sensibly presented to me. It is entirely possible that I could judge the ax to be aesthetically pleasing—even beautiful—while at the same time judging it to be a poor ax (judging it as an instrument). If one were to insist that pleasure was caused by the judgment of taste—and the cognitive faculties standing in "unintentional accord" with one another—then it would be hard to make sense of that case in which one
was simultaneously pleased by the ax's appearance yet displeased by its state as an ax (i.e. an instrument used for chopping).

If, on the other hand, we take the feeling of pleasure to stand for our capacity to see the world as conducing or not to our purpose (i.e. as a teleologically organized living being), then there is no problem. For in that case, the pleasure [Gefühl der Lust] which is "aroused" is simply a satisfaction with some object (just as displeasure [Unlust] would be our dissatisfaction with some object). It is perfectly natural to say that one is satisfied with an object in one sense but not in another just as we could be satisfied in both senses. Consider the ax that I judge to be beautiful even though I think it is a poor ax (at least judged in relation to the ordinary functions of an ax). Here I am satisfied with its appearance—the improvement of which I struggle to imagine—even though I am dissatisfied with its state as an ax. The claim that the object is suitable "to the cognitive faculties that are in play in the reflecting power of judgment" is not meant to explain a pleasure that is otherwise mysterious; rather, it is meant to articulate the significance of our liking for some object when we do not concern ourselves with its end.

The reason why Kant articulates the significance of such a satisfaction in terms of a "harmony" [Harmonie] or "accord" [Einstimmung] of the cognitive faculties—specifically the imagination and the understanding—is because it is precisely through these faculties that we are able to be presented with something as an object in the first place, even prior to our seeing that object as promoting or inhibiting any particular end. The imagination, as Kant says in section 9, is responsible for the "composition of the manifold of intuition" while the understanding is responsible for the "unity of the concept
that unifies the representations." As I understand him, the imagination refers to my capacity to synthesize an image—something that is significant only to me—out of the infinite manifold of intuition. The understanding, on the other hand, refers to my capacity to have an image of something—a certain kind of thing that I can communicate with others. The understanding presupposes certain rules and norms that, in a certain sense, govern the way we synthesize the manifold of intuition. It is in virtue of our understanding—and the concepts we share with others—that we are able to distinguish between healthy productions of our imagination and those productions that fail to conform to reality—what we call mere fancy.

When Kant says that the imagination is "unintentionally [unabsichtlich] brought into accord with the understanding," he need not be read as saying that the imagination and understanding accidentally fall into a harmonious relation with each other, thereby causing us to feel pleasure. As I read him, the harmony between the cognitive faculties is unintentional in that our evaluation of the object is not constrained by a particular end [Absicht]. To appreciate this point, consider again my judgment that an ax is beautiful.

Insofar as I am judging the ax on its mere appearance, a person could not refute my claim by showing that the ax would be better constructed if the handle were made of a stronger wood or if the ax head had a curve more fit for chopping. Even if such claims are true and new to me, insofar as I am not judging the ax in view of a particular end, they are mostly immaterial. By abstracting from any particular end that I might have, I am freeing my

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368 5: 217.
369 5: 190.
370 As I noted above, they could be indirectly relevant.
imagination to conceive of a much wider range of forms that the particular ax could take. If I then express the judgment that the ax is beautiful, I am saying that I cannot imagine any way in which this particular ax could be improved in its appearance, even if I can easily imagine it to be a better ax.

This satisfaction with the appearance of the object expresses a "harmony" between these cognitive faculties because the object appears to promote simultaneously a range of ends that might in other circumstances compete with each other. Indeed, that is precisely what would happen if we evaluated the object in relation to a determinate end. For example, if we insisted on evaluating the ax in relation to the end of cutting wood, we would not be bothered by the fact that it did not also conduce to other ends we had, although we would be bothered if it did not appear to conduce to this particular end. However, if we judge the ax in abstraction from this or any other particular end, then the ax with which we are most satisfied will be the one that appears to conduce most completely with the full range of our purposes.\footnote{This need not exclude the end of chopping. Insofar as we were expressing what Kant calls an "applied judgment of taste." this end would still be relevant though no more relevant than other ends that we had reason to see realized. Cf. 5: 231.} We could say of such a judgment that our imagination and understanding are in a "free play" \[ in einem freien Spiele \] since "no determinate concept restricts them to a particular rule of \textit{cognition}.\footnote{5: 217.} We can describe this as a "harmony" of the cognitive powers, since the imagination and understanding are functioning just as we would have them if we were not constrained by a particular end.
It is for this reason that Kant regards the pleasure we take in the beautiful as "the only free satisfaction" [das einzige freie Wohlgefallen]. Unlike the pleasure we take in the "agreeable" [angenehm] or the "good" [gut], "no interest, neither that of the senses nor that of reason, extorts approval." The term that Kant thinks captures this kind of satisfaction is 'Gunst', which is nicely translated into English as 'favor'. Although 'favor' is not a term that we use very often in English, close reflection on it reveals its aptness. In those instances in which we do use it, we do so usually to indicate that a person or object meets the satisfaction of another person, especially a person or group of people to whom that person is subordinate. We say that a person comes into and stands in the favor of another. Or we say that a person goes out of and stands out of the favor of another. Generally speaking, the term implies the preference of a person for another person or object that lasts only so long as the former sees no way in which the latter is deficient and could be improved (or simply rejected). If that object did not find the favor of another, then the person would, so long as he had the power, change it.

