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THE NOTION OF FORM IN KANT'S
CRITIQUE OF AESTHETIC JUDGMENT.

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THE NOTION OF FORM IN KANT'S CRITIQUE
OF AESTHETIC JUDGMENT

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By

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* * * * *

The Ohio State University
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PREFACE

This dissertation is the result of investigations into Kant's Critique of Aesthetic Judgment begun in the summer of 1960. I am especially grateful to Professor John P. Anton of the State University of New York at Buffalo who first suggested to me the crucial importance of the notion of form in Kant's aesthetics. Our discussions, not only about Kant but about aesthetics in general have, I hope, borne some fruit in this essay, although I am not confident that Professor Anton would find it possible to agree with everything that is in it.

Portions of chapter four were read in February, 1963, before a Philosophy Department Colloquium at the Ohio State University. I am grateful to the faculty members and assistants of the Department of Philosophy for their criticisms and helpful suggestions.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The first half of Kant's Critique of Judgment has long been looked upon as setting some of the most crucial problems and questions in philosophical aesthetics. Margolis, for example, writes:

Aesthetics, as a discipline, begins approximately with Kant's Critique of Judgment. . . . It was Kant . . . who gave a sense of philosophical importance to aesthetics and set certain of its central questions.¹

René Wellek points out that Kant "must be considered the first philosopher who clearly and definitely established the peculiarity and autonomy of the aesthetic realm."² Wellek even goes so far as to say: "One may look upon the whole history of general aesthetics after Kant as a series of discussions, repudiations, and developments of Kant's thoughts."³ Hegel, in a well-known passage, remarks that in Kant's considerations about form in the

¹Philosophy Looks at the Arts, ed. Joseph Margolis (New York: Scribner's, 1962), pp. 5-6.

²René Wellek, "Aesthetics and Criticism," The Philosophy of Kant and Our Modern World, ed. Charles Hendel (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1957), p. 67.

³Ibid., p. 77.

Critique of Judgment we find "the first reasonable thing said about beauty."⁴ There is some rather general agreement, then, that the Critique of Judgment holds a rather important place in the history of aesthetics.

The agreement on this point does not extend to the interpretations which the Critique has fostered. On the contrary, there is a full panorama of views concerning the meaning of the central notions in Kant's aesthetic theory, as well as the import of the theory as a whole. This panorama of views arises, I think, from four main sources. Moreover, what I think are some errors in interpretation arise from one or more of the same four sources.

First, there is the difficulty of various readings in the three editions of the Critique of Judgment published during Kant's lifetime (1790, 1793, 1799). One variation in reading, appearing only in the 1799 edition, concerning Kant's views toward the physical theory of light and sound advanced by Euler, is crucial enough to receive considerable attention in the sequel.

Second, and related to the first, is the general availability of two English translations of the Critique of Judgment (J.H. Bernard's and J.C. Meredith's). Variations in these two translations are sufficient in

⁴G.W.F. Hegel, Lectures on the History of Philosophy, trans. E.S. Haldane and F.H. Simson (New York: Humanities Press, 1963), III, 469.

scope to render divergent meaning at some places. In this essay I have made use of both English translations as well as Vorländer's German edition (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1924) and Hartenstein's edition (Leipzig: Modes und Baumann, 1839).

Third, many writers have approached the Critique of Judgment with a set of presuppositions extensive enough to prohibit a fair interpretation or criticism of Kant's meaning. Croce's comments in his Aesthetic are, I think, a case in point. Now I do not mean to say that Kant's aesthetics should always be approached, regardless of the purpose of the author, without any presuppositions. But I do assert that in so far as one is concerned with an analytical exposition of meaning, presuppositions should be reduced to the minimum. I hope that in this essay my own presuppositions have been so reduced. I have no philosophical axe to grind; my foremost concern is to find out what Kant meant.

Fourth, the Critique of Judgment ought not be looked at in isolation from the other Critiques. The first half of the Critique of Judgment is not limited to Kant's aesthetics but involves the extension and, at times, the modification of issues raised in the earlier Critiques. For example, Kant did not exhaust the notion of the imagination in the Critique of Pure Reason. He has a great deal to say about this notion in his analysis of the apprehension of

the form of an object. Other examples are the notions of judgment and the thing-in-itself. The question of the relationship of judgment to understanding and reason receives considerable attention in the Critique of Judgment. Some illumination is shed as well upon the very troublesome thing-in-itself. I suggest, then, that to succeed in any exegesis of the Critique of Judgment, it is necessary to consider it in its reciprocal relationship with the two earlier Critiques. I think that in order to understand and appreciate Kant's aesthetics it is necessary to realize a considerable scope of these relationships. We cannot isolate Kant's aesthetics from his theoretical or practical philosophy nor can we isolate the theoretical or practical from the aesthetic. In sum, then, this exegesis will proceed by considering the Critique of Judgment as part of the Critical Philosophy and not as an isolated statement in aesthetics (or in anything else).

There are, of course, many relationships which exist among the Critiques. It is far beyond the scope of this essay to investigate all or even the most significant part of them. Rather, I intend to concentrate primarily upon one notion of great importance in Kant's aesthetics, the notion of "form." I hope to show the development of this notion within the Critical Philosophy and its meaning and role within the first half of the Critique of Judgment. With the investigation and elucidation of this notion seems to me to

lie the solution to many of the perplexing difficulties and paradoxes of the Third Critique. Indirectly, the notion of "form" sheds considerable light upon one bothersome notion in the earlier Critiques, the notion of the thing-in-itself. Moreover, the notion of "form" is central in Kant's discussions of purposiveness without purpose and the place of the faculties of imagination and understanding in the analysis of the judgment of taste. In what sense or senses pleasure in aesthetic contemplation is derived from the perception of the harmony of the imagination and the understanding in the apprehension of the form of an object is a key question in Kant's aesthetics and within the Critical Philosophy.

There are three things, in particular, that this study does not attempt to do. First, it is a limited study in Kant's Critique of Aesthetic Judgment and not a commentary to it. At those places where sentence by sentence analysis is undertaken, it may sound more like a commentary than an exegesis. The Critique of Judgment has long stood in need of a complete commentary, and I should like very much to write one, but this does not pretend to be it. H.W. Cassirer's 1935 Commentary suffers from rather extensive omissions (for example, sections 13-17, 40-42, 51-54, 58-60, 67-68, and 72-73). Accounting for parts of Cassirer's incompleteness was his awareness that certain passages in the Critique of Judgment seem to deny intelligi-

bility. The only other candidate is Baeumler's work on the Critique of Judgment which, as I understand, was never completed.

Second, this study does not attempt to trace out the historical development of the notion of "form" before Kant. That much was said about "form" before and contemporary with Kant's own reflections cannot be denied; nor can it be denied that some of what was said influenced Kant to some degree. My concern is limited to an analysis of "form" as a notion within the Critical Philosophy; I have not extended the analysis to the notion in its historical setting.

Third, I am not concerned with the influence of what Kant said upon either his contemporaries or successors. Certainly what Kant said about "form" has been most influential. One need only mention E. Cassirer's Philosophy of Symbolic Forms. But what Kant's successors said about what Kant said did not influence what he actually did say--and what he actually did say is that with which I am concerned.

The investigation in this essay proceeds in a fugal manner. I have begun with a "preliminary investigation" of the notion of "form" which constitutes the first voice. The full relevance of the "preliminary investigation" cannot be seen until the other voices have been added in proper measure. What I have hoped to do, then, is reconstruct, step by step, Kant's doctrine of "form." The final phase is

the placement of this reconstruction within the more general context of Kant's theory of art.

CHAPTER II

THE NOTION OF FORM: PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION

Judgment (Urteilstkraft) is "the faculty of subsuming under rules; that is, of distinguishing whether something does or does not stand under a given rule."¹ It is the "faculty of thinking the particular as contained under the universal."² As a power or faculty it is either determinant judgment or reflective judgment. The crucial difference between these two is that in determinant judgment the universal is given and judgment (Urteilstkraft) is then the subsuming of the particular under that universal, whereas in reflective judgment no universal is given. In the latter case the particular, which is given, may be said to be in search of a universal.³

Judgment (Urteilstkraft) is one of the three higher

¹Immanuel Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, trans. Norman Kemp-Smith (London: Macmillan, 1958), p. 177 (A132-B171). (References to the Critique of Pure Reason include Kemp-Smith's pagination as well as the customary "A" and "B" for the first and second editions, as in Kemp-Smith's translation.)

²Immanuel Kant, Critique of Judgment, trans. James Creed Meredith (London: Oxford, 1952), p. 18.

³Ibid.

faculties of knowledge. There is, additionally, understanding (Verstand), which is the faculty of the cognition of universal rules, and reason (Vernunft), which is the faculty of determining the particular by the universal, i.e., the faculty of deriving the particular from a principle. Understanding and reason are intimately bound up with the two different worlds of nature and freedom.

Understanding furnishes the rules necessary for knowledge of the world of nature; the analysis of the operation of understanding in fulfilling this function is theoretical philosophy. Reason, on the other hand, in its practical operation, conceives of the laws of the world of freedom. The laws of the world of freedom actually determine our will but give us no theoretical knowledge of the world of freedom. We are not capable of any theoretical understanding of practical principles. In accordance with this distinction between understanding and reason, the Critique of Pure Reason may be said to set forth the principles (a priori) of nature and the Critique of Practical Reason may be said to set forth the principles (a priori) of freedom.

Determinant judgment may be either theoretical or practical in its operation. In either case, it will be remembered, all that it does is subsume particulars under given universals. It is the job of the power of judgment to make decisions--to decide if a given particular stands under a given universal. A determinant judgment produces

nothing--the universal, with which it deals, is produced either by understanding or reason. If the universal law, rule or principle is produced by the understanding and judgment subsumes a particular given intuition under that law, rule or principle, then the determinant judgment is theoretical in its application. If, on the other hand, the universal law is produced by reason and judgment subsumes a particular action under that law, then the determinant judgment is practical in its application.

To reflective judgment no universal is given; thus, reflective judgment considers the relationship between universal and particular in a decidedly different way than determinant judgment. For determinant judgment, the principle which enables it to subsume particulars is given to it either by understanding or reason. No such principle is given to reflective judgment. Thus, Kant writes:

The reflective judgment which is compelled to ascend from the particular in nature to the universal, stands, therefore, in need of a principle. This principle it cannot borrow from experience, because what it has to do is to establish just the unity of all empirical principles under higher, though likewise empirical, principles, and thence the possibility of the systematic subordination of higher and lower. Such a transcendental principle, therefore, the reflective judgment can only give as law from and to itself. It cannot derive it from any other quarter (as it would then be determinant judgment). Nor can it prescribe it to nature, for reflection on the laws of nature adjusts itself to nature, and not nature to the conditions according

to which we strive to obtain a concept of it,-- a concept that is quite contingent in respect of these conditions.⁴

What this principle is and how it is derived we shall investigate in detail in the sequel.

Determinant judgment, then, is either theoretical (logical and cognitive) or practical. Reflective judgment points to that general kind of judgment which lies within the scope of this essay--namely, aesthetic judgment. Aesthetic judgments (Aesthetische Urteile) are divided into empirical and pure. An empirical aesthetic judgment asserts that a certain object is either pleasant or unpleasant--that is, it asserts that an object is or is not a source of empirical satisfaction. A pure aesthetic judgment asserts that a certain object is beautiful or sublime. This kind of aesthetic judgment Kant calls a judgment of taste proper. An aesthetic judgment, whether empirical or pure, consists of a subject, copula and predicate. The predicate in either case is a feeling of pleasure or displeasure in the presentation of an object. The crucial difference for Kant is that in a pure aesthetic judgment (judgment of taste proper), the feeling of pleasure or displeasure in the presentation of an object is a determination which goes to the form of the object of sense, whereas in the case of the empirical aesthetic judgment

⁴Ibid., pp. 18-19.

(empirical judgment of taste), the feeling of pleasure or displeasure is a determination which does not go to the form but rather to the matter of the object. We have, then, a clear instance of the formal-material dichotomy in the division of aesthetic judgments. Only those aesthetic judgments which are formal are judgments of taste proper.⁵ It is this kind of aesthetic judgment, which is reflective, with which I am primarily concerned.

A judgment of taste proper, then, asserts that a certain object is beautiful or sublime (although my attention is directed mainly to the judgment of taste on the beautiful). In so judging that an object is beautiful or sublime we estimate the form of that object. Pleasures or displeasures arise in the simple reflection upon the form of an object of sense. In this preliminary investigation we shall begin to discover what meaning can be attached to the phrase "form of an object" of sense.

Most instructive at the outset is a difficulty which Kant raises about attaching the predicate "beautiful" to particular colors and tones. We may want to call a particular color, say a shade of green, or a particular tone, say middle "C," beautiful. Yet it seems that particular tones and colors are mere sensations. If they are mere sensations without form, then beauty could not be predicated of them.

⁵Ibid., p. 65.

We could say that they are sources of satisfaction (that they are agreeable or pleasant), but not that they are beautiful objects.

At one place, Kant writes that he is not at all sure whether we can call colors and tones beautiful or merely pleasing and agreeable.

In other words, we cannot confidently assert whether a color or a tone (sound) is merely an agreeable sensation, or whether they are in themselves a beautiful play of sensations, and in being estimated aesthetically, convey, as such, a delight in their form.⁶

From this we derive that if a color or tone is capable of being beautiful in itself, then it is more than sensation--it is a play of sensations. If we assert that this play of sensations is beautiful, that is, if our judgment is a pure aesthetic judgment on the beautiful, then we must be concerned with the form of these sensations.

Although Kant, in the above passage, cannot "confidently assert" whether particular colors and tones are agreeable or beautiful, in the Third Moment of the Analytic of the Beautiful he seems to be somewhat more confident that it is possible to predicate beauty of them. He asserts:

It will at the same time be observed that sensations of color as well as of tone are only entitled to be immediately regarded as beautiful, where in either

⁶Ibid., p. 189.

case they are pure. This is a determination which goes at once to their form, and it is the only one which these representations possess that admits with certainty of being universally communicated.⁷

Kant brings in the notion of communicability ostensibly for the following reason. A sensation of a color or a tone is something which is not necessarily the same for each perceiver of that color or tone. That is, the quality of, say, one particular sensation of blue may not be quite the same for two individuals. And, as Kant points out:

We can hardly take it for granted that the agreeableness of a color, or of the tone of a musical instrument, which we judge to be preferable to that of another, is given like preference in the estimate of everyone.⁸

Thus, in so far as communicability is concerned, we must look to something other than color and tone as sensations only. We must, Kant would say, concern ourselves with the form of sensations.

Prior to investigating in more detail what Kant means by the "form of an object of sense," it will be necessary to determine, in so far as possible, whether we should take Kant as asserting that particular tones and colors can be beautiful objects or whether, on the other hand, we must conclude that Kant wavered continually on this question. If particular colors and tones are beautiful plays of sensations, rather than merely agreeable

⁷Ibid., p. 66.

⁸Ibid.

sensations, then the investigation of what, exactly, is involved in calling them beautiful will aid in solving the more general question of the meaning of form, since, if they are capable of being called beautiful, then there is a reflection on their form.

Whether Kant held that colors and tones were "plays of sensations," having a form, depends in large measure upon his agreement or disagreement with the physical theory of light and sound advanced by Euler. If, in fact, Kant agreed with Euler, then colors and tones could be ranked as beauties; otherwise, they could not.

Fortunately, Kant speaks of Euler. Unfortunately, the reading of the most crucial part of the passage has been the subject of no small dispute. Here is that passage in the form for which I shall argue:

Assuming with Euler that colors are isochronous vibrations (pulsus) of the aether, as tones are of the air set in vibration by sound, and, what is most important, that the mind not alone perceives by sense their effect in stimulating the organs, but also, by reflection, the regular play of impressions, (and consequently the form in which different representations are united,)--which I, still, in no way doubt--then color and tone would not be mere sensations. They would be nothing short of formal determinations of the unity of the manifold of sensations, and in that case could even be ranked as intrinsic beauties.⁹

As I have said, the reading of this passage has been the subject of some dispute. This dispute has centered

⁹Ibid.

around the words "which I still in no way doubt." The first (1790) and second (1793) editions of the Kritik der Urteils-kraft read "woran ich doch gar sehr zweifle."¹⁰ Vorländer, in his edition, appends the following note to this passage:

The first and second editions have "gar sehr." Windelband, by means of detailed citations from various writings of Kant, has made it plausible that the reading of the third edition [gar nicht] accords with the view of the philosopher. Cf. Schoendorffer, op. cit. and E. von Aster in Kantstudien XIV, 475f.¹¹

Bernard, in his translation of the Critique of Judgment reads "which I very much doubt."¹² That is, he translates the German as it appears in the first and second editions. However, he appends this strange footnote:

First edition has "nicht zweifle" for "sehr zweifle," but this was apparently only a misprint.¹³

Bernard is certainly factually wrong in this claim. The first and second editions read "gar sehr zweifle" and

¹⁰See Immanuel Kant, Kritik der Urteils-kraft (Berlin und Libau: Lagarde und Friederich, 1790), p. 40; Immanuel Kant, Kritik der Urteils-kraft (Zweite Auflage; Berlin: Lagarde, 1793), p. 40; Immanuel Kant, Kritik der Urteils-kraft (Dritte Auflage; Berlin: Lagarde, 1799), p. 40.

¹¹Immanuel Kant, Kritik der Urteils-kraft, ed. Vorländer (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1959), p. 63, note d (my translation).

