

# Subjectivity and Sociality in Kant's Theory of Beauty

BRENT KALAR  
University of New Mexico  
Email: kalar@unm.edu

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## Abstract

Kant holds that it is possible to quarrel about judgements of beauty and cultivate taste, but these possibilities have not been adequately accounted for in the dominant interpretations of his aesthetics. They can be better explained if we combine a more subjectivist interpretation of the free harmony of the faculties and aesthetic form with a type of social constructivism. On this 'subjectivist-constructivist' reading, quarrelling over and cultivating taste are not attempts to conform to some matter of fact, but rather to reconcile subjective perceptions through mutual interchange governed by the regulative goal of constructing a universal community of agreement.

**Keywords:** beauty, harmony of the faculties, free play, aesthetic form, subjectivism, constructivism, aesthetic argument, cultivation of taste, art criticism

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Among Kant's views about beauty are two significant and widely accepted theses that have generally been ignored by commentators. The first is that *beauty must be something it makes sense to quarrel about*. The second is that *the ability to appreciate beauty is something that can and must be cultivated*. In this paper, I shall argue that neither of these Kantian claims has been adequately accounted for in the leading interpretations of his aesthetics. The problem, as I see it, is an inadequate grasp of the depth of Kant's subjectivism about beauty. As a remedy, I shall show how we can interpret Kant's subjectivism in a stronger sense than usual, and combine this with a social-constructivist account of beauty. My view is that, for Kant, quarrelling over judgements of beauty and cultivating taste are not attempts to conform to some matter of fact, but rather to reconcile essentially subjective and individual-relative perceptions, motivated by the goal of generating an intersubjective agreement that is, ideally, universal.

## 1. Interpretations of Kant's Subjectivism in Light of his Commitments to Quarrelling and Cultivation

In the opening section of the Critique of Aesthetic Judgement, Kant proclaims that the judgement of taste about the beautiful is not 'cognitive' or 'logical', but rather 'aesthetic', 'by which is understood one whose determining ground cannot be other than subjective' (5: 203).<sup>1</sup> An aesthetic judgement in this sense involves a 'relating' of the representation of an object 'to the subject and its feeling of pleasure and displeasure' (5: 203). That is, in order to be judging an object aesthetically, my judgement must be determined according to my feeling of whether I like it or not; however, by means of the feeling of pleasure and displeasure 'nothing at all in the object is designated' (5: 204). Through this sensation no object or objective property is represented (5: 206). Rather, here the mind merely becomes conscious of itself (its own state) (5: 204).

Any plausible interpretation of Kant's theory of beauty, therefore, will have a way of accommodating his subjectivist statements, depending upon how the interpreter sees the relation of the judging subject to the object of judgement. At the same time, an interpretation has to accommodate the counterbalancing fact that the judgement of taste for Kant is governed by the norm of universal validity (*CPJ*, §§6–9, 5: 211–19). Two broad interpretative trends can be discerned as the dominant tendencies. The first tendency, which I call the 'naturalistic-causal' approach, includes such interpreters as Paul Guyer (1997) and Karl Ameriks (2003).<sup>2</sup> The second tendency, which I call the 'normative-intentional' approach, is exemplified by Henry Allison (2001) and Hannah Ginsborg (2015).

The naturalistic-causal approach begins with the harmony of the faculties of understanding and imagination in their free play, which Kant identifies as the source of pleasure in the beautiful (*CPJ*, §9, 5: 217–19). It construes this harmony as a given mental state, and sees certain objects as causing this state, which, however, only reveals itself indirectly through the pleasure it in turn causes. Thus the aesthetic judgement that a particular object is beautiful is a causal inference based upon one's awareness that one is currently experiencing pleasure while perceiving the object, along with the belief that the source of this pleasure is disinterested and founded solely on the form of the object (Guyer 1997: 88–97, 129). On this interpretation, the subjectivity of the judgement rests on the *epistemically* subjective position that one is in. My judgement is based merely upon introspective evidence available to me alone through my immediate self-consciousness, together with my entirely personal assessment, again based on introspection, of the source of that conscious evidence.<sup>3</sup>

This contrasts with an objective cognitive judgement which is based on publicly available evidence and intersubjective and impersonal methods of verification. However, it must be noticed that, on this interpretation, aesthetic judgements of the beautiful do still have a truth-value; the only difference is that there are no objective methods for ascertaining what this truth-value is (at least not decisively).<sup>4</sup>

The normative-intentional approach tends to de-emphasize giving a causal account of the origin of the mental state underlying the judgement of taste in favour of a perhaps more characteristically Kantian emphasis on the primacy of spontaneous human acting and the irreducibility of normativity in all spheres of human mental activity.<sup>5</sup> In this view, the aesthetic judgement of taste is, like all judgements, a reflective mental act whereby I affirm that my mental state in judging an object is appropriate, or as it ought to be.<sup>6</sup> While Allison and Ginsborg understand the feature of appropriateness in very different (and actually incompatible) ways, for both it entails that the pleasure in the beautiful is related *intentionally* (in the philosopher's technical sense) to the mental state of judgement.<sup>7</sup> On this view, pleasure is not a separate causal effect, but rather is a form of consciousness *through which* I perceive the activity of the faculties. Thus there is no need to construe the judgement of the beautiful as implying a causal claim. Nevertheless, the normative-intentional approach still presupposes that there is a truth-value to my judgement, at least insofar as its appropriateness is concerned. It tends to explain the *subjectivity* of aesthetic judgement primarily in terms of its being *independent of conceptual grounding*. That is, unlike objective cognitive judgements, the affirmation of the normative correctness of my judgement does not rest on a claim to be applying a concept correctly to an object; rather, it rests solely on a primitive characteristic of the faculty of judgement itself, which is the inherent normativity that it shares with cognitive judgement.<sup>8</sup>

In my view, neither of these approaches is very good at accounting for Kant's views about *quarrelling* over taste and *cultivating* it. This problem has been overlooked, for commentators generally either simply ignore the fact that Kant holds these views, or neglect to seriously consider their implications for his overall theory.<sup>9</sup> Admittedly, Kant's remarks on these features remain more suggestive than fully worked out. However, his commitment to them is unquestionable, and they are phenomena that should be accounted for in any adequate philosophical theory of taste.