The term 'favor' captures our satisfaction in the beautiful so well for a couple of reasons. First of all, it captures the disinterestedness that distinguishes the beautiful from the agreeable and the good. I can favor something even without being inclined to it (as I am to the agreeable) or having respect for it (as I have for the good). Secondly, favor implies an impermanence that seems to mark our experience of the beautiful. We have no rational guarantee that the thing we judge beautiful will continue to be satisfactory to us.

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374 Ibid.
375 Ibid. According to Kant, the terms that capture our liking for the agreeable and the good are 'inclination' ('Neigung') and 'respect' ('Achtung') respectively.
Because the imagination is not bound by a determinate concept, it is free to conceive of a wide range of forms the object could take that might be superior to that of the object we are presently contemplating. In other words, we cannot rule out the possibility that we might discern ways whereby the object could be improved. As beautiful as something is, we can never rule out the possibility that it could be more beautiful.

III. Loosing Ourselves from Our Ends

Despite the fact that the satisfaction we take in the appearance of an object is free, judgments of taste are still fallible. By that, I mean our judgments may be better or worse. Even if we cannot prove them, we acknowledge the possibility that we may be wrong about what we judge beautiful. We see some people as having better taste than others and we think that taste itself can be cultivated. It is precisely this fallibility of judgments of taste which yet resists proof that makes them a worthy object for philosophical reflection.

The problem with regarding "the harmony of the faculties" as explaining judgments of taste is that it subtly implies that judgments of taste can be proven, despite appearances. If we take the pleasure unique to judgments of taste to be caused (in one way or the other) by the imagination and understanding working together in a certain way, then we have an incentive to inquire into the workings of our mind in order to ascertain the true nature of the pleasure we feel for the object. Even if we deny that this self-examination is something which happens in our contemplation of an object we judge beautiful, as Allison does contra Guyer, we still leave open the possibility that rules for
the beautiful can be articulated. However, if this is what Kant intended, then he would not appear all too different from the rationalist theorists he was criticizing.

Reflection on judgments of taste is so important because it reveals a distinct source of error for our judgments. For what makes judgments of taste erroneous is not a failure in understanding: we do not wrongly judge something to be beautiful because of our ignorance. Nor is a judgment of taste erroneous because of a failure in reason: we do not wrongly judge something to be beautiful because we fail to think consistently about it. Although ignorance or a failure to think consistently may certainly influence our judgments of taste, close analysis shows that error rests on something deeper.

As I argued in chapters 3 and 4, error in judgments of taste rests fundamentally on a failure to abstract fully from the private conditions that determine our judgment. These conditions include not only our faculty of desire—and the particular interests it engenders—but also our understanding, imagination, and even sensibility. A difference in any one of these faculties may make an object appear uniquely satisfactory to us. Consequently, to the extent that we wish to speak with a universal voice—which our engagement in aesthetic argument clearly implies—we must turn our attention to the ways that other people see the objects of our evaluation. As Kant puts it, we must put ourselves "into the position of everyone else." In so doing, we may discover that there are ways that an object can be improved or, as the case may be, that it is satisfactory just as it is.

376: 294.
Our failure to consider an object from the point of view of another is manifest a variety of ways. One way it is shown is by failing to consider the whole object of one's appraisal. After all, many an object would appear particularly beautiful if one were to ignore willingly a large segment or, as it were, side of it. It is especially tempting to do this when one wants to like something. Of course, another person might not be so inclined to ignore what we willingly, even if unconsciously, turn away from. Consequently, if we want to abstract from the private conditions of our judgment, we must take care to consider the whole object, paying close attention to all the parts that a person different from oneself would find important.

Another way this tendency is made manifest is in our reluctance to consider those objects that someone prefers to the ones that satisfy us aesthetically. This is especially unfortunate since, as I argued in chapter 4, it is through our consideration of a wide variety of examples that our judgment is, as Kant puts it, "sharpened." So long as we focus our attention only on the object at the center of our disagreement, it is unlikely that we will be able to resolve our disagreement with someone about its aesthetic value. Any criticism or praise of the object is only fully meaningful in light of the way the person uttering that criticism or praise sees the object. For that criticism or praise merely articulates his liking; it does not justify it. If we want to understand why a person is aesthetically pleased by a certain object, we are compelled to consider the background of objects against which he sees that object. If a person does not like a piece of music that I like, I ought to inquire into the music that he does like. If a person judges a flower

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377 The power of photography, especially for advertising and entertainment purposes, depends upon this.
378 Cf. 5: 282, A 134/B 173.
beautiful that appears ordinary to me, I ought to consider those flowers or other things in relation to which he is viewing the flower. A person who refuses to consider no objects except the ones he finds aesthetically pleasing is not doing much to inquire into the limited nature of his judgment.