¹²Immanuel Kant, Critique of Judgment, trans. J.H. Bernard (New York: Hafner, 1951), p. 60.

¹³Ibid., note 16.

the third "gar nicht zweifle." Apart from the mere technicality of the reading, Windelband has given good reasons for reading "which I still in no way doubt." I shall attempt to support Windelband.

E. v. Aster, in the article referred to by Vorländer,¹⁴ points out that Kant thinks that it is possible "that even the pleasure which we feel when confronted by simple colors and tones is not based on the mere sensible 'material,' but on a 'form' of the objects." But this is possible only if one agrees with Euler's theory of light and sound and, moreover, assumes that "the mind not only perceives by sense their effect [that is, the effect of colors and tones] in stimulating the organs, but also, by reflection the regular play of impressions (and, consequently, the form in which different representations are united)." The parenthetical remark following this begins the dispute. As we saw above, "which I very much doubt" appears in the first and second editions, while "which I still in no way doubt" occurs only in the third. Aster points out that this correction was made by someone unknown; yet this individual "had Kant's full power of authority." Windelband, then, decided to place "gar nicht"

¹⁴E. v. Aster, "Band V und VI der Akademie-Ausgabe," Kant-Studien (Berlin: Verlag von Reuther und Reichard, 1909), XIV, 468-476. The part of this article which concerns the reading of the paragraph in question is pp. 475-76.

in the text, "in opposition to previous editors." According to Aster, Windelband justifies this emendation by showing, first, that the mode of expression used by Kant whenever he alludes to Euler's theory would justify "gar nicht," second, that Kant approved of Euler's theory and, third, that many places in the Critique of Judgment concur with the thought expressed in the disputed passage only if we read "gar nicht." In other words, what Windelband tries to show is that the doctrine that pure colors and tones are not only products of sense but also involve a reflection upon the regular play of impressions is advanced throughout the Critique of Judgment.¹⁵

I think that there is a definite instance of this doctrine to support Windelband's contention and emendation. In a section of the *Analytic of the Sublime*, Kant considers the aesthetic employment of Euler's physical theory:

If we consider the velocity of the vibrations of light or, in the second case, of the air, which in all probability far outstrips any capacity on our part for forming an immediate estimate of the perception of the time interval between them, we should be led to believe that it is only the effect of those vibrating movements upon the elastic parts of our body, that can be evident to sense, but that the time interval between them is not noticed nor involved in our estimate, and that, consequently,

¹⁵In the Akademie edition, V, 527ff, there is a collection of quotes from Kant's works which are relevant to the reading of the disputed passage. The reading "gar nicht" is favored as well on the basis of evidence from works other than the Critique of Judgment. I have not reconsidered that evidence in this essay.

all that enters into combination with colors and tones is agreeableness, and not beauty, of their composition.¹⁶

Thus, if the time interval is not involved in our estimate, colors and tones cannot be judged as beautiful. But if, on the other hand, we "feel compelled to look upon the sensations afforded by both, not as mere sense-impressions, but as the effect of an estimate of form in the play of a number of sensations,"¹⁷ then we can judge colors and tones to be beautiful. Kant now considers whether music is a fine or merely an agreeable art. He writes:

Either [music] is to be interpreted, as we have done, as the beautiful play of sensations (through hearing), or else as one of agreeable sensations. According to the former interpretation, alone, would music be represented out and out as a fine art, whereas according to the latter it would be represented as . . . an agreeable art.¹⁸

The important phrase here, of course, is "as we have done." Kant certainly seems to be saying that music is to be interpreted as a beautiful play of sensations. He would therefore seem to endorse Euler's physical theory of light and sound.

Now it may be argued at this point that there is, nevertheless, some evidence to support the opposite view. For example, Kant, as we have seen, states that he cannot

¹⁶Kant, Judgment (Meredith), p. 189.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 190.

¹⁸Ibid.

"confidently assert" whether colors and tones are merely agreeable sensations or beautiful plays of sensations.¹⁹ However, I do not believe that this supports the opposite view. The problem, as Kant seemed to pose it, concerned the "interpretation" of color and tone. It is probably quite true that Kant either would not or could not assert colors and tones to be beautiful plays of sensations. But this reluctance need not mean that Kant did not interpret colors and tones to be beautiful plays of sensations. That Kant actually did so will, I think, become abundantly clear in the sequel.

Having, thus, reached a decision on the reading of the disputed passage, we may return to the question which originally led us to investigate this passage, i.e., what does it mean to speak of the form of an object of sense? We have, I think, established this much. A pure, as distinct from an empirical, aesthetic judgment asserts that an object is beautiful. A pure aesthetic judgment is concerned with the form of the object in question and is called, therefore, a formal judgment as distinct from a material one. We may want to call a color or tone beautiful, but we cannot do this if colors and tones are mere sensations. We are taking Kant as interpreting them as something more; namely, as plays of sensations. The mind perceives by

¹⁹Supra, p. 13.

reflection the play of these sensations; in other words, if we are to call colors and tones beautiful, we must concern ourselves with their form. Supposedly, a mere sensation cannot have a form, but a play of sensations, since this implies a multiplicity, can have a form. Beauty is ascribed to colors and tones, and to any other object, only because of form. All other conditions are extraneous.²⁰

This much, then, we may take as tentatively established. But we have, to this point, only the barest outline of Kant's argument. We must now fill in this outline with a more detailed investigation of what Kant has to say about the play and form of sensations, and the form of an object in general.

In the Third Moment of the *Analytic of the Beautiful*, Kant introduces the term "design" or "delineation" (Zeichnung):

In painting, sculpture, and in fact in all the formative arts . . . the design is what is essential. Here it is not what gratifies in sensation but merely what pleases by its form that is the fundamental prerequisite for taste.²¹

The formative arts (bildenden Künste) express ideas in sensuous intuition.²² Formative art is divided into the arts of sensuous truth and sensuous semblance. The art of

²⁰Kant, Judgment (Meredith), p. 67.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid., p. 185.

sensuous truth is plastic art; the art of sensuous semblance is painting. Plastic art is further subdivided into sculpture and architecture. With regard to architecture, Kant remarks that "it is the art of presenting concepts of things which are possible only through art, and the determining ground of whose form is not nature but an arbitrary end."²³

Painting Kant divides into the beautiful portrayal of nature (painting proper) and the beautiful arrangement of the products of nature (landscape gardening). Painting proper is taken in a very wide sense by Kant--it includes not only what we normally mean by painting, but includes as well the artful decoration of a room, involving such things as "hangings, ornamental accessories . . . beautiful furniture, . . . even the ladies' attire."²⁴ The judgment of taste involving what is beautiful in the art of painting, taken even in this very wide sense, is "a judgment only upon the forms . . . as they present themselves to the eye, singly or in combination, according to their effect on the imagination."²⁵

Before commenting upon the notion of form as it is involved with the judgment of taste upon a work of formative

²³Ibid., p. 186.

²⁴Ibid., p. 188.

²⁵Ibid.

art, I shall introduce some considerations which Kant brings to bear upon another category of art which he recognizes, namely, the art of the beautiful play of sensations. The art of the beautiful play of sensations arises, Kant says, through tone or modulation for the communication of sensation. He continues:

The art of the Beautiful Play of Sensations, (sensations that arise from external stimulation,) which is a play of sensations that nevertheless has to permit of universal communication, can only be concerned with the proportion of the different degrees of tension in the sense to which the sensation belongs, i.e., with its tone.²⁶

There is a twofold division of the arts of the play of sensations: (1) The artificial play of sensations of hearing (music) and (2) the artificial play of sensations of sight (the art of color). Keeping Euler's theory in mind, we "may feel compelled to look upon the sensations afforded by both, not as mere sense impressions, but as the effect of an estimate of form in the play of a number of sensations."²⁷

To Kant's comments upon formative art and the art of the play of sensations, this passage must be added:

All form of objects of sense (both of external and also, mediately, of internal sense) is either figure or play. In the latter case it is either play of figures (in space: mimic and dance), or mere play of sensations (in time).

²⁶Ibid., pp. 188-89.

²⁷Ibid., p. 190.

The charm of colors, or of the agreeable tones of instruments may be added: but the design in the former and the composition in the latter constitute the proper object of the pure judgment of taste.²⁸

Play, then, is a play of figures in space, such as the dance or mimic (pantomime) or a play of sensations in time. Play of sensations in time seems to involve the arts mentioned above as the arts of the beautiful play of sensations, that is, music and the art of color.

We are now prepared to organize and comment upon the considerations set out so far.

Kant, in speaking of the form of objects of sense as play divides, as we have seen, play into a play of figures in space and a play of sensations in time. As examples of the play of sensations in time, he cites the art of color and the art of tone. The play of sensations in time, then, seems to correspond to the art of the beautiful play of sensations. The proper object of the judgment of taste when the art is the art of color is the design; the proper object of the judgment of taste when the art is the art of tone is the composition. When Kant speaks of composition, he refers it to the "tones of instruments."²⁹

In accordance with our reading of the disputed paragraph concerning Euler, we take Kant as saying that

²⁸Ibid., pp. 67-68.

²⁹Ibid., p. 68.

individual (particular) colors and tones are more than mere sensations--they are plays of sensations. Moreover, as we have just seen, they are plays of sensations in time. The form of a color is its design; the form of a tone made by an instrument is its composition. Now we are here starting at the very "bottom," so to speak, with the analysis of particular colors and tones. But it is, I think, necessary to determine what Kant means at this level before going on to the investigation of the more general phrase "form of an object of sense," although, hopefully, nothing stated now will violate the later investigations.

Euler's physical theory of light and sound states that colors are isochronous vibrations of the aether and that tones are isochronous vibrations of the air set in motion by sound.³⁰ Kant points out that we probably do not have the capacity to form an immediate estimate of the time interval between vibrations.³¹ Thus, Kant says:

We should be led to believe that it is only the effect of those vibrating movements upon the elastic parts of our body, that can be evident to sense, but that the time-interval between them is not noticed nor involved in our estimate, and that, consequently, all that enters into combination with colors and tones is agreeableness, and not beauty, of their composition.³²

³⁰Ibid., p. 66.

³¹Ibid., p. 189.

³²Ibid.

But what we should be led to believe is modified by this consideration which Kant adduces--namely, that we ought consider "the mathematical character . . . of the proportion of those vibrations . . . and our judgment upon this proportion."³³

A. Wolf sums up the physical theory of light and sound of Euler in the following way:

Euler . . . started from the assumption that the space between heavenly bodies is filled with an extremely fine material aether. . . . This is a fluid, like the air, but, according to Euler, a thousand times as elastic as air, and incomparably more finely divided, since the heavenly bodies traverse it without encountering any sensible resistance. Moreover, the aether has the property of spreading out in all directions and filling up all empty spaces. Hence it must not only exist in the heavens but must penetrate the atmosphere, and press into the interstices of all terrestrial bodies. Since the air, in consequence of its similar properties, is adapted for taking up the vibrations of sounding bodies and propagating them in all directions, thus giving rise to sound, it is natural to suppose that the aether, under similar conditions, will take up regular impulses and convey them as waves in all directions, and to a much greater distance than sound will travel. Such agitations of the aether constitute light, whose enormous velocity follows from the low density and high elasticity of the aether.

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Euler supplemented Huygens' theory of light with the doctrine that color is determined by the frequency of the corresponding aether-vibrations, and it is thus analogous to pitch in sound. He doubted, however, whether it would ever be possible to estimate the frequencies of the aetheric vibrations. Sunlight appears white because it consists of vibrations of every frequency. . . . Euler likened the colours of the spectrum to the notes of the

³³Ibid.

octave, and he supposed, on this analogy, that beyond the violet one would pass through purple to a second red whose frequency would be twice that of ordinary red.³⁴

One especially important point which comes out of Wolf's discussion of Euler's theory is that Euler doubted whether it is possible to estimate the frequencies of the aetheric vibrations. Kant, as we have seen, seems to agree in part with Euler's judgment, in that Kant asserts that the time interval between vibrations or pulses (or, what is the same, their frequency) cannot be sensibly estimated. However, Kant goes further and suggests that we ought to consider "the mathematical character . . . of the proportion of these vibrations . . . and our judgment upon this proportion."³⁵

Now this suggestion is, I think, one which will bring much insight into the problems raised in this preliminary investigation. Kant's claim is that if we wish to call a particular color or tone beautiful, we must do so on the basis of what is intelligibly estimated, not what is sensibly perceived. Although a judgment of taste applies to objects of sense, it is not the material element which is involved in our calling the object beautiful. In an aesthetic experience we must look to the form--form in time (form

³⁴A. Wolf, A History of Science, Technology and Philosophy in the 18th Century (New York: Harper, 1961), I, 164-65.

³⁵Kant, Judgment (Meredith), p. 189.

arising within successives) which is a temporal relationship (play) and form in space (form arising from coexistences) which is a spatial relationship (figure). Now neither figure nor play is given in sensation, although figure and play are the forms of objects of sense. They are the formal elements among sensations--relationships among sensations, perceived, in some sense, "intellectually." But in what sense? Let us look more closely into this,

The apprehension of the form of an object of sense is the apprehension of the temporal or spatial relationships among a given manifold of sensations. Such an apprehension is productive of pleasure. Now the pleasure (the predicate in a judgment of taste proper) expresses a certain conformity:

The pleasure can express nothing but the conformity of the Object to the cognitive faculties brought into play in the reflective judgment. . . . For . . . apprehension of forms in the imagination can never take place without the reflective judgment . . . comparing them [the forms] at least with its faculty of referring intuitions to concepts. If, now, in this comparison, imagination (as the faculty of intuitions a priori) is undesignedly brought into accord with understanding, (as the faculty of concepts,) by means of a given representation, and a feeling of pleasure is thereby aroused, then the object must be regarded as final for the reflective judgment.³⁶

Kant states further:

A representation, whereby an object is given, involves, in order that it may become a source

³⁶Ibid., p. 30.

of cognition at all, imagination for bringing together the manifold of intuition, and understanding for the unity of the concept uniting the representations.³⁷

Imagination, then, brings together sensations. Sensations so brought together exhibit a form--that is, they exhibit temporal or spatial relationships, play or figure. Now if the form exhibited by the unified manifold of sensations accords with the faculty of concepts, pleasure results and the object of sense is judged beautiful. But further, only the form, and not the matter of sensation could accord with understanding. The understanding contains nothing sensible; it can intuit nothing.³⁸ The understanding has empirical employment and relates to objects given in sensible intuition³⁹ but it "distinguishes itself not merely from all that is empirical but completely also from all sensibility."⁴⁰ Thus, only that characteristic which is "intelligibly" perceived, which is a formal element, could accord with the formal characteristic of the understanding. This aspect of Kant's aesthetics, the mutual accord of the two cognitive faculties, imagination and understanding, is the subject of the following chapter.

³⁷Ibid., p. 58.

³⁸Kant, Pure Reason, p. 93 (A52-B76).

³⁹Ibid., p. 100 (A63-B88).

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 102 (A65-B90).

However, before bringing this chapter to a close, let me bring to a focus the considerations concerning particular colors and tones.

In accordance with Kant's claims, colors and tones are objects of sense which are more than mere sensations. They are, rather, manifolds of sensations--vibrations of either the aether (color) or air (sound). They are thus spoken of by Kant as plays of sensations; the vibrations may be spoken of as successions of sensations. In estimating aesthetically colors and tones we are concerned with the temporal relationships which these manifolds exhibit. However, a relationship (temporal) is not exhibited in sensation--that is, the play is not exhibited in sensible intuition. Imagination brings together the sensations (the manifold of intuition). Thus, with regard to colors and tones, imagination brings together the manifold (isochronous vibrations of the aether or air) and this manifold exhibits form, i.e., a specific temporal relationship. If this form accords with the understanding, then pleasure results and we are justified in judging the particular color or sound beautiful. Or, as Kant puts it: "They would be nothing short of formal determinations of the unity of the manifold of sensations, and in that case could even be ranked as intrinsic beauties."⁴¹

⁴¹Kant, *Judgment* (Meredith), p. 66.

This analysis we have given of colors and tones holds for any other beautiful object as well. Whatever the set of sensations may be, it is not the sensations themselves with which we are concerned in the aesthetic experience but, rather, with the relationship among the sensations and its harmony with the understanding. When Kant states that in the formative arts such as painting, sculpture and architecture, the design is what is essential, what he means is that the manifold of sensations or figures brought together in the imagination, which constitutes the work of art (or at least one aspect of it), exhibit a definite spatial relationship (and perhaps a temporal one as well) which accords, in some sense, with the understanding. A work of art, then, to use Kant's example, may be such a thing as an artfully decorated room, in which account is taken of the furniture, the clothing worn by the people in the room, the accessories, and so on. The crucial test is whether that manifold of sensations and figures brought together in the imagination supplies or exhibits such relationships as would harmonize with the understanding and be, thus, productive of pleasure. A beautiful object of sense can be anything from a particular color or tone up to, and including, the most massive painting or gigantic symphony. The question of beauty is one which is answered by taking account of the form of the manifold, a manifold present no less in the tone than in the symphony.