First, let us consider quarrelling. Kant is clearly committed to the view that beauty must be something about which we can 'quarrel' or 'argue'

(*streiten*) (*CPJ*, §56, 5: 338). As a generator of the ‘antinomy of taste’ that some interpreters have regarded as the central problem of his aesthetics, this proposition is obviously significant (Mothersill 1991). Kant distinguishes quarrelling over matters of taste from the more familiar form of rational argumentation, which he calls ‘disputing’ (*disputieren*) (*CPJ*, §56, 5: 338). He says that these two modes are ‘certainly alike’ in that ‘they try to bring about unanimity in judgments through their mutual opposition’; however, ‘they differ in that [disputing] hopes to accomplish this in accordance with determinate concepts as grounds of proofs’ (5: 338). Given the normativity that the judgement of taste has as a claim to universal validity, we may take it for granted that quarrelling aims to bring about an agreement that is genuinely rational. However, it does not proceed by trying to *prove* a conclusion either deductively or inductively. A proof is impossible in this case because the judgement of taste is merely aesthetic, hence cannot be founded upon a discursive principle.<sup>10</sup> Each party in a quarrel must rely only upon their own immediate feeling, without appeal to general rules or third-person authorities. Unfortunately, Kant does not give a positive explication of this peculiarly aesthetic mode of argumentation, making it unclear how it is to be viewed, or how it remains a rational activity. Clearly, a Kantian account of quarrelling over beauty must walk a fine line. On the one hand, quarrelling cannot be equated too strongly with proving, lest taste lose its distinguishing aesthetic character. On the other hand, quarrelling cannot simply be emotive or rhetorical persuading. If it is to be rational, it must retain some guidance or directedness toward the norm of universal validity.

Second, Kant holds that good taste must be cultivated. In its purest form, taste is something that one may or may not, but ought to, have (*CPJ*, §7, 5: 213). A good illustration of Kant’s commitment to aesthetic cultivation is his memorable description of the ‘young poet’ who at first immaturely opposes his personal taste to that of the more cultivated, but, ‘when his power of judgment has been made more acute by practice’, will ‘depart from his previous judgment of his own free will’ (*CPJ*, §32, 5: 282). The cultivation (*Kultur*) of taste is something that must be encouraged or ‘recommended’, for it cannot be expected to occur automatically and without effort (*CPJ*, §14, 5: 225). Left to itself, taste remains crude (*CPJ*, §32, 5: 283). It is far from clear, however, how we are to picture the contrast between crude and refined taste, and Kant provides us with no well-developed account and few obvious clues. In a few places, he suggests that there is a connection between unrefined taste and the pleasure in ‘charms’ and ‘emotions’, such that the experience of the beautiful exists on a historical continuum with the experience of the agreeable

(*CPJ*, §41, 5: 297). In support of this interpretation, Kant observes that 'charms' appeal to an unrefined taste, but this appeal dissolves once taste is cultivated (*CPJ*, §14, 5: 225; §41, 5: 297). Yet, as in the case of quarrelling, he gives few details about the nature of the process itself, or what the rational constraints on it might be.

Kant's admittedly sketchy accounts of quarrelling and cultivation need to be filled in by a sound interpretation's appeal to other fundamental features of his theory. Let us examine how the above interpretations fare in this regard, starting with how quarrelling might be accounted for on the naturalistic-causal approach. If two parties are in disagreement over whether an object is beautiful, this must be, on this approach, because at least one of the parties has made a mistaken causal inference about the sources of her mental state. This mistake itself must have a cause, which can only be a failure to properly attend to the relation her interests bear to the mental representation of the object, or to adequately abstract from that representation everything but the form of the object. Without disputing that these failures may be real sources of deficiency in a judgement of taste, I merely note that they cannot plausibly be taken to adequately capture the character of the most significant aesthetic disagreements. If they did, aesthetic quarrels would always be *ad hominem* in character, proceeding by the one party charging the other with a lack of epistemic scrupulosity. While this might sometimes be appropriate (especially when one judge is much more experienced and cultivated than the other), it is out of place in a quarrel among sophisticated and mature judges of taste who, presumably, are well practised in abstracting from their idiosyncratic interests and focusing only on relevant considerations. But this is the paradigm of what a (serious) quarrel should be.

A parallel difficulty arises for the naturalistic-causal approach in regard to cultivation. For both Guyer and Ameriks, there would appear to be nothing *positive* that one can do to cultivate taste. For Guyer, there is no way to characterize the content of aesthetic form in informative terms, hence it is difficult to see how one would go about cultivating an appreciation for it.<sup>11</sup> Ameriks likewise does not seem to regard the objective causes of the pleasure in the beautiful to be discoverable in a way that could contribute to a substantive characterization of aesthetic form (Ameriks 2003: 319–20). Hence, on this approach, cultivation would appear to be restricted to the purely *negative* attempt, through a kind of ascetical discipline, to block out causes of pleasure that could be erroneously mistaken for the pure form of beauty. Cultivation can only take the form of preventative measures to keep one's interest suspended

and ignore charms and emotions. But this narrow procedure overlooks the need to train the intellect, imagination and senses to become more widely experienced, sharper and more perceptive. In sum, it fails to recognize that cultivation is *adding* to, not merely taking away from, our perception.

The normative-intentional approach fares no better than the naturalistic-causal approach. If anything, it is even less clear, on this approach, what the content of an aesthetic quarrel would be. If you and I both assert that our judgements are as they ought to be, yet they are in disagreement about whether a particular object is beautiful, clearly we have the opposition of judgements that is a prerequisite for a quarrel. But a quarrel also requires us to have something to *say* to each other about these judgements. Certainly, one can imagine any number of things that we might say to attain the presumed goal of producing agreement; to begin with, I might try to describe *why* my mental state appears to be 'appropriate'. However, a phenomenological description that attempts to convey the appeal that my inner perception has for me does not suffice to show its appropriateness, or support the supposed fact that I ought to be in such-and-such a mental state. To begin, it is unclear what norms govern this description. Clearly, it cannot be appropriate because my judgement matches a concept of 'appropriate judgement', or follows from a principle of appropriateness, because then the judgement would not be aesthetic. Furthermore, it is not even clear what the content of 'appropriateness' would be, since it does not look like it can be stated. In fact, for both Allison and Ginsborg, the claim of fittingness, suitability or 'ought-to-be-ness' appears to be a bare (self-)assertion.

