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# Kant on Aesthetic Ideas and Beauty

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## I

Readers of Kant's *Critique of Judgment* (1790) have understandably been stumped trying to decipher Kant's views on the relation between beauty and art.<sup>1</sup> At §43 Kant ends his discussion of "free natural" beauties such as flowers and birds of paradise and begins to formulate a theory of fine art, according to which fine art has as its purpose the expression of "aesthetic ideas." This theory of fine art, perhaps because it is saddled with examples of second-rate art (including a poem by "the great king" Frederick) and is sketchier than the theory of beauty, has not been given the attention accorded the four "moments". However, Kant's theory of fine art is not as "unsophisticated" and "unenlightening" as one commentator thinks.<sup>2</sup> It is rough and unfinished, but even so, it lays claim to being, along with Aristotle's account of the "philosophical" implications of literature, one of the great pre-Hegelian statements on the capacity of art to express ideas. At least, the fact that the *Critique of Judgment* contains such a theory should stand as a warning to those who blame Kant for "neutering" the capacity of art to have any practical effect by reducing art to a contrivance for producing an enervating "disinterested" pleasure.<sup>3</sup> On the contrary: Kant himself may in fact have thought his theory of fine art the capstone of his aesthetics. For at §51 he writes, "We may in general call beauty (whether natural or artistic) the *expression* of aesthetic ideas." And here is where the puzzle begins, for it is not at all clear how or why beauty should even apply to the expression of aesthetic ideas — let alone apply in a way such that "we may *in general* call beauty ... the expression of aesthetic ideas."

The puzzle, in slightly more detail, concerns how the reader is to understand the application of the predicate "beautiful" to items of meaning (that is, to works of fine art in so far as they express aesthetic ideas), given that the theory of beauty as drawn out in the pre-§43 portions applies the predicate almost entirely to items lacking meaning, namely natural beauties and instances of pure design. The following passage is typical of Kant's pre-§43 exposition:

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 determine 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. What we

call fantasias in music (namely music without a topic [*Thema*]), indeed all music not set to words, may also be included in the same class. (§16, 229)

This occurs in a section in which Kant distinguishes “free” from “accessory” beauty, a distinction we will come back to later. Suffice it to say that free beauty is the sort of beauty Kant is interested in explaining — that is, free beauty is beauty proper, and his purports to be a theory of free beauty. I have called the preceding passage typical, yet it seems more than that: It seems nearly definitional of his theory of beauty. In so far as there are few examples given of the beauty of ordinary artifacts, let alone works of fine art,<sup>4</sup> it begins to seem as if Kant thought “beauty” applied not just in its most ordinary instances or even paradigm cases but *exclusively* to items lacking meaning.

It is arguable that our earliest, childhood experiences of beauty are of the beauty of flowers and wallpaper; and so it might be a kind of didactic strategy to introduce a theory of beauty that draws on such examples, then to go on later to discuss the beauty of fine art which we not only experience later in life, but which also seems a more complex beauty. Yet there is more than an expository strategy going on, for the up-front formalism of the theory up to §43 makes it difficult to see how beauty can be applied to content, i.e., to the expression of aesthetic ideas. It is our intuition, with which Kant never disagrees, that flowers as found in nature do not express or communicate anything. How then does the expression of aesthetic ideas turn out to be beautiful?

## II

Kant’s theory of beauty is in part motivated, at least in the two Introductions Kant wrote for the *Critique of Judgment*, by a problem left over from the first *Critique*. That problem is how concepts apply to percepts. The problem sub-divides further. There is what we can call the big-picture problem: How does the world turn out to be receptive to the activities of the mind, which, after all, is imposing its creations (concepts) on something that might be entirely unconceptualizable? Then there is a problem arising out of Kant’s mental mechanics. How does the imagination (understood roughly as the faculty of imaging, or that which is acquainted with though does not comprehend perceptions) manages to interact with what in the third *Critique* is called the understanding (the faculty of understanding or cognizing — of applying concepts to — percepts).

Kant’s solution comes via the faculty of judgment, which mediates between imagination and understanding. Suppose we have a percept (of a rose, as it happens) in the imagination. Before we can make the empirical or “determinate” judgment, “This is a rose,” we have to engage in what Kant called “reflective judgment,” which is a search for a concept to fit the percept at hand. To solve the big-picture problem, Kant thought “judgment” must make the assumption — in Kant’s language, judgment takes as a transcendental or synthetic *a priori* principle — that the world is receptive to the cognitive activities of the mind.<sup>5</sup> Reflective judgment is to view nature as if designed for human cognition, as if purposive; though since such purposiveness cannot be objectively established, it is called by Kant “purposiveness without purpose,” or sometimes, “the form of purposiveness.”

The mental mechanics problem now takes on another dimension. We begin with a percept *a* and then search for a concept, perhaps *F*, with which to understand *a*. The

process of reflectively judging, which is the search for a concept adequate for the percept at hand, cannot itself be rule-governed, for rules are given in concepts and *ex hypothesi* we don't have a concept to apply to anything yet. Hence the pure reflective judgment must be "aesthetic," i.e., it must be grounded in feeling.<sup>6</sup> Such feeling will turn out to be pleasure. The general idea is that the purposiveness of nature is shown (really, experienced only as a felt pleasure) through the harmony of the imagination and the understanding, i.e., the harmonious working of a faculty that presents intuitions of the world (not quite raw intuitions, for they must already be organized by the categories of space and time) and a faculty that seems to grasp them. The imagination and understanding are, as Kant sometimes says, in free play, a free play that is productive of (and signaled by) pleasure. It is here, at this juncture on the process of reflectively judging *a*, that the judgment that *a* is beautiful is occasioned. In fact, "*a* is beautiful" is an expression of this felt pleasure, though we need not have yet grasped that *a* is *F* (that *a* is a rose, say). What Kant will do in the theory of beauty proper — I mean what he writes after the transcendental *mise en scène* of the Introduction(s) — is to elaborate on the nature of the pleasure, what should *not* be involved in judging the beautiful, and so on.

### III

In generating his theory of the beautiful, Kant does a sort of back-and-forth between delivering up deep intuitions about the beautiful — describing what Wittgenstein might have called the grammar of judgments of the beautiful — and bringing his transcendental epistemology to bear on explaining or justifying these deep intuitions. So, for example, Kant thinks, apparently independently of his transcendental epistemology, that *beauty* is not a concept, by which he means that to say of something, *a*, that it is beautiful does not express a way of understanding *a* — does not express, we might say more bluntly, a fact about the object *a*. He will explain/justify this intuition with the claim that a judgment of the beauty of *a* is made during the process of pure reflective judging in which the search for a concept *F* to apply to *a* is conducted precisely in the absence of an understanding of the character of *a*.