I will mention one last way in which one's failure to abstract from the private conditions of one's judgment is made manifest. This is the holding of objects to the wrong standard. Many an object would be judged differently if the person judging it made an effort to compare it to a model other than the one he has in his own mind. Although this is true for both nature and art, it is in art that we find the best examples. Consider, for example, a work of modern art such as Duchamp's famous "Nude Descending a Staircase." A person could, presumably, see the title of this painting and think that the painting was an utter failure: how is that a picture of a woman descending a staircase? Had the person considered the possibility that Duchamp had intentions other than simple portraiture, such as the representation of motion on canvas, he may have come to a very different assessment. Likewise, we can imagine a person judging a fresco of Giotto harshly because the painter has not mastered the naturalist techniques so characteristic of the later renaissance. A piece of music too might be misjudged if it were heard as a waltz instead of a dirge. In each of these cases, a person could have taken greater (or lesser, as the case may be) satisfaction in an object's appearance had he made the effort to see it in relation to a more proper standard.379 Sometimes this involves considering the intention

379 Our capacity to evaluate artwork (or other objects) according to different ends that we, as it were, imagine, is explored by Wittgenstein in the second part of the Philosophical Investigations. Cf. 202e, Part II. "Here it occurs to me that in conversation on aesthetic matters we use the words: 'You have to see it like this, this is how it is meant'; 'When you see it like this, you see where it goes wrong'; 'You
of the artist or the function that the piece is meant to serve. Of course, this would make
the object what Kant calls a dependent beauty (and an object of an impure judgment of
taste), although this would not make the judgment a conceptual or cognitive one.

It is actually very difficult to describe the way in which we abstract from the
private conditions that determine our judgment or, alternatively, put ourselves into the
position of another. In fact, by attempting to illustrate this concept, I run the risk of
making it seem like a kind of activity. But, as I argued in the third chapter, abstracting
from our point of view is not an activity, although it is implied by our activity. It is better
characterized as an attitude or a "way of thinking" [Denkungsart], a term that Kant
himself suggests in describing this concept. Furthermore, the change in judgment that
it may bring about typically occurs gradually, sometimes only after a lifetime of looking
at paintings or flowers, dresses or landscapes, furniture or buildings. This is not to say
that a change cannot happen all at once. A person's viewing of a work of art can
sometimes be transformed simply by looking at the work from a different perspective,
just as one could suddenly see a rabbit turn into a duck in the famous duck-rabbit picture.
But ordinarily, this only comes after years of practice and the development of a more
"broad-minded" way of thinking.

Interestingly, the picture of the duck-rabbit is a useful metaphor for reflecting on
the way in which we argue about matters of taste. For it shows how the fundamental
obstacle to our taking appropriate satisfaction in an object (or dissatisfaction, as the case

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380 5: 295.
may be) is we ourselves. Imagine that someone judges the picture of the duck-rabbit to be a rather nice representation of a rabbit. I could theoretically object to this assessment on the basis that the picture looks much more like a duck than a rabbit. As I see it, the mouth is much too big and it has no long ears. If it is a rabbit, it is a very strange looking rabbit indeed. Now we can imagine the argument going on like this for a while, until I make an earnest effort to see the picture as a rabbit. It does not take much: by simply rotating the page or attending to a different part of the picture, a rabbit may suddenly appear. As long as I am able to see the picture as a rabbit, I will be capable of taking a satisfaction in it in a way that I was not before. Of course, I may still see a way in which it could be improved (as a rabbit). But I will be on more solid ground in expressing my evaluation.

Now in this case, the object of our appraisal is ambiguous and simple enough that we may adopt a new perspective very easily. More importantly, there are no particular consequences for seeing it one way rather than another. It is all the same if we see it as a duck or a rabbit. And yet it is easy enough to imagine that there could be consequences for seeing it one way rather than another. For example, I may be pursuing a certain end that somehow gives me an incentive for seeing the picture as a duck. We can imagine a case in which, if it were not a duck, then achieving that end would be more difficult. With the stakes elevated in this way, it would be natural if I applied my cognitive faculties (especially my imagination) in such a way that it continued to appear as a duck to me. To any point brought forward to show that it was not actually a duck, I could, with some ingenuity, find a way of incorporating that point into my way of seeing it as a duck. The

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381 Indeed, with a little imagination we could see it as other things besides a duck or a rabbit: a map, a funny shaped putting green, a half-drawn octopus, etc.
more committed I am to this end, the easier it is to do this and the more difficult it will be to see it a different way.