Kant's position, in so far as we have seen it, seems to me to have the merit of avoiding a difficulty. If particular colors and tones are mere sensations and not plays of sensations, then they are capable of being pleasant or agreeable but not beautiful objects. Not only does this possibly violate our aesthetic experience, in that we do want to call certain particular colors and tones beautiful objects but, moreover, we are then faced with the problem of how beauty arises out of merely pleasant and agreeable things. Does beauty arise, in any sense, out of mere pleasantness? If the parts of a painting are not capable of being beautiful things, in what sense, then, can the painting as a whole be a beautiful thing? This difficulty really does not arise for Kant. If we are to call a painting beautiful, we would do so on the same grounds that we could call any constitutive part of the painting beautiful. And these grounds are, of course, that the manifold brought together in the imagination exhibits spatial or temporal characteristics which, in some sense, accord with the understanding. It is this harmony of the imagination and understanding which we shall investigate in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III

FORM, IMAGINATION, AND UNDERSTANDING

In the preliminary investigation I provisionally examined Kant's views on the question of form, imagination and understanding. Quite obviously, the doctrine of a form, exhibited by a synthesized manifold of sensations, harmonizing with the understanding and thus productive of pleasure, stands in need of further explanation. What we have seen is that the imagination brings together sensations, that sensations so brought together exhibit a form (temporal or spatial relationships--play or figure), and that if the form of the "brought together" manifold of sensations accords or harmonizes with the understanding, pleasure results and the object is judged beautiful. Exactly what this means, in so far as the notions of imagination and understanding find their way into the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment, and what difficulties occur in trying to find out what this means, is the subject of this chapter.

Any consideration of the function of imagination and understanding in the Critical Philosophy involves difficulties. Some of these difficulties arise from Kant's less than straightforward way of dealing with the analysis of

human experience and knowledge in the Critique of Pure Reason. Perhaps the most direct evidence that Kant did not deal unambiguously with the whole question of what is "in" the imagination and the relationship of imagination and understanding is the scope of positions argued for by Kant's commentators and critics. The variation in views results mainly from analyses of Kant's statements in the First Critique and, more particularly, from analyses of the various versions of the deductions of the categories. The problems of this chapter are magnified since we cannot deal with the First Critique alone but must bring forth another body of statements from the Third Critique (and from the Prolegomena) which, at first sight, seem to be at odds with much of what Kant states in the First Critique.

However, I must at this point reiterate that I am concerned with Kant's analyses in the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment and, as I have indicated, primarily with his analysis of the notion of form. However, I cannot ignore either the deductions of the categories or the controversies engendered by them. In the first place, those deductions and controversies are helpful in shining some light upon the issues surrounding the notion of form and, in the second place, they prevent one from becoming too dogmatic in treating the aesthetic judgment. What I shall do then is attempt to draw from the Critique of Pure Reason those considerations concerning the function of imagination and

understanding which seem to help in clarifying the doctrine of form as it is contained in the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment.

Since form is exhibited by a synthesized manifold, it will be well to begin our exposition with this notion. Kant's most exhaustive treatment of synthesis occurs in the deductions of the categories in the Critique of Pure Reason. This calls for an initial word of caution. The First Critique is in part concerned with the factors and conditions involved in objective knowledge. However, an aesthetic judgment involves the estimation of form apart from cognition or knowledge. Thus, Kant's analysis of the synthesized manifold in the First Critique is part of his analysis of human knowledge whereas in the Third Critique it is part of his analysis of taste. There are far-reaching and crucial distinctions to be made here, and no easy ones. I shall proceed in a provisional manner; we shall reach a number of preliminary positions, which shall be restated with clarifications and additions. Only at the end of this chapter can the final version of what Kant has to say about form, the synthesized manifold, imagination and understanding be stated in a definitive way. I believe that this is the only way I can be successful in explaining Kant. To state the final version at the beginning would only obscure the difficulties inherent in arriving at it--and these difficulties are the explanatory challenge.

A synthesized manifold suggests that there is something which is synthesized, namely, sensations, the data of sense, a given manifold, representations or intuitions. I prefer "sensation" as the least troublesome expression denoting the element which is synthesized.

The notion of synthesis is described by Kant in the following way:

By synthesis, in its most general sense, I understand the act of putting different representations together, and of grasping what is manifold in them in one act of knowledge.¹

Synthesis in general . . . is the mere result of the power of imagination, a blind but indispensable function of the soul, without which we should have no knowledge whatsoever, but of which we are scarcely ever conscious. To bring this synthesis to concepts is a function which belongs to the understanding, and it is through this function of the understanding that we first obtain knowledge properly so called.²

There are, then, sensations or impressions supplied by the senses. However, the senses do not combine these impressions or sensations to form representations of objects ("representation," as used by Kant, is a very general term which refers to almost any mental content whatsoever). Yet every object which appears to us consists of a manifold of sensations (even isolated colors and tones). Thus,

¹Kant, Pure Reason, p. 111 (A78-B103).

²Ibid., p. 112 (A78-B103).

there must be some other faculty which combines sensations:

There must therefore exist in us an active faculty for the synthesis of this manifold. To this faculty I give the title, imagination. Its action, when immediately directed upon perceptions, I entitle apprehension. Since imagination has to bring the manifold of intuition into the form of an image, it must previously have taken the impressions up into its activity, that is, it must have apprehended them.³

The content of the imagination, then, is presumably a synthesis of sensations or an "image." This image, as we have seen, exhibits a form. Aesthetic pleasure is the result of the apprehension of this form.⁴ However, pleasure results only in so far as the apprehension of the form of the image is not directed to nor for the purpose of cognition or knowledge of the object of sense represented by the synthesized manifold of sensations. As Kant puts it at the beginning of the First Moment of the Analytic of the Beautiful:

If we wish to discern whether anything is beautiful or not, we do not refer the representation of it to the Object by means of the understanding with a view to cognition, but by means of the imagination (acting perhaps in conjunction with understanding) we refer the representation to the Subject and its feeling of pleasure or displeasure. The judgment of taste, therefore, is not a

³Ibid., p. 144 (A120).

⁴Kant, Judgment (Meredith), p. 30. This is a highly provisional statement and requires many additions to become clear. As it stands now it is misleading. The only reason for stating it in this way at this point is to show, in future developments, in exactly what way or ways it is misleading.

cognitive judgment, and so not logical, but is aesthetic--which means that it is one whose determining ground cannot be other than subjective.⁵

The distinction which Kant draws between a cognitive (logical) judgment and an aesthetic judgment is one of some importance for our explanation. A logical judgment "subsumes a representation under a concept of the Object."⁶ In other words, it subsumes a particular under a universal and is thus a determinant judgment.⁷ Logical judgments make assertions about objects; they are formed by the understanding and, in fact, are the way in which understanding thinks--or, what is the same, thinking itself. More precisely, a logical judgment involves the application of the categories to the organized or "brought together" sensations "in" the imagination. A logical or cognitive judgment is the logical employment of the understanding. As Kant puts it:

Now the only use which the understanding can make of these concepts is to judge by means of them. . . . Now we can reduce all acts of the understanding to judgments, and the understanding may therefore be represented as a faculty of judgment.⁸

An example of a logical or cognitive judgment is "all bodies are heavy." Such a judgment is a claim to knowledge

⁵Ibid., pp. 41-42.

⁶Ibid., p. 142.

⁷Supra, p. 8.

⁸Kant, Pure Reason, pp. 105-106 (A68-69; B93-94).

or cognition in that the assertion is one of a necessary connection between the subject and predicate notions. Such necessity cannot, of course, be derived from mere enumeration. And, moreover, such a claim is a claim made about the phenomenal object--it is, in other words, a claim which possesses, in Kantian terms, objective validity. Further, any judgment which is objectively valid is necessary:

Therefore, objective validity and necessary universality . . . are equivalent terms, and though we do not know the object in itself, yet when we consider a judgment as universal, and hence necessary, we thereby understand it to have objective validity. By this judgment we know the object (though it remains unknown as it is in itself) by the universal and necessary connection of the given perceptions.⁹

Now in an aesthetic judgment, as we shall provisionally set it out, the categories are in no sense "applied" to the synthesized manifold of sensations. Therefore, of course, there is no question of knowledge or cognition of the object represented by the organized synthesis in imagination. However, the form exhibited by this synthesized manifold of sensations is that which "corresponds" or "harmonizes" with the faculty of understanding; this harmony is productive of pleasure which permits the object (the imaginative sense-entity), by virtue of its form, to be called beautiful. Judgment, then, in so far as it is a logical

⁹Immanuel Kant, Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics, ed. L.W. Beck (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1950), p. 46.

judgment, is an "application" of the categories to the imaginatively synthesized sensible manifold for the purposes of knowledge, whereas aesthetic judgment, while not involving an application of the categories of the understanding (the pure concepts or universals), does involve a harmony between the faculty of understanding and the spatial and temporal relations (the forms) exhibited by the imaginatively synthesized sensible manifold. Exactly what is meant by "harmony" or "corresponds with" is especially crucial and will occupy us in the future. However, there are many other difficulties which must occupy us first.

The notion of the synthesis of imagination not being brought to concepts has engendered some dispute among Kant's well-known commentators, a dispute which centers on the relation between the faculty of imagination and the faculty of understanding. This dispute is especially important for our purposes, since it involves our success in explaining the aesthetic judgment.

In the first edition *Transcendental Deduction* of the *Categories*, Kant distinguishes two kinds of synthesis--one of the imagination and one of the understanding. He everywhere within the *Deduction* proper speaks of separate faculties of understanding and imagination and asserts that the synthesis of the sensible manifold is the work of the imagination. The understanding relates to sensible objects only

through this synthesis of imagination.¹⁰ The following passages are, I think, particularly illuminating:

The empirical faculty of knowledge in man must therefore contain an understanding which relates to all objects of the senses, although only by means of intuition and of its synthesis through imagination.¹¹

A pure imagination . . . is thus one of the fundamental faculties of the human soul. . . . The two extremes, namely sensibility and understanding, must stand in necessary connection with each other through the mediation of this transcendental function of imagination, because otherwise the former, though indeed yielding appearances, would supply no objects of empirical knowledge, and consequently, no experience.¹²

There must therefore exist in us an active faculty for the synthesis of this manifold. To this faculty I give the title, imagination.¹³

Difficulties arise immediately when on the very first page of the second edition Transcendental Deduction we find

¹⁰I must point out here that this doctrine occurs as well in some passages in both the first and second editions, but these passages occur before the Deductions proper. For example, in Section 3 of the "Clue to the Discovery of All Pure Concepts of the Understanding" on p. 112 (A78-B103), the imagination is "an indispensable function," and Kant clearly seems to distinguish a division of labor between the imagination and understanding. As we shall see, this division is not so sharply drawn in the second edition Deduction. Why it was left in the passages preceding the Deduction in the second edition in the form that it does appear is something that I cannot answer. But as we shall see, it is not of crucial importance in modifying what I shall take to be the gist of Kant's argument.

¹¹Kant, Pure Reason, p. 143 (A119).

¹²Ibid., p. 146 (A124).

¹³Ibid., p. 144 (A120).

Kant asserting that all combination (synthesis) is the work of the understanding:

But the combination of a manifold in general can never come to us through the senses, and cannot, therefore, be already contained in the pure form of sensible intuition. For it is an act of spontaneity of the faculty of representation; and since this faculty, to distinguish it from sensibility, must be entitled understanding, all combination--be we conscious of it or not, be it a combination of the manifold of intuition, empirical or non-empirical, or of various concepts--is an act of the understanding. To this act the general title 'synthesis' may be assigned.¹⁴

The difficulty which this passage presents may be provisionally stated in this way. It seems at first sight that if all synthesis is the work of the understanding, then, quite obviously, there is some difficulty with what seems to be Kant's suggestion in the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment that the imagination, in its synthetic role, functions without the categories. Now it is true that Kant does not do away with the imagination in the second edition Deduction. For example, we read that the transcendental synthesis of imagination "is an action of the understanding on the sensibility"¹⁵ and that the synthesis of apprehension and the synthesis of apperception is "one and the same spontaneity, which in the one case, under the title of understanding, and in the other case, under the title of im-

¹⁴Ibid., p. 151 (B129-130).

¹⁵Ibid., p. 165 (B152).

agination, brings combination into the manifold of intuition."¹⁶ However, what seems to be the case is that imagination has ceased to be a fundamental and distinct activity. The second edition Deduction certainly suggests that there is no synthesis which is not brought to concepts. As Kant says, "all synthesis . . . even that which renders perception possible, is subject to the categories."¹⁷ What is asserted is the fundamental position of the understanding; imagination becomes merely one of the "titles" or names of the understanding. Kant, thus, seems to call the understanding by the name "imagination" when the understanding is related to the manifold of sensations. The activity of imagination and the activity of thought are the same activity. No manifold of sensations synthesized by the imagination can logically be uncognized, since the act of imaginative synthesis is an act of cognition or categorization. This, then, is our difficulty: in light of the modifications imposed upon the faculty of imagination by the second edition Transcendental Deduction, how are we to explain Kant's claims that when we assert an object to be beautiful, the representation of that object is not referred to or brought under the categories? It certainly does seem on the basis of the second edition Deduction that

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 171-172 (B162), note b.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 171 (B161).

there can be no consciousness or awareness which is not cognition--that is, which does not involve the understanding. Do we have a genuine case of conflict? If not, we must explain why not. And if we cannot come up with a satisfactory explanation, we may find ourselves in the uncomfortable position of defending the Third Critique against the First Critique or vice versa.

Kemp-Smith calls these two positions regarding the synthetic functioning of the imagination the subjectivist and the phenomenalist, the subjectivist position represented by Kant's view in the second edition Deduction, namely, that the imagination is merely the understanding at work, and the phenomenalist position represented by the view expressed in the first edition Deduction.¹⁸ Without going into Kemp-Smith's rather lengthy discussion of the meaning of the subjectivist and the phenomenalist elements in Kant's thought,¹⁹ we can, I think, state what his position is with regard to the synthesis of imagination and understanding. If I read Kemp-Smith correctly, he seems to hold that the view expressed by Kant in the first edition Deduction, the view that the imagination is a faculty apart from the understanding, is a distinctly pre-Critical position.²⁰ With-

¹⁸Norman Kemp-Smith, A Commentary to Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason' (New York: Humanities, 1962), p. 227.

¹⁹For this discussion see the Commentary, p. 270ff.

²⁰Kemp-Smith, p. 222.

out the categories, no consciousness of any kind is possible. As Kemp-Smith puts it:

Relation to an object is constituted by the categories, and is necessary in reference to sense-representations, because only thereby is consciousness of any kind possible at all.²¹

This, Kemp-Smith says, is the "truly Critical position."²² The "truly Critical position" is that there can be no cognitive awareness or consciousness apart from the categories. Thus the Critical position is that the transcendental synthesis of imagination is the action of the understanding upon sensibility; or, in other words, that the imagination is one name of the activity of the understanding.

The investigation of the temporal order of Kant's thought and its division into categories such as "pre-Critical" and "Critical" is a worthwhile and difficult task. However, I fail to see what weight ought to be attached to the claim that consciousness apart from the categories is pre-Critical whereas the Critical position is that there is no consciousness apart from the categories. I am suspicious of the pre-Critical versus the Critical distinction often made within Kantian scholarship; at times, I think, the distinction becomes equated with what is "less-Kantian" and

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid. The considerations with which we are now involved with Kemp-Smith bring us into contact with the so-called "patchwork" theory. Any direct discussion of this theory, pro or con, I am carefully avoiding, although some of my remarks will undoubtedly allude to it.

"more-Kantian." What we are in search of is the most intelligible and consistent exposition and explanation of certain aspects of Kant's philosophy. I believe that the best way to carry this off is through careful textual analysis. A distinction, such as the pre-Critical--Critical one, carries with it the danger that if seemingly irreconcilable assertions are met with in Kant's philosophy, then the choice would rest on the grounds of which assertion is Critical, rather than on the more solid philosophical grounds of judicious textual analysis. It may be that the best explanation involves the kind of statement Kant made in the second edition Deduction, but I do not think we ought to prefer the statements of the second edition Deduction merely because they are a later stage in Kant's thought or his "truly Critical position."

If Kant did hold, in the second edition Deduction, that only by means of the categories is consciousness of any kind possible at all, then we must reconcile or at least account for statements in both the Prolegomena and Critique of Judgment which seem at first sight to suggest that there is consciousness or awareness of some kind (perhaps a kind of non-cognitive consciousness) apart from the categories. On the "date of composition" approach the evidence from the Prolegomena would not be troublesome, since presumably this work was produced prior to the second edition Deduction. The supposed evidence from the Critique of

Judgment would provide, possibly, some difficulty, as it is likely that it was produced after the second edition Deduction. However, our difficulty is not with the juxtaposition of evidence of varying dates, but with the juxtaposition of evidence which, on the face of it, seems to be opposed in notion. We shall, in a moment, look at the relevant statements from the Prolegomena and the Critique of Judgment with the hope that some consistent explanation can be discerned on the basis of what the texts say and mean. First, however, let us structure the issue in two ways, as we have it to this point.

1) Are there two separate and distinct syntheses, one of the imagination and one of the understanding? Does the imagination, when directed toward a manifold of sensations, work independently of the categories? Can the imagination in its synthetic role function apart from the categories? Or, on the other hand, is all synthesis a work of the understanding, such that the synthesis of imagination is really one title of the activity of the understanding?

2) Is there an awareness or a consciousness of any kind apart from the categories or are the categories the condition of consciousness itself? Can the imagination present an image or a mental content of any kind apart from the understanding or is every relation with objects a cognitive, knowing relation?

