September 5, 2007
INTRODUCTION:
AESTHETICS AND PHILOSOPHY THE KANTIAN PROJECT
THE 1ST AND 2ND CRITIQUES
Philosophy is defined or constituted by its repudiation of art
first, emptying it of any significance (Plato: art is mere copies of copies, ephemeral, illusions, stirring irrational emotions)
second, appropriating its remnants (beauty as an introduction to the good; beauty as evidence of rationality)
Philosophy becomes philosophy by denying that it is art (it may not be science, but at least not art). The dignity of philosophy is its repudiation of art.
What's left over? Dead remnants.
Witness what philosophy never talks about:
food, sex, children, drugs, fighting, etc., i.e. things that relate to our interest in the world, our being living beings, trying to reproduce our form of life.
Also: things that make life interesting!
Plato: let's let the person who is not interested in life at all rule (the philosopher-king), because he is disinterested, and therefore can rule merely according to ideas.
cf. Danto's essay on the philosophical disenfranchisement of art (The Wake of Art)
One of the reasons Plato thought philosophers should be kings is that they, concerned only with pure forms, could not coherently have any interests in the world of appearances. Not being motivated by what normally moves men and women – money, power, sex, love – they could achieve disinterested decisions.
Plato cleverly situates works of art outside the range of interests as well. Since who could feel exalted at possessing what merely appeared to be gold? Since to be human is very largely to have interests, art stands outside the human order pretty much as reality stands outside the primary apparent order in Plato's system. So, though they approach the issue in opposite directions, the implication is that art is an ontological vacation- place from our defining concerns as human, and with respect to which, accordingly, makes nothing happen.
Philosophy eschews both
life and the reproduction of life art
Note that the Third Critique has two parts: one of life, one on art.
In thinking about the connection between life and art, we are thinking about what it is that philosophy has traditionally left out.
Kant, in a fumbling way, knew that these two phenomena were related.
The 3rd Kr is an anxious text, based on the intuition that life and art cannot be left behind, but the acknowledgement of life and art within it is systematically fraught.
2 contrary readings:

1. Kant is a Platonist, deploying a version of ephemeralization and takeover.
2. Kant is critiquing that exclusion, instead holding to the necessity, unavoidability and unappropriability of life and art.
   This is philosophy deciding what it wants to be when it grows up. 1st reading – analytic
   2nd reading – continental
   Must read it in relation to the rest of Kant. Support for the first reading:
   Ephemeralization:
   Kant says works of art are purposive, but without an external purpose.
   anything. That is, perfectly useless. Does not give knowledge. Empty of truth & morality. Art gives us "disinterested pleasure" (or in Danto's words, "tepid gratification", "narcoleptic pleasure").
   Takeover:
   Art is a symbol of the morally good.
   Support for the second reading:
   The idea of aesthetic pleasure and the engagement with purposive wholes yields a wholly different way of thinking about philosophy.
   For Schelling and Nietzsche, it points to the problem of life and the centrality of life.
   For Hegel, it opens up the question of history.
   Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Lyotard and Deleuze find in the aesthetic suppressed forms of modes of interaction with the world.
   i.e. there are ways of engaging with objects that are not scientific modes or rational (cf. reflective judgement).
   This reading of the 3rd Kr also inspires Marxists:
   Lyotard (Trotskyist) defines himself as a "Third Critique Kantian". Lukacs, Adorno, Benjamic, Eagleton, Jameson – "let's think about art"!
   To read Kant in this way is not to read the 3rd Kr as a supplement to the first two, but as supplying an implicit critique of them (even leaving them in tatters).
   In short, Kant can be read as a super conservative, or an unwilling radical.
   The 3rd Kr is the Ur-text of modern aesthetics (everything since is a mere footnote to it), because it is where philosophy takes on its constitutive exclusions.
   Kant's philosophy begins with the problem – definitive of the modern situation – of the disenchantment of nature, as brought about by Newtonian physics. As Velkley (The Ends of Reason) argues, the human motivation behind Kant's system was his concern for the meaning of freedom and morality in light of the undeniable universality of the Newtonian system.
   Kant was the first to recognize that the one thing science can't explain is science, as an account of the world. (Newtonian theory can't account for Newtonian theory.) In a perfect Newtonian universe, there would be no room for truth or reason or science – it would be determinism all the way down.
   Some contemporary philosophers bite the bullet on this – naturalist epistemology finds some evolutionary account of the nature of knowledge itself.
   e.g. Pierce: "Nature grows knowers in order to know itself."

Quine: Tries to give a naturalist account of science, but cannot do so except by fudging on what is meant by reason or rationality.
Kant says in the 1st Critique that he had to limit knowledge in order to make room for faith. The faith he was concerned with was the faith in freedom and reason – not God. The motivating question being: Can we make sense of ourselves as rational and moral creatures? The initial gesture of Kant's entire philosophical project is a critique of instrumental reason (for if that's all there is, then there is no reason at all – only calculation).
The issues that are central to the 3rd critique were initially part of Kant's plan for the 1st critique.
Kant wrote to his student Marcus Hertz in 1772 that he was preparing a book to be called The Limits of Sensibility and Reason, that would consist in two parts:
A general phenomenology, and the nature and method of metaphysics
The universal principles of feeling, taste, sensuous desire the first principles of morality.
i.e. everything in the 1st Kr, 2nd Kr, and even more than is in the 3rd Kr
Alternatively (to a critique of instrumental reason), Kant can also be described as giving us a critique of metaphysics: he gives us a modern treatment of the transcendental ideas of the scholastic tradition: truth (1st Kr), goodness (2nd Kr) and beauty (3rd Kr).
For the scholastics, these categories were unified, literally, in God.
What makes Kant modern is that he does not unify them. The three critiques talk to one another, but reason is essentially fragmented and cannot be totalized.
Kant talks about truth, goodness and beauty from a truly human perspective. He did not ask the questions: How can human knowing approach divine knowing? or: How can human beings approach saintliness? But: What is it for human beings, who are both rational and sensible, to have access to a world existing independently of them? What is it for human beings, who can reflectively determine their own conduct, to act well?
We do not know things in themselves. The divine perspective is forever foreclosed because there is no standpoint outside of the world. The totality of the world disappears, for us. This is no deficiency, but what it means to be (a) human (knower or agent).
Our limits are constitutive. The limits of reason are the conditions of its possibility.
Exposing those constitutive limits is what it means to know it all.
The old questions (about truth, beauty, goodness) are a denial of the human perspective, which is constitutive of knowledge and action (the Copernican turn).

Each of the three critiques makes the Copernican turn.
cf. The Preface to the Second Edition of the 1st Kr
"Hitherto it has been assumed that all of our knowledge must conform to objects."
This is the assumption of metaphysical realism: that certain facts or states of affairs in the world are truth-makers.
Problem: how do we know whether our statements conform to objects, when our relationship to objects is given by our statements about them?
a priori knowledge = knowledge independent of any particular experience, i.e. independent of the world = metaphysical knowledge
Can we have synthetic a priori knowledge?
Plato: we get it from memory.
Leibniz: We get it by a proper working out of analyticity, sufficient reason.
Kant takes these to be unsuccessful. We must stop trying to know things in themselves, and ask: Do objects conform to our knowledge? Is there a way that objects conform to us, and must conform to us?
Each of the three critiques means to steer a course
between empiricism and rationalism
between skeptical subjective idealism and realism
between a Hume who doesn't believe we know how things are in the world, but only what our experiences are like, and a Leibniz who believes we really know how things are in the world just by thinking about it
Kant believes that
there is not a unitary account of how things are, but three different perspectival takes on the world – each irreducible to the other (morality is not reducible to knowledge, beauty is not morality, etc.), but which are not subjective in the negative sense
and each perspective is necessary – we cannot have anything like our experience of the world without these three
Hence the idea of the "transcendental" = opposite of transcendent (which means beyond experience), rather: the necessary conditions for the possibility of experience. What must we presuppose for the possibility of experience?
The possibility of experience is Kant's new Archimedean point. [see handout: How to become a transcendental idealist]
So, basically, Kant is denying epistemology.
3 initial moves:
They are internally ordered, but not for

1. Every philosopher prior to Kant had conception of knowledge that involved mental perception – i.e. we perceive with the mind's eye. We are immediately aware of ideas in our own mind. Their model of knowing was that of direct perception, so that how we see things with our physical eye is how we see things with our mental eye.
   Kant: This is a fiction. All knowledge is judgement – that is, knowledge is a relationship between a subject and an object, between my judging faculty, and the object of that judgement. Our primary datum are judgements – which are already a relationship between a knowing subject and an independently existing object.
   Judgement = synthesis. Ways of ordering and connecting up our sensory manifold.
   How do we synthesize?
2. There is a limited inventory of forms of judgement (S is P. If ... then ...)
   In other words, the human mind is equipped with a primitive transcendental grammar. (Wittgenstein thinks there are tons of these primitive forms, but has the same basic thought as Kant.)
3. Hume was right about causality (and substance, and the subject) – I perceive only regularities, not causality as such.
   Kant's metaphysical deduction (B105)
   The judgement form (S is P) is how I turn my experience into knowledge. ("The lectern is brown.") By articulating my

sensations in accordance with a judgement form (and this is the only thing we can do with our sensations, in order to make use of them), I render them a way of talking about the world.
Now, we can only make use of the subject-predicate form if we treat the world as having substances and attributes (i.e. the material projection of subject and predicate).
We can only think about the world the way we do if the world is structured to allow us to do that – i.e. there must not only be a transcendental grammar, but a transcendental semantics.
Kant goes from syntax to semantics, and from semantics to syntax: We can only make use of the if-then form of judgement if there are causes and effects in the world, and conversely, there is no way to make sense of the idea of causality unless you possess the if-then form of judgement. The meaning of thinking of the world as causally structured is given by the way you are able to use the if-then structure.
If we are stuck with our grammatical forms, then equally we are stuck with the material projection of those grammatical or judgement forms.
Hence, we are a priori committed, just because of our judgemental forms, to thinking about objects as substances with properties, causally related to one another.
Kant on causality perception of a house
perception of a boat travelling downstream
In both cases the initial datum is structurally the same, namely, it is composed of subjective succession. However some subjective successions are also objective (the boat moving down the stream).
house: the subjective successions of an unchanging object are reversible (or can be performed in any order, for that matter)
boat: what makes the succession objective is that the state-changing successions occur according to a rule (of cause and effect)
Knowing the rule is what allows me to see this as an event, and not an object.
The law of cause and effect is necessary to have experience of events. An event is an experience that occurs in accordance with a rule.
Space & the Transcendental Aesthetic
It is a necessary condition for judging something to be outside my mind that it be in space.
This is not trivial: the notions of being outside my mind, and being in space, are not analytically linked to one another. There are ways of thinking of things being outside my mind that do not involve them being in space (viz. Leibniz, for whom space and time are not real). Kant has to show why Leibniz can't be right.
According to Kant, to think of something as outside my mind means to think of it being somewhere I am not. For any object to be outside any other object is for it to have a spatial relationship to it.
Kant is defining space functionally, as that which provides the condition for object individuation. Kant's conception of space has to do with that transcendental function (which ultimately means denying the identity of indiscernibles).
Space is not metaphysically real (for what would it then be but a big un-thing?). And it can't be, as Newton thought, God's sensorium. Rather, space is a necessary condition of the possibility of experience.
So, Kant's point is that the structure of experience reflects the structures of our mind. Kant is unearthing the deep structures of human thinking about the world.
We have, a priori, a concept of an object. We know, a priori, that for anything to be an object, it must be: somewhere somewhen
a substance, possessing properties
causally related to every other substance, existing in space
and all state changes of those objects are determined by laws of cause and effect
The deep structures of the human intellect (not the God's eye point of view) give us the structure of the world.
We end up with a Newtonian universe, not as what is metaphysically real, but simply as a function of how we must think about things as knowers.
cf Susan Kozel's Closer on the relationship of dance to technology, and Helmuth Plesner's Laughing and Crying.
This latter is subtle and fascinating because it involves counter-to-fact conditionals, i.e. it requires knowledge of states of affairs that haven't happened!

September 19, 2007
THE COPERNICAN TURN IN THE 1ST, 2ND, AND 3RD CRITIQUES UNDERDETERMINATION AND JUDGEMENT
THE PRINCIPLE OF JUDGEMENT
The Copernican turn in the First Critique:
turning away from the idea that we can attain the God's eye point of view on the world we cannot see the world as a whole, as unconditioned
we cannot make it fully present to ourselves (per Heidegger) – critique of presence
we are finite knowers
we cannot know the world as a thing in itself
shift from a closed world to an infinite universe, from knowing the infinite to infinite knowing (since we are finite)
For Kant there is not one human perspective on things. Our engagements with the world are perspectival. 2 necessary perspectives:
being an agent (first person point of view, standpoint of subjectivity) being a spectator (third person point of view, standpoint of objectivity)
irreducible to one another – cannot capture agency with an epistemic point of view
The objective standpoint is a point of view – it is determined by the necessity of the way in which we must think about the world in order to have objective knowledge.
For that, we must have a certain number of presuppositions (spatial continuity, substance, etc.) – i.e. the categories that determine the conception of an object in general (and equally our concept of the world / of nature).

Again, this is only a stance – albeit a necessary one.
Kant does 2 things:
grounds the categories necessary for Newtonian science
limits those categories to the objective standpoint (not the world in itself)
the limits of knowledge are at once the conditions of its possibility
finitude is not a privation or restriction or loss; it articulates or reveals our having a world at all
both rationalism and empiricism are a version of realism, i.e. positing that there is a thing in itself rationalism: we can know it
empiricism: we cannot
in ethics, this gets translated into a
Hobbesian moral empiricism (what is good is what I desire) moral rationalism (one does the objectively impersonal good)
The Copernican turn in the 2nd Critique:
set up by this question: assume there is a good – whatever that is (the greatest happiness, the 10 commandments, etc.)
what is the relationship between my desire and the good?
there are only two possibilities:
I am contingently related to the good, or I am necessarily related to the good
(a) means that there are no obligations (b) means that I have no freedom
both alternatives make morality impossible
Kant's solution: we must demonstrate that we are both obligated to do the good
free
His strategy is to relocate the formerly metaphysical object (the good) into the structure of the mind – as a law of reason.
the Categorical Imperative: act only on that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it be a universal law
analogous to the law of non-contradiction with respect to statements stipulates the minimal conditions for consistency in action
if that is right, then there is a requirement for all rational beings – even God, though he is not obligated by it because unlike us he does not have
2 competing sources of action:
our desires
reason (according to Kant, reason must be independently motivating)
The CI is an obligation because we are sometimes tempted to act against it.
How do we know morality is real?
Imagine you are offered a house in which all of your desires will be satisfied, but in order to get access, you have to tell a lie to a friend. The very fact that you would hesitate in the face of that situation indicates that there is a source of motivation other than one's desires.
For Kant, the only things that are innate are the categories and the moral law; the latter we discover. The CI is merely formal – no content of its own. How can it be the source of morality?
[see handout, likely from John Rawls]
morality is not a spectator sport
maxims can be understood as broad intentions
to really intend an action, we must have an idea of the necessary and sufficient means for doing it
in fact, we cannot intend the end without intending the means – this is an analytic truth (otherwise we'd be talking about a wish or hope – not an intention)
applying the CI:
identify my maxim
universalize it
examine the new situation, in which my maxim has become a law of nature
the problem arises when there is a contradiction in the will
the CI reveals
that universality is part of the grammar of human action, and why ethics prohibits making an exception of oneself
why others must always be treated as ends and not mere means
this Copernican turn gives us an irreducible standpoint
the CI is equally the law of freedom, i.e. self-determination – only by acting in accordance with the CI is it possible to have my actions be self-determined
We cannot know that we are free. It's only available from the 1st person point of view. It's not an object. But freedom is assumed as soon as one takes on the first person point of view.
So, the basis of the moral law constitutes the first person point of view in general – it is what it is to adopt the position of an agent (and not something that is just heteronymously determined).
But this sets up a radical dualism:
p. 176 (2nd intro, §2)
there is no connection between nature and the supersensible, the freedom and the real, yet in the former we intend things to be realized in the world
for morality to be possible, it has to be actualizable in the world – but this requires that the laws of nature do not make the realization of morality impossible
So there must be a basis uniting the sensible and the supersensible, even though it never reaches either theoretical or practical cognition.
Kant has problems to solve:
How do we harmonize these two domains?
If the possibilities for thinking about the world are exhausted by the two perspectives of the "is" and the "ought", where is the room for art?
The Copernican Turn in the Third Critique:
Is beauty purely subjective, or it is determinate?

Kant thinks that aesthetic judgements are either right or wrong – i.e. objective – and thus agrees with the rationalist tradition, but also that there are no rules for determining this, so there is an ineliminable moment of subjectivity.
It matters that Kant calls this the Critique of Judgement – unlike previous aesthetic theories, he is shifting focus from the object to the judgement about certain kinds of objects (the ones we find beautiful).
The Copernican turn here is to not look at the thing itself (beauty), but our capacity for judging beauty. And with that, we necessarily have to take into account both the qualities of the subject (the features of our judging), and the qualities of the object that are the intentional correlates of that form of mental activity.
The object is brought in, but only as part of a united subject-object structure.
The relationship between the judging subject and the object judged is what Kant's going to mean by a judgement of taste.
The judgement of taste involves a judging subject (there is no beauty in the absence of judgers), and a beholding, and our understanding of that beholding.
What makes this aesthetics and not psychology (as per Guyer) is that there are new a priori justifying grounds for the judgements of taste.
These grounds are the principle of subjective purposiveness and the harmony or free play of the mental faculties. Kant's motivation with the 3rd Kr is not overwhelming the duality.
THE THIRD CRITIQUE
FIRST AND SECOND INTRODUCTIONS
judgement in general is the power or faculty for thinking the particular as contained under the universal 2 ways of subsuming the particular under the universal:
determining judgement: the universal (rule / law / concept / principle) is given, and judgement seeks to subsume the particular under it (this is the only notion of judgement that appears in the 1st Kr)
reflecting judgement: only the particular is given, for which the universal must be found see first introduction, p. 211, §5
Judgement can be regarded either as merely the ability to reflect in terms of a certain principle on a given presentation so as to make a concept possible, or as an ability to determine an underlying concept by means of a given empirical presentation. In the first case, it is the reflecting, in the second care, the determinative power of judgment. To reflect is to hold given presentations up to, and compare them with, either other presentations, or one's cognitive power itself in reference to a concept that this makes possible.
see also second intro, p. 179
According to Kant, there are 5 forms of reflecting judgement: searching for a system of scientific laws
aesthetic judgements: judgements of beauty
aesthetic judgements: judgements of the sublime
teleological judgements: of particular organisms teleological judgements: of nature as a whole
How do these 5 forms come together?
John Zammito, On the Genesis of Kant's Critique of Judgement
1787 The 3rd Critique was originally a critique of taste, addressing feelings of pleasure, i.e. a critique of the beautiful – what became sections 1-27, 31-40.
1789 Kant has composed the 1st Introduction. He is now interested in a critique of teleological judgement, and for the first time develops the idea of the faculty of judgement power as a whole (he had not previously considered this as something separate about which he could write a critique). This probably comes from the intellectual interest in the beauty of nature – treating nature as a work of art, i.e. as somehow intended.
Further, at this moment, Kant gets the idea that if judgement (specifically, reflecting judgement) can be used teleologically, it can be used for the purposes of cognition – generating a philosophy of science.
This also coheres with the notion of ideas of reason that have a regulative use.
Later that year, all of this takes an ethical turn, perhaps due to Kant's struggles with pantheism, and this gave the book a more metaphysical appearance, above all by positing the idea of a supersensible ground of both subjective freedom and natural order, and this also probably underlies his interest in the notion of the sublime.
So, the ethical turn was very late.
What is the space possible for talking about judgement at all?
First hint of a problem of judgement occurs at 1st Kr A132 How is judging possible?
"mother wit"
judgement can be practiced only and not taught – the application of rules cannot itself be rule-bound (else an infinite regress)
judgement is an art and not a series of laws or algorithms
this is most obvious in
applying a concept
learning a new concept
extending the application of a concept
But this is 1st Kr but as the three things listed above indicate, something about our powers of cognition seems necessarily to
In other words, in some way, we must be encountering an object independent of a concept. heresy, where he says that the full meaning of an object is given by the concepts that subsume it!
operate without full conceptualiza-tion occurring
The problem that Kant came to recognize, between the 1st and 3rd Critiques, is the underdetermination of empirical knowledge by transcendental theories.
That is, the 1st Kr provided the necessary conditions for the possibility of experience, but nothing about how actual empirical judgements (i.e. real experience) are possible.
see Susan Nieman, The Unity of Reason
Three levels of underdetermination
Thinking about intuitions as concrete individuals (the problem of the individual as individual)
Making a judgement (the synthesis of intuition in a concept, e.g. "this is a cup") does not yield full, concrete individuality (this cup itself). By bringing intuitions under concepts, I say what they are not in themselves, to use Adorno's phrase. I subsume the

this-ness under my conceptual apparatus. It would seem that I am going to lose my own sensory awareness of the thing.
p. 220, 1st Introduction
"Every empirical concept requires three acts of spontaneous cognitive power: apprehension of the manifold in intuition..." – no concept is mentioned here.
What is apprehension?
In 1st Critique, this is passed over – it is a moment sublated in a second moment. Here, Kant is worried about it, as independent of the other two moments of comprehension and exhibition.
We never get the notion of a contingent this in the 1st Kr. Reflecting on objects in order to make concepts possible footnote p. 211 & p. 213
How can we hope that comparing perceptions would allow us to arrive at empirical concepts of what different natural forms have in common if nature, because of the great variety of its empirical laws, had made these forms, as is surely conceivable, exceedingly heterogeneous – so heterogeneous that comparing them so as to discover among them an accordance and a hierarchy of species and genera would be completely, or almost completely futile.
In order to think about the world, we must be able to bring intuitions under empirical concepts, but in order to do that, we must be able to compare intuitions, to determine how like or how different they are, and we need to do this in order to form new concepts.
The only innate concepts are the categories. Empirical concepts are learned from experience. How is it possible to learn from experience? What are the conditions that make the generation of concepts even in principle possible?
If the world were heterogeneous enough that we could never reuse a concept, then we wouldn't have empirical concepts, only proper names.
In order for us to have empirical concepts at all, natural phenomena must not be so heterogeneous that we can't see objects to possess shared empirical properties.
So: even to begin the business of knowing the world, we are going to have to make some presuppositions.
This is the issue as to whether there is a sufficient minimal order in nature – a clustering of natural objects into natural kinds, in terms of objects and properties, to make ordinary empirical concepts possible, and hence empirical cognition possible.
Kant is here assuming that nominalism is just silly, because it doesn't explain how we think anything. We can't just say two things are alike because we say so. I can't carve nature up as I merely want to. Names must actually latch onto something.
Concepts, of course, are by their very nature universal – that is, reapplicable to different objects. Furthermore, empirical concepts, because they are universal, are either themselves highly condensed laws of nature, or are derivable from laws of nature (something is red if and only if it appears red under certain conditions). Ordinary concepts embed counterfactual conditions.
Another reason why our concepts have to be latching onto things.
Note: Kant is not Leibniz. Leibniz tried to show that the world is the way it must be. Kant didn't think we could do this.
Reflecting on existing knowledge in order to make science possible (the problem of a system of laws)
It may be that we have empirical concepts, but cannot unify our knowledge into one systematic whole. But this would enter into direct conflict with the assumption of nature as a unity. How could every object be in causal relation with every other object at the same time, and causally continuous through time, and yet there not be a system of laws that applied to all of these objects? What we think of as natural science would be impossible.
So the prospect of systematizing our knowledge, of having a coherent body of knowledge, makes a bundle of other assumptions.
These (1 through 3) are all problems of the underdetermination of phenomena by the transcendental laws of experience of the 1st Kr. These problems open up a new domain of thought or inquiry: the problem of judgement.
If intuitions are nothing without concepts, that eliminates the sensible apprehension, or in other words, us. THESIS of this course:
Every determining judgement has a moment of reflecting judgement in it.
Reflecting judgement – the kind of judgement that is our non-conceptual but nonetheless cognitive encounter with intuitions – is the necessary condition for conceptual experience generally, and therefore the translation of conceptual experience into science is actually a betrayal of empirical knowledge.
This is why the 3rd Kr is a critique of Kant – because Kant was the philosopher who most thought that all knowledge had to be translatable into science, because he thought that intuitions without concepts are blind. It just turns out that as he began thinking about the actual mechanics of it, he was rigorously honest, and as he worked out the details of the whole process, he ended up generating conclusions that go beyond the original theory they were meant to defend.
Following the rigour of thinking took him places he did not want to go.
On the basis of underdetermination, Kant is going to have to think up a new a priori principle that is in itself, in its own way, a necessary condition for knowledge: the principle of the purposiveness of nature, or the technic of nature.
Underdetermination, then, carves out a space for reflecting judgement. Judgement needs a principle at the basis of it.
p. 209 1st intro, §9
We presuppose unification, because we presuppose the unity of space and time.
Therefore, it is subjectively necessary for us to make the transcendental presupposition that nature, as experience possible for us, does not have this disturbing, boundless heterogeneity of empirical laws and heterogeneity of natural forms, but that rather, through the affinity of its particular laws under more general ones, it takes on the quality of experience as an empirical system.
This presupposition is the transcen- dental principle of judgement.
Kant is claiming that something is both necessary and subjective.
The presupposition that nature is not chaotic is necessary for the possibility of inquiry.
undertake scientific inquiry without presupposing the intelligibility of nature as a system, if this idea is necessary for the minimal idea of knowledge-getting, then it's transcendental, but it's transcendental in a way that nothing in the first critiques is transcendental in that it is also subjective – it provides no basis for the theoretical cognition of nature. On the basis of it I cannot know, nor even believe, that nature is orderly. So what does it meant to say that I must presuppose it? The presupposition relates not to nature itself, but governs my activity.
I must act towards nature as if it were orderly for the sake of doing science. That does not guarantee that it will be successful, and does not allow me to believe, let alone know, that nature is orderly (that would be absolute speculation on my part). Rather,

this is only a principle for judging and investigating nature.
So it is a principle that sounds like it is about the world – "nature is orderly" – but in fact it is about my stance or attitude towards the world internal to the activity of acquiring knowledge of nature.
Allison: Think of this as the problem of induction (of which it is a version), i.e. the movement from some to all.
Kant's solution is not to say that we have an a priori guarantee that nature will behave in an orderly way commensurate with our logical powers, nor do we have a metaphysical solution, nor even a doxic solution (what we must believe) – rather, it is a normative solution. Normative because the claim is that we are rationally constrained to approach nature as if it were so ordered, but the constraint is a constraint upon our rational activity. The "as if so ordered" – the principle of purposiveness – defines the space of judgement, just as the categories give us the space of reason, since it provides the rational and thus normative framework in which alone rational reflection on nature is possible in general.
It's the Copernican turn, even more radical: to take what was a metaphysical problem about the world, and turn it into a normative problem about how we must think about the world for the sake of reflection upon nature.
Thinking of the solution as normative explains what Kant means by "subjective" – this does not mean private. It's about the agent and its powers. Hence why he makes up a new word: the "heautonomy" of judgement.
The principle of the purposiveness of nature does not touch the object. It determines my thinking about nature, not nature itself.
The principles of the first two critiques have an object (the world and freedom, respectively). The principle of purposiveness does not have an object. It legislates no domain, only our activities in seeking knowledge.
The principles of purposive judgement do not give us a priori knowledge of the world at all. subjective – they do not determine the object. They do not tell us that nature is orderly.
They really are

DETERMINING AND REFLECTING JUDGEMENT
Recall the difference between determining and reflecting judgement.
We can see how the problem of reflecting judgement arises when we look at three features of ordinary empirical judgements:
learning new concepts (we must have some form of cognitive engagement with particulars before they are subsumed under a concept)
applying ordinary concepts (in what way does experience guide or trigger concept application? how do objects in the world tell us what concepts they need to fall under?)
extending a given concept to a new situation
In other words, there is something puzzling about the relationship between individuals and concepts.
The argument of the 1st Kr, which establishes the necessary conditions for the possibility of experience, cannot yet account for the possibility of ordinary experience. There remain three obvious gaps or areas of underdetermination of transcendental philosophy:
And if we cannot
the INDIVIDUAL as such
Indeed, the 1st Kr seems to argue that the individual as such in an unintelligible idea, since "intuitions without concepts are blind," yet we have an idea of specificity, of concreteness, of the irreducibility of the particular (and just fixing it at-this-place and-this-time does not get at its concreteness). Best example: a particular work of art.
particulars as of some CONCEPT
We must presuppose that any particular we come across falls under some empirical concept or other. If it is true that intuitions without concepts are blind, then the idea of an in-principle irreducible one which has no conceptual relationship to any other is unintelligible. But more importantly, in our ordinary empirical life, when we come across an object, we assume that it is conceptualizable – that is, not a raw particular, but in principle intelligible.
concepts as under wider concepts / laws – a system of SCIENCE
And further, for the sake of science, we presuppose that concepts can be brought under wider concepts, laws can be brought under wider laws, until they are brought under one unified conceptual apparatus.
In order for (3) to work out, we had to introduce a new principle of reflection – science must approach nature as if scientific inquiry were possible, that is, as if for any laws, broader laws could be found under which those narrow laws could be brought.
So, scientific inquiry is teleological or purposive intellectual activity, guided by this idea of a unity of the world
under law. And that presupposes (p. 209 2nd intro, §4) the principle of the purposiveness of nature. It is subjectively necessary for us to make this transcendental presupposition (it is transcendental because it is a necessary condition for the possibility of scientific inquiry).
This principle is puzzling because it is not actually about nature, but how we must reflectively regard nature for the sake of our empirical investigations of it. So unlike the categories, which are legislative of nature, or the moral law, which is legislative of freedom, the principle of the purposiveness of nature is not legislative of any ontological domain. What it legislates is itself – that is, the activity of judgement.
And therefore, Kant is here proposing a normative and not epistemological or ontological solution to the problem of induction. He is legislating the presuppositions for rational activity, and not for any object domain.
That is why he introduces the principle of heautonomy (p. 185-6, 2nd intro).
Hence judgement also possesses an a priori principle for the possibility of nature, but one that holds only for the subject – a principle by which judgement prescribes not to nature, which would be autonomy, but to itself, which is heautonomy, a law for its reflection on nature. This law could be called the law of the specification of nature in terms of empirical laws.
DETERMINING AND REFLECTING JUDGEMENT : THE PROBLEM OF CONCEPTS
We have now said something about (3), and that leaves us with (2) and (1). We have begun vindicating the notion of reflecting judgement with respect to scientific inquiry, but still have not explained the systematic relation between reflecting judgement and

determining judgement with respect to (2) and (1).
This is what makes the 3rd Kr important for questions of epistemology.
The Longuenesse/Allison Hypothesis
cf. Kukla's edited collection Aesthetics and Cognition in Kant's Critical Philosophy
All theoretical judgements, including – indeed especially – ordinary empirical judgements of empirical states of affairs, contain what might be termed a moment of reflection as well as determination.
In other words, determining judgement presupposes in every instance a moment of reflecting judgement.
We have already seen why this might be the case: the problems of learning, applying and extending concepts indicate that there is an intrinsic moment of indeterminacy with respect to each determinate judgement. That moment of indeterminacy lies in the fact that the concept cannot itself specify its conditions of application, learning, and extension.
Allison focuses on the question of acquiring new concepts. According to him, this occurs through complex acts of logical reflection, called "the capacity to judge."
This arises in the 1st Kr with respect to the problem of schemata. The Schematism is meant to answer how a concept, which is purely intelligible, can be applied to something that is not only individual, but sensible.
This problem, of course, is exiguously difficult as the 1st Kr begins with the missing empirical experience –
namely Hume's insight that nothing in experience corresponds to (looks like) "cause" or "effect". The 1st Kr is meant to answer Hume on this – showing that the universe is not a matter of mere regularity but causality. Kant argues against him that cause is necessary in order to distinguish subjective from objective succession (see lecture 1).
The question then becomes, how does the notion of causality get a grip on the sensible world?
If we are going to have judgement at all, we are going to have to cross the gap between the intelligible and the sensible.
The third thing that connects understanding (the faculty of concepts) with sensibility (or connects mind and body) = the productive imagination.
Kant describes it as neither wholly active (like the understanding) nor passive (like sensibility).
The imagination temporalizes each of the categories. So, causality, for example, is rule-following succession.
All of this happens automatically, without reflection (Kant describes it as "an art hidden in the depths of the soul").
So, with respect to the categories, for Kant, there is no problem of judgement. It happens automatically in the case of categories, so no rules are necessary for transcendental schemata.
Empirical concepts are another matter.
Reflective judgement is going to do the work of relating sensibility to imagination that happens through imagination alone in the 1st Kr.
According to Longuenesse and Allison, neither the categories (cause and effect, etc.), nor the forms of intuition (space and time) are innate. Rather, they are both acquired from the synthetic activities of the imagination under the direction of the logical functions of judgement. These latter (subject-predicate forms) are innate.
So we need reflective judgement even to explain how the categories themselves gain access to the world: the categories gain access to the world through the way in which they regulate ordinary empirical concepts, but ordinary empirical concepts are not innate or given; rather they must be generated;
how are they generated? we are back to the problem of reflective judgement.
Kant is going to be suggesting a version of concept formation through abstraction, and so has to solve all the problems that the theory of abstraction faces.
Reflection is a work of comparison. The question is, a comparison of what with what?
Concepts have two aspects – generality (form) and the individual that falls under them (matter). compare?
What do we
[41:20]
Allison p. 21 Kant's Theory of Taste (quoting Kant's logic lectures)
To make concepts out of representations, one must be able to compare, to reflect, and to abstract. For these three logical operations of the understanding are essential and universal conditions for the generation of every concept whatsoever. I see, for example, a spruce, a willow, and a linden. By first comparing these objects with one another, I note that they are different from one another in regard to the trunk, the branches, the leaves, etc., but next I reflect on what they have in common among themselves – trunk, branches and leaves themselves – and I extract from the quantity, the figure, etc., of these. Thus I acquire the concept 'tree'.
First of all, as Allison points out, comparison, reflection, and abstraction are not temporally successive, but a single, unified activity with three analytic moments.
But the whole problem of abstraction – and the reason many take it to be a bad theory of concept formation – is: How can one ignore certain irrelevant features unless one already possesses the concept? How else do we know which differences to ignore?
The problem of abstraction is significant for Kant because we cannot apply the categories without empirical concepts (can't apply the notion of causality directly, but only to some event – |water| |freezing|, for example). And we know already that they are insufficient to account for concept acquisition.
So, we need to think harder about the logical act of comparison.
Well, even animals and children have association of ideas. When my son was about four, we lived in a village called Wivenhoe, with farms all around it, and I took him out for a walk along the country path in springtime, and there were all the tiny little lambs gamboling over, and I said "Dan, look at all the lambs!" and he said "Yum! Yum!"
The crux, according to Longuenesse, is that comparison is always universalizing – tending towards generality (looking for common features in the sensibly given), because this activity is in the service of the logical functions of judgement.
This looking for generality occurs under the guidance of concepts of comparison. cf. "The Amphiboly of Concepts"
The work of reflection occurs under the operation of four couples:
identity and difference
agreement and opposition inner and outer
matter and form
But we still have not got an answer to our original question: what is being compared with what to produce what? In one of Kant's

notebooks, he states: “We compare only what is universal in the rule of our apprehension.”
Recall that apprehension is the original work of the imagination in its operation on the sensibly given (to be distinguished from comprehension, which requires concepts.)
So our apprehension, in the imagination, of the sensibly given is rule-governed. A rule of the sensibly given is a schema. So what we do, in forming concepts, is compare schemata.
Schemata are neither raw images nor raw impressions, but rules governing particular image formations, or rules articulating particular image clusters – they have that moment of universality. There is something concept-like about them.
Allison’s 1st hypothesis, p. 25:
What one is really comparing are the patterns or rules governing the apprehension of these terms. That is, their schemata. And it is from a reflection on what is common to these patterns of apprehension, or schemata, combined with an abstraction from their differences that one arrives, eventually, at their reflecting concept (at ‘tree’).

4. How is it possible to have a schema without a concept? 2. How does the schema of an empirical concept originate?
How far toward concreteness can consciousness go, and still be a work of consciousness? After all, our question is: How does the mind touch the world?
So, one cannot have a concept at all without a corresponding schema, otherwise no application.
Allison p. 25: “What is required for a schema is a sensible expression or presentation (of a concept).” So schemata are the rules for generating sensible presentations of concepts.
So what we are looking for now are schemata without a concept. Allison quotes an example from Kant (from the Logic):
If, for example, a savage sees a house from a distance, whose use he does not know, he admittedly has before him, in his representation, the very same object as someone else who knows it determinately as a dwelling established for human beings.
When people with or without a concept face the same material object, they see pretty much the same thing.
But as to form, this cognition of one and the same object is different in the two cases. In the former, it is mere intuition; in the latter, it is simultaneously intuition and concept.
What the savage lacks, therefore, is a schema.
What Allison and Longuenesse want to press for is a notion of passive synthesis.
Apprehension is a work of
passive synthesis.
Allison (still quoting Kant) p. 27
But after seeing many similar objects, which he [the savage] presumably relates by association, he will begin to perceive relevant similarities and differences, which in turn leads, under the implicit guidance of the concepts of comparison, to the formation of a schema of a house, as a rule- governing apprehension, and possibly even the full-fledged concept.
What is presupposed, from the side of the mind, is the capacity to judge. The question we must ask is, judge what? We have a notion of schema, but still no account of how it is to get going.
Allison p. 28
This general validity presupposes a comparison, not of perceptions, but of our apprehension, insofar as it contains the presentation of an as-yet undetermined concept, and is universal in itself.
So:
the presentation in the apprehension is what is universal in itself
what gets compared with what is various acts of apprehension – or better still, the contents of various acts of apprehension
and they are compared with respect to their exhibition of an as-yet undetermined concept.
The notion of presentation points towards the notion of a schema. So indeed what is compared is the schemata of concepts not yet formed. And this is the basis of concept formation. The puzzle – what will make the whole thing work if it works at all – is that the content of these acts of apprehension contains something universal in itself.
This is to say that not only in the production of an image corresponding to a concept, but in the apprehension of an object, there must be something universal involved. The strangeness we feel towards this comes from our massive assumption that concepts have universality, and intuitions (what are apprehended) are particular (i.e. everything mind-like belongs to the mind, and everything in the world is merely a dumb particular). But this must be wrong. And indeed Kant is denying this very dualism.
Kant believes in sensible generality – form, schema, patterning – something that is not yet a concept, but a condition of its application.
The Critique of Judgement is a critique of concept-intuition dualism.
In order for concept acquisition to be possible, there must be sensible generality (patternings) in the world – not yet causal, or law-like, or conceptually determined, but nonetheless of such a distinct quality that we cannot deny as we gaze upon them that there is some sensible integrity to what we apprehend.
Kant is trying to find something between strong rationalistic Platonism on the one hand, and nominalism on the other. The notion of reflective judgement is the first attempt to fill that space.
After all, we like to think that concepts are not mere reflections of how we think about the world, but in some sense get at how the world is. The question raised by the problem of reflective judgement is, precisely how does the world have a speaking voice in the realm of judgement and reason?
The hidden language of nature is what aesthetics gets at.
If we thought that all of our conceptual inquiry – all of science – was just an imposition of our mind on the world (as per Nietzsche), then we would be deeply uninterested in knowing about the world.
Kant was concerned about this suggestion in his own account (1st Kr: “the mind legislates for nature”). By the 3rd Kr, he is concerned to show that the mind doesn’t merely legislate, but touches the world.
And nature speaks – quietly, but more than Popper, for example, would allow, according to whom nature can only ever say “no”.
The transcendental principle of reflective judgement is, again, the principle of the purposiveness of nature.
1st Intro, p.211-2
The principle by which we reflect on given objects of nature is this: that for all natural things, concepts can be found that are determined empirically.
– i.e. not by will, or agreement, or imposition, or metaphor.

Kant is turning against a certain naïve conception of what idealism means.
There is in fact a deep parallel to the solution of the problem of lawlikeness in science and the problem of the potential orderliness of nature as a whole – the one that Kant uses for scientific inquiry – on the one hand, and the problem of the possibility of concept acquisition, on the other.
So, on the scale discussed at the beginning of this lecture (individual, concepts, science) – level (3) presupposes level (2).
I am hypothesizing that the resolution of the difficulty of what it is to be aware of an individual (1) will be the work of aesthetic reflective judgement, but if that is true, then not only does (3) presuppose (2), but finally (contra Allison and Guyer), (2) presupposes (1).
In other words: we can only fully comprehend the moment of reflection presupposed by each determinate judgement by having an aesthetic level. The aesthetic will be the empirical foundation of it all. Our aesthetic encounter with the world is the condition of the possibility of our cognitive encounter with the world, because the aesthetic encounter with the world is already going to be pretty cognitive.
The lost pleasure of cognition
p. 187 2nd Intro
It is true that we no longer feel any noticeable pleasure resulting from our being able to grasp nature and the unity in its division into genera and species that alone makes possible the empirical concepts by means of which we cognize nature in terms of particular laws. But this pleasure was no doubt there at one time, and it is only because even the commonest experience would be impossible without it that we have gradually come to mix it in with mere cognition and no longer take any special notice of it.
(The way small children do.) We no longer experience such pleasure because we experience the world as already conceptualized – there is no space between concept and object.
The 3rd Kr is about opening up the space between concept and object, so as to see the history of how they once got together. It is a genealogical account of the history by means of which we have come to a conceptual determination of the world.
Note: the pleasure is both a pleasure in ordering (mastery) and in the order found – i.e. in both discovery and creation.
Hypothesis: The amenability of nature to our powers in general, in our experience of particular presentations, is the pleasure found in aesthetics. In natural beauty, we become aware that nature, without any imposition of our conceptuality upon it, suddenly appears as if it were beckoning our mind's relationship to it – that is, as if we were not only attuned to it, but our attunement to it is permitted by its attunement to us, without any actual willing of that attunement.
(This is one of the reasons why the 3rd Kr is primarily an account of natural beauty, and only derivatively about artistic beauty.)
So all beauty is a return of the repressed – of nature repressed by our conceptuality. We walk around as though are concepts are nature, and then discover that there is more to nature than we thought, but lo and behold, it's still amenable to us. Or completely hostile, which we call the sublime.
This gives the object a potential, such that as we experience it, we are not merely narcissistically re-experiencing our own mental powers, but rather the attunement of our mental powers to what exists independently of them. What does "independently of them" mean? This is what needs to be shown by a theory of the judgement of taste.
Before talking about aesthetic judgement, we will talk about teleological judgement and
THE PROBLEM OF ORGANISMS
(which is also about the mind's relationship to particular objects, and also a problem of reflective judgement). See 1st intro, §§ 6, 7, 9
See Chapter 2, Against Voluptuous Bodies [38:10]
Actual subsumption under laws or concepts is the work of determining judgement. For determining judgement, all explanation is merely mechanical explanation – that is, in terms of laws of cause and effect, bodies in motion.
p. 218, 1st Intro
"The operations of determining judgement occur as if wishing to have everything reduced to mechanical kind of explanation."
This works well for certain ranges of objects – namely, everything that is a mere aggregate, e.g. rocks.
But not all of the natural world is like this. Flowers, or the inner structure of plants and animals, appear to consciousness as being incapable of being explained by mechanical natural laws alone.
Why?
Crystal Fricka:
§ 65
For such items, the interaction of the parts cannot be explained mechanically because the completeness of the parts cannot be explained by means of their mechanical relations without having recourse to the representation of the whole system.
That is, we cannot even say what these items are, without describing the system of which they are a part. So here we require a structure not of universal to particular, but of whole to part.
Aggregates have surfaces but no boundaries – cut a piece of coal in half and you have two pieces. however... So there is something about a cat's surface that is a boundary. It has an inside and an outside, a whole and parts.
Because living things must be both organized, from the perspective of the whole, and self-organizing, from the perspective of the interplay of the parts, they can be comprehended as possible neither in accordance with pure mechanical laws, nor as artifacts – that is, objects produced through acts of freedom.
But according to Kant, "those two modes of comprehension exhaust the possibilities of objectively cognizing living beings by a discursive intellect like our own."
A discursive intellect = an intellect in which the analytically universal or abstract concept precedes and so determines the meaning of the sensible particulars that fall under it. [From 10_03_07: A judgement articulates conceptual content. S is P. Substance with property.]
According to Kant, we don't have any way of understanding anything whose character is self-organizing. Such a thing "has nothing analogous to any causality known to us."
In this sense, Kant thinks that living nature is both opaque and inscrutable.
So we can ask the question, Is living nature in principle comprehensible? Or is there something fundamentally inscrutable about living nature?
The task is to ask this question in a good way.