It is equally unclear how, on the normative-intentional approach, I can get *better* at making a judgement of taste, hence how taste can be cultivated. This is because the nature of the capacity to recognize appropriateness or fittingness is itself obscure. Both Ginsborg and Allison regard this capacity as derived from the ability to subsume particulars under universal concepts, but this is of little help. I can indeed get better at applying concepts if I accumulate a cache of experience of particular instances of that concept in the past, and thereby become more facile in judging when a particular concept is appropriately applied. But, in the case of a judgement of taste, I am not applying a concept, so this analogy does not seem relevant. It is as if cultivating taste were simply a matter of getting better at recognizing *appropriateness as such*. But what sort of capacity is *that*? And what practical steps can be taken to improve it? These questions do not seem to have answers on the normative-intentional approach.

The two dominant approaches fall short, I suggest, because in spite of their reasonable efforts to accommodate Kant's subjectivist statements, they continue to view beauty *too objectively*. In sum, both approaches construe the judgement of taste as asserting an *objective truth-claim* of one sort or another. In the case of the naturalistic-causal view, beauty is viewed essentially as a mind-independent property of an object. Because it continues to maintain the Humean view that beauty is ultimately rooted in intrinsic causal properties of objects, the naturalistic-causal approach is ultimately led to cut off our epistemic access to the cause of pleasure in the beautiful, and thereby render quarrelling objectionably *ad hominem* and cultivation too exclusively negative. The normative-intentional approach tends to be more sensitive to the need to avoid an objective view of beauty. Nevertheless, this approach, if it is to account for the normativity of the mental state underlying the judgement of taste, ends up needing to construe the mental state itself as possessing a quasi-objective status, insofar as it objectively possesses an intrinsic property of appropriateness. The judgement of taste makes a claim about this property that purports to be true. Because this claim is put forth as a kind of irreducible bedrock claim, it becomes impossible to account for quarrelling and cultivation.

By contrast, I propose to ascribe a stronger subjectivism to Kant, one that would deny that his judgement of beauty has a truth-value at all. The judgement of beauty, on this proposal, is not an assertion of a truth about an object and its causal properties vis-à-vis human beings, nor is it a self-referential truth-claim about a bedrock *sui generis* normative property of appropriateness. Rather, its content is a statement that merely expresses 'how it is' for a particular subject, in that subject's own perspective. Of course, questions naturally arise how this proposal can be adequately filled in and rendered compatible with quarrelling and cultivation – not to mention Kant's other theoretical commitments. Certain forms of subjectivism (emotivism, for instance) would lead to the extinguishing of all matter of dispute, as well as any real question of better and worse taste. Since Kant is clearly committed to the *universality* and *necessity* of taste as well, any acceptable subjectivism must be compatible with a plausible account of the normativity of taste.

This could be accomplished by combining a stronger subjectivism with a *constructivist* account of beauty. More specifically, Kantian aesthetic quarrelling and cultivation might be seen as socially mediated processes of mutual adjustment of individual-relative perceptions, motivated by the common aim of achieving a universally shared, intersubjective

perception. ‘Beauty’ would then be the name for the resulting perception, which is seen, on this reading, as merely a regulative idea of universal agreement. So construed, it is a socially constructed phenomenon that emerges out of the back-and-forth of the aesthetic quarrels that occur among human beings as they progressively (yet always only approximately) approach the goal of a universally shared taste. Thus we might call this a ‘subjectivist-constructivist’ reading of Kantian beauty. To make such a reading plausible, we need to reconsider the basic premises of Kant’s theory of taste.

## 2. A Stronger Subjectivism about the Free Harmony of the Faculties and Aesthetic Form

Let us revisit the topic of the free harmony of the faculties, and specifically focus on what Kant calls the faculties’ ‘purposiveness’ for one another.<sup>12</sup> We can construe such ‘purposiveness’ as their being ‘made for’ each other, in the sense of each having the optimal ability to satisfy the other’s defining end. The understanding’s end is to unify the sensible manifold through general concepts, by means of judgement (A68/B93). It thus aims at generality or comprehensiveness, drawing many representations together into one (A69/B94). The imagination, by contrast, is, ‘as a productive cognitive faculty’, a great power that allows the mind to create ‘as it were, another nature, out of the material which the real one gives it’ and we ‘entertain ourselves with it when experience seems too mundane for us’ (CPJ, §49, 5: 314). Through this productive imagination ‘we feel our freedom from the law of association’ (5: 314). In a famous example from the Jäsche Logic, Kant seems to indicate how the understanding and the productive imagination can work in harmony with each other’s ends. In this example, he says ‘I acquire the concept of a tree’ by reflecting on ‘that which [a spruce, a willow and a linden] have in common among themselves, trunk, branches, and leaves themselves, and I abstract from the quantity and figure of these’ (JL, 9: 94–5). The resultant sensible pattern, or ‘schema’, of a tree would evidently arise out of the productive imagination, since it emerges out of a comparison of sensibly given images and does not originally appear in nature.<sup>13</sup>

In presenting such a pattern, the imagination may be said to ‘harmonize’ with the end of the understanding, by furthering its aim of finding patterns in experience that can be the basis for concepts. Since the understanding is here presumed to be *acquiring*, and hence not yet to *have*, the concept in question, the imagination is evidently regarded here as capable of harmonizing with the understanding without being guided



by a concept. In a similar vein, Kant repeatedly emphasizes that beauty is 'without a concept'.<sup>14</sup> Hence, the imagination's presentation of beautiful form can to be understood as likewise operating for the sake of the understanding's need to conceptualize, but prior to an actual concept being given.

Reciprocally, the understanding's harmonizing with the imagination in the aesthetic experience may be thought of as the 'open-endedness' of its demand for regularity. It does not 'hem in' (with a specific conceptual rule) the imagination's inherent free spontaneity and creativity in constructing patterns from the given data of sensation, but rather provides only a generic demand for regularity. Naturally, this permissiveness or, as it were, 'liberality' of the understanding is also consonant with its own proper functioning, which demands that it be open to the discovery of new and ever more adequate ways of conceptualizing experience.

Since Kant holds that the satisfaction of an aim is necessarily connected with *pleasure* (*CPJ*, 5: 187), we can say that, on this account, the free harmony is pleasurable because each faculty assists the other in satisfying its defining end. Through the liberality of the understanding, the imagination satisfies its aim of schematizing or constructing new patterns out of the sensible manifold. Through the creativity of the imagination, the understanding satisfies its aim of discerning regularity in experience. One can surmise that this condition of mutual aim-satisfaction constitutes or produces a stable mental state with the sort of propensity to maintain and preserve itself that Kant regards as definitive of pleasure (*CPJ*, §10, 5: 220; FI, 20: 230).