In the Prolegomena, Kant makes a distinction between

judgments of perception and judgments of experience or, what amounts to the same thing, a distinction between subjectively valid and objectively valid judgments. What is crucial for our purposes is Kant's remark that judgments of perception "require no pure concept of the understanding, but only the logical connection of perceptions in a thinking subject."²³ In a judgment of experience the perception (or "the representation of the sensuous intuition"²⁴) is subsumed under a concept of the understanding.

Kant gives five examples of judgments of perception which fall into two categories. There are, first, those judgments of perception which cannot become judgments of experience. These are judgments such as "the room is warm," "sugar is sweet," and "wormwood is bitter."²⁵ Second, there are judgments such as "air is elastic" and "when the sun shines on the stone, it grows warm"²⁶ which can become judgments of experience. The crucial difference between the two, as Kant sees it, is that the first category includes those judgments which "even though a concept of the understanding were superadded" they could not become judgments of experience "because they refer merely to feeling, which

²³Kant, Prolegomena, p. 45.

²⁴Ibid., p. 46.

²⁵Ibid., p. 47.

²⁶Ibid., p. 47 and p. 49, note 3.

everyone knows to be merely subjective and which of course can never be attributed to the object."²⁷

We have here what I take to be an explicit distinction between feeling and cognition. In order for consciousness to be cognitive awareness or to be consciousness in the sense of knowledge of an object, the perception must be subsumed under a concept (or a concept "superadded" to the perception). What is perhaps more enlightening here is Kant's division of judgments of perception into two categories. This division indicates that judgments of perception are quite actual judgments--not all of them can become judgments of experience. It seems to me that Kant is certainly asserting that there are perceptions or awarenesses apart from the understanding and its synthesizing activity. But we must note that these judgments refer to feeling--which is something attributed to the subject and not the object. Judgments of perception are not valid of objects and possess neither universality nor necessity.

The aesthetic judgment bears a similarity to one aspect of the judgment of perception and one important dissimilarity. We have seen that in an aesthetic judgment the "representation," to use Kant's own terminology, is referred to the feeling of pleasure and displeasure of the sub-

²⁷Ibid., p. 47, note 1.

ject. However, the aesthetic judgment claims universality and necessity:

The result is that the judgment of taste, . . . must involve a claim to validity for all men, and must do so apart from universality attached to Objects, i.e. there must be coupled with it a claim to subjective universality.²⁸

The whole notion of subjective universality and its very important connection with imagination and understanding is a topic reserved for the later stages of this exposition. For the moment, let us look at a classification of judgments which we can construct on the basis of the Prolegomena and the Critique of Judgment. Using the dichotomies "subjective--objective" and "universal--particular" we can structure the following classification of kinds of judgment:

- 1) Judgments of perception: subjective and particular.
- 2) Aesthetic judgments: subjective and universal.
- 3) Judgments of experience: objective and universal.

Let us now pose again our question: Is there consciousness or awareness of any kind apart from the categories?

It certainly seems to be the case, on the basis of the above classification, that our answer must be affirmative. Judgments of perception, of at least one kind, are completely devoid of any relationship with the categories.

²⁸Kant, Judgment (Meredith), p. 51.

Aesthetic judgments are in some sense related with the categories and the faculty of understanding, although we have not yet seen in what way. The categories, at this point, clearly seem to be the condition only of judgments of experience, which judgments are knowledge claims. I do not think we would go badly astray at this point if we provisionally concluded that the categories of the understanding are certainly the condition of cognitive awareness of objects--that is, that they are requisite for knowledge of objects. But this provisional conclusion, which is altogether obvious, still leaves unanswered the issues raised by Kant in the second edition Deduction by the statement that "all synthesis, even that which renders perception possible, is subject to the categories."²⁹ We must, then, agree with Kemp-Smith when he writes "relation to an object is constituted by the categories, and is necessary in reference to sense-representations, because only thereby is consciousness of any kind possible at all,"³⁰ if by consciousness "of any kind at all" Kemp-Smith means cognitive or knowing consciousness.

A point of view very similar to that of Kemp-Smith has been expressed recently by R.P. Wolff, who writes:

What Kant aims to prove is precisely that appearances cannot be given to us unless they conform to

²⁹Kant, Pure Reason, p. 171 (B161).

³⁰Kemp-Smith, p. 222.

the pure concepts. The categories are conditions of the possibility of consciousness itself. . . . There can be no appearances "given in intuition independently of the function of the understanding."³¹

Before commenting further upon Kemp-Smith's and Wolff's views, let us consider some difficulties which H.J. Paton and A.C. Ewing raise concerning the woolly term "consciousness":

The passages to which Mr. Kemp-Smith appeals show clearly enough that for Kant there can be no knowledge or experience of objects--in the strict sense--apart from the categories. To say this, however, is a very different thing from saying that no representations can exist for consciousness apart from the categories.³²

What Paton has in mind is illustrated by this passage:

It is due to our sensibility that we see the red colour, and it is due to our understanding that we see it as the colour of a thing or object. . . . In this case the intuition, or sensation, given to sense apart from thought is separated from experience by an act of analysis, and does not exist by itself in consciousness apart from thought of an object. . . . It is [not] impossible to have conscious intuitions without thinking that they are intuitions of an object.³³

A.C. Ewing is essentially in agreement with Paton. According to Ewing it is necessary to draw a distinction

³¹Robert Paul Wolff, Kant's Theory of Mental Activity (Cambridge: Harvard, 1963), p. 94.

³²H.J. Paton, Kant's Metaphysic of Experience (2 vols.; London: Allen & Unwin, 1951), I, p. 330.

³³Ibid., p. 331.

"between having images or feelings and explicitly recognizing their presence and nature so that we can say to ourselves that we have them."³⁴ Ewing continues:

It seems to me that Kant holds that apart from the categories we should still have consciousness in the sense of feeling but not in the sense of cognition. I think Professor Kemp-Smith and Professor Paton are really agreed on this point, though the latter does not recognize it. Professor Paton admits that "for Kant there can be no knowledge or experience of objects--in the strict sense--apart from the categories," but insists that "this is a very different thing from saying that no representations can exist for consciousness apart from the categories." Professor Kemp-Smith on the other hand says that because they cannot apply the categories and have no capacity for self-consciousness, according to Kant "animals must be denied anything analogous to what we must signify by the term consciousness," but he admits that Kant attributes to them sensations, feelings, apprehension. They both therefore seem to agree that without the categories we could feel or have images but could not cognise our feelings or images.³⁵

However, with regard to the question whether imagination functions apart from the understanding, Ewing asserts that he cannot reconcile the position adopted by Kant in the First Critique with Kant's position in the Prolegomena and Critique of Aesthetic Judgment, especially regarding judgments of perception and aesthetic judgments respectively. I tend to think that Ewing is somewhat overcautious and that it will be possible to explain at least aesthetic

³⁴A.C. Ewing, A Short Commentary on Kant's Critique of Pure Reason (2d ed.; London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1961), p. 93.

³⁵Ibid., pp. 93-94.

judgments in the light of the Deductions in the Critique of Pure Reason.

Before going deeper into this issue I want to clear up one possible source of difficulty, namely, the nature of Kant's analysis of experience in the First Critique and Prolegomena. The question, as I see it, is this: Is Kant's analysis one of distinguishable but inseparable elements or, on the other hand, is he doing empirical psychology? To use Paton's set of alternatives, is Kant "trying to explain the genesis of experience. . . . Question how experience comes to be"? Or, on the other hand, is Kant's concern with "what is contained in experience"?³⁶

The difference is this: If Kant is doing the former job then his analysis is one of processes which follow one another in temporal succession; if he is doing the latter, showing what is contained in experience, then he is distinguishing those elements in experience which are inseparable with regard to time order. In other words, the latter task (which is the one I think Kant set for himself) involves the denial that any analysis of human experience is one in which the distinct separable elements or events are set out in their proper sequence. As Kant puts it in the Prolegomena:

In order to comprise the whole matter in one idea, it is first necessary to remind the reader that we

³⁶Paton, I, 575.

are discussing, not the origin of experience, but that which lies in experience. The former pertains to empirical psychology and would even then never be adequately explained without the latter, which belongs to the critique of knowledge and particularly of the understanding.³⁷

Kant's account is not a generic history of the development of human experience. On the contrary, in the First Critique and the Prolegomena it is an analysis of what is necessarily involved in the cognition of objects. Kant's attempt may be called a search for the a priori objective conditions of all knowledge. These conditions are the universal and necessary ones. Empirical psychology, depending upon observation and collection of relevant data, could not yield the necessity and universality desired by the theoretical critique.

Both Paton and Ewing state quite explicitly that Kant is not attempting to analyze experience in a psychological way:

What Kant is doing is to analyse experience into matter and form. The matter is given to the mind and the form is imposed by the mind; there is no reason for supposing that either is before the other. Whenever we know any object, sense, imagination and understanding are at work together. Sense receives the matter under the form of time, imagination organises it in space and time in accordance with the empirical concepts and categories, and understanding judges it by means of the same concepts and categories. I can see no ground for saying that these processes succeed

³⁷Kant, Prolegomena, p. 51.

one another in time; they are all elements in the one temporal process which is experience.³⁸

What is merely given without a synthesis is described as sensation. . . . We need not think of this as existing by itself in the phenomenal world before it was synthesised, but neither need we think of it as having a noumenal existence in which it is subjected to a non-temporal synthesis. It is perhaps an element in experience which never exists apart from others in human beings and can only be separated from them by abstraction, and certainly we need not think of it as if there were always, first, sensation, then synthesis by the imagination, then synthesis by understanding.³⁹

The First Critique and Prolegomena constitute an analysis of what is involved in human cognition. Kant's interest is in a certain kind of relationship between the mind and the object, which may be said to be knowledge or cognition. In the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment Kant's analysis is not of the cognitive relation, but of a somewhat different kind, wherein the human mind is aware of the object, not as something to be known, but as a thing to be aesthetically estimated. I think that what we have said Kant does not do in the theoretical works holds as well for the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment. Kant's interest is not

³⁸Paton, loc. cit.

³⁹Ewing, pp. 94-95. Paton's and Ewing's arguments are directed against the opposite view expressed by Vaihinger and Kemp-Smith (and also against Ewing's own earlier position, which was derived from Vaihinger). In this essay there is no need to deal exhaustively with this dispute.

in the psychology of taste but in the analysis of the judgment of taste--which analysis will reveal the elements involved in that pure aesthetic judgment.

It seems to me further that Kant's analyses, whether they be of taste or cognition, will, in varying contexts, reveal differing aspects of human awareness, cognitive or not, and that Kant's language will vary accordingly. I do not think that the two Deductions seriously conflict with one another and I do not think that Kant's analysis of aesthetic judgments seriously conflicts with the second edition Deduction (as I hope to show shortly). I do think, however, that the problems Kant investigated were extraordinarily difficult ones and that few of his solutions were facile. For these reasons I do not think that we ought expect the same insights and the same wording at every step of the way. One of Kant's greatest merits as a philosopher was his ability (and his willingness) to see many aspects of a difficult question. He very often went where the analysis led him; the framework which he carried to each question, as a framework within which analysis occurred, was itself modified by the analytic task. I do not think we can squeeze all of Kant's assertions into a wholly consistent picture, but I do think we can come up with a reasonable explanation of what Kant basically means.

Let us, then, attempt to resolve the difficulties presented in the preceding pages and relate understanding

and imagination to the notion of form, without doing violence to the assertions in the Critique of Pure Reason.

We shall return first to the distinction drawn in the Prolegomena between judgments of perception and judgments of experience. Paton dismisses judgments of perception as "an afterthought and not a very happy one"⁴⁰ but, unfortunately, he does not tell us why they are such an unhappy afterthought. I do not think that the distinction drawn by Kant is either unhappy or an afterthought, nor do I think that the issue involved in the judgment of perception involves the aesthetic judgment, as Ewing seems to suggest when he says he cannot reconcile the Critique of Pure Reason with the Prolegomena and Critique of Judgment. The judgment of perception is an individual judgment about given sensations; that is, it points to a quite obvious fact that we judge certain sensations to be pleasant or unpleasant. In this sense the judgment of perception is very much like an empirical aesthetic judgment.⁴¹ That which is judged in an empirical aesthetic judgment and a judgment of perception is the sensation, or the "matter." The pure aesthetic judgment, as we have already seen, is formal. What

⁴⁰Paton, I, 331.

⁴¹Supra, pp. 11-12. See also Kant's remarks in Judgment, p. 117, to the effect that "in relation to the feeling of pleasure an object is to be counted either as agreeable, or beautiful, or sublime, or good (absolutely)," and the discussion following.

is judged pleasant in a pure aesthetic judgment on the beautiful is a sensation, but a sensation of a very particular kind, namely, the sensation of the harmony of the imagination in its free play and the understanding in its conformity to law.⁴² Judgments of perception, then, do not raise any grave difficulties for the pure aesthetic judgment. However, they do point out that Kant was aware of what is perhaps altogether obvious, that human beings stand in relationship to sensations in non-cognitive ways. I do feel certain ways about things. For example, I feel that the room is warm, I find the smell of burning rubber to be an especially unpleasant sensation, and so on. I make these judgments and as Kant points out, they refer merely to my feelings and do not ascribe anything to the object. The behavior of some animals and small children indicates that they too possess the same kind of awareness but they do not, as far as I know, explicitly make or vocalize the so-called judgment of perception. I want to say that I am conscious that the room is warm, and that the animal and the child are conscious that the room is warm, but I certainly do not want to say that there is a cognition of the warmth of the room by means of concepts, since this would imply a necessary connection.

But does the judgment of perception involve a synthe-

⁴²I have hinted here at a very important point, which is, I think, the key to the solution in this chapter.

sis of imagination apart from the categories of the understanding? Must we reconcile the judgment of perception with Kant's assertion that "all synthesis, therefore, even that which renders perception possible, is subject to the categories"?

The solution to this difficulty lies in keeping clearly in mind the two categories of judgments of perception. My judgment that the room is warm can never become an objectively valid judgment. Why it cannot involves the synthesis of imagination. The synthesis of imagination, when the imagination is synthesizing sensations, is entitled by Kant the synthesis of apprehension. Apprehension is "a placing together of the manifold of empirical intuition,"⁴³ or "the art of running through and holding together a manifold."⁴⁴ What does the synthesis of apprehension, this activity of the imagination on sensations, produce? It produces an image. Synthesis of apprehension is "that combination of the manifold . . . whereby perception, that is, empirical consciousness of the intuition (as appearance), is possible."⁴⁵ Imagination brings together the manifold of intuition "into the form of an image."⁴⁶ But how does the

⁴³Kant, Pure Reason, p. 209 (B219).

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 131 (A99).

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 170 (B160).

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 144 (A120).

imagination proceed in its synthesis of apprehension? Is there a rule or a set of rules which directs its activity? The answer is that there are rules of synthesis and those rules are the categories.⁴⁷ The categories impose the form of synthesis. Synthesis according to rules confers a necessity of connection upon a manifold, and the result is an explanation of objective knowledge.

Now it is true that Kant tends to obscure that imagination functions, in its synthetic role, in accordance with the categories by distinguishing between imagination and understanding. Kant works with this distinction in the Prolegomena and the first edition Deduction although his interest in both places is the analysis of knowledge of objects. Quite obviously the judgment of perception does not involve a synthesis of the imagination directed by the categories because it is not an objectively valid judgment. It is true that Kant does say that all our judgments at first are judgments of perception⁴⁸ but this should not obscure

⁴⁷See, for example, ibid., p. 147 (A126) where Kant writes: "We have already defined the understanding in various different ways: as a spontaneity of knowledge (in distinction from the receptivity of sensibility), as a power of thought, as a faculty of concepts, or again of judgments. All these definitions, when they are adequately understood, are identical. We may now characterise it as the faculty of rules. This distinguishing mark is more fruitful, and approximates more closely to its essential nature. Sensibility gives us the forms (of intuition), but understanding gives us rules."

⁴⁸Kant, Prolegomena, p. 46.

the fact there are two kinds of judgments of perception, subjectively valid and potentially objectively valid. The only difference I can see between these two kinds of judgments of perception is that in the kind that can become a judgment of experience there is in fact a synthesis of the manifold in accordance with the categories, whereas in the case of the judgment of perception as such there is no such synthesis, since no claim is made by them about objects. What is perhaps most misleading is the term "become." Judgments of perception of the kind which are valid of objects obviously do not become judgments of experience--they are judgments of experience (logical, cognitive, determinant judgments made in accordance with the faculty of thought). Kant was analyzing experience and not giving its generic history; in the Prolegomena, in seeing what is contained in experience, he made the distinction between perception and experience. Not all perception or awareness is cognitive experience, and that which is not is that in which the matter given to sense is not synthesized and therefore not attributed to objects or nature as appearance but merely to the capacity of feeling in the human being. I take as decisive this passage and the comments following upon it:

Now it is imagination that connects the manifold of sensible intuition; and imagination is dependent for the unity of its intellectual synthesis upon the understanding, and for the manifoldness of its apprehension upon sensibility. All possible perception is thus dependent upon the synthesis of apprehension, and

this empirical synthesis in turn upon the transcendental synthesis, and therefore upon the categories. Consequently, all possible perceptions, and therefore everything that can come to empirical consciousness, that is, all appearances of nature, must, so far as their connection is concerned, be subject to the categories.⁴⁹

This passage brings to light the wooliness of the term "perception." I can perceive, that is, sense, that this room is warm. This is not knowledge or cognition in the sense of an assertion of a necessary connection between the room and warmth. I can perceive (sense) the warmth of the room without the application of concepts. But "perception," as used by Kant in the above passage, is not perception in the sense of "having a sensation" but rather in the sense of "having an appearance of nature." Having a perception is thus being aware of an appearance of nature. But the perception that this room is warm is not an appearance of nature. What constitutes an appearance of nature is what is subject to the pure concepts of the understanding. Kant's analysis in the Prolegomena points to this wooliness in the term "perception." And that analysis does not deny either that we have certain perceptions which are subjectively valid or that there are other perceptions which are connected according to rule. His statement that all our judgments are first merely judgments of perception is, I think, an unfortunate way of stating what his analysis shows, for

⁴⁹Kant, Pure Reason, p. 173 (B164-165).

it suggests what he denies a few pages later, namely, that he is doing empirical psychology and setting out the elements in experience in their generic order. What the analysis does show is that there are two different kinds of judgment about perception, and not that one kind precedes in time the other.