Kant was adamant that, in itself, the notion of something being alive – a living thing – was inscrutable and opaque.
[See John Dupré, The Disorder of Things]
Kant thinks that we must judge living things as purposive since their complexity of form exceeds the grasp of mechanical explanation, while acknowledging that there is something inexplicable in the principle of purposiveness employed. It is the combination of how we must think about living things in part-whole terms, and the ultimate opacity of the principle of teleological judgement that makes it reflective – that is, subjective albeit not merely subjective.
In other words, we must judge living things as if they were alive. But only as if. This is normative for our investigations, but not constitutive of the objects themselves – for we cannot conceive of a causality that is self- organizing.
Kant is puzzled by the notion of self-organization. Recall Hume's account of this problem in the Dialogues on Natural Religion – if the world appears as if designed, there must be a designer. But then, who organizes the ideas in God's mind? Generates an infinite regress.
The notion of self-organizing is more primitive and more basic.
Living things present us with an excess of formal integrity, beyond what discursive thinking can accommodate. This sensuous excess in living things is more problematic for Kant's system than he acknowledges.
He says "The employment of teleological judgement permits us to begin the work of reflectively explaining living things." But this use of teleological explanation, in one absolutely crucial sense, comes too late. Before we can embark on the business of explaining living nature, there is a prior moment: recognizing something as a living being. What Kant does not adequately conceptualize – arguably no philosopher has yet (Aristotle and Bergson give only disappointing accounts) – is what is involved in the experience of seeing something as alive.
So, we have to already distinguish between the experience of something living, and the experience of a mere thing, mere nature. Reflective judgement's turn to teleological explanation must be a second reflection – about our experience of things as living that attempts to make sense of that initial encounter and do something with it.
Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, §284
Look at a stone and imagine it having sensations. One says to oneself, 'how can one so much as get the idea of ascribing a sensation to a thing?' One might as well ascribe it to a number. – And now, look at a wriggling fly. And at once these difficulties vanish, and pain seems to be able to get a foothold here, where before everything was, so to speak, too smooth for it. And so too a corpse seems inaccessible to pain. Our attitude to what is alive and what is dead is not the same. All our reactions are different.
Wittgenstein is claiming that the predicate "is alive" does not, and cannot, operate the way an ordinary predicate ("red", etc.) does because the way in which we assign properties to objects presupposes our prior categorization of them as living or as dead (mere things).
So when he says "all our reactions are different," he means to say that even if there are family resemblances between the smoothness of the stone, and the smoothness of the skin, there is nonetheless a difference in what is involved in feeling that smoothness. One is not even tempted to pinch a stone.
My suggestion is that the notion of "is living" is a material a priori predicate – material because we come to it through our encounter with patterns of living beings, but a priori because it is a condition for our use of concepts for things of that kind. It cannot be used like ordinary predicates.
Question: What about non-animal life?
Note that the Investigations is not about mindedness, but bodiedness – sensations belong not to consciousness, but to bodies of certain kinds. Wittgenstein's use of the fly as example is trying to push our capacities beyond anthropomorphic identification.
That the living also includes that which has no sensation is one of the most difficult things to think coherently about. Matisse thinks hardest about it – he treats plantlikeness as the fundamental category with which to understand even the human world.
Some of the questions we have to think about in thinking about Kant:
Can we think coherently about art without thinking about the beauty of nature?
Can we coherently think about the beauty of nature without thinking at least part of it under the notion of living nature?
Is the notion of organic form intrinsic to the arts or not?
Kant's Third Critique The New School for Social Research
Jay Bernstein
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AESTHETIC REFLECTIVE JUDGEMENT
We have looked at 3 forms of reflective judgement
with respect to system (natural science as requiring a unified system) with respect to concept formation (when faced with new particulars) with respect to living systems or organisms
These all share the production of concepts of a certain kind.
Kant's way of thinking about concepts in general doesn't seem to leave space for the idea of recognizing things as living – hence my hypothesis that the predicate "is living" is a material a priori predicate.
Now, aesthetic or "mere" reflection does not produce a concept, but a feeling – of pleasure or displeasure – which makes aesthetic reflection unlike the above three. Let us think through this unlikeness.
1st Introduction, §7 on mere reflection
The subtext of this discussion is the necessity for there to be a harmony of the faculties of:
A cat,
imagination
faculty of direct engagement with intuitions apprehends
understanding faculty of concepts comprehends
Apprehension is a work of passive synthesis – preparing the intuition for conceptualization by seeking out both its unitary character and the crucial discriminating characteristics of that unitary presentation.
We are taking an intuitional manifold (manyness), and thinking of it as unified or as one.
The example to keep in mind here is looking at a Pollock painting: seeing a coherence in the manyness

not doing conceptual work, but imaginative work
looking for significant patternings, relations, movement
In a way, our first encounter with any object in the world is like looking at a Pollock painting. We have to first imaginatively apprehend it. This prepares the object to be comprehended. In a way, the imagination anticipates what is going to happen when the understanding kicks in.
[Does this take time?]
In that sense, the relationship between imagination and understanding is a coordination of these two faculties, the one dealing with concepts, the other with sensory presentation. And necessarily, for any empirical judgement, there has to be a harmony between the imagination and understanding.
The topic of the 3rd Kr is the harmony between imagination and understanding in general.
Kant's aesthetics has to do with how these faculties work together.
2 respects of this relationship:
cognitive reflection aesthetic or mere reflection
Standard empirical case: the harmony is for the sake of the recognition of what is thought in a given concept, in the sensible appearance, by the imagination.
Allison – we can imagine three types or cases of empirical reflection (this is on the way to thinking about how the understanding and imagination relate in general):
minimal harmony disharmony
"what is it?"
"an object"
is it even one single thing?
object too irregular or idiosyncratic for conceptualization
"it's a cup"
too universal – pretty much says anything
(does this have something to do with the ugly?)
maximum harmony
What, then, is mere reflection?
Aesthetic judgement is not about bringing an object under a concept (hence the relevance of the Pollock – though the same goes for a Rembrandt).
Here, we are looking for an intuitive content in what is perceived that is prior to and independent of any conceptualization, and which presents itself as containing the same type of intuitional coherence – a unified manyness.
Perhaps something universal in itself.
Or perhaps it presents itself as schema-like – as if governed by a rule, although there is no rule present. A high level of intuitional coherence, but not as following from a rule.
Or it presents itself as intelligible, but only at the sensory level. It is perfectly apprehensible, without being in the least bit comprehended.
In aesthetic judgement, there is a harmony of the faculty of the imagination with the whole of the faculty of the understanding.
Normally, the understanding has two aspects to its activities: categories
concepts (governed by the categories)
A judgement articulates conceptual content. S is P. Substance with property.
In taking up the manifold, the imagination is already preparing it to be judged in terms of substance and property / subject and predicate (an image itself is nothing).
The understanding applies concepts to objects under the guidance of the demands of the categories.
Normally, we are not talking about the faculty of the understanding in harmony with the faculty of the imagination, but the preparation of a particular manifold for conceptualization.
What is the faculty of understanding when it is not conceptualizing?
What is the faculty of imagination when it is not preparing for conceptualization?
p. 220, First Introduction
But when we merely reflect on a perception we are not dealing with a determinate concept, but are dealing only with the general rule for reflecting on a perception for the sake of the understanding, as a power of concepts. Clearly, then, in a merely reflective judgement, imagination and understanding are considered as they must relate in general in the power of judgment, as compared with how they actually relate in the case of a given perception.
Normally we examine their (understanding and imagination's) products, but now we are turning to the machinery that makes those products, and what its properties are.
In this general harmony, we are looking for a particular type of harmony, namely, an ideal one.
So if the form of an object given in empirical intuition is of such a character that the apprehension, in the imagination, of the object's manifold agrees with the exhibition of a concept of the understanding (which concept this is being indeterminate), then imagination and understanding are – in mere reflection – in mutual harmony, a harmony that furthers the task of these powers...
It's as if, even though we're not looking for a cognition of an object, we nonetheless go through the same kinds of activities, but with no recognition in a concept. What is presented allows the imagination to function in a way that is in harmony with the needs of the understanding in general.
There are 2 theses here:

5. The perception, so considered, is one that energizes or releases the relationship between the imagination and the understanding, and because it does so it reveals the relationship between the faculties.
[42:00]
i.e. in aesthetic perception, we routinely say that it is an act of absorptive looking – an extended act of perception – a form of appraising an object in a way that brings a sense of the coherence of that object as a mere sensible particular.
When we find such unity, we feel a distinct form of pleasure. Finding this harmony – finding that we are capable, in looking at a

Pollock, of seeing a hypnotic pattern of energized relatedness, in which there is both movement and stasis in reciprocal balance with one another; a structure that holds the whole together as a standing piece – the pleasure we thereby feel is a pleasure in the harmony of the imagination and the understanding.
The point of modern abstract art, is to refuse to allow us to conceptualize it. We are forced to "aestheticize" it.
Once we interpret a work of art, we can no longer see it. (Hence why all art dies – because we can interpret anything.)
Sometimes we are struck by beauty, sometimes we have to work at it, etc.
Kant's story is one that wants judgements of taste to be democratically distributed – even children are capable of finding things beautiful. It is something that can occur, as well as something that we can cultivate.

6. What we attend to is the form of the object, because form is what apprehension apprehends.
Now, because the object occasions this harmony, it must be considered as if its form were purposive for our faculties. It is, in other words, as if the object has a perfect fit with the structure of the faculties in general.
The manifold apprehended by the imagination is discerned to possess a form – something that is schema-like, that is imaginatively suitable for the work of the understanding in general. But something's being schema-like is just what the understanding requires, so the imagination, in synthesizing the manifold as schema-like, is nonetheless working at the behest of the understanding, although the latter is not demanding anything of the imagination, because it is not trying to conceptualize – it's not trying to bring the intuition under a concept, it's just letting the imagination do its work.
Kant will say (this will need massive unpacking) that not only is there a harmony between the imagination and understanding, but a free play in the relationship between them, as opposed to in the case of conceptualization.
It is precisely in virtue of its ability to occasion the production of such a form that the object is deemed purposive for judgement. [51:00]
Two side-comments:
Aesthetic reflective judgements are somehow connected to the demands of cognition. Teasing that out is difficult – this is an area of real debate.
Because, for Kant, judgements of taste are non-conceptual, his fundamental object is nature, not art. This strikes us as very 18th century. I would like to challenge you to see this as not being unfortunate on Kant's part.
Also note that the very non-conceptual character of Kantian aesthetics has made it appear tremendously ideal for modernist art. The greatest of all modernist critics, Clement Greenberg, in his aesthetic theory (which is really just a commentary on the 3rd Kr) – these are the lectures he gave in Beddington in 1964 – shows a certain deep Kantian formalism. This is exactly what post-modern critics hate about Greenberg. [Note: See Chapter 2 ("Judging Life: Kant, Clement Greenberg, and Chaim Soutine") in Jay's Against Voluptuous Bodies]
[54:30]
So... we've noted that the judgement is non-cognitive; why call it "aesthetic"?
What is the relationship between mere reflection (reflective judgement) and aesthetic reflective judgement? p. 223' (First Introduction)
but we can also consider this same relation between [those] two cognitive powers merely subjectively, [namely,] insofar as one of these powers furthers or hinders the other in one and the same presentation and thereby affects one's mental state, so that here we consider this relation as one that can be sensed (as does not happen in the case of the separate use of any cognitive power other [than judgement]).
So, on the one hand, when we are judging that an object is beautiful, what we are ultimately interested in is not a feature of the object, but the way in which the object affects our capacities for judgement. This is about the subjective features of our relationship to the object.
In an aesthetic reflective judgement, we are not seeking a determination of the object, but a determination of the subject, and of his or her feelings. What we are inquiring into is not how things stand with the object as such, but how the object is experienced by the subject with respect to his powers of cognition generally.
A turn from looking at the world, to how the world affects, or is experienced by us, in a fundamental way. This has two aspects:
How the two powers of cognition – imagination and understanding – mesh, or fail to mesh, in considering the object.
Our awareness of that harmonizing or failure of it.
A judgement of taste is not a raw feel. We are not caused to feel pleasure. It is the upshot of both the relationship between our faculties, and our awareness of it, and a certain kind of meaningfulness that it has – a meaningfulness that is normative.
Put another way: there is no phenomenologically identifiable thing called "aesthetic pleasure". Aesthetic pleasure is not recognized the way one recognizes a feeling of burning or greenness. The kind of pleasure one gets in an aesthetic episode is involved in a certain context, and involves both reflective capacities and intentional understandings, however implicit. But there is a level of complexity here that is ingredient in the judgement. And therefore, despite the fact that it's subjective, and about pleasure, and at the sensory level, it's got to have a particular kind of intentional complexity to rise to the level of a reflective judgement.
That said, what makes it an aesthetic judgement is that the determining ground is a feeling of pleasure. p. 224'
Hence we may define an aesthetic judgement in general as one whose predicate can never be cognition (i.e., concept of an object, though it may contain the subjective conditions for cognition as such). In such a judgement, the basis determining [it] is sensation. There is, however, only one so-called sensation that can never become a concept of an object: the feeling of pleasure and displeasure. This sensation is merely subjective, whereas all other sensations can be used for cognition.
"All other sensations" = red, cold, rough, bright... All of these can be turned back into an account of the object. They may be relative, but they refer to something in the world. They have an aboutness of the object.
Pleasure is about how I feel. An aesthetic reflective judgement is a response, by me, to the experience of the object in reflection.
The notion of pleasure that Kant uses is far from transparent.
pp. 230-231' Kant offers a transcendental definition of pleasure, i.e.
A definition of this feeling in general [terms], without considering the distinction whether it accompanies sensation proper [Sinnesempfindung], or accompanies reflection, or the determination of the will
—Kant here is ignoring the various ways we can feel pleasure and considering pleasure transcendentally, which means with respect to the fundamental powers of the human being, for our capacity to encounter objects in the world. The (transcendental)

definition given here is a two-part definition:
Pleasure is a mental state in which a presentation [Jay: something in the imagination] is in harmony with itself [and] which is the basis either for merely preserving this state itself, (for the state in which the mental powers further one another preserves itself) or for producing the object of this presentation.
i.e. there are 2 possibilities:

7. Either we get a pleasure from being in the state of a harmony of the faculties, a state which feels sustaining for life (or for the life of the mind), a self-maintaining moment which seeks to preserve itself because it is pleasurable, so that state is both cause and effect of itself;
8. Or, the presentation is the basis of a desire to produce an object in the world, and satisfied by the production of that object. (I get an idea of the Empire State building, and I build it.)

Clearly, aesthetic pleasure is not of the latter kind. So what is it? What is this self-maintaining state? Is it pleasure at all? And is it disinterested?
In thinking of different types of judgement of pleasure, we are not thinking of pleasure as something that is immediate. In routing it through judgement, what we are getting is an intentional account of the meaning of pleasure. Or to put it differently, there are different kinds of pleasures, and they have different kinds of meanings owing to the intentional route by which we come to experience them.
Kant is here saying something controversial, for one might think nothing could be more immediate than a feeling of pleasure. But this type of pleasure is not merely caused.
What makes this especially difficult is that the judgement of taste is equally non-conceptual and non-cognitive – it is about a relationship between the harmony of the faculties – and the pleasure in the judgement is therefore both causal and intentional. The intentional moment being that we become aware of the harmony through the pleasure, and in finding ourselves in that harmony, give it an evaluative worth. Our giving it an evaluative worth comes out in our claim "x is beautiful."
What we have done is taken our experience of pleasure, and on the basis of that made a judgement that Kant wants to claim is objective. (What is at stake is not something like the claim "Chocolate is good.")
The harmony is feeling the apprehension, and the apprehension, like the harmony, is an inherently pleasurable mental state that we seek to preserve – not willfully, but being in that state is being in a state where we spontaneously seek to maintain it. It is part of being in that state that we experience it as self-preserving or self- maintaining.
Pleasure is described differently in the Second Introduction. As we saw last week when talking about the lost pleasure of judgement, pleasure is there looked at as a feeling in response to the attaining of an aim. If we think of aesthetic reflective judgements using that model, then the source of pleasure is the discovery of a contingent fit between the object and our mental powers.
Part of the pleasure in natural beauty (assuming there is any – I took my son to Yellowstone and he thought it was kitschy) is the experience of order when we are not searching for it. When this happens, we think that the general aims of the mental faculties are being satisfied in a way that feels wholly spontaneous and accidental. It's as if nature itself was so designed as to let my mental powers exist in their full exuberance. It is as if in that experience I find a general attunement between the way nature merely appears to the senses, and our powers of cognition in general. The fitness of the object for our mental powers in a way that has no ground.
At that level, the experience of nature is riveting. Adorno: "Beauties of nature can never be seen but only glimpsed." If you look at nature in a steady way, it will be oversaturated.
Does the principle of the purposiveness of nature – which underlies our capacity for reflective judgement concerning system, concept formation and organism – also underlie the possibilities of the judgement of taste?
The standard answer in the literature is no. Whatever goes on in aesthetics is different from these other cognitions. The aesthetic is discontinuous from whatever it is that allows science to be possible.
This question of fitness raises the question that is significant in the Second Introduction – about the normativity of judgements of taste, as opposed to other forms of pleasure and awareness.
p. 191 Second Introduction
but, like any other empirical judgement, a judgement of taste claims only to be valid for everyone, and it is always possible for such a judgement to be valid for everyone despite its intrinsic contingency.
When I make a judgement of taste, I am claiming that if anyone were placed in the same position I am with
respect to this object, and attended to it appropriately, they too ought to feel pleasure. objectivity here.
So there is a claim to
In the same way, someone who feels pleasure in the mere reflection on the form of an object, without any concern about a concept, rightly lays claim to everyone's assent, even though this judgement is empirical and a singular judgement.
We are covering the general architecture of a judgement of taste: harmony of the faculties
about pleasure
valid for everyone
"Beautiful" does not refer to a property of the object (the way "red" does). apprehended in a certain way, leads to pleasure.
It refers to the fact that that object,
There is a puzzle here about normativity:
For Kant, if something is normative, it has to have an a priori principle – a basis in our capacities for, or the
structures of, our encounter with the world in general.
What might that principle be in the case of aesthetic judgements?
I have been suggesting that the principle of purposiveness, which is the ground for system
concept formation
organism
might also be the ground for aesthetic reflective judgements.
p. 193, Second Introduction – principle of purposiveness
Although our concept of a subjective purposiveness ... is only a principle of judgement by which it provides itself with concepts in nature's immense diversity (so that judgement can orient itself in this diversity), we are still attributing to nature, on the

analogy of a purpose, a concern, as it were, for our cognitive power. Hence we may regard natural beauty as the exhibition of the concept of formal (merely subjective) purposiveness, and may regard natural purposes as the exhibition of a concept of a real (objective) purposiveness, the first of which we judge by taste (aesthetically, by means of the feeling of pleasure), and the second by understanding and reason (logically, according to concepts).

Kant is suggesting that finding things beautiful is finding them as if nature designed them for our cognitive powers.

Everyone thinks that when Kant says this, he is simply making a wild mistake. First, because it makes the relationship between aesthetic reflective judgements, and cognitive judgements, much too close. If you follow the principle of the purposiveness of nature, why isn't it the case that all natural objects that we can judge are beautiful?

Second, if we think that the principle of the purposiveness of nature underlies judgements of taste, what happens to art? Does it operate on a wholly different basis than the beauty of nature?

Hegel says that our judgements of beauty in nature should be based on our judgements of beauty in art. Kant, on the other hand, wants to make judgements of natural beauty the paradigm of a judgement of beauty, and extend that account into art.

The way in which the question of the beauty of nature could be related to the question of art is by considering the role in art of mediums. If art is necessarily medium-bound and medium-specific in its operations, then those mediums themselves (paint, harmony, etc.) may be portions of nature worked up into cultural form. Art is then the way in which we experience nature in a fully cultural way.

After all, meanings in art are not translatable out of the medium in which they are presented – unlike other meanings, which can be translated (from one language to another, for example).

The argument for thinking that the judgement of taste is grounded on the principle of the purposiveness of nature, and Allison's objections:

[see handout]

p. 61 of Kant's Theory of Taste, first full paragraph: Allison summarizes Kant's argument (referring to the passages in Kant that we just read, plus First Intro 232-3 240-3).

Kant's reasoning in these passages seems to be roughly the following: (1) We have seen that the inclusion of judgment in the "system" of higher cognitive faculties requires that it have its own a priori or transcendental principle. (2) We have also seen that the formal or logical purposiveness of nature is such a principle. (3) But judgments of taste, as merely reflective judgments, make a claim for universality and necessity. (4) If this claim is legitimate, it must rest on an a priori principle, and since the judgments are merely reflective (do not involve determination), it must be a principle that pertains to judgment in its reflective capacity. (5) Since the purposiveness of nature has already been shown to be just such a principle, judgments of taste must be based on it (or at least they must be if their claims are to be warranted).

Allison's objections:

9. It does not follow, from the fact that the principle of purposiveness is the a priori principle of reflective judgement in logical reflection that it must likewise be the same principle underlying aesthetic reflective judgements – i.e. this does not follow directly.
10. We should not even think this plausible, since logical reflection concerns reflection on diverse forms, whereas judgements of taste are concerned with the purposiveness of judgement for particular forms. When we're looking for concepts, we are looking for forms – things that apply to more than one object. A judgement of taste, however, is always singular.

This much is true. But Allison is wrong that this is grounds for separation.

After all, I could not compare the schema of diverse objects unless, for this particular object, something schema- like was possible. That is, the very capacities that allow me to do the work of concept formation presuppose my capacity in general to find individual objects having intrinsic schema-like coherence themselves.

In saying this, I am claiming that the thought of system presupposes the possibility of concept formation, and the possibility of concept formation presupposes the capacity for individual judgement. How can we go about the business of concept formation unless we already have the capacity displayed in aesthetic reflective judgement? Why isn't it the case that the bedrock presupposition for the entire hierarchy, going right up to science, is an aesthetic reflective judgement – why should we draw a line severing aesthetic reflective judgement?

The unlikeness is not as unlike as Allison claims. He is relying on the particular/general distinction, but you cannot do generals without particulars.

To be clear what is at stake: Judgements of taste have a certain normativity. What is the ground that entitles us to that normativity? In both Introductions, Kant suggests: the principle of the purposiveness of nature. Yet this is dropped completely in the main text.

Recall that the archaeology of the text (as it occurred to Kant): The Analytic of the Beautiful

Reflective Judgement

The Sublime

Morality and Art

The second half on Nature

Kant's argument may well be false, as Allison claims.

severs aesthetics from all of the considerations on how we judge nature, then what on earth is aesthetics going to be about? Why do we care about it, and why are people always trying to get rid of it?

If knowledge and morality do not talk about everything, what is left over? Our sensible, subjective relation to the world. How we are attuned to the world as sensing and feeling creatures. Aesthetics is an attempt to get at a stratum of experience that joins us both to the world and to one another.

The danger is that either one instrumentalizes aesthetics, and just makes it a precursor to cognition, or one aestheticizes it, and then it becomes about nothing.

What sustains this possibility of significance, without emptying it into mere self-referentiality, or instrumentalizing it either for cognition or for morality (which is what Kant did do at the end of the 3rd Kr)? Kant's Third Critique The New School for Social Research

Jay Bernstein

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PLEASURE AND DISINTERESTEDNESS
In the 3rd Kr, Kant is interrogating different forms of non-meaning: the logic of the beautiful, the logic of the sublime. There are others that Kant doesn't interrogate, like the logic of cruelty, or the return of the repressed. It is very important that we understand not only how these different forms of non-meaning have their own logics, but also find some way, perhaps, of connecting them to one another.
I am going to resist going back to last week, since I think we ought to start the book. As Adam said at the end of last time, outside, the problem with the First Introduction is that it says everything all at once. Now we are going to go much more slowly through the logic of Kant's argument. My reason for starting with reflective judgement is precisely because it locates the question of non-meaning as a form of judgement. Reflective judgement is exactly the attempt to encounter, say, the individual for its own sake, without subsuming it under a concept.
Question: I am worried about calling this non-meaning. It just seems like non-conceptual meaning. It could be locating another order of meaning.
That is what I mean: non-conceptual meaning.
Let us begin with §1. I would like to try to get through the first two moments today. §1 covers terrain that we have already covered, but with a couple of twists.
The judgement of taste refers to the presentation of an object to the subject: a presentation whose appraisal is a source of pleasure or displeasure. And because a judgement of beauty is above all a source of pleasure or displeasure, it is for Kant fundamentally non-cognitive, therefore aesthetic, therefore subjective.
p. 44
To apprehend a regular, purposive building with one's cognitive power (whether the presentation is distinct or confused) is very different from being conscious of this presentation with a sensation of liking. Here the presentation is referred only to the subject, namely, to his feeling of life, under the name of feeling of pleasure or displeasure, and this forms the basis of a very special power of discriminating and judging.
What is this feeling of life?
[6:00]
At the very beginning of a very, very bad book called On Beauty and Being Just, Elaine Scarry... It is a very bad book, because it's wants to claim that beauty is the experiential lure and stand-in for every thing that is good – for knowledge, truth, equality, justice – just in an affective mode. Which is to say beauty is slightly idealized. Nonetheless, she does hit upon something that is phenomenologically true, and is sometimes too obvious or too embarrassing to mention, which is this: after recounting the story of Odysseus being washed up on the shore, to confront, as if a metaphor for his not drowning, the incomparable and astonishing beauty of Narsica, Scarry bluntly contends that beauty is life-saving: it quickens, adrenalizes, makes the heart beat faster, makes life more vivid, animates, makes life worth living. And what holds for the experience of beauty – its animating character – is projected upon its objects. Their being perceived as beautiful seems to bring them to life or to make them life- like. In some cases, maybe all, this can be called a mimesis of life.
So, for Scarry, part of aesthetic pleasure is a feeling of animation (we see the same term in Kant: the "animation" of the relationship between the Imagination and the Understanding). And it is clear, for Kant, that the notion of pleasure is something that can only be ascribed to beings that have a biological life. We cannot imagine a notion of pleasure without that substratum of being alive.
What Scarry misses is that in her own account, that experience of beauty as life-saving occurs only in utter proximity to death. It is only when Odysseus is saved from drowning that he has this intense experience. Later, as she attempts to provide beauty's enlivening power with its ethical force, she notes the way in which in one's daily unmindfulness of the aliveness of others is temporarily interrupted by the presence of a beautiful person. Beauty becomes a sign of life. As we walk around the word, we somehow don't grasp the aliveness of our fellow creatures, and the appearance of a beautiful person catches us off our guard because we are suddenly enlivened and see this beauty before us as a sign of life.
My question is, how are we experiencing other persons when we are not noticing their aliveness? And how do we experience ourselves when not in that aesthetic state? What state were we in prior to the experience of beauty, and what does that state have to do with the appeal or the significance of beauty? If beauty is enlivening, what does that say about our non-aesthetic moments of existence? What does that say about the role of beauty in our lives?
[13:10]
Pleasure is defined by Kant as the feeling of the furtherance of life, and displeasure as the feeling of the restriction of life. One almost wants to say that all displeasure is a kind of memento mori.
Aesthetic pleasure heightens the sense of my existence. It furthers my feeling of being alive and is significant thereby. Part of the import of aesthetic experience is that in it we feel more fully and intensively engaged than in everyday experience, and insofar as aesthetic experience is contemplative, in it my mental life is connected to my biological life.
Which is to say that in aesthetic experience, mental life is experienced as the life of a living being, which is certainly not the case in rational cognition. One of the pleasures of philosophy is that it lets you forget your embodiment.
All of these are ways in which the question of life that I raised two lectures ago touches directly on the questions of aesthetic reflection, and therefore on cognition generally. At the very outset of his argument, Kant is suggesting that the pleasure of the beautiful is an experience or re-experiencing of the relationship between our mental life and our bodily existence.
In the Critique of Practical Reason (p. 9n), Kant says that life is the faculty / power of a being by which it acts according to the faculty / power of desire. Life is connected to the structures of desire – what moves us to act in particular ways – and pleasure, in this case, is the idea of the agreement of an object or action with the subjective conditions of life.
That is, if we desire something, we do so because we think it will satisfy a life need, and so we experience the pleasure in the satisfaction of the desire as something with accords with the subjective conditions of life. Because this sort of state is pleasurable, it is one we seek to preserve.
[18:30]
Recall the title of §1 "A Judgement of Taste Is Aesthetic" – what is aesthetic about it? The pleasure. What kind of pleasure is it?

Kant has to distinguish the kind of pleasure appropriate to aesthetic reflective acts from other forms of pleasure.
A judgement of beauty – "x is beautiful" – expresses a claim about our being in a pleasurable state in response to the object – one that others would feel as well.
Question: Is pleasure something we only think makes us more alive, or does it actually further our being alive?
In the Critique of Practical Reason, the argument is based on the logic of desire. You always desire objects under a description, i.e. they are things you seek because you think they will be satisfying.
Question: ...Not that they necessarily will be.
That's right. It's a belief. If you recall, Descartes is worried about this problem in his Doctrine on the Soul, which is why he spends a whole lot of time talking about wormwood – that is, desires for things that are actually harmful to us. He wants the world of desire to be belief-free and non-cognitive: desires are neither true nor false. He is trying to separate out the domain of desire from the domain of cognition.
Kant has a far more nuanced conception of desire than that, and certainly allows beliefs to enter in.
But having the desire, and of course pleasure itself, in satisfying our desire, is what subjectively enhances our life. The two parts are related but there isn't a direct entailment.
Ok. The faculty that apprehends the beautiful is a "very special faculty [power] of discrimination and judgement" (204)
It is
a faculty of appraisal... what is appraised aesthetically through this faculty is the capacity of a representation to occasion an enhancement or a diminution of one's cognitive faculties [the imagination and the understanding] in their cooperative activity. (From Allison, Kant's Theory of Taste, p. 69.) Kant says, at p. 222
For this consciousness in an aesthetic judgement contains a basis for determining the subject's activity regarding the quickening of his cognitive powers... This pleasure is also not practical in any way [Jay: i.e. it is totally useless], neither like the one arising from the pathological basis, agreeableness, nor like the one arising from the intellectual basis, the conceived good. Yet it does have a causality in it, namely, to keep [us in] the state of [having] the presentation itself, and [to keep] the cognitive powers engaged [in their occupation] without any further aim. We linger in our contemplation of the beautiful
compare to pp. 242-3, where he talks about the opposite – boredom – where we do not linger. Judgement reflects, compares; it is the feeling that appraises the results of reflective activity. 2 acts of judgement involved in an aesthetic appraisal
(There are debates about how these two aspects work together.)
But there is something to consider here: if one utterly
The appraising of the object, which is to give rise to a harmony of the imagination and the understanding. The judgement of taste proper, which is a form of reflective endorsement of what occurs in (1).
The problem is that it could be the case that the endorsing – the wanting to linger – is also a source of pleasure. How many judgements and how many pleasures are there? And how are they related to one another?
It can't be just (1), for that is a causal thesis.
Part of the problem is to locate the exact place of pleasure. The effect of the representation of an object on one's cognitive faculties, insofar as they are engaged in mere reflection, is something that can only be felt. That is, how does anyone know that their imagination and understanding are acting in harmony? What one does know is that one is in a peculiar state of pleasure. So, access to (1) is via the pleasure, and the pleasure is going to be part of the grounds on the basis of which we judge something to be beautiful.
A judgement of beauty is something that, on a certain level, must be felt. That feeling is why we demand that the individual face the object – we cannot merely describe beauty.
Says Kant, the feeling operates like a predicate. It serves as a vehicle through which we perceive the aptness, or subjective purposiveness of a given representation for the proper exercise of our cognitive faculties.
So, aesthetic feeling plays the role in aesthetic judgement that recognition in a concept plays in a cognitive judgement. It's a judgement alright, but it's on the basis of a feeling – the feeling is going to play the role of a predicate.
To unpack "is beautiful" is to unpack the pleasure, for the beauty is not in the object per se.
On a footnote on p. 203, Kant says that he is going to use the logical functions of judging to help him find the moments of aesthetic judgement, and that he is going to start with the notion of quality, not quantity.
In his Analytic of the Beautiful, Kant is only interested in pure judgements of taste, since only these focus resolutely on the question of whether something is beautiful or not. The account that he is going to give here is one that provides the grounds for calling anything beautiful.
What are the necessary conditions for calling a judgement of taste "pure"?
From Beatrice Longuenesse, "Kant's Leading Thread in the Analytic of the Beautiful" in Rebecca Kukla, Aesthetics and Cognition in Kant's Critical Philosophy (the entire book focuses on reflective judgement). Kant's leading thread, here as in the other Critiques, is the table of judgements.
§9 of the Critique of Pure Reason
"What it provides us with is a checklist of questions concerning the nature of the acts of judging at work in aesthetic judgement."
We're not following it slavishly, but we are using it to formulate the questions we need to ask ourselves in investigating aesthetic judgements. What the functions of judging point us to is that, in the act of judging the beautiful, we need to elucidate the meaning of the predicate "beautiful" in the propositions resulting from that act.
Now, in the 1st Kr, Kant begins with quantity, because ultimately he is interested in the question of universality, and how it is that judgements can be objective along those dimensions.
All aesthetic reflective judgements are singular, so quantity would be the wrong place to start. It's judging this object, and only this object.
So, rather than starting with the question of quantity, he starts with the question of quality, because the whole analysis of aesthetic judgement boils down to: what is the meaning of the predicate of the judgement of taste ("beautiful")? That is, what is asserted of the object in an aesthetic judgement?
What is being affirmed (it is an affirmative judgement) in the judgement "x is beautiful" is the fact that in judging that object we have a feeling of pleasure brought about in the subject by his own mental activity in apprehending the object.
The four moments are:

quality – a judgement of pleasure (elicited in us), but with a negative condition: disinterestedness quantity – universal liking
In §6, Kant makes a direct inference to this from the disinterestedness – if interest is always my interest, and I am here disinterested (there is nothing of me here), then it is of universal liking. relation – purposiveness
The objective correlate, or the occasion of a judgement of taste is the form of an object, which is by definition (in this instance) the appearance of being purposive, but without being for anything (except my cognition itself).
modality – necessity
Kant gives various groundings of this. One version is: the presupposition of common sense.
Allison thinks that the first three moments simply state what makes a judgement of taste pure – that is, they are definitional. They answer to what Kant calls the quid facti (the facts that are under dispute), and leave out of account the quid juris (with what justification?).
Jay: I don't find this compelling. In the second moment, for example, to claim that the pleasure is disinterested is already in the service of justification.
Disinterestedness
A condition of the purity of the judgement of taste. Ensures that this pleasure is not mixed up with the other kinds of pleasure.
What is an interest, anyway? A desire or need for that object – plus a rational endorsement of that desire or need.
Interests are of two fundamental kinds: empirical (the agreeable)
for pure practical reason (a liking for the good)

11. Empirical pleasures are based on antecedent desires or inclinations. We want the object to exist, so that we can consume it.
12. There other spring of action is reason itself, which gives us a desire to pursue the good. For Kant, reason is an independent source of motivation. I think the good ought to exist, and I do those actions that I think will bring about the good. I have an interest in those states of affairs in which the good would be realized.
So, interests move an agent to act, and having an interest in something necessarily involves desiring its existence.
Kant believes – and this is the fundamental basis of the strategy – that these two sources (roughly, the body (1) and the mind (2)) exhaust the sources of interestedness. So, they exhaust the way in which pleasure can be related to the faculty of desire. So, if we feel a pleasure that is neither empirical nor moral, then it is a pleasure without interest. Therefore it is a disinterested pleasure.
One striking feature of Kant's argument here occurs on p. 210, where he lines up the three pleasures
Hence the agreeable, the beautiful, and the good designate three different relations that presentations have to the feeling of pleasure and displeasure, the feeling by reference to which we distinguish between objects and ways of presenting them.
i.e. we distinguish radically between kinds of pleasures based on the source of those pleasures. If the source of the pleasure is the satisfaction of an ordinary desire, that's one kind. If the source is the satisfaction of the moral good, that's another kind. And if the source is the experience of an aesthetic judgement, that is a different kind still. So, the sources are related to the different kinds of presentation that occur.
The terms of approbation are also different:
the agreeable – gratifies us
the beautiful – we just like
the good – we esteem or endorse (attributing it an objective value).
What is shocking here is the next part:
Agreeableness holds for non-rational animals too; beauty only for human beings, that is, beings who are animal and rational, though it is not enough that they are rational – they must be animal as well; the good for all rational beings as such.
So we're being told that the experience of pleasure of the agreeable, which of course is connected to the body, is something we share with animals. And our pleasure in the good we share with all rational beings (god and angels?). Only aesthetic pleasure is uniquely human. Only in the domain of the aesthetic do we experience the unity of our being rational animals.
This thought is what lies behind all of Schiller's philosophizing. Schiller calls the domain of the empirical the sense-drive; the domain of the rational he calls the form-drive. The sense-drive is to make everything that is near form into a content – something concrete. The form-drive is to make everything that is merely given into a structure of reason, which we call enlightenment. The third thing, Schiller calls the play-drive. "Man alone plays."
It is not an accident that Kant continually says that what is at stake in an aesthetic judgement is the free play in the relationship between the imagination and the understanding.
Kant seems to be suggesting that uniquely in the case of aesthetic experience do we behave as humans, and not as either animals or gods. What is it about aesthetic reflective judgement that is a source of it being uniquely human in a way that our other motivations are not?
3 Clarifications of Disinterestedness

13. To say that the pleasure is disinterested is to say that the object's existence is not the cause of our pleasure, nor does our faculty of desire strive to cause the existence of the object. Instead, the object's existence is only the occasion for the pleasure which is elicited by the free play of the imagination and the understanding in apprehending the object.
To say that the pleasure is disinterested does not entail indifference to the existence of the object, because while pleasure in beauty is inherently disinterested, as Allison rightly points out, that in itself can give rise to interests – namely, that we have the arts!
Disinterest is not indifference. It only says that in a certain way, the pleasure is desire-free. We have pleasure in the mere contemplation of the object.
14. What exactly is disinterested?
cf. Nick Zangwill, "On Kantian Notions of Disinterest" in the Guyer volume
Zangwill rightly comments that disinterest, despite the way it sounds, directly refers neither to attitudes nor intention, but solely to the pleasure itself.
p. 205
All I want to know is whether my mere presentation of the object is accompanied by a liking, no matter how indifferent I may be about the existence of the object of this presentation.
Pleasure is disinterested when the route from the representation of the object to the response of pleasure entirely bypasses desire. I merely contemplate it – I don't contemplate it because I desire something from it. But in that contemplation I feel a pleasure.

Hence it bypasses the structures of both empirical and moral desire.
Said differently: pleasure in the beautiful is a response to the representation of the object, and to it alone.
Kant is not making the argument that there is such a thing as an aesthetic attitude, or an aesthetic form of attention. According to this interpretation, there is a way of attending to objects which we call a disinterested attention, and through disinterested attention, we can come to experience the object as beautiful. And we can take this attitude to any possible object. The point here is that attending is something we do. Feeling pleasure is something that happens to us.
Whether or not there are desires operative in my perceptual attention (why I have gone to the museum to look at the object) – all of this is irrelevant to the question of whether the pleasure derived from such attention or contemplation is or is not disinterested. That will only occur, Kant will say, if I am attending to the form, etc.
Since the desires motivating attention need not intervene in the route from representation to pleasure, pleasure in the beautiful can still be a direct response to the object. The question is simply, does my pleasure arise from the mere contemplation?
Zangwill pushes the difference between disinterested pleasure and disinterested attitudes too far, because he presupposes that there is simply no connection between the disinterested pleasure, and the attitudes or modes of attention by which we judge an object to be beautiful. But that cannot be quite right, because after all, one of the questions I might reasonably ask myself, if I find myself in a heightened state of pleasure when regarding an object, is: Is the pleasure I'm finding something that connects this object to me and my personal history, or is it something occurring from the mere contemplation of it? That is, if I want to know whether my pleasure is disinterested, I might well want to check the attitudes or motivations at work in my attention. For example, I know that everyone who's cool thinks this is a beautiful painting. The attitude is presumably not irrelevant.

15. How does the aesthetic pleasure relate to the stuff about life?
We've already seen that pleasure as a feeling for life involves the representation of the agreement of an object or an action with the subjective conditions for life – that is, the conditions under which the faculty of desire becomes active in striving to generate objects. That's our interested notion.
So the feeling of life – and this is why there's a puzzle here – seems to intrinsically connect the pleasure with the interest of desire. And that means we haven't yet been able to make sense of how the feeling of life business connects with the pleasure business. Because in feeling alive, I'm interested.
Well, we also found last week, in the First Introduction, p. 231, that Kant there gives two accounts of pleasure:
The one we've already just seen (the transcendental definition of pleasure): a mental state in which a presentation is in harmony with itself, and which is the basis either for merely preserving this state itself, or for producing the object of its presentation.
This idea of maintaining ourselves in a state is equally the notion of pleasure we noticed in §10 p. 220:
Consciousness of a presentation's causality directed at the subject's state so as to keep him in that state may here designate generally what we call pleasure.
This first kind = the pleasure involved in being in the state in which we wish to keep ourselves in that state. As opposed to:

16. The kind of pleasure derived from the satisfaction of desire.
So the obvious question that arises at this juncture is, how does the pleasure of mere consciousness of the effort of mind to conserve its present state connect to the feeling of life? We have discovered that there are two different kinds of pleasures, one from the fulfillment of desire, the second in preserving one's self in a particular state – being a self-maintaining system, in a state that is both cause and effect of itself. And it's that second pleasure that is the kind of pleasure we take in the aesthetic, but the problem with that is that we don't know how to connect it to the feeling of life, because the feeling of life is ordinarily connected to the desire-pleasure structure.
To put the question another way, is aesthetic pleasure, as Kant said, really connected to the feeling of life, which after all must be biological life, and is the same life we share with non-rational animals? There is a patent disconnect here.
Rudolf Makkreel's book Imagination and Interpretation in Kant: The Hermeneutical Import of the Critique of Judgment has a go at this problem.
Longuenesse has a very surprising solution to this issue. She says that the life whose consciousness is aesthetic pleasure might be the life of what Hegel will later call Spirit – that is, the life of the universal community of human minds.
This is obviously a stretch, for two clear reasons.
Why think that there is a connection between biological life and spiritual life? Is the notion of life, as used in biological life, really the same as "life" in "spiritual life" – or isn't that just a mere metaphor? And the worry here is equally the problem as it arises in Aristotle – as we know, Aristotle has two words for life: zoe, biological life, mere being alive, and bios, which is a way of life (we are political animals). The question here is the same as it might be put in Aristotle: what is the connection between a feeling of life in the biological sense and a feeling of life as the life of a people?
Kant ain't Hegel.
Longuenesse of course knows that, and the first thing she wants to say is that there can be no pleasure outside the feelings of a living entity, in the biological sense. Being conscious is always the consciousness of a corporeal being. So what is at stake is the way in which the consciousness of ourselves as corporeal beings is connected to the feeling of the life of the mind.
The crux, for Longuenesse, is in that second definition of pleasure – being in a state that seeks to maintain itself, which means being in a state that is both cause and effect of itself – which is exactly how Kant defines life as a capacity of corporeal beings! That is, the idea of a self-maintaining state is Kant's definition of life as a capacity of corporeal beings. So at the very least, in defining the second notion of pleasure in the way he does, he is pointing to the fact that this one that occurs as a function of the mind of a corporeal being.
So, Longuenesse argues, it becomes apt to say that in aesthetic pleasure, the mind is cause and effect of nothing but itself, which means that it is in a self-maintaining state, and it becomes right to say that aesthetic pleasure is a feeling of life, in this case in the restricted sense of the life of the mind, that is, of our representational capacities. So at least Kant is drawing on the fact of what it is to be a corporeal being in his second definition of pleasure.
Nevertheless, Longuenesse says, "the term 'life' has at the same time its most usual sense – the capacity of a corporeal being to be cause and effect of its own activity – since there would be no feeling of pleasure unless the representational capacities were those of a living thing in the ordinary sense of the term."
Why, then, is she tempted by the notion of the life of spirit? Because what it is, about the state of mind, that elicits this peculiar kind of pleasure, is the very fact that it is universally communicable. That is, what makes the pleasure aesthetic pleasure (and this

is just going to be the second moment now) is that it is universally communicable, or makes a claim to the possibility of being shared by all human beings.