While this account might be acceptable as far as it goes, the nature of the *pattern* that is involved in the beautiful remains obscure. This obscurity, moreover, is only compounded by Kant's well-known conception of beauty as the form of the purposiveness of an object without the representation of a purpose (*CPJ*, 5: 236). As Guyer has noted, this notion, when construed as the mere 'appearance of design', is quite vacuous (1997: 194–9). Consequently, instead of attempting to explain Kant's notion of beautiful form in terms of purposiveness, I propose to begin from the examples that he offers to elucidate this notion in the last sections of the Third Moment (§§14–17). These are, first of all, 'drawing' in the visual arts and 'composition' in music, which he characterizes as 'arrangements' (*CPJ*, §14, 5: 225). While he does not explain these terms, he evidently takes his meaning to be quite obvious and familiar. Thus 'arrangements' are likely to be such things as visually and audibly

manifest balance, symmetry, rhythm and similar modes of ‘compositional’ unity. That this is his intended meaning is supported by his later discussion of ‘free beauty’, in which he cites as examples ‘designs *à la grecque*, foliage for borders or on wallpaper, etc.’ and ‘all music without a text’ (CPJ, §16, 5: 229). Because Kant also mentions flowers and birds such as ‘the parrot, hummingbird, the bird of paradise’ (5: 229) as examples of ‘free beauties’, it seems reasonable to infer that he thinks natural beauties can exhibit formal patterns analogous to those of consciously arranged works such as those mentioned above. The analogy in question would not necessarily have to be some generic ‘appearance of design’, but could rather be quite specific formal similarities. To see the relevance of Kant’s formalism to quarrelling and cultivation, we need to inquire into how such formal patterns emerge, what role the unique experience of the individual plays in their emergence, and what degree of volitional control one can exercise over them.

The psychological process that results in aesthetic form must be reconstructed from oblique indications that Kant gives. For this purpose, the key text is the final section of the Third Moment (§17), where he introduces the ‘aesthetic normal idea’. Granted, this notion belongs primarily to his description of ‘adherent’ beauty, which presupposes ‘a concept of what the object ought to be’ (CPJ, §16, 5: 229), or (alternatively) is ‘fixed by a concept of objective purposiveness’ (§17, 5: 232). The notion of adherent beauty is itself notoriously problematic, given Kant’s general line that beauty ‘pleases without a concept’.<sup>15</sup> However, I do not seek here to defend this notion, or to claim that all beauty involves a relation to an aesthetic normal idea. Rather, I want to use Kant’s account of how the aesthetic normal idea emerges psychologically and is applied to given objects in judgements of adherent beauty as a clue to a parallel process by which ‘free’ (concept-independent) beauty emerges within a subject’s perception. Kant does not explicitly give a distinct and parallel psychological account for the emergence of free beauty, but he does give us reason to assume that a similar explanation could be made, *mutatis mutandis*.

The aesthetic normal idea, despite its name, is actually not a discursive concept, but rather what I shall call an ‘intuitive gestalt’: a *schematic or pattern-like unity* that is a *product of the imagination*. In §17, Kant explains that the imagination is capable of superimposing an immense number of reproduced images of objects of the same kind on top of one another, to generate a ‘mean’ image out of the area of darkest overlap, ‘in the space where the greatest number of them coincide’ (5: 234). The result

would be, in the case of the kind 'man', the imaginative outline of the average man. The normal idea of 'man' thus emerges as an intuitive gestalt within the subject who imagines it. Such an idea represents, Kant asserts, 'the stature of the beautiful man' for that subject (5: 234). On the basis of such ideas, aesthetic judging 'first becomes possible', for the normal idea of a kind is the 'archetype of beauty' of that kind, and the standard of what is 'academically correct' (5: 235). Thus the normal idea functions as a model to be emulated, and hence objects are judged by their correspondence with it (5: 232). We may conclude that certain empirically given manifolds may, through comparison with a judge's 'normal idea', come to be seen to instantiate the form of that 'idea'. In this manner, a *second* gestalt apparently emerges within intuition, one corresponding to the normal idea, but located phenomenologically *in the object*. We might say that the normal idea 'constellates' the elements of the empirically given manifold such that a corresponding gestalt emerges as the object's perceived aesthetic form. Exactly how conscious this process would have to be is left undetermined. The process by which the normal idea is formed, and indeed its very existence, would seem to normally fall beneath the level of consciousness (5: 234). However, its association with modelling suggests that the normal idea could become conscious through *exemplification*, insofar as the empirical manifold is seen to approximate it. In sum, there appears to be a double-sided process involved in the judgement of adherent beauty. From the one side, the normal idea 'constellates' the manifold of the given object into an intuitive gestalt by its application to it; this new gestalt is perceived by the subject as the object's aesthetic form. From the other side, and in the very same act of judgement, the object exemplifies (an approximation of) the subject's normal idea, thereby bringing this idea to consciousness.

So far, this only explains adherent beauty. Kant omits an explicit parallel psychological explanation of free beauty, although it is supposed to be the standard type. How might we account for his silence on this topic? One likely possibility is that he expects us to conclude that, *mutatis mutandis*, the same psychological account also applies to free beauty. Indeed, Kant asserts that the normal idea is 'only the form that constitutes the indispensable condition of *all* beauty' (CPJ, §17, 5: 235; my emphasis). It is tempting to dismiss this remark as due to carelessness, since clearly Kant cannot mean that the *normal idea itself* is an indispensable condition of *all* beauty. However, we might take the word 'form' here to refer, in a looser sense, to the *kind of psychological product* that the normal idea is. Might there be a similar *kind* of product involved in the judgement of free beauty? The aesthetic normal idea emerges from

individual experience and constitutes a selective synthesis of various pattern-like features of that experience into a gestalt. Inspired by Kant's account of the formation of the 'normal idea', we might posit an analogous type of intuitive 'idea' that could emerge through an individual's recollection of shapes and proportions of sensible elements, synthesized together into a schematic image representing a 'compositional' unity. Unlike in the case of the normal idea, the elements the imagination draws upon here could very well belong to different natural kinds.<sup>16</sup> In this hypothetical process, an initial unconsciously formed gestalt analogous to a normal idea is formed which 'constellates' the empirical manifold, again in an analogous way. Thus the form of free beauty emerges in a strictly parallel fashion to that of adherent beauty, only it is 'without a concept'. In the next section, I shall argue that, from the other side, the subject's unconscious idea can be brought to reflective consciousness when she reflects on what pleases her about the object's form and attempts to give a critical description of it.