The formalism that dominates Kant's theory initially derives not so much from considerations about the beautiful, though Kant is apparently quite happy to accept some kind of formalism with respect to beauty, but from the way he solves the epistemological problems of the Introductions. The character or nature or "content" of an item of perception, *a*, cannot be known until the conclusion of the pure reflective judgment, that is, the point at which the mind has come to a determinate judgment (that *a* is *F*). So, if we cannot know the character or nature or "content" of *a*, what can we know or at least be acquainted with? Kant's initial suggestion cannot be that we are acquainted with *nothing* about *a*, for that would entail that we have no motive to begin to engage in any kind of judging at all. Thus Kant adopts the idea that the judgment of the beautiful is triggered by the *form* of *a*. This idea in itself hardly says anything at all, for the concept of form is notoriously elusive. It is not that it cannot be unpacked at all, though the way Kant unpacks it pre-§43 is in large part the source of the difficulties he and his commentators encounter later in trying to explain how it is that aesthetic ideas can be beautiful.

The difficulties begin when the pre-§43 exposition understands the form of an item of perception *a* to be an arrangement that obtains among the parts of *a*, either spatial

arrangements or shape (if *a* is a visual object) or temporal arrangements or “play over time” (if *a* is an auditory object). It is not that this is wrong right from the start. It is, if anything, *right* right from the start, if we start with the ordinary instances of beautiful things — birds and their song, flowers, wallpaper, and so on. These precisely are items of perception (in the ordinary way of understanding perception), and it is entirely appropriate that form be introduced as roughly equivalent to shape or play over time. And indeed, when specifying just what it is that we judge beautiful, Kant has recourse to such formalistic terms as “form,” “shape,” “design,” and “composition.” For example, “When we judge free beauty (according to mere form) ... our imagination is playing, as it were, while it contemplates the shape ...” (§16, 230) One of the consequences of this view is that we need not have a concept of the object — need not know what the object is apart from how it appears — to judge it as beautiful. “Flowers are free natural beauties. Hardly anyone apart from the botanist knows what sort of thing a flower is [meant] to be; and even he ... pays no attention to this natural purpose when he judges the flower by taste.” (§16, 229) And if, in reflecting on *a*, we need not know that *a* is a rose (or even what a rose is) to find *a* beautiful, what else could we know except how the item appears in perception, and what else could this be except its shape?

Intermingled with the examples of birds and wallpaper are formalistic art-critical remarks. Some of these are straight-forward applications of form-as-shape to artforms: “In painting, in sculpture, indeed in all the visual 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.” (§14, 225) Others derive from another of Kant’s deep intuitions about the beautiful, according to which what is beautiful appears to be objective or fact-like yet to say of *a* that it is beautiful can’t itself express a fact about *a* (for *beauty* is, recall, not a concept). Yet there is an appearance of objectivity or facticity in the judgment of the beautiful that has to be accounted for, and Kant tries to account for it in his claim that judgments of the beautiful are as if objective in that they “demand universal assent.” What cannot be shared universally (what cannot be considered part of *common* sense), then, cannot properly be part of the judgment of beauty. Thus in §§13-14, emotion, color, and tone are excised from the pure judgment of the beautiful.<sup>7</sup>

This recitation of some aspects of Kant’s theory of beauty — *beauty* is not a concept; we need not have a concept of a thing to judge it as beautiful; judgments of the beautiful concern form which seems to be identified as shape; the paradigms of beauty are things such as flowers in nature that do not express or communicate anything — explains why the theory of fine art that starts with §43 seems almost to begin another work, and why Kant’s remark at §51 that beauty in general is the expression of aesthetic ideas astonishes us. In what follows I will outline my understanding of Kant’s theory of fine art. I will then explore one solution to the §51 perplex as given by D. W. Gotshalk, according to which Kant has *two* theories of the beautiful. Ultimately I will argue that Kant has but one theory, and that it can accommodate the beauty of natural objects, the beauty of pure design, and the beauty of aesthetic ideas.

To prefigure my argument a bit: Kant misleads us (and perhaps himself) into thinking, initially, that physical form is the sole ground for the judgment of the beautiful. Suppose I judge that *a* is beautiful. It is easy enough to venture into considering just what it is about *a* that occasions the judgment that it is beautiful, and to identify that or those aspects as the grounds for the judgment that *a* is beautiful. Kant flirts with this once in a while. “Everything that [shows] stiff regularity (close to mathematical regularity)” —

Kant's rather charming example is a pepper garden with its regular rows and parallel lines — "runs counter to taste because it does not allow us to be entertained for long by our contemplation of it." (General Comment after §22, 242–3) It may begin to seem as if it is the unvaried regularity that is un-beautiful, thus that beauty applies to things in virtue of an objective property such as variety in shape. Once one does this, it is natural to think that Kant simply glues a formalistic theory of beauty onto the expression of aesthetic ideas where it cannot possibly remain stuck. But I will argue that this is to confuse what often occasions a certain mental activity (the free play of the cognitive faculties) with that mental activity itself. The pleasure of free play is *often* occasioned by pure design, but which is not *necessarily* occasioned by pure design and pure design alone. The entertaining of aesthetic ideas, I shall argue, stimulates (as far as we can tell) the same mental activity as a judgment of the beauty of wallpaper. Thus, the grasping of aesthetic ideas can itself be beautiful.

#### IV

We can divide Kant's theory of fine art into three parts. In the first part (A-G) Kant describes the purpose of art, summarized below (and omitting mainly Kant's thoughts on rules and his comparisons between art and science):

- A. Artworks are made by rational agents ("through a power of choice that bases its acts on reason"). Such agents have in mind "a purpose to which {an artwork}<sup>8</sup> owes its form." Works of nature, honeycombs for example, are products of "instinct" and not "rational deliberation." (§43, 303)
- B. The purpose of the agreeable arts (e.g., setting a table) is "that the pleasure should accompany presentations {of possible or actual objects} that are mere *sensations*." The purpose of the fine arts (e.g., poetry) is "that the pleasure should accompany presentations that are *ways of cognizing*." (§44, 305)
- C. "Fine art ... is a way of presenting" possible or actual objects that has as its purpose "social communication." (§44, 306)
- D. The pleasure engendered by fine art, if it is to be universally communicable, requires "that this pleasure ... be a pleasure of reflection rather than one of enjoyment arising from mere sensation." (*Ibid.*)
- E. Fine arts "must necessarily be considered arts of *genius* " (§46, 307), which provides "rich *material* for products of fine art; processing this material and giving it *form* requires a talent that is academically trained ..." (§47, 310)
- F. One of the "powers of the mind which constitute genius" is "spirit" [*Geist*]. The artist, by dint of spirit (and other talents), having created an artwork, is thereby able to animate the minds of those who view, hear, or read his artwork.<sup>9</sup> (§49, 313)

- G. The artist animates the minds of his audience by his “ability to exhibit aesthetic *ideas*.” (§49, 314)

This is a theory of art, grounded in plausible intuitions and plausible reasoning from these intuitions. Art is made by rational beings with a purpose, and the purpose of fine art has to do with communicating a way of cognizing the world. The pleasure of fine art, therefore, must have something to do with cognizing broadly construed. (So far, this would be agreeable to Aristotle or Nelson Goodman.) The artist has a special power, genius, by which he produces these special cognitions, which are here termed aesthetic ideas. (This is distinctively Kantian.) Therefore art is the expression of aesthetic ideas.<sup>10</sup>

I might mention that Kant is not entirely clear or consistent about how this theory of art applies to music. Consider for example his mention of “fantasias in music (namely, music without a topic)” in §16 as an instance, along with flowers and birds, of free beauties. We might naturally interpret “music without a topic” to mean “non-programmatic (or pure) music,” but does this mean “music that does not express aesthetic ideas”? If so, then Berlioz’s *Symphonie fantastique* is art (since it’s programmatic) but Beethoven’s First Symphony is not art (since it’s not). Odd. Or did Kant mean something else by “music without a topic”? Or was this a just a careless remark at §16? I shall take it that Kant’s final view is that all and only artworks are expressions of aesthetic ideas, without thereby foisting a philosophy of music on him.