If this analogy is a good one, then abstracting from the private conditions that determine our judgment can be seen as a matter of loosing ourselves from the ends that influence the way we see objects. The duck-rabbit is a nice analogy partly because in the context in which we find it—reading a work of philosophy or psychology\footnote{Specifically, one may find it in Ludwig Wittgenstein's \textit{Philosophical Investigations} (1953). Wittgenstein himself got this example from Joseph Jastrow's \textit{Fact and Fable in Psychology} (1900).}—there is no obvious consequence to seeing it one way rather than the other. That is to say, our act of reading—and our larger intellectual activity of which that is a part—is not furthered by seeing it one way or the other.\footnote{It would be a different matter if it were in a book about rabbits.} (At least it is not meant to be.) It is a similar matter when we consider a work of art. Because a work of art is generally made not for the sake of any end but our very contemplation of it, we are free to interpret it various ways just as if we were trying on so many different hats.\footnote{It is this way, as I suggested above, that our imagination may come into a free harmony with the understanding.} At the same time, we may still be so committed to some end that it could be very hard to see the object differently. A certain hat may be a little too comfortable to take off in order to try on another. Even or especially with respect to art, there may be all kinds of ends that are hard to let go of, not least of which is the end of being seen as right in our judgment or having good taste.
IV. On the Realization of Our Highest End

When we look at judgments of taste in this way, we can understand why Kant would say that the principle of taste is the "subjective principle of the power of judgment in general." For the subjective principle of the power of judgment is that we look at the world as if it were designed for us—that is, as if it were intended for our purposes. Now I do not want to imply that the person who does not make much of an effort to see an object from a different point of view is not looking at the world as if it were meant for his purposes. Indeed he is. However, those purposes that he directs his cognitive faculties towards are relatively narrow. The person has other purposes that could also be advanced were he willing to open himself to them. For whatever reason, he has chosen not to pursue them and has thereby resigned himself to a particular way of looking at the world. It is, of course, natural that one should do this. Our initial efforts towards realizing our ends are often awkward and even painful. As we seek ends that extend beyond our competence, the world appears fearful and alien. It is easy in these situations to return to those ends we are more adept at achieving. However, so long as we attend to such a narrow range of purposes, the world will shrink considerably as we focus merely on what is relevant to those purposes.

Our erroneous judgments of taste are merely one manifestation of this narrow-minded "way of thinking." But there are other manifestations of it as well. Even our cognitive judgment (both theoretical and moral) may be dulled by a failure to abstract from the subjective conditions that influence our judgment. This may not make the

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385 5: 286.
particular judgments we express false. However, we may fail to appreciate their limited significance and overlook valid, even important, points made by others. This occurs, for example, when we mistakenly believe that a person has contradicted our judgment even though he is making a quite separate point. We say of these situations, fittingly, that we are speaking at "cross-purposes." A person who is incapable of appreciating the purposes of another, and is thereby unable to appreciate the truth in what that person is saying, is demonstrating a narrow mind regardless of the depth of his understanding or the power of his imagination.

It is tempting to say of such people who deny some apparently obvious truth because of their commitment to an end that they "refuse to listen to reason." This is a little misleading in that it implies that a person refuses to draw an inference he sees himself rationally compelled to draw. In most cases, the person believes he is being completely rational. Indeed, with respect to the end he is concerned with, his thinking may be entirely consistent. All the countervailing evidence in the world would not show that he is mistaken. For his problem is not that he draws the wrong conclusion but that he is unable or unwilling to consider things from a different point of view or, what is the same, in relation to a different end. Had the person done that, he would have seen that he was not in fact compelled to deny the point he was so keen to defend. Furthermore, he may have seen that he was compelled to assert a new point that followed logically from this new end. So in another sense it is right to say that he has "refused to listen to reason" since the person has not, in a way, given reason the chance to speak fully.
This narrow-minded way of thinking can be regarded as a failure in judgment. After all, the person may be so focused on some end that he may overlook other ends that, as a rational human being, he has an interest in seeing promoted. These include both intellectual and practical ends. The person's fault is not that he affirms something untrue. In respect to the end that he is concerned with, the person may be entirely in the right. The problem is that he is not expressing the whole truth. To the extent that he actually frustrates the purposive behavior of others in the process, even for the sake of a legitimate end, he is showing poor judgment. With respect to the highest end that we share as human beings—for Kant, happiness in perfect accordance with morality—he is not putting to best use his understanding nor his other faculties and talents. Were he not so focused on some particular end (or ends), he could well be promoting other important ends of himself and others while developing capacities hitherto undeveloped.

That Kant thinks of judgment as the better and worse use of our cognitive faculties is suggested in a passage we have already had occasion to consider. In section 40, Kant argues that taste itself can be regarded as a "kind of sensus communis" [eine Art von sensus communis]. In order to make this point, Kant adduces the three "maxims of the common human understanding": "1. To think for oneself; 2. To think in the position of everyone else; 3. Always to think in accord with oneself."