On the interpretation just offered, the gestalt that Kant associates with the form of the beautiful presents itself as *phenomenologically* objective. Nevertheless, it is actually subjective in a stronger sense than in the interpretations discussed previously. In this case, there is no matter of fact that the judgement is about, and thus it cannot be held to have a truth value. There are two main reasons for this: (1) there is no sense to the claim that the gestalt that is 'constellated' is 'really there', in the object itself; further, (2) it is subject to alteration with additional experience and personal volitional control in a way that an objective perception with a truth value is not. First, the gestalt that the subject perceives is an effect of the particular, individual-relative experience she brings to it. This is quite apparent in the case of adherent beauty, for, as Kant notes, the different experiences of different subjects will result in the formation of different normal ideas. For instance, subjects from widely separated cultures – say, Europe and China – will have significantly divergent ideas of human beauty (*CPJ*, §17, 5: 234). What corresponds to the normal idea in the case of free beauty remains to be clarified. However, its dissociation from a concept of a natural kind suggests that, if anything, it would be even more based on personal experience and, thus, individual-relative. Second, given the process by which it emerges and comes to be exemplified, the organizational pattern that one sees will, in the typical case, be subject to alteration with time and the changing experiences of the subject. The more I perceive of formal patterns in objects, the more likely I will see a *new* intuitive gestalt the next time I view a familiar object of aesthetic appreciation. I may also discover that I can perform a conscious

*gestalt switch*, and organize the spatiotemporal elements of my experience differently from before, while retaining the ability to 'switch back'. These are, of course, experiences that anyone who has ever had formal training in sustained looking at a great painting or listening to a piece of serious music has probably shared. But they are incompatible with the perception of an objective property.

Admittedly, the description of the form of free beauty as an indeterminate sort of *gestalt* is still fairly vague. However, it is arguably inappropriate to demand a greater degree of specificity at this level, when we are merely trying to explain what kind of thing this form is in general. The appropriate place for a more specific description of the *gestalt* would be, not in an abstract philosophical analysis of beauty in general, but rather in the criticism of specific objects judged as 'beautiful'.

### 3. Quarrelling, Cultivation and the Social Construction of Beauty

In *CPJ*, §34, Kant briefly describes an 'art' of criticism 'that is useful for correcting and broadening our judgments of taste' by 'laying out in examples the reciprocal subjective purposiveness [whose] form in a given representation is the beauty of the object' (5: 286). This criticism is concerned with bringing the 'reciprocal relation of the imagination and understanding to each other in the given representation' 'under rules' and 'determining it as to its conditions' (5: 286). In the terms laid out above, we might gloss this by saying that the aim of the critic is to describe, in concrete terms, the pattern involved in the judge's *gestalt* by pointing to specific elements and describing their arrangement by the imagination so that the (merely aesthetic) 'rule' governing the whole *gestalt* is made manifest. In the simplest cases, the objects of criticism will be natural objects or landscapes that are judged to be beautiful. I might encounter, for instance, a certain live oak that strikes me as beautiful due to the peculiar rhythm of its branches and the symmetry and balance of its bundles of leaves. To fix this *gestalt* in my mind, perhaps I am inspired to try to put my impression of these elements into words. This effort might clarify, as Kant says, 'the conditions' of the oak's rhythmic and symmetrical appearance to me, as I search my recollection for analogies from my past experience – Kant's 'examples'. This may involve comparison with other trees, but more useful are likely to be comparisons with other patterns of nature given in specific examples. I might, for example, compare its rhythm to a wave on the ocean, or of a field of grain. In this way, critical description may naturally tend to verge on poetry. The 'rule' here would thus be the order or

arrangement that is presented aesthetically in and through the critic's description.

Fine art is a significantly more complex object for criticism than beautiful nature, and a detailed treatment of all the issues involved cannot be undertaken here.<sup>17</sup> I would maintain, however, that the basic approach of the 'formalist' criticism described above remains foundational for art as well, for 'in all beautiful art what is essential consists in the form' (*CPJ*, §52, 5: 326). Fine art is more complex because its formal analysis requires additional context.

First, the critic must discern the intention of the artist. Kant writes, 'A beauty of nature is a **beautiful thing**; the beauty of art is a **beautiful representation** of a thing' (*CPJ*, §48, 5: 311). This refers, of course, to the artist's subject matter – what Kant calls 'a concept of what sort of thing the object is meant to be' (5: 311). But it also refers to the manner in which the artist is attempting to represent it, for 'Beautiful art displays its excellence precisely by describing beautifully things that in nature would be ugly and displeasing' (5: 312). Kant holds that the task of the artistic genius is precisely that of 'finding ideas for a given concept on the one hand and on the other hitting on the expression for these' (*CPJ*, §49, 5: 317). The 'idea' referred to is an '*aesthetic* idea', which is an *intuitive* representation of the artist's imagination (5: 314–15). This suggests that an initial task for criticism would be reconstructing the gestalt that the artist is attempting to convey. The competent critic of a painting will not only describe how, in *her own* perception, the distribution of rhythmic lines and shapes, say, draws the eye around the visual field of a painting so as to circumscribe its elements into a unified whole, but will also ask whether this gestalt *was intended by the painter*.

Second, art criticism would have to situate the work within its genre. Kant is well aware that the genius does not create in a historical vacuum, but situates his work in relation to the works of preceding geniuses (*CPJ*, §47, 5: 309–10; §49, 318–19) – works which have acquired the status of *classics* within the ongoing history of art (or, as he conceives it, the 'progress of culture') (*CPJ*, §32, 5: 282–3). Kant also has a detailed theory of the division of the arts (§§51–3) and, presumably, a work would have to be *classified* before it could be formally criticized as an instance of such-and-such a genre type. Here, the cultivated Kantian critic's experience of classical works within a given genre would undoubtedly play a role in influencing the gestalt that appeared to her, and thus explicit comparison with classical works would typically come into play in the description of the gestalt.

Finally, it is clear that a complete criticism of an artwork for Kant would have to include *moral* critique. As he asserts, formal beauty must be a 'pleasure that is at the same time culture', which 'disposes the spirit to ideas' (*CPJ*, §52, 5: 326). However, even here, formalist concerns would seem to remain foundational, insofar as it is not so much a vulgar didacticism that Kant is advocating, but a symbolic approach to art that relies upon an analogy between the formal characteristics of beauty and morality. The 'culture' in the above quote has to do primarily with the moral content – ideas of reason – that formal beauty's 'aesthetic ideas' are peculiarly suited to communicate (*CPJ*, §49, 5: 314–16). Thus the formal description remains the basic act of criticism, even if cultural knowledge of symbolic referents is added to it in the total critique.