## V

What are aesthetic ideas? In what I call the second part of Kant’s theory of art, the explanation of how fine art accomplishes its purpose, Kant defines and discusses aesthetic ideas:

- H. An aesthetic idea is “a presentation of the imagination which prompts 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.” (§49, 314)
- I. “It is easy to see that an aesthetic idea is the counterpart (pendant) of a *rational idea*, which is, conversely, a concept to which no *intuition* (presentation of the imagination) can be adequate.” (*Ibid.*)
- J. Aesthetic ideas result from an imagination that uses association and analogy to “process” material from nature into something that “surpasses nature.” (*Ibid.*)
- K. The reason these are called “ideas” is to indicate “that they at least strive toward something that lies beyond the bounds of experience.” (*Ibid.*)
- L. A presentation of an aesthetic idea in an artwork quickens the mind by prompting “so much thought as can never be comprehended within a determinate concept,” and prompts such thought by “opening up for it

{the mind} a view into an immense realm of kindred presentations.”  
 (§49, 315)

In Tolstoy’s well-known theory of expression in *What Is Art?* the artist begins by experiencing an emotion which he wants to share, and prepares an external object — a poem, for example — designed to cause its readers to experience that emotion. The artwork is successful — and counts as art — only if the poem’s readers are subsequently “infected” with the artist’s emotion. Kant shares what we might call the form of Tolstoy’s theory, though Kant’s candidate for artistic communication is not emotion but aesthetic ideas. What he tells us is that aesthetic ideas are products of the artist’s genius and “prompt much thought” in his audience. (H) and (J) are as close as Kant comes to describing the formation of aesthetic ideas in the artist’s mind (and since Kant thinks that aesthetic ideas are the product of genius and that genius cannot be explained, one is grateful for the little he says here). (L) seems to be a description of the reception of aesthetic ideas by the spectator of the artwork. There are strong similarities between the formulation of aesthetic ideas (by the artist) and the reception of them by the spectator: Imagination is essentially involved, mainly since no determinate thought is involved (and a determinate thought is the product of the application of a concept by the understanding to an item in the imagination). The mind is “quickened” though not because it has made some exciting determinate judgment but because it has *entertained* something indeterminate, something that is rightly called an “idea” for it is more propositional than shapely. It is in this sense that artworks *express* aesthetic ideas: thoughts on the part of the artist, an artwork created in order to “prompt” those thoughts, and finally thoughts on the part of the audience prompted by the artwork.

Kant, of course, did not mean that aesthetic ideas are any old thoughts on the part of the artist that led him to make an artwork which could then prompt any old thoughts on the part of the spectator. Kant conjures up an example of a painting. “Jupiter’s eagle with the lightning in its claws is an attribute of the mighty king of heaven” which does not “present the content of our concepts of the sublimity and majesty of creation” but presents “something that prompts the imagination to spread over a multitude of kindred presentations that arouse more thought than can be expressed in a concept determined by words.” (§49, 315) In another example, “a certain poet, in describing a beautiful morning, says: ‘The sun flowed forth, as serenity flows from virtue.’ The consciousness of virtue ... spreads in the mind a multitude of sublime and calming feelings and a boundless outlook toward a joyful future, such as no expression commensurate with a determinate concept completely attains.” (*Ibid.*)

These examples (the eagle as an expression of majesty, the sun as an expression of virtue) and Kant’s remarks (I) that aesthetic ideas result from an imagination that used association and analogy and (K) that artworks generated from such a use of the imagination open up the mind “a view into an immense realm of kindred presentations” which (H) no determinate concept can express completely, suggest that Kant thought that every artwork was a metaphor.<sup>11</sup> More specifically, Kant thought every artwork is the result of an imaginative process of making a metaphor, and every artwork is to be understood in the way that metaphors are interpreted. For what “ideas” other than metaphor proceed by analogy and are indeterminate in content?

Kant’s theory, in fact, approaches an account of metaphor by Max Black.<sup>12</sup> According to Black’s theory, in Romeo’s exhalation, “Juliet is the sun,” there are two “sub-

jects,” one being used literally (Juliet) and the other metaphorically (the sun). Black considers a metaphor to be “an instrument for drawing implications grounded in perceived analogies of structure between two subjects belonging to different domains ...”<sup>13</sup> More specifically, Black writes,

Although I speak figuratively here of the *subjects* interacting, such an outcome is of course produced in the minds of the speaker and hearer: it is they who are led to engage in selecting, organising, and “projecting.” I think of a metaphorical statement (even a weak one) as a verbal action essentially demanding “uptake,” a creative response from a competent reader.<sup>14</sup>

We can call Black’s an “uptake” view of metaphor, which, in essence, holds that metaphorical meaning is not as it were in the sentence but in the thoughts provoked by the metaphor. Since Romeo cannot mean that Juliet is the sun, and since the terms “Juliet” or “the sun” do not grow a special metaphorical sense or reference for just this occasion, we, the hearers, produce one: Juliet is the center of Romeo’s life, she is his warmth, without her he cannot live, and so on. As Donald Davidson, another defender of “uptake” views, puts it: “A metaphor makes us attend to some likeness, often a novel or surprising likeness, between two or more things.”<sup>15</sup> This is a virtual reading of Kant’s remark about “an immense realm of *kindred* presentations” (my emphasis) that are “prompted” by the artwork. Kant’s theory of aesthetic ideas, if indeed it is a theory of metaphor, is an “uptake” theory.

There is some agreement by contemporary philosophers that the meaning of metaphor is, as Kant says, “immense” and “indeterminate,” i.e., inadequately definable by any determinate concept. Black says, “There is an inescapable indeterminacy in the notion of a *given* metaphorical statement.”<sup>16</sup> Stanley Cavell speaks of “the burgeoning of meaning” in metaphor, mentioning the fact that most attempts to paraphrase metaphor end with “and so on.”<sup>17</sup> Davidson states that “there is no limit to what a metaphor calls to our attention, and much of what we are caused to notice is not propositional in character.”<sup>18</sup>

Kant, like Black but unlike Cavell, offers a brief explanation of why it is we need metaphors. Kant’s claim that aesthetic ideas are a “way of cognizing” is so blunt as to discourage further analysis, and is complicated by a remark at §57, “An *aesthetic idea* cannot become cognition because it is an *intuition* (of the imagination) for which an adequate concept can never be found.” Is Kant, for example, saying that metaphor are a way of cognizing that is never statable or that is not, really, cognizing proper at all?<sup>19</sup> That no answer is forthcoming from Kant is unfortunate. Donald Davidson opens his paper on metaphor with “Metaphor is the dreamwork of language.” Now my inclination is to say that his metaphor is beautiful and enlightening. Metaphors seem at the same time to delight and enlighten. We shall, however, have to forgo the enlightening in treating Kant’s theory.