Strictly speaking, Kant says, these maxims do not belong as "parts of the critique of taste," since taste concerns how things satisfy us in their appearance, not how things are objectively. Nevertheless, Kant
does think that these maxims can "serve to elucidate [the critique of taste's] fundamental principles."³⁸⁹

Among the three maxims, the one most relevant to taste is the second: "to think in the position of everyone else." Kant refers to this as the "maxim of the power of judgment."³⁹⁰ The person who does not act according to this maxim is "narrow-minded" or "limited" [bornirt, eingeschränkt] as opposed to "broad-minded" [erweitert]. Interestingly, Kant specifies that he is not using "narrow-minded" [bornirt] in the way the term is commonly used. That is, he does not mean to refer to the person "whose talents do not suffice for any great employment."³⁹¹ For judgment has not to do with the state of our cognitive faculties but the way we apply our cognitive faculties.

But the issue here is not the faculty of cognition, but the way of thinking [Denkungsart] needed to make a purposive [zweckmäßigen] use of it, which, however small the scope and degree of a person's natural endowment [Naturgabe] may be, nevertheless reveals a man of a broad-minded way of thinking if he sets himself apart from the subjective private conditions of the judgment, within which so many others are as if bracketed, and reflects on his own judgment from a universal standpoint (which he can only determine by putting himself into the standpoint of others).³⁹²

A person whose talents did suffice for "any great employment" would not be broad-minded if he were so focused on some particular end (even a great and lofty end) that he neglected other ends that deserved his attention and respect. In relation to the final end of reason itself—happiness in perfect accord with morality—he would not be putting his "natural endowment" to its best use. On the other hand, a person with more modest gifts (cognitive and otherwise) would be broad-minded if he did not let his own chosen ends

³⁸⁹ Ibid.
³⁹⁰ The other two are the maxims of the understanding and reason respectively.
³⁹¹ Ibid.
³⁹² Ibid. (The italics are mine. The boldface is Kant's.)
prevent himself from respecting and even promoting the equally valid ends of others. In respect of the final end of reason, the person with fewer or lesser talents would be showing himself to be of better judgment. 393

Our capacity for good judgment and broad-mindedness is especially apparent in our discussions of art and beauty since here we presuppose no particular end against which we can measure our judgment. Consequently, we are not in a position simply to compare each other's understanding or rational capacity in order to adjudicate the matter. If someone objects to my expressed judgment about a mathematical matter—say, that 459 is not a prime number—he can endeavor to show me through proof that I am mistaken. He can do this two ways. He may show me that I misunderstand what prime numbers are, as when I think they are something they are not. Or, assuming that my understanding is sound, he may show me that I am not thinking clearly or consistently (i.e., that I have miscalculated). In either case, our end is fairly unambiguous—the practice of mathematics—such that we need not worry that there are different ways of thinking about numbers that would account for our disagreement. When it comes to disagreement about aesthetic matters, however, we have no end that fixes the matter, except the entirely formal end of representing the object and contemplating it as such. Consequently, the only way of determining who is right—whose judgment is preferable—is by comparing points of view and abstracting from those conditions that make our way of seeing the object unique. Admittedly, this may show that our poor understanding or undeveloped

393 It is interesting to compare Socrates' argument in the Republic for why the philosopher is best suited to rule. Socrates claims that in addition to being honest, being brave, having a good memory, and loving the whole truth, the philosopher is not "small-minded." That is to say, the philosopher is not "involved in petty details" but has a mind that "has broadness of vision and contemplates all time and all existence." 486a, Robin Waterfield translation.
reason negatively impact our judgment. But it also may not. In those instances, we see that the obstacle to the correct judgment is nothing but the failure to abstract adequately from those conditions that determine our judgment.

When we argue about an object of taste, we are inclined, just as we are when we argue about an object's theoretical or moral significance, to overlook the fact that it is presented to us in a particular context. Consequently, we fail to appreciate the fact that the object may have very different meaning for other persons. We are thus surprised when we are unable to resolve our dispute even after the most exhaustive examination of the object. What we tend to overlook is that the object may present itself as an entirely different object to other people, just as the simple line drawing may appear as a duck to one person and a rabbit to another. Both the rationalist and the empiricist philosopher is susceptible—as we all are—to this tendency. What distinguishes them is their response to the aesthetic disagreement that emerges from it. The empiricist takes the skeptical approach: he argues that "all claim to the necessity of universal assent is a groundless, empty delusion" on the basis that aesthetic pleasure is a contingent matter.\textsuperscript{394} The rationalist takes the dogmatic approach: he argues that the claim to universal assent is justified on the basis that the judgment of taste is "really a concealed judgment of reason."\textsuperscript{395} Under this view, a judgment of taste could be proven provided we were clear about the end of the object. As Kant sees it, both parties share the same questionable assumption: that objects of the senses are things in themselves.\textsuperscript{396}

\textsuperscript{394} 5: 345.
\textsuperscript{395} 5: 346.
\textsuperscript{396} 5: 344.
In order to overcome this natural, "transcendental" illusion, we must learn to see objects as, in a certain sense, a product of our activity. That is to say, the way an object is presented to us depends upon the ends we are pursuing. Now, this does not mean that objects are what we want them to be or that there is no independent reference point against which we can compare our representation of them. It only means that this reference point is itself not an object of experience but what Kant calls an "idea," a norm to which we are rationally committed even if we never have any experience of its fulfillment.397 Error in judgment occurs not because we express a proposition that fails to correspond to things as they are in-themselves; instead, error occurs because we fail to live up to a certain idea within us.398 With respect to judgments of taste, we fail to live up to the concept of the "supersensible substratum of humanity" or "the indeterminate idea of the supersensible in us."400 As I have been arguing, this is nothing but the idea that we can overcome the unique and private circumstances that determine our judgment and share a liking for objects with people marked by different understandings and interests.