In asserting the usefulness of criticism for 'correcting' and 'broadening' our judgements of taste, Kant seems to be implicitly linking it to quarrelling and cultivation. From this brief sketch of Kantian criticism, then, we may attempt to draw some conclusions about these aesthetic practices. The general background assumption of Kantian aesthetic quarrels, on this reading, would be the shared goal of reaching explicit agreement in an aesthetic experience. The existence of this goal seems to be an essential tenet of Kant's conception of the pure judgement of taste itself, which 'ascribes this agreement to everyone, as a case of a rule with regard to which it expects confirmation ... only from the consent of others' (*CPJ*, §8, 5: 216). A critic offers a description of her gestalt that she hopes will elicit an imaginative response in her interlocutor, leading to the other forming a similar gestalt in her own imagination. Quarrelling arises when the critic's description conflicts with, or perhaps simply does not appear among, the range of descriptions her interlocutor accepts. Willingness to engage in critical quarrels is based upon the confidence that, through critical communication, one's gestalt can be replicated by others, and would be experienced with the same sort of pleasure if it were.

Quarrelling about beauty can be seen to differ from theoretical disputation about objective matters of fact in essential respects. Critical dispute does not involve proving the objectivity of one's gestalt, or the correctness or accuracy of one's application of the concept 'beautiful'. The aim is not to show that the gestalt is somehow 'really there', independent of our seeing it, but rather for me to get you to replicate it by exercising your imagination in the way I am guiding you. The description, unlike an empirical concept, *entices* or *coaxes* you to see something I see; it does not and cannot *compel*, as an empirical demonstration can. Thus the critical description does not violate Kant's stricture that the form of beauty

involves pleasure without a concept. There is, first, no assumption that the gestalt in question, let alone its description, is applicable to anything and everything that might be described as ‘beautiful’. Moreover, there is always an unavoidable slippage between the description and the intuition. The description may always be modified and improved – added to or altered – as circumstances warrant. There is no necessary connection between it and the intuition, as there may be thought to be (and is for Kant) between an intuition and an empirical concept. As noted above, criticism shares many of the same tools, methods, strategies and ends as poetry. It may be for this reason that Kant regards criticism as (merely) an art. All of these features of aesthetic quarrelling illustrate the strongly subjective character of beauty itself.

This subjectivist account can be reconciled with Kant’s commitment to the universal validity of taste if we regard beauty as ‘socially constructed’. I am using this term in the sense common among many contemporary social scientists and humanists, to refer to a phenomenon being a product of social processes, rather than natural ones (Burr 2003: 4). On the above account of quarrelling, there is no natural fact of the matter about whether a judgement of the beautiful is true or false. Moreover, there is no social fact of the matter either, since any given cultural *status quo* – e.g. concerning the canonical status of a given work – can always be validly contested. Rather, aesthetic quarrelling is discourse framed by the ‘regulative’ ideal, shared by both parties, merely to try to produce agreement among their subjective experiences. This reading finds support in the famous rhetorical question in §22, whether the ‘common sense’ is ‘a merely ideal norm’ that has the status of ‘a regulative principle for us’ (5: 239–40). As a mere ideal norm and regulative principle, a ‘common sense’, or state of universal agreement in aesthetic experiences, is something to be constructed through a long historical process of working out consensus through aesthetic quarrelling. Since *beauty* is that which is ‘represented as the object of a *universal* satisfaction’ (CPJ, §6, 5: 211), it is never simply an extant reality, strictly speaking. Rather, an object is called ‘beautiful’ based on the ‘nomination’ of a judge, who places it ‘in the running’ as a ‘candidate’, as it were, for universal agreement. This reading finds textual support in Kant’s remark that the judge, in applying the term ‘beauty’, speaks with ‘a universal voice’ (CPJ, §8, 5: 216), and his claim that the ‘necessity’ of such a judgement is merely ‘exemplary’ (CPJ, §18, 5: 237). In sum, use of the term ‘beauty’ signifies a speaker’s assigning of *exemplar-status* to a given object for the sake of furthering the goal of socially constructing a universal agreement in aesthetic experiences.



The fact that aesthetic quarrelling about 'beauty' is governed by the regulative ideal of a universal shared taste is naturally seen to motivate both parties to try to refine and broaden their experiences as much as possible, so as to narrow the gap with other parties with differing experiences. We can thus see the intimate relationship between the willingness to engage in aesthetic quarrels and the *cultivation* of taste. Indeed, on the present account, one might say quarrelling and cultivation are two sides of the same coin. I cultivate my taste primarily by engaging with an open mind in actual or imagined quarrels. Nevertheless, there are also processes that belong to cultivation in the sense of *preparation* for making a judgement of taste in general. For Kant, there is both a negative and a positive dimension of this preparation. The negative, and more familiar, dimension is *disinterestedness*. As Kant says, a pure judgement of taste cannot be 'partial' or 'biased' in favour of the existence of the object, but must look at its mere representation with a certain 'indifference' (*CPJ*, §2, 5: 205). This is *not*, on the present reading, in order to justify an inference to hidden causes of the pleasure; rather, we might say, the purpose is to narrow one's focus to what is *communicable*: the formal gestalt. This concern for communicability is also reflected in the importance Kant also assigns to the 'broad-minded' way of thinking: 'to think in the position of everyone else' – a 'maxim' which '[serves] to elucidate' the 'fundamental principles' of the critique of taste (*CPJ*, §40, 5: 294). In the context of the present reading, we might infer that, for Kant, the cultivation of taste involves the active effort to see an object with the eyes of the other, to try to effect a 'gestalt-switch' that will also enable you to share her pleasure.

Finally, an important objection to this way of reading Kant needs to be addressed. Against a subjectivist-constructivist reading, it might be objected that, in one place, Kant appears to say that we make 'erroneous' judgements of taste of a sort that is ruled out by such a reading.<sup>18</sup> The passage in question occurs in §8, where Kant concludes his primary explanation of the universality of taste with certain remarks about the notion, mentioned above, of a 'universal voice'. His initial claims about this 'universal voice' seem at first to be quite consonant with the interpretation being proposed here. Kant emphasizes that the universal voice is 'only an idea', which contains the mere '**possibility** of an aesthetic judgment that could at the same time be considered valid for everyone' (5: 216). On the subjectivist-constructivist reading, the 'possibility' here could quite naturally be taken to be one realized only in an idealized culmination of the 'progress of culture', in which true universal agreement is realized. In a passage already mentioned above, Kant goes

on to say that the judgement of taste does not ‘postulate the accord of everyone’, but ‘only ascribes this agreement to everyone, as a case of a rule with regard to which it expects confirmation not from concepts but only from the consent of others’ (5: 216). Thus, in the idealized scenario when a universal intersubjective agreement in judgement is reached, *all* would ‘consent’; the *partial* consent we receive in our actual discussions of matters of taste can be taken as ‘confirmation’ that we are on the right track: it is an indicator or harbinger of a future universal agreement. While other readings are possible, this one seems to harmonize quite well with the text so far.