In a second sense, then, aesthetic pleasure is a feeling for life, or a feeling of the life of an a priori grounded community of judging subjects. A community grounded in the a priori representational capacities shared by all judging subjects.

We are now moving into the second moment: the very question of universality.

The thought that I am trying to communicate is that beauty talk is inherently normative – it is not a claim about what I like, without caring what anyone else thinks. To judge an object beautiful is to claim that my pleasure belongs intrinsically to the judgement of that object, and the question, of course, for Kant is, what is objectivity here? It is not grounded in the concept of the object, but in my subjective state. So the only meaning for objectivity in aesthetics is that it is universally shareable. Because it is about my state of pleasure, and I am claiming that my pleasure is objective – "It is beautiful", not "I like it." Something about the affirmative nature depends upon the judgement having an inherently normative character, and that inherently normative character turns out to be one of universal shareability.

And then the issue is going to arise that the pleasure we take is bound up with that universal shareability. So it is not just that we find looking at the object okay, but that being in that state, I feel that I am in an exemplary state of regard – one which anyone, if they had their wits about them, would respond likewise. Which is why we can hardly bear contradiction in aesthetic matters.

So, there is something about a judgement of taste that is necessarily about a community of sense. To make a judgement of taste is necessarily to claim that there ought to be a community of sense – that is, a community of responsiveness in light of this. That is the surface logic, and it is that surface logic that Longuenesse is pointing to – why she calls it the life of Spirit: because she is saying that if Spirit means nothing but who we are as an ongoing community, then aesthetics is what calls into being the shareability of our sensory attunement to the world – that is, it is the normative structure (or potential normative structure) of our relatedness to everyone.

Question:

It is because my pleasure is disinterested that I care whether you agree with me. What is at stake is the shareability of our subjective life – whether we "share a world."

[40:15]

Let us begin Section 2.

§6, as I have already mentioned, simply tries to make a direct inference from disinterestedness to universality. If I am disinterested, then the object must be universal.

There are two issues here.

17. If this argument were sufficient, then there is no reason why Kant should have written anything more in part 2. So, Kant cannot intend that this inference be sufficient for understanding the universality of a judgement of taste.
18. Kant is overly dependent on this two-sources-of-motivation thesis – he thinks that if I can eliminate the fact that I have a private desire for the object, and I can eliminate the fact that it's bound up with a moral interest, then there could not be another interest at work. But he doesn't think that there is an interest of some folk – there is either "me" or "everyone". He neglects the fact that there could be a communal interest – that some of us find these objects pleasurable. He always thinks that some is reducible to one.

    But as Allison points out, anyway, he does not intend §6 to be a direct inference, but a natural or reasonable conclusion that builds a bridge to the normative aspects of the judgement of taste. Further, because (according to Kant) we can never know for certain whether a judgement of taste is fully disinterested (I can't know for sure what my motivations are), there has to be more to the story of universality than the sense of disinterestedness. Indeed, we'll see in a moment, that disinterestedness may actually be thought to be an inference from universality rather than the other way around.

    So the better way of looking at this section is that he starts with a negative criterion of universality – disinterestedness – and the rest of the chapter tries to provide a positive account of universality.

    [44:00]

    §7 I have already been talking about, because what is at state here is simply the attempt to demonstrate that beauty talk is inherently normative. Kant wants to say that to say "It's beautiful to me" is a contradiction in terms, or not really an aesthetic judgment – just as to say to your beloved "You are beautiful to me" is a kind of insult. If, in an argument, you retreat to the point of saying "But I find it beautiful" – that is a retreat away from aesthetic discourse altogether. It is part of the logic of criticism in the arts that one is not attempting to say that one alone finds an object beautiful, but to give an account of one's response to the object that gives anyone listening to one's account reasons to share it – reasons to begin to appreciate the object in the way you do.

    Question: How can there be reason-giving?

    Re: Criticism

    If I say, "look at the sweep of the line" and you then notice it, that is not a reason for you to find the object beautiful. You have to actually engage the object, and find that in doing so, you are put in the relevant state. The work of criticism is to articulate the relationship between one's response to the object – just pick up any piece of Pauline Kael's movie criticism. Her review always starts with these strong feelings about the object, and then begins talking about the object so that you realize these are not private feelings at all, but ways of noticing how the film works, which you may then look for yourself. Criticism is an objectification of one's feeling response, in relation to structures of the object, for the sake of drawing one's attention to the object. But no criticism is QED. It is rather, "If you think about it in these terms, you will find it beautiful." One cannot simply say "look again" because art objects are extremely complex, caught up in complex histories, and you cannot see them without a bit of culture behind you. But eventually, as Cavell says, you are going to end up with "Don't you get it?"

    Criticism builds up a culture of shareability – the means by which we acculturate ourselves to a community of feeling. It's not QED stuff, but what makes us think that QED stuff is the most important type of persuasion?

    Kant wants to see what is at stake in the pure judgement of taste, so that we know how to think about complicated cases that are not pure – there may be a lot going on in art that is not about beauty. But we want to get clear about beauty itself, in its simplest forms (the beautiful line, for example – see Hogarth's writings on this), and then proceed through all the complexities: simple beauty, then the sublime, then art works, then all of nature. If we begin too deep, in the arts, then we will lose sight of isolating the moment of pleasure involved – which, Kant wants to emphasize, is not cognitive, not conceptual.

Sharing our sensible relationship to the world is a necessary condition for sharing our world rationally. We begin by sensory attunement to the world, and build up to rational structures, which then can take off in their own way, but when a mother is teaching her child, what she is doing, in the first instance, is giving them a sentimental education – giving them routes of pleasure ("Eat this, you'll enjoy it") – trying to find how the world is sensorily shared – and building up to the conceptual. I will present a detailed argument of how this works next week. Of course, once we're conceptualized, our concepts can push us apart.
Aesthetics is a way to reattune us to our sensory connectedness.
Kant's Third Critique Jay Bernstein
The New School for Social Research Fall 2007
PAGE PAGE 15
October 17, 2007
The aim today is to get through §§21-22, although the first hour will be spent on §9.
3 AND THREE QUARTERS INTERPRETATIONS OF §9
Modality
Problematic Assertoric Apodictic
Quality
Affirmative Negative Infinite
TABLE OF JUDGEMENTS
Relation
Categorical Hypothetical Disjunctive
Quantity
Universal Particular Singular
Let me just catch us up to where we are. Last week we discussed the disinterested character of pleasure, and I said that the crux of the notion of disinterestedness is that in the judgement of beauty, the object is an occasion of pleasure which bypasses the faculty of desire. That is, the pleasure is not causally related to antecedent desires.
And in §6, which is the beginning of the Second Moment (the Quantity of the Judgement of Taste) we noticed that one quick and dirty way to the quantity of the judgement of taste – i.e. universality – is as an inference from this disinterestedness. If my pleasure is not connected to any interested that is specific to me, that is, my desires (which are what distinguish me from everyone else) – if my pleasure is not mediated by an antecedent desire, then I have reason to believe that my judgement is universal.
This argument convinces no one, because it is a negative argument, and it leaves out of account the possibility that there is some other source of my attraction that is neither private nor derived from my desire for the good – but, applies to a group of people, a collective, albeit not everyone. Why do all men find Brigitte Bardot attractive?
Kant has no answer to this, since he thinks of groups as logical extensions of private desire. He has no way of distinguishing between individual private desire, and what a subgroup finds desirable.
[4:16]
Since Kant goes on to give a positive account of universality, he could not have meant §6 to be a rigorous inference, but only a reasonable conclusion – the disinterestedness builds a bridge to the normative aspects of taste without making all of the necessary connections. We need to look further, beyond this merely negative account of universality, towards a positive account. And the rest of the second moment is dedicated to providing that.
I want to argue that what Kant is suggesting in §7 is that normativity belongs to the logical grammar of judgements of taste – it is what we mean by calling something beautiful rather than merely agreeable. There is an implicit claim to universality just in the grammar.
p. 213
That is why he says: The thing is beautiful, and does not count on other people to agree with his judgment of liking on the ground that he has repeatedly found them agreeing with him
– it's not an inductive judgement –
rather, he demands that they agree. He reproaches them if they judge differently and denies that they have taste, which he nevertheless demands of them, as something they ought to have.
Question: Is this strictly for aesthetic judgement?
We are here talking about just pure judgments of taste. Other forms of judgement are logically universal, and we do demand universal agreement, but it's based on the fact that the object comes under a concept.
Allison wants to distinguish
universal validity (which he things is the quid facti) from the demand that others agree (the quid juris)
and while there are hints of this, for example at 216, I have questioned whether that distinction can be maintained – between universality as a mere category, and universality as justificatory.
[9:30]
At p. 215 Kant introduces the notion of the universal voice:
If we judge objects merely in terms of concepts, then we lose all presentation of beauty. This is why there can be no rule by which someone could be compelled to acknowledge that something is beautiful.
There is no conceptual or logical compulsion to coerce someone to regard something as beautiful, in the same way that you can compel them to regard something as a chair.
No one can use reasons or principles to talk us into a judgement on whether some garment, house, or flower is beautiful. We want to submit the object to our own eyes, just as if our liking of it depended on that sensation.
Notice: "as if" it depended on that sensation – it is not actually dependent on that sensation, because then this would be a matter of causality.
This is the puzzle of §9: as a result of finding ourselves in a state of pleasure, we want to call the object beautiful, but if the sensation alone is the source of my judgement, then my judgement is based on a mere causal fact. I bumped into this Manet, felt pleasure, and said, "Hey that's beautiful!" What's gone missing in all of that is judgement.
The puzzle is how to relate judgement and pleasure. What we cannot do, as some naturalists do, if we are going to be Kantian, is

make the pleasure a mere causal fact about us that we then dress up as a rational claim.
The phrasing here is very careful. “As if.” It’s like being in a sensory state, but somehow different.
And yet, if we then call the object beautiful, we believe we have a universal voice.
When I say “it’s beautiful”, I take myself to be speaking for everyone – for anyone who would be in my position (looking at this beautiful object). It’s not beautiful for me; it’s beautiful for everyone. Which is why people who are good at making aesthetic judgements can feel as though they are coercing us!
We can see at this point, nothing is postulated in a judgement of taste
except such a universal voice
– what is at stake is that movement, from me standing here, to everyone; not relying on concepts, but merely my capacity to judge. Nothing else is at stake.
Question: You’re making an argument based on the grammar. Are you going to give me anything else?
Yes. Well, a little. But it’s significant that Kant thinks that he’s got something about the logical grammar here. He thinks he is revealing to us how aesthetic talk operates, and what its stakes are, and thereby that whatever sorts of arguments and criticisms and other surrounding paraphernalia will kick in later will do so in virtue of this original claim. The power of that claim is its groundlessness in conceptual terms, and its exhorbitance in validity terms. That’s what makes it kind of uncanny.
Kant clarifies that one is not here postulating everyone’s agreement – not making a prediction, but making a normative claim about what they ought to say.
it merely requires this agreement from everyone, as an instance of the rule, an instance regarding which it expects confirmation not from concepts but from the agreement of others.
What is crazy-making here is that, at the end of the day, how does one know one has got it right? Well, in part because others do agree! The kind of evidence is going to be that it really does generate a community of agreement about this! But on the basis of a normative requirement.
That’s why Kant says the universal voice is only an idea – not a fact about the world or the object. But normative through and through. It’s almost as if this about the normativity of normativity, getting at what it is to find ourselves capable of sharing our position as individuals with all others, not dependent on anything else (say, “the idea of the good” – I call that the Platonic cheat).
It is equally obvious that while it is normative, it is not normative in the way that moral norms are. It’s not an imperative. I’m not saying that because I judge it as beautiful, you must say as I say. It doesn’t have that prescriptive force. It’s normativity without prescriptivity. That is another aspect of what might be at stake in calling it an idea – something we demand of others, but not in the same way that we demand that they not kill their children or not rob banks.
Three and Three-Quarters Interpretations of §9
Note the title: Investigation of the Question Whether in a Judgement of Taste the Feeling of Pleasure Precedes the Judging of the Object, or the Judging Precedes the Pleasure
This is the very question of sensation I have just put to you. Kant says getting clear about is “the key to the critique of taste and hence deserves full attention.”
One of the things behind this – behind the question of the relationship between pleasure and judgement – is what it means to take a Copernican turn in aesthetics. If the sensation comes first, then Kant is a realist, as Hume is in The Judgement of Taste (the key at the bottom of the barrel of wine). Aesthetic judgements are just causal judgements – a matter assimilating the judger to the causal properties of the object. By making the judgement precede the pleasure, we are doing the Copernican turn.
Kant claims that if we have the sensation first, this is agreeableness, not taste. The judgement of causal.
Hence, instead, somehow, the judgement must ground the pleasure. Although we already know that what makes a judgement aesthetic is the disinterested pleasure we take in it.
seemingly conflicting requirements – not based on a concept, but on pleasure; but not based on pleasure in a causal way
If the pleasure is disinterested, and if the judgement has the logical grammar of universality, then the judgement must ground the pleasure.
But, as Allison points out, when Kant begins the third paragraph, the argument turns brutally circular: p. 217
[33:15]

19. Paul Guyer
Hence it must be the universal communicability of the mental state, in the given presentation, which underlies the judgement of taste, as its subjective condition, and the pleasure in the object must be its consequence.
So, now the claim appears to be that the pleasure of taste is the result of the very universal communicability of the mental state itself, and we’re assume that this universally communicable is itself pleasurable, and this, Allison rightly points out, commits Kant to the view that pleasure of taste must be the universal communicability of the pleasure of taste. That seems circular.
Hence the need for interpretation here. I will give you three and three-quarters.
(Two and 3⁄4 interpretations argue that there is one pleasure, and each has a different interpretation of what that one pleasure is. The last interpretation gives a two-pleasure theory.)
Judgements of taste involve two distinct acts, and the relationship between them.
The 1st act = judging the object.
This is an act of aesthetic response.
It is a matter of generating a relationship between the imagination and the understanding – I reflect upon the object, looking to see whether there is a complicated unity in multiplicity (this is the demand of the understanding), but without a rule (the imagination is synthesizing in a rule-less way, that is, merely through apprehension).
If there is unity in the multiplicity – and there is thus a harmony between imagination and understanding –, then we have pleasure.
Act of aesthetic response:
reflecting I & U pleasure
act 2: S
x is beautiful
act 1:
apprehension S O

This is just a work of aesthetic reflection. What more do I need for a judgement of taste?
The 2nd act = the judgement of taste proper.
This an aesthetic judgement.
reflecting
I & U
pleasure
apprehension
S O
This is an implicit mental activity. The second act notices the pleasure derived in the first act. So the second act is reflective – reflecting upon the first act.
In the second act, I notice:
that there is a pleasure
that it is disinterested
that there are no concepts involved
in fact, it seems to be about nothing other than the harmony of the imagination and the understanding in their free play
I am responding merely to the form of the object – the purposiveness without purpose of it I therefore take my judgement to be one of taste, and I therefore judge the object beautiful.
The object of the second act is the first act, checking that the first act meets all of the above criteria (disinterestedness, etc.).
So, the aesthetic judgement proper is a judgement about my aesthetic response to the object. [42:28]
Kant, at least, disagrees. In fact, most of the literature now disagrees with Guyer, who maintains his position anyway.
Rachel Zuckert has a terrific book coming out (Kant on Beauty and Biology: An Interpretation of the Critique of Judgment). She has a good criticism of me. It emphasizes the second book of the Third Critique, i.e. teleology.
I don't want to go through all of the critiques of Guyer. At p. 238-239, 1st Introduction, Kant says:
If we grant the claim of a judgement to necessity, it would be preposterous to justify it by explaining psychologically the origin of the judgment. For we would thereby act against our own intention, and if the look for explanation were to succeed completely, it would show that the judgement can make absolutely no claim to necessity precisely because it can prove its empirical origin.
Normative necessity drops out if all of the weight is being carried by the psychological harmony of the faculties in step 1.
Kant goes on: "Aesthetic judgements of reflection are of this kind" – i.e., they make a claim to necessity. They say not that "everyone does judge this way" (explaining that would be a task of empirical psychology) but that everyone ought to.
Guyer's account turns the normativity into an ideal prediction. He treats the idea of eliminating interests and all that as a matter of getting the right psychological pedigree. And if I find, in the second-order judgement, those correct psychological characteristics, then I really do expect (that is the right word) everyone who is similarly placed to judge in the same way.
In short, the two-act theory (with only one moment of pleasure – in the first act) turns out to lost all of the actual normativity in Kant's account.
Although this interpretation is wrong, as we shall see, we can't quite shuffle it off.
[47:25]

20. Hannah Ginsborg
From "On the key to Kant's critique of taste" Pacific Philosophical Quarterly 72.
Ginsborg likewise thinks there is just one pleasure, but believes that it is a self-grounding pleasure.
She wants to take what Kant says to literally be the case – that "the universal capacity for being communicated of the mental state in the given representation, as a subjective condition of a judgment of taste, must serve as its ground, and must have the pleasure in the object as its consequence."
It's the universal communicability of being in that state that is the source of my pleasure, and is the ground therefore of my pleasure in the object.
This is called a self-referential theory of judgement.
The primary datum, contra Guyer, is the universal communicability of my mental state (in judging the object).
My judgement is that I am judging this object as it ought to be judged from everyone. To take Guyer's model, (2) detaches itself from (1) and becomes the whole story.
But this is crazy: the object all but drops out. And when I make an aesthetic judgement, I don't think I am making a judgement about my own mental state, but about the damn Matisse!
Says Ginsborg: "In performing this judgement, I am not explicitly aware of its self-referential structure, but my act of judgement is instead manifest to consciousness in being in a state of pleasure. In other words, the act of self-referentially taking my mental state to be universally communicable, with respect to the given object, consists, phenomenologically, in a feeling of pleasure in that object. Nonetheless, the exercise of taste is nothing but the act of self-referentially judging that one's mental state, in that very act of judging, is universally communicable, and that this act of judgement is manifest to consciousness as a feeling of pleasure."
We get it exactly as Kant demands: the judgement precedes the pleasure.
But now it is not just this aesthetic response that precedes the pleasure, but the judging my state to be universally communicable – although this becomes manifest to consciousness in pleasure. It is the source of the pleasure, but that source only becomes manifest via the pleasure.
To return to the question: what is disinterested pleasure?
Ginsborg: "In engaging in this self-referential act of judgement, what I am doing is demanding that all other judgers perceive the object as I do, and thus they all ought to share the mental state that corresponds to my act of judging. But this demand of being a universal applies just as much to me as to everyone else."
i.e. – "I am judging this object as I ought to be judging it." – I am living up to the normative requirement of my own judgement.
I am normatizing, and corresponding to my own normative requirements – that is why my pleasure is disinterested.
The universality grounds the disinterestedness, rather than the disinterestedness grounding the universality. Note the Copernican structure of this.
there are no grounds for normativity – our normativity arises out of our taking our judgements to be universal, and nothing else

(to think that there should be a source for normativity would be a Platonist) the aesthetic judgement is performing the normativity of normativity
(this kind of normativity is between normativity and facticity; this is an attempt to find out how a factical state of affairs can take on a normative force
what makes the moral ought moral is its overridingness – overridingness is necessary for morality, in order to secure obligatoriness (cf. Jay's book Adorno: Disenchantment and Ethics for the counterargument to this)
this is looking for a normativity without overridingness) 3 criticisms:

21. This loses the role of the object
Ginsborg acknowledges this on p. 308 and is undisturbed:
"On my account, the free play of the faculties bears no essential relation to the activities of ordering and unifying whereby we make sense of an object of aesthetic experience. If it captures anything about the phenomenology of aesthetic experience, it is only this: the experience of an object as beautiful carries with it a sense of its own universal validity, and hence of appropriateness or rightness with respect to the object perceived."
G's account loses the depth of any notion of reflection; seems devoid of content; is overly self-referential
it performs the Copernican turn, and the world gets lost in the meanwhile
22. It doesn't leave room for negative judgements of taste
23. Isn't the pleasure in universal communicability an interested pleasure? Almost moral? She's lost the idea of interested pleasure and made it an interest in sensus communis.
Then the notion of disinterestedness is very thin indeed – i.e. not deriving from either the pleasures of the body, or an interest in the good.

3⁄4. Allison
Three-quarters because he doesn't think the full story of universality gets worked out here.
the solution to the circularity problem that he analyzes (and which sounds very much like Ginsborg's own theory) is that it runs together 2 separate theses:
that the subjective universality that is affirmed in a judgement of taste must be based on a universally communicable mental state
that mental state derives its universal communicability from its connection with a universal communicable act of judging or reflection, and it is this judging that must logically precede the pleasure
what Allison wants to say is that Ginsborg is right that the pleasure must be grounded in a universal communicable state, but the universal communicable state must refer back to an act of judging or reflection that logically precedes the pleasure
the crux, for Allison, is how does universality pertain to cognition?
this is actually what Kant discusses on pp. 217-218: (3rd para)
Nothing, however, can be communicated universally except cognition, as well as presentation insofar as it pertains to cognition, for presentation is objective only insofar as it pertains to cognition, and only through this does it have a universal reference point, through which everyone's presentational power is compelled to harmonize.
i.e., If we want to explain universality – in aesthetics, as elsewhere – it has to relate to cognition, because cognition is in the business of stating what is the case, for everyone. The universality in aesthetics has to relate to the universality that is achieved in cognitive judgements.
The universality that is achieved in cognitive judgements gets is universality from the concept. But what pertains to us achieving that cognition?
What Kant is talking about are the subjective conditions for objective judgement: the way in which imagination and understanding are brought into relation. In a cognition, they are brought into a relation via subsumption – by the presentation being subsumed by the conceptuality of universality.
But nonetheless (§21) we cannot make sense of cognition, unless our different faculties get into relation with one another. Call this "harmony."
Now we need somehow to separate aesthetic harmony from cognitive harmony.
If, then, we are to think that this judgement about the universal communicability of the presentation has a merely subjective determining basis, i.e., one that does not involve a concept of the object, then this basis can be nothing other than the mental state that we find in the relation between the presentational powers [imagination and understanding] insofar as they refer a given presentation to cognition in general.
The thought here is that what an aesthetic state is, is the relation of the imagination to the understanding in general, which is to say, without the determination of a concept.
"When this happens, the cognitive powers brought into play by this presentation are in free play, because no determinate concept restricts them to a particular rule of cognition.
Cognition without a concept – aesthetic reflective judging – involves a free play in the relationship between the imagination and the understanding, the general demands of harmonization.
Hence this subjective universal communicability
– universally communicable because it satisfies the general subjective conditions for objective judgement (we are here looking at cognition from the subjective side – the kind of mental activities that must be gotten through for the sake of any judgement of an object, but without actually making a judgement) –
can be nothing but that the mental state in which we are, when imagination and understanding are in free play, insofar as they harmonize with each other for cognition in general. For we are conscious that this subjective relation suitable for cognition in general must hold just as much for everyone, and hence must be just as universally communicable as any determinate cognition, since cognition always rests on that relation as its subjective condition.
Kant is here arguing is that the really big deal is about the harmony between the imagination and understanding. That is a universally communicable state because it provides all the subjective conditions necessary for an objective judgement, but without any concepts being involved (without concepts determining the imagination by the understanding) – just letting the demands for unity emerge from the imagination itself.
Harmony in this sense – the free play – is constrained by any interests, by any need to generate a cognition.
Allison: the crux is that we can distinguish harmony from free play.

Free play = unconstrained by interest
The free play of the I and U can be either harmonious – yielding pleasure, or not harmonious – yielding displeasure.
Free play without harmony = the object is ugly. Harmony without free play = a cognition.
Kant in this section explains universality by the idea of a universally communicable state, which he takes to be an anticipation – the subjective side – of objective cognition.
So we have traced the universality affirmed in a judgement of taste to the harmony of the faculties. And we've explained the harmony in the faculties should be a universally communicable state, even though we haven't proved it yet.
What we are missing, up to now, is: why should we assume that the free play of the understanding and the imagination is the subjective conditions of possibility for objective judgement. Why should we assume, once we stop demanding that the work of the imagination and the understanding operate according to conceptuality, that we are still talking about cognition in general.
Kant gives the answer to this in his Deduction.
But the harmony of the faculties in their free play Kant takes the be the only conceivable source of subjective universality.
Kant should now be ready to discuss necessity, but he doesn't. Rather, at p. 218, he asks a different question, namely: How do we become aware of the harmony between imagination and understanding? and he gives the answer we already know: pleasure. And then, again not discussing necessity, he goes on to purposiveness.
This is why this only hints at universality, per Allison. cf. Guyer in Kukla's volume

24. Longuenesse – Two pleasure thesis
    Affirms everyone.
25. Agrees with Ginsborg: the universal communicability is elicits the pleasure proper to the judgement of taste.
    The pleasure taken in the universal communicability of one's state of mind in judging the object is a primitive fact that justifies aesthetic pleasure as disinterested.
    Ginsborg's self-referentiality is a primitive of our human self-relation in our relationship to the world.
    All of this is a variation on Descartes – i.e. our relationship to the world is grounded in our self-relation. The cogito is a mini Copernican turn.
    There must be primitive forms of self-relation that ground our capacity to relate to the world.
    What is important for Longuenesse is that this self-referentiality alone justifies the idea of aesthetic pleasure as disinterested. She is reversing the direction of interest – it is not disinterested pleasure that grounds universal communicability, but the other way around – and it is this pleasure that grounds the judgement "this is beautiful."
26. Aesthetic judgements are not the only judgements that are universally communicable. In the Prolegomena Kant distinguishes between
    judgements of perception ("this stone feels warm" – a recording of how the stone feels to me; private) and judgements of experience (transforms the judgement of perception into a statement like "the stone is warm" or "the sun warms the stone" – this moment of universality is made possible by the entire apparatus of the a priori categories. The cognitive capacities are what ground it).
    So, universal communicability can be had in one way simply through cognition.
    If there is a judging that precedes the pleasure, then it must be an act of reflecting upon the object (Guyer). The reason that is important is because it is only in reflecting upon the object that the I and U and put into play, and that what is elicited is a mutual agreement between those two faculties. Because in this case, no concept can possibly account for my experience – only the mutual enhancing and enlivening of U and I. But if we use the language of "mutual enhancing and enlivening and agreement" of U and I, then we have a second pleasure.
    So aesthetic judgement doesn't involve two acts – but two different kinds of pleasure. p. 207 of Longuenesse
    The pleasure is twofold. It's the first-order pleasure we take in the mutual enlivening of I and U [– what Kant calls the free play –] but that pleasure alone – the pleasure of reflection – is not sufficient to constitute our experience of what we call aesthetic pleasure of reflection – pleasure in the beautiful. Another constitutive feature of aesthetic pleasure is the sense that the mutual enlivening of I and U, in apprehending the object, and the first-order pleasure it elicits, could and ought to be shared by all. This sense of the universal communicability of a pleasurable state of mutual enhancement of imagination and understanding is the source of a second- order pleasure. And it's the second-order pleasure that results in the judgement 'this is beautiful.'
    She subsumes the Guyer interpretation under the Ginsborg interpretation. The aesthetic pleasure proper is only the pleasure you get from the judgement of the universal communicability, but that itself is dependent on an antecedent pleasure in aesthetic reflection on the object.
    This solves a lot of problems, but does not match up with experience. We do not experience two distinct pleasures!

Ginsborg uses her account of the self-referentiality of taking something to be beautiful, and that idea of normativity, to generate a generalized account of concept acquisition.
This is interesting in relation to the problem of abstraction – i.e., when judging an object reflectively (when I do not know the universal of which it is an instance), how do I know what features of that object to pick out, so that I can look for resemblances between it and some other objects?
The notion of schema doesn't answer this question.
Longuenesse says that we are always heading towards universality, because we are always trying to make the object fit within our judgement, but that just begs the question: which features, and why?
Ginsborg's general strategy is to combine a Humean dispositional account with a Kantian normative account.
She says: when we perceive an individual object, it is a basic psychological fact about us that our association of ideas follow certain regular patterns. When we see a triangle, we think of other triangles we have seen. We automatically remember resemblances. This is a primitive fact about how the imagination works.
And because of natural patterns of association, once the word "triangle" has been applied to a representative sample, we will

become disposed to apply it to triangles generally. And relatedly, when we entertain hypotheses involving the word “triangle,” it is precisely ideas of triangles that we are supposed to call to mind as potential counterexamples. Finding a resemblance does not precede the acquisition of the corresponding disposition. Rather, acquiring the disposition is just what finding the resemblance consists in.
Resemblance is a consequence of association and not a condition for it.
This is a version of psychological nominalism. She needs to say something more: why should the representational character of a particular idea be transformed by a state of readiness to call to mind other particular ideas into a universal norm? Why does that count as generality at all?
She adds: the awareness of one’s own state of readiness – rather than the particular idea itself – is what constitutes the possession of the general idea. I.e. it is my attitude towards this idea – my own state of readiness to think of it as a general idea – that makes it a general idea.
That is, generality is equal to my readiness to call to mind like objects and conceive of them as having normative force.
The normative twist:
My perception of a tree not only involves my being in a state of readiness to call to mind (reproduce) representations of other trees, but my taking it that, insofar as I do call other ideas of other trees to mind, I am doing what I and everyone else ought to be doing under these circumstances. That is, the generality of my disposition lies not in the rules and not in the content, but is incorporated into my perception, through seeing the tree as a tree, in virtue of my awareness that my readiness to associate this tree with other trees is appropriate given my perceptual situation.
The rule-governedness or generality in my associations is not a function of the rules themselves, but of my taking my representations to be rule-governed.
This is exactly what she said about beauty.
This is what makes beauty interesting: Kant wants to make room for the possibility of normative claims that do not presuppose existing rules. This is his anti-Platonic move. And his way of handling this is that our entitlement to make judgements of beauty appears to depend on our being entitled to take a normative attitude towards our mental activity generally.
Ginsborg has a 4-part theory of concept acquisition:
We are hardwired to form dispositions to associate x (one perception) with previous x’s (morphologically like perceptions).
As a second thesis, I would add that we have cultural/anthropological constraints on the way we pick out objects (what objects are your parents showing you?).
Cavell: rule-following depends on us sharing a world (things we all need, things we all find interesting) – that the world appears the way it does is overdetermined by evolution and culture making certain objects salient in our environment. This is going to govern our disposition to association.
So far, all of this is completely empiricist – a version of Hume.
The normative twist: When I form such a disposition, I take it that my disposition is as it ought to be. The generality derives not from the association, but from my giving those associations the standing of seeing things as they ought to be seen.
What follows is that I can only cash out my belief in (3) by forming two kinds of rules:
schema rules rules of inference
The implication of (3) is to take there to be a schema to umbrellas, say, and rules for inferring that something is an umbrella.
Rule-following and schema formation are thus the last step in a developmental sequence.
The great question of normativity is answered by the self-referential thesis, and then only gets made explicit by the series of rule-following activities.
(3) (4?) can only kick in if beauty is possible – if there are cases of normativity not underpinned by (already existing) rules.
Normativity is the hinge between the empiricism and the rule-following here.
THE THIRD MOMENT: PURPOSIVENESS
The Third Moment:
Disinterestedness Universality Purposiveness
About the character of the object suitable for a universally communicable state of the harmony of the faculties. Not talking about the object itself, but the object qua represented in mere reflection.
p. 236
“Beauty is an object’s form of purposiveness insofar as it is perceived in the object without the presentation of a purpose.”
i.e. Purposiveness without purpose.
§10 Purposiveness is originally thought of as a property of a concept having a causality with respect to its object, and the object is thought of as a purpose.
So, my concept of dinner tonight is purposive in the sense that it will lead me to produce a dinner, and that dinner is the purpose. When we look at that dinner, we think that is not a cosmic accident, but the consequence of an intentionally planned act. It has been achieved through someone’s conceptuality.
That gives us the notion of the purposiveness of a concept and gives us a content – the object produced. But our concern here is with aesthetics. And so Kant says, (end of §10)
On the other hand, we do call objects, states of mind, or acts purposive even if their possibility does not necessarily presuppose the presentation of a purpose. We do this merely because we can explain and grasp them only if we assume that they are based on a causality that operates according to purposes, on a will that would have so arranged them in accordance with the presentation of a certain rule.
Sometimes we are struck by objects – both cultural and natural objects – that, because of the intricacy of their form or arrangement as we experience it, we cannot but think of them as the consequence of – let’s call it – intelligent design, even if we have no idea what they were designed for.
We can perceive a purpose merely on the basis of form.
What is form here? The purposive look of something independent of our capacity, or even desire, to construe it as an actual purpose.
It is purpose without a content.
For reflective judgement, all purposiveness is without purpose, since logically judging purposiveness would be making a

determinate judgement. For the sake of aesthetics, we want purposiveness without a purpose.
In §11, Kant argues for this purposiveness without purpose by arguing by elimination from all the other possible grounds for our liking an object. Since we get disinterested pleasure from the object, then it has no subjective purpose. Furthermore, it has no objective purpose (i.e. morality), and because it's aesthetic it's not based on a concept. "Therefore, the liking that, without a concept, we judge to be universally communicable, and hence to be the basis that determines a judgement of taste can be nothing but the subjective purposiveness in the presentation of an object, without any purpose, whether objective or subjective, and hence the mere form of purposiveness, insofar as we are conscious of it in the presentation in which an object is given to us."
Why is he talking about purposiveness at all?

27. The form of purposiveness is the seeming-as-if-designed. (Later he will say that when we look at nature, we conceive it as art – that is, it has the look of something designed – and artworks must have the look of something natural – not explicitly intended.)
Purposiveness is introduced into the analysis of a universally communicable pleasure in a mental state of the free harmony occasioned by reflection upon an object, which entails that it is mentally, subjectively purposive, not because of its form, but because it enhances the reciprocal activity of the imagination and understanding.
The object construed as purposive here, is only purposive as apprehended, for the harmony between the imagination and the understanding. Recall that in this section (§10) that Kant states that "consciousness of a presentation's causality, directed as a subject's state, so as to keep it in that state, may here designate what we generally call pleasure."
So it is purposive for keeping us in that harmonic state, and that is the source of pleasure, and that pleasure occurs because being in that state is generally purposive for cognition.
Purposiveness is being used in three ways:
a form of purposiveness
for the sake of the relationship between the imagination and the understanding – it keeps them in that state of pleasure
that state of harmony matters to us (§21) because being in it is propadeutic to cognition in general
An aesthetic state will be pleasurable because purposive – not purposive because it produces pleasure. That is, it's only those states that are purposive without a purpose, that produce pleasure. And it's not the fact that we have the pleasure that leads us to think of those states as purposive.
So, purposiveness is really seeming-purposive. Purpose-like. Which occurs when not connected to a determinate purpose. Hence Kant's notion of a form of purposiveness.
Lyotard, "Sensus Communis" Judging Lyotard ed. Andrew Benjamin
A judgement blind to every end, but for this very reason not a symptom, or as Kant says, 'disinterested' – without interest in liberty or in pleasure in the usual sense; a state of mind that owes nothing as yet (or already no more) to the intrigues of willing, whatever it be – this feeling, when it is a question of tasting beauty, is precisely a feeling of pleasure. But a pleasure with doesn't come to fill up a lack, nor to fulfill any desire at all. A pleasure before any desire. The aesthetic pleasure is not the purpose of a purposiveness experienced beforehand as desire. It has nothing whatsoever to do with an end or purpose. It is finality. Purposiveness itself, which has no end, no purpose in front of it, nor lack behind it.
So that notion of purposiveness without purpose is also pleasure without desire. You cannot have disinterested pleasure – pleasure without desire – without purposiveness without purpose.
On the occasion of a form, which is itself only an occasion of feeling, the soul is seized by a small happiness, unlooked for, unprepared, slightly dynamizing. It is an animation, or an anima, there on the spot, which is not moving towards anything. It's as if the mind were discovering that it can do something other than will and understand. Be happy without ever asking for it, nor conceived it – an instant which will seem very long measured by the clock of intrigue, but which is not in the purlues of its timekeeping. A flash made of glades.
Only in aesthetic movements do we subvert the metaphysical will to truth – do we get out of the structure of lack and fulfillment that transpires either as the belief in the true or the good, and of course which ends up as rationalism and totalitarianism.
Aesthetic moments open up a relationship to ourselves and to the world that is not structured by a finality. If one thinks that the structure of finality is what we mean by metaphysics (everything has an end or purpose – the structure of finality always leads to god), then the only way to begin to think of a world without a god is by the moment of the beautiful.
So to take purposiveness without purpose, in terms of natural beauty, is to expose us to a nature that is theologically disenchanted, but humanly inhabitable (as if, perhaps, for the first time). Perhaps before Kant no one had conceived of nature in human terms, as opposed to theological terms.
And yet, all this is bound up with Kant's formalism – that we experience works of art and nature in terms of form, not content. Purposiveness without purpose is what he means by form here.
So what does he mean by form? How are we to interpret Kant's so-called restrictive formalism? §14 "Elucidation by examples" about the critique of colour and taste
Trying to make precise what the proper object of aesthetic regard is.
It cannot be a mere empirical liking – people will declare a mere colour or tone to be beautiful in itself. Kant must resist this, because a uniform colour or tone can only be experienced causally.
He wants thus to reintroduce Hume's distinction between primary and secondary qualities. The first can only be known by one of our senses. The only proper objects of aesthetic regard are those that can be experienced by more than one sensory apparatus.
The critique of charm is a critique of sensation – and the role of sensation in art, and a restriction of art to judgements of form.
So it looks as if what he means by form is nothing more than spatio-temporal organization.
Hence Kant seems to argue that true art depends on design in composition, as opposed to anything directly sensory.
p. 225
In painting, in sculpture, indeed, in all the visual arts, including architecture and horticulture insofar as they are fine arts, design is what is essential; in design the basis for any involvement of taste is not what gratifies us in sensation, but merely what we like because of its form... All form of objects of the senses (the outer senses, or, indirectly, the inner sense as well) is either shape [space] or play [time].
This is clearly wrong.
Guyer: "Form" really is a dummy term for whatever occasions harmony between imagination and understanding – whatever has enough complexity to generate a relationship between them.

Allison: If form is ordering an arrangement of data as taken up by imagination so that complexity and unity are necessary elements, Kant conflates perceptual form and aesthetic form. Allison quotes a passage from Kant's Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View where this conflation is explicit (p. 137 in Allison) "'But in taste, that is in aesthetic judgement, what produces the pleasure in the object is not the sensation immediately – the material element in our idea of the concept – it is rather the way in which the free and productive imagination arranges the matter inventively – that is, the form. For only form can lay claim to a universal rule for the feeling of pleasure. We can expect no such universal rule from sensations, which can differ greatly as the subjects differ in their attitude in the senses."

But that passage tells you exactly why perceptual form won't do. Perceptual form, having to do with space and time, is rule-bound. We are back into objectivity.

In Chapter 3 of his book The Idea of Form, Rudoplph Gasché argues that §14 is being misread, because the notion of elucidation by examples is really trying to ratchet up the concept of form by engaging with existing discourse in the arts. Kant is there trying to use the type of distinctions that belong to the art criticism of the time. But Kant cannot mean that it's a spatial form, or organized temporality in the ordinary sense, that he is interested in, because Kant says over and again (in this chapter and later on) that too much regularity / symmetry / visible order are prohibitive of beauty. Because we experience order and regularity as constraints that do not allow for the free play of the imagination. Quoting Gasché (p. 66)

Neither regularity and symmetry nor their opposites constitute the beautiful form. Instead, a certain richness of the form itself, its indeterminateness or dunamis of possibilities constitutes that beauty. Rather than being opposed to content, form in this sense gestures towards what is otherwise than form and content – an exuberance of indeterminateness prior to any fixing of objective meaning and its constraining formal characteristics.

He refers us to Kant's account at the very end of the chapter (p. 243, §22)

Everything that [shows] a stiff regularity (close to mathematical regularity) runs counter to taste because it does not allow us to be entertained for long by our contemplation of it; instead it bores us, unless it is expressly intended either for cognition or for a determinate practical purpose. On the other hand, whatever lends itself to unstudied and purposive play by the imagination is always new to us, and we never tire of looking at it. Marsden, in his description of Sumatra,

– there are all kinds of examples of primitive peoples here because Kant is interested in the notion of the wild and the primitive; that is a subtext of the entire discussion –

p. 81

comments that the free beauties of nature there surround the beholder everywhere, so that there is little left in them to attract him; whereas, when in the midst of a forest he came upon a pepper garden, with the stakes that supported the climbing plants forming paths between them along parallel lines, it charmed him greatly. He concludes from this that we like wild and apparently ruleless beauty only as a change, when we have been satiated with the sight of regular beauty. And yet

– this is Kant's defense of wildness –

he need only have made the experiment of spending one day with his pepper garden to realize that, once regularity has prompted the understanding to put itself into attunement with order which it requires everywhere, the object ceases to entertain him, and instead inflicts on his imagination an irksome constraint; whereas nature in those regions, extravagant in all its diversity to the point of opulence, subject to no constraint from artificial rules, can nourish his taste permanently. Even birdsong, which we cannot bring under any rule of music, seems to contain more freedom and hence to offer more to taste than human song, even when this human song is performed according to all the rules of the art of music, because we tire much sooner of a human song if it is repeated often and for long periods.

So, Gasché's thesis is that beauty is not, as we might have been thinking of it all along, all this harmony of the imagination and understanding. It seems as if Kant would want a moment of dissonance – a certain disabling of the understanding, a making of understanding inadequate to the task, exposing the possibility of a free play of the imagination and understanding. Hence beauty is always – not form – but the excess of form. The form of all form. Form before it is ruled and governed. The possibility of form, rather than form itself. It is this exuberance of form that Kant thinks of as beautiful, and hence as what enables the beautiful.

The beautiful is not, and cannot be, the imagination and the understanding discovering, for any conceivable object, that they can put themselves into harmony, for if the object is sufficiently regular or structured or symmetrical, then there will be no play – no freedom – and hence no beauty.

Beauty is the condition for the possibility of cognition, or the relationship between the imagination and the understanding that are a condition for cognition, in a state that disallows cognition.