We are on firmer ground in rejecting a kind of interpretation that at least one commentator has made.<sup>20</sup> This is to take Kant as holding that we need metaphors only to express the supersensible. This interpretation is not entirely unfounded. In remarks (J) and (K), aesthetic ideas are said to “surpass nature” and “the bounds of experience”. While it is plausible to maintain that we cannot portray something supersensible such as the power of heaven except metaphorically (this recalls the running scholastic dispute about literal versus nonliteral descriptions of God), there is no reason to think that meta-

phors *must* be about the supersensible. The fact is that aesthetic ideas — if indeed they are metaphors — could be of mundane, empirical things. To borrow an example from Black (who borrows it from Ezra Pound), a metaphor of education as shepherding does not seem to involve the supersensible at all. It is perhaps wrongly thought that inexpressibility by determinate concepts entails supersensibility (it of course does not); or perhaps commentators are enchanted by Kant’s pietistic examples, which mention paintings and poems of “the mighty king of heaven” and “the sublimity and majesty of creation”.

We should not forget that Kant gives aesthetic ideas as the counterpart of rational ideas. Aesthetic ideas are intuitions that cannot be adequately captured by determinate concepts, while rational ideas are concepts that cannot be adequately illustrated by intuitions. So Kantian aesthetic ideas are attempts to illustrate rational ideas:

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 on. Or, again, he takes [things] that are indeed exemplified in experience, such as death, envy, and all the other vices, as well as love, fame, 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. (§49, 314)

This remark, too, needs clarification, but Kant is of no further help. Maybe the realm of the blessed “goes beyond the limits of experience,” and can therefore be only metaphorically illuminated, but envy, love, and fame are hardly in the same category. Instances of these are, in a perfectly ordinary sense, found in experience. Of course what Kant says is that the artist wants to give “sensible expression” to, say, envy, “with a *completeness* for which no example can be found in nature,” though it is hard to know what is meant here by “completeness”. This remark is suggestive of Aristotle’s famous claim that the poet differs from the historian in being more “philosophical” by which he meant “expressing the universal,” though both poet and historian are in a way recounting the same set of facts.<sup>21</sup> There are problems here as to how the poet can rise to the universal, but it is uncertain whether Kant has anything like this in mind. Indeed, we wonder how Kant could explain how “completeness” can (or must) be conveyed metaphorically — i.e., indeterminately, through association and analogy — for one would think “completeness” and “indeterminacy” to be in conflict with one another.

## VI

In the third part of Kant’s theory of art, he attempts to combine his theory of art and aesthetic ideas with his earlier account of the beautiful.

- M. “Whenever we convey our thoughts, there are two ways (*modi*) of arranging them, and one of these is called *manner* (*modus aestheticus*), the other *method* (*modus logicus*); the difference between these two is that the first has no standard other than the *feeling* that there is unity in the exhibition [of the thoughts], whereas the second follows in [all of]

this determinate *principles*; hence only the first applies to fine art.” (§49, 318–19)

- N. In art “a product is called *mannered* only if the way the artist conveys his idea *aims* at singularity and is not adequate to the idea.” The pretentious and stilted is “without spirit.” (*Ibid.*)
- O. If art shows genius it is called inspired, “but it deserves to be called *fine* art only insofar as it shows taste.” (§50, 319)
- P. “In order [for a work] to be beautiful, it is not strictly necessary that [it] be rich and original in ideas, but it is necessary that the imagination in its freedom be commensurate with the lawfulness of the understanding.” (*Ibid.*)
- Q. “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*.” (§51, 320)
- R. “Now although the two cognitive powers, sensibility and understanding, are indispensable to one another, still it is difficult to combine them without [using] constraint and without their impairing one another; and yet their combination and harmony must appear unintentional and spontaneous if the art is to be *fine* art.” (§51, 321)

The remarks start off with hardly a strain on the earlier exposition of beauty. The artist, according to (M), has a certain way of proceeding which essentially involves feeling (as opposed to the scientist who proceeds “logically”). The artist should avoid what is stilted (N), and should certainly show taste (O). (Q) seems to point out the difficulties of being in artistic control (“using constraint”) yet producing an object that appears “spontaneous”. (And Kant has nothing more to say about how to ease these difficulties.) So far, these remarks could be addressed to the wallpaper designer as well as to a painter of landscapes, for they raise no problems against the formalism of the theory of beauty to that point.

The difficulty begins with (P), for here Kant seems to require that a work of fine art be “rich and original” in ideas in order for it to be beautiful. And all bets seem to be off with (Q), which all but identifies beauty with the expression of aesthetic ideas.

I should add that this is not, as it were, a blunder that Kant should have avoided — I mean, a blunder in even raising the issue of the beauty of aesthetic ideas. Kant rightly sees that he cannot just parenthesize expression when addressing the formal beauty of an artwork (as in: *The design of this artwork is beautiful; and by the way, the artwork expresses a certain aesthetic idea*); nor can he ignore formal beauty when addressing its expression (as in: *This artwork expresses a certain aesthetic idea, though we will pass over in silence the issue of the beauty of the artwork*). That is, Kant acknowl-

edges that the beauty of artworks is complex in a way that the beauty of flowers and wallpaper is not. Whether he adequately accounts for the complexity remains to be seen.

## VII

Our first question is: How can beauty be applied in any way to aesthetic ideas? In a famous paper on Kant's theory of art, D. W. Gotshalk claims that Kant cannot consistently allow aesthetic ideas to be beautiful. "In Kant's conception of Beauty in Art ... the emphasis shifts from form to expression. Above all the natural source of Beauty in Art is identified with expressive power rather than with formal excellence."<sup>22</sup> But not only does the "emphasis" shift; in Gotshalk's view Kant advances a different, post-§43, theory of beauty:

Kant holds a *formalist* theory of Natural Beauty and an *expressionist* theory of Fine Art. ... To a purely disinterested observer there is considerable difference between a formalist and an expressionist aesthetical theory, and in Kant's third *Critique* there is clearly a change from the first type to the second when we proceed after some delay (over the Sublime) from his theory of Natural Beauty to his theory of Fine Art.<sup>23</sup>

Gotshalk's concern is to explain why Kant made this shift. Kant in Gotshalk's view is seeking "*a priori* evidence for a harmony between Nature and moral aspiration,"<sup>24</sup> or as we might also put it, between the realm of natural causality and the realm of human freedom. Such evidence is eventually provided by the concept of genius which "is the innate mental predisposition (*ingenium*) through which nature gives the rule to art." (§46, 307) Natural beauty is then — guilelessly — redefined to accommodate genius.<sup>25</sup>

Before we entertain an explanation of why Kant held two theories of beauty, we should be convinced that he did in fact hold two different theories. Gotshalk's evidence that Kant held two theories rests on little more than the supposed *obviousness* of a "considerable difference" between the theory of pure beauty and the theory of aesthetic ideas. It is undeniable that there *appears* to be a difference. This largely has to do with the earlier remarks emphasizing form-as-shape. But might there not be a deeper interpretation that demonstrates a unity? It makes Kant into quite a muddler if he has *inadvertently* abandoned what on Gotshalk's view must be thought of as the pre-§43 theory of beauty — and it would have to be inadvertently abandoned, since Kant doesn't *say* that he is summoning up a different theory of beauty post-§43. He doesn't, for example, claim a distinction between "formal" and "expressive" beauty, in the way that he distinguished (in §§15–16) "free" from "accessory" beauty. In fact, the so-called "Dialectic of Aesthetic Judgment" (§§55–60) which follows the theory of fine art is a near restatement of the pre-§43 remarks.