The paragraph concludes, however, with a claim that might be held to create a problem for this reading:

Whether someone who believes himself to be making a judgment of taste is in fact judging in accordance with this idea can be uncertain; but that he relates it to that idea, thus that it is supposed to be a judgment of taste, he announces through the expression of beauty. Of that (*davon*) he can be certain for himself through the mere consciousness of separation of everything that belongs to the agreeable and the good from the satisfaction that remains to him; and this is all for which he promises himself the assent of everyone: a claim which he would also be justified in making under these conditions, if only he were not often to offend against them and thereby make an erroneous judgment of taste. (*CPJ*, §8, 5: 216)

This passage can be held to claim that we make erroneous judgements of taste even now, in a way that is incompatible with the subjectivist-constructivist reading, if we make a few interpretative moves. The first move would be to take ‘Of that (*davon*)’ – the object of certainty – to refer to the fact that that ‘he is judging in accordance with this idea [of the universal voice]’. The second move would be to take Kant to be saying that a *sufficient condition* for his being certain that his judgement is in accordance with the idea of a universal voice is ‘the mere consciousness of separation of everything that belongs to the agreeable and the good to the satisfaction that remains to him’ – in other words, the mere consciousness that his judgement is disinterested. This seems to imply that the (only) cause of an *erroneous* judgement is that one ‘offends’ against the ‘disinterestedness condition’. In that case, the passage would seem to be supporting something like the position of the causal reading. On this reading, to ‘offend against’ the ‘conditions’ of disinterestedness means to

*interfere with the causal process* that would otherwise lead one to register the actual fact of the matter concerning whether beauty exists now or not, and thus fall into error. This of course presupposes that beauty is a really existing causal power of an object, which is denied by the subjectivist-constructivist reading. This points to a fourth interpretative move that would have to be made: 'to judge in accord with the idea of a universal voice' must be read as equivalent to 'to judge in a way that is actually universally valid, because it conforms to the facts: the object really does have the causal power to produce a pleasure in everyone who views it disinterestedly'.

While such a reading is certainly possible, I do not believe the case for it is a decisive one. The passage is notoriously ambiguous.<sup>19</sup> Given this ambiguity, an equally plausible subjectivist-constructivist reading of the passage is also possible. First, we might construe the object of certainty, not as the *accordance* of his judgement with the idea of a universal voice, but rather as the *relating* of his judgement to that idea. Then Kant would be contrasting something *uncertain* – the accordance – with something about which one can normally be quite *certain* – the relating. On this reading, then, the error he refers to could be *thinking that one is making a judgement of the beautiful when one is not*. To make the possibility of such an error intelligible, we would have to say that, for Kant, to actually *make* a pure judgement of taste *strictly speaking*, it is not enough merely to judge using the word 'beautiful', or to *want* others to agree with you. You have to actually *will* to make a pure judgement of taste, which means, to take all essential means in one's power to assure agreement with one's judgement. To fail to do so – which is to 'offend' against the 'conditions' of making a coherent claim of taste – is to *erroneously think* that one is making a pure judgement of taste when one is not. We might describe this as a 'performative misfire'. This misfire arises if one believes he can merely impose his private, interested satisfactions on others without taking their own points of view into account. One thinks – erroneously – that to make a judgement of beauty all one needs to do is assert one's own opinion, and one is permitted to refuse to listen to others. Such may be the position of an immature critic like Kant's 'young poet' (*CPJ*, §32, 5: 282), but not of the maker of an authentic judgement of beauty.

Thus I do not think that a decisive case can be made for a reading of this passage that contradicts the subjectivist-constructivist reading. But even if such a case *could* be made, this one passage would still have to be weighed against the overall advantages of the subjectivist-constructivist

reading *compared to the other contenders*. In that circumstance, I believe this reading's superior ability to account for Kant's commitment to quarrelling and cultivation would outweigh the evidence of a single, highly ambiguous passage.

#### 4. Conclusion

Clearly, more would need to be said to round out this subjectivist-constructivist reading of Kant's theory of the beautiful. In particular, it would also have to be shown how it fits with Kant's attempts to defend the supposed claims to universality and necessity in the pure judgement of taste. To address this would require a reconstruction of the deduction of taste, and of our interest in the beautiful. First, an argument for the *very possibility* of inter-subjectively sharable formal gestalts will be required. But second, and to my mind more significantly, the *shared motivation to produce agreement*, which is what binds the quarrelling parties together in their quarrel and drives them to broaden their personal experience, needs to be explained and justified. However, since each of these two topics demands a separate essay-length treatment in its own right, a full discussion of them will have to wait for another occasion.<sup>20</sup>

#### Notes

- 1 Except for the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, which will be cited by the standard 'A/B' format, citations from Kant will refer to the *Akademie* edition (Kant 1902–) by volume and page number, using the following abbreviations: FI = *Erste Einleitung in die Kritik der Urteilskraft*; JL = *Logik* (ed. Jäsche); CPJ = *Kritik der Urteilskraft*. English quotations from Kant are taken from the appropriate volumes of *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant: Critique of the Power of Judgment* (Kant 2000), *Critique of Pure Reason* (Kant 1998), *Lectures on Logic* (Kant 1992).
- 2 Other authors with this approach include Kulenkampff 1990 and Savile 1987.
- 3 Guyer refers to this as 'a hypothesis about a stretch of my own mental history' (1997: 134).
- 4 For Guyer, the judgement of the beautiful 'amounts to the claim that ... under ideal conditions – of noninterference from purely sensory pleasures and abstraction from any concepts that might affect an interested response – everyone who perceives *x* will take pleasure in it' (1997: 130). The problem is not that the judgement of taste has no truth conditions, but that I can never have sufficient evidence to guarantee that they have been met. Ameriks argues that Kant should have regarded beauty as objective in the same way that 'secondary' qualities are (2003: 299–302). In that case, one would not have to be as sceptical as Guyer about the prospect for attaining sufficient evidence, provided that one could discover empirical laws correlating the pleasure in the beautiful and the natural features of the object that reliably caused that pleasure, in a way analogous to how secondary qualities are correlated with 'primary' natural qualities through empirical laws (2003: 305–6). This approach, however, forces Ameriks to *revise* Kant's theory, distinguishing in an un-Kantian manner the subjective judgement of *taste* – based on