Interestingly, as he pursues this argument, Gasché nonetheless goes along with a standard reading of Kant: that the state of free play between imagination and the understanding is a precognitive state. The relationship between the imagination and understanding is the subjective side of objective conditions for cognition.

The relationship between imagination and understanding represent the minimal relation necessary for there to be a possible cognition... Mere form, then, is the pre-objective and pre-predicative condition under which empirical manifold of imagination can be gathered into figures of objectivity in the absence of determinate concepts.

The puzzle is exactly there in this chapter by Gasché. The question is, what is the relationship between the claim that this is the minimal necessary condition for a cognition (the pre-cognitive, pre-predicative state that is the anticipation of cognition in general) and his thesis that this object, as apprehended, must be experienced as an excess of form, as wild form. There seems to be a tension between the minimalist account that wants to connect aesthetic pleasure to cognition in general, and the idea that what we experience in beauty is an exuberance of form – a form that exceeds the possibilities of ready cognitive grasp, and it is this exceeding of those possibilities that sets off the free play.

We will see that Kant consistently holds both theses – Gasché is not misreading Kant. [32:25]

Question: It seems that the purposiveness without purpose is likewise an excess of purpose.

Absolutely. It's form without form. By which I mean the difference between aesthetic form and perceptual form. Gasché is right to say that there has got to be a difference between the two. Perceptual form will be cashed out in the rule-governedness of the object, while aesthetic form is subjectively related, and is about the excess of that possibility of projecting back a series of rules onto the object. It is only in the relation of the imagination and the understanding, in their free play, that I experience the unity in the complexity. That's what the beautiful is.

Question: I'm wondering about the section where he says that we can receive colour aesthetically. Even though it is normally just a sensation.
As I said he had to be wrong about that. And that is also why Euler was a problem for him, because Euler had a undulatory – that is, a wave-theory – of colour, such that Euler did not think that a colour was one monotonous tone, so to speak, and Euler's account of colour just rode roughshod over Kant's form-content, sensation-space- time structure. And Kant didn't know what to do with it. Kant misread Euler because he was conflating the perceptual and the aesthetic. Once you stop that conflation... – what is Matisse's greatest achievement? That he learned to draw in colour. He overcame the duality between drawing and colour, the traditional view of drawing as the substructure of the painting, and colour as filling in the dots, which Kant went along with. Matisse overturned 2500 years of thinking about art in just one picture.
[38:55]
Question: Is it possible for someone to say something beautiful just because they don't understand the concept of x?
No. Remember that the relationship is one of unity and complexity. Not understanding is not going to do that by itself – it would be chaos, a mess, just anything. The puzzle of a Pollock or a Twombley isn't the mess, it's that it seems somehow unified in ways that cannot be cashed out by merely pointing to the structure of the piece.
Question: [inaudible]
There are different ways of doing aesthetics. Benjamin said, let's stop talking about aesthetic experience and start talking about aesthetic production. As far as that goes, Kant doesn't care about all the agonies the artist went through etc., he's only interested in the product. That it was accidental, intentional, doesn't matter. All that matters is what's on the canvas.
The mystery and fantasticness of Agnes Martin is that she ought to be the very exemplary case of playing in order. And somehow it's not that. And to figure out why it isn't – why her works are not merely geometric grids – and why we experience in them a non-geometrical purity, like an austere spiritual exercise... there's something hypnotic about it.
Question: Can a person be beautiful?
We're getting there. It's called the ideal of beauty. Let's see if we can start that discussion.
43:45
There are still problem cases here. Think of the great monochrome works of art. Robert Riman is one of the most complex artists around. As rich and complex as a renaissance artist. I don't think I want to say that about an Yves Klein or Ellsworth Kelly. My view is Kelly is abysmal. Something in the area of the above discussion is at stake there, though I don't know how to negotiate that.
Riman Klein Kelly
§15 is Kant's critique of rational aesthetics, according to which things are beautiful if and only if they are perfect, and aesthetic cognition of them is a sensory apprehension of something (rationally) perfect in itself, where perfection refers to what sort of thing an object is meant to be. This was the dominant aesthetic view at the time.
§§16, 17 address the problem of conceptual content, and thereby, impure judgements of taste. He does so by drawing a contrast between pure or free beauties and adherent or dependent (conditioned, accessory) beauties.
On pp. 229-30 Kant defines these terms:
When we judge free beauty (according to mere form) then our judgement of taste is pure. Here we presuppose no concept of any purpose for which the manifold is to serve the given object, and hence no concept as to what the object is meant to represent; our imagination is playing, as it were, while it contemplates the shape, and such a concept would only restrict its freedom.
The use of Latin terms here shows Kant's nervousness. The Latin gives a false precision.
pulchrituda vaga pulchrituda adheris
Vaga is a strange Latinate term to pick up. Matthews, in his commentary, that it has the sense of wandering, roaming, diffuse, stolling about, unfixed, aimless. The term "aimless" is perhaps the most revealing since it reveals the absence of a determinate purpose. This fits nicely with Kant's examples in §4, namely "Flowers, free designs, lines aimlessly intertwined and called foliage" – the words "doodles" and "doodling," used in reference to aimlessly drawn lines also capture this idea to some extent. Rendering free beauty as "doodling beauty" would be linguistically unattractive but does capture much of the sentiment of vaga. That's why I said, if you want to think of free beauty, think of Cy Twombley. He uses combinations of childlike scribbing to de-skill and disorder the painting's surface. He wants to use, as it were, pre-drawing, precisely because the notion of drawing has become associated with order and regularity. So to return drawing to the state of excess of form, he scribbles and doodles. For years I didn't get Twombley. But what is interesting, part of what makes his art possible, is that in the forty-odd years he's been painting, he's never developed. There are phases – he does it on blackboards, and then on canvas – but the intrinsic nature of the Twombley practice has not developed, and it could not develop without undercutting his own discovery about scribbling – that scribbling has to be in accessible to development in order to make it work. So now, the fact that he never developed a second stage, looks to me like genius.
This distinction between pure and adherent beauties can be puzzling, although it is part of what has often led to Kant being associated with high modernism of painterly abstraction. That abstraction seems exactly like what a free, wandering aimless beauty would look like.
Hence Kant's famous two lists: List of free beauties
On p. 229 he says,
Many birds (the parrot, the humming-bird, the bird of paradise) and a lot of crustaceans in the sea are [free] beauties themselves [and] belong to no object determined by concepts as to its purpose, but we like them freely and on their own account. Thus designs à la grecque, the foliage on borders or on wallpaper, etc., mean nothing on their own: they represent [vorstellen] nothing, no object under a determinate concept, and are free beauties.
i.e. he takes the opposite of high art – decorativeness – and uses it as a clue to the notion of pure beauty. (That's also what Matisse did – he put decorativeness back into painting – but by doing that he meant to make painting really difficult, since it is the hardest thing rather than the easiest thing.)
List of adherent beauties Page 230:
But the beauty of a human being (and, as kinds subordinate to a human being, the beauty of a man or woman or child), or the beauty of a horse or of a building (such as a church, palace, armoury, or summer-house) does presuppose the concept of the purpose that determines what the thing is meant to be, and hence a concept of its perfection, and so it is merely adherent beauty.

There are certain types of objects where we cannot abstract from their purpose when we see them.
objects can never be beautiful, or their beauty is somehow related to their purpose. The question is, how can we relate the beauty of an object to its purpose without having the purpose subsume the beauty and collapse backwards into perfectionist aesthetics? This is all the more the case if we are tempted to say (as Kant is) that the paradigm case of all beauty is the beauty of the human.

October 31, 2007
You should all have an outline of §21 (Allison's Kant's Theory of Taste, pp. 150-151) [5:30]
When we ended last time, we were just beginning to talk about:
FREE AND ADHERENT BEAUTY
And we looked at Kant's two lists, on p. 229. The one that has the foliage, wallpapers, designs à la Grecque, and the other which has the list of church, palace, armoury, summer house.
free beauties are free of any conceptual determination
adherent beauties presuppose a concept of what the object ought to be (horse, church...)
The question, in the case of adherent beauties, is: How does this concept affect it as beauty?
There is a wonderful essay by Martin Gammon, 'Parerga and pulchritudo adhaerens: a reading of the Third Moment of the Analytic of the Beautiful', Kant-Studien 90, 1999, pp. 148–67 Allison, in fact, follows Gammon's argument, which is:

28. All beauty, qua beauty, is judged in the same way, and on the same basis, whatever the setting. Beauty is beauty, no matter where it appears.
29. So, what difference does setting (as Kant is concerned with in the case of adherent beauties) make?
Kant thinks that there are some settings in which we cannot and should not abstract from the purpose of the thing.
This generates appropriateness conditions for the ways in which it can show itself as beautiful – i.e., it must have forms which consort with a purpose like that. You do not want a gothic church with pink and white candy stripes and polka dots. The fact that it's a church constrains the types of forms that are appropriate for it.
The genius of Frank Gehry is that he has shown us how to exploit beautiful sculptural forms which can nonetheless cohere with their setting, in the natural landscape, and function (say, as a museum). A Gehry building is perfect for what it has to do. It's just that function in these cases does not dictate form heavy-handedly.
The point is that for objects of a certain kind, we must take into account function and purpose, and only then can we think of how it shows its forms, and those forms have to be harmonious with that function.
p. 230
Much that would be liked directly in intuition could be added to a building, if only the building were not meant to be a church. A figure could be embellished with all sorts or curlicues and light but regular lines, as the New Zealanders do with their tattoos, if only it were not the figure of a human being. And this human being might have had much more delicate features and a facial structure with a softer and more likeable outline, if only he were not meant to represent a man, let alone a warlike one.
[12:40]
On this reading, the function of an object presents a constraint. But does it present only a constraint?
There are 2 theories of how the concept and object go together:
(pp. 64-65 of Matthews' commentary)
30. Negative thesis: beauty should not contradict purpose. A negative, limiting condition.
31. Positive thesis: we can combine purpose and beauty, because there are two sorts of satisfaction, each of which has its proper sphere, but which get added together when we appreciate the beauty of an object. In this case, the idea of the beautiful is the combination of the satisfaction of the object's perfection with the more limited, disinterested satisfaction in the object's beauty.
Kant is uneasy between these 2 alternatives.
One the one hand, he claims that adherent beauty is not beauty proper, and all beauty proper is free beauty
Adherent beauties are just the constraint or the extra notion of purposiveness of the object, but when we judge the beautiful, we are always engaged in the same sort of reflective activity.
Kant has to hold to this.
But: why are there two kinds of beauties? Why are there beauties where we cannot abstract from purpose? Why are there adherent beauties at all? Why aren't all beauties simply free beauties?
Because the notion of dependent or accessory beauty is itself fully dependent on Kant's moral theory –
Objects about which pure judgements of beauty can be made are just those that lack any intrinsic moral worth – things that are necessarily not ends in themselves. While objects about which only impure judgements of beauty can be made are those which are ends in themselves. (Kant's moral theory depends on the insight that human beings, as self-determining agents, have intrinsic moral worth, and so can never be treated as mere means.)
The items on Kant's list – horse, church, house, armoury – are chosen because they all belong to human culture. This leads to a certain puzzle or problem:
There can be pure judgements of taste, and hence an autonomous domain of the aesthetic, just in case there are objects that have no intrinsic worth or value (i.e. objects of no moral interest).
Conversely, things of intrinsic moral worth can never be pure beauties.
The duality of free and dependent beauty relates to Kant's dualistic ontology:
Either these
dumb nature
causally determined Newtonian universe
no intrinsic value
a world of objects in which judgements of truth and falsehood can be made
valueless in itself
human beings

a realm of freedom
intrinsically valuable human beings
a world of persons in which judgements of right and wrong, good and evil can be made
without cognitive grip
A hypothesis, in response to this puzzle:
Newtonian nature is governed by the laws of geometry and is dead. And there is nothing beautiful about the world of the dead. When Kant says that nature is the proper object of pure judgements of taste, he must mean living nature. Organic form. Where the notions of unity and complexity get a grip. Where there really is purposiveness without a purpose. Only living nature satisfies the notion of free and wild beauty, which, as we saw with Gasché, is necessary to think about the beautiful. Geometry, the repetitious, the absolutely symmetrical, are not sources of beauty but sources of boredom.
I am suggesting that the wild and the primitive are a code word for being alive. The excessive, beyond- geometrical form of living things is expressive of their aliveness. It is because of that aliveness that we are attracted to those things.
The problem is that it now seems that beauty is an acknowledgement not of the world that science depicts (the world of knowledge) but the world we live in. We are responding to these objects not as dead objects out there, standing against us, but as part of a human habitat.
This goes along with my suggestion that the self-sustaining experience of pleasure is an experience of aliveness, that when we experience the beautiful, we experience ourselves as alive (I will return to this thesis when we discuss the Deduction of Taste).
Judgements of beauty concern the excess of living form in a living, human environment, beyond the reach of mathematical or even standard cognitive activity. (This view is all but absent in the secondary literature.)
Question: What about the stone in Wittgenstein? He contrasts that with aliveness. But we can imagine a beautiful stone.
That's why I said "living objects and their like." What happens in judgements of beauty is that we consider objects, not as out there independent of us, but as part of an ambient living world that is part of our attunement to that world. The rock can be looked at by the geologist, or in terms of its smoothness and its form, but as soon as we start doing that, we are drawing analogies to bodies. The sublime is a different matter, but beauty always has some analogical relationship to the living.
Q: You refer to the world of human habitat. That is the world of practical engagement. But isn't that in conflict with disinterestedness?
I am interested in that stratum of our experience that is a precondition for practicality. Freedom for Kant is weirdly purely noumenal, but of course we know – and Angelica Nuzzo has a book coming out that argues this – that free action requires having a living body. I am saying that the level of the living is a condition for our inhabiting the world as free beings. That is what I meant by an originary attunement to the world, prior to our objectification, or action on it.
Q: On p. 225-6, Kant talks about how judgements of sense impugn a judgement because we're taking an interest, therefore it cannot be a judgement of taste, then on p. 230 he talks about how these judgements can be impaired by some kind of judgement of purpose. In the first case, the judgement of taste is absolutely undermined, and in the second case, it is merely qualified.
If we can get the right answer that question, we can show how Kant's entire system is false.
My suggestion is that there is no space in Kant to talk about living nature in a meaningful way. There are teleological judgments, but there Kant skips something – the step when we recognize something as alive. So the gap of the beautiful is not purposive in an undermining way because for Kant it doesn't have any intrinsic meaning, it's a "sign", written in the language of nature.
Q: But as the Wittgenstein passage pointed out, it's not the form that's different. It's that our attitude is not the same. I don't see any room in Kant for an attitudinal account – he's deriving that from form.
[34:50]
A: The real question is, what is the attitude called reflecting judgement. That is, I'm saying that it is an attitude – it's the missing attitude, in a certain way. It is that stance towards things that opens up the possibility of regarding us and them as attuned to one another, beyond the reach of morality and of objective cognition.
Q: I like what you're doing but I'm not sure it's Kant.
A: Oh, I am doing terrible things to Kant. I am giving an Althusserian reading – the way you read a text is to look for the thing it does not talk about, because that's what it's all about. It actually works. Just think of Foucault's book on sexuality. Where is the French Revolution? Pierre Macherey – all that kind of criticism. My reading of Kant is that the missing link in the deduction of beauty is this notion of living form, or life experienced as form. Apart from perhaps McGreal (and I am looking forward to Rachel Zuckert's book) this reading is absent. I am not suggesting that the notion of living form is one of the hypotheses that Kant is explicitly thinking about, but it's all over the text.
Q: But he doesn't have the resources to go there?
A: It's not that. It's that he senses something in beauty he had not accounted for, and is trying desperately to make space for, but he doesn't know what it is. But he is doing everything he can to carve it out, and to give it an integral space. And that will cohere with the fact that all art is about resurrection – he says, saying something totally gnomic.
[39:00]
THE IDEAL OF BEAUTY
(This is the other side of this argument).
The judgment of the beautiful – of free beauties – is the experience of more, in our perceptual experience. More form, excess of form, beyond the minimum necessary conditions for cognition.
In §16 Kant says, strictly speaking, perfection neither gains by beauty nor beauty by perfection. He has to say this, otherwise he's going to drift into a perfectionist aesthetics. That's what lay behind, quite correctly, Gammon's argument that adherent beauties are not kinds of beauties, because if beauty gained by perfection, then you're back to aesthetic rationalism.
In §17 Kant wants to offer a positive articulation of the relationship between beauty and goodness (we'll come back to the whole morality and beauty thing, but this is a low level at which it first appears). And he has to offer an account of this relationship between beauty and goodness, reason and judgement, in a way that does not transgress the free/adherent beauty divide. Which is to say, human beings are a problem.
But Kant realizes that he cannot attack the problem directly, so he tackles it sideways. He notes: there are no objective rules of taste. How then is the domain of taste reproduced by culture? That is, if this is not a rule- following activity, how does it proceed and how is it sustained?

Through the use of certain products of taste being treated as models – as things exemplary for taste.
In such (exemplary) cases, an individual object itself is being used for estimating normative guidance in a domain.
The highest model of taste – those models that best exemplify beauty, and in so doing provide orderliness for the domain of the beautiful – is to be called the archetype (Urbild) of taste. Where does this archetype come from? How can there be an archetype of taste?
He begins again formally. He says that the archetype of taste is an ideal of taste which each of us must attempt to beget within ourselves, in accordance with which we estimate other things. The archetype of taste, and other models of taste, are stand-ins for, and replace, objective rules or criteria. They are paradigms. And they're, in a certain sense, inexhaustible.
[45:15]
Exemplary items take up the burden of orienting us in the field of the aesthetic.
Orientation is a technical Kantian term. It is different from guiding, ruling, and determining.
The example that he gives in his early writings is our orientation in space, which is determined by right and left. The reason why these provide orientation and not criteria is because the difference between them is intuitive and not conceptual. Orientation is something that is concrete, intuitive, and gathered through experience, but yet has the power of literally providing guidance in an infinite open domain. At least if I've got left, right, back and front, I can make decisions about where to go.
One of the questions we should be thinking about is whether the notion of ethics requires, or can bear more than, orientation. Could ethics be not about obligations, norms, values, all the stuff that we lily-livered Platonists think it's about? Could it be orientation, in accordance with models? Plato says the good man is the icon of the good. But what if "the good" doesn't exist? Then all you've got is the practices of the good man, as your model for ethicality. "Act like that" might be the thought. Or "This is what freedom is." Or "This is keeping a promise." That is, what if ethicality were built not out of principles or norms, but cases of emphatic salience? The way Kant is going to argue, when we come to art, that art is built out of cases of emphatic salience. "This is what a great piece of music sounds like." "This is a fugue." If you follow the rules, you won't produce a fugue, you'll just produce a student exercise.
This issue of orientation is the de-Platonizing, anti-Aristotelian moment in Kantian thought. Why does it happen with beauty? Because beauty is the realm of the sensible, and so is excluded from truth and goodness, and is always part of a contested space.
Heidegger's "On the Origin of the Work of Art" expresses this idea that artworks provide orientation. When he says that "the temple gives to things their look, and to men their outlook," he's not suggesting that it gives them rules or principles, but that the work of art opens up a space of orientation, and then he makes it literal: it says what is high and what is low, what is mean and what is great, etc. Heidegger takes this idea and beats it to death. (And that's not the half of what he borrows here.)
So now we are saying that if art has any regularity or normativity to it, it's got to be through archetypes, exemplary instances, and the like. The question is, which ones? Or is it pure conventionality?
The Ideal
We have to distinguish between ideas and ideal.
Ideas are always ideas of reason. They belong to rational self-determination, and so are always conceptual.
An ideal, on the other hand, is the representation of an individual fully adequate to the idea. It is the case that exemplifies, or instantiates, or incarnates the idea.
Hence the archetype of taste, which rests on reason's idea of an indeterminate maxim. An indeterminate maxim cannot be represented by means of concepts – only as an ideal, i.e. in an individual case.
So the ideal of beauty cannot be drawn from the domain of free beauties, for because they are free beauties, any individual member of any particular group that is determined as beautiful is purely contingent.
Since there is nothing about free beauties that makes them such – we require an attitude; it's not a fact about them – then by definition, they are ill-suited to play the role of ideal beauties.
An ideal beauty must be one for which there exists a final, objective finality, i.e. something that has an absolute purpose. An object whose purpose cannot be abstracted from it. Only the human being qualifies (p. 233):
[This leaves] only that which has the purpose of its existence within itself – man. Man can himself determine his purposes by reason; or, where he has to take them from outer perception, he can still compare them with essential and universal purposes and then judge the former purposes' harmony with the latter ones aesthetically as well. It is man, alone among all objects in the world, who admits of an ideal of beauty, just as the humanity in his person, [i.e., in man considered] as an intelligence, is the only [thing] in the world that admits of the ideal of perfection.
So the ideal of beauty rests upon the rational idea of man, that is, the idea of man as possessing intrinsic moral worth, and virtues attendant upon that. It is these notions of what it is to be a human being that govern the representation of the human figure such that the human figure becomes the outward expression – the visible expression – of these inward, abstract, wholly ideal notions. The ideal of the beautiful is the image of human worth and virtue embodied.
You might say that Kant is giving Wittgenstein a transcendental twist. Wittgenstein says, the best image of the human soul is the human body. Make that thesis transcendental: the only, and necessary, image of the human soul – that is, what it is to be a human being – is the human body. That's the thesis of ideal beauty.
[59:53]
We are looking for a worldly object that will give us orientation in the field of beauty. If we're going to have a domain of the aesthetic, we have got to have some cases that are indisputable cases of the beautiful. The only ones that have the requisite consistency are not pure ones, but adherent ones, and the only adherent one that has enough consistency is the human, because we are free. The word "soul," that Wittgenstein uses, is translated by Kant as "free." The only image, and the necessary condition of the image of human freedom, is the human body.
Something about the human body possesses an intrinsic expressivity, and the beautiful body is the revelation of the intrinsic expressivity of the human body as the image of the human soul, which is the picture of human freedom.
One aspect of Kant's thesis is that the human body, uniquely, puts constraints on its representation in such a way that we cannot fail (although we always do fail), with enough thoughtfulness, to ask about the relationship between how the body is represented, and what it is represented as.
The case I want to look at is the various depictions of the rape of Lucretia. This was a great trope of Renaissance art. In almost

all of the pictures of the rape of Lucretia, of which Titian is the most repugnant case, what you have is a heavily-clothed, muscular guy with a naked, wholly exposed woman, who is always in a pose, not of violation, but of surprise seduction.
This is even worse in the case of Giordano, where the woman is just being coy.
The great commentary on this – and the one I would argue is an exemplar of the idea of beauty – is Rembrandt. Rembrandt's Lucretia is fully clothed. If you know the story, after she was raped, because she was dishonoured, she committed suicide in front of her husband-to-be, her father, and her brother. In Rembrandt's case, he has her having already stabbed herself, and her garment soaked in red, and she's holding a cord. Is the cord an alarm? A blind? A cord about to be pulled? But what we know of this is that she has lost everything. And seeing that desolation on the face of Lucretia, we know exactly what the human soul is, and how it is to be measured. Something that does not occur in the Italian works, which I would argue treat the female form as pure sexual decoration.

It is tempting to think that the notion of the ideal of beauty represents the point of beauty. But this is a point of beauty that is in tension with free beauties. We have this tension opened up between the way in which Kant wants to talk about free beauties, and the way he wants to give a certain privilege to ideal beauties. And I'm not clear that he ever explicitly overcomes that duality in his account.
One question we can ask ourselves: Is art beauty on the side of ideal beauty (Rembrandt) or that of free beauty (still-lifes, landscapes, abstract paintings)?
What is the relationship between free beauty and freedom, with respect to ideal beauty?
Schiller, in the Callius (?) letters, suggests that all beauty is an image of freedom realized. Ask yourself, What does freedom look like? Schiller's answer is basically, "It looks like a flower!" An object's structure can have one of two sources: either it's determined from without (in which case it's mechanical nature), or else it's determined from within (merely from what it is) – but isn't this just a definition of freedom?
Anything living, insofar as it escapes from mechanism (i.e. the dead), is an image of freedom. This is Schiller's reading of the Third Critique. Schiller is asking the question that Gasché didn't ask: What makes form more? excessive? Answer: its not being determinate. It has more in it, to be itself, than is required to simply bring it under a concept.
4TH MOMENT (MODALITY) AND SENSUS COMMUNIS
Modality is supposed to unify the first three moments in a common basis. [9:25]
On p. 240 Kant says
p. 237
For the present, our task is only to analyze the power of taste into its elements, and to unite these ultimately in the idea of a common sense.
The idea of common sense is meant to unite the first three moments.
The debate about all of this, especially about §21, is going to be whether, in giving us an idea of common sense and of necessity, Kant is offering a deduction of the possibility of taste, or just a further elaboration of what a pure judgement of taste is, which will then get its deduction in §§31-39.
While §21 does provide grounds for postulating a cognitive capacity that is a necessary condition for the possibility of taste, Allison for one argues that that cognitive capacity is weaker than a deduction. Over the past fifteen years agreement has formed that §21 is not sufficient on its own to provide a judgement of taste. Twenty years ago, people used to argue that everything after §21 was redundant. The redundancy thesis has now gone out of fashion. We now have a weak reading of §21, and a hopeful reading of §§31-39.
§18 introduces the idea of necessity. The question is, what kind of necessity is at issue here? Kant's answer is: an exemplary necessity. Rather, as a necessity that is thought in an aesthetic judgement, it can only be called exemplary, i.e. a necessity of the assent of everyone to a judgement that is regarded as an example of a universal rule that we are unable to state.
If you want to lose many sleepless nights, try to think about what necessity means.
In philosophy, we distinguish between: logical necessity
causal necessity
historical necessity (different from above?) ethical necessity
ontological necessity epistemic necessity necessary truths
I take it that "necessary truths" organizes all the other ones.
(Usually, Kant says, necessity goes together with universality. Hence a necessity in which a concept precedes the object.)
Rationalism has located the notion of necessity above all in the notion of timelessness. So necessarily true means something that is always true, and can never be false. What must be the case in order for something to be necessarily true? A thing is necessarily true if and only if the conditions for its holding are always in place, or the conditions for its changing are never in place.
The reason that I don't like logical necessity is because of how this has been distorted by modal logic. According to modal logic, a thing is necessarily true if it is true in all possible worlds. What is a possible world? Saul Kripke made a living off of this crap. I consider S5 to be a load of semantic nonsense. And that, by the way, was Kant's critique of Leibniz – i.e. that logical necessity ("true in all possible worlds") is dependent on what you can conceive of, and that of course is just a play of the imagination. Kant said that when you detach necessity from anything as simple as "how could we know that?" you get a philosophical free-for-all. And if you want to see a philosophical free-for-all, you just look at all the philosophy that comes out of trackingness (?).
What is interesting here is that exemplary necessity connects necessity and contingency.
What I am saying here is that all of these traditional notions of necessity, based on the idea of necessary truths (and logical truths are just paradigm cases of necessary truths) – all of this is the metaphysics of presence.
Part of the fascination of reflective judgement is the way in which we want to make claims about necessity, but
that take their point of departure from an individual case, which is therefore a singularity. says, just before introducing the notion of exemplarity (p. 236)
Which is why Kant
Step 1:
It is not a theoretical objective necessity, allowing us to cognize a priori that everyone will feel this liking for the object I call beautiful. Nor is it a practical objective necessity, where, through concepts of a pure rational will that serves freely acting beings as a rule, this liking is the necessary consequence of an objective law...

The necessity here is bound up with contingency. I am claiming to have judged an object as it ought to be judged, and this is the basis of my demand for the agreement of others. I make this claim because I assume my judgement instantiates a universal rule. However, since the judgement is aesthetic and not cognitive, based on feeling rather than concept, this rule cannot be stated. If there were an actual rule, it would be a cognitive, logical necessity, not an aesthetic one.

[23:35]

So the notion of the exemplary instance ("This is beauty") is what is at stake. Allison, Kant's Theory of Taste, p. 147 ff:

Continuing his analysis of this exemplary necessity, Kant points out in §19 that it is not only subjective but also conditional [bedingt]. Specifically, it is conditional upon the correct subsumption of the instance (the particular appraisal) under the unstatable rule... In the next section (§20), Kant identifies this mysterious, unstatable rule, which serves as the condition or ground of the demand for universal agreement implicit in the pure judgment of taste, with the idea of a common sense.

The principle that's supporting this fabric of claims, the principle under which the subsumption occurs, is not a principle in the ordinary sense, but the notion of a common sense. Common sense – and I'm going to suggest this means two different things – is going to be the ground of the possibility of aesthetic judgements. Common sense is at least this: it is the shared capacity to feel what may be universally sharable.

Allison's breakdown of §21 [handout] (from Kant's Theory of Taste, pp. 150-151)

"Cognitions and judgements must be universally communicable," because this is necessary to have those judgements agreeing with the object.

What is being stated here, at least weakly, is the reversibility between objectivity and intersubjectivity. What is truly objectively the case (true independent of anyone) must be statable in a way that is shareable by everyone. And what is intersubjectively true – what we can all share – is what we can claim to be of the object. So we are getting a kind of reciprocity argument between intersubjectivity and objectivity, with a lack of clarity, at this point, about any primacy in either direction. The justification of this claim, which is not a deep one, but sufficient for the moment, is: deny it, and you end up in skepticism. If you have universal shareability but no objectivity, then you've got a version of subjective idealism. If you have objectivity but no shareability, then you've got solipsism.

I say it's a weak thesis, because he doesn't disprove skepticism. He says: the denial of the thesis entails skepticism. It's an anti-skeptical premise.

Step 2:

"This entails that the mental state required for cognition in general, that is, the attunement" between imagination and understanding, or proportion between them, the subjective states that make those judgements possible – they too "must be universally communicable, for again, to deny this would open the door to skepticism, since the attunement is the subjective condition for cognition."

So, the picture looks like this:

The subjective condition for an objective judgement is the harmony between the imagination and understanding, and this too must be communicable, since it is just the subjective condition for the intersubjective judgement.

If you want to, you can simply "black box" the subjective conditions. Whatever they are, they must be communicable.

Step 3:

"This attunement actually occurs whenever the perception of a given object puts the imagination into play, which, in turn, sets the understanding into action, for this attunement varies in proportion to differences in the occasioning objects."

So, this activity of the imagination and the understanding occurs whenever this [objective judgement?] occurs, and further, this has variations. It varies in relationship to differences in the object. If there were a flower on the tree, there would be a different harmony over here.

Step 4:

"Nevertheless," Allison suggests – and it is unclear whether this is in Kant – "there must be one optimal attunement, that is, one in which the inner relation is most conducive to the mutual quickening of the cognitive faculties with a view to cognition in general; and this attunement can be determined (recognized) only by feeling (since the alternative – concepts – is ruled out)."

And this is really the puzzling step. It states that attunement can happen, for even an individual object, in a variety of ways, but there should be an optimal attunement. That is, one in which the inner relation, between imagination and the understanding, is such that the cognitive faculties are operating in their own maximum functionality, with a view to cognition in general, and this maximum functionality can only be recognized by feeling, because we have no other access to it.

Step 5:

"Moreover, this attunement and the feeling of it in connection with a given representation must likewise be universally communicable."

So, if this feeling happens, then it must happen with respect to a given individual, simply as an inference from Step 4.

Step 6:

"But the universal communicability of this feeling presupposes a common sense."

That is, in order for the sharing to go on, we must assume that the way in which imagination and understanding work in relationship to one another is shared by all the participants. Otherwise you're going to again lose the universal communicability, which you've already agreed is a necessary condition for cognition in general.

Step 7:

"Consequently, we do have a basis for assuming a common sense, without relying on psychological observation, as a necessary condition of the universal communicability of our cognition, which must itself be presupposed if skepticism is to be avoided."

There are two conflicting ways of reading this: The strictly cognitive / epistemic reading

The aesthetic reading

On (1), what is offered is a strictly cognitive conception of common sense, not particularly geared to the aesthetic, but rather providing the grounds for what will be a necessary condition for the possibility of taste, by alleviating the worry about what appears a strange condition. On the strictly cognitive reading, what is being suggested is that if we share judgements, then we must share the capacities for judgements. And in sharing the capacity for judgements, we at least have the idea that the way the imagination and understanding work is something that is universally shared, or at least in principle shareable, but it is not by itself sufficient for aesthetics.

On (2), which would be an as-if deduction of taste, one moves from the general cognitive story to an aesthetic story via the moment of optimal attunement. What does it mean to talk about an optimal attunement, that is, most conducive to cognition in general? It is as if the very moment picked up by the attunement between the faculties reaches a sort of pitch of explicitness that says something about what is the case for the minimal case.

The point here is that the cognitive does not entail the aesthetic. And this is going to be the problem for the deduction of taste, over and over again. The reason that the cognitive does not entail the aesthetic is because the minimum necessary conditions for judgement – that is, the coordination between imagination and understanding – occur when there is conceptual determination, and that doesn't tell us what happens when there isn't conceptual determination.

So problem number one is that we don't know why the relationship between the imagination and understanding that is necessary for cognition should be related to what happens when we're not cognizing.

The question is, what is the relationship between the cognitive story, and the aesthetic story? And the way this gets played out, very often, is by use of inflated words. So, Gasché says, on page 82 of The Idea of Form, that

the basis upon which the universality of an aesthetic judgement rests is that of "mere form" – the form of the objects, the form of what is eminently cognizable.

What does "eminently cognizable" mean? What is the difference between cognizable, and eminently cognizable? That difference is supposed to capture the relationship between the cognitive and the aesthetic. As far as I can see, in the Gasché story, it just gets played out by the word "eminently."

In Allison, it gets played out in that language of "optimal attunement that is most conducive to the mutual quickening of the cognitive faculties." For the cognition... of a pencil?

In other words, there is a gap here. And the issue of the deduction is precisely how we relate the patent fact that we require a harmony between imagination and understanding for cognition when there is no free play (when the relation between imagination and understanding is determined), and what happens in the case of free play. And how one story bears on the other.

The argument for entailment obviously fails and is question-begging, because cognitive judgements are interested, and judgements of taste are disinterested. Cognitive judgements are ones in which the understanding determines the imagination, while in judgements of taste the imagination exercises a free play, and the attunement occurs as a consequence of free play.

And this is underlined by the question of whether taste is original (we have it), or only regulative. Which is the question Kant asks in §22, p. 239

That we do actually presuppose this indeterminate standard of a common sense is proved by the fact that we presume to make judgements of taste. But is there in fact such a common sense, as a constitutive principle of the possibility of experience, or is there a still higher principle of reason that makes it only a regulative principle for us, [in order] to bring forth in us, for higher purposes, a common sense in the first place?

Well, common sense was supposed to be the ground, but he's now suggesting we may not have it! And if we do not have it, why should we believe that we can share our judgements? (And why would we demand that of other people?)

The question is, is common sense constitutive or regulative?

That we cannot even begin to answer this question given what goes on in §21 is all the evidence in the world for saying that the deduction of taste does not occur there.

THE DEDUCTION OF TASTE

What I want to argue about the deduction is that the entire problem that we have just looked at – let's call it the relationship between the minimum notion of required shareability, and the normative maximum – riddles the deduction itself. And it's not idle that it does so, since on one reading the question of the deduction of taste is purely epistemological, and on another, it's emphatically normative.

So the issue is, how do the epistemic and the normative go together, in the question of taste? And related to that are the different accounts of what Kant means by the harmony of the imagination and the understanding.

Let me lay out the set up for the deduction of taste, and we will save the deduction and the analyses for next week. Although that may go more quickly than you imagine, since the deduction is one of the most disappointing passages in all of Kant – a mere two sentences, and they're not wholly persuasive.

The deduction of taste occurs in §31-39. For whatever reason Kant puts the sublime in the middle of all of that. [That is, between §21 and the deduction.]

Against the background of the analytic of taste, the deduction hardly says anything new. Kant calls it "easy" (p. 290) since "it does not justify the objective reality of a concept, for beauty" is not a property of things and is not cognitive.

All it asserts is that we are justified in presupposing universally in all people the same subjective conditions of the power of judgement that we find in ourselves; apart from this it asserts only that we have subsumed the given object correctly under these conditions.

This is what the deduction has to establish – that we are justified in presupposing universally in all people the same subjective conditions of the power of judgement that we find in ourselves. Because if I can presuppose that everyone shares the power of judgement I have, then I am entitled to say, when I judge something to be beautiful, that my judgement should be shared.

And this deduction applies solely to pure judgements of taste, and furthermore, we are never in a position to determine with certainty whether a given judgement of taste is pure. We never know if we've done the subsumption correctly. But if it is pure, and we've done it correctly, then, if the deduction is true, we are entitled to assert that our judgement should be shared.

And furthermore, in the sublime, there is no separate deduction. Or as Kant puts it, the exposition and deduction of the sublime are the same. That sounds weird, but the sublime in Kant is not what you think it is.

Pure judgements of taste covers both nature and art. Art beauties can be free or adherent beauties, but for the purpose of this analysis, we have already learned that insofar as they are beauties, the are judged just like free beauties. How this plays out for art, we will come to. Hence, for the purposes of argument, the focus is on natural beauty, and therefore on the purposiveness of nature.

The deduction must show that judgements of taste are possible. Kant doesn't show that anyone has ever made one, or a good one.

He then sets up a variety of sub-requirements for a judgement of taste, the first of which is stated in §32, when he says that judgements of taste are possible only if you judge for yourself, and he defends the young poet for stubbornly thinking that his young work is excellent, even though he or she is wrong.

He goes on to say that classics are not models to be imitated, but put others on the track whereby they could search within themselves, and so adopt their own, or a better, course.

And then he talks about exemplarity: exemplarity is following by reference to a precedent, rather than imitating.

What is all of this about?

It's the same as the question of freedom. How do you teach someone to be free? After all, to teach someone to do art is a way of teaching freedom. Indeed, arguably, the teaching of art is one of the exemplary practices in which human beings learn freedom. Artworks are unique, created. What makes an artwork an artwork is not that it's an exact imitation, although imitation is a way of learning technique,

but to make art is to learn to make something new. So freedom is the capacity to act anew, and art is that human practice in which human beings routinely produce new, unique items.
So when Kant is talking about the role of autonomy here, he is suggesting that in the world of art, both in making and in judging, you must judge for yourself because what is at stake is freedom. For Kant, the worst sin is imitation. Imitation, for Kant, is what parrots do, not human beings. Being able to mimic is not being able to do.
So all of those accounts of following rather than imitating, having exemplary cases, having classics, are about understanding how tradition and freedom can go together. The question of art is one of the places in culture where we are necessarily posed the question of how we can have an ongoing tradition which we claim is our own, but that is a tradition, not of simply carrying on the dead law, but a tradition of the new. That is, a tradition in which the practice is the production of unique works that each must judge for himself.
[58:28]
Somewhere Adorno says that the notion of determinate negation probably never happens in history, but it does happen in art. That is, art really does have a history, because it is exactly that effort of producing new works, as a consequence of a previous tradition, in relationship to it by the way in which you depart from it. And you set your relationship to it by (and just by) the ways in which you determinately negate it and go beyond it.
So art is the practice of freedom.
In §33 Kant says there are no proofs, no rules for judgements of taste.
In §35, a subjective principle of taste is put forth. And then, in a second step, it will be grounded (in §38).
Question: Will be talk more about freedom?
Yes, in the section in genius. Genius is just another word for freedom.
Adorno likewise views art as the practice of freedom – in fact, the only place where we can practice freedom, since we cannot practice it in the world.
Nietzsche also views art as the practice of freedom, except that we are the artwork.
In judgements of beauty, there must be a moment of excess or dissonance, but it must be a moment in which form emerges out of conceptuality. It's the excess beyond conceptuality that's going to let us experience form in its purposiveness. While in the case of the sublime, the excess is the explosion of non-form. So on my reading at any rate, it is certainly the case that both beauty and the sublime are about excess, but in very different ways. And there is a good question about how they connect up, if they do.
Eminently cognizable is not sublimely cognizable. The sublime is going to be the destruction of form, for reasons we will come to.
The sublime is a kind of violence. Beauty is not supposed to be violent. Because if violence is violation, then beauty would have to have the destruction of form as one of its moments. The sublime is an experience of formal violence – it is the violation of the boundaries of the imagination and therefore of the integrity of the body.