Most tellingly against Gotshalk, there seems to be no second theory of beauty adumbrated in the *Critique of Judgment*. One does not present a *theory* of beauty by the mere implication that a judgment of the beauty of an artwork is grounded in something different from a judgment of the beauty of a flower. So even if Kant's pre-§43 remarks cannot, ultimately, be held to apply to the expression of aesthetic ideas, we should conclude, not that Kant had two theories of beauty, but that he has one theory of beauty that cannot accommodate his theory of fine art.

In a paper partly written as a response to Gotshalk, Paul Guyer says “that Kant’s formalism and expressionism may be seen as aspects of a complex but non-contradictory theory of the pleasures which we take in beautiful objects.”<sup>26</sup> The crucial aspect of Guyer’s view is this:

Nothing in [Kant’s formalism] need be seen as excluding concepts, or representations of concepts, symbols, and the like, from being *part of the manifold of imagination* which the mind ranges over in its free play. Nothing in what I have argued to follow so far from the theory of cognitive harmony need exclude the meaning or significance, the suggestiveness or symbolic aptness, of a given representation, work of art or of nature, from being among that which disposes the mind to the state which grounds an aesthetic judgment.<sup>27</sup>

But this is only half the solution. If nothing *excludes* expression from being beautiful, what *enables* expression to be beautiful?

I think the answer is that an expression of aesthetic ideas — a metaphor — can be found beautiful because entertaining one mimics the same mental processes and acts as the judging of natural beauty. Kant’s remarks suggest that he found a deep similarity, which he did not fully spell out, between the grasping of aesthetic ideas and the perception of beautiful form. Remark (M) says that when we “arrange” our thoughts “in the aesthetic mode” (which we can take to mean “when we think metaphorically”), then they can have a unity signaled by a feeling, a feeling, we might assume, of pleasure. Remarks (Q) and (R) suggest that the grasping of aesthetic ideas involves “reflection” with the possibility of the “harmony” of sensibility and understanding.

This is as far as Kant goes. We might continue speculatively along the following lines. Consider a painting, *Jupiter’s Eagle*, which depicts an eagle with lightning in its claws, flying through ominous clouds, and so on. It provokes aesthetic ideas by prompting us to discover a meaning for it. This is like the search for an adequate concept for an item of perception; in other words, the search for metaphorical meaning is a kind of reflective judgment. In the case of “ordinary” reflective judgment, the understanding is presented with percepts and tries to find an adequate concept. In discovering metaphorical meaning, we are not exactly trying to recognize the subject in a painting. At least we know it is an eagle with lightning in its claws. (As Kant says, “In the case of beautiful art the aesthetic idea must be prompted by a concept of the object.”) What we have to discover are concepts adequate to express the meaning of the painting. So we run through concepts such as *sublimity*, *majesty*, *might*, and so on, none of which is entirely adequate, though each feels like it fits. This feeling of fit might be what Kant calls the “unity” in an expression of aesthetic ideas, and might therefore be the source of the (pleasurable) feeling he takes to be part of the grasping of aesthetic ideas.

This line of reasoning entitles Kant to say that an expression of aesthetic ideas by a work of fine art, such expression being considered by itself, can be found beautiful. It does not, exactly, substantiate the notorious remark at §51, quoted as (Q) above. That remark seems simply overstated — a mistake on Kant’s part. If beauty were “in general” the expression of aesthetic ideas, then it would follow that all beautiful things are expressions of aesthetic ideas. But this is simply false: we have the simple counterexample of beautiful flowers and birds. True, there is a passage in which Kant writes on “the charms in beautiful nature” which “contain, as it were, a language in which nature speaks to us and which seems to have a higher meaning. Thus a lily’s white color seems to attune the

mind to ideas of innocence ...” and so on through other colors. (§42, 302) Yet these colors, while perhaps calling to mind certain ideas and therefore “as it were” expressing aesthetic ideas, do not *actually* express such ideas since only the work of human *geist* can do this.

### VIII

I have established that Kant, without switching theories, can say both that an object that does not express aesthetic ideas (e.g., a rose) and that an object that expresses aesthetic ideas (e.g., a poem) can each be freely or purely beautiful. Beauty is therefore not limited to pure form (of the spatial or temporal sort). This is a kind of reconciliation of the pre-§43 natural beauty portion of the theory with the post-§43 fine art segment. However, not all questions are answered.

Is it possible to arrive at what we might think of as an all-things-considered judgment regarding the beauty of an artwork? This is a question that Kant did not seem to raise explicitly, though one or two proposals may be teased out of some of his remarks. The problem is that many works of art offer *both* form and aesthetic ideas — painting and kinds of visual art for sure, less certainly music (Does music express aesthetic ideas?) or poetry (Is there any way in which a poem exhibits spatio-temporal form?). It apparently doesn’t follow that if an artwork is beautiful in aesthetic ideas, then it will be beautiful in form. Nor vice-versa. Beauty of form and beauty of aesthetic ideas seem on first glance to be logically independent. (And they will prove to be logically independent. See the discussion of the “equivalence proposal” below.)

Consider four visual artworks, Alpha, Beta, Gamma, and Delta. A spectator renders certain judgments about each: that Alpha’s form and expression of aesthetic ideas are beautiful, that Beta’s form but not its expression of aesthetic ideas is beautiful, and so on. We’ll tabulate this spectator’s verdicts:

<b>Artwork</b>	<b>Form</b>	<b>Expression of aesthetic ideas</b>
Alpha	Beautiful	Beautiful
Beta	Beautiful	Not beautiful
Gamma	Not beautiful	Beautiful
Delta	Not beautiful	Not beautiful

These seem to be possible verdicts. That is, there is no obvious inconsistency about them. In that case, we need some additional proposal to get a univocal answer to the question, Is artwork Beta or Gamma beautiful?, since the answer thus far seems to be Yes and No. Here are three proposals concerning any artwork, *A*:

- The Disjunctive Proposal:** *A* is beautiful iff *A*'s expression of aesthetic ideas is beautiful or *A*'s form (design, composition) is beautiful.
- The Conjunctive Proposal:** *A* is beautiful iff *A*'s expression of aesthetic ideas is beautiful and *A*'s form is beautiful.
- The Equivalence Proposal:** *A*'s form is beautiful iff *A*'s expression of aesthetic ideas is beautiful.