Although we can never know that we have judged in accordance with this idea, we are nonetheless committed to it. Our highest end—a world in which happiness exists in perfect accord with morality—compels us to realize this idea. For as long as we are fixated on our unique, individual purposes, we will fail to take full satisfaction in a world that does not always conform to those purposes but often frustrates them. It is quite easy to overlook the fact that our belief that the world is unfair and disordered or that human

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397 Cf. A 312/B 368 - A 320/B 377.
398 Perhaps more helpfully conceived, error is a wandering [errare] from the path that would bring us to our true end.
399 5: 340.
400 5: 341.
nature is too weak to achieve the ends that reason commands of it is our judgment. That means it is necessarily influenced by our unique understanding and interests, which, no matter how deep and noble they are, are limited by our finite point of view. In order to achieve that full and lasting satisfaction that reason desires, we must find a way of overcoming this point of view, as difficult as it may be. The world is not unlike a work of art that somebody whom we respect enjoys even though we find it perplexing or even unpleasant. In order to find satisfaction in that object, we have to learn where and how to look. And this means, as hard as it may be, making that effort to look for it.
CONCLUSION

What then does an examination of aesthetic experience—including our experience of the beautiful—tell us about judgment? As I have tried to show, aesthetic experience can show us what it is that good judgment comes to. In Kant's language, it reveals judgment's "principle," which we violate when we make poor judgments of taste or, as he sometimes calls them, "erroneous judgments of taste." This occurs not because we fail to represent an object as it truly is. Rather, it occurs because, in our application of our cognitive faculties in the pursuit of proximate ends, we fail to realize how some object harmonizes (or fails to harmonize) with our higher ends as a human being. Poor judgment is a kind of narrow-mindedness [eingeschränkte Denkungsart]⁴⁰¹: we are so focused on some particular end or ends that we fail to note relevant aspects of an object under which it should appear as satisfying (or not) to us. In order to overcome this narrow-mindedness, we must reflect upon the limited nature of our point of view and consider the way an object would appear to a person with a different commitment to ends.

While this principle applies to all judgment, it is especially apparent in the judgments we describe as aesthetic. Only in light of this principle can we make sense of the activity of artists and critics whose excellence (at producing and evaluating beautiful objects) cannot be justified on the basis of rules. An artist may evince poor judgment not because he lacks talent or ability but because he does not put it to its best use. Even if he applies his talent or ability in a way that is relatively praiseworthy, he may fail to realize the artistic potential of the object. He may do so for different reasons, including the desire

⁴⁰¹ 5: 295.
to flatter himself or to elevate himself in the eyes of others. Equally, an art critic may betray poor judgment despite his talents as a critic, which may include a broad understanding, a lively imagination, and a fine perceptual capacity. While such a critic may discriminate the value of an object in a way that others cannot, this very ability may itself present an obstacle to good judgment. It is easy to imagine an art critic whose fine taste for certain objects makes it harder for him to see the value of different but nonetheless related objects. For neither the artist nor the critic can we demonstrate their poor judgment on the basis of rules since any rules that would apply are dependent upon (and get their significance from) how one chooses to look at the object.

In order for the artist or the critic to improve his judgment, he must be open to examining those objects that other persons prefer or disparage in opposition to himself. Without doing so, he cannot be certain that the object he likes harmonizes with the ends of anyone but himself. For as he demands that everyone else agree with his judgment—which is implied by the very form of judgments of taste and their claim to necessity and universality—he must therefore "take account (a priori) of everyone else's way of representing in thought, in order as it were to hold its judgment up to human reason as a whole and thereby avoid the illusion which, from subjective private conditions that could easily be held to be objective, would have a detrimental influence on the judgment."\textsuperscript{402} Failure to do so counts as a violation of the principle of \textit{purposiveness} [Zweckmäßigkeit]. This is not because the person fails to see the object in relation to his purposes at all. Indeed, he does. Rather, he fails to consider the object in relation to purposes that he

\textsuperscript{402} 5: 293.
shares with humankind generally, not just the ones that he alone (and those like him) cares about. That is to say, he has not held up his judgment to "reason as a whole." Instead, he has held up his judgment to what we might call a circumscribed reason.