Let us summarize the results of our investigation to this point.

1) The question whether there can be consciousness or awareness apart from the categories has been answered in the affirmative. There are judgments of perception such as "this room is warm"; that is, there is consciousness in the sense of feeling. We may connect those feelings with certain objects but the judgment is, nevertheless, only subjectively valid. We agree then, with Ewing and Paton on this point (and with Kemp-Smith if we accept Ewing's account of Paton's and Kemp-Smith's essential agreement).

2) To the question whether there are two separate and distinct syntheses, one of the understanding and one of the imagination, such that the imagination in its synthetic activity works apart from the categories, we have answered in the negative. The imagination works according to rules, which rules are the categories. One of the titles of the understanding is the synthesis of the imagination. The combination of the manifold proceeds in accordance with the

categories; this combination is called by Kant the synthesis of apprehension. I take the following passage to be decisive:

In this manner it is proved that the synthesis of apprehension, which is empirical, must necessarily be in conformity with the synthesis of apperception, which is intellectual and is contained in the category completely a priori. It is the one and the same spontaneity, which in the one case, under the title of understanding, and in the other, under the title of imagination, brings combination into the manifold of intuition.⁵⁰

3) Points one and two involve the original issue which we structured in two ways. However, our investigation has shown that what we have is not one, but two issues, since we are able to give an affirmative answer to one and a negative answer to the other. The fact that all synthesis proceeds in accordance with the categories, since the imagination is merely one title of the understanding at work, does not affect the possibility of there being awareness apart from the categories since, quite obviously, there is an awareness not dependent upon the imaginative synthesis. The perception or image resulting from the synthesis of imagination is an appearance of nature. In so far as the analysis of objective knowledge is concerned, a synthesis directed by the categories, yielding judgments such as "all bodies have weight," is revealed. Such a judgment is a connection in accordance with the categories. However, the

⁵⁰Ibid., pp. 171-172 (B162), note b.

analysis of human awareness in general reveals that there is non-cognitive awareness as well as cognitive awareness. Non-cognitive awareness involves no connection of mental content into a judgment valid of objects but merely a possible connection of mental contents into judgments which assert how one "feels" toward a certain object.

4) The judgment of perception is closely related to the empirical aesthetic judgment in that what is judged is sensation and whether or how sensation affects the person. However, the judgment of perception is not to be confused with the pure aesthetic judgment since the sensation which is judged pleasant by the pure aesthetic judgment is not a sensation such as warmth but the sensation of the harmony of the cognitive faculties, imagination and understanding. Nor is the pure aesthetic judgment to be confused with the logical judgment, since the aesthetic judgment is reflective and non-cognitive, whereas the logical judgment is determinative and cognitive. The aesthetic judgment is a kind of judgment characterized by the terms non-cognitive, reflective, subjective, necessary and universally valid. It is, therefore, a very paradoxical thing, not to be confused with other kinds of judgment.

5) The commentators are not seriously at odds with one another. Ewing is probably right that Kemp-Smith and Paton essentially agree. However, the notion of an awareness apart from the categories does not support Kant's

efforts in the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment nor does the notion of the essential unity of imagination and understanding frustrate his efforts. Ewing, therefore, is wrong when he opposes the doctrine of both the Prolegomena and Critique of Aesthetic Judgment to the teaching of the second edition Deduction. In the first place, the issues in the first two works are not the same and, in the second place, the doctrine of judgments of perception is not opposed to the teaching of the second edition Deduction. As we shall see, the notion of a pure aesthetic judgment is not opposed to the second edition Deduction (or to judgments of perception) either.

6) Finally, we may summarize Kant's analysis of a "knowledge situation" or "thinking" or "the action of the understanding."

a) There is a given manifold of sensations (in accordance with the teaching of the Transcendental Aesthetic).

b) Sensations must be apprehended. Their apprehension is a "bringing them together." This is a synthesis in accordance with the categories of the understanding (the rules of synthesis). Synthesis according to rules confers a necessary connection upon the manifold. The result is knowledge, the mark of knowledge being necessary connection according to concepts.

c) The action of the understanding thus yields

determinant judgments wherein particulars are subsumed under given universals.⁵¹

Having now indicated certain aspects of the notions of synthesis, imagination and understanding as they occur in the theoretical part of the Critical structure, we may proceed with the investigation of imagination and understanding in the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment. Our investigation so far indicates mainly in what ways we must not confuse the pure aesthetic judgment.

The aesthetic judgment, it will be remembered, is a reflective judgment, the predicate of which is a feeling of pleasure or displeasure. Pleasure arises upon reflection on the form of an object of sense. The form of an object of sense is those spatial and temporal relationships exhibited by a synthesized manifold. If this form, exhibited by the imaginatively synthesized manifold accords or harmonizes with the understanding, then pleasure results and we judge the object of sense to be beautiful. In other words, the reflection upon the form of an object of sense which is productive of pleasure is a productive reflection only if the exhibited form harmonizes with the faculty of concepts.

One may say that there are immediate difficulties

⁵¹Supra, p. 8. The summary given here is of course only a partial summary of part of Kant's analysis but will serve to point out some of the crucial differences between determinant judgments and reflective judgments of the pure aesthetic caste.

here and, on the face of it, there are. The aesthetic judgment is not a cognitive or logical judgment. But the manifold of sensations is synthesized by the imagination which, in accordance with our investigation above, is merely one name of the activity of the understanding. Thus, it would seem that the object could not be estimated other than cognitively and certainly not aesthetically.

Such a difficulty is illusory and rests upon a basic misunderstanding of what is involved in the aesthetic judgment. In the first place, imagination and understanding are cognitive faculties and never will be any other kind. The pleasure in the apprehension of the form of an object of sense expresses "the conformity of the Object to the cognitive faculties brought into play."⁵² Form harmonizes with the cognitive faculties.⁵³ Imagination is no less a cognitive faculty merely because it is involved in Kant's analysis of non-cognitive judgment. Let us look more closely into this.

The cognition of an object of sense involves both sensibility and understanding--that is, given sensations and their conceptualization. These are the elements in cognition. The "having" of a synthesized manifold exhibiting a form is the result of the operation of the necessary

⁵²Kant, Judgment (Meredith), p. 30 (*italics mine*).

⁵³Ibid., p. 33. See also especially pp. 57-60, p. 64, pp. 85-86, and p. 143.

cognitive elements. To have this mental content implies that sensations have been brought together according to rule. But attached to the mental content is a "subjective side." This "subjective side" is "incapable of becoming an element in cognition." What this is is identified by Kant as the "pleasure or displeasure" connected with having that mental content.⁵⁴ This is the first turn of the key in the lock. I take this as meaning that in the cognition of objects there is this "subjective side" which is a feeling of pleasure or displeasure which accompanies that cognition. However, in so far as the pleasure or displeasure is, in fact, subjective, it is not involved in knowing the object. What we must ask now is: what brings about this feeling of pleasure or displeasure? What explanation is there of this pleasure or displeasure accompanying the cognition of an object?

Our provisional answer to this question has been that the pleasure is the result of the harmony or agreement of the form exhibited by the imagination (or the form "in" the imagination) with the understanding. But the further question is: what, exactly, is in the imagination and why does that correspond with the understanding?

What is in the imagination is a synthesized manifold exhibiting temporal and spatial relationships (play and

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 29.

figure). Those temporal and spatial relationships exhibited by the sensations is the form of the object of sense. Now understanding, as we have already seen,⁵⁵ is the faculty of the forms or rules of thought. Thus, not the sensations but only the form exhibited by those sensations could correspond with the understanding as the faculty of the forms of thought. Let us apply this to a specific example.⁵⁶

The unit which I shall use for analysis is the first four measures of the first Kyrie Eleison of Bach's Mass in B Minor. Hearing these four measures (considered as a unit) is, on Kant's analysis, being aware of a number of sensations which are then (a logical, not a temporal "then") gathered together by the imagination. In so far as they are brought together, this manifold of aural sensations exhibits its temporal relationships--a temporal "shape"--which Kant calls play. If we assign a time span of one unit to an eighth note, we would, following the bass line, have a temporal relationship such as the following (in which I have indicated the time span of rests, or silence, which

⁵⁵Supra, p. 29 and p. 61.

⁵⁶I am indebted for the general drift of the example to Robert L. Zimmerman's article, "Kant: The Aesthetic Judgment," The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, XXI (Spring 1963), 333-334.

is as much a part of the temporal succession as the sounds, by an asterisk):

3 - 1 - 2 - 2* - 3 - 1 - 2 - 2* - 3 - 1 - 2 - 1* -
1 - 4 - 4

Using hyphens, one hyphen to the eighth note, and including the rests, we would have a temporal shape like this:

--- - -- -- --- - -- -- --- - -- -- --- - -- -- ---

Leaving out the rests, to indicate silence in the pattern, we would have:

--- - -- --- - -- --- - -- --- - -- ---

Assuming that we listened only to the bass voice (which is sufficient for purposes of illustration), we would then have this temporal shape. Presumably, then, this is what would be exhibited by the sensations in the imagination. It is, very simply, their play. Such a formal pattern is that which could harmonize with a purely formal rule of thought or concept. Such a formal pattern is what the entity in the imagination and the understanding have in common.⁵⁷

My example, in so far as it is spelled out, utilizes only the notion of play. Zimmerman's example, utilizing the notion of figure, is at this point helpful.

⁵⁷Exactly what concept is an analogue is left open by Kant. That an analogue is "found" is marked by the resultant feeling of pleasure.

Zimmerman supposes that the content of the imagination is a series of red patches. Each red patch is half the size of the one which preceded it. These red patches depict blood on a battlefield. What would correspond or harmonize with the understanding would be "the order of diminishing size progression." Zimmerman continues in this way:

That is, the purely rational formula of half the first and half again, is the rational schema which the understanding would have an affinity towards. Nothing that was material or specific could find an analogue in the understanding since it (the understanding) contains only immaterial and abstract entities.⁵⁸

The harmony of the imagination and understanding, which harmony is the result of the form exhibited by the mental content in the imagination, gives rise to a feeling of pleasure or displeasure. Supposedly, then, if the form is such that the harmony does in fact occur, which means that it has found an analogue in the understanding, then the object of sense is called beautiful. If, on the other hand, the object is devoid of form or presents a form which "is an outrage on the imagination"⁵⁹ then the object is not judged beautiful, but sublime. We may thus state the aesthetic judgment on the beautiful in the following way.

The predicate of an aesthetic judgment is pleasure or displeasure. In a pure aesthetic judgment the feeling of

⁵⁸Zimmerman, p. 340.

⁵⁹Kant, Judgment (Meredith), p. 91.

pleasure or displeasure in the presentation of an object of sense depends upon the form of that object of sense. What we mean by the form of an object of sense is the figure and play of the sensations gathered together in the imagination. If the form harmonizes with the understanding, then there is pleasure in holding those gathered together sensations--that is, there is pleasure associated merely with having that mental content. The harmonious activity of the understanding and imagination is the pleasant sensation. In so far as the sensation is pleasant we judge the object to be a beautiful object of sense. If, on the other hand, the sensation is not pleasant, then understanding and imagination are not in harmony with one another. This would occur in that case where imagination presented a form which could not accord with the understanding or where the content of the imagination was devoid of form. In the latter cases, the object might be aesthetically judged to be sublime.⁶⁰ Thus, the feeling of pleasure or displeasure which accompanies the cognition of an object of sense is a feeling resultant upon the harmony of imagination and understanding, those faculties (or faculty) requisite for cognition in general.

This harmony is brought about by the form of a given object of sense. But the understanding and imagination (or

⁶⁰A discussion of the sublime is reserved for the end of this chapter.

the understanding with its synthetic activity) are faculties of knowledge. Why, then, when an object is judged beautiful is this not a judgment that that object possesses a certain determinant quality (beauty) in accordance with the concepts? In other words, have we to this point satisfactorily answered the possible objection that all judgments, because of the essential unity of imagination and understanding as cognitive faculties, must be cognitive, objectively valid judgments?

The above question leads us to a discussion of what Kant calls the free play of the cognitive faculties. This discussion I take to be particularly crucial in understanding the aesthetic judgment.

In a logical or cognitive judgment, a particular is subsumed under a universal. In a reflective judgment, a particular may be said to be in search of a universal. Let us look first at this passage:

The aesthetic judgment in its estimate of the beautiful refers the imagination in its free play to the understanding, to bring out its agreement with the concepts of the latter in general (apart from their determination).⁶¹

Now this looks especially important. It suggests the following interpretation and explanation. The particular in the aesthetic judgment, which is in search of a universal, is the imagination in its free play. What is "in" the

⁶¹Kant, Judgment (Meredith), p. 104.

imagination in its free play is an image which exhibits a form. However, the form is not itself subsumed under a concept or determined by one. This is the great paradox of the critique of taste with which we shall deal in a moment.

What it points to is that aesthetic judgment refers the form exhibited by a manifold of sensations to the understanding as a faculty of the forms of thought. As Kant indicates, "the subjective formal condition of a judgment in general. . . . [It] can consist only in the subsumption of the imagination itself . . . under the conditions enabling the understanding in general to advance from intuitions to concepts."⁶² If in this subsumption the form exhibited by the imagination finds an analogue in the forms of the understanding, then the imagination and understanding, because of the given form, may be said to be in harmony. This harmony of the faculties involved in the cognition of objects in general is a pleasant feeling or sensation. In so far as the sensation is a pleasant one, then the object may be said to be fitted for the cognitive faculties in general and therefore judged to be beautiful. Moreover, the sensation aroused by the harmonious activity of the imagination is "the sensation whose universal communicability is postulated by the judgment of taste."⁶³

⁶²Ibid., p. 143.

⁶³Ibid., p. 60.

Not only the issue of free play, but three others have now presented themselves, to be dealt with in order: the paradox of the critique of taste, aesthetic teleology (alluded to above), and the subjectively universal character of the pure aesthetic judgment.

A passage in the Second Moment of the *Analytic of the Beautiful* first specifically raises the issue of free play:

The cognitive powers brought into play by this representation are here engaged in free play, since no definite concept restricts them to a particular rule of cognition. Hence the mental state in this representation must be one of a feeling of the free play of the powers of representation in a given representation for a cognition in general.⁶⁴

This passage points out that the feeling or sensation aroused by the harmony of the imagination and understanding, if the object is to be judged beautiful or sublime, must be a harmony of those faculties in their free play. This means, then, that their harmony or correspondence, or the imagination's finding an analogue in the forms of thought, must not be determined according to rule or concept. How, then, since imagination and understanding are cognitive faculties working according to the forms of thought, are we to have free play of these faculties (an activity not determined according to rule)?

This is the paradox of the critique of taste. We are thus concerned with the first two issues at the same time.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 58.

The most crucial passage for the explanation of the above issues is the first paragraph of the General Remark on the First Section of the Analytic. I shall quote this paragraph in its entirety and then comment upon it.

The result to be extracted from the foregoing analysis is in effect this: that everything runs up into the concept of taste as a critical faculty by which an object is estimated in reference to the free conformity to law of the imagination. If, now, imagination must in the judgment of taste be regarded in its freedom, then, to begin with, it is not taken as reproductive, as in its subjection to the laws of association, but as productive and exerting an activity of its own (as originator of arbitrary forms of possible intuitions). And although in the apprehension of a given object of sense it is tied down to a definite form of this object and, to that extent does not enjoy free play, (as it does in poetry), still it is easy to conceive that the object may supply ready-made to the imagination just such a form of the arrangement of the manifold, as the imagination, if it were left to itself, would freely project in harmony with the general conformity to law of the understanding. But that the imagination should both be free and of itself conformable to law, i.e., carry autonomy with it, is a contradiction. The understanding alone gives the law. Where, however, imagination is compelled to follow a course laid down by a definite law, then what the form of the product is to be is determined by concepts; but, in that case, as already shown, the delight is not delight in the beautiful, but in the good, (in perfection, though it be no more than formal perfection), and the judgment is not one due to taste. Hence it is only a conformity to law without a law, and a subjective harmonising of the imagination and understanding without an objective one--which latter would mean that the representation was referred to a definite concept of the object--that can consist with the free conformity to law of the understanding (which has also been called

finality apart from an end) and with the specific character of the judgment of taste.⁶⁵

In a cognitive judgment, understanding and imagination are in mutual accord (and, in fact, the imagination is called the activity of the understanding) because the imagination, in its activity, is directed by the laws or rules of thought (the pure concepts of the understanding). In a judgment of taste upon the beautiful the activities of understanding and imagination are in mutual accord too. However, in this case the mutual accord is not brought about because of a determination of the activity of the imagination according to concepts but, rather, because of the imagination freely according with the faculty of concepts. This is a conformity to law without a law--or, more precisely, a conformity without determination or "restriction" by the law. The imagination, then, supplies the forms which freely allows it to accord with the understanding. The representation of the object in the imagination supplies just that form which the imagination would possess if it were determined by the rules of the understanding. This is what Kant calls a subjective harmonizing of the two faculties of cognition; this subjective harmony of faculties is that sensation which is pleasurable. Imagination, then, conforms to the rules of synthesis in general without being deter-

⁶⁵Ibid., pp. 85-86.

mined by them. It is a free conformity of the imagination to the understanding.⁶⁶

We have not violated the second edition Deduction. In the cognitive judgment the manifold ~~is~~^{is} arranged in conformity with the rules of understanding (thus the unity of imagination and understanding). In the judgment of taste the arrangement of the manifold is ~~that~~ arrangement which the object supplies to the imagination and is that same arrangement that the imagination would bring about if it were conforming with the faculty of rules (thus the unity of the imagination and understanding in the judgment of taste as well).⁶⁷ The essential unity of imagination and understanding is no less in the judgment of taste than in the cognitive judgment. But the explanation of this unity differs. In the case of the judgment of taste, the form of the synthesized manifold, which is the same form the imagination would freely project in harmony with the rules of the understanding, finds an analogue in the understanding. In the case of the cognitive judgment, the form of the imaginatively synthesized manifold is a form "directed by" the forms of thought. Let me again repeat that we have not

⁶⁶All this echoes the teaching of the Critique of Pure Reason that the imagination both belongs to sensibility and conforms to the categories. See, for example, the Schematism, pp. 181-182 (A139-140; B178-179) and the second edition Deduction, p. 165 (B151-152).