Kant, vaguely, inclines towards the conjunctive proposal here, towards the equivalence proposal there; though we shall see that he is probably entitled only to the relatively uninteresting disjunctive proposal.

The conjunctive proposal is suggested by (N), (O), and (P). (N) and (P) seem to say that an artwork lacking beauty of expression simply fails to be beautiful. (O) says that a work of art needs “taste” in addition to genius to be beautiful, which hints that a work of art needs formal beauty — its design or composition must be beautiful — in order to be beautiful. Thus (adding it up) it appears Kant held that a work of art needs both formal and expressive beauty in order to be beautiful (all things considered). On the conjunctive proposal, Alpha alone would be properly speaking beautiful.

What sort of position is this? If Kant thinks he is describing our intuitions (or what almost amounts to the same thing, our word usage), he isn't being entirely accurate, for we are comfortable in “splitting” our verdicts. We might say that the expression of aesthetic ideas but not the design of Marcel Duchamp's notorious *Fontaine* (the urinal-as-artwork) is beautiful. Alternatively, a person could judge the idea-less, purely sensuous, aspect of an artwork to be beautiful, yet judge its aesthetic ideas ugly. This, in fact, could be said to describe the initial critical reception of such works as Manet's *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* or the recent reception of Robert Mapplethorpe's dicier photographs: beautifully composed works with an off-putting subject matter. It could be argued that “interest” has intruded — our spectator just doesn't like nudes or he's homophobic or some such thing. Hence he is not delivering himself of a pure judgment of beauty.

Well, then, consider the general possibility of weak metaphors. Consider a painting that expresses aesthetic ideas about the nature of heavenly bliss. This painting depicts people in white robes sitting on clouds strumming harps. It is not necessarily evidence of the intrusion of “interest” if a spectator fails to find its expression of aesthetic ideas beautiful. This painting is the fine art counterpart of the dull and regular pepper garden: its ideas simply don't “play”. Nonetheless, the spectator may find the design of the painting beautiful.

If the conjunctive interpretation is supposed to reform our intuitions, Kant gives no reason why we should withhold a pronouncement that thus-and-such work of art is beautiful unless we judge *both* its form and expression beautiful. So the conjunctive proposal, even if Kant intended it, is not justified.

The equivalence proposal might be suggested by (Q), which does tell us that “we may *in general* call beauty (whether natural or artistic) the expression of aesthetic ideas” (emphasis added). In effect, the equivalence proposal denies the possibility that a work of fine art could be beautiful in form and fail to be beautiful in its expression of aesthetic ideas. The equivalence proposal entails that the spectator’s verdict regarding artwork Beta or Gamma is not just false but incoherent. On the other hand, if the equivalence proposal could be argued for successfully, Kant would have a way of *fully* integrating his theory of fine art with his theory of beauty.

Suppose an observer pronounces the painting *Jupiter’s Eagle* to be beautiful. Could Kant argue for an equivalence between form and expression by alleging an inseparability between form and expression — alleging that *that* very form, that pictorial design and no other, could express the aesthetic ideas it in fact expresses? No. Even granting that those ideas could only be expressed by that pictorial design, we still could judge the painting’s design ugly and the ideas it expresses beautiful (or vice versa).

Alternatively, Kant may claim that it is indistinguishable to internal sense whether we judge beauty of expression or beauty of form: reflective judgment operates in so similar a way in each. We may find an artwork beautiful, yet be uncertain as to whether the source of its beauty is its expression of aesthetic ideas or its composition. Yet what follows from this? Surely not that beauty of expression is equivalent to beauty of form, for examples such as Duchamp’s *Fontaine* or Manet’s *Déjeuner* demonstrate not only that there *is* a difference but that we can, at least in these cases, *tell* the difference. There is, then, no reason to think the verdicts regarding Beta or Gamma to be anything but consistent.

In the end, then, we are left with the disjunctive proposal. This is disappointing, for it does not really integrate Kant’s theory of fine art into his theory of pure or formal beauty. It merely says that an artwork can be beautiful in either or both of two aspects. While this may be hardly unsettling in itself — we often say of an artwork, a movie for example, that its script was interesting but its acting was not, which is a perfectly acceptable way of answering the question, “Is it a good movie?” — our conclusion about Kant reveals that the only thing the beauty of spatio-temporal pure form and the beauty of aesthetic ideas have in common is eliciting a condition of free play in their perceivers. But of course that may be the only thing the beauty of a nautilus shell and the beauty of a rose have in common.

## IX

I would like to attempt a correction to the reputation of Kant’s theory of beauty in modern aesthetics, in particular as Kant and his theory are understood in George Dickie’s recent book, *Evaluating Art*. I will close with some comments on the vexed question of the aesthetic versus the cognitive.

The correction: Kant is usually seen as the progenitor of the modern apparatus of the aesthetic. The ideas of disinterestedness, of a special mode of attention that later is called the aesthetic attitude, and of formalism in art criticism are traceable to Kant who, if not quite the first to formulate them, is credibly held to have installed them firmly into modern thought. I do not wish to counter this view. However, some writers insist that art be valued for its aesthetic merit alone, others that cognitive import be included as well.

The mistake comes, I think, in finding Kant on the side of aesthetic merit alone. Mary Mothersill recently wrote, “Kant seems to think that it is *just* their lack of ‘meaning’ ... that qualifies conventionalized design motifs or unfamiliar botanical specimens for being paradigms of beauty. This is why people who care about the arts think that Kant’s aesthetic theory ends by trivializing what is important.”<sup>28</sup> But Mothersill simply ignores the theory of aesthetic ideas.

The problem is that Kant’s theory of aesthetic ideas is not part of the canonical history of aesthetics. George Dickie in *Evaluating Art* for example traces a line of ancestry from Kant’s disinterestedness through Schopenhauer’s account of aesthetic consciousness, culminating in Monroe Beardsley’s theory of art evaluation.<sup>29</sup> It is not that there is no such line, but we must remember that an idea moving through history, like a passenger on a long train trip, may well lose some baggage along the way. In getting from Kant to Beardsley, we should not forget that Kant’s theory was processed by Clive Bell whose 1914 book, *Art*, portions of which still appear in nearly all introductory anthologies, is a virtual Kant-made-simple, and whose central concept of “significant form” strips Kantian aesthetic judgment of anything except a preoccupation with design and composition. “Significant form” is “the one quality common to all works of visual art.” It is “lines and colours combined in a particular way, certain forms and relations of form, [which] stir our aesthetic emotions.” Of a certain “descriptive” painting, Frith’s “Paddington Station,” Bell says, “In it line and colour are used to recount anecdotes, suggest ideas, and indicate the manners and customs of an age: they are not used to provoke aesthetic emotion. Forms and the relations of forms were for Frith not objects of emotion, but means of suggesting emotion and conveying ideas.”<sup>30</sup> This is a good synopsis of the way the later twentieth century understood Kant, and hence why Beardsley and Kant *seem* to stand in the same line of thought.