This violation of the principle of judgment is apparent in our tendency to judge an object in relation to a rule without considering the significance of that rule and the way it fits into a larger system. The violation of this principle seems especially evident in the case of aesthetic judgment since here it is widely accepted that judgments cannot be proven on the basis of rules. The reason for this is that we may express aesthetic judgments without an eye to any particular end that we have. Consequently, there is no determinate end according to which we could measure our activity and say that the object, given what we know about it, is as it should be. Still, we may equally violate this principle when, because we are pursuing a particular end, it is appropriate to measure the object in relation to a rule. We do so when we privilege the rule over the end from which it gets significance. For example, a person would display poor theoretical judgment if he applied a rule in such a way that he failed to further the intellectual end (the development of the scientific discipline) that gave that rule its significance.

The cost of poor judgment is not so much that we fail to represent objects as they are but that we fail to realize our ends as fully as possible. It is easy to miss this point if we take our highest end to be cognition. But our highest end is not cognition but happiness. Cognition is sought not for its own sake but so that we may be happy. And

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403 Indeed, a person who appealed to a rule in support of his aesthetic claim would be flagging his own limited judgment.
404 I should point out that here I am using the term ‘happiness’ in a way different than Kant uses Glückseligkeit, which is usually translated as ‘happiness’. For Kant Glückseligkeit is a simple matter of
for us to be happy, we must use cognition well. In order to use cognition well, we must constantly reflect back on our own activity and consider whether we are realizing our most important ends as human beings. And this means asking ourselves honestly whether we are getting on with others in a way that we could reasonably expect of anyone, not just those who share our particular perspective (shaped by our understanding and interests). This question, which is presupposed in all of our judgment, is most clearly manifest in our judgments of taste.

As I have argued earlier in the dissertation, a person who does not take this question seriously may develop a very deep understanding and yet still show poor judgment. He may, for example, develop a deep grasp of a particular science while at the same time be unable to apply that understanding in a meaningful way to objects that cannot be understood solely in terms of that science. What is more, he may hamper his ability to further that particular science if he denies himself the resources that could come from other parts. The problem with this is not simply that he leaves unfulfilled his potential to know things: more importantly, it limits the scope of his activity as a human being. That is to say, it makes it harder for him to achieve all of the ends that he has as a human being. The mastery of a set of rules (for the sake of a particular science) is but one end that he has.

fulfilling our inclinations, whether or not we do so in accordance with moral laws. I am using the term ‘happiness’ more in the Aristotelian sense of eudaimonia whereby we achieve perfect satisfaction by living a truly human life. This involves acting in accordance with the moral constraints that reason imposes upon us. Kant approximates this idea by describing the highest good as the perfect accord of happiness and morality or happiness where we are “worthy to be happy.” Cf. 5: 110-111. In other words, my use of ‘happiness’ here takes for granted the feeling of moral respect that Kant aims to make explicit in the Groundwork and the Critique of Practical Reason.
When we look at judgment in this way, we can understand why Kant might have considered all the way back in the *Critique of Pure Reason* a physician, judge, and statesman who lacked the power of judgment. When we evaluate figures such as these, and praise or blame them for their judgment, what matters is not how deep their understanding is, be it of the human body, the law, or government. Rather, what matters is how well they fulfill their ends as physician, judge, or statesman. Considering the particular set of circumstances in which they are situated, we evaluate their judgment according to how well they realize the ideas to which they are implicitly bound: ideas of health, justice, and the state. We do not evaluate their judgment according to how much they know about something, nor how quickly they can arrive at a logical conclusion. If a person knew a great deal about some object, but was unaware of the limits of his knowledge, then he could not put that knowledge to its best use. Consequently, good judgment requires reflection on our own activity and consideration of the significance of the universal (the rule) that we want to apply. This means that judgment, in the truest sense of the term, must be "reflecting" [*reflectirend*].

The reason why Kant considers judgment to be a special "cognitive faculty" [*Erkenntnisvermögen*] is because good judgment cannot be explained solely in terms of the mastery of a concept (through the understanding) nor in terms of the capacity to trace the implications of a general rule (through reason). This is what the cases of the physician, judge, and statesman mentioned in the *Critique of Pure Reason* make so clear. For each person may exercise poor judgment despite the fact that they have "many fine

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\(^{405}\) A 134/B 173.
pathological, juridical, or political rules" in their heads. As Kant had pointed out earlier, poor judgment cannot be improved simply by deepening one's understanding and providing it with more rules. After all, any new rules (and the understanding that contains them) will still be subject to abuse. The only corrective is practice: "examples and actual business." In short, good judgment comes from experience.

What is it that experience provides? It cannot be that we simply expand our understanding, as this is precisely the faculty that we are inclined to abuse. Rather, it is the increasing awareness of our tendency to push our understanding beyond its limits. Only through experience—the application of our judgment—are we able to learn how easy it is to "confuse the mere appearance of truth with truth itself." Only through experience can we discover the kinds of mistakes that we are inclined—for a wide variety of reasons—to make. However, in order to recognize and learn from our mistakes, we must make the constant effort to compare ourselves with others. It is not enough to pass the time in situations that are new or different. We must learn to accept, as difficult as this may be, the limited nature of our perspective. We must acknowledge the effect that self-interest has on the way we represent things. This means assuming the point of view of those who have a different understanding and those who have different interests. But this cannot be simply an act of the imagination; it must take the form of concrete action, even or especially when it is awkward or even painful to us.