November 7, 2007
THE DEDUCTION
THREE INTERPRETATIONS OF THE JUSTIFICATION OF JUDGEMENTS OF TASTE
Our strategy will be to track the Deduction, following Allison. I will then offer three further interpretations of justification of judgements of taste. The first I flagged at the very beginning: the idea of lost pleasure. The second, Longuenesse's, follows different accounts of necessity. The third, Guyer's, itself follows three different interpretations of the harmony of the faculties.
These are different strategies for thinking about this what is actually at stake in a judgement of beauty, why beauty matters.
We ended last time at §35. §35 and §38 are the core of the deduction. In §35, the subjective principle of taste is set forth, and in §38 it is grounded.
In §35, Kant says that the subjective principle of taste is nothing else but the power of judgement itself. p. 287
Now since a judgement of taste is not based on a concept of the object (in the case of a presentation by which an object is given), it can consist only in the subsumption of the very imagination under the condition [which must be met] for the understanding to proceed in general from intuition to concepts.
Because we're not bringing the object under a concept, all that can be at stake is the movement in general by which the imagination and the understanding operate, as heading toward conceptualization – the thought of cognition in general. That is a move from intuition to concept, without ever achieving a concept. We are tracking how intuitions are worked up – how they are further elaborated and thought in preparation for being conceptualized, but without conceptualization.
In other words, since the imagination's freedom consists precisely in its schematizing without a concept,
The free play of the imagination is nothing other than that activity of generating, from the manifold of intuitions, a sufficient amount of unity in complexity, or complexity within unity, so that if we had a concept – which we don't – the schema of that concept. And the schema is guided not by the concept, but by the reflective act of judging itself. So the reflecting act of judging is the business of detecting, locating sources of what I will call (to be provocative) "material order," and that material order is the equivalent to a schema, but a schema without a concept.
Which is to say it acknowledges the integrity of the object independent of any conceptualization of that object. The object itself has a kind of integrity, although that integrity can only be found in our experience of the object, not in the object itself. So the bearer of that integrity of the object is the reflecting judgement itself. I will be coming back to this thought over and over again in the next couple of hours. So, in schematizing without a concept,
a judgement of taste must rest upon a mere sensation,
How do I know that I've succeeded in uncovering, or detecting, or having the experience of, the integrity of an object without a concept? Only by a sensation, but a sensation that has, as Lyotard puts it, its own reflective dimension. That is, it's not a raw sensation. Rather, it is – in Lyotard's word – "tautogorical," a word that combines "categorical" and "tautology." The structure of my sensory awareness, my sensation, is the mind feeling itself in a mode of satisfaction. And it's that mode of satisfaction, which is the integration of the imagination with the understanding, that we call pleasure. So a judgement of taste must rest on a mere sensation,
namely, our sensation of both the imagination in its freedom and the understanding with its lawfulness, as they reciprocally quicken each other;
The freedom of the imagination is that it is, in acting for itself, the requirement for unity, but that requirement for unity is the

acknowledgement of what is needed for the understanding, were the understanding to be a next step in the process. That is, Kant says, it must rest on a feeling that allows us to judge the object by the purposiveness that the presentation (by which an object is given) has insofar as it furthers the cognitive powers in their free play.
So the object is experienced as purposive, just to the extent to which we can find that possibility of schematizing it without a concept. Purposive for our powers of cognition, but without any extrinsic purpose.
This is just a tighter redescription of what has gone before: there is a power of judgement, and the autonomy of judgement takes the form of heautonomy: giving the law to itself for its own purposes.
Some points:

1. Notice that the representations are subsumed, not under a concept, but under the (subjective) conditions for subsumption.
2. Harmony of the faculties now equals exactly this subsumption – the normativity of judgement is tied to the act of estimation, and not the verdict ("X is beautiful"). The normativity is of that state of reflective rightness, that sensation makes us aware of, and this is just again subsumptive.
3. The work of the imagination then reveals what I'll call the in-principle subsumability of the object, although not its actual subsumption under a concept. That it is of a sort that could be.
4. The free play of the imagination is said to be equivalent to schematizing without a concept, which
5. That hints at a claim that I have been pressing from the beginning, namely that if we are examining the subjective conditions for objective judgement, then Kant here is suggesting that if we could not schematize without a concept, we could not schematize at all. (I take that to be the weighty claim.) We could not think that what we are doing is thinking about individual objects, rather than mere instances of universals.
   If you're a Platonist, then every object is simply an instance of the universal. In that case, there is nothing at stake in the individual case. Everything important is in the universal. Instances are no more than. The universal exhausts the object without remainder. Which is to say, nothing new is possible. There is and could be no unique individuals.
   Kant's claim is that in a non-Platonic world – that is, a world that is contingent, a world in which there is concept formation, concept acquisition, the extension of concepts to instances – it must be the case that we have the capacity to schematize without a concept. Otherwise we could not schematize with a concept, except in the dull sense that we could be object recognition machines (which is what we are most of the time – I will say more about that).
   So, what's yielded as a consequence of this, Allsion claims (p. 171) – a strange and puzzling claim – "what is finally generated is the exhibition of the form of a concept in general." My question to Allison is, What is a concept in general that is not a concept? He somehow thinks that schematizing without a concept is nothing more than what schematizing with a concept involves, except you don't have a concept. But in that case, there's no extra to "without a concept."
6. And finally, the freedom of the imagination and the lawfulness of the understanding together generate a notion of lawfulness without law, of purposiveness without purpose, and of meaningfulness without meaning. We'd better have an account of what it might mean to say that there could be lawfulness without law or meaningfulness without meaning.
   Meaningfulness without meaning may be like metaphor, as opposed to a determinate concept. Metaphors are meaningful without a determinate meaning.
   Let me put it another way, going back to the beginning of the course: What is the difference between philosophy and literature? Philosophy is meaningful. Literature, perhaps, is meaningfulness without meaning, because it is non-translatable. Irreducible. You can't abstract the meaningfulness from the object, to somewhere else, without losing some of that meaning.
   All of this is roughly familiar. But in what sense does it reveal the subjective principle of taste?
   Ultimately, what Kant means to say is that the judgement "x is beautiful" is underpinned by the principle or universal rule for judgement.
   There is a normative validity, or exemplary necessity, to the pleasure felt in connection with a mere judgment of taste of a particular object. Now, to claim something has normative validity, for Kant, typically means that, as an individual case, it can be brought under some universal. Here we do not have a universal, however, because the very nature of a judgement of taste is that it is unique, and not made on the basis of a concept. Therefore, we are looking for what is going to stand in the role of the universal. This is what the Deduction is all about. What is at stake is the normative validity of single judgments of taste. Since there is no rule or criterion of beauty, with what right can we regard such judgements it as if under a rule? Where do we get the grounds for suggesting that we are entitled to say "This is beautiful; everyone should agree with me"?
   Kant's answer is sometimes "common sense," sometimes simply "the power or principle of judgement itself" (the notion of "principle" is equivocal here).
   So that's the exposition: the principle of judgment is nothing more than the exemplary necessity of the pleasure felt in a judgement of taste. That's what we're grounding. The actual deduction occurs, according to Allison, in three steps (Allison p. 175):
   First step
   Second step
   If it is granted that in a pure judgement of taste our liking for the object is connected with the mere judging of its form, then this liking is nothing but its subjective purposiveness for judgment, which we sense as connected in the mind with the representation of the object.
   So the first thought is that the mere judging of the form of an object without a concept is the discovery that that object is suitable for our mental apparatus. Purposive for it. It fits it. Our mind finds itself attuned to that object, can work with it. Namely, it satisfies everything that's needed for us to generate the harmony of imagination and understanding.
   Now, since with regard to the formal rules of judging apart from all matter, judgement can be directed only to the subjective conditions of the employment of judgement in general, and hence to that subjective factor that can be presupposed in all men (as is required for the possibility of cognition in general), so it must be allowable to assume that the agreement of a representation with these conditions of judgement is valid for everyone a priori.
   So the argument here is, if the harmony of the imagination and the understanding is interpreted as a necessary requirement for all cognition, and therefore represents the subjective side of every cognitive activity, then, since we do have cognitions, we can assume that the subjective aspect is shared by all human beings. But if the subjective aspect is shared by all human beings, then it

must be allowable that anything that satisfies those conditions is valid for everyone, a priori. That is, if all that's happening is that I'm satisfying the subjective conditions for cognition in general, then that's got to be the same for everyone (since we already share our cognitive judgements) – but since the object now has simply been found to be purposive for that, then I can assume that it's a priori valid.

Third step

That is to say, the pleasure or subjective purposiveness of a representation for the relation of the cognitive faculties engaged in the judgement of a sensible object in general can with right be required of everyone. (KU 5:289-90; 155)

That's the QED.

So, all Allison seems to say here is that what is brought into play in a judgement of taste is simply the power of judgement as necessary for the possibility of cognitive judgment, ergo I'm entitled to say it is the same for everyone. And the question now is, How is this different from §21?

Well, we could argue that in §21, we were not talking about judgements of taste, but just cognition and common sense, so now – this is Allison's thesis – a missing step there has been added, namely the connection between taste and the conditions of cognition. What §38 adds to the argument of §21 is that whereas §21 was simply talking about judgment, imagination, as necessary for cognition, Kant's now adding that the judgement of taste satisfies those very conditions, so he's connecting the judgment of taste to the powers of cognition, saying they are the same powers, only now operating without a concept, and therefore we're entitled to say that they're the same for everyone.

I think this is a mess, for obvious reasons. Because the question we have to answer is, What is the relationship between:

(1) the relationship of the imagination and the understanding in cognition,

as compared to

(2) the relationship between them in a judgement of taste.

Allison is trying to create a connection between these two. (2) is to map onto (1). But how is that to happen? After all, in the first case, it's determined by the concept, and in the second, it's a free play.

What we're trying to map in the Deduction is how (1) can provide justificatory force for (2). Allison says, puzzlingly, on p. 177, that "the Deduction affirms the universal validity of the principle of taste on the grounds that it is also a condition of cognition." So the line connecting them is: judgements of taste are conditions for cognitions. But then he goes on to say – and here's where the whole thing comes apart – "although taste is grounded indirectly in the conditions of cognition, since its governing principle (the harmony of the faculties) has that status, there is no suggestion that taste itself is such a condition." So he both wants (2) to be a condition for cognition (1), and agrees that it can't quite be. So we're left with a gap.

Here's the half-truth here: conforming to the subjective conditions of cognition does not automatically extend to any feeling bearing on those conditions. That is, he's right to say that there cannot be a direct mapping, without further argument, from the feelings of pleasure to cognition in general.

Kant's problem is that he needs a connection between judgements of taste and cognition close enough so that the activity of the judgements of taste puts into play the conditions of cognition, hence providing a grounding claim, without identifying the judgement of taste as the subjective conditions of objective judgement. So he needs a close enough relationship so that (2) can bear on (1) without creating an identity between the two.

And of course, they have to be different for the reasons I just said: one is determined by a concept, one by free play.

Schematizing without a concept, and schematizing with a concept, having to be significantly different, and yet they have to related to one another, so that schematizing without a concept bears on schematizing with a concept.

One version of the link between taste and cognition is stated explicitly in §39, p. 292

On the other hand, the pleasure we take in the beautiful is a pleasure neither of enjoyment, nor of a law-governed activity, nor yet of a reasoning contemplation governed by ideas, but is a pleasure of mere reflection. Without being guided by any purpose or principle whatever, this pleasure accompanies our ordinary apprehension of an object by means of the imagination, our power of intuition, in relation to the understanding, our power of concepts. This apprehension occurs by means of a procedure that judgement has to carry out to give rise to even the most ordinary experience.

So now he wants to close the gap. He's going to say that the procedure of reflective judgement is the minimal necessary subjective condition to give rise to even the most ordinary experience.

The only difference is that in the case of ordinary experience, the imagination has to engage in this procedure in order [for us] to [obtain] an empirical, objective concept, whereas in the present case (in aesthetic judging), it has to do so merely in order to perceive that the presentation is adequate for [giving rise to a] harmonious (subjectively purposive) activity of the two cognitive powers in their freedom, i.e., in order [for us] to feel the presentational state with pleasure. This pleasure must of necessity rest on the same conditions in everyone, because they are subjective conditions for the possibility of cognition as such, and because the proportion between these cognitive powers that is required for taste is also required for the sound and common understanding that we may presuppose in everyone

So now, in §39, he goes all the way towards saying that (2) is nothing but the subjective conditions for (1).

This thesis gives rise to the most common objection to Kant's Deduction, which since it is so pervasive I simply call it "The Standard Objection." It is the following: if it is the case that the link between taste and cognition is direct, then potentially every object about which we can interestedly form a concept should disinterestedly appear beautiful. That is, the standard objection is that if you get (1) and (2) this close, if (2) really is the precondition for all of (1), then potentially, anything that we can interestedly know, we can disinterestedly experience as beautiful. And that means that every object is potentially beautiful. And if that's not the case – if there is something more required for an object to be beautiful – then you have what Ralph Meerbach (?) calls "an inscrutable condition." So it looks like we have an aporia.

Allison twists and turns on this thought, but he ends up with the idea of an inscrutable condition, namely that some objects are felt to invite judgements of beauty, while other objects are not.

This is the puzzle, and we can solve it in a variety of ways.

One way is to bite the bullet and ask ourselves, Why can't it be the case (and what's entailed by claiming) that every object that can be judged cognitively is necessarily beautiful?

How are we going to think about this? The way I've suggested is: the theory of the lost pleasure. As a matter of genealogical fact (not quite historical fact), it is the case that as we encountered every new object, they were sources of pleasure.

We first schematized without a concept, as a condition for forming concepts, and then once we formed concepts, the pleasure dropped out, and we began to just judge.

In his book, Imitation and Society, Tom Huhn has a beautiful thought that connects with the thought of the lost pleasure. He says that ordinary representations are profoundly deceptive because they simultaneously assert and deny their relation to reference. That is, ordinary representations both refer to – and in referring to, depend on – their objects, but they also deny it, insofar as they claim that the meaning of those objects is given by the concept itself. So the concept "red" is clearly related to red representations, and yet we can say that the possession of the concept of red is exhausted by my capacity to distinguish red things from blue, green, yellow things, full stop. That is, it's exhausted not by the relation to the object, but my power for making the requisite distinctions. So in one sense, the meaning of the concept is tied to the object, and in another, it's tied to the differential relationships between concepts as they articulate the world.

Huhn goes on to say that representations at once refer themselves to some source, and deny that they are products of this gesture of referencing. That is, the very notion of a concept is both sourced by experience, and simultaneously independent of that experience. And must be independent of that experience because concepts are general. So they can't be bound to any particular experiences. So there is a tension in the very structure of our representations.

Now, Huhn thinks about this in an immensely productive way. He says that the reason for this deception is that in determinative judgements, the fit between material and concept – redness and the concept of red – is so snug that the history of a judgement having been made, of a schema imposing an order between concept and material, is effaced. In short, determinative judgement is overdetermined judgment.

When I judge "this is a grey sweater" [note for later: Jay pointed to his own sweater, which was a particularly indeterminate shade of grey], where is the schema? "Grey sweater" just goes right to the object. The schematizing is absolutely invisible. When our concepts are operating in their ordinary way, we don't sense that there is a subjective side at all. The sourcing of the concept "grey" and "sweater" in "this is a grey sweater" is effaced as the concept grasps things, comprehends them. Put it another way: in ordinary judgments, there is no history or genesis of judgement. They are given, as it were, at a moment, without any conditions of possibility being shown.

We can restate the problem that is being engaged with in the following way: the typical Kantian claim is that intuitions can only be experienced, and ignores the fact that we have to learn concepts, that we go on learning new concepts routinely, and that equally routinely we must extend existing concepts into new circumstances. In short, ordinary judgement can make no sense of concept acquisition and extension, and it's that history of concept acquisition and extension that is suppressed in every ordinary determinate judgement. With this thought it mind, we can then go on to say that reflective judgements of taste are the history of judgements displayed – in a way that reveals the role of the material itself in judgement, and gives it its proper due.

If Huhn is right, then concepts actually have two aspects. They have their aspect of generality, and they have their aspect of dependence on material. The argument so far is that what disappears in ordinary determinate judgments is the dependence on the material.

On this analysis, beauty is our memory of our experience of the world independent of concepts, but nonetheless as cognitively engaged with it.

People often say that beauty is either memorial or utopian – that it either points to a lost past (a garden of Eden) or an ideal future. But we may say that beauty is perfectly anarchic – that is another way of reading lawfulness without law (viz., without being subsumed under constitutive rules). But to make that run, we have to have a notion that can do the work. So let me see if I can thicken the notion of reflective judgement in a way that gives it dependence on material, in a way that is, I am going to argue, quasi-cognitive. That is, the reason a Kant can't follow through on his own argument is because he just wants this moment ((2)? the free play?) to terminate in the judgement "x is beautiful." And therefore he doesn't know how to give it a sufficient amount of independence. But if you think about the notion of reflective judgement as itself meaningful but without meaning, lawful without law – if we actually try to think about what is involved with that, if we can locate another notion of meaning (I want to say: another notion of cognition), then we will answer that charge.

So what I have to do, in order for the lost pleasure theory to work, is to deny that the aesthetic is non-cognitive. I want to say that it's non-discursive cognition. I first have to establish that there is such a thing as non-discursive cognition, and furthermore, I have to argue that non-discursive cognition is a necessary condition for the possibility of discursive cognition.

Question: What about demonstrative judgements? "That grey, in particular."

Perfect. That is the model. That is the way John McDowell does it: he asks, What is the role of purely ostensive accounts of the meaning of a concept? I had this problem with describing my sweater earlier, now I can say: "I mean this colour." Now, what is "this colour"? Well, all that is going to count as "this colour" is my capacity to hold it in mind, so that if I were to see the same again, I could say "the same again." But it is wholly dependent on this instance, so my possession of "this colour" is actually dependent on this very thing, and not on a concept independent of it. So that would be a non-predicative, or purely ostensive, judgement.

Now, I want to say that that model of purely ostensive judgement is the model for judging in general. I have to say something about how that can be. And I want to borrow from the way in which Adorno picks out the notion of reflective judgment – he calls reflective judgements "mimetic." His notion for non-discursive cognition is mimesis.

Let me read a passage on mimesis, and then show how this is all over Wittgenstein as well. distinguish between two types of understanding.

So, I am going to

Adorno: What is aesthetic judgement? from Notes to Literature, vol. 2, p. 97

§531:

If the concept of understanding is meant to indicate something adequate, something appropriate to the matter at hand – which is to say, not merely subsumptive, not merely brining under an old, tired concept – then today it needs to be imagined [Jay: and now he is going to use a series of mimetic concepts] as following along afterwards, as the co-execution of the tensions sedimented in the work of art, the processes that have congealed and hence become objectified in it. One does not understand a work of art when one translates it into concepts, but rather when one is immersed in its immanent movement. I should almost say, when it is recomposed by the ear, in accordance with its own logic, repainted by the eye, or when the linguistic sensorium speaks along with it.

Here is a corresponding passage from Wittgenstein (§527 of the Investigations):
Understanding a sentence is more akin to understanding a piece of music than one might think [Jay: where he's imagining that to understand a musical theme is simply to hear the theme, follow it with one's ear]. Why must these bars be played just so? Why do I want to produce just this pattern of variation in loudness and tempo? I would like to say "Because I know what it's all about." But what is it all about? I should not be able to say.
We speak of understanding a sentence in the sense in which it can be replaced by another which says the same. But also in the sense in which it cannot be replaced by any other.
So, there are two ways of saying that we understand a sentence. One, when you can find a perfectly good other way of expressing the same thought. And another one when we think that to change even the smallest word would alter the meaning. To understand the sentence in the second way is to understand why that meaning can only be said by using those words in that order and in no other way. We call that kind of meaning poetry.
Wittgenstein goes on:
In the one case the thought of the sentence says something common to different sentences; in the other, something that is expressed only by these words in these positions.
So, I am going to say, there must be two different ways of understanding.
First, understanding that allows us to say it in another way – which is an understanding that is independent of the object – and which I shall call "translatable" or "transitive" understanding.
And, second, if the meaning can only be grasped by the concatenation of those sounds in that order – call that a symphony, or a poem – then the understanding must be "intransitive" – intransitive because it stops with the object, and is non-detachable from it.
So, to accept the thought of non-paraphrasability is at least to agree that in some cases, to understand something requires the dependence on the object. In which case, if poems are comprehensible, meaningful without a meaning – look, of course you can say, "What was that poem about?" "Well, it was about: all love is painful." But that's not what it was about. There is no way you can, as it were, get the aboutness of it, because in art, the product – the meaning – is dependent on the process by which it is achieved. While, let us say, in science – the other extreme – the process by which it is gotten makes no difference whatsoever. All we have is the product.
The reason we care about art is because it reveals the material meaning that is the condition for non-material meaning. It locates the intuition on which the concept is dependent, and brings it into the meaning of the concept. So the intuition has its own speaking voice. Schematizing without a concept is a way of asking how intuitions can indeed guide conceptualization and not be reduced to it. So there has to be some notion of pre-meaning, or meaningfulness, that is not exhausted by conceptuality, and I am saying that art is a version of that (or certain types of art are).
What I am claiming is that what drops out of this picture [Allison's?] is any notion of experience. What I am trying to do is ask, What is the relationship between experience and meaning? (There is another version of this whole argument, by the way, in Being and Time.)
In intransitive meaning, there is an essential reference to subjective experience. The reason is this: in an act of reflective judging, in the first instance what is before my eyes has to be grasped by me, so that the unity of the object is the unity as it is held in mind by me – that is, in my experience of it. The very notion that the object has any integrity is only available from this, because there is no concept. Schematizing without a concept is schematizing by the mind alone.
The huge mistake made by the linguistic turn – and this is what Heidegger is worried about in Being and Time – is that it thought it could detach language from experience. He has to reconnect it with experience by his idea of different types of interpretation, different types of meaning. I just want to say that originally, the notion of meaning is meaning held in mind and experienced as meaningful. Huhn is arguing that the object is a source, but its integrity depends on my holding it in mind, in exactly the way Gabe suggested I hold in mind my impression of this colour (only now think of it as "this flower"). Which then gets articulated in a concept – and then I no longer need a mind.
Ordinary life is cognition without experience – exactly the absence of the experience that is the source of the meaning of the concepts. Adorno: "All reification is forgetting." What have we forgotten? Those intuitions that are the source of the meaning. Think of the way Heidegger does it. He has something like this idea: "I'm a farmer, I plant my tomatoes, my son comes along and I say, 'They're green – don't pick them just yet.' Then 'Now they're red, we can pick them, they're ripe.' And he goes to school and tells a classmate, 'When tomatoes are red, they're ripe.' That child now has the concept, but none of the experience that sources it." This is what Heidegger means by 'fall,' and what I call the degeneration of concepts. All concepts enter into a process of degeneration, by means of which they are absenting from their own intransitive meaning. They become purely transitive.
Beauty = intransitive sense.
Question: Is this Kant, an interpretation of him, or a response to him?
This is not Kant because he would not allow reflective judgements to be forms of cognition. On the contrary, he says they are non-cognitive. I am suggesting that in order to make sense of his own account – in order to allow for schematizing without a concept – one has to allow intuitions to be meaningful, independent of.
If he had thought about this, he would have recognized it, like Wittgenstein does. On this point, see David Bell, "The Art of Judgement" in Mind 96 (1987).
Saying "the same [grey, etc.] again" is an acknowledgement of the integrity – and intransitivity – of the individual case itself. So, schematizing without a concept is at once general and particular.

We are biting the bullet with the Deduction, assenting to the idea that every object is potentially regardable as beautiful – that is, every object must be in principle experienceable as beautiful.
Let's think of Kant's example of wild beauty and the rows of peppercorns. It looked like a refutation of the idea that every object is potentially beautiful. But in fact it doesn't say that, because Kant acknowledges that the rows of peppercorns can be seen as beautiful, but that we will simply tire of their beauty, roughly because they are so regular, and that the wild extravagant beauty only provides a more reliable source of the experience of beauty. Why? Because wildness does the work of abstracting from the concept for us. So there are

certain types of objects in nature (wild ones), and in culture (art ones) that do the work of abstracting from the general concept for us, and therefore allow us to remember what holds of every case, for every object.
In fact, in her book On Photography, Susan Sontag notoriously complains that the problem with photography is that it beautifies everything (think Walker Evans' depression-era photography). You can make any object look beautiful with a camera. I say, that's fine with me, because what a camera does is give us a disinterested, because mechanical, account of the object. Photography is the mechanization of disinterested judgement. Put another way, cameras are naturally mimetic.
Question: This sounds like the reification of beauty.
It is! I'm not saying it doesn't have its own problems. I'm just taking the other side. Granted, it produces all sorts of disastrous stuff. The reason why photography is a problem is exactly because it mechanizes beauty. It does the problem of abstraction for you.
Question: Are you saying that every photograph is beautiful?
No. Sontag's claim is that every object, qua photograph, can be an act of beautification. Question: Photographed well...
But it's because of mechanism. Mechanism is a form of disinterest.
Question: It would seem to depend on how it's wielded. You're linking up the disinterestedness to the pleasure we're going to have in looking at the object. But of course you could take ugly photographs, but then you still have the mechanization, and so disinterestedness.
It's a nice question: is a truly ugly photograph possible? Stephen Melville says the problem with photographs is that they can never be wrong.
Question: There are lots of techniques for framing, and technical... That was my ceteris paribus.
Question: But you could use those techniques to elicit a sentimental reaction, and then you're not disinterested, and so not judging the object as beautiful.
It's often said that the power of painting is the capacity to turn ugly things into objects of beauty. The Laokoon is the standard example. Photography does that in a more routinized way.
Question: I'm still not understanding the connection between mechanism and disinterest, because it seems that there are ways of making photographs of things that some people could be highly interested in, like pornography, or photographs of travel locations...
I'm not saying that every photograph is beautiful. I'm saying that structure of photography is the case of the possibility of the beautification of every object. The kinds of cases I am thinking about are Let Us Now Praise Famous Men, or James Nachtwey's Inferno. Nachtwey is the leading documentary photographer of our time, and you've all seen his photographs everywhere. He photographs nothing but atrocities. In the photographic world he's regarded as a bit of a saint, because he photographs every disaster, every misery. Inferno is a picture of hell on earth over the last 25 years, but no matter what the picture is of – Romanian children in orphanages, whatever – every one of them is exquisite. There is a big debate about the pornographic beautification of atrocity.
I am not denying that, but I am saying that there is something startling about that capacity of the photograph.
Question: How would you link that up with what you were saying about newness before? Would you say that the photograph allows us to see from a different perspective?
Absolutely. Why do we love Walker Evans' photographs? Because he makes the conditions of destitution beautiful, which gives the people back their dignity.
Question: But there is a really fine line...
I am not denying the nasty things about photography. After all, you're talking to someone who has written on Cindy Sherman. What she is doing is disenchanting photography. She's working against that very impulse of photography: she has to find the way of making us unable to see it as beautiful. That is part of her whole strategy.
I'm not denying all of that. I'm just offering evidence for the idea that every object is potentially beautiful: photography is a way of thinking about how that has practically occurred.
Question: I am thinking of those Anne Geddes photographs of babies in bonnets, etc. Doesn't photography actually reinforce stereotypes [rather than helping us to see anew]?
Photography can be the most stereotyping, the most reproducing of standardized images. All I am saying is that photography illustrates the idea of every object being potentially beautiful, because photography (or at least some photography) searches for that appropriately mimetic relationship between object and image.
Question: It seems as though all objects being potentially beautiful turns on novelty...
No, not novelty: de-reifying, which opens up the possibility of novelty. Conceptual meaning becomes a stereotypical meaning and loses its relationship to its object, and what beauty does is return concepts to this whole of their meaningfulness.
Question: ...In all of the examples we've been talking about, it's as though there has to be an unexpected, in other words novel –
That's logical. Because concepts are old. Concepts say that everything that falls under them is the same, therefore they take everything that is singular, new, and makes it old. So it's simply a logical truth than individual experiences strike us as new. But also allows for the notion of actual novelty. Which is what artworks do – artworks generate new meaning.
Question: Getting back to the mechanism of the camera, it seems that the mechanism of the gallery does the same thing. You could put a urinal on a wall and we're forced to look...
That doesn't make it beautiful, that makes it art. Duchamp never claimed it was beautiful. Needless to say, I think Duchamp was a fraud. [See 12.12.07 lecture.]
Question: ...What about painting as a framing device for a ubiquitous object, as in a soup can. Is this also another example of the same thing?
There are two different ways of reading that. Arthur Danto thinks that what Warhol was doing was revealing the beauty of the everyday. I read Warhol in a much more cynical way.
Question: ...More like Duchamp?
More like Duchamp. But that's a whole debate.
One last point on this: Guyer criticizes my argument in his piece by saying that lost pleasures are not about the relationship of concept to object. Rather, it is about cases of species and genera: we no longer find pleasure in bringing species under a higher genetic ordering, because we've gotten used to it. My answer is that in the First Introduction, the relationships of concept and object, and of species and genera, are treated exactly the same, so I take it that what holds of one holds of the other.
That is one interpretation of the Deduction: all objects are potentially beautiful.
Concepts have two aspects: material and abstract, intransitive and transitive. When we find concepts are fully meaningful, we have a sense that those two aspects of the concept are fully operable. Ordinary experience uses just a part of the concept. So what Kant calls a

concept, I am saying is only half a concept.
Concepts are usually mere mechanisms for identification – they save us the trouble of having to experience the object. Conversely, most art just takes the other half of the concept, and operates with it, independently of the other side. We have the kind of art we have because we have a broken conceptual regime. Concepts are mostly dead. We go to the artwork because our concepts have mostly died on us. We go to the artwork to say, "Ah, that's what love is." Once my concept is rejuvenated by being bound to the appropriate types of experience, it is de-reified and revitalized again.
Question: Can't we take this one step further and say that conceptuality becomes a new material for aesthetic pleasure? I'm thinking of conceptual art – the pleasure you get out of the play of concepts itself.
I don't know what to say because I don't get that pleasure. I think conceptual art is dumb. It's for people who haven't bothered to study philosophy. I don't think it's art. It picks up the wrong moment. It over-aestheticizes the moment of determination. It's a critique of Greenberg, who says that the only place we can have this revitalized experience now is in totally abstract art. But look, abstract art is just as commodified, saleable. Conceptual art seems wholly resistant to the idea of beauty: it wants to be art without aesthetics. I'm claiming that the aesthetic is a dimension of conceptuality. We are interested in art because it is a source of meaningfulness.
Question: Could we say that every cliché photograph or work of art was once novel, in the sense you are talking about?
Who knows if they were once non-cliché. But that they are cliché means that even an image can be non-singular. That's the genius of Cindy Sherman's early film stills – she shows that all these images of women, who are just every woman you have ever met, are stereotypes. And that's terrifying, because then you think that what it means to be a woman in America, at least in the 1950s and 1960s, is only to be determined by a series of stereotypes, and there's no possibility for authenticity. So you look at these things, and they look like they are nostalgic for certain movies, but they're actually a horrifying experience of the power of the cliché to determine identity.
Second interpretation of the deduction (Longuenesse)
From the same essay I've talked about before. Her interpretation concerns what Kant means by necessity, and therefore universality.
The problem with my account is that I've made no use of Ginsborgian normativity. This account will bring that back in (remember §9).
What is necessary in an aesthetic judgement? In the judgement "x is beautiful," is the necessity (a) the relationship between the object judged and the predicated beauty? Or (b) the connection between predicate and subject in the implicit judgement about all judging subjects – namely, that in apprehending x, everyone ought to experience the same pleasure? That is, the necessity that everyone agree?
If (a), then the necessity is between the form of the object and the pleasure I feel. If (b), it is between the obligation to all, and judging subjects as such.
In §18, p. 237, Kant seems to suggest both.
It is not a theoretical objective necessity, allowing us to cognize a priori that everyone will feel this liking... Nor is it a practical objective necessity, where... this liking is the necessary of an objective law... Rather, as a necessity that is thought in an aesthetic judgment, it can only be called exemplary, i.e., a necessity of the assent of everyone to a judgment that is regarded as an example of a universal rule that we are unable to state. Since an aesthetic judgement is not a objective and cognitive one, this necessity cannot be derived from determinate concepts and hence is not apodeictic.
The thought is both that the necessity is the pleasure I feel, and the necessity of everyone to agree. In this case, however (§18), it's the normative necessity that grounds the objective necessity. That is, it's the necessity that everyone ought to agree with me that grounds the judgement "x is necessarily beautiful."
Longuenesse is interested in two types of necessity; objective (epistemological)
normative (quasi-moral)
Our question is whether, and how, they connect, for Kant.
In §18, as we just saw, the normative grounds the objective. Because everyone ought to judge as I do, the predicate of the manifest judgement ("x is beautiful") can be asserted as necessary. Why? Because what is beautiful is the object as apprehended. Being beautiful is the same as being judged to be beautiful – that is the Copernican turn here.
Longuenesse wants, first, to ground the epistemological in the normative. The model here is morality.
The alternative is to assert that the model here is still cognition: because I claim objective validity for my judgements, I can claim that all judging subjects ought to agree. An epistemology that is being given a moral aspect.
Longuenesse wants to claim that both models are relevant.
The model from presupposed, ordinary cognition, to universal communicability is analogous to submitting oneself to the norm of truth in cognition. To make judgements of taste – to be disinterested, to judge by form alone, etc. – is analogous to judging for truth. The impetus for the aesthetic is like the impetus for truth statements.
§21 – last sentence – reads:
Hence it would seem that we do have a basis for assuming such a sense, and for assuming it without relying on psychological observations, but as the necessary condition of the universal communicability of our cognition, which must be presupposed in any logic and any principle of cognitions that is not skeptical.
We have to assume the sameness of our faculties if we are not to end up in skepticism. The problem is that the relationship between the imagination and the understanding, in cognition, is a coerced cooperation. What about such cooperation when it is not coerced?
Longuenesse says, let us then shift from the idea of common sense as presupposed, to the idea of common sense as what ought to be, using the moral duty model. Her argument here is: if the common ground is the same for both cognition and aesthetics, then Kant is open to The Standard Objection, which she takes to be lethal.
But, she says, one can respond to The Standard Objection in another way. What the cognitive view shows is merely a kinship, and not a generic identity, between the sensus communis grounding taste, and empirical judgement. And, she says, the latter cannot ground the former. Universal communicability, in empirical judgment, only entails that it is possible for the imagination and the understanding to agree when they are not rule-governed.
What we want to complement that possibility is the demand that they ought to be in agreement, to make it as if a duty to bring it about in ourselves and in others.
§40, p. 296
If we could assume that the mere universal communicability as such of our feeling must already carry with it an interest for us (something we are, however, not justified in inferring from the character of a merely reflective power of judgement), then we could explain how it is that we require from everyone as a duty, as it were, the feeling [contained] in a judgement of taste.
Longuenesse wants to say that what this points to is our interest in having a shared common sense.

else is needed to explain this demand – something that would make the sensus communis not only a common sense, but a general sense of community, a sense by virtue of which we take ourselves to belong to a community of judging subjects. The reason we care about the universalization argument is because we want to belong to a community of sense in which we share our judgments. So the universality comes out as an as-if demand, so that the notion of universal communicability is something like a progress towards a community of judging subjects.

So, she thinks that the impetus behind the necessity is, finally, a moral impetus, but not for a moral state, but for having a sense of a community of shared sense. And this goes along with the fact that it's only by actually coming to share our judgments that we know that we are all geared to the world in the same way. So that we are a community not because of the rules we have to follow, but because of the judgements and feelings we make about the world. Again, a version of anarchism.

In her case, the sensus communis is both presupposed, cognitively, and yet to be achieved, normatively. And the experience of the beautiful is the experience of that in between. It both joins us to everyone – we presuppose the shareability – and it further enjoins us to further states of sharing, because otherwise we cannot make sense of our own judgements. Our judgements turn out to be merely idiosyncratic. We cannot believe our own judgments unless we are committed to the community of common sense.

This is an interesting anti-Gadamerian reading of Kant. Gadamer says that the problem with Kant is that he took the (stoic, Roman) notion of common sense – where it was the shareability of the political community – and internalized it in the subject. Subjectivized it. Longuenesse is re-objectivizing it.

Kant's Third Critique The New School for Social Research Jay Bernstein Fall 2007

November 14, 2007

re: Dick Moran's talk at the Kant conference ("Self and World: Aesthetic Judgment" at NYU, November 8-9, 2007)

His solution to all of the problems we've been worried about was to go to Proust, and say that the relationship between reflecting judgement and the object was one of overpowering love – the object addresses you, beseeches you, and this personification solves the problem in a way that Kant could not account for.

He began his talk by setting up the right problem, namely that Kant wants two different things: on the one hand, for our relationship to the object to be free, a free play of the faculties, that we are not under any obligation to address the object. On the other hand, once we do make the judgement of beauty, it is required of all others to agree. And he could not see how you could get from freedom to some requirement.

So the reason why he used love is because at least the object of love is something that calls out to us – to ignore it would be a betrayal of it. Thus, there is already a requirement at the first step.

But this solution drops the question of freedom – it answers the problem by denying the problem. The question is, how do you get from a free comportment to an object, to, on the basis of your judgement, creating a requirement for everyone? He goes from freedom to requirement.

Question: Why isn't it a simply matter that once you turn your attention, you take on a set of obligations towards that object?

That is roughly his solution. The problem with it is that the freedom is not merely a freedom of choice about the object, it's a free play of the imagination. He was further right that in making an aesthetic reflective judgement, the direction of fit is one in which we are, as it were, making ourselves responsible to the object. Although, on one level, beauty is apprehended, the apprehension is one which, we feel, must connect with the intrinsic character of the form of the object. So the direction of fit really runs in this direction: we adequate ourselves to the object, rather than absorb the object to us.

What would it mean for the direction of fit to be in the other direction, where we made the object agree with us? The agreeable – the object has to conform to my antecedent need

The good – the object has to agree with my conception

Understanding – the object has to agree with my conceptuality

These are all versions of making the object agree with our constitutive subjectivity. Freedom is freedom from constitutive subjectivity. So when I am judging the beautiful, I must expose myself to the object. I must overcome my standing needs, desires, forms of judging, concepts, morality – and what is left? Nothing but my naked subjectivity itself.

So the movement of freedom is the movement of exposing myself to the object as it is in itself. It is the moment which I give up everything that allows me to determine the world, and I let myself be determined by it. It is the experience of asking myself, "Can I bear it?" It is a subjectivity beyond constitutive subjectivity, beyond empirical subjectivity. When I am so exposed to the object, then all I have is my imagination and my understanding. And reflective judgement is the naked exposure of me qua sensible subject, because it is the free play of the imagination, in relation to the faculty of the understanding, letting the object determine my capacity for responsiveness. In going through that, I am adjusting my powers to the demands of the form of the object. This exposure is mimetically retracing the object qua its forms, and seeing if I can find in that exposure, in my sensible nakedness, that structure of harmony that is conducive to the needs to the imagination and the understanding in cognition in general. That is, that notion of complexity in unity, unity in complexity.

Now, if I have done nothing more than abandon myself to the demands of the object, and I then find it beautiful, it is only because I presume that I have discovered, in the heart of my subjectivity, its correspondence to the object, to its forms. That is what I must think I have found. But if I think I have found that, of course it's exactly via my freedom that I generate the requirement: because the direction of fit is so bound to the demands of the object that I am bound to think that everyone should judge as I do. So rather than thinking of freedom and requirement as in tension with one another, it is only from the position of freedom that the notion of requirement can enter in, because it is only from the position of freedom that the direction of fit works from me toward the object, rather than me absorbing the object.

Moran failed to understand what disinterest, or freedom, means here – that is, exposure. Allowing myself to be determined by the object's formal features. Which is why we always think the beautiful object is new – because we have not predetermined it in accordance with our pre-existing schemes. There can be no novelty, and no uniqueness, without exposure.

Rebecca Kukla was trying to say that the kind of normativity we've been thinking about, Ginsborgian normativity, taking my reflective position to be speaking with a universal voice – Kukla said, shouldn't we always think that, even empirically? She tried to make normativity more routinely available.

But she also dropped the problem of freedom.

Question: But all of this is taking place within consciousness, the otherness of the object is an otherness within you (the Hegelian objection).

That is an unnecessary metaphysical extra. All we're talking about is the object, as apprehended. We are not asking idealism vs. realism, or any of those larger metaphysical questions. This is a way of avoiding them. This could help us find a form of materialism that makes the idealism-realism structure unimportant. That whole question turns on the constitutive powers of subjectivity. But I've just given those up! This is not unlike Deleuze's transcendental empiricism. I'm exposing myself by abandoning my position as transcendental, and asking about that exposure. Adorno would say that this is reversing the Copernican turn (although not completely).
...Question: To keep that from happening in Urteil, don't we have to keep cycling back to the freedom?
It is still only as if a demand – I obligate you to see it, or even to look at the thing of beauty. When I speak with the universal voice, I can make no sense of what I am doing unless my exposure here is nothing but the adequate responsiveness – what is demanded of me by this object.
Question: Why is this undergoing still not transcendental?
That is a great question, because the upshot of my sense of requirement is the belief that the object is purposive for the mind. So there is the transcendental principle of purposiveness that there is a harmony between nature and me that is revealed, which vindicates the principle of purposiveness (of nature for us). The transcendental principle of purposiveness can only have empirical vindication. It cannot be shown to be universally true. All I can do is gain evidence for it by discovering, once again, nature to be beautiful. So it inhabits the domain of the transcendental while not belonging fully to it.
Normally, for Kant, to say that something is transcendental is to say that it is a necessary condition for the possibility of experience. Secondly, Kant thinks that transcendental philosophy is to show a priori that such-and- such conditions are necessary conditions for the possibility of experience. What about the principle of purposiveness? My argument has been that unless the principle of purposiveness is satisfied, then unless we can schematize without concepts, we could not schematize with concepts. The reason why that cannot be shown to be a priori the case is because it is possible for us to have experience, but our experience not to be of the world. We have a scheme of categories and concepts. What we all want to know is, is that just the way we constitute the world, or is that the way the world is? And we abandon ourselves because we want some sense that we are not merely imposing our conceptual scheme on the world, but that it is a way of capturing how the world is. But because there cannot be a transcendental demonstration of the falsity of nominalism, we cannot be guaranteed we are not simply prisoners of our own conceptual scheme.
My claim is that beauty and the sublime are a way of climbing out of our own skin. To find ourselves in relationship to the object in ways that can let us know, but only one judgement at a time, that we are not merely imposing ourselves on the world, but discovering that there is a fitness between human subjectivity and the way the world is.
[32:30]
There is always the possibility of skepticism. There is no permanent resolution to the hankering. Aesthetics is the strategy of testing ourselves against what exceeds our normal powers of constituting the world. That is the thrill of the aesthetic. It becomes part of a material a priori of our account of the world.
Question: But doesn't that make the whole transcendental apparatus redundant?
No, it shows that it's partial, interested. And then you have to ask, What is that interest? According to Adorno, it's instrumentality and control – a way of looking at nature for the sake of scientific understanding and manipulation. But there are other ways of encountering the world, not dependent on a transcendental interest. Hence the notion of disinterest, which is part of this notion of freedom. It's not that we can get rid of that stuff, since we can't get rid of our needs. (The notion of functionality became crucial to the neo-Kantian movement in
Germany in the 19th century, especially in Ernst Cassirer, From Substance to Function.)
Last week, I told you to ask yourselves, with each of the accounts of the deduction, what each of them says the interest of disinterest is – that is, why do we care about beauty at all. And in the first account we saw, we care about beauty because it puts us in harmony or attunement with nature, as sensible beings. In Longuenesse's account, it's the community of sensible beings in their relationship to the natural world – her idea is that we should be united as a community of sense, as well as a community of reason.
Every time we face an account of beauty, we want to ask Why? Why bother? It's not to know the good – Plato's answer. I'm suggesting it is part of our sensible attunement to the world as natural creatures.
When are we free? How do we get free? How difficult is it? How usual is it? What do we need to be free?
On my account, it is the case that every object is potentially beautiful, it just so happens that this is near impossible. The way I am making my argument is like Heidegger's argument in The Age of Technology, where he says, "Look at the Rhine, now. What is the Rhine, now? An object for the tourist industry." I.e., even when we are nose-to-nose with nature, we are so embedded in cultural clichés – even that which is beautiful has already been framed, coded as beautiful ("Tourist Vantage Point"), so that you don't have to confront it. So you don't expose yourself to it; you take it as a cliché as beauty. Avant garde art is trying to avoid this: it knows that if it delivers beauty over to us easily, it will only be clichéd. Kant assumes a more ready access to beauty than that, or than I do.
[42:51]
We want a way of thinking about the world that acknowledges its full independence from us. And we are interested in understanding how we are located not above the world but in the world as a sensible creature, whose attachment to the world must be by our capacity for sensible response, rather than making our capacity for sensible response merely the conduit for information to be conceptualized. We want the object to have a stronger speaking voice, and to acknowledge that speaking voice, because we want to judge objects in their individuality, and not merely as falling under predetermined universals. Because without that, we can't have morality or love or some important aspect to our engagement with the world. My lover does not want to hear, in response to "Why do you love me?" "Because you are just the kind of girl I would love." There are instances where we think uniqueness matters.
Art has always been in that domain, because of the irreducible of the sensible to the universal in art. Which is why it was anathema to Plato, who thought that nature was nothing but universals. Aristotle had to get past that – so he introduced phronesis to engage particular cases. It is worth comparing reflective judgement and phronesis. Those two, and adduction in Pierce, are the only models I can think of for thinking the particular. Kant, Aristotle, and Pierce want uniqueness and specificity within reason, not outside of it. Reflective judgement, phronesis and adduction are forms of reason, and hence ways of expanding our epistemic repertoire.
47:15
On to Guyer. We had two views last week, this is the
Third interpretation of the deduction
We left off last time discussing p. 245, where I had already talked about the phrase
For the one liking ([that for] the beautiful) carries with it directly a feeling of life's being furthered, and hence is compatible with charms

and with an imagination at play. But the other liking (the feeling of the sublime) is a pleasure that arises only indirectly: it is produced by the feeling of a momentary inhibition of the vital forces followed immediately by an outpouring of them that is all the stronger.
So a pleasure in our being afraid or anguished or disturbed, and then an overcoming of that disturbance – a framing / controlling / sublimating of it, in some way. Kant will give a naïvely easy answer to the question of that pleasure. But we will question whether his sense of the pleasure in the sublime is as directly straightforward as all that.
Kant goes on to say
Hence it is an emotion,
I hesitate only because feelings and emotions are different things, and Kant is collapsing them here. But he seems aware that something else is going on – that pleasures are usually taken to be immediate feelings; emotions, just to be clear, are usually taken to be intensional – that is, they have an object, and a structure, they can be appropriate or inappropriate. So calling it an emotion is already acknowledging the weight of reflection involved in this feeling – that it may indeed be closer to an emotion than an outright feeling, in a way that the harmony of the faculties could legitimately be thought of to be – just a feeling.
Something about the pleasure here, therefore, is problematic. And he says:
Hence it is an emotion, and so it seems to be seriousness, rather than play, in the imagination's activity. Hence, too, this liking is incompatible with charms, and, since the mind is not just attracted by this object but is alternately always repelled as well, the liking for the sublime contains not so much a positive pleasure as rather admiration and respect, and so should be called a negative pleasure.
How do you like that for an oxymoron? What is a negative pleasure? And why, and with what license, does he automatically think he can get admiration and respect in here? All of this needs unpacking.
Lyotard looks at this moment in a slightly peculiar way. He looks at the notion of the seriousness rather than the play. He wants to get from the beautiful to the sublime, and therefore his first gesture, which does not follow Kant, is to imagine the imagination itself proliferating its forms, or as he puts it, "going wild," as it does in the work of art, that is, in the work of genius. Genius is the proliferation of forms. Lyotard says that this overabundance of images, this proliferation of forms by the imagination gone wild, makes up for this powerlessness of principle – powerlessness to create a whole. But then, creativity is no longer in free play, pleasant, even fortuitous. It falls prey to a regime of anguish.
Why anguish? Lyotard says, "This must be understood in the seriousness with which Kant qualifies the activity of the imagination in the sublime. It is the seriousness of melancholy." Why melancholy? Because imagination here is suffering from an irreparable lack, an impotence, an inadequacy. What it is missing is an absolute nostalgia for forms only always being forms – that is, limitation. It is the experience of the relationship between the limited and the unlimited. "Even as it deploys an unlimited field of proliferating forms, before thought, the imagination remains a slave to its finitude because each of the forms it invents and adds to the others remains limited by definition." That is, in the experience of the sublime we are in the area of seriousness because we are in the area of acknowledging our finitude, because the imagination is always brought up to the fact that it can only have finite forms, so no matter how many it has, it's stuck with that finitude and has to acknowledge it. And acknowledge that finitude is in some way inadequate.
So finitude here is a privation, and remains privative throughout the sublime.
Question: Kant wanted to say that what is revealed to us in the sublime is our own infinitude.
Of course. But the question that Lyotard is raising is why, even though the sublime is an aesthetic thing, Kant suddenly drops the notion of play and insists on seriousness. Up until now it's all been about harmony, and free play, and getting in touch with nature. Now there is seriousness. Lyotard is arguing that Kant is using that language because something about finitude is going to prove insufficient. When Lyotard says melancholic, he means finitude is experienced here as absolute loss. So, we may find an infinity to balance it out, but the finitude itself, if we are going to take the notion of anguish or pain seriously, has to be roughly at that level. It's getting the right weight into the notion of the moment of pain in the sublime.
The problem of pleasure is going to be hard by itself, but the first issue is that Kant is emphatic that as an aesthetic phenomenon, the sublime has a structure of pain and pleasure. And therefore, whatever the moment of the negative is here, negative feelings, those negative feelings have to be more than "Oh, I can't do it." For those feelings we have all the time.
So, we need to find some motivation for the language of pain and anguish, being repelled, that Kant uses.
The notion of negative pleasure is important because one of the questions you should be asking yourself (I'll come back to §27 where he has the phenomenology of the feeling) is whether the feeling of the sublime is one complex emotion, or an alternating series of emotions, of pain followed by a pleasure. At least here, in coining it a "negative pleasure," he seems to be thinking of it as one complex pleasure.
The big disanalogy between beauty and the sublime, which he mentions at p. 245, is that while beauty is purposive for the power of judgement, the sublime is contra- purposive for the power of judgement. As he puts it
incommensurate with our power of exhibition, and as it were violent to our imagination, and yet we judge it all the more sublime for that.
So, the more contra-purposive, the more violent, the more humiliation we suffer, the happier we are.
Now, all that said, as I mentioned last time, Kant then withdraws by mentioning that there is nothing sublime in nature. That, properly speaking, the sublime belongs not to nature but to the mind. So, p. 245 still
Instead, all we are entitled to say is that the object is suitable for exhibiting a sublimity that can be found in the mind. For what is sublime, in the proper meaning of the term, cannot be contained in any sensible form but concerns only ideas of reason, which, though they cannot be exhibited adequately, are aroused and called to mind by this very inadequacy, which can be exhibited in sensibility.
So it's the experience of the imagination, which is to stand in for sensibility as a whole, suffering some humiliation or violence as it attempts to grasp some natural scene. And in its failure to do so, there is put in mind (we'll see the putting in mind actually happens earlier) that even though we cannot think of the object as infinite, we come to recognize an infinity in us – that is, ideas of reason here, ideas of the unconditioned, or if you will, ideas of the absolute, which themselves, qua ideas, could never be exhibited.
Thus the vast ocean heaved up by storms cannot be called sublime. The sight of it is horrible; and one must already have filled one's mind with all sorts of ideas if such an intuition is to attune it to a feeling that is itself sublime, inasmuch as the mind is induced to abandon sensibility and occupy itself with ideas containing a higher purposiveness.
So there you are, looking at the roaring ocean, and now you are to turn away from it somehow, and occupy yourself with the ideas of reason. I could never quite figure out how the mind does that.
The point I would like to underline at this juncture is that it is evident here that we are getting an opposing conception of the natural world than we one we got when we looked at the question of the beautiful. There, we examined the natural world as an appropriate habitat for human beings – something we were attuned to, something we had our natural place in and were a part of and were continuous with.