Beardsley, for example, clearly opposes aesthetic appreciation to the expression of ideas. In a late essay, he offered the definition that “an artwork is something produced with the intention of giving it the capacity to satisfy the aesthetic interest,” where aesthetic interest is specified as standing in opposition to such things as an interest in the cognitive (which presumably includes not just what might count as knowledge but also what is clearly presented as mere opinion). “The fuss that has been made about Duchamp’s *Fountain* has long amazed me,” Beardsley wrote. “It does not seem that in submitting that object to the art show and getting it more or less hidden from view, Duchamp or anyone else [!] thought of it either as art or as having an aesthetic capacity. ... Many objects exhibited today by the avant-garde evidently do make comments of some kind on art itself, but these objects may or may not be artworks.”<sup>31</sup> But this would not be Kant’s view. Were Kant to be resurrected and confronted with Duchamp’s artwork-urinal, he would probably faint. But when revived and stuffed with 150 years of art history, he *could* say that the form (design, composition) of *Fountain* was not especially beautiful, yet, still, the work not only expressed aesthetic ideas (among which is the idea that art needn’t be especially pleasing in design), its expression of aesthetic ideas was beautiful — a comment in clear opposition to Beardsley. I do not mean to pit a hypothetical and speculative Kant against an actual Beardsley. The fact is that Beardsley’s theory doesn’t allow him to appreciate ideas aesthetically, while Kant’s does.

It is a near-standard feature of contemporary discussions of the value of art that “aesthetic value” is other than “cognitive value.” For example, the two major modern theorists of the value of art in Dickie’s *Evaluating Art* are Beardsley (on behalf of aes-

thetic value) and Nelson Goodman (for cognitive value). Dickie tries to effect a kind of synthesis by ascribing *artistic* value to artworks, where artistic value is a kind of composite of the aesthetic and the cognitive. He holds “that Beardsley is right to hold that aesthetic, nonreferential characteristics of works of art are important for the evaluating of art and that Goodman is right to hold that cognitive characteristics of works of art are important for the evaluation of art.”<sup>32</sup>

By calling Dickie’s view a kind of synthesis, I do not mean that he *blends* Beardsleyan-formalist and Goodman-cognitivist assessments of a work of art into one all-things-considered judgment of that work. Dickie adopts the notion of “independently valued properties” which are properties valued (positively or negatively) independently of their relations to others aspects of the work.<sup>33</sup> The discussion of independent properties, unfortunately for my purposes, occurs in the context of comparing works of art, so that Dickie’s examples of independent properties are, in his first illustration, a poem’s subtle meter against a painting’s brilliant color. “Meter and color are such different things that it does not appear to make sense to try to compare and rank them.”<sup>34</sup> Probably, but what of cognitive and aesthetic qualities? While Dickie doesn’t come right out and assert this, it seems to be implied in his discussion of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* that Twain’s work could be valued *independently* for its aesthetic properties (its beautiful writing and plot construction, say) and for its cognitive import (its confrontation with racial attitudes).<sup>35</sup> If so then Dickie, I think, should agree (a) that the matrix above regarding artworks Alpha, Beta, Gamma, and Delta represents independent value judgments, and (b) that the conclusion I’ve drawn with respect to Kant, namely that Kant seems to be entitled only to what I’ve called the disjunctive reading (a work of art is beautiful in either or both of two aspects: its form or its expression of aesthetic ideas), is not a bad position to be in — is, in fact, the *correct* position.

There is an exception to be noted: Dickie would not describe the judgments regarding the four artworks in terms of the beauty of their form versus the beauty of their expression of aesthetic ideas, but rather as aesthetic value versus cognitive value. I think this is more at stake than a difference in terminology.

Dickie plays out aesthetic value by and large via Beardsleyan formalism, which is, in its simplest formulation, to look at or listen to or read the artwork itself and notice the degree of unity, intensity, and complexity it exhibits. The greater the unity (etc.) the more aesthetically valuable the artwork, for its unity contributes to a heightened aesthetic experience. When cognitive value is addressed by Nelson Goodman, it seems we have to back off from pure Beardsleyan formalism. We must begin to notice the reference of the artwork, and reference, whatever else it is, is a relation between aspects of the artwork and something else.

In contrast, the expression of aesthetic ideas is or appeals to something we can rightly call “cognitive,” though the motivation to *oppose* the cognitive to the aesthetic is absent in Kant’s case. The cognitive, not only in *Evaluating Art* but also in Goodman’s *Languages of Art*, revolves around the ability of works of art to make reference to something outside themselves — to “say something about the world.” However, the expression of aesthetic ideas does not involve reference, except indirectly, in so far as artworks stimulate the mind to thoughts of things. If the cognitive/aesthetic distinction is drawn along the lines of attending to the reference of a work versus attending to its unity, complexity, and intensity, then the cognitive is opposed to the aesthetic: We either see what

the artwork says about the external world or we look towards how its parts are arranged. Or both. But the point is that these seem to be activities of differing kinds, which lends support to the common view that cognitive valuation is different enough from aesthetic valuation to force us to speak of different values.

If, on the other hand, we take Kant's route, the cognitive in art will not necessarily aim at stating truths or at standing as samples of reality, but will be that which stimulates metaphorical thinking, which lays claim to being a cognitive activity. (I don't mean that the cognitive in art *can't* aim at truths or exemplification, only that the cognitive in art needn't be *limited* to reference.) More importantly, on Kant's view the appreciation of aesthetic ideas is not an activity different in kind from the appreciation of design and composition. There is no contemplation/verification split of the sort that motivates an aesthetic/cognitive value distinction. In fact, Kant shows how Duchamp's *Fountain* — of all things — is susceptible to aesthetic appreciation without falling into the trap of “mooning over the gleaming surfaces of the porcelain object [Duchamp] had manhandled into exhibition space.”<sup>36</sup> And we may have a kind of reconciliation in the offing: perhaps Duchamp's *Fountain* and a work like Michelangelo's *Moses* are not as *radically* different as some think.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>The translation and English terminology I have used is from Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment* (1790), trans. Werner Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1987). References to quotes are given by citing section number (where Kant gives one), followed by the page reference to the *Akademie* edition of the collected works — e.g., “(§44, 305)”. Italics, *Akademie* pagination, and text in square brackets, “[ ]”, are as given by Pluhar.

<sup>2</sup>“Unfortunately, Kant's theory of symbolism is relatively unsophisticated. He assimilates metaphor, personification, synecdoche, and other tropes, and he does not distinguish them from other forms of symbolism. Nor does he argue for his stated view that such symbols are ineffable ... Consequently, many of the details of Kant's view are unenlightening.” Donald W. Crawford, “Kant's Theory of Creative Imagination,” in *Essays in Kant's Aesthetics*, ed. Ted Cohen and Paul Guyer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), pp. 173-174.