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406 Ibid.
407 A 133/B 172.
408 A 134/B 173.
409 Consider Kant's remark in the Jäsche Logic that a "practiced faculty of judgment" is "found only in advancing age." 9: 74.
410 9: 54.
It might seem surprising that a person with a deep understanding of some matter could display poor judgment in his application of that understanding—that is, when he is confronted with an instance of something he knows so well. It may seem surprising, for example, that a person could possess unmatched knowledge of the body and yet be a poor physician. Could a physician who consistently misdiagnoses diseases in persons really know all that much about those diseases? Certainly, if that person lacks self awareness then he will surely overlook the effect that his inclinations—his desire for various ends—have on the way he sees or, as it were, "reads" the world. For no human understanding is great enough that it cannot be deceived by exceptions to rules that the imagination conceives of. Depending upon how much a person wants something—or alternatively fears something—he will find a way to make his understanding conform to the world.\(^\text{411}\)

Ironically, the greatness of a person's understanding may even serve to entrench his poor judgment inasmuch as it provides a wealth of support for the claims he wants to make.

Consequently, good judgment comes from a growing awareness of the effect that our inclinations have on the way we perceive the world. These inclinations are not bad in and of themselves. After all, we are attracted to various things precisely because we see something good in them and so can give a reason for why they should exist. However, if we are not careful, we may let various inclinations get the better of us insofar as we seek one end over another more important, urgent end. This is not the fault of our desires nor the objects of those desires; rather it is the fault of ourselves and the decisions that we make.

\(^{411}\) "Put the world's greatest philosopher on a plank that is wider than need be: if there is a precipice below, although his reason may convince him that he is safe, his imagination will prevail. Many could not even stand the thought of it without going pale and breaking into sweat" (Pascal, *Pensees*, 44).
make. These decisions concern how we ought to realize our many purposes in the world. In short, they concern who we want to become. Since each person has different talents and opportunities, the answer to this question is unique to each one. Our judgment improves as we provide, through our lives, a better and better answer to that question. Ultimately, the person of the soundest judgment is the one who has done the most to develop his potential.

Understood in this way, judgment is not some mysterious homunculus, which acts for its own purposes and which we must try to understand and control. Rather, judgment just is our competence as human beings. A person with good judgment is one who seeks ends that are consonant with his power of cognition, given the social environment in which he finds himself. Such a person is sensitive to the limits of his understanding and knows how easy it is to be deceived, even or especially when he knows a lot. A person of good judgment recognizes that one's power of understanding is only valuable to the extent that it helps him achieve his ends, and that his ends cannot be assessed in isolation from those around him.

It is true that we often speak of judgment as if it were an independent mental faculty that was the source of the judgments we make. We constantly speak of the judgment of a person. We say that one person displays better judgment than another. “In these matters,” we say, “I defer to your judgment.” A person who has erred, especially in matters moral or ethical, is often said to have "used poor judgment." These and other expressions seem to imply that judgment is similar to a person's eyesight, hearing, or

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412 Interestingly, the term 'competence' comes from the Latin competere, which can mean to be adequate or suitable. More literally it means to seek together.
power of memory. That is to say, they suggest that judgment is a tool that ought to be cared for and used well, specifically in those situations in which the understanding seems ill-suited to the matter at hand (what we might call the "hard cases"). The problem with this picture, however, is that it obscures what is most important about judgment. For each of the faculties just mentioned is significant for the sake of our activity. Without good eyesight, for example, it is very hard to partake in certain activities. Indeed, certain activities would be closed off to a person who lacked it. The same can be said about hearing or memory. Judgment, on the other hand, is not a faculty to be used for the sake of an activity; rather, it is the knowing when and how to use our faculties. It is, as it were, the faculty of knowing how to use our faculties. In this way, judgment can be understood as competent activity itself.\footnote{An important point about competent activity is that it does not entail that the competent person understands that in which his competence consists.}

The value of looking at judgment in this way consists in the fact that we can see more clearly the fundamental obstacle to good judgment. It is not a lack of understanding nor is it an inability to reason. Rather, it is our own self-satisfaction. That is to say, it is our contentment with how much we have done to realize our potential, be that with respect to specific activities (as a scientist, a physician, craftsman) or, more importantly, with respect to the activity of living a fully human life. A person who is self-satisfied sees no reason to try things differently, for that would mean risking what he has already achieved. The person of good judgment, on the other hand, is sensitive to his limitations, especially the finiteness of his understanding. He is willing to take action even when he does not know why it is appropriate or how it is possible. All that he knows is that
something needs to be done and it is up to him to do it. For the person of good judgment
knows that in the end, our activity is evaluated according to its fruits. He is the one who
knows how to answer the question that Kant attributed to judgment in the *Anthropology
from a Pragmatic Point of View*: "What does it matter?" [Worauf kommts an?][414] That is
to say, he knows what is truly at stake, which he shows through his action.

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