The view of nature in the sublime is just the opposite. Nature, in the instance of the sublime, is primordial nature. That nature which is threatening to human beings, which primitive human beings were terrified of and gave godlike names to. And the structure of the sublime, in Kant, is really at least in part a part of this primitive battle between the human being and the natural world.
Someone who understood this perfectly, and who provided a kind of caricature of the Kantian view of the sublime is Schiller, in his great essay on the sublime. So what is done, as it were, behind the scenes in Kant is done wide open and crudely in Schiller.
Schiller views human beings as surrounded "by numberless forces which are superior to him and which hold sway over him." And we undertake all sorts of efforts to control threatening nature. And indeed our intelligence – our understanding – is indeed the attempt to control and manipulate nature, to dominate nature, in order to bring it into harmony with our natural needs. And to a certain extent, Schiller says, we succeed in reigning physically over everything that is physical. Let's call that technology.
But still, Schiller says, "man's efforts inevitably founder," and they founder because we can never overcome death. Death is the single point where a human being is under constraint and bound. Now, "it is at this single point," says Schiller, "that the human being boasts his liberty."
So, for Schiller, the human being, properly understood, is irreconciliable with succumbing to any exterior force:
He must be man in the full sense of the term, and consequently he must have nothing to endure contrary to his will. Accordingly, when he no longer can oppose to physical forces and proportional physical force, only one resource remains to him to avoid suffering any violence. He must annihilate, as an idea, the violence he is obliged to suffer in fact.
What he means by that is that we are capable of doing so because we are moral beings. And as moral beings, we participate in a higher order than the natural order. And indeed, following Kant absolutely, Schiller thinks of this higher order as the moral law itself, that is, the law of freedom.
So, Schiller says,
Man is in the hands of nature, but the will of man – his power of freedom – is in his own hands.
So, the sublime, for Schiller, is a sensuous means to teach us that we have something more in us than a sensuous nature.
Here, the physical man and the moral man separate in the most marked manner, for it is exactly in the presence of objects that make us feel at once how limited the former is [that is, the physical man] that the other [the moral man] makes the experience of its force. The very thing that lowers one to the earth is precisely that which raises the other to the infinite.
One of the reasons that Schiller is interested in the sublime – and the question is why are we interested in the sublime – is because he thinks that ordinarily, we tend to forget our moral vocation. We forget our superiority to nature in having this purely rational power within us. And part of what makes us forget this is indeed the beautiful. The beautiful is a kind of seduction that leads us to think that nature might be friendly, that the world may be okay, that we can get on with life in a sensible way, and in feeling the beautiful, we think of ourselves as in mutually dependent relationships with nature. And are satisfied by that.
This is illusory, for Schiller. He says,
It is not little by little, for between absolute dependence, and absolute liberty, there is no possible transition. It is suddenly, and by a shock, that the sublime wrenches our spiritual and independent nature away from the net which feeling has spun around us, and which enchains the soul more tightly because of its subtle texture...
One single sublime emotion often suffices to break all this tissue of imposture [the imposture is beautiful spirituality], at one blow, to give freedom to the fettered elasticity of spiritual nature, to reveal its true destination, and to oblige it to conceive, for one instant at least, the feeling of its liberty.
So the thought here is of an absolute incommensurability between our moral powers and our habitation of the natural world – no transitions are possible. And the sublime is going to be a moment in which we come face to face with our physical standing in the world, and are wrenched out of it in order to feel an absolute liberty. Remember that this is being written at about the time of the French revolution – absolute liberty, absolute freedom, absolute terror – all of these are lurking around in this notion of this lack of mediation between nature and freedom.
Why is he insisting in the incommensurability here?
The insistence comes in exactly the same way as it came in Pascal: I may be an infinitely small speck in a physical universe, but I am one that is capable of comprehending that whole, and am therefore in every sense beyond it. So this is that moment when rationality is trying to come to grips with the meaning of a joint discovery – and I think it is important to think of this moment as terribly fraught in the history of ideas, one which I would argue we haven't thought through yet, namely, that we live in a disenchanted physical universe, on the one hand, and that we have discovered our powers for historical creation, on the other. That we are free, self-determining agents. And for Kant – and I take it this is part of why he thinks the story of the sublime is important – the sublime is that moment in which those two things are experienced. Not just thought, but experienced.
So part of the depth of the sublime is that it brings us to that pitch of, not contradiction, but aporia in the modern situation, of the modern subject. That's how Kant would think it. And the sublime, for him, is that lesson of that experience of that aporia.
Question: Is the sublime also part of Kant's late-stage importing of morality into the Critique? Was this added as part of that third stratum?
Yes. And Kant is trying to domesticate it. In his earlier writings on the sublime – his essay Observations On the Beautiful and the Sublime, there is this (remarkably sexist) passage where, roughly, guys are sublime and women are beautiful. There is this whole gender language that deals with education. So he already tries to domesticate it there, in that way, but he hadn't really hit on his whole theory yet.
Kant is trying to contain the sublime. Burke is merely psychological, so it's hard to know what is going on in Burkean analysis. But for Burke, it is nature that is sublime, not reason within us. And it's natural for us to think – we do think, still, despite Kant – that it's the alps that are sublime, or the starry heavens. Kant thinks that is subreption. That is, he thinks we are projecting onto the object an infinity that is only proper to the subject. And that is his way of trying to contain it.
Now, part of the reason he does so, even though I think it is a containment strategy, is because having thought about Burke's psychology, he can't figure out where the pleasure is going to come from. So Kant, at least, unlike Burke, is trying to answer the question why we feel pleasure in this. So in that sense the details of the account do matter, because of Kant's phenomenology of the experience of trying to come to grips with the way in which this involves both negative and positive emotions or feelings.
Let us talk about the mathematical sublime.
You can get really lost in the mathematical sublime. I will try to keep to the core arguments as far as possible.
In §25, he defines the sublime as absolutely large. And what is absolutely large is what is large beyond all comparison. The "beyond all

comparison" is the crux here, because if it's not a comparative largeness, that means it's not measured against anything else. It is without limit. Therefore, it is absolute or unconditioned, to be measured only against itself.
Unfortunately, Pluhar begins his account – his translation of pp. 248-9 getting the distinction between the absolutely great, and the simply great, and then loses it. So the translation is a bit confusing. Allison gives all the details on p. 312. But rough and readily, what is going on on pages 249-9 is not a discussion of the absolutely great, but of the simply great, which Kant is using as a prologue to the absolutely great.
So, let us talk about the Empire State Building. That's big. Awesome. Now, in making the judgement "That's awesome," it appears as non-comparative, but only because we're not using any explicit measure. But a measure is assumed nonetheless, albeit an indeterminate one, because we do expect others to agree with our judgement. That is, we don't think it's a merely relative judgement. Being in a certain position, looking up, "That's awesome" has got to be right. Now, in measuring it, we are, according to Kant, making an aesthetic judgement. So, the Empire State Building would be, for Kant, sort of sublime.
Well, this way of leading into the mathematical sublime is confusing, because, roughly, an indeterminate concept is not the same as having no concept. Kant assumes that the two are the same. Which tells you a lot about Kant. And therefore, although he thinks we are judging by the eye, we are in fact assuming a rough measure, or an inexact measure, but nonetheless a measure. It's just that that measure is unmentioned, or suppressed. It is our own bodies. And indeed, the measure of the body will be something that is running throughout all of this – when we look at things in terms of size, there has always got to be a relativity to the body, and of course the powers of the body.
Kant then goes on to suggest, as a brief interlude, that we think of the large as that which is deserving of respect and admiration, and the small as that which is deserving of contempt. Which means that there is a naïve, quantitative affective geometry running through this. (Levinas, likewise, always thinks that you are called from on high.) Why can't you be called by a small voice? Why can't you feel admiration for a small speck? I point this out because I do think it is naïve and culturally specific and not natural.
At p. 250, he finally does get to the absolutely great.
Suppose something not only large, but large absolutely. In every respect beyond all comparison – that is, sublime. Clearly, in that case, we do not permit a standard adequate to be sought outside it, but only within it. It is a magnitude that is equal only to itself.
So the absolutely large is a magnitude equal only to itself. It follows
– terribly important how (mere) definitions slip into big inferences here –
It follows that the sublime is not to be sought in things in nature, but must be sought solely in our ideas. but in which of these it resides is a question that must wait for the deduction.
His thought here is that if you choose any physical object as a measure, no matter how large – lightyears, etc. – they're nonetheless going to be comparative. Therefore, anything you can find in the natural world is going to fail the definition of being absolutely large, and hence necessarily, the argument is going to run, what is absolutely large is going to have its measure only in itself, and so cannot be anything physical.
He then goes on to rub it in:
That is the sublime, in comparison with which everything else is small.
he then takes the next step
We can easily here see easily see here that nothing in nature can be given, however large we may judge it, that could not, when considered in a different relation, be degraded all the way to the infinitely small.
Now, the way in which this works – the reason why this is required – is that there is a relationship, in this business of figuring out the right measurement, between the imagination and reason. Such that the object is going to bring the imagination to count it. And it can just keep on counting. What it cannot do is divide totality. With that activity of counting, we always want to totalize it into an absolute whole. Reason is commanding the imagination to totalize its infinity – to bring it into a single intuition. And it will be the imagination's failure to do so – not absolutely (the imagination itself is just happy to keep counting), but only with respect to that requirement of totalization – that will give onto reason, not as sensible, but as supersensible. And reason as supersensible is that, in comparison with which, all else is small.
That is the logic, and that is what he says in the following three sentences, which I shall paraphrase:
What happens is that our imagination strives to progress towards infinite, while our reason demands the absolute (demands totality) as the real idea. And so the imagination, which registers magnitudes in the world of sense, is inadequate to that idea.
So it fails to take counting into a single intuition, a single whole. There is also a problem of taking what is temporal and turning it into a simultaneity. Reason wants to transcend time itself. Reason is doing a violence to inner sense.
Yet this inadequacy itself is the arousal in us of the feeling that we have within us a supersensible power. And what is absolutely large is not an object of sense, but is the use that judgement makes naturally of certain objects so as to arouse this feeling, and in contrast with that, any other use is small.
So in a way, reason is using the supersensible to arouse the feeling of the smallness of the physical universe. So the sublime is what, even to be able to think, proves that the mind has a power surpassing any standard of sense.
Now, in §26, he tries to take this logic and tie it down in a more complicated way. He calls this moment apprehension, and this moment comprehension. And then he is going to say apprehension is the collecting up to infinity, comprehension is the holding together of what is collected. When comprehension fails – and he says it fails when, say, you are looking at the stars, and you get to 3,487, and you start losing the first stars – when the comprehension fails by the beginning dropping out, a maximum is then recognized, and the imagination is exceeded. I just simplified a really complicated bit of argument.
So, he says, p. 254
Hence reason demands comprehension in one intuition, and exhibition of all the members of a progressively increasing numerical series, and it exempts from this demand not even the infinite (space and past time). Rather, reason makes us unavoidably think that the infinite (in common reason's judgement) as given in its entirety (in its totality).
So, this is an argument that is not unlike the Antinomies of Space and Time in the First Critique where, in terms of the phenomenal world, we need counting, but in terms of the noumenal world, we can think of space and time as an absolute whole.

It is an oddity of Kant's account that while he says nature is the proper locale of the sublime, he illustrates this with discussions of St Peter's and the pyramids. I take these illustrations not to be cases of the sublime as such, but as meant to illustrate how apprehension and comprehension work in these cases.

There is a primacy of nature here because art is always purposive, hence unsuitable for thinking the sublime. The sublime, he says, must have no purpose whatsoever of the object, as the basis determining it.
The crux of the mathematical sublime is the necessity of thinking the infinte. Carrying on reading p. 254
The infinite, however, is absolutely large. Compared with it everything else is small. But to be able even to think the infinite as a whole indicates a mental power that surpasses any standard of sense. For [thinking the infinite as a whole while while using a standard of sense] would require a comprehension, yielding as a unity a standard that would have a determinate relation to the infinite. one that could be stated in numbers; and this is impossible.
Any number is going to be too small because you can just keep adding to it.
If the human mind is nonetheless able to be able even to think the given infinite without contradiction, it must have within itself a power that is supersensible
that is, detachable from the powers of the imagination. And that is the same argument that Descartes uses in the second Mediation when he is asking what is the nature of sensible objects. He says, they are malleable, they can
take infinitely many shapes – but if that is the case, then our idea of an object is a rational idea. something not known through the senses. That is,
whose idea of a noumenon cannot be intuited but can yet be regarded as the substrate underlying what is mere appearance, namely, our intuition of the world.
Allison states this argument in the following terms (p. 323)
Sublime objects – objects that are tied up with the feeling of the sublime – cannot be held within a single intuition. They objects present themselves to the imagination as if absolutely great.
But to do justice to this (my experience of the starry heavens as infinite, therefore absolutely great), the imagination
seeks to produce a unit of measure adequate to the task. But the only possible measure would be the whole of nature.
Which is to say, the unconditioned. And that notion of the unconditioned is contradictory because nature, as an absolute totality, we experience only in terms of an infinite progression. So even the idea of nature as a totality is insufficient as a measure.
Kant's thought is that the feeling produced by the mental attunement involved in entertaining the idea of the supersensible, occasioned by objects via the mathematically sublime, he says, conforms to, or is compatible with, our moral feeling. That is, our sense that we have the supersensible within us – that we are more than sensible creatures.
[8:10]
He uses the phrase "conforms to" or "is compatible with" moral feeling because he does not want to say it is a moral feeling, because it if were, it would not be an aesthetic response, but a moral response. It is an aesthetic response because it lacks any motivating force. It doesn't determine the will in any particular way, the way the moral feelings do.
What Kant is demanding here, as he does elsewhere, is a difference between experiencing and thinking – in the First Critique, it was a difference between knowing and thinking; here, the difference is between aesthetically estimating and thinking. But in both cases, we are pushed to recognize in ourselves a non-sensible capacity.
When Kant talks about art, he does so in terms of aesthetic ideals. These are sensible corollaries of intellectual ideas, which are the same as moral ideas. The question is, what are aesthetic ideas?
Question: Kant is burying something when he links the imagination just to the sensible – in the First Critique, there is a spontaneous side of the imagination.
The imagination is always just going to find another form. It's partially sensible, remember, but it's always about exhibition, presentation.
The imagination may be spontaneous in all sorts of ways – call that its freedom – but it will always be bound by the sensible. The infinite is never going to be a sensible idea.
Once we realize that something could take an infinite number of shapes, we have stopped imagining and started reasoning.
So the feeling of the imagination is going to have another sort of role. We will come back to this in the discussion of genius.
Let's press on to the phenomenology of sublime feeling (§27), and the dynamical sublime, which is more interesting and more plausible.
The crucial feeling, perhaps disappointingly, is that of respect:
the feeling that it is beyond our ability to attain to an idea that is a law for us is respect
The moral law is
the law of our will
an ideal with normative authority.
It always stands above us, remains a norm, and authoritative for us. We can asymptotically approach it by trying to conform to it, but we can never attain it. Hence the feeling of respect for it.
The idea of normative authority is what is doing a lot of the work here. Something can only have normative authority if it is lawlike: always independent of your will, and a guide for it.
That's our idea of reason and the supersensible in us. It's respect for our own vocation because it's respect for the fact that we are rational self-determiners. That is, we have the power to act in accordance with norms.
This notion of ideality is incommensurable with any sensible presentation, because any sensible presentation will not be it, not an instance of it with respect to its authority. It's the authoritative character of something that is normatively ideal, that is, authoritative for the will, that is doing the work here. And that, for Kant, is our reason. Reason is our capacity to be moved by pure idea.
So the notion of respect is the thought that we are intrinsically motivated by our apprehension of this to act in accordance with it.
We also – just to remind you – have another spring of motivation: desire. Like the little devils on either shoulder: moral law here, sensibility there.
Respect is that feeling in relationship to that rational authority.
So the sublime feeling is a feeling that refers to that rational vocation, and a rational vocation that means that we are not to be determined or governed by anything sensible. That ultimately, our actions are to be determined by the moral law itself, hence by reason itself.
27:50
This is why Kant thinks of the notion of the sublime as a subreption – that is, we think we are respecting nature,
but really it is our own rational vocation, although certain objects are capable of occasioning such a feeling.
This is the big difference between the beautiful and the sublime. In the case of the sublime, the object is an occasion which sets off in me my coming to awareness of my rational vocation, and certain objects are more or less suitable for doing that (say, the starry heavens). But I want to underline the thought that the object is an occasion, which means that the object almost drops out. The object has a less intrinsic

role to play, and it's because of that that Kant feels he does not have to offer a deduction of the sublime. After all, what would a deduction of the sublime be? The object is an occasion for me being aware of what I am rationally. Things I possess anyway. Then all I have to do is explain or elaborate situations in the right way, and the sublime is justified, it's deduced. The appropriate feeling is just the pain, pleasure. And it turns out the pleasure itself is a pleasure in what we can already feel good about, namely that we are rational self-determining creatures. Hence Kant says that there is no deduction of the sublime. Its exposition is the same as its deduction.

Kant gives a variety of curious descriptions of the actual feelings themselves. At 258, he says

In presenting the sublime in nature, the mind feels agitated, while in aesthetic judgement of the beautiful in nature, it is in restful contemplation. This agitation, above all at its inception, can be compared with a vibration, i.e. with a rapid alternation of repulsion from, and attraction to, one and the same object. If a thing is excessive for the imagination, the imagination is driven to an excess as it apprehends the thing in intuition, then the thing ... an abyss, in which the imagination is afraid to lose itself. Yet at the same time... to mere sensibility.

On the next page, he talks about the simultaneity, which is to say Kant seems to give two different descriptions of the sublime feeling. On the one occasion, he thinks of the sublime feeling as one complex feeling in which the imagination is humiliated, and in the same experience, we feel this excessive pleasure. A second version of the sublime is presented as a series of individual feelings in which first the imagination feels pain, then there is some sort of rational insight, and then it feels pleasure.

In his article on the sublime, Guyer plausibly argues that the reason Kant is tempted by the second account – the serial account – is because he is very often persuaded by Hume's theories of feelings. And for Hume, feelings (especially of pleasure) have to be atomic and unmixed. And there is a way in which Kant is often inheriting empiricist ideas, and then trying to do things with them that they can't quite manage. Kant here wants to talk about a complex emotional experience that has these cognitive dimensions, and his inclinations towards empiricist accounts of feelings and emotions leads him to oversimplify.

37:45

So if you want to think about the sublime feeling, it's probably more plausible if one tries to construct it as he does at the beginning – a negative pleasure. A feeling that is bound up with an experience of the negative being surmounted, as a component of that feeling.

Q: Does Kant, like Hume, mean pain in the sense of discomfort and uneasiness?

A: That, yes, and he also describes humiliation, and violence in the experience of limitation.

It is also worth remembering that the moral law itself – the notion of respect for the moral law – is complicated, and in fact contradictory. The contradictoriness is kind of obvious. The moral law has to do two tasks, affectively. It has to humiliate the desires – it has to humble us – and it has to represent an ideal to be striven after. So it actually goes in two different directions: one direction is the hammering of the desires, and the other is presenting itself as an object of ideal fascination. Which is to say, if you are a Freudian, it is both a superego ("don't do this," "don't do that") and an ego-ideal (that which you want to be). If you think hard about it, Kant can't really account for the double structure of the moral law, but I mention it here because the experience of the moral law includes both the pain of humiliation and the pleasure of desire. The notion of respect in fact encapsulates itself a complicated pleasure-pain structure. That is my claim, and my hunch that it was because Kant intuitively had that thought of that the moral law does that he found it so easy to paste it onto the structure of the sublime.

§28 THE DYNAMICALLY SUBLIME

This is the sublime we're more familiar with, but also the sublime in ways that raises all those questions we've been skirting around. This considers nature, not in terms of quantity but in terms of quality, and in particular in terms of might, in terms of the power of nature. Now, in aesthetic responses to large mountains and roaring waterfalls and other sites of the dynamically sublime, we are overawed, but we cannot be literally afraid, for an aesthetic response would then be impossible. When we're afraid, we're not going to appreciate anything; we're just going to run.

Here is the puzzle: it is the experience of nature as fearful, without actually being afraid. Now, what separates actual fear from what I'm calling the fearful is that in the perception of a true object of fear, one would be aware that any resistance would be futile. Which is to say that in seeing something as truly fearful, we have to recognize our physical impotence. What makes an aesthetic perception of all this possible is that we experience this might from a safe place, a safe distance.

So, Kant says, p. 261

On the other hand, consider bold, overhanging and, as it were, threatening rocks, thunderclouds piling up in the sky and moving about accompanied by lightning and thunderclaps, volcanoes with all their destructive power, hurricanes with all the devastation they leave behind, the boundless ocean heaved up, the high waterfall of a mighty river, and so on. Compared to the might of any of these, our ability to resist becomes an insignificant trifle. Yet the sight of them becomes all the more attractive the more fearful it is, provided we are in a safe place. And we like to call these objects sublime because they raise the soul's fortitude above its usual middle range and allow us to discover in ourselves an ability to resist which is of a quite different kind, and which gives us the courage [to believe] that we could be a match for nature's seeming omnipotence.

So aesthetic distance from nature is distance from its immediate threat. But what is so viewed is nature in its immense power and in its indifference to us. That is, what we become aware of, in this case, really is nature is an utterly disenchanted and terrifying place, and hence what we become aware of is our mortality, and thereby our finitude.

Now, physical nature is necessary but not sufficient for Kant because our physical independence from this threat gets translated into a moral independence from nature, so he says, at the end on p. 261

In the same way, though the irresistibility of nature's might makes us, considered as natural beings, recognize our physical impotence, it reveals in us at the same time an ability to judge ourselves independent of nature, and reveals in us a superiority over nature that is the basis of a self- preservation quite different in kind from the one that can be assailed and endangered by nature outside us.

I take it our capacity to preserve ourselves as moral beings. At the very last paragraph of the section, he says:

Sublimity is contained not in any thing of nature, but only in our mind, insofar as we can become conscious of our superiority to nature within us, and thereby also to nature outside us (as far as it influences us). Whatever arouses this feeling in us, and this includes the might of nature that challenges our forces, is then (although improperly) called sublime. And it is only by presupposing this idea within us, and by referring to it, that we can arrive at the idea of the sublimity of that being who arouses deep respect in us, not just by his might as demonstrated in nature, but even more by the ability, with which we have been endowed, to judge nature without fear and to think of our vocation as being sublimely above nature.

This is puzzling, but the puzzle here I think is deeper than the puzzle with respect to the mathematical sublime, because I think we're all aware of this nature of the sublime, and somehow the Kantian account approximates something without quite being satisfying. And I

want to offer two hypotheses about the nature of the dynamical sublime to try to account for this.
The puzzle is, why do we seek to put ourselves in relation to things that terrify us? What is that about?
I want to answer this in the first case by drawing an analogy between the dynamical sublime and tragedy. After all tragedy, at least according to Aristotle, has a pity/fear catharsis structure, which I want to claim is analogous to the pain/pleasure structure of the sublime. And I find it more than interesting that at the time that the sublime arose, tragedy had almost disappeared from European literature. There was drama, but no tragedy.
So let us start with the question, Why do we go to tragedies? The response I find the most compelling is the one offered by Jonathan Lear in an article on catharsis that appears in Amelie Rorty's reader on Aristotle's Poetics. Lear says that normal, educated people, in normal circumstances, and outside of the theatre, seem to have beliefs they do not feel. We all have numerous beliefs we hold intellectually but not affectively, for example we don't live in constant dread that we are going to die. If we have children, we believe that they are vulnerable, but we can't live in perpetual anxiety about that. We have lots of beliefs for which we do not have the appropriate feelings. Lear's hypothesis is that when such people experience a good tragedy, they are able to unify their beliefs with the emotions appropriate to them. I want to argue that this thought extends beyond tragedy to much of art. That is, much of art is about the reconnecting of our cognitive/doxic life with our affective life.
Now, what makes it possible for us to do this is being in a safe place in the theatre. In the theatre, what a dramatist can do, is take states of affairs that would generate the appropriate emotions and treat them as if they were real, or at least possibly real. In a good tragedy, Lear says, "Even if tragedy does not befall us, it goes to the root of the human condition that it is a possibility we must live with." So the sorts of situations that are rehearsed in tragedies are ones that are related to some of our fundamental beliefs about who we are as human beings. And they take those beliefs and give us the opportunity to experience them.
"Catharsis occurs," according to Lear,
when we feel we have experienced the worst, in reality or in imagination, and survived. Our survival, which is guaranteed when we have experienced the worst only imaginatively, is what commits the release of our pent-up emotions. Having survived, and appreciating our survival, we have nothing further to fear. There is, Lear says, consolation in realizing that one has experienced the worst, there is nothing further to fear, and yet the world remains a rational and meaningful place in which a person can conduct himself with dignity. Even in tragedy, perhaps especially in tragedy, the fundamental goodness of man and the world are reaffirmed.
I don't think I believe that last bit, but I suspect that Lear probably does, and I think that Aristotle does, which is why I think Lear is saying it.
Nonetheless the catharsis does seem to have something to do with having experienced the feelings appropriate to those beliefs, and experienced that we can survive them. We are drawn to those tragedies, those types of art, in which there is – interestingly, the word pathos in Aristotle is both objective and subjective. Objective pathos is the occasion – the type of structure of situation – that can threaten a subject, and the subjective pathos is the fear and anxiety occasioned by a situation like that. So for Aristotle, there has to be an appropriate situation – the tragedy must be plausible, it must be something that occurs to individuals for the most part – all that language in Aristotle about how the narrative works is really to try to argue for an objective pathos that generates the subjective pathos, the fear and pity.
[59:45]
How about the sublime? Well, like tragedy, sublimity is to be understood as precisely a relationship between an objective pathos – in this case a greatness in size or intensity threatening our sensible being by the measure of our body – and a subjective pathos, namely fear and anxiety. The scene, although dramatic in itself is no longer a drama. Which is to say it's no longer a series of actions. It is not characters we observe in the sublime, but ourselves.
Nonetheless I want to insist on it being a kind of drama. And we are both audience and hero in one. This is why pity drops out of the formula. We don't have to pity ourselves. We don't have to identify with ourselves; we are ourselves. There is no one's downfall we have to empathize with, however the movement is directly from a safely observed threat to the recognition of rational safety and the catharsis of pleasure.
What happened to the action? Here's my guess. Just a guess. As in tragedy, I think, in the sublime, we seek out reassurance that the world is a rational place through contrast with threatening nature – a threatening nature that has been mastered and left behind in the emergence of bourgeois society. This is the reason I mentioned Schiller earlier, when I said that he thinks the seduction is beauty. Let's say the seduction that makes us forget threatening nature is bourgeois society, that in bourgeois society we no longer face nature as a large and threatening thing. Rather, bourgeois society is a kind of world that supports and protects individuals and therefore dulls the need for significant action. The more rational and orderly society is, the less individual action is required to bear the burden of our standing in the world. Indeed, in the modern world, significant action is usually considered the part of situations that are intimate, tactful, a question of manners or stragegy; at any rate, the sort of things you get in a novel. On the other hand, this orderly and rational world is already beginning to feel flat, small, incapable of presenting, in its own terms, anything that might be said to go to the root of the human condition. If you wish, think of what Heidegger calls the world of Das Man, what Mill thinks of the world of hat (?), what Kierkegaard thought of Christendom. Including for Kant: the bourgeois world is a world of imitative rules in which we forget those features of experience that are constitutive of it. As Adorno puts the thought, "The subject's powerlessness in society is petrified into a second nature which promotes the motor of flight into purportedly first nature." That is, I think the sublime is the reason why people go into the woods for a hike; the reason that we seek out waterfalls, the reason why, when the hurricane is lashing outside, we go outside into that howling 100-mile-an- hour wind. Why? Because I want an experience that literally goes to the root of my condition as a natural being.
So my thought is that in the case of the sublime, the sublime reaches past the complacent narcissism of the everyday in order to allow us to measure and sense society as a whole, and us in it as composed still of mortal and vulnerable beings triumphing over hostile nature. So the original sublime, as it's thought about in Burke and Kant, I believe, was culture's first attempt, first need to make an attempt, to find a limit to rational order that would reanimate the subject. That is, we desire the sublime that might destroy us as a reminder of our natural mortality, and we want a reminder of our natural mortality not because we want to die, but because we want a reminder of what it is we are alive. We want to be able to feel our sensible aliveness in relationship to the conditions that make it pertinent. We seek the sublime in order to have the feelings appropriate to our beliefs about ourselves as vulnerable, injurable, mortal beings. I cannot think of any other reason why we would seek it out.
Now, Kant wants a more complicated thought. He thinks we want to seek it out because we want reassurance of ourselves as self-conscious creatures. I'll stop there...
Q: On your account, to what extent would the sublime have to be a solitary experience.

A: I think it would be, which is why I think we're always disappointed when we go to Niagara Falls – if you're part of a party with a guide, it doesn't have the same zing to it. I was in Yellowstone, and the first thing I wanted to do was get off the path.
Q: It seems then like there is a kind of narcissism in the sublime also. All by myself in the woods, which are bigger than me, but I am taking them on alone.
A: Absolutely, I am not denying the narcissism. It is part of the structure of the sublime. I'm historicizing it as a part of a type of response to a particular bourgeois culture, which is a culture of a kind of narcissism.
Q: I want to know about the relationship between the mathematical and the dynamical sublime, and this in relation to the First Critique.
A: On my reading, the mathematical sublime is actually a version of the dynamical sublime. So my sense is that when I am out of the city, and out of the suburbs, and I look at the sky an find it awesome, it's because I have a notion of immensity, which takes the quantitative as qualitative. So it's that sense of being exposed to it.
Q: There's a threat involved in that bigness?
A: There's a feeling of radical diminishment of me. It's the threat that Pascal felt on the basis of the new science. But Pascal just got it immediately. I think that in order to get that feeling of living in an infinite universe – we are born into an infinite universe and rarely feel it, it doesn't have an affective grip. I think the sublime is those occasions when the notion of an affective universe gets an affective grip. I'm doing the feeling-alive line rather than the moral-grandeur line or the rational-self-assurance line, and I'll then have to ask how Kant takes what I am taking to be the narrative structure, and translates it into an account of self- reassurance. I have a story to tell about that, but they're two different stories.
Q: The sublime seems to give us a mirror image of our dual nature (rational finitude). That is very different from the account you just gave: finding a limit to the rational order, and reaffirming a secure finitude that somehow does not require a rationalization. I think there's a perfectly anodyne response as to why Kant wanted to do it his way rather than yours, which is that he has a dualistic conception of our natures. But on a deeper level I find that unsatisfying: that is, why is Kant keeping rationality in the picture? What does that add?
A: What I'll try to convince you of next week is actually a story about the emergence of self-consciousness. How can we think of the sublime as a story of the emergence of self-consciousness überhaupt?
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Plan for today:
Something
Guyer's essay actually concerns three views of the harmony of the faculties, but from it can be extrapolated three views of the deduction.
pre-cognitive strategy
multi-cognitive strategy
metacognitive strategy (the one he favours)
Distinguishing these is useful.
The precognitive strategy is the one we have been discussing for the last two weeks – that is, it satisfies the conditions for cognition except for that of the actual application of the concept. It is the subjective conditions for objective judgement.
[49:00]
Andrea Kern, in her book Schone Lust, calls this the materialist strategy, in reference to Paul De Man's essay on Kant. De Man reads the scenario I just gave, of exposure to the object, as nothing but a material relationship to the world.
You can also find the precognitive view in Dieter Henrich, Donald Crawford, and Rudy Capriel. Hannah Ginsborg is using a version of it.
The multicognitive strategy Kern calls the hermeneutic strategy. The object satisfies all of the conditions for judgement, for cognition, but in an indeterminate way. It is not that there is no conceptuality, but rather that there is an open-ended manifold of concepts that is suggested by the manifold of intuition. There are various ways in which they object may be conceived or understood –various ways in which it may grab our attention.
Fred Rush wrote an article called "The Harmony of the Faculties" in Kant-Studien in 2001 in which he says that in the case of the aesthetic function, the intuitively given is not subsumed under a determinate concept, but under a multitude of concepts playfully applied to it. In aesthetic reflection and the harmony of the faculties, perception is a taking of the manifold as having one among many possible characters, a state in which it is implicitly registered that what is perceived is one way, but that does not foreclose – indeed it rests upon – other ways it might be subject to synthesis.
Allison, flip flops between a precognitive and a multicognitive view, but ends up with the latter. At least on p. 71, where he says "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 patters of order."
So, the idea of hermeneutics is a nice one here, because in the multicognitive view, what is going on is an insistent interpretive endeavour that has no closure, but rather wants that very suggestiveness of interpretive possibilities.
What are Guyer's objections to these two views? To the precognitive view, he answers that it entails that all objects are potentially beautiful, to which he says two things: "Gee ain't that silly," and "Kant never suggests this," pointing to the wild beauty passage.
But even Guyer has to acknowledge that the question must arise, which object, and under what conditions do we find it beautiful? Which is to say, under what conditions can we abstract from our interests? And if we cannot abstract from our interests, why not? Further, the question must arise, which objects facilitate the play of faculties, and what does it mean to say that some objects facilitate the play of faculties more radically than do others?
In response to the multicognitive strategy, Guyer says that at no point does Kant suggest this. The judgement of beauty requires no concepts – not no determinate concepts – and further, Kant says that it is only the faculty of the concepts that is at stake. So it seems to play fast and loose with Kant's account. Secondly, there is a philosophical problem, according to Guyer, namely, why would an experience of "flitting back and forth among an indeterminate multitude of concepts for a single object be found pleasing?"
I do not think that the multicognitive view is Kant's view, but I do think that Guyer is uncharitable to it. What I think is behind the multicognitive view are two thoughts. First, that we find works of art deep and inexhaustible. They bear further seeing, reading, hearing, because no one take on them exhausts their potentiality. Why is it we believe that good metaphors are not fully translatable? What do we find important about metaphors? That they force on us, in their collisions of concepts, ways of thinking about phenomena that no literal statement quite captures. Metaphors are, in the precise sense, suggestive of different and multiple conceptualizations. And it is indeed

difficult to think that we could have anything like what we think of as art if we did not have the capacity for metaphor. Metaphors are conceptualizations beyond existing conceptualizations. And indeed we may think that one of the ways that human thought advances is via the process of metaphorization. By generating metaphors that take us into new areas.
So, at least for cases of art, there is quite a bit to be said about the multicognitive view. [1:03:30]
Guyer's negative view: according to Guyer, we always, for any judgement of beauty, use some determinate concepts. To be able to say that something is beautiful, we must say "the x is beautiful" (the sunset, the flower, that phrase etc.). If you're a Kantian, the object has to undergo some syntheses, has to come up as an object somehow, and therefore we have already conceptualized it to some degree, and so it is not simply "it is beautiful" but "the x is beautiful." Harmony then requires "only the absence of any concept of a determinate intended end, or use of the object of experience." So, of course I recognize the sun as sun, but I don't have to do all the paraphernalia of thinking of it as what keeps us warm, or as part of the planetary system – I am just looking at it as "Gee, that's a beautiful sunset." So it doesn't harm the possibility of judgement to have a weak and no- determinate-end-or-use concept under which I bring it.
Another way of thinking about this is that a determinate end of the mind is satisfied, but in an unusual way. Our determinate end of conceptualization, or finding harmony, but in an unusual way. On p. 183 it says, "It is also a state of mind in which it is felt that, or as if, the understanding's underlying objective or interest in unity is being satisfied, but in a way that goes beyond anything required for, or dictated by, satisfaction of the determinate concept or concepts upon which mere identification of the object depends. A beautiful object can always be recognized as an object of some determinate kind but our experience of it always has even more unity and coherence than is required for it to be a member of that kind. Or has a kind of unity of and coherence that is not merely a necessary condition for our classification."
What is more unity? What is having more than is necessary to be called a rose?
Guyer wants the notion of more. He says, "We can, and indeed must be able to have our ordinary cognition of the object, but we experience it as beautiful precisely because we experience it as inducing a degree or type of harmony of the imagination and the understanding that goes beyond what is necessary for ordinary cognition." Guyer is thinking about the wild passage.
The question is, what is the pleasure of the more? It is, I would argue, an inscrutable extra. And he gives us no clear idea of what would make that inscrutable extra significant. He says, "But if the pleasure in beauty is to be noticeable, and the imagination is to be free, the satisfaction of the underlying object of cognition must be in some way unexpected, and not determined by any rule." The only way to put all of these assumptions together is to suppose there is something more.
Now, there is some phenomenological rightness to what he is saying. The difficulty is that it's unclear why something being more suggestive than everyday objects for our powers of understanding and imagination should be regarded as something that we care about. And so it's not that this account isn't phenomenologically right, it's that it leaves us with the question, what is the source of the more?
One possibility that we have talked about is that those perceptual objects that possess an excess of form, beyond the normal capacities of the understanding, are the living ones. The metacognitive, if it is to kick in, has to go in one of two ways: towards art (art is an explosion of our conceptual understanding ("This is a marriage," etc.) – this is Guyer's view), or towards life. And if it's natural beauty, it has to go towards organic form.
I have been arguing that we have, in Kant, two irreducible ways of organizing the visible world: according to geometry, and in accordance with living form. The human person, I want to suggest, is a material a priori of our visual encounters with experience. Which is to say that to see something as a living being is irreducible to mere geometrical accounting. Our capacity to recognize a living being as living exceeds whatever geometrical capacities we have, and in recognizing living beings, it is not simply that they are in space, but they organize space in a non-geometrical way. That is, they elaborate space.
This is, of course, all over Merleau-Ponty. The simplest way to think of it is the sculptures of Anthony Caro. Prairie is this extraordinary piece of long orange piping, and as you see it, it is no longer in space. Rather, what the work does is spatialize. It creates flatness as a domain of habitation. It is the experience of space as stretching out and at a distance in some way.
There is a whole literature on Kant and spatiality. People say there are two types of geometry in Kant: literal geometry, and what they call perceptual geometry. What rules does the latter break? Think of train tracks – parallel lines meet in conceptual space. My thought is, that is getting into the claim that it's always geometrical. Living things create forms of organization that are not reducible to geometry, because they have an expressive dimension, i.e. "alive!"
So the more of the metacognitive would be the more of organic form, and I am suggesting the notion of organic form which is a problem. People never know whether to view it as a good thing or a bad thing, for isn't it idealizing the notion of human beings, and giving everything in accordance with that? Isn't that creating too much harmony in the world? There is a whole critique of whether artworks should have organic form.
I am suggesting that the notion of organic form is at least irreducible to geometric form, and when Kant says we recognize formal purposiveness, I believe that can be decoded as organic form. And that might be a reason to go metacognitive.