<sup>3</sup>I have in mind an essay in which Arthur Danto seeks out “the political subtext” of both Plato's attack on art in the tenth book of the *Republic* and what Danto sees as a parallel attack by Kant in his third *Critique*: “So art is systematically neutered, removed from the domain of use on one side (a good thing if artists lack practical intelligence they merely can give the appearance of having) and, on the other side, from the world of needs and interests.” Arthur C. Danto, “The Philosophical Disenfranchisement of Art,” in his book of essays, *The Philosophical Disenfranchisement of Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), p. 10.

<sup>4</sup>At §7 he admonishes us that “it would be ridiculous” to say that “this object (the building we are looking at, the garment that man is wearing, the concert we are listening to, the poem put up to be judged) is beautiful *for me*.” Kant's intent here is to put forward an intuition about the beautiful, namely that the beautiful is universal in a way that the agreeable is not. We should note that he is here at least comfortable in speaking of the beauty of poems and concerts, that is, of artworks.

<sup>5</sup>This is the substance of the (second or published) Introduction: “Now this [transcendental principle of reflective judgment] can only be the following: since universal natural laws have their basis in our understanding, which prescribes them to nature ... the particular empirical laws must ... be viewed in terms of such a unity as [they would have] if they too had been given by an understanding (even though not ours) so as to assist our cognitive powers by making possible a system of experience in terms of particular natural laws. ... In other words, through this concept we present nature as if an understanding contained the basis of the unity of what is diverse in nature's empirical laws.” (§IV, 180–181)

<sup>6</sup>See especially the (published) Introduction, §VII.

<sup>7</sup>Kant is confusing (and, I think, confused) on the role of color. At §14, 224 Kant considers whether a color

considered in itself could be beautiful. His answer seems to be that if color consists of “vibrations of the aether in uniform temporal sequence, as in the case of sound” then a color could be beautiful because it would then have parts in “regular play”—an odd view, as it equates the beauty of color to the beauty of music, that is, color as a kind of temporal art. A bare *Akademie* page later we find Kant saying that “charm is a vulgar error that is very prejudicial to genuine, uncorrupted, solid taste.” For instance in painting, “The colors that illuminate the outline belong to charm. Though they can indeed made the object itself vivid to sense, they cannot make it beautiful and worthy of being beheld.”

<sup>8</sup>Remarks in curly braces, “{ }”, are my glosses on the text.

<sup>9</sup>In Pluhar’s translation Kant wrote this: “*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 play which is such that it sustains itself on its own and even strengthens the powers for such play.”

<sup>10</sup>This theory prefigures some modern views according to which a necessary condition for being a work of art is to have a meaning. See Arthur Danto, *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), or Richard Wollheim, *Painting as an Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press for the Bollingen Foundation, 1987).

<sup>11</sup>I am not the first to interpret Kant’s notion of aesthetic ideas as a theory of metaphor. See Francis X. Coleman, *The Harmony of Reason* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1974), pp. 158-167.

<sup>12</sup>The theory as cited here is from Max Black’s paper, “More About Metaphor,” *Dialectica* 31 (1977), which is a later reworking of the “interaction” theory of a better known essay by Black, entitled simply “Metaphor,” in his *Models and Metaphors* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1962).

<sup>13</sup>Black, “More About Metaphor,” p. 446.

<sup>14</sup>Black, “More About Metaphor,” p. 442.

<sup>15</sup>Davidson, “What Metaphors Mean,” in *On Metaphor*, ed. Sheldon Sacks (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), p. 31.

<sup>16</sup>Black, “More About Metaphor,” p. 438.

<sup>17</sup>Stanley Cavell, “Aesthetic Problems of Modern Philosophy,” in his book of essays, *Must We Mean What We Say?* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1969), p. 79.

<sup>18</sup>Davidson, “What Metaphors Mean,” p. 44.

<sup>19</sup>Is Kant verging on a view recently expressed by Richard Rorty, according to which “[T]here are three ways in which a new belief can be added to our previous beliefs, thereby forcing us to reweave the fabric of our beliefs and desires—viz., perception, inference, and metaphor. . . . A metaphor is, so to speak, a voice from outside logical space, rather than an empirical filling-up of a portion of that space, or a logical-philosophical clarification of the structure of that space. It is a call to change one’s language and one’s life, rather than a proposal about how to systematize either.” Richard Rorty, “Philosophy as science, as metaphor, and as politics,” in his collection of essays, *Essays on Heidegger and Others: Philosophical Papers Volume 2* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 12–13.

<sup>20</sup>See Donald W. Crawford, *Kant’s Aesthetic Theory* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1974), pp. 134 ff., whose discussion of aesthetic ideas is a springboard into sections on the “supersensible” and aesthetics and morality.

<sup>21</sup>See Chapter IX of Aristotle’s *Poetics*. On how the poet might achieve the universal, see Robert J. Yanal, “Aristotle’s Definition of Poetry,” *Noûs*, XVI (1982), 499–525.

<sup>22</sup>D. W. Gotshalk, “Form and Expression in Kant’s Aesthetics,” *The British Journal of Aesthetics*, 7 (1967), p. 253.

<sup>23</sup>Gotshalk, “Form and Expression in Kant’s Aesthetics,” p. 260.

<sup>24</sup>Gotshalk, “Form and Expression in Kant’s Aesthetics,” p. 258.

<sup>25</sup>I do not deny that Kant’s larger project involves seeking such evidence. Nonetheless I think it fair to say that if Kant is just surreptitiously redefining a concept he isn’t discovering evidence; he’s cheating.

<sup>26</sup>Paul D. Guyer, “Formalism and the Theory of Expression in Kant’s Aesthetics,” *Kant-Studien* 68 (1977), p. 48.

<sup>27</sup>Guyer, “Formalism and the Theory of Expression,” pp. 55. Guyer has not modified this view in his more recent book. See *Kant and the Claims of Taste*, pp. 233-234.

<sup>28</sup>Mary Mothersill, *Beauty Restored* (Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 225.

<sup>29</sup>George Dickie, *Evaluating Art* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988), pp. 27–37, 53–4. See also Monroe C. Beardsley, *Aesthetics: Problems in the Philosophy of Criticism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1958), pp. 454–556; and “In Defense of Aesthetic Value,” in *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association* (Newark, DE: American Philosophical Association, 1979), 723–749.

<sup>30</sup>Clive Bell, *Art* (1914), as reprinted in *Aesthetics: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Dickie and Sclafani (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1977), pp. 40–41.

<sup>31</sup>Monroe C. Beardsley, "An Aesthetic Definition of Art," in *What Is Art?* ed. Hugh Curtler (New York: Haven Publications Inc., 1983), p. 21, 25.

<sup>32</sup>Dickie, *Evaluating Art*, pp. 115–6.

<sup>33</sup>Dickie, *Evaluating Art*, p. 164. Dickie muddies the waters, however, when he tells us (p. 173) that independently valued properties sometimes "interact" — which seems to be prohibited by the very definition of independent properties.

<sup>34</sup>Dickie, *Evaluating Art*, p. 165.

<sup>35</sup>Dickie, *Evaluating Art*, pp. 174 ff.

<sup>36</sup>Arthur Danto, *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), p. 94.