

## Weekly Assignment 1. Kant's View on Aesthetics

王宇哲 1800011828

1. *On Kant's view, what are the features that distinguish the beautiful from the pleasurable? Explain each of them briefly, and clarify in what sense both the pleasurable and the beautiful are "subjective".*

On Kant's view, the features that distinguish the beautiful from the pleasurable is its disinterestedness, universality, purposelessness and necessity.

The beautiful is disinterested, while the pleasurable is interested. In Kant's view, since an object's beauty only depends on its appearance, it doesn't matter whether the object actually exists. In other words, the judgement of taste "does not presuppose the existence of the object that is judged to be beautiful", while, on the contrary, it's unlikely to consider an object pleasurable when it doesn't even exist.

The beautiful is universal, while the pleasurable is subjective. When we judge an object to be beautiful, it's rational that we expect anyone to be able to have the same experience in right conditions. That is to say, in Kant's view, the criteria of beauty are universal regardless of time and space. On the other hand, there is no universal agreement when it comes to the pleasurable, as different people may hold totally different attitude towards a given object.

The beautiful is purposeless, while the pleasurable is purposive. Kant demonstrates that an object "is subordinated to a given concept" in ordinary judgements such as judgements of pleasure, but the judgements of beauty involve no concepts because such judgements do not categorize objects to certain concepts. As a result, the judgement of beauty is purposeless. Unlike the case of pleasure, we experience beauty with no particular purpose.

The beautiful is necessary, while the pleasurable is contingent. When an object is considered to be beautiful, it is guaranteed to arouse people's desire to

appreciate it and obtain a sense of contentment. But it is plausible that people don't feel the same pleasure when facing a certain object under different circumstances.

Both the beautiful and the pleasurable are subjective because they are both determined not by a set of objective rules, but by people's personal, subjective feelings, which can't be exactly the same. As is stated above, it's hard for people to reach an agreement whether an object is pleasurable. It's not hard to judge whether an object is beautiful in Kant's view, but different people may explain how they feel in completely different ways, and there is no so-called "correct" answer. This is why Kant describes the experience of the beautiful as "involving purposiveness without purpose."