One of the reasons I wanted to give enough air to each of these theories (the precognitive, the multicognitive, and the metacognitive views) is because each addresses part of our interest in the aesthetic. The next question is whether all of these views can be held together, as part of a more capacious view, or whether there is perhaps not a univocal interest in the beautiful, but rather a diversity of interests.
The precognitive view seems to get its force from the beauty of nature. The multicognitive fits art beauty best. So how do art beauty and natural beauty fit together, and how does organic form relate to those?
The question to ask is, could we have a significant interest in art beauty if we didn't have an interest in natural beauty?
THE SUBLIME
The sublime became a topic in the 18th century again thanks to Burke. Kant is in some part responding to Burke.
I want you to be disturbed by the fact that people are interested in the sublime – it is not obvious how terror/angst/ fearfulness at the world, and light, should go together. The sublime, as it appears in Kant and Burke, is an area of danger, yet we are drawn to it. What are we desiring when we go in search of the sublime?
Kant sees the problem, but rather than facing it, he tries to contain it. Or even sublate it. Which is why having Burke in the background would be helpful to you. Throughout my account of Kant, I am going to play off the desire for the sublime, and the strategies of containment, of limiting or diminishing it.
I take containment to be the issue since, if the big topic of the Critique of Judgement is the purposiveness of nature, then the sublime clearly stands outside the framework of the investigation, because it is contra-purposive. So in some sense, I think Kant felt, because of

Burke, that a book (that turned out to be) about the aesthetic had to confront the sublime, but I almost sense that he does so unwillingly here, and he has to spin it in various directions in order to make it fit into his framework in some way, and the way he is going to do that is of course by moralizing it.
So the notion of morality enters here in a way that it hasn't explicitly enters into the text previously.
Secondly, since Kant, the sublime has continued to be a huge topic. It has been one of the driving concepts of modern Continental philosophy – Lyotard's book on aesthetics is titled Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime. The argument of my book, The Fate of Art, is that deconstruction is nothing but a strategy of the sublime. The sublime has, in a certain way, for us, displaced the beautiful. Analytic philsophers like the beautiful, Continental philosophers like the sublime – we like the angst and all that, while analytic philosophers just want to know that everything is okay.
There are varieties of the sublime. In his essay on the beautiful and the sublime, Guyer sets out a few of these. I will follow his ordering.
The deconstructive sublime is something like the following: the sublime reveals an underlying and irremediable impossibility of determinate thought by showing that every attempt to produce a closure of conceptuality is impossible because it leaves out an excess that is incommensurable with that closure. The sublime moment is that moment of différance, which is the moment of deforming or difference beyond every categorization of identity and difference. So différance is a version of the linguistic sublime. Another version of the linguistic sublime is that the sayability of experience always rests on an unsayability of experience. Every saying is parasitic on what it cannot say, which it can never capture. So the sublime, in the linguistic register, is not simply the moment of non-form, but of the unformed that lies behind, and is a condition for everything formed. Meaning rests on non- meaning.
In his wonderful book The Art of Judgement, Howard Caygill tries to argue for a version of the perceptual sublime (345-6): "The proportion of normal experience originates in the abnormal experience of the sublime. The regularity of proportion has its ground in the irregular violence of the sublime, and the life-enhancing form of beauty is traced back to the violent outrage which the imagination visited upon itself. The disposition of activity and passivity and resistance is the same formula as the violence of the mathematical sublime. When encountering objects in time, we are subject to their might, but we bring them under our dominion when we arrest them in space and determine them according to our proportions."
So, Caygill's thought is that originally, experience is an experience of terrifying chaos, of being overwhelmed by the world, of the world not being at our disposal at all, and that in order to inhabit the world, we have to not just find order but impose order. The sublime is a reminder of the antecedence to our orderly experience of the world, namely, violent, inhospitable and disenchanted nature. So that we can, in the experience of the sublime, feel that we are having exactly the opposite experience of "exposure" in the precognitive view – I expose myself, and lo and behold, there is form. The sublime says, I expose myself, and I am undone. Nature is not commensurable with my needs, although I may have the power to dominate it.
[18:30]
Finally, one last version. Terry Eagleton gives an ideological interpretation of the sublime. He says "the beautiful and the sublime are essential dimensions of ideology, for one problem of all humanist ideology is how its centering and consoling of the subject is supposed to be made compatible with a certain reverence and submissiveness on the subject's part. One of the sublime's aspects is exactly this chastening, humiliating power, which decenters the subject into an awesome awareness of its finitude – its own petty position in the universe, just as the experience of beauty shores it up." So the sublime is there for the sake of reminding us, if we get too uppity, that we are really nothing. And this is a way of the masters keeping our control over us.
I think that the notion of the sublime has more to it than Kant allows. He tells us that the sublime is really reason itself, and that experiences of unformed nature, whether instances of mathematical or dynamic forms, are occasions in which reason – which for Kant is our infinity, not our finitude, our power beyond any physical power – is what is revealed. And because he thinks of the sublime as a way of affirming our reason and rationality, our transcendental vocation as free and self-determining subjects – that is what I mean by saying that Kant wants to contain the sublime. He wants to make the notion of the sublime harmonize, despite the terror. The pleasure is always going to come from reason itself. The plausibility of this lies in the fact that the sublime can't be sheer terror. In real terror, we don't stand around and gawk at the object; we run. Aesthetic fear/terror or angst, is different from real fear/angst/terror. The question here is the source of our pleasure in it.
We do have at least one pre-modern occasion that is like the sublime, where we experience terror and fear and then pleasure: tragedy. We should think that the notion of the sublime arose in a culture in which the notion of the tragic had lost its grip. The sublime has a family resemblance to the notion of tragedy.
Now, that does not answer the question about the pleasure of the sublime – it simply raises the question, what is the pleasure in tragedy? Aristotle says: catharsis. Why?
The puzzle of the sublime is this puzzle of this twinning of the contrapurposive – the fearful – and the pleasurable.
§23 opens with 5 analogies between the sublime and the beautiful:

1. Both the sublime and the beautiful are liked for their own sake, that is, disinterestedly. We now know that that disinterest is a complicated phenomenon, but it has something to do with the pleasure. I will want to ask you, is Kant right that the pleasure of the sublime is really disinterested?
2. Both are judgements of reflection.
3. In these judgements of reflection, the object is referred indeterminately to the concept – that is, we are going to subsume the object, though it has to be referred to our powers of conceptualization.
4. It is connected to the mere power of exhibition of the imagination in relationship to another faculty. In the case of the beautiful, it's the understanding, in the case of the sublime, it's reason. Reason plays, in the sublime, something like the role the understanding plays in relation to the beautiful.
5. For both, although they are singular intuitions ("This is sublime" / "This is beautiful") we yet expect universal validity for our judgements. Something about our state in response to them.
   Disanalogies:
6. Beauty is a response to the form of objects; the sublime is a response to formlessness or unboundedness. Not just formlessness itself, however, but in relationship to the thought of totality.
   When we are thinking about the sublime, we are always trying to think about the sublime as one. We have a totalizing ambition with respect to it, and it's that totalizing ambition that's going to fail. Without that totalizing ambition of trying to hold it in the imagination, it couldn't be contrapurposive. So that notion of totality is functioning here in the way in which the demand of the

understanding for unity functions in the judgement of the beautiful. Totality, or the unconditioned, plays the role here that unity plays in the beautiful.

[30:15]

In both cases, however, the referent is to an indeterminate concept. In the case of the beautiful, it is an indeterminate concept of the understanding, something concept-like, he actually says. In the case of the sublime, it is an indeterminate concept of reason. It is important that it is indeterminate. It refers us to the faculty of reason – the faculty of the thought of the unconditioned. But it must refer to it indeterminately, because if it were determinate, it would just be the moral law, and I would have to act on it. But the sublime is free from action.

When I experience the moral law, normally, I experience it as a motive to act in one way rather than another: this desire should not be acted on, but another desire should be. The experience of the moral law is, under normal conditions, practical. Actionable. If there is something like an experience of the moral in the experience of the sublime – and Kant is telling us that there is – it must be indeterminately, because it cannot be telling us to do anything in particular. What is an indeterminate awareness of our reason? A coming to a sudden awareness of my vocation in general as a rational and free being. In the face of the sublime, I experience myself as inhabiting both a sensible and a supersensible domain. Or an empirical and a noumenal domain. It is about my transcendence of sensibility, and that is constitutive of who I am überhaupt. That is why it is an indeterminate experience.

7. In the case of the beautiful, there is a qualitative liking. In the case of the sublime, there is a quantitative disliking. The sublime, in the first instance, has a quantitative dimension. There is a book coming out on Kant's aesthetic, of which an article by Melissa Zinkin ("Intensive Magnitudes and the Normativity of Taste") in the Kukla reader is a preview, totally based on the idea of intensive magnitudes, taking that idea from the First Critique, and driving it into aesthetics in a really interesting way. Terrific stuff.

   When we are dealing with the sublime, but the mathematical and the dynamic, there is a quantitative aspect to it. And not a mere qualitiative, or formal, one.
8. The liking of the beautiful is a furtherance of life – imagination and understanding in free play. The liking of the sublime, Kant says on p. 245, "involves a momentary inhibition of vital forces, followed immediately by an outpouring of them that is all the stronger." I keep thinking of it as a near-death experience – an experience of being taken over by a wave, and thinking for a fraction of a second that you are going to die. You are hopeless and powerless, and then you are on the beach and you feel utterly exhilarated. Only in that proximity with death do we get reminded that we are alive. There are other ways of unpacking that but I will skip them.
9. Kant thinks of the beautiful as free play. The sublime involves a tremendous seriousness, says Kant. Lyotard has a lot to say about this.

   We will end there.

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   THE SUBLIME (ctd.)
10. Finish up the sublime
11. Move on to questions on art.

   THE SUBLIME (ct'd)

   Continuing the analysis started last time... Why the sublime?

   Vitalism

   The sublime is the occasion for refinding ourselves as part of the natural world, of reminding ourselves of our vitality. Behind my thinking on that issue is the thought that we started out with at the beginning of the semester, namely: nature as a return of the repressed, that is, living nature as what has gotten repressed in the course of the civilizing work of morality, of the production of society. At a certain moment we want a different conception of nature to rearise, one that reminds us of our own bodily belonging to nature, and our own standing as living as well as rational beings.

   The promise of happiness

   The other way of thinking about the sublime.

   Kant's notion of the highest good = happiness rewarded in proportion to virtue.

   It's not enough that we're rational and self-determining, we like to feel good too. And the problem (this is what the second half of the Critique of Judgement is about) is that the civilizing process is a work of discipline and mastering, of society, of nature, of ourselves. So the conditions of civilized life are the repression and the domination of nature and desire. And in the aesthetic, we always find a reemergence of that. The sublime is one of those places in which the relationship between culture and nature is reignited.

   This is what connects art to sexuality – our interest in sexuality is, beyond hormones, an actual interest in happiness, and the transfiguration or realization of happiness, and sexuality is a symbol of that. It's not an accident that our conceptual reality and our sexuality are intertwined in the way they are.

   The flipside or skeptical aspect of the sublime concerns the way in which it functions as a reassurance of ourselves as not part of nature (I beat this idea to death at the end of my book Against Voluptuous Bodies, talking about Cindy Sherman). So the sublime is a systematically equivocal site. It testifies to, and is a manner in which we reconnect with, the claims of vitality by recognizing our natural being. Conversely, it is a continual work of repetition reassuring us of not belonging to nature. You see this in the way Kant describes the sublime in the Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View, where the seed of the sublime is given a dramatic and narrative form:

   The sublime is that greatness in size or intensity which inspires awe and simultaneously invites us to approach it.

   What kind of invitation is this?

   (so as to make our forces equal to it) and deters us by the fear that in comparison with it we shall shrink into insignificance in our own estimation. Thunder over our head, for example, or a high, rugged mountain. When we are in a safe place, the gathering of our forces to grasp the appearance, along with our anxiety about not being able to rise to its greatness, arouses astonishment, a feeling that is agreeable, because it continuously triumphs over pain. So the sublime is not an object for taste. It is rather the

feeling of being stirred, that has the sublime for its object. But when an artist exhibits to the sublime to us, by describing it, or clothing it in ornaments, it can and should be beautiful, since otherwise it is wild, coarse, and repulsive, and so contrary to taste. And that verb is what Derrida goes crazy about.

The paragon of the sublime is beautiful art. The latter is the clothing or framing of the monstrous. But this makes the sublime itself stand in a curious relation to Kant's aesthetic – both a moment of it, formally analogous with the logic of beauty – and outside it, a function of a logic that belongs more to morality than aesthetics. And this is what piques my curiosity. My suspicion is that the sublime, too, is some kind of paragon, some kind of extra work, some kind of clothing for another scene.

Beauty is a paragon for the sublime, and the sublime is a paragon for... x.

Art is the way we clothe the sublime – Beethoven's symphonies and all that – that gives us the image of the sublime, although of course it is not monstrous, it is clothed in an acceptable way, by framing it. And I am saying that the sublime too is perhaps a framing for something else. And it's that something else that I am trying to understand. What kind of scene the sublime is a scene of, which is to say, why do we seek it out? This is the question we asked last time, and that we are still trying to answer. Why we put ourselves through this form of pain-pleasure.

Well, the safe place is a condition for what unfolds' being a drama. The sublime is made possible by a safe place, and a safe place is what turns what would have been some natural event of some kind into something else, some kind of drama. So the safe place is the operation of an aestheticization. Again, one must ask, an aestheticization of what?

So the sublime is not a source of fear, but a representation of dramaticization of fear, and the spectator him- or herself who frames the set is an actor in the drama. We are both the authors and protagonists of this story.

Now, in order to feel the fear adequately, and the threat sufficiently, we must put ourselves into some proximity to the sublime object. It must already have come on the scene, it must already have invited us, or we must have felt invited – without the invitation, the lure, the desire for it, the object could not interrupt our narcissistic self- complacence, which is of course what we are interested in. We want to be torn from our narcissism. We want to feel the touch of the other. There is, then, a test of forces, and what is tested thereby is what our forces are, which is to say, who we are – our being. So the testing must raise us to an insight into the very nature of what our forces could be, what our nature is as living human beings, and do so in a way that is emphatic, that makes it clear that we can have confidence that it is indeed what our essential forces are that are hit upon in this experience. So one of the things that attracts us to the sublime is that it reveals to us both what our natural forces are – who we are as mortal beings – and what our extra-natural forces are, what we are as supra-natural beings. So that the sublime is a paradigm limit situation, which in being a limit situation, attracts us precisely because of its apparent revelatory power.

So we are threatened, and fearful, and what threatens us threatens our sense of our bodily integrity. It awakens in us an awareness of our sensible being, and furthermore it awakens in us our sensible being as an indeterminate but absolute vulnerability. We are injurability, which is to say we are aware of our mortality as sensible beings, hence we are threatened to the limit of our sensibility. So in the test at the very least our mortal being is revealed as mortal. We are scared to death. But safely, from a safe place. It is a drama, after all.

Now, in this test we also learn that we cannot be confined to our mortal being, to our life, and to our drive for self- preservation. Hence our vulnerability is both accepted/acknowledged and repudiated. And the repudiation will be ambiguous between a justified denial – in some sense we are always in excess of our merely sensible being – and a complete self-denial, or self-repudiation. After all, what the story of the sublime wants to say is that we, essentially, are not sensible beings, that we are essentially self-legislating, autonomous creatures, who project ourselves onto the screen of the sensible, but are always beyond it.

Attraction and repulsion of the same object. The phrase is Derrida's. The safe place can now be recognized, because the safe place is not merely a physical distance, it's the place of reason itself, whose transcendence beyond all sensible threat is assumed from the outset. Hence the apparent transition from imagination to reason is made through the determination of reason. And this, for me, is the puzzle. Structurally. That is, reason is setting up this situation in order to test itself, so reason projects the other as the limit of its power, as the limit of the sensible, for the sake of reaffirming its own powers of transcendence.

The sublime, we are told over and over again, halts the easy play of beauty, and introduces an abrupt seriousness. The seriousness is the seriousness of the idea of a mortal threat, and the idea of that threat being overcome, sublated, defeated. Here, the imagination not only includes our sensible constitution generally, but stands for the body, and does so almost everywhere in Kant. The imagination is what finds itself unable, in its own terms, to transcend this force; the imagination breaks open, is defeated.

How is Kant different from Descartes? Kant does not have the kind of mind-body dualism that Descartes has, because the notion of mentality in Kant is always mediated by the imagination. I want to say that mediation by the imagination is always the acknowledgement of bodily mediation. The imagination is always the placeholder for the body, and is in a way the measure and access of the body.

Hence it is unsurprising when Kant says that the primary subjective sensory immediate living measure proceeds from the body, things come to relationship of body to body. The measure of the body is §26. So the contest of the sublime is really a contest between two bodies, each exceeding itself, each being more than body, and in that excess, threatening the other body.

[24:15]

The question is not merely, what is the sublime? but why do we seek it again and again.

I'm trying to narrate the sublime in a way that should sound an awful lot like Hegel's dialectic of master and slave. It take it that way because we assume ourselves to be self-conscious beings, and desire to have validated and confirmed the sense of ourselves as transcending our natural determination. Only a completely circular confirmation would arise from Kant's uninterpreted account of the confrontation. Real confirmation can come only from another self-conscious being – a being who would also be sensible. And this is why, I think, Kant often says of the sublime that it is a schema for ideals – ideas of reason. That is, only if nature has ascribed to it the infinity of reason can its threat be sufficient for its overcoming to signify our transcendence of natural determination.

So the battle is a body-to-body, but of bodies in excess of themselves, and the issue is a mastery of nature within and without. And in the experience of that mastery is our pleasure. So this is an experience of pleasure in domination: the pleasure of dominating our fear, if not its object, of finding ourselves more than what threatens from the measure of the body, is what reassures us of our place in the world.

The sublime is a repetition of what I take to be the founding moment of every modern philosophy, namely the coming to self-

consciousness out of a scenario of violence. In Descartes, it's the violence of the evil demon, in Hobbes it's the state of nature and the war of all against all, in Hegel of course it will be the master slave, in Kant I am suggesting, it's the scene of the sublime. The scene of the sublime is the occasion for an assertion of our rational self-possession. I take it that it matters that this occasion happens in Kant aesthetically.
[29:20]
So what is given in the sublime is the demand for the overcoming of nature and the assertion of originary subjectivity. Subjectivity becomes subjectivity – becomes self-consciousness, becomes the I-think – only by the overcoming of the absolute other, and it does that through a kind of imaginary violence.
So the violence of the sublime is both the threat and its overcoming. So in the sublime, nature comes to appear as powerful only when its power has been negated. Only when it is no longer powerful. Only aesthetically. Nature is empowered by reason only imaginatively. Tom Huhn, in a lovely essay in the Journal of Aesthetics in 1995 called "Kantian Sublime: The Nostalgia for Violence" makes the claim this way: "The pleasure of the sublime is what binds subjectivity to itself." But I reassure myself and I become a subject in that pleasurable overcoming of that threat that I triumph over.
So it is moment when subjectivity feels itself – the moment subjectivity becomes whole and cohesive. [32:00]
Question: There are two ways to take this – genetically, and as phenomenology.
The reason why the two are not separate is the repetition. Why do we do this again and again? For us modern subjects, it is genetics. The origins of modern subjectivity – we continually repeat this moment, and we have to, as it were, repeat these moments of violence and domination, and take pleasure in that, as a condition for reassuring ourselves that we are rational. So the claim is that rationality rests upon this pleasure in violent domination, that is rehearsed again and again.
Question: ...It never resolves itself.
Yes, it cannot. It is illusory.
I am claiming that there is an aesthetic condition of modern, rational subjectivity. Modern, rational subjectivity rests on a certain fantasy, and that fantasy is a source of pleasure, pleasure in violence, which is a condition of the cohesiveness of the rational subject.
I tried last week to present a good sublime, and this is the nasty sublime. And I think that both are present in Kant.
Question: [Inaudible]
Cindy Sherman's art derives from realist horror movies. She actually made one – called ... The Secretary? ...
pretty gruesome.
I am making a Hegelian claim that a rationality that is self-reassuring, rather than being reassured in relationship to another, will tend to slip into domination, necessarily. Because it is built on the domination of the other. That is the relationship, structurally. It only knows the other as that which is to be dominated. What is to be overcome. That is its relationship to nature. Which is why I am saying that the sublime is an antagonistic moment in Kant's Third Critique. Which is why I wish it wasn't there. It antagonizes the core structure of the book. The moment of wild anxiety which was elicited by the project of the book – this is his response. The sublime is a fear.
The reason I am suggesting that sublime nature is also the Other is because of the invitation. There has to be a desire to test my capacities, and from that test get confirmation. So somehow I am screening – that is why I say reason projects onto nature its ideas, so that it can focus as something to be overcome. So it's flip-flopping between those two (substance and subject).
[41:35]
Question: Is there a structural similarity between horror and the sublime, or are these instances of the sublime?
It's structural similarity. There is a constant mutation between tragedy, horror – things change at each moment, so we have to explain why we go to the Saw movies, rather than test ourselves by going to a waterfall. I take it to be a question of cultural degeneration – precisely what Sherman's pieces are about. An analogous thing that operates in a slightly different way.
Question: It couldn't be an instance, because, Where is nature?
Nature has disappeared. Even in the sublime, nature has almost disappeared, and we have to go seek it out in some weird way. I think that in the modern world – unless you go to central Maine – nature is gone. We don't even have that as a constant source of our self-understanding for this issue. And I take it that that's scary. That would be my cultural diagnosis: that even the question of nature, especially for us urban dwellers, has no longer played a structural role in our understanding of ourselves as self-conscious. Arguably, Hegel thought by 1820 that nature could no longer play that role. It was already beginning to disappear.
The sublime seems to me a moment at which the idea of nature will disappear until global warming will once again put us in nature – that's Chakravarty's thesis. He is saying that it's the end of that kind of storytelling about our relationship to nature.
I think we have art because we do not have a world we can inhabit. So I don't see it as a question of philosophy tying up any ends here.
The issue is the standing of reason with respect to the world that it has created.
Question: You said earlier that nature can be pushed to the uppermost reaches but it cannot lose its claim on us...
My claim is that it can, it has. We no longer measure ourselves against that claim – at least not explicitly. I agree that implicitly we do – that's what I think art is about. Which is why I think a lot of the art world is screwball, because it thinks art is about something else – protesting against... whatever. That's likewise what I think our fascination with sexuality is about. But I take it that we have such poor cultural accounts of these moments that we read them as something else, namely "there's bad reason and we ought to transgress it." And we don't understand the sources or the desires for our transgression. Maybe freedom. Maybe freedom is what we think we're interested in.
Question: Then I don't understand the repetitive quality...
My argument there was Kant's argument. And I take it that the way in which we no longer feel compelled by the account of the sublime in Kant is the way in which that repetition no longer operates. Repetition was a
hypothetical repetition of 18th and 19th century sublime, not a projection into our future.
ART
Rather obviously, Kant has an overly moralized conception of art, and I despise that. But nonetheless when I read Kant on art, I am intrigued. So I take it that it's an internally complex account, and therefore I want to develop a reading strategy for looking at Kant on art that will release what is deep and still with us in his account – that is, Kant as a radical modernist (that is the assertion I want to make).

It's clear that the position on art in Kant must be fraught. After all, internally the whole aesthetic theory is a reception aesthetic, and the question of art sits uneasily in that context – art always has to have at least a moment concerning production and creation. Further, Kant's aesthetic is one geared towards natural beauty. Hence he has to squeeze his account of art into the context of natural beauty, which, on the face of it, seems perverse. Indeed, so perverse is it that we know that Hegel went in the other direction, and claimed that philosophical aesthetics should be a philosophy of art, with natural beauty dependent on its fit with it. That there is no such a thing as natural beauty, but rather a deficient mode of art beauty. And for what it's worth, within the history of aesthetics, Hegel has triumphed. Indeed triumphed so radically that some critics, like Noel Carroll, who I consider a world- historical nincompoop, deny that Kant has a philosophy of art at all – and therefore that Kant is useless for contemporary purposes.

Well, I think there is an interesting leitmotiv that runs right through Kant's theory of art, namely about a notion of meaning, or meaningfulness, beyond determinate discursive meaning. That is, a notion of meaning beyond rational meaning. A notion of meaning that is not secured in independence of the material world, but in conjunction with it. I want to find a way of bringing that theme to conspicuousness so that the moralizing view disappears.

My strategy is to read the entire section on the aesthetic backwards. By which I mean I want to start with §51, which is the account of the division of the fine arts. I will then turn to an account of aesthetic ideas, and only finally do I want to read those two moments in the context of Kant's claim that art is beautiful when it appears like nature – a deeply puzzling claim. And I want to then think about all of that by thinking about his account of genius, which is obviously at the centre of his account. I take it that his account of genius is so peculiar, and so odd, that it's really hard to make sense of.

My opening gambit, I should say – Kant on the division of arts – will be playing off an unpublished paper by my friend Gregg Horowitz, which he gave at Berkeley a couple of years ago.

§51 After again repeating his claim that beauty, whether natural or artistic, is the expression of aesthetic ideas, Kant says that if we wish to divide the fine arts, we can choose for this, at least tentatively, no more convenient principle than the analogy between the arts and the way people express themselves in speech, so as to communicate with one another as perfectly as possible

So the opening thought is the idea of what is called "perfect communication."

Namely [he goes on to say what perfect communication is] not merely as regards their concepts, but also as regards their sensations.

That is, perfect communication would be now complete communication of everything you are thinking and feeling and experiencing, to another.

Such expression consists in word, gesture, and tone (articulation, gesticulation, and modulation). Only when these three ways of expressing himself are combined does the speaker communicate completely. For in this way thought, intuition, and sensation are conveyed to others simultaneously and in unison.

So the beginning here is surprising, because the notion of complete communication ignores all of Kant's usual divisions between mind and body, between reason and intuition, between intuition and sensation, and thinks that communication, if it is to be fully successful and complete, would have to be something that unified all of these and simultaneously communicated them. This is, in Kant, and in the way he is going to insist upon it, and impossible idea. And its impossibility is our interest.

Hence, he goes on to say there are only three kinds of fine arts:

the arts of speech, called literature,

visual art [which is what he thinks makes up the notion of gesture], and the art of the play of sensations [think about it as primarily musical]

What is interesting is that Kant is not going to give an account that says, "Here is art in general, and here are the modes of art." Rather, he is going to think of art as essentially divided, not to be unified, not to be systematized. And the division is primary because the plurality of art arises out of an already divided or self-dividing sphere of communication. So Kant's interest here is in the plurality of arts. Why are there a plurality of arts? What is it about our communicative interest that requires that there be a plurality of arts and not just one? And what are the stakes of art in light of the fact that there are a plurality of arts?

We can say that the artist who would be perfectly anti-Kantian here therefore would be Wagner. He would be the idiot. Which I take to be right. I despise Wagner. I take it that there is something deep about the plurality of the arts. And I take it that there is something deep in Kant's thought that we think about this plurality as part of the irreducibility of the principles that require the differentiation of the arts.

[13:00]

Here is the surprising thought – for Kant, at least. In thinking about the idea of perfect or complete communication, Kant is giving normative force, and normative authority, to what necessarily remains unarticulated or unspoken within the abstract concept. If complete communication involves both concept, intuition, and sensation – if that's the image of complete communicate he's offered to us – then the idea of complete communication assumes there is more to be communicated than what gets communicated by concepts themselves. So the idea of complete communication is already itself a kind of normative or abstract ideal that licenses us in taking seriously what gets unsaid, unspoken, in ordinary conceptual determination, say in a philosophy lecture.

So the idealizing device he uses to sort through the many arts is this notion of perfect or complete communication. And he makes clear by his references to sensation, as distinct from thought and concept, that the idea of perfect communication is not to be thought of as the clarification of all possible mental contents, by means of better or more capacious concepts. He does not mean, therefore, that the making explicit of the content of the communication by conceptual means everything that Robert Brandom wants in making it explicit – the perfectly perspicuous account of all the inferential commitments involved in a saying. That is not perfect communication, or complete communication. Rather, complete communication communicates contents that are significant in their residual sensational aspects, that is, in their nonidentity to the concepts they colour and inflect.

Communication, you might say, is perfect, in this light, when it also conveys what is not mediated by concepts. So if science – and if you wish, philosophy (it depends on how you think of philosophy) – is the idea of what can be made conceptually determinate, and in the Dialectic of the Critique of Pure Reason, Kant says that the goal of the progress of science is complete conceptual determinacy. That is, for any concept, to be able to say whether it falls under or not any other concept – if that's what science is, then Kant is here opening up the possibility of a form of communication, and therefore a form of expression, and

therefore a form of meaning, other than the perfectly rational. Conceptually determinate meaning. Hence, there is art because the ideal of communication, of making oneself completely understood socially, requires the social acknowledgement of what cannot be made explicit in communication. We have art because our ordinary communications fail to communicate – I would say: what is most important to us.
Question: Pippin and Ginsborg, in each of their articles, talking about this normative aspect of aesthetic judgements – it's a capacity, but it's something we have to weigh on ourselves. How does this kind of social acknowledgement will institute that?
Here Kant is providing a motive and rationale for art that is independent, at this point (this is why I am working backwards), of the normative authority of reflective judgement, and therefore of the beautiful. I am here suggesting that there is here a new or different normative ideal: complete communication. Complete communication, as an ideal, is an acknowledgement of what remains blocked or incomplete, even if the conceptual content of communication is perfectly explicit and clear. So think about those times when you ask someone a probing question, and they give you a perfectly reasonable answer, and you say, "Yeah, I know that, but what do you really think?" Something has been left uncommunicated in their perfectly rational communication.
Question: How does this reading of communication relate to communicability in the sensus communis, and would this resist Arendt's appropriation of Kant for the political? That is, wouldn't the restrictive character of communicability here jeopardize the community?
Well it would destabilize any sensus communis, for sure, because it has a permanent interest in the thought that there is a deficit of communication built into communicability. And art is going to be the means, the mechanism, the acknowledgement of the displaced and unacknowledged meanings that are at stake in communication but have been left uncommunicated. And there will be as many arts, we might say, as there are displaced or unacknowledged meanings. This is about how the meanings we have are always less than the meanings we need, and the meanings we need cannot be fully made explicit, and art is the repository of those unspokens. Would that jeopardize the sensus communis or create a different one? I am not sure.
Question: How can something impossible be stipulated as an ideal?
This is a standard notion of ideal – the moral ideal, or any notion of ideal in natural science – read Nancy Cartwright. A frictionless surface: there are none! But we cannot do science without it. All of science, natural science, rests on idealizations of impossible states of affairs.
Q: But then the ideal is stipulated beforehand, before any communication and...
No. I am suggesting that it is the experience of the failures of communication, even in the most explicit communication, that generates an idea or ideal of perfect communication that we then have, I am now suggesting, as a critical impetus against pure conceptuality.
Question: How do we have it if it's never been reached?
Just the same as there is the idea of a perfect friend, even though no one has ever been one (per the Metaphysics of Morals). Aristotelians may or may not want that kind of thing...
[28:00]
So, the idea is that the arts are sites of disclosure of the uncommunicated elements of social communication, and that their being so can help us to grasp the complexity of the relationship between cognition and affect in art. Because the displaced or unacknowledged meanings given form in art are precisely – and I am just using sensations for the moment but gestures would do just as well (think of gestures as paintings, sensations as music, but we'll just use the phrase "sensations" for the both of them) – are precisely meaningful sensations, they cannot be regarded as anything but undischarged demands on understanding. That they demand uptake an acknowledgement by the understanding, so the desire to distinguish affect from concept, in order to quarantine affect in the domain of the presentational impact of art, may seem to be in the service of the significance of affect to art, but in practice it functions as the abstract concepts' last line of defense against the confrontation with its own communicative weakness, which is to say its normative ethical and social weakness.
What I mean by that is, if you run the concept-affect distinction too hard, you're going to give too much to the concept. So rather what you want to say is the affect is that aspect of the concept itself that the determinate concept fails to communicate in its own regard. So if you're Kristeva, you're going to say it's the semiotic element of the concept itself that gets lost in its becoming determinate.
[30:45]
Question: Is that parallel to the distinction you made in the first half between rationality and the sublime?
I hope not.
Q: ...In that the sublime is some excess...
Not every excess is the same. Let's be careful here. I will want to say that there is something to the relationship between art and the sublime, but we will come to that. Let us not just jam together every time we see reason and its other.
The beauty of this account in Kant is that affect and gesture are not sublime others, they are unacknowledged sources of meaning, bits of communication that have gone astray, bits of social demand that have not been acknowledged. The unacknowledged meanings at work in communication here are taken to be neither unacknowledgeable, nor merely not-yet-acknowledged, but are demands for response in extremis. That is, response, the provision of which is a matter of historical contingencies, that abstraction aims to leave behind.
Think of it this way. In Butler's talk this weekend, she said that the notion of the scent was something that had to do with rogue speech, and that rogue speech was unspeakable within a regime of discourse. And that it could only appear as unspeakable, and perhaps unspoken, or what cannot be spoken, and what demands to be spoken.
Well, Kant's interested in a demand of that kind, a demand that is putting absolute pressure on our regimes of existing communication. Now, if this is right, then it explains why Kant's account of the plurality and specificity of the arts – explains why there is not, and cannot be, a system of the arts. There cannot be a system of the arts because the plurality of the specific arts derives from the logical connection between the communicative deficit of the abstract concept and the immeasurable field of displaced meanings. And that is to claim that there is no concept that will permit us to cognize the totality of the arts.
Horowitz puts this thought this way: "There is not system, but solidarity becomes the right metaphor for the internal relation of the several arts. They testify jointly, in their plural specificity, to the perpetual need for judgement."
So the plural specificity of the arts is an expression of art's tactlessness or untimeliness or provocation or unjustifiability. That is, art, just like the rogue speech in Butler's discourse, has about it a necessary tactlessness because it is taking up what has thus far

precisely been unacknowledged and in principle is unacknowledgeable by determinate conceptuality.
So what arts reveal are the ways in which rogue meanings press on us despite their not being turned into concepts. They don't stop pressing on us. After all, if arts convey both these unacknowledged meanings and their incommensurability to determinate meanings, then they harass us in a certain way. What makes the arts tactless or intimate in their communication, or seeming like their harassing us, is their untranslatability. That even when the arts are there, those meanings are not then able to be conveyed and made determinate and picked up. No, the arts themselves are the site of the fact that what we have is something like an idiolect that cannot be generalized or further translated.
Another word for a meaning that is demanded in the differend – Lyotard would call the site of a meaning for which there is no word "suffering." So we may say that arts are the site of suffering that has not found social expression. And it is perpetual because the artistic expression acknowledges those meanings without finding the ability to translate them or redeem them.
[40:00]
That's all surprising coming from Kant. The power of the account is again surprisingly the irreducibility of the arts as conveyors of meanings, and not just any meanings. What we do when we create works of art is we create works that can bear the burden of human significance. I take it that bearing the burden of human significance, in the account of the plurality of the arts, is given articulation by the idea of uncommunicated meanings. It is given generality in Kant's account by his account of aesthetic ideas.
Let me stop there.
Question: Then what is the role of the art critic?
To provide access to the work itself. Not to translate out, and give it another meaning that can then socially circulate, but to assume the idiolect – that was my claim, that there is an idiolect character of the arts, which is why art is harassing – but the critic can at least create pathways to the idiolect, so that it can be encountered.
Question: Why do we need a critic to provide access?
Because of form. Form is a way of taking up and discharging it. You read Hamlet, and the reasonable question is, "Well, what undischarged idea is at stake here?" In my judgement, most readings of Hamlet are way off base. I want to say this is a play about the impossibility of losing your mother and your father, about the sudden experience of subjectivity emanating out of the absolute father and the absolute mother. And then I'm going to have to make a story about that. But at the end of the day, you're going to have to experience the play. The aesthetic ideas that are at work in that play, I am going to claim, are mourning and melancholy, and the form of the play is going to be a certain tragedy and a certain narration that are going to embody them and give all these consequences and connections.
Art works are the occasions in which we can acknowledge and work through these unacknowledged meanings.
Question: Meaning is, if anything, something shareable...
There are different ways of sharing. There is a confusion about the notion of shareability. It may mean transferability, or it may mean capable of plural encounter, and they are both reasonable notions of shareable. We can both share the experience of the same object, not by communicating directly with one another, but by, as it were, finding ourselves capable of equally being responsive to it, and being able to acknowledge our mutual responsiveness to it. So that there is a certain coordination, or failures of coordination, that criticism does, but in relation to another object. But I do not think – and this is the problem I have with Dummett's whole philosophy of language – the opposite of privacy is not decontextual translatability. The opposite of privacy is: capable of being experienced by another. Otherwise the notion of art is sunk. And the notion of non-discursive cognition is sunk. If there is such a thing as non-discursive cognition, be it by ostension or acquaintance or immediate encounter, if that is a form of cognition, then it has to be capable of being both objective and non-transported. That's going to be true of even the simplest demonstrative.
Question: Given this account of art, is there a possibility of non-tragic art? Is there a kind of non-translatable meaning that wouldn't just be reducible to suffering?
Do you think comedy is funny? Aristophanes is funny? You may laugh, but he is the darkest of playwrights. I'm not denying laughter, or epic poetry. But I am saying that they are about ranges of experience, and some of them may even be heartwarming ones, if you wish. Giving birth. The great poem by John Berryman on The Homage to Mrs. Bradstreet which has the great two stanzas of her giving birth. I don't know what it's like to give birth, needless to say, I never will – neither did Berryman, for that matter – but it's a remarkable sixteen lines.
[19]
So squeezed, wince you I scream? I love you & hate off with you. Ages! Useless. Below my waist
he has me in Hell's vise.
Stalling. He let go. Come back: brace
me somewhere. No. No. Yes! everything down hardens I press with horrible joy down
my back cracks like a wrist
shame I am voiding oh behind it is too late
[20]
hide me forever I work thrust I must free
now I all muscles & bones concentrate
what is living from dying?
Simon I must leave you so untidy
Monster you are killing me Be sure
I'll have you later Women do endure
I can can no longer
and it passes the wretched trap whelming and I am me
[21]
drencht & powerful, I did it with my body!
One proud tug greens heaven. Marvellous, unforbidding Majesty.
Swell, imperious bells. I fly.
Mountainous, woman not breaks and will bend: sways God nearby: anguish comes to an end. Blossomed Sarah, and I blossom. Is that thing alive? I hear a famisht howl.

Tragedy just seems the wrong word. I should say I am using the notion of suffering formally, not morally. It's about the blockage. Our inability to have exposed those things that need saying.
Question: I wonder about the relegation of affect to the realm of art, and whether that happens only once the realms of truth and art are separated, in the modern world.
There is only art in the full sense in a non-religious society. There can neither be philosophy nor art where there are gods. So the answer to your question has to be yes. In the Greek world, art arises from the collapse of the Greek gods. Religious art is not art, it is religious ritual.
Question: Where is technic in your account? Making something, and sharing that? Is this not an overly intellectual, highbrow account of art?
I haven't got to art-making yet. Technique, for Kant, is the body of aesthetic ideas. That's literally the image he uses.
[53:50]
Question: You talk about failures of communication, introducing the idea of what gets left out in communication, but the way that Kant introduces this is the analogy between the arts and the way people express themselves in speech. So he is suggesting that there is a way in which people do communicate that goes beyond conceptual communication. [Jay: Indeed] You haven't talked about that. And that would suggest, on that analogy, that encountering an artwork is a very personal, one-on-one encounter that has these other aspects to it. And that's just slightly different from the way that you're suggesting...
Your account leaves out the plurality of the arts. Your account exactly imagines that there is this complete communication ordinarily, and then the arts can follow that. That is the Wagnerian fantasy. I am suggesting that for Kant, the thought is rather different. Where you're right is that he is aware that there are breakdowns in ordinary communication. You experience this every week when you go home and reread your notes and they make no sense. Because you are missing the context, gesture, etc. So, everyday communication, Kant acknowledges, involves sensational, gestural aspects. But he is equally claiming that our notion of determinate meaning... He is aware that there is a gap between conceptual determinacy and complete communication.
Question: I can see how what you are saying applies to some arts, but what about realism? A painting of a pear on a table. What's the rogue meaning?
I am going to ask you: Kant says that judgements of natural beauty express aesthetic ideas. Same question. He is going to say that something has been unexpressed, and that there are reasons why I am one of those people who loves Morandi. I love those paintings of those goddamn bottles. Or even worse, I adore Agnes Martin. So, there is a story to be told here. We need a deeper conception of aesthetic ideas before we get into that.
[1:00:00]
Let me try to get started on aesthetic ideas. I am working backward, so back to §49. Works of art, for reasons we will return to, are produced by genius. In §49 Kant says that works can be formally fine, but fail. And he says it will fail because it lacks spirit. What is spirit? Animation, self-sustaining play, harmony of the imagination and the understanding.
Spirit [Geist] in an aesthetic sense is the animating principle in the mind. But what this principle uses to animate [or quicken] the soul, the material it employs for this, is what imparts to the mental powers a purposive momentum, i.e. imparts to them a plat which is such that it sustains itself on its own and even strengthen the powers for such play.
Now I maintain that this principle is nothing but the ability to exhibit aesthetic ideas.
And then he gives his first definition of aesthetic idea:
I mean a presentation of the imagination which prompts much thought but to which no determinate thought whatsoever – that is, no determinate concept – can be adequate, so that no language can express it completely and allow us to grasp it. It is easy to see that an aesthetic idea is the counterpart (pendant)
for some reason he puts in parentheses "pendant" – he wants a hierarchy. He doesn't want us to think aesthetic ideas are as important as rational ideas, so he makes them the pendant, what hangs from those rational ideas, realizing that the notion of counterpart didn't do it
of a rational idea, which is, conversely, a concept to which no intuition (presentation of the imagination) can be adequate.
So, an aesthetic idea is an intuition, but it's unlike any intuition we've yet seen in Kant. It's an intuition that is a bearer of meanings, a presentation of a particular, an individual one, but this individual one is not awaiting conceptual determination, rather it is a source of meanings which no concepts are equal to, or capable of fully exposing, just as rational ideas – ideas of reason (freedom, the soul, the world as a whole) – are ideas for which it is impossible to provide a determinate intuition.
He gives a variety of definitions of these. At Ak342, he says
An aesthetic idea cannot become cognition because it is an intuition (of the imagination) for which an adequate concept can never be found. A rational idea, conversely, can never become cognition because it contains a concept (of the supersensible) for which no adequate intuition can ever be given.
I think we may call aesthetic ideas unexpoundable presentations of the imagination, and rational ideas indemonstrable concepts of reason.
So Kant's first thought, in thinking about aesthetic ideas, is simply – definitional now – they are going to be presentations which, for reason we have not yet been given, but he is aiming to convince us, cannot themselves be made conceptually determinate or explicit.
I am going to follow his elaboration here in §49, and then try to defend the notion of aesthetic ideas as a good one.
After giving this original definition of aesthetic idea, Kant then makes a series of elaborations, on pp. 314-315. There are several things he says, and we need to label each of them and then put them together in a consistent package.
First, he says,
For the imagination ([in its role] as a productive cognitive power) is very mighty when it creates, as it were, another nature out of the material that actual nature gives it.
This is actually extremely surprising. The claim here is that the imagination, in making a second nature, is saying that first nature, that is, causal deterministic mechanistic nature, can be eclipsed. Which is to say that the mechanisms of first nature can be supervened upon by meanings, thereby taking on a significance that is in excess to natural law, but take on a meaningfulness that cannot be made fully determinate. And I take it that the non- arbitrariness of this moment depends on the thought that we have first nature as raw material. So that part of what I am going to call "the transcendental opacity of aesthetic ideas" is to be understood as in part dependent upon the fact that the material that aesthetic ideas work upon is the raw material of first nature

itself.
But to put it that way is to suggest that what is at stake here, at least in part – and I am going to return to this next week – is, in thinking about this notion of second nature, Kant is thinking about aesthetic ideas as a mediation, or a suspension, of the dualism between freedom and determinism, itself. Because after all, the raw materials, the material stuff, is what is causally determined, and we going to be able to shape that material in ways in which we suspend the efficacy of those causal laws as giving the full intelligibility of what appears before us, and therefore what appears before us is something that coheres with our need to express meaning, then we have subtly or not- so-subtly at least suspended the absolute duality between phenomena and noumena, between freedom and causality.
Let me give an example. Any bit of music is going to depend upon all the ordinary mechanisms of sound waves hitting our ears, instruments causally interacting, all that stuff. And yet, certain structuring, just of those sounds themselves, into melodic, rhythmic structures, is going to become the expression of grief. Brahm's violin concerto – something like that.
So, it's that power to take that material and suspend its causal meanings into another type of meaning, and a meaning that cannot be detached from the ordering of that material. If that's right, it would follow that every artwork, and I suppose this is part of the charm of artwork, is an imaginative sublation of nature; that in aesthetic ideas, nature is not merely places in the light of human freedom, but recreated and liberated from theoretical laws.
Something about art is a demonstration, not merely that we can control nature – we know that all the time – but that nature is not resistant to, but indeed can be a vehicle for, our deepest meanings. Indeed, not only a vehicle for them, but the only vehicle by which they can be communicated. So the realm of nature, rather than being the antagonist, suddenly becomes the indefinite resource for the possibilities of those communications that ordinarily are uncommunicated.
Our concept of an object is necessarily of something bound by causal laws. That is its condition of intelligibility, of appearing as an object at all. Don't worry about how it happens. That's the fundamental commitment. Now, in certain ways we always know we can work with those laws, that's what we do when we build a building. This is something else. This is not merely harnessing those powers are redirecting them to human ends. This is thinking of them as meaningful.
Question: The story you are telling sounds a lot like McDowell. But he does so without art. So what role does art play in this story about first and second nature?
McDowell has an insufficient account of first nature. He helps himself to the idea of second nature so thoroughly
that the realm of law becomes a theoretical posit only of interest to the natural sciences. nature is overly optimistic.
His notion of second
Kant's Third Critique Jay Bernstein
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A lot of next week's lecture on morality and taste is a negative argument against the idea of the supersensible substrate. As you know, Kant has this worry about the relationship between freedom and causality, and in order to get around this he tries to imagine that maybe there is some substrate that is neither freedom nor causal. And it just seems to me one of his silliest and worst ideas. That was what I was going to talk about next week, and I can do that, or since it is our last week, I could give the lecture I am just finishing and planning to give tomorrow on Picasso, which takes up almost all the ideas we were dealing with in the course, about meaning, about life, about the relationship between art and materiality, and about the role of art in our judgements about the world instead. So you have a choice.
[The class chooses pizza and wine with Picasso.] A wise choice. It will be full of pictures.
[3:20]
THE ARTS
Last week I ran an argument, the structure of which was the following:
First Part
Unlike any other account of the system of the arts, Kant's is intended to be pluralist. That is, he runs an argument about the irreducibility of the different arts to one another, and he does so on the basis of an implicit idea of what he calls ideal or complete communication.
Complete communication has 3 elements: concept
gesture
sensation
A complete communication would be an ideal synthesis of all of these.
communication falls woefully short of ideal or complete communication, the consequence of which is that art picks up, or responds to, all those things that the existing means of communication fails on. So the very existence of art, on Kant's account, is a response to unexpressed needs for communication that existing means of communication fail.
The arts –
"sensation" referring to the arts that are akin to music,
"gesture" to those that are akin to painting and sculpture, and
"concept" to those that are akin to poetry –
are irreducible to one another. Each of those arts are attempts to give expressivity to those unmet or unsatisfied demands for communication.
I drew the analogy with Judith Butler's notion of rogue speech: art is the speaking of that which has remained unspeakable in accordance with existing communicative modes. There is, I argued, a deficit of communication built into everyday communicability itself, and the each of the arts, in their medium-specificity, are potentialities of meaning.
What Kant is here suggesting is that the notion of meaning cannot be reduced to the notion of determinate meaning. Which is to say that scientific meaning (which is the ideal of fully determinate communicability) itself is a form of unwanted hegemony over communication itself. And the development of the individual arts is the development, in ways that cannot be fully controlled or predicted, of the potentialities for meaningfulness in these non-conceptual domains.
As a consequence, in the system of arts, I argued, there is at most a solidarity of the various arts with one another. The last thing we want is the complete or ideal communication – the ideal art, which is all the arts in one.