- one's first-hand feeling – from the objective judgement of *beauty* – based upon one's knowledge of relevant empirical laws (2003: 322).
- 5 Allison emphasizes the search for normative principles as the distinguishing task of all three *Critiques* (2001: 3–6). As the title of her work *The Normativity of Nature* suggests, Ginsborg advances an interpretative project that argues for a continuity between cognitive and aesthetic judgement in Kant that is based precisely on the shared feature of normativity (2015: 3–6).
  - 6 This reading bases the claim for the normative character of the judgement as such on Kant's own repeated normative language, and especially upon his emphatic insistence on the distinction between asserting that 'everyone **will** (*werden*) concur with our judgement' (which the judgement of the beautiful does *not* claim) and 'everyone **should** (*sollen*) agree with it' (which it does claim) (*CPJ*, §22, 5: 239). Ginsborg explicitly cites this passage against Guyer (2015: 39). However, it should be noted that preserving the normativity of the judgement of taste does not necessarily imply that I must assert that my judgement is appropriate, or is as it ought to be. For this claim, both Ginsborg and Allison adduce additional considerations. Ginsborg argues, based on Kant's remarks in §9, that the judgement of taste should be construed as the 'consciousness that I ought to be in the very same mental state as that in which I presently find myself' (2015: 44). Allison construes the harmony of the faculties as a state of 'maximal' or 'ideal' 'fit' between concept and intuitive representation, but without an actual concept (or rule) being involved (2001: 48–50). This 'corresponds to the norm required for cognition without itself amounting to cognition' (Allison 2001: 50).
  - 7 When Ginsborg's interpretation of the self-referential character of the judgement of taste is combined with an understanding of pleasure as a mental state that 'supports or maintains itself by serving as a ground or justification for my being in that very state of mind', the result is her identification of the pleasure in the beautiful with the self-referential consciousness that constitutes the judgement itself (2015: 44). Allison, in a parallel fashion, emphasizes the identification of the feeling of pleasure with the representation (i.e. the awareness) of the subjective purposiveness of the faculties: 'The free harmony is itself subjectively purposive, since it involves the furtherance of the cognitive faculties involved therein, and the pleasure is precisely the sensation through which the subject becomes aware of it' (2001: 54). It is worth noting that Allison takes care not to deny (indeed, he affirms) that there is *also* a causal relationship between free harmony and pleasure (2001: 53–4). However, because of his endorsement of an intentional relation, the causal claim becomes insignificant to the *content* of the judgement of taste. Like Ginsborg, the judgement, for Allison, is *about* my mental state (the harmony of the faculties).
  - 8 See Ginsborg 2015: 47. Like Ginsborg, Allison draws an analogy between the 'objective validity' of cognitive judgements and the 'subjectivity universality' of the judgement of taste, which, he says, 'belongs to it intrinsically' (2001: 81). For Allison, the normativity in taste remains subjective in comparison to cognitive judgements because we can never be certain that our judgement is 'pure', or based solely on the form of the object alone. This uncertainty is the consequence of the judgement being based on a feeling rather than a concept (2001: 178).
  - 9 An exception to this rule is Watkins 2011. On the fundamentals, Watkins follows Ameriks' objectivism about beauty. However, he (correctly, in my view) places cultivation at the centre of his interpretation, since, according to him, subjectivity comes into the picture only because one must have cultivated one's taste in order to determine the objective beauty of an object. While I regard this as too weak a sense of 'subjectivity' for Kant, it does at least pick up on Kant's reliance on cultivation.

- Watkins also is at greater pains than either Guyer or Ameriks to account for common art-critical practice. However, to the extent that his basic theoretical commitment is to the naturalistic-causal view, I believe he remains subject to the same criticisms, and his accounts of quarrelling and cultivation do not follow from – and, indeed, are inconsistent with – his naturalistic-causalism.
- 10 In §§33–4 and elsewhere, Kant argues that there are neither empirical nor *a priori* ‘grounds of proof’ for judgements of taste, and hence no objective principles of taste (*CPJ*, §33, 5: 284–6). This is because, when it is a matter of taste, ‘I try the dish on my tongue and palate, and on that basis (not on the basis of general principles) do I make my judgment’ (5: 285).
  - 11 Guyer argues that the notion of ‘finality of form’ is vacuous (1997: 197). As will emerge in what follows, I grant this point, but not his position that Kant therefore does not allow for anything descriptive to be said about aesthetic form.
  - 12 In §9, Kant first speaks of their ‘mutual subjective correspondence’ (5: 218), their being ‘in unison’, ‘mutual agreement’ and a ‘well-proportioned disposition’ (5: 219). This relationship is characterized in §12 as a ‘merely formal purposiveness in the play of the cognitive powers of the subject’ (5: 222).
  - 13 This usage of ‘schema’ may extend somewhat that given in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (A141/B181). In this case, the schema would of course have to be regarded as of an *empirical*, rather than of a pure concept.
  - 14 Notably, this qualification occurs in some form in all of the Analytic’s definitions of the beautiful, explicitly in the second (5: 219) and fourth (5: 240).
  - 15 There is an extensive literature on ‘adherent’ beauty. For a recent survey of the problem, see Guyer 2005: 129–40.
  - 16 Indeed, Kant says that, in addition to the same kind, the imagination also ‘knows how to reproduce the image and shape of an object out of an immense number of objects of different kinds’ (5: 234, my emphasis).
  - 17 An adequate account of Kantian criticism would also need to address the different approaches taken in the literature on the topic, including Crawford 1974: ch. 8, Janaway 2003, Zuckert 2013, Tuna 2016.
  - 18 I am indebted to an anonymous referee for *Kantian Review* for suggesting this objection.
  - 19 Cohen (1982) argues that there are four possible referents of the *davon*, and thus four possible interpretations of what the error is. While agreeing with Cohen that there is a ‘significant’ (though lesser) ambiguity, Allison disagrees with him about what the correct referent is (2001: 107–8).
  - 20 I am grateful to Richard Aquila for helpful comments and questions on an earlier draft.

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