⁶⁷On the unity of imagination in the judgment of taste see, for example, Judgment (Meredith), p. 31.

violated this unity; there are representations of objects which possess the spatial and temporal ordering that the imagination, in its synthetic activity directed by rules, would bring to the manifold. In the case of the judgment of taste the free conformity is a pleasant sensation. The fact that a given manifold is arranged in such a way that the imagination would project the same form in accordance with rules leads us to call the object represented a thing of beauty--"as if, when we call something beautiful, beauty was to be regarded as a quality of the object forming part of its inherent determination according to concepts."⁶⁸ It is a pleasant surprise to find that the figure or play of a manifold of sensations is the same form that the manifold would have if it were arranged solely in conformity with the rules of thought in general. In fact, it strikes us as if it were so arranged.

Our preceding discussion was at the same time a derivation of the principle of reflective judgment, that principle which reflective judgment must give to itself from itself.⁶⁹ Such a principle can only be a subjective principle of subsumption, that is, a principle for reflective judgment in its search for a universal. The notion of the subsumption of the imagination in its freedom under the

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 59.

⁶⁹Supra, p. 10.

understanding as a faculty of rules supplies that principle. As Kant sums it up:

Taste, then, as a subjective power of judgment, contains a principle of subsumption, not of intuitions under concepts, but of the faculty of intuitions or presentations, i.e. of the imagination, under the faculty of concepts, i.e. the understanding, so far as the former in its freedom accords with the latter in its conformity to law.⁷⁰

Kant, I believe, has pointed out an important aspect of our aesthetic experience, namely, that beauty is something which is felt. When I stand before a painting or sit in the concert hall it is likely that this feeling will be aroused. The reason for this feeling, according to Kant, is the spontaneous harmony of the imaginative mental content and the faculty of rules. When I judge, for example, that Seurat's A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte is a beautiful work of art, what this means is that there is a felt aesthetic pleasure in the harmony of the representation of this object with the faculty of understanding, yet understanding, as a faculty of rules for the knowledge of objects in general, does not affect or interfere with the representation of this object. In other words, in being presented with this object, I feel that this is beautiful and that feeling does not constitute knowledge.

⁷⁰Kant, Judgment (Meredith), p. 143.

Further, the harmony of the imagination and understanding implies that the representation of the object is such that it promotes their harmony. The form of the object is such that that the faculties find themselves in a harmonious state when reflecting upon it. We may thus assert that the object, because of its form, is fitted for being taken in by the faculties. This is what Kant means when he asserts that the representation of the object is final. This is the aesthetic representation of finality and aesthetic finality in beauty.⁷¹

It remains now only to explain the "subjective universality" of the judgment of taste along with the communicability of the feeling of pleasure in the beautiful and sublime, and finally, the difference between the feeling of the beautiful and the feeling of the sublime.

When we judge an object to be beautiful, our judgment

⁷¹"Finality" is Meredith's translation of Zweckmässigkeit. Bernard translates "purposiveness," which probably indicates more clearly what is involved here. The form of the object of sense is such that it seems as if it were purposively fitted for our delight in it, yet at the same time we do not think of that object as if it were fitted for a particular purpose or end. As Kant writes in Judgment, p. 71: "The aesthetic judgment . . . refers the representation, by which an Object is given, solely to the subject, and brings to our notice no quality of the object, but only the final form in the determination of the powers of representation engaged upon it." And at the end of the Third Moment of the Analytic of the Beautiful (p. 80) Kant gives this definition of the beautiful on the basis of the Third Moment: "Beauty is the form of finality in an object, so far as perceived in it apart from the representation of an end."

rests upon a feeling aroused by the harmonious interplay of the cognitive faculties. This feeling is my feeling. How, then, is it possible for Kant to claim that the judgment of taste possesses universality in light of its subjective character? For he does claim it, for example, in this passage:

When the form of an object (as opposed to the matter of its representation, as sensation) is, in the mere act of reflecting upon it, without regard to any concept to be obtained from it, estimated as the ground of a pleasure in the representation of such an Object, then this pleasure is also judged to be combined necessarily with the representation of it, and so not merely for the Subject apprehending this form, but for all in general who pass judgment. The object is then called beautiful; and the faculty of judging by means of such a pleasure (and so also with universal validity) is called taste.⁷²

The answer to these claims of universal validity is already before us. It is true that my judgment that an object is beautiful is explained in terms of the subjective harmony of my cognitive faculties. But my judgment involves a claim to validity for all men simply on the grounds that I may regard my judgment as "resting on what [I] may also presuppose in every other person."⁷³ Now what I may presuppose in every other person is that they possess faculties of cognition and that their mental state in the free play of those faculties is analogous to mine. I may presuppose

⁷²Kant, Judgment (Meredith), p. 31.

⁷³Ibid., p. 51.

that the pleasure I find in the harmony of the imagination and understanding when directed to the form of an object of sense is the same pleasure which other rational creatures would feel as well. And in so far as the judgment is one of the sublimity of the object, I may presuppose that the same feeling of displeasure (if it is displeasure) is aroused.

As Kant writes:

The quickening of both faculties (imagination and understanding) to an indefinite, but yet, thanks to the given representation, harmonious activity, is the sensation whose universal communicability is postulated by the judgment of taste.⁷⁴

But why "thanks to the given representation"? The given representation with which we are here concerned is a representation of the formal relations among sensations and not the sensations themselves. If the representation were one of sensations alone, and the judgment a material rather than a formal one, no universality could be claimed. Kant's problem here is to account for what is the empirical fact of agreement in matters of taste. We do, in fact, agree in recognizing certain objects as beautiful ones. To the individual who does not so recognize that object as beautiful we may say "you have no taste." If the judgment of taste were material and a judgment therefore on the pleasantness or agreeableness of sensations, neither universality nor communicability could be claimed, for I could

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 60.

not impute the same agreeableness of certain sensations to all men. The feelings aroused by certain sensations are notoriously too contingent to allow claiming that all who sense the same thing will have the same feeling. But if the characteristic to be judged is a formal one of relations among sensations, then I may claim that the pleasurable sensations which I receive from the harmony of the cognitive faculties in their free play in "taking in" the form of the object of sense is a pleasurable sensation which all men would share. Thus the notion of form is that upon which rests Kant's claims for the universality of the aesthetic judgment.

The aesthetic judgment is also subjectively necessary. However, "the assertion is not that every one will fall in with our judgment, but rather that everyone ought to agree with it."⁷⁵ The subjective necessity of the judgment rests on what Kant calls the assumption of a "common sense." However, it is important to note that Kant does not mean by a common sense what he has denied in speaking of the universality of aesthetic judgments. That is, the notion of a common sense is not the assertion that all men would find the same sensations, as such, agreeable or pleasant. On the contrary, this common sense is "the effect

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 84.

arising from the free play of the powers of cognition."⁷⁶
 In other words, common sense is a feeling--a feeling
 aroused by the interplay of imagination and understanding.
 But this is not a private feeling, such that I rest my
 judgment on only what is valid for me; rather, this is a
 feeling, a common public sense, which I may assume to be
 present in all men. Thus, aesthetic judgments, because of
 the assumption of a common public sense, are deemed sub-
 jectively necessary, although we proceed as if they were
 objective--as if some discernible quality of an object were
 being judged rather than our feeling. As Kant helpfully
 adds:

And here, too, we do not have to take our stand
 on psychological grounds, but we assume a common
 sense as the necessary condition of the universal
 communicability of our knowledge, which is pre-
 supposed in every logic and every principle of
 knowledge that is not one of scepticism.⁷⁷

In sum, then, what Kant was aware of is that our aes-
 thetic judgments are such that when we proclaim them, we
 think that everyone else ought concur with our opinion.
 Thus, if I judge that object "x" is beautiful I expect that
 others will concur with my judgment. If they do not, I may
 attempt to bring them around to my way of judging or, per-
 haps, merely dismiss them as persons without taste or hon-
 esty. In fact, I may dismiss them as persons without

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 83.

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 84.

"feeling." But my judgment that "object 'x' is beautiful" is not a judgment like "object 'x' is heavy." According to Kant, the latter judgment rests upon the subsumption of a particular under a given universal. Universality and necessity are claimed because there is this subsumption under a given rule for cognition in general. But in the former judgment there is no such subsumption; the judgment rests not on concepts but on feeling. Kant's problem, then, was to account for the fact that we impute agreement to others in our aesthetic judgments yet at the same time account for this on grounds as subjective as feeling. This he did by arguing that the feeling was aroused, not by sensations themselves, but rather by the harmonious interplay of those common cognitive faculties engaged in the apprehension of the relationships among sensations. The beautiful and the sublime are felt qualities of representations of objects and arises immediately upon the contemplation of the formal properties exhibited by those representations.

Finally, I shall say a word or two about the sublime and its relationship to the notions of form, imagination and understanding.

The sublime, like the beautiful, is a feeling. However, it is not the unqualified feeling of pleasure in the form of an object of sense. Rather, "the sublime does not so much involve positive pleasure as admiration or respect,

i.e., merits the name of negative pleasure."⁷⁸ As we shall see in a moment, the feeling of the sublime is both a feeling of pleasure and a feeling of displeasure.

The most crucial difference Kant sees between the beautiful and the sublime involves the notion of form. A beautiful object "conveys a finality in its form making the object appear, as it were, preadapted to our power of judgment" whereas, on the other hand, "that which . . . excites the feeling of the sublime, may appear, indeed, in point of form to contravene the ends of our power of judgment, to be ill-adapted to our faculty of presentation, and to be, as it were, an outrage on the imagination, and yet is judged all the more sublime on that account."⁷⁹

Kant thus argues, as I see it, that the feeling of the sublime is aroused when the form of an object of sense is not such that the imagination would freely project it in harmony with the laws of the understanding. In other words, the form cannot be "taken in" by the imagination and thus no analogue can be found for it in the faculty of rules. This would presumably be the case when the object was either devoid of form or the form was such that it "violated," in some sense, human thought. For this reason, I think, Kant brings in the notion that the feeling of the

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 91.

⁷⁹Ibid.

sublime is such that imagination is not referred to the understanding but rather to the ideas of reason.

Therefore, just as the aesthetic judgment in its estimate of the beautiful refers the imagination in its free play to the understanding, to bring out its agreement with the concepts of the latter in general (apart from their determination): so in its estimate of a thing as sublime it refers that faculty to reason to bring out its subjective accord with ideas of reason (indeterminately indicated).⁸⁰

In the judgment upon the beautiful, aesthetic judgment refers the particular (imagination) to the understanding as a faculty of the forms of discursive thought. If the imagination finds an analogue in the forms of thought, then the faculties accord with one another and a pleasant sensation results. This pleasant sensation is ultimately due to the form of the object of sense. However, in the judgment upon the sublime, imagination can find no analogue in the understanding, presumably because of the given relations among sensations; either there are no relations, in which case the object may be said to be devoid of form, or the relations are such that there is no form of thought to which the particular form may be referred. However, accord may be found with an indeterminate idea of reason; this accord between imagination and reason would give rise to the feeling of the sublime. This is a feeling of displeasure because we perceive that the imagination, as

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 104.

a faculty belonging partly to sensation, is, in a way, inadequate. That is, displeasure arises from the "inadequacy of imagination in the aesthetic estimation of magnitude to attain to its estimation by reason."⁸¹ However, according to Kant, we are thus made aware of the supersensible side of our being and we take pleasure "to find every standard of sensibility falling short of the ideas of reason."⁸²

So much, then, for imagination and understanding. But the notion of a form of an object of sense or, what is the same, the notion of a property of a manifold of sensations which is logically prior to the determination of that manifold by concepts, suggests that there might be some connection between Kant's notion of form and the very troublesome thing-in-itself. That will be the subject of our next chapter.

⁸¹Ibid., p. 106.

⁸²Ibid. There is, of course, far more to say about the notion of the sublime, particularly in its relation with the Dialectic in the Critique of Pure Reason and with the Critique of Practical Reason in general. However, to say more here would only be to embark on another essay. I have introduced the sublime only to add some measure of completeness to our explanation of form, imagination and understanding (or, in this case, reason).

CHAPTER IV

THE NOTION OF FORM AND THINGS-IN-THEMSELVES

One of the most crucial yet generally maligned distinctions in the Critical Philosophy is that between things so far as we know them (in so far as they are given to us) and things so far as we do not know them (as they are in themselves).¹ Let me remark at the outset that I do not intend to argue that we have knowledge of things-in-themselves or that Kant argued that we have such knowledge. Nor will I argue that the thing-in-itself is a dispensible notion within the Critical Philosophy. On the contrary, I think it is quite indispensable although its complete role or function is seldom realized. I will therefore argue for a particular view of the function of the thing-in-itself, a view which clarifies certain aspects of the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment and intimately involves the notion of form as figure and play.

First, let us clarify to some extent two sets of terms which Kant employs: "thing-in-itself--appearance" and "noumena--phenomena." Literally speaking a "noumenon"

¹This way of putting the distinction is a paraphrase of a number of Kant's statements.

is an intelligible object--that is, an object of intelligence or thought (intelligibilia). A "phenomenon" is a sensible object--that is, an object of sensibility (sensibilia). The distinction between phenomena and noumena thus seems to be an epistemological one. The thing-in-itself is closely related to the general notion of noumenon. Kant distinguishes between a positive and negative sense of noumenon. A noumenon in the negative sense is "a thing so far as it is not an object of our sensible intuition." To this Kant adds that we have thus abstracted from our mode of knowing the noumenon. A noumenon in the positive sense is "an object of a non-sensible intuition." In so defining a noumenon in this positive way we "presuppose a special mode of intuition, namely, the intellectual, which is not that which we possess."² It seems to me that the noumenon in the negative sense, as not an object of our kind of sensible intuition, is the same thing as the thing-in-itself. The thing-in-itself versus appearance dichotomy looks like an ontological one as opposed to the epistemological noumena--phenomena distinction. The negative sense of noumenon does away with the epistemological reference and suggests this identity with the ontological thing-in-itself. This view is supported by Kant's assertion that "that . . . which we entitle 'noumenon' must be understood as being such only in

²Kant, Pure Reason, p. 268 (B307).

a negative sense"³ followed shortly by his remark that "the concept of a noumenon--that is, of a thing which is not to be thought as object of the senses but as thing in itself . . . is not in any way contradictory."⁴ It is fair to point out that this is a well-known interpretation, agreed to, among others, by Kemp-Smith, who remarks that the noumenon in its negative employment is "indistinguishable from the notion of the unknown thing-in-itself."⁵

I do not think that the notion of the thing-in-itself as expounded in the Critique of Pure Reason is either very problematic or difficult to understand although, among all the notions in the Critical Philosophy, this one has probably engendered the most dispute (particularly with regard to whether Kant could have dispensed with it altogether).⁶ I tend to think that Kant expounded a fairly consistent account of the thing-in-itself in all portions of the First Critique with mainly minor differences between the two editions.

³Ibid., p. 270 (B309).

⁴Ibid., p. 271 (B310).

⁵Kemp-Smith, p. 409.

⁶For a brief history of this dispute as it occurred among mainly German Neo-Kantians and anti-Kantians see Gottfried Martin, Kant's Metaphysics and Theory of Science, trans. P.G. Lucas (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1961), pp. 134-141. A bibliography of the more important works in German concerned with this dispute is given on p. 221 of the same work.