Put another way, the attempt to translate one form of art into another form of art is a denial of the structural and material possibilities of meaning that human embodiment involves. Which is why I had an endless series of communications this summer with Ken Wark, author of The Hacker Manifesto, Gamer Theory, and a real proponent of the digital world and of digital art. For me, digital art is the death of art, necessarily, because it is exactly the thought of the translatability of all media into just one: an underlying digital structure. We got fed up with each other but we're still talking. He's one of the most talented young thinkers around.

The arts are all, necessarily, intimate communications. Almost idiolects. The beauty of art is that it is born to failure, unlike science, which is born to success. Art can only succeed by failing because it can only inhabit its domain of the idiolect. It can only acknowledge its own limitations, its own inadequacies, and plunge into that structure of particular meaning that is intentional indifference to other forms of meaning.

Art is always fragile, always unpredicted, always in a sense unjustifiable (we will come back to this in the section on genius), except in its very existence. Art cannot be grounded or rationalized or founded. The very notion of art is that it must, to succeed at all, transgress beyond existing norms of communication.

[13:15]

Question: So the arts of speech that are based on the concept are categorically distinct from the arts based on gesture and sensation, but at the same time, as an art, somehow related to sensation?

Absolutely. And indeed, what distinguishes poetry from discursive argument is that there are domains of materiality of meaning, say for example by means of sound or meter, that contribute to meaning, but are not themselves conceptual.

Question: Does that affect the categorical – their being separate from each other?

In the case of poetry, in the case of all of them, they're all structures, in dominance. Sensation isn't pure. You might say sensation is a structure based not just on sound but on rhythm and meter, and then you can say that we cannot think of rhythm and meter without the notion of gesture (the rhythm of the heart), and so on. So they intersect with one another, but they accept their material conditions of possibility rather than fight against them. So they are in that sense perfectly finite in that their limitations, what makes them limited and insufficient, are also their conditions of possibility.

[15:34]

Second Part

Question: You wondered earlier whether ethics can really bear anything more than exemplary particularity: "this is what it means to be a good friend." Perhaps what Kant is after here is something like that. Shakespeare gives us Iago and tells us, "This is what it means to be cunning."

I think that's absolutely right. So the question is, what is art doing when it's doing that? My suggestion is it is not simply giving an essential definition, although it can sound that way, and Heidegger, in The Origin of the Work of Art, makes it sound that way. That seems to me like a mistake. It's not the essence, but something analogous to it.

What the artwork reveals is that, for the item under discussion, that item is a transcendental condition for the possibility of experience for us. Each work of art is a kind of transcendental deduction, namely of the necessity, or the categorial status, of a particular idea.

The reason why ideas, in artworks, cannot be judged true or false, in the ordinary way, is because art does not do things like announce "here is an image of what love looks like in the world." That may be what the sociology of love does – Beck or Bauman are trying to say "here's a picture of what love is now operating like." That is not what art does, and that is why art is not subject to a correspondence theory of truth.

Artworks are doing something else. Each work of art attempts to bear the burden of human significance. Artworks show how we cannot make sense of our lives unless this concept has this kind of bearing for us. This is how human experience has meaning at all, not with respect to everything, but simply with respect to this. So it is not surprising that in a world in which, for example, so much of our lives are based on intimate relationships, we have novels all about love or marriage or friendships, because those are the ways in which we are literally attempting to make sense of our own lives.

Art cannot be matched against the world because it is itself philosophical. In that sense, using the notion of aesthetic idea is exactly right: it is the attempt to reveal or disclose or exhibit how a range of experience that circulates around a particular phenomenon comes to bear the burden of meaningfulness for us, and we suddenly feel, when we are in touch with it, that it gets closer to us than our own lives. Listening to Casals playing Bach, I know what grief is. I know that life is grievable. I can only make sense of that thought in relationship to those sounds. Those sounds and that pattern are the grievability of life, and the thought that life could be other than that is refuted by that music. That music has to bear the weight of that claim.

I think that is why aesthetic ideas cannot be made determinate, because there is no object they're corresponding to. They are indeed ideas in partially Kant's sense, but without the phenomena/noumena distinction, which, I am suggesting, leads him on a series of red herrings. Everything he says about aesthetic ideas is better than the phenomena/noumena distinction, and hence better than his notion that aesthetic ideas express rational ideas or symbolize them, and better than the notion of completeness or maximum, although I am again saying that if we use the phrases "maximum" or "completeness" themselves metaphorically, as expressive of bearing the burden of human significance, then there is a kind of rightness to the claim.

Question: How is this different from the Romantic Fragment?

I think the Romantic Fragment grew out of ten paragraphs of the Third Critique, roughly, §§40-51.

Question: [unintelligible]

Art arises out of the failures of communication in everyday life. Everyday life does not give us the articulateness of our fundamental commitments. Of course, to claim that every work of art enacts a kind of transcendental deduction, I am kind of half-paraphrasing Stanley Cavell, when he draws on an argument from Emerson, who says, "Every word they say chagrins us," to which Cavell's response is, Kant was wrong in thinking there were only twelve categories. Every word of the language can suddenly seem to us as in need of a transcendental deduction. I think that's right. That's why I'm skeptical about both the number of categories and Hegel's logic. Every word can suddenly be in need of a transcendental deduction, because we do not know what word, what range of experience will suddenly be the one we need to make sense of for our lives.

Question: Including the infinite (to get back to the sublime)?

In principle... I mean, you can always play the game. You can play the game with Plato's ideas. "Socrates, is there an idea of mud?" To which Socrates says, "Well, if there are ideas, then there are ideas of mud." So my answer is, sure, why not? I'm

committed to the thought that mud and the infinite can both be in need – I'm not saying they are in need, or that I can imagine the cases of need – all I'm saying is that it's an unregulated sphere, because of the limits or failures of communication or communicability, and we don't know where we're going to need the help, or what's going to confront us.
Question: Why do you think Kant privileges poetic expression?
Because poetic expression is closest to language, therefore closest to the work of the imagination itself. There are some wonderful essays by Jane Kneller on this, trying to show that the imagination has the job of secularizing the noumenal. That's roughly what romanticism is all about: secularizing everything by turning it into poetry. So it's the proximity between poetry, language, and imagination... Everyone from Lessing – even earlier –, right on through the Romantics, assumes the arbitrariness of language, which means its malleability. The malleability of language – the arbitrariness of the signifier, if you're a Saussurian – is what makes it usable by the imagination, in the way that, for example, Lessing argues in Laokoon. Freedom, the imagination and language form a constellation. This is also noted by the Schlegel brothers – there are explicit paragraphs in the Athenaeum.
Question: What is the difference between aesthetic ideas and free play?
I am going to later suggest – I'll just be quick now – following an argument of Kirk Pillow's, that free play is form, and aesthetic ideas is content. The form is the form of the beautiful, the content is the sublime.
Question: How does aesthetic experience come out of certain forms? Why couldn't it just be any phenomenal experience that generates the aesthetic idea of free play?
Any experience can. What the arts do is bind themselves to the rigour of their medium, as a way of doing this as a practice. So the difference between art and the rest of life is, it's not that we don't use metaphors and gestures all the time, and sometimes hit levels of oratorical power and expressivity, but it's an accident. Art is that domain of practice that aims at this and takes it up. So it is the making explicit of these differential structures, and the elaboration of them in light of the deficits of communication in everyday communicability.
Question: You said that when you listen to Casals play Bach, you know what grief is. But couldn't you get that just by turning on the radio? Isn't the interesting thing about Casals playing Bach the fact that it makes the grief simultaneously enjoyable?
That was just the question from before. What I am saying is that a community that can fully acknowledge grievability in the way that I am suggesting – that can have it as part of its culture – is a community that is more likely to really respond to the grief of a particular experience when it comes in contact with it, because that grief will now have a standing or status or shared rationality that it would not have if it were just a singular experience of "Oh god, that's awful!" (turn off the radio, make popcorn). Art is limited – it's not practice, it's not ethics, it's not politics – it's what we have when those things are failing us in radical and systematic ways. All art is about the absence of a politics or an ethics that we could own. If we had the politics we would like to have, I have no idea whether we would have an art culture. That's Schiller's argument, in Aesthetic Education: art only arose when Greek politics failed. The great age of Greek art arose as Greek political culture declined. Art is always memorial or utopian, a memory or a hope of an engagement that is failing us. But that goes along with the definition I started with: the deficit in communication. If there were no deficit, then there wouldn't be this need that art answers to and that we feel struck by when we come across it. Art wouldn't be answering to anything.
Question: Is your recording of Casals on compact disc?
I've had it in every format imaginable. I used to not have any machines that played music back, so I would only hear Casals on radio. But then I got a record machine and now I have a machine that plays those discs.
Question: ...Because speaking of the plurality of the arts, what role does the medium play? This is in the context of your comments on digital art.
Photography, for example, is not an art medium. It is a technology that can be used for a variety of purposes, including advertising, shapshots, and art. In the case of music, the capacities of digitalization are being supervened by the desire to have the art of music – the art of sound – transmitted. That's all. As Benjamin says, we're not leaving the world of mechanism behind, we're supervening on it. The same goes for digital. There's no purity here. That's why I want to keep the question of mechanism going. Let it die, and you have some fancy purity. I don't see any justification for that.
Question: Is art a mode of production or a mode of consumption? Maybe not consumption, but of relation to the object?
Art is a human practice of production and consumption. It is the production of objects, Kant says, for the purposes of expressing aesthetic ideas.
Question: ...So you cannot relate artistically to something that was not produced for that purpose?
We've spent twelve weeks on the aesthetics of nature! And I'll have to come back and say more about how nature relates to this, but my suggestion from the beginning of this discussion has been that Kant is simply more interesting on art than the notion of natural beauty would lead one to anticipate.
Question: Is it always that art communicates that which cannot be communicated? Or is it sometimes that art communicates what is always communicated, but just exalts it and makes it beautiful?
There has to be a need. Art is not mere fantasy, cooking up some crazy idea. Art answers needs for communication. Beauty is the form in which those reach perspicuous presentation – perspicuous (and I'll get to this in the second half) because of the structure of purposiveness without purpose.
[1:06:00]
Question: How does this all relate to the debate about what constitutes art, and how to distinguish between (real) art and non-art?
As soon as art becomes art, then the question will arise, of necessity (and this will bear exactly on the question of genius): is it art? Because each artwork is going to be a new step along the way, in the capacities for human meaningfulness. And because it is going to be ungrounded, any modern art (that is, art that is not politics, or religion, etc.) is going to necessarily raise the question of fraudulence. Which is what all of Michael Fried's criticism is about – the question is theatricality, which is a question of fraudulence, and how that fraudulence became bound up with certain moments of art.
Question: Fried's problem with minimalism is that it takes modernism's exploration of the medium so far that it collapses the distinction between the work and the medium ... So is there a distinction between art that is new and dangerous but allows art to stand, and art that threatens the very existence of art?
I would want to hold off on the notion of "too dangerous." There is no such thing as too dangerous. There are lots of possibilities for failure, and the question is how much failure is courted. Take Tony Smith's Black Box.
A six-foot, perfectly square black cube – that's certainly courting failure. Now, I have, in Against Voluptuous Bodies, a critique

of Fried. I think he's wrong about minimalism. I don't think he can distinguish minimalism from the art he supports, especially Noland and Lipsky.

But that's the job of criticism – to take up the burden of making those distinctions in significant ways. I used Frank Stella, in his book Working Space, where he criticizes Noland, against Fried. And Fried says back to me "Okay, but you're using my vocabulary." And I think he's right – the fact that we're discussing his distinction means that he hit the notion of the potential of fraudulence that the Duchampians wanted to deny, right on the head.

The degree to which we find ourselves compelled by Fried is the way in which we cannot take Duchamp seriously. de Duve tries to bring in Kantian judgement, tries to bring in taste, but I don't see how he can do it: he has no way of anchoring the notion of significant failure. And what Fried is doing is pressing the issue that art must be capable of failure, or it cannot be capable of success. And at least that much of Kantianism, I want to buy into.

So after saying (p. 315) that aesthetic ideas put reason in motion and make reason think more, Kant goes on to the thought of aesthetic attributes, and says

If forms do not constitute the exhibition of a given concept itself, but are only supplementary [Neben-] presentations of the imagination, expressing the concept's implications and its kinship with other concepts, then they are called (aesthetic) attributes of an object, of an object whose concept is a rational idea and hence cannot be exhibited adequately.

The notion of aesthetic attributes has come under a fair amount of discussion, and it is roughly the ways in which concepts may be related to other concepts in ways that are aesthetic rather than inferential or logical. An aesthetic attribute takes a concept and associates other concepts around it – Adorno would say it forms a constellation. Those relationships are aesthetic in a way that corresponds to what I'm arguing is the notion of aesthetic idea.

Nearly everyone agrees that the best example of a relationship of concept to concept that is not inferential is that of metaphor. Metaphoricity sets up a concept in relation to another concept such that they inform one another in non-inferential ways, and further, we cannot make that relationship fully determined. Metaphors set up new ways of thinking by putting concepts to work in ways that their inferential powers do not themselves directly license.

If aesthetic ideas are ones that rake the boundaries of the understanding, and even that the imagination cannot fully totalize or make determinate, then don't aesthetic ideas do exactly the same activity of humbling that the sublime does? The notion of the sublime, in its excessiveness, is really what we're using, tacitly, in thinking about aesthetic ideas. That thesis is precisely the thesis that is investigated by Kirk Pillow, in his book Sublime Understanding. The book is divided into three parts:

an account of Kant's aesthetic reflection,

Hegel's aesthetics, and then

an attempt to show that both metaphoricity in general, and interpretation in general, should be understood on the model of the sublime.

I want to look at just some features of his account of Kant, in order to show what's at stake, because it will illuminate some of the path that we've already gone along, and also tell us about ways in which Kant goes wrong.

Pillow's general thesis is that aesthetic judgement, in its activity of connecting and being relational, is clearly a different kind of activity than that of subsumption. Reflection itself is a different way of engaging with ideas and concepts than making determinate or subsuming. In particular, what occurs in aesthetic reflective judgement is a judging, not of inferential relations, but of relations of whole and part. The entire analysis is governed by a part- whole logic, but one in which the whole is necessarily indeterminate – purposive but without a purpose. So, both artworks and natural beauties are wholes but they are not determinate wholes – that is, they are not for some identifiable purpose, and it's their lack of an identifiable purpose that sets in motion, and keeps in motion, you might say, their parts. It's exactly because the purposiveness is without purpose that we are set on the activity of relating and connecting without end – because to have an end would be to have a determinate purpose. So that structure of purposiveness without purpose is a way of thinking of the part-whole relationship that, if you want to be technical about it, is different from any conceivable mereological system. Mereology, for those of you who do not work on deviant logics, is the logic of part and whole. Kit Fine, etc.

So, aesthetics is a completely different way of thinking about part-whole relationships, and it's the idea of an indeterminate unity that makes this possible. The requirement that there be an indeterminate unity means that the notion of form is always the notion of an open form. Artworks are always, at a certain moment, not closed in upon themselves.

This requires that there be two steps, according to Pillow, in the analysis of artworks along this line, namely what I suggested before:

beautiful form and

a sublime content.

1. When we are judging works of art, we are trying to have a sense of them as wholes, for which we appreciate that they are types of wholes that make a claim in virtue of that wholeness, and that's the moment of beauty.
2. The moment of sublimity is: because that wholeness is indeterminate and open, the movement of the content is going to be sublime. And aesthetic ideas are therefore the paradigm, for him, of sublime content.

   The one bit of argument that I think is important here is the following. Kant notoriously gives an account of the notion of symbolic expression, and above all (and of course significantly) of the beautiful as a symbol of the morally good. He gives his own account of symbol in those paragraphs. When he thinks about the notion of symbol, he does so on the basis of analogy, and he claims that we can distinguish between

   quantitative analogies, and qualitative analogies.

   Quantitative analogies can be determinate because they are like ratios: two is to four as three is to x. And the value of x there is going to be perfectly determinate, it is going to be...?

   Six.

   Well done. You've passed your logic exam at NSSR.

   In the case of qualitative analogies, he says they do not provide determinate knowledge of the fourth term, rather they offer only the relation to a fourth, but not this fourth member itself. And the example he famously gives is the analogy of the handmill. The handmill is supposed to be in an analogy with despotic rule. The thought is that when you see a state apparatus mangling its subjects' freedom the way a handmill crushes through force, you know you are dealing with a tyrant.

   Using this example, he then in §59 gives his famous account that the intuition of beauty offers a symbolic expression of the directly unintuitable rational idea of the morally good. And the analogy is the following (Pillow, p. 83):

In the appreciation of beauty, we experience, Kant thinks, a direct and disinterested liking [that is] reflective of a capacity for judging universally, free from the influence of merely sensuous charms. Moral reflection[, analogously,] involves the production of universal rule free from the influence of inclination, and so aesthetic experience offers an intuitive embodiment of the self-legislative vocation of practical reason.

At p. 354 Kant sums this up by saying, through this analogy

Taste enables us, as it were, to make the transition from sensible charm to a habitual moral interest without making too violent a leap...

The claim is something like, in aesthetic reflective judgement, we judge disinterestedly, without being overwhelmed by sensation, charm, and this capacity is akin – indeed, analogous to – the capacity to judge morally independently of our inclinations. You might say, about judging beauty, that when you see a beautiful rose, you think "Ah, that's beautiful," whereas when you're faced with wild, rampant desire and you're forced to judge universally, that seems hard, but aesthetics eases us into that practice. It eases us into the practice of disinterested judgement, by learning to detach ourselves from the claims of sensation and inclination.

That's the core of that famous argument that beauty is the symbol of the morally good, and it strikes me as appalling, above all because the analogy in fact reduces itself to a very (not simple but nonetheless) direct simile: namely, beauty can symbolize morality because aesthetic experience is like moral reflection, due to the disinterested and free universality common to both. I don't see anything about inexhaustibility or sublimity there. In fact, it strikes me as as determinate as a quantitative analogy, and as a consequence it seems to me to stand well short of the notion of inexhaustibility of meaning that Kant attributes to aesthetic ideas. The meaning of an aesthetic idea cannot be determined by any rule, and certainly not by an analogical one. So aesthetic ideas cannot have symbolic function in Kant's sense. Hence Kant's theory of symbols is totally insufficient for his notion of aesthetic ideas.

Aesthetic ideas do not, Pillow says, exhibit concepts or ideas at all. "Instead they express an indeterminate and expansive range of meaning that no rule, concept, or rational idea can encompass." (p. 84)

That leads Pillow to think that the notion of aesthetic idea is richer than Kant's notion of symbol, and like a metaphor, aesthetic ideas are unlimited and boundless in their content, which is to say that they defy determinate comprehension by any one concept, and in that sense, aesthetic ideas are sublime.

Put differently, aesthetic ideas "surpass the maximum of comprehension that the imagination faces in the experience of vastness" (p. 86).

Second comment

§51 says the following

But in fact, the argument runs, ordinary

I went on to say that this idea of partial or indeterminate communication gets thematized in Kant very explicitly in the notion of aesthetic ideas. Aesthetic ideas are the content of what Kant is concerned with. I began by tracking the run of argument that begins on p. 314. He defines aesthetic ideas as

presentations of the imagination which prompt much thought, but to which no determinate thought whatsoever, i.e., no [determinate] concept, can be adequate, so that no language can express it completely and allow us to grasp it.

The next page and a half is an attempt to lay out the consequences of this notion of aesthetic ideas, i.e. meaningful intuitions.

As I was hinting last week, in the Critique of Pure Reason there is a wall or boundary between concept and intuition. You only know what an intuition is in virtue of the concept it falls under. That seems to be the point of the deduction of the categories, in the First Critique.

The entire Third Critique, I have been arguing, is an attempt to say that the notion of intuition has more complexity, more meaningfulness to it, than the notion of concept fully accounts for. The first elaboration of that idea is the notion of reflective judgement.

We are now getting a further elaboration of that idea through the notion of aesthetic ideas, because they are themselves intuitions of a certain kind, presentations, which are suggestive of thoughts, ideas, feelings, and the like, which is to say they aim at cognition. They do not aim at mere sensation. That's would be gastronomy, say. Art aims at cognition (all this sounds almost un-Kantian), but a cognition that no determine concepts can get on level footing with, and therefore that cognition extends beyond the powers of discursivity.

Kant takes it as obvious that there is meaning independent of, or not wholly absorbable by, conceptual meaning. He begins to unpack this through a series of steps. He first talks about creative imagination, which he calls the productive imagination. (The section on genius will be all about this.) Kant says that the productive imagination (p. 314)

creates, as it were, another nature out of the material that actual nature gives it. We use it to entertain ourselves when experience strikes us as overly routine.

The notion of a second nature at least means the following, according to this paragraph: that a given intuition sets us off thinking about something utterly different from what we would normally think of when faced with an intuition of that kind. Kant is being kind of Humean about this: if you're struck with a flower, then you have your normal associations of plant, trees... Then you go and look at the Georgia O'Keefes in the Met. You're not going to think about trees or biology. You're going to think about the most intimate versions of human sexuality imaginable. Which is to say it's an intuition – her painting of a flower – that sets us off necessarily associating with that image another set of associations, another set of ideas, which then seem to come to belong to that, and give us ways of thinking about it. So when we're looking at a Georgia O'Keefe, you may say that we're both thinking about flowers in ways that we had not before, but equally we're thinking about human sexuality and the female form in ways that we had not before. And they set up associations that are therefore fresh or new, and allow us to think about each. Hence the notion of a second nature is, at least, taking first nature and giving it a range of associations and meanings that it would not have on its own. We break from the laws of cause and effect and we enter into laws of association or connection that belong to cognition and meaning itself. And it's part of how we begin to think about what sexuality is: how it is revelled in, how it is dramatized, etc.

Part of this is that first nature is eclipsed, or the mechanisms that rule first nature are supervened upon by meanings that are not intrinsic to it, and because it is, there is no exact boundary to these things. There is no full or determinate statement of what a Georgia O'Keefe flower is meant to say. You can say the obvious, but when you say the obvious, you are leaving just about

everything that is significant unsaid.
[26:10]
Part of this equally means to say (and I'll come back to this in the second half) that nature is no longer conceived of as determined by the rules of Newtonian science alone. There is more to nature than cause-and-effect discourse allows.
There is an extraordinarily interesting debate in the new European Journal of Philosophy (December 2007 v. 15, issue 3), where John McDowell responds to Robert Pippin's essay in the McDowell reader ("On Pippin's Postscript," pp. 395-410), and then Pippin responds to McDowell (p. 411-434). Part of what this is about is the issue of second nature. Both of them want to say something like the following (and which I will pick up next week in the lecture on Picasso): the meanings Georgia O'Keefe allows us to attach to the notion of flower are not a mere projection. In some sense, the thought of nature having meanings above and beyond its causally reductive structure are not mere matters of projection. They are things that arise because of, and in the light of, our human, free and determined, habitation in a natural world, but that are nonetheless objective.
So the reason why the notion of a second nature is so fraught is because it's asking how post-Newtonian nature can mean, in ways that do not run afoul of the claim (which is the standard claim from the point of view of reductionist science) that we simply project human meanings onto nature, and that if we stop projecting, what we discover is that it's mechanism all the way down. So to take seriously the notion of aesthetic ideas, to take seriously the thought of artworks, is to take seriously the thought that
there is more potential in the materials of nature themselves – sounds, rhythms, meters (all stuff which can, by the way, be dealt with and analyzed in purely causal ways)
and that more is neither fanciful nor merely projection.
Remember, the problem here is this: the archetypal object of projection, of course, is God. There are no gods; we project the idea of God into the world. And what the Enlightenment taught is, beginning with the Greeks, was that it was a mere projection. Well, the claim of Newtonian science was, so is all meaning of the natural world a mere projection. Newton totally disenchanted the world – including, and above all (and this is why I want to talk about Picasso next week), the human body. The human body, as Descartes and Kant insist, is a machine. So the question is, can we have a notion of meaning of nature that is not merely, again, the cultural projection of meanings onto it. So something about the way in which we judge artworks, the way in which artworks operate, has to bear that weight of supervenience without falling afoul of the notion of willful projection.
Question: How does that relate to the debate between Pippin and McDowell?
[32:00]
McDowell is always to fast to drop the notion of first nature and let second nature be meaningful all by itself. This was the problem in that same book edited by Nick Smith. This was my critique of McDowell: he thinks disenchantment is a merely epistemic error, and that once we stop philosophizing, then the whole world will appear as second nature and everything will be fine, as if the disenchantment of the world were not a social fact as well as a certain structure of scientific thought. What Pippin wants to do is to take seriously the Hegelian thought, which is an extension of the Kantian thought, that all meaning must be attached to an I-think or a we-think, and that in a certain way therefore, we cannot have an understanding of the possibilities of meaningfulness without some notion of the way in which meaning can fail, and the way in which it could be a projection, a mere willfulness, merely instituted and not something stronger than that. That notion of failure is what McDowell insufficiently recognizes. That's one of Pippin's pointed critiques of McDowell.
Let's press on to the next paragraph (p. 314):
[40:50]
Such presentations of the imagination we may call ideas. One reason for this is that they do at least strive towards something that lies beyond the bounds of experience, and hence try to approach an exhibition of rational concepts (intellectual ideas), and this [these concepts] are given a semblance of objective reality.
Kant's claim here, which I'm going to say is not actually persuasive, is that one of the reasons we call the kinds of intuitions at stake here aesthetic ideas is that they strive to express rational ideas, and rational ideas are ideas of reason, which are exactly those ideas like freedom and virtue that are, for Kant, necessarily outside of the natural world, outside of what can be experienced in intercourse with the natural world, because they are noumenal. So his two-world theory is structuring the form of his argumentation here.
So, his thought is that aesthetic ideas are an attempt to give what he calls a semblance of objectivity, by which he means presentation in the objective world (he doesn't mean truth here, he just means exhibitability in intuition, i.e. being an object for us – he calls this "objective reality"). And then he thinks about this a second longer and realizes maybe something else is at stake here, and says that
Another reason, indeed the main reason, for calling these presentations ideas is that they are inner intuitions, for which no concept can be completely adequate.
It's a very peculiar sentence. Now his thought is, "I'm going to call this intuition an idea because ideas are the sorts of things for which no determinate concept can be given, and therefore they are like ideas in their indeterminacy." So really he is operating on an analogy, or a simile, because of sharing in the type of indeterminacy from conceptual indetermination that ideas have. He then goes on to explain his sentence –
A poet ventures to give sensible expression to rational ideas of invisible beings, the realm of the blessed, the realm of hell, eternity, creation, and so forth.
The thought is: give expression to things that are themselves necessarily invisible. And then he changes his mind:
Or again he takes [things] that are indeed exemplified in experience, [things] that are themselves phenomenal such as death, envy, and all the other vices, as well as love, dame, and so on; but then, by means of an imagination that emulates the example of reason in reaching [for] a maximum, he ventures to give these sensible expression in a way that goes beyond the limits of experience, namely, with a completeness for which no example can be found in nature.
I've been thinking about Kant off and on for 40 years now, and I have no idea what he means by "maximum" and "completeness" here. What does it mean to think about envy completely? Or the maximum of envy? The reason he is using the notion of maximum completeness is because that is what rational ideas are – they are always ideas of the unconditioned, or of some totality. So his intuition is that somehow art must be thinking of those things in that way. I can make no sense of that claim. What would completeness mean here?

But I want to take seriously why Kant is tempted by the idea of completeness or maximum. So let us ask, what do artworks do?
We may in general call beauty (whether natural or artistic) the expression of aesthetic ideas; the difference is that in the case of beautiful [schön] art the aesthetic idea must be prompted by a concept of the object, whereas in the case of beautiful nature, mere reflection on a given intuition, without a concept of what the object is [meant] to be, is sufficient for arousing and communicating the idea of which that object is regarded as the expression.
[24:20]
On page 301, Kant says
It will be said that this construal of aesthetic judgements in terms of a kinship with moral feeling looks rather too studied to be considered as the true interpretation of that cipher through which nature speaks to us figuratively in its beautiful forms.
So, nature is a cipher – that is, a secret or untranslated language – and the beautiful is the expression of aesthetic ideas.
Well it's certainly an odd turn to say, as he is, that nature appears as art, and that nature is expression of aesthetic ideas. You may say that's in opposition to what we've been doing. But is it? I guess the question would be, What might the language of nature be? What ideas do natural objects express? What is Kant thinking about when he says natural beauty expresses aesthetic ideas? Surely our concern for natural beauty cannot be meaningless. But what is it that we find in the beautiful that, like a work of art, might be thought of as expressing aesthetic ideas?

3. The very structure of awesome purposiveness, without the thought that it could have been created. (If intelligent design were true, we would not find the world beautiful. We would find it puzzling ("What was he thinking?") but not beautiful. Beauty requires the without-purpose.)
   What else?
   [29:00]
4. I take it that he must think that it expresses ideas like nature, life, purpose, vitality, contingency, (in the case of a crocus) fragility, (in the case of a redwood) sturdiness, monumentality. And these are not, I want to argue, mere projections, but give us a sense of the contours of the natural world.
   Question: But isn't all this anthropocentric?
   I have no problem with anthropocentrism. I admit that it is anthropocentric, but I want to deny that it is anthropomorphic.
   Question: They are ideas related to natural function...?
   They are ideas related to nature as nature, not ideas of gods or fairies or a mere screen for ideas that are wholly extrinsic.
5. These ideas' appearing to us in that way is just our experience of ourselves as natural beings in a natural setting. The experience of them in that way is exactly the removal of our anthropomorphic temptations, and the attempt to relocate ourselves as members of a natural habitat. Of course they are relational, but they are no more relational than the colour red. The notion of red requires that there are eyes that see red, but it doesn't mean that there's no redness in the world. It means that it has its character only in relationship to sensibilities capable of detecting light waves of different lengths. It doesn't mean that there is no redness, or that redness can be reduced to light waves of different lengths, because what light waves of different lengths do is... appear as different colours! In relation to natural objects such as ourselves.
   There is a huge literature about the relationship between aesthetic ideas and relational ideas like colour. And you can see why from the case of natural beauty: the problem seems exactly analogous.
   The arguments Kant made at the beginning, saying we found order and purpose in nature, were all along subtly preparing us for this idea of aesthetic ideas, of nature as a language above and beyond the language of causality.
   The production of artworks
   (We are working backwards, to the beginning of the chapter). Here the argument takes a different turn. The question of art is certainly in part a reflection on the relationship of freedom or culture to nature and body. That relation begins to come into focus in Kant's conception of genius.
   Genius is, I want to suggest, the exemplary expression of human freedom. Thinking about artworks is a difficult and exemplary way of thinking about the nature and meaning of human freedom. And the reason for that is obvious: when we make artworks, we make original, new meaning. We make meaning that doesn't follow from existing rules.
   Art is about originality and creativity, and these two concepts are the concepts that best help us think about the meaning of freedom. The cosmological question of freedom and determinism – thinking about freedom by simply asking the question "Is there some mechanism in the brain...?" –seems to be a hopeless way of thinking about the meaning of human freedom. What we want to do, when we think about the question of human freedom, is to make the cosmological questions dissolve into irrelevance. Thinking about the problems of creativity and originality and ways of doing that. Then the question "Was it really caused?" becomes a question about which we can only scratch our heads.
   The structure of my claim here is like the structure of Strawson's claim in his great essay on freedom and resentment – a standard essay on the meaning of human freedom. What Strawson does in that essay, following a line from Austin, is point out that being pissed off is a deep part of our grammar, insofar as we distinguish between voluntary and involuntary actions, and we don't know what it would be like to drop that distinction. So, the discovery that determinism is true could not get any traction in ordinary experience. We can't actually make sense of that claim, given our structures of responsiveness to things that happen by accident, inadvertently, unintentionally. When we think that people's thinking is causally determined, we lock them up, we give them drugs. We make distinctions between voluntary and involuntary, and nothing about the discovery, whatever it might mean, that determinism is true, could get any traction in relationship to the practices of everyday life. Strawson is saying that the cosmological question of freedom doesn't mean anything.
   The notion of creativity seems another way of putting out of play the concern of the cosmological question. Part of our interest in art is its consistent production of novelty. Most of us are inclined to think that history is full of changes in which new things emerge (whether you think it's progress or not). But the problem with new things emerging in history is that history works very slowly, often we can't see it happening, and often it happens behind our backs: as Marx says, we make history, but not under conditions of our own choosing. So don't have the sense of ourselves as makers.
   In the case of artifacts, like chairs and tables, we make things alright, but we make them in accordance with existing ideas – we simply follow a blueprint. The fascination of art is that in it, we have an infinite experience of the production of new things, new ideas, new objects: people making sense in ways that follow no existing rules of sense-making.

Question: Doesn't that critique only apply to mass production? What about an individual chair being made?
It's still being made from existing ideas. It may be a unique object but that just implies that the way in which an idea meets reality requires adjustments. The example my friend likes to use is automatic landing systems. The plane, all by itself, registers the wind, adjusts to contingency, and makes a new landing, but in a purely mechanical way.
Now, that's the skeptical line. I am not suggesting that that is the best way to think about craft activity.
Part of our fascination with art is that it is an area in which freedom appears. Freedom appears in art as originality. Hence the cult of originality – which is also the cult of the genius – is partly for us a fascination with the possibilities of transgression, of new meaning arising, and at least it gives us the sense that, in this little enclosed sphere of art, which is not the wide difficult world, we have some sense that history is possible. That history need not be a repetition compulsion, or simply the unfolding of mechanical laws, or the subsumption of human beings under social structures. That we are capable of shaping or fashioning the world.
Think about Plato's love of craft – everything for Plato is a craft. Why? Because craft is: having an idea and applying it. That's why Plato didn't like art. The notion of craft, for Plato, meant the old. The old, over. Plato wanted time to be dead. The notion of craft is, for Plato, dead time.
We have an idea of history as possibility of the new. "Modern times" and "new times" are the same, in German [neuezein]. Modernity is that experience of the possibility of new time. Art is, I would argue, the bearer of that idea of the possibility of new time – of fashioning and making self-changing.
Question: There is an intermediate case between craft – if you interpret that as just repetition – and the aesthetic notion of genius, which is the democratization of genius, which America has undertaken. This is seen in pragmatism, for example, which has this moment of creativity, but one that is democratized, and incremental, etc.
There are different definitions of democracy. One is self-rule, or the rule of the majority. Another notion of democracy – for example, in Claude Lefort's writing – is collective self-making. Democracy is the way in which a collectivity determines what it is by making itself over and over again – by deciding who we are. So democratic practice is the practice of asking the question, What is it to be a society at all? And how is it, in being a society at all, we relate to one another and to the world? That's a one-sentence version of the philosophy of Cornelius Castoriadis.
Question: What would you say about what might be called the latency period of beautiful things – something comes along that is beautiful but it takes a while for the universal voice to say it. Or else, things can later come to seem kitschy.
This is what the theory of genius is about – in order for something to be new, there must be a provocation. It must in some way explicitly flout what we already believe about that domain. Otherwise it cannot strike us as new. The new must appear, at least logically (and we can talk about reality in a moment), as a moment of nonsense. It must have that moment of excess in relation to given regimes of sense in order for it to be a systematic departure from it.
So every new must necessarily risk two types of failure: (1) the failure of in fact being destructive of existing rules but having no new rule to follow – that is, it may just be original nonsense, which is to say the possibility of failure is intrinsic to it absolutely; and (2) being original but never getting taken up. The primary object I'm going to talk about next week is Les Demoiselles d'Avignon, which every one of Picasso's friends thought was monstrous, and hated it so much that it stayed against the wall in his studio for a decade. And this in spite of Picasso's reputation at the time. This thing could not be tolerated. It's conceivable that it never would have gone into circulation.
[55:15]
Question: I wonder if another way of asking the question is: Who actually produces the work of art – that is, the work of genius. Because it it's not just the artist who produces it in a way that shocks convention, but some story has to be told about this new form, that at the time had no rules for its production. Then it's not just the artist, through this great imaginary act, who creates it, but the genius is also somehow the story that is told. And therefore the genius doesn't just reside with the artist, but with his recognition.
Absolutely. One of the things that Kant will say, alarmingly, is that genius can only be recognized by genius. Which is to say that the only test of genius is someone responding to it in an appropriate genial way.
Question: ...But the genius could also be interpreted in a more democratic way. The genius isn't superhuman...
It's not superhuman at all. If I were Heideggerian, which I am not, I would say that it is a manifestation of human transcendence, that is, the sense in which we are beyond ourselves, that we are not in complete self-possession of ourselves, including our own best thoughts. We produce and speak and act in ways that are intentional, but not, in being intentional, fully purposive, or fully within our control. Art makes explicit that notion of self-transcendence which has about it an anti-Cartesian conception of the subject. The notion of subjectivity, for the Cartesian, has something to do with absolute self-possession, or absolute self-control. And whatever you don't control or can't purposely intend is mechanism, nature acting against you. Kant wants to use the notion of genius to say that there is an excess in subjectivity beyond subjectivity, that is, beyond intention and control, that belongs to it, not in its failure of the human, but in the its most expressive realization of itself in free, creative action.
Question: I am wondering whether the way you are spinning out newness and originality can really fit within Kant's account of genius.
My problem with Kant is that it's utterly Maoist. It's a recipe for a Maoist revolution.
Question:...I take this to be a standpoint from Castoriadis, for example. If genius is nature giving the rule to art, then there is a sense in which what is happening through nature is a kind of productivity, but not through creativity. There is a difference between production – bringing forth some form that was there in some way – and a radical break in which a new form, that can't be deduced from all previous forms, comes about.
You're reading the role of nature in Kant as the bad unconscious?
I don't know what that means.
The question of nature here is the question of the imagination. The imagination is the indeterminate conditions for determinate action. When Kant says nature is giving the rule rather than me giving the rule, it is to acknowledge that there has to be an indeterminate plentitude of imaginary activity in order for true creativity to occur. Freedom, instead of being Willkür, which is just the power of spontaneity in Kant's moral theory, is instead the productive imagination here.
Kant does not have an account of the productive imagination other than his account of genius and aesthetic ideas. So you may say there's a missing phenomenology of mental experience to back this up, but I take it that by nature, he doesn't mean anything

other than the productive imagination. He uses the notion of nature there because he wants two thoughts: not under my explicit control, and because he's Kant he wants "somebody's gotta be in control here." So he uses the word nature as a sign of an anxiety about wanting lawfulness but without intentionality. And so he has to have a notion of opaque lawfulness – that's the set of metaphors he's playing on – but I take it that all of that anxiety boils down to the operation of the productive imagination.
Let me give an explicit example. What strikes Kant is that the notion of inspiration cannot be legislated. I cannot explain to you how it is that I come to say, "these two concepts are going to make a metaphor." So, he is struck by the fact that the very nature of originality involves what I want to call a moment of transcendental opacity. And must do. If there wasn't such a moment, then we'd be back in either pure intentionality or pure mechanicity. And Kant is in anxiety about that moment – just the moment in which you say, "Oh god, I want to express how much I love thee... I love thee like a summer's day!" Where did that come from? You're not going to account for that, because to account for that is the denial of originality.
So the difficulty of this moment is the difficulty of thinking about freedom without trying to make it rule-bound.
And Kant, being Kant, panics. And he panics by saying "It's nature in us." But he just means the productive imagination.