The doctrine is first spelled out in the Transcendental Aesthetic. We know from the Aesthetic that we can have an intuition (or perception of an object) only in so far as that object is given to us. Intuition, as the mode of perceiving objects, may be analyzed into matter and form. The forms of intuition are space and time; its matter what Kant calls sensation in general. Thus, if it can be said that an object is perceived, it can be said that that object is perceived in accordance with a certain mode of perception, intuition. The nature of this mode of perception is that it has certain forms, forms of perceiving or intuiting, space and time. Space and time belong to the subjective constitution of our minds and they cannot be ascribed to anything apart from that subjective constitution. Thus, things-in-themselves are not brought into spatial-temporal relationships but, rather, appearances are brought into these relations. But appearances to whom and of what? The Kantian teaching is that appearances appear to discursive understandings and as such they are the things or objects of a discursive understanding. But these appearances are also appearances of "something"--namely, things-in-themselves. The world of space and time is a phenomenal world; however, this phenomenal world suggests to Kant the existence of things-in-themselves. In other words, what appears to us are objects or things. Things as they are in themselves, however, are not objects of knowledge, but their appear-

ances, which as appearances are subject to space and time, as forms of our sensibility, are the objects of knowledge. Things-in-themselves, then, are asserted by Kant to exist yet denied by him to be knowable. I know of no instance where Kant denies their existence or asserts that they can be known.

The same kind of doctrine is expressed throughout the *Analytic*. The categories apply only to appearances of things-in-themselves and not to things as they are in themselves. In abstraction from what is given in sensible intuition, the categories have no object. This is quite obviously the case since the categories are the rules of subsumption; without subsumable appearances the categories are mere logical forms--without matter or an object. However, the Second Critique, with its doctrine of the intelligible world which may be thought, although not known, preserves, at least, the notion that even though empty, the categories still possess meaning. But in the First Critique the doctrine is consistently maintained that the categories in no sense apply to things-in-themselves, i.e., that without the sensibly given appearance they are empty logical forms. As Kant puts it in the Schematism:

We conclude that the categories in their pure significance, apart from all conditions of sensibility, ought to apply to things in general, as they are, and not, like the schemata, repre-

sent them only as they appear. They . . . ought to possess a meaning independent of all schemata.⁷

But Kant goes on to say that although this ought to be the case, if we consider a category apart from its schema (apart from its connection with what is given in sensible intuition) this, then, would be a representation which could be put to no use. "The categories, therefore," Kant says, "without schemata, are merely functions of the understanding for concepts; and they represent no object."⁸ To think that the categories apply to objects which are not given in sensible intuition is to become entwined in a transcendental illusion, the subject of the Dialectic.

Both the Transcendental Dialectic and the Amphiboly of the Concepts of Reflection are to some extent structured on the distinction between appearances and things-in-themselves. The position of the dogmatic rationalists that concepts are objectively valid and that we therefore have the right to transfer to objects whatever is true of the corresponding concepts is based on the view that the objects of knowledge are not phenomenal but, rather, things-in-themselves. Kant's argument against Leibniz in the Amphiboly rests on the fundamental thesis that only the employment of the understanding in conjunction with a given sensation yields a determinate object. Neither intuitions nor

⁷Kant, Pure Reason, p. 186 (A147-B186).

⁸Ibid., p. 187 (A147-B187).

concepts alone are sufficient; human understanding knows its objects discursively through categories, yet the employment of the categories presupposes a sensible given in intuition. The known objects are phenomenal things and not things-in-themselves. Thus, the doctrine of the unknowable character of the thing-in-itself provides arguments against the claims of the rationalists, particularly of the Leibnizian caste (it is helpful in this context to think of the monad as noumenon in Kant's positive sense). In fact, one of the fundamental principles of the Leibnizian philosophy, the Identity of Indiscernibles, is tenable only on the assumption that appearances are things-in-themselves. However, given the Kantian teaching that human perception is sensible and not intellectual, the principle becomes false, since location in time and place then become sufficient conditions for distinguishing things.

Throughout the Critique of Pure Reason we thus have the position that from the theoretical point of view things-in-themselves, in that they are not objects of our sensible intuition, are unknowable. To assert that human intuition is intelligible and that therefore concepts apply to noumenal things, or to take appearances for things-in-themselves, is to fall into the illusions of the dogmatists. However, it is not inconsistent to assert that things-in-themselves exist although they are unknowable (although perhaps thinkable). Kant is led to this position

by having to account for appearances as such. And appearances imply the existence of that of which they are appearances. As Kant puts it:

At the same time, if we entitle certain objects, as appearances, sensible entities (phenomena), then since we thus distinguish the mode in which we intuit them from the nature that belongs to them in themselves, it is implied in this distinction that we place the latter, considered in their own nature, although we do not so intuit them . . . in opposition to the former, and that in so doing we entitle them intelligible entities (noumena).⁹

Appearances are only representations of things which are unknown as regards what they may be in themselves.¹⁰

So much, then, for a preliminary look at the thing-in-itself in the First Critique. Let us now begin to direct our attention to the relationships between the form of an object or thing of sense and the thing-in-itself.

In the Third Moment of the Analytic of the Beautiful Kant remarks that "the purity . . . of colors and tones . . . [makes the form of objects of sense] more clearly, definitely and completely intuitable."¹¹ Thus the form of an object of sense is intuitable; it may be perceived. In the general Remark on the First Section of the Analytic, already quoted at length,¹² we read that the imagination in

⁹Ibid., pp. 266-267 (B306).

¹⁰Ibid., p. 173 (B164).

¹¹Kant, Judgment (Meredith), p. 68.

¹²Supra, pp. 78-79.

the apprehension of an object of sense (a phenomenal "thing") is tied down to the form of that object and that the object supplies to the imagination a determinate form (the same form which the imagination would project freely in harmony with rules). It has been remarked, for example by H.J. Paton, that the whole of the Critique of Pure Reason "may be described as an analysis of our experience into its formal and material elements."¹³ When one speaks of the formal element in Kant's philosophy, one usually means either the forms of human sensibility, space and time, under which objects or things appear to us, or the forms of thought, i.e., the pure concepts of the understanding. But this notion of an intuitable form is, quite obviously, a different kind of form and, I think, a much overlooked kind of form in the Critical Philosophy. This kind of form is the form which we have discussed in the preceding chapters--that is, figure and play (as the form of objects of sense). Kant certainly has a great deal to say about it in the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment. However, he does not neglect mentioning it in the First Critique although of the six major commentators in English upon all or part of that work (Kemp-Smith, Ewing, Paton, H.W. Cassirer, Weldon and

¹³Paton, I, 138.

Wolff), only Paton explicitly notices Kant's remarks about "empirical form."¹⁴

In the Critique of Pure Reason Kant distinguishes between empirical and universal laws. Universal laws are imposed by the mind on objects. However, Kant states that no laws can be imposed "other than those which are involved in a nature in general, that is, in conformity to law of all appearances in space and time."¹⁵ Empirical laws are not due to the nature of the mind but "they are one and all subject to [the categories of the mind]."¹⁶ Kant states further that "to obtain any knowledge whatsoever of these empirical or special laws, we must resort to experience; but it is the a priori laws alone that instruct in regard to experience in general and as to what can be known as an object of experience."¹⁷ What Kant has in mind here may be seen by an example. It is an empirical law that "fire causes heat" while it is a universal law that "fire causes heat."¹⁸ The importance of this distinction between empirical and universal laws is that it brings out a distinction between particular determination and universal condition.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 140-143.

¹⁵Kant, Pure Reason, p. 173 (B165).

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸I am indebted for this example to Wolff, p. 181.

The particularity is not due to the understanding but to things. Moreover, this distinction begins to involve us with "empirical form":

Empirical laws, as such, can never derive their origin from pure understanding. That is as little possible as to understand completely the inexhaustible multiplicity of appearances merely by reference to the pure form of sensible intuition. But all empirical laws are only special determinations of the pure laws of understanding, under which, and according to the norm of which, they first become possible. Through them appearances take on an orderly character, just as these same appearances, despite the differences of their empirical form (unerachtet der Verschiedenheit ihrer empirischen Form), must none the less also be in harmony with the pure form of sensibility.

Pure understanding is thus in the categories the law of the synthetic unity of all appearances, and thereby first and originally makes experience, as regards its form, possible.¹⁹

The two rather exciting phrases in this passage are "that it is as little possible as to understand completely the inexhaustible multiplicity of appearances merely by reference to the pure form of sensible intuition" and "these same appearances, despite the differences of their empirical form, must none the less also be in harmony with the pure form of sensible intuition." Certain objects or things (not things-in-themselves but phenomenal things) appear to us as triangular; others appear as squares or circles. Or, perhaps, we perceive decreasing size progressions of a particular shape. We shall concentrate for a moment on the triangles. Of things which appear to us as

¹⁹Kant, Pure Reason, pp. 148-149 (A127-128).

triangular, some appear large and some appear small. Things, then, appear to us in certain shapes and sizes of those shapes. If experience were a mere rhapsody of undifferentiated perceptions, a conglomeration of Humean atomic entities, how then would we account for one object appearing triangular and another appearing square? If Kant's task was one of indicating the elements out of which experience is constructed, rather than indicating the elements into which experience can be analyzed, then Kant would have to be read as taking over a kind of Humean psychology and then attempting to put these entities together into a whole which accounted for human experience. But as I have indicated I think that this is the wrong reading.²⁰ Kant does imply that experience is one of distinguishable objects and not a mere undifferentiated awareness of a rhapsody of perceptions.²¹ But if we did assume that Kant took over a psychology involving atomic entities then, I think, we would have to assume that the triangularity and squareness of objects was, in some, sense, imposed by the mind. This is certainly nonsense. Triangularity and squareness are particular determinations of objects. Triangularity and squareness are not imposed because particular determinations are not imposed. The difference in shape between a square

²⁰Supra, pp. 54-56.

²¹Kant, Pure Reason, p. 193 (B195).

object and a triangular object must not, therefore, be due to our way of perceiving objects. Only universal conditions and forms may be said to be imposed upon what is given. If, therefore, particular determinations and differences among objects are not imposed, they must therefore be due to the objects or things themselves. "In an appearance the objects," Kant writes, "may even the properties we ascribe to them, are always regarded as something actually given."²² The difference between a square object and a triangular object is not imposed by the knowing subject because the knowing subject is responsible only for the universal conditions of objects or things and not their particular determinations. Thus the empirical form must be regarded as something actually given. The spatial and temporal relationships among sensations is a particular determination or aspect of phenomenal things, not due either to understanding or the faculty of sensibility but rather to things. A square object and a triangular object thus differ in their empirical form. To say this is to say, first, that when we perceive one of the objects what is given in sensation compels a synthesis of the given in the shape of either a triangle or square. This is the weight I attach to Kant's remark that imagination in the apprehension of an object of sense is tied down to the form of that object.

²²Kant, Pure Reason, p. 88 (B69), italics mine.

Second, and what I shall argue for next, is that the empirical form--the spatial and temporal relationships among sensations--is due to things as they are in themselves. In other words, phenomenal objects display a certain form because they are appearances of things-in-themselves. It is the case that things or objects are known only as they appear to us and that they appear to us in accordance with certain universal conditions. But to assert this is not to assert that every determination of an object is due to the knowing subject. The phenomenal object has certain characteristics, e.g., a specific empirical form. And the object or thing has a specific empirical form because it is the appearance of a thing-in-itself.

What is at stake here is a particular relationship between the thing-in-itself and the appearance of the thing-in-itself (the phenomenal object). The first aspect of this relationship is contained in the phrase "appearance of the thing-in-itself." It is the thing-in-itself which appears. Thus the thing-in-itself and the appearance are indistinguishable, at least numerically. The point here, of course, is that which comes under the forms of sensible intuition is the thing-in-itself. It is the thing-in-itself which appears and this is how we stand in relation to it, not as it is in itself.²³

²³This view has also been insisted on by H.J. Paton and Paul Henle. See Paton, I, 422 and Paul Henle, "The

But does the thing-in-itself cause the appearance? Here we must tread with the utmost caution. The difficulty in asserting that things-in-themselves cause appearances is the same difficulty, now being raised for the first time, in asserting that things-in-themselves exist. Kant, as I have pointed out,²⁴ asserts that things-in-themselves exist yet denies that they can be known. To deny that they can be known is to deny that the categories are applicable to things-in-themselves. But to assert that they exist seems to apply the categories of reality and existence to them. Kemp-Smith asserts that this is a conflict of which Kant seems to be unaware:

Kant . . . [holds] unquestioningly to the existence of things in themselves, and yet at the same time . . . [teaches] that they must not be conceived in terms of the categories, not even the categories of reality and existence.²⁵

With the assertion that the categories as such, and therefore by implication those of reality and existence, are inapplicable to things in themselves, he combines, without any apparent consciousness of conflict, the contention that things in themselves must none the less be postulated as actually existing.²⁶

Critique of Pure Reason Today," The Journal of Philosophy, LIX (April 26, 1962), 226-227. Perhaps the strongest statement Kant himself made of the numerical identity of the appearance and the thing-in-itself is that "the object is to be taken in a twofold sense, namely as appearance and as thing in itself." (Pure Reason, p. 28, Bxxvii.)

²⁴Supra, p. 96.

²⁵Kemp-Smith, p. 412.

²⁶Ibid., pp. 413-414.

To assert that things-in-themselves cause appearances would by the same token seem to apply the category of causality to things-in-themselves and thus yield the same criticism which Kemp-Smith brings out.

I do not think that there is any great difficulty present here in these so-called conflicts if we keep in mind that that which comes under the forms of sensible intuition is the thing-in-itself or, in other words, that every appearance is the appearance of a thing-in-itself. If we keep this relationship in mind, which indicates that the thing-in-itself is numerically indistinguishable from the appearance then, I think, the difficulties both with existence and causation readily disappear. The difficulties arise only if we view this relationship as one between two distinct entities, such that the thing-in-itself is one entity causing another entity, the appearance. Then it is necessary to explain, first, the existence of that which causes and, second, the causality of that which exists. But what we have here is really one thing considered in two ways--as it is apart from appearance and as it appears. Things-in-themselves exist since things-in-themselves are what appear to us. If there are appearances then there are things-in-themselves which appear. The thing-in-itself is known as it appears to us. Kant's point is that it is not known to us apart from its appearing or being brought under the forms of sensible intuition. I see no difficulty

whatsoever with this particular teaching and I think that it is certainly implied throughout the Critique of Pure Reason as well as by the notion of form as it occurs in the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment. The question of cause then becomes a somewhat bogus question. In a sense, though perhaps a rather metaphorical one, things-in-themselves cause appearances, but only if we want to say that when a thing-in-itself comes under the forms of intuition then the thing-in-itself has caused the appearance. And this seems difficult to say since we do not have two things here, but rather two "aspects" of the same thing. Certainly, if the notion of cause is involved here at all it is not the sense of cause we find in the proposition "fire causes heat." Rather, it would be more analogous to the sense of cause found in the proposition "the plastic is the cause of the tablecover" ~~where~~ the plastic and the tablecover are numerically indistinguishable. But I really do not think that cause need be introduced here at all. To assert merely that the thing-in-itself and the appearance are so related that the appearance is an appearance of the thing-in-itself seems to me to be quite sufficient and has the merit of avoiding the many problems introduced by the term "cause."

What this argument points to is that particular determinations of appearances or, what is the same, the spatial and temporal relationships among the sensations which constitute the appearance, are not due to our way of

perceiving objects but, on the contrary, are actually given. I think it should now be plain that the specific empirical form of an appearance is displayed because that appearance is an appearance of a specific thing-in-itself. Thus, what we have in the analysis of an aesthetic judgment is that the empirical form of the appearance, which is that ordering of the thing as it appears, is just that form or ordering which the imagination, in conformity with the rules of the understanding, would project freely.

My analysis of the relationship between appearances and things-in-themselves with the connected assertion that empirical form is just that way in which a thing-in-itself appears in experience stands against the ascription to Kant of the view that there are two entities, an appearance and a thing-in-itself, of which the former is effect and the latter cause, and that there is a possible inference from effect to specific cause. This view, which has been called "noumenalism" by one recent commentator,²⁷ may be suggested by some of Kant's statements about the relationship of appearances and things-in-themselves. For example, we have this statement from the Prolegomena:

I, on the contrary, say that things as objects of our senses existing outside us are given, but we know nothing of what they may be in themselves,

²⁷Graham Bird, Kant's Theory of Knowledge: An Outline of One Central Argument in the 'Critique of Pure Reason' (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962), p. 20.

knowing only their appearances, that is, the representations which they cause in us by affecting our senses.²⁸

presentations
our senses.²⁸ Kant uses it here, may suggest causation

between appearance and thing-in-itself on the order of efficient causation. This would be suggested only if we took the appearance and the thing-in-itself to be two numerically distinct entities. If, however, we deny their numerical distinctness, causation could only be on the order of material causation which, if we wish to speak of cause at all, would be the kind of cause indicated. That we ought not assert a relationship of efficient causation and that we ought reject any ascription of noumenalism to Kant is supported by parts of the *Amphiboly of the Concepts of Reflection*, discussed earlier,²⁹ and particular by Kant's refutations of idealism.

Kant's critics were fond of accusing him of merely reiterating certain of Leibniz's doctrines or, on the other hand, they drew a parallel between parts of the *Critical Philosophy* and either Berkelian or Cartesian idealism. Even so acute a critic as Schopenhauer accused Kant of suppressing, in the second edition of the Critique of Pure Reason, certain principles of Berkeley (e.g., "no object without a subject") which had to be maintained in the interests of

²⁸Kant, Prolegomena, p. 36.

²⁹Supra, pp. 97-98.

the internal consistency of the Critical Philosophy. In the main, Schopenhauer contended that Kant's position was far closer to Berkeley's than Kant himself realized or cared to admit.³⁰ However, the possibility of such confusion with Berkelian, as well as Cartesian idealism, was a real and quite evident possibility to Kant--so real, in fact, that in nine places within the Critical Philosophy we find explicit arguments against idealism in one or both forms.³¹ It was equally evident to Kant that he might be confused with Leibniz.³² To the end of distinguishing his position from that of Leibniz, Kant appended the Amphiboly of the Concepts of Reflection to the Analytic of the First Critique, which appendix constitutes a refutation of Leibnizian rationalism.

For our purposes it will suffice to look in detail at some aspects of Kant's refutation of Cartesian idealism.

³⁰See especially Schopenhauer's discussion in The World as Will and Representation, trans. E.F.J. Payne (2 vols.; Indian Hills, Colorado: Falcon's Wing Press, 1958), I, 434-435 and 446-447.

³¹Critique of Pure Reason: A366ff (The Fourth Paralogism); B69-77; B274-279; B291-294; Bxxxix-xl, note. Prolegomena: Section 13; Section 49; Appendix II. Sieben kleine Aufsätze aus den Jahren 1788-91: No. 3, "Widerlegung des problematische Idealismus," Werke, ed. E. Cassirer (11 vols.; Berlin: Bruno Cassirer, 1922), IV, 522-524.

³²And, in fact, he was, by one Herr Eberhard. Kant wrote a separate article against Eberhard entitled "On an Alleged Discovery Showing all the Recent Criticisms of Pure Reason to have been Superfluous." The "alleged discovery" was, in sum, that everything Kant said was anticipated by Leibniz.

Our purpose, it will be remembered, is to reject any ascription of noumenalism to Kant and to reject the relationship of efficient cause between the thing-in-itself and the appearance.

In the "Sixth Meditation," Descartes attempts to deduce the existence of material things from the presence of certain given perceptions. This attempt is well known; I shall merely briefly summarize it.

Descartes asserts that "there is . . . in me a certain passive faculty of perception, that is, of receiving and recognizing the ideas of sensible things."³³ A "passive faculty" is one which does not produce the ideas of sensible things; it merely receives and recognizes them. Further, this faculty is such that it cannot help perceive the ideas of sensible things when they are present. The meaning of a "faculty of perception" is clarified by a point or two of terminology. Descartes recognizes two general modes of thought, one of which, the perception of the understanding, includes sense perception, imagining and conceiving (which are simply called modes of thought).³⁴ The other general mode of thought is the action of the will, which need not delay us. Sense perception, as a faculty of perception, is

³³René Descartes, Meditations on First Philosophy in The Philosophical Works of Descartes, trans. E.S. Haldane and G.R.T. Ross (2 vols.; 2d ed. rev.; New York: Dover, 1955), I, 191.

³⁴Ibid., The Principles of Philosophy, I, 232.

that which is our concern. A "faculty of perception," then, is one of those specific modes of that general mode of thought called the perception of the understanding. More specifically, a "passive faculty of perception" would presumably be the faculty of sense perception and it is from the ideas apprehended by this mode of thought that Descartes attempts to "derive some certain proof of the existence of corporeal things."³⁵

Descartes asserts next that "this [faculty of perception] would be useless to me . . . if there were not either in me or in some other thing another active faculty capable of forming and producing these ideas."³⁶ In other words, what Descartes postulates is an active faculty productive of the ideas received by the faculty of perception. Descartes then argues that the active faculty is not in the individual. His argument has two parts.

First, the individual is a thing whose essential attribute is thought. The active faculty which produces the ideas of sensible things does not presuppose thought; that is, thought is not logically prior to the production of the ideas of sensible things. If the active faculty were in the individual, and since the essential attribute of the indi-

³⁵Ibid., Meditations, I, 187.

³⁶Ibid., p. 191.

vidual is thought, then thought would be logically prior to the production of the ideas of sensible things.

Second, the ideas of sensible things are often produced in the individual without the individual contributing to them and often against the will of the individual. Thus, Descartes writes:

It is thus necessarily the case that the faculty resides in some substance different from me in which all the reality which is objectively in the ideas that are produced by this faculty is formally or eminently contained."³⁷

The three possibilities of a "substance different from me" are material objects, God, or something "more noble" than material objects. The last two possibilities are eliminated by Descartes' consideration that if it were the case that God or some thing "more noble" than material objects produced the ideas of material objects then, since God has given the individual "a very great inclination to believe that [these ideas] are conveyed . . . by corporeal objects,"³⁸ it would be concluded that God was a deceiver. But God is not a deceiver (argued for in earlier "Meditations"). Therefore, the active faculty for the production of the ideas of material things resides within material things; hence we must allow that they exist.

So much, then, for a summary of Descartes' well-known

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid.

deduction of the existence of material things. Central in this deduction is the element of inference from an effect (ideas of material things or appearances) to a supposed cause (material things themselves). It is this element of inference which Kant attacks and which, for Kant, makes the Cartesian deduction so uncertain. But although Kant does attack the inference, he argues for the absolute certainty of the existence of external objects. In his attack upon the inference I think we find strong suggestions that Kant regarded things-in-themselves as analogous to material causes. In Kant's argument for the existence of external things I think we find suggestions which support our view of the relationship of the thing-in-itself and the appearance.

Although Descartes seems to think that he has offered a demonstration for the existence of material objects, Kant argues that "the existence of that which can only be inferred as a cause of given perceptions has a merely doubtful existence."³⁹ The Cartesian position is that one does not immediately perceive external things; rather, one has only "inner perceptions" or ideas of material objects which one takes to be the effect of some external cause. What is immediately perceived is the idea, not the material object; the object is inferred from the presence of the idea.

³⁹Kant, Pure Reason, p. 344 (A366).

Descartes eliminated as possible cause of the idea both the perceiver and God and was thus left with material objects as the cause. Kant, however, maintains that this is not at all certain; that even if God and the perceiver are eliminated as possible causes of the idea, the cause of the idea is not necessarily material objects. A passage from the Fourth Paralogism expresses this view:

Now the inference from a given effect to a determinate cause is always uncertain, since the effect may be due to more than one cause. Accordingly, as regards the relation of the perception to its cause, it always remains doubtful whether the cause be internal or external; whether, that is to say, all the so-called outer perceptions are not a mere play of our inner sense, or whether they stand in relation to actual external objects as their cause. At all events, the existence of the latter is only inferred, and open to all the dangers of inference.⁴⁰

On the basis of this argument I fail to see how it could be maintained that Kant's assertion that the thing-in-itself causes a representation in us by affecting our senses could be causation in the sense of efficient causation. Efficient causation, as apart from material causation, requires two numerically distinct entities; Kant could hardly argue that Descartes' deduction was a doubtful one and at the same time maintain that the existence of things-in-themselves rested on the fact that they caused appearances. On the contrary, we are directly acquainted, on Kant's view, with the appearances of things-in-them-

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 345 (A368).

selves. These appearances are for us objects or things--but things or objects as they appear. There is no suggestion here of causation of the efficient kind but, I think, a strong suggestion of something very much like material causation--if, indeed, as pointed out before, we need introduce this concept at all. Kant never wavers in his claim that things-in-themselves exist and never asserts that they exist on the grounds of an inference from their appearance. This seems to me to rule out efficient causation and add weight to our view that it is the thing-in-itself which, to human sensibility, constitutes sensation or appearance in general.

Kant maintains, therefore, that what must be shown is that we have direct experience of things as they appear, not mediate; this, he says, "cannot be achieved save by proof that even our inner experience, which for Descartes is indubitable, is possible only on the assumption of outer experience."⁴¹ What Kant hopes to demonstrate is that the mental contents we have of objects or things are mental contents of actual appearances of things-in-themselves, or that there are phenomenal objects to which we refer our mental contents. This can be done by demonstrating this thesis:

The mere, but empirically determined, con-

⁴¹Ibid., p. 244 (B275).

sciousness of my own existence proves the existence of objects in space outside me.⁴²

Now an object or thing, as I have pointed out, is for Kant a phenomenal object or an appearance of a thing-in-itself. Moreover, since Kant wishes to demonstrate the existence of objects in space, the object is the phenomenal object, since space is not a property belonging to things as they are in themselves. Thus, the thesis should read: "The empirically determined consciousness of my own existence proves the existence of phenomenal objects, or things as they appear." This, of course, is foreign to Descartes. For Descartes, the only immediate experience was inner experience, such as the experience of our own ideas and thoughts, from which the existence of material objects or things could be inferred as the cause of some of that inner experience. What Kant wishes to show is that the immediate experience of appearances of things-in-themselves makes possible consciousness of my own existence in time. Let us look at his proof and then relate it to our view of the relationship of appearances and things-in-themselves.

Kant begins his proof with this premiss:

I am conscious of my own existence as determined in time.⁴³

In other words, I am conscious of a succession of

⁴²Ibid., p. 245 (B275).

⁴³Ibid.

feelings, thoughts, aversions, desires, etc., and have consciousness, therefore, of my existence determined in time.

All determination of time presupposes something permanent in perception.⁴⁴

A succession of my ideas, thoughts, feelings, etc., is logically posterior to some permanent in perception. Logically prior to change is something constant against which change occurs and which assures that the change will be perceived. There must be something unchanging by means of which change in time may be perceived.

But this permanent [in perception] cannot be an intuition in me.⁴⁵

That is, the permanent cannot be one of my mental contents, since mental contents (or representations in general) are those whose place in the succession is to be determined.

Thus perception of this permanent is possible only through a thing outside me and not through the mere representation of a thing outside me; and consequently the determination of my existence in time is possible only through the existence of actual things which I perceive outside me.⁴⁶

That is, there are actual things to which are referred my changing mental contents.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 34 (Bxxxix), note a.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 245 (B275-276).

The consciousness of my existence is at the same time an immediate consciousness of the existence of other things outside me.⁴⁷

This follows without difficulty.

Kant maintains, and I think that he is correct, that he has turned the game played by the idealism of Descartes against itself. Whereas Descartes attempted to show that the existence of objects or things was dependent upon an inference from immediate inner experience, Kant, beginning with the same premiss, showed that inner experience is not possible unless we have immediate consciousness of things or objects. Experience of objects is, for Kant, immediate, not mediated, as Descartes thought, by an idea "produced by" the object. Further, inner experience is not immediate as Descartes thought, but possible only mediately through the experience of actual objects (and not mere ideas of them); the consciousness of one's own existence in time is possible only in respect of actual things.

Kant's arguments against Cartesian idealism support the view of the real existence of appearances of things-in-themselves of which we are directly aware. Things or objects, as appearances of things-in-themselves, are basically real entities. Kant's rejection of the kind of inference process required by the Cartesian deduction strongly suggests that he would reject as well the view that the

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 245 (B276).

existence of things-in-themselves could be inferred from the immediate awareness of phenomenal objects. Additionally, I think that this suggestion would rule out the possibility that Kant is asserting the existence of two numerically distinct entities. On the contrary, there is but one entity, knowable as it appears.

Let us return to our example of two objects, one square, the other triangular. What we have here are two objects, known through sense, differing in shape. I believe that the following assertions would be rejected by Kant.

1) Experience is composed of atomic entities upon which are imposed the forms of space and time. Thus the difference in shape is due to the way in which we perceive objects.

2) The existence of objects is inferred from the existence of the ideas we have of those objects.

3) The existence of the thing-in-itself is inferred from the existence of the appearance of the thing-in-itself.

The following assertions are, I think, accepted by Kant.

1) Experience is analyzable into matter and form. We may speak of both the categories and space and time as forms. The matter of experience is sensations.

2) The difference between a square object and a triangular object is a difference in empirical form. The

empirical form is the spatial and temporal relationships among sensations. Thus, empirical form is given along with sensations. Such qualities as size and shape are given.

3) Sensations possessing spatial and temporal relationships are, to us, the appearance of a thing-in-itself.

4) Sensations possessing spatial and temporal relationships are numerically indistinct from the thing-in-itself.

5) Sensations possessing spatial and temporal relationships are to us immediately known objects or things, upon the real existence of which rests the consciousness of my own existence as determined in time.

6) The forms of sensible intuition account for the fact of perception; empirical form accounts for the differences among that which is in fact perceived.

7) An object or thing of sense is judged to be a beautiful thing if the appearance of the thing-in-itself is just that appearance which imagination would freely project in harmony with the cognitive rules (a free conformity to law of the imagination). Thus, aesthetic experience involves an awareness of the noumenal world in so far as it affects us and apart from our active organizing of the content of experience.

We have now considered the most important characteristics and relationships of the notion of form. Our next

task, taken up in the following chapter, will be to consider in more depth the aesthetic judgment, as formal, and its connections with both natural beauty and sublimity and works of art in general. In other words, we are now in a position to investigate Kant's theory of art and its reliance upon the central notion of form.

CHAPTER V

FORM AND KANT'S THEORY OF ART

What we have seen so far concerning Kant's aesthetics and its involvement with the notion of form may seem to give his aesthetics an over intellectual and perhaps even sterile flavor. To associate the aesthetic judgment with the functioning of the imagination and understanding and with the notion of the noumenal world, involving us, as it did, with the complexities and obscurities of certain crucial teachings of the Critique of Pure Reason, might suggest that Kant, enchanted with the architectonic of the Critical Philosophy, has given us an unduly difficult and perhaps unrealistic account or empirically doubtful account of aesthetic experience. But we must remember that Kant's task was to give as thoroughgoing analysis possible of the aesthetic judgment; this kind of judgment, in that it is reflective and opposed to the determinant judgment, involved him in distinguishing a critique of aesthetic judgment from a critique of logical judgment. Because Kant drew this distinction and set one kind of judgment against the other, we could not avoid his discussions in the theoretical work. However, those aspects of Kant's aesthetics which

have involved us in the deductions of the categories and the status and function of the thing-in-itself should not blind us to the fact that Kant's Critique of Aesthetic Judgment is the work of an individual who was himself quite capable of aesthetic experience and receptive to that experience in other men. The Critique of Aesthetic Judgment is more than the crowning phase of the Critical Philosophy. It possesses more than architectonic importance.

The notion of form, as figure and play, is, I think, the most important notion within the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment. To this point I have attempted to explain its epistemological and metaphysical involvements, as well as its key relevance in the analysis of aesthetic judgments. But the explanation of form is incomplete without considering its relevance to Kant's theory of art, in somewhat greater detail than we have done to this point. The discussions in this chapter shall do this, as well as add completeness to some of our discussions in preceding chapters.

Kant, as we saw in the second chapter,¹ divides aesthetic judgments into empirical and pure. This distinction rested upon whether the source of pleasure was mere agreeable sensations or, in the case of the pure aesthetic judgment, the form of the sensations. This division in the activity of judgment carries over into the division of

¹Supra, p. 11.

aesthetic art. The basis of this distinction is stated in this way:

The description 'agreeable art' applies where the end of the art is that the pleasure should accompany the representation considered as mere sensations, the description 'fine art' where it is to accompany them considered as modes of cognition.²

This passage points to our considerations in the second and third chapters. The standard of fine art is not mere sensation but the form of the synthesis of the manifold of sensations in the imagination. In discussing Kant's theory of art we will thus be discussing his theory of fine art which, unlike agreeable art, involves the notion of form.

In the second chapter in our initial attempts to understand the meaning of the notion of form, we became involved in a discussion of the kinds of fine art which Kant recognizes. We saw there that there are formative arts and the arts of the beautiful play of sensations. The former includes the arts of sensuous truth or plastic art (sculpture and architecture) and the arts of sensuous semblance or painting (painting proper and landscape gardening). The latter includes the arts of the artificial play of sensations of hearing (music) and the artificial play of sensations of sight (the art of color). A third kind of fine art is the art of speech, which includes rhetoric and poetry.

²Kant, Judgment (Meredith), p. 165.

This division of the fine arts may, for the purposes of clarity, be set out in this way:

- I. Formative Arts.
 - A. The arts of sensuous truth (plastic art).
 - 1. Sculpture.
 - 2. Architecture.
 - B. The arts of sensuous semblance (painting).
 - 1. Painting proper.
 - 2. Landscape gardening.
- II. The Arts of the Beautiful Play of Sensations.
 - A. The arts of the beautiful play of sensations of hearing (music).
 - B. The arts of the beautiful play of sensations of sight (the art of color).
- III. The Arts of Speech.
 - A. Rhetoric.
 - B. Poetry.

Kant realizes that this division of the fine arts is merely one of a number of possible divisions which could be made. In fact, in the Anthropology From A Pragmatic Viewpoint, we discover that creative works of art are all called poetry in sensu lato. Poetry in sensu lato includes painting proper (a formative art of semblance), landscape gardening (a formative art of semblance), the art of music (a play of sensations of hearing), architecture (a formative art of truth), rhetoric (speech) and the art of making poems (poetica in sensu stricto).³

Far more important than the actual division of the fine arts which, as the contrast of passages from the

³Kant, Analytic of the Beautiful from the 'Critique of Judgment' with excerpts from 'Anthropology from a Pragmatic Viewpoint, Second Book,' trans. Walter Cerf (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1963), p. 73.

Critique of Aesthetic Judgment and the Anthropology indicates, is quite arbitrary, is the rationale or basis of the divisions. According to Kant, beauty is the expression of aesthetic ideas. The way in which an aesthetic idea is expressed provides Kant with the division of the fine arts as set out in the Third Critique. Thus, for example, a formative art, being an art either of sensuous truth or sensuous semblance, expresses ideas in sensible intuition; the arts of the beautiful play of sensations expresses aesthetic ideas in those plays of sensations of hearing and sight. It is this notion of an aesthetic idea, its production and expression, and its involvement with the notion of form as figure and play, which provides us with the initial key to Kant's theory of art.

The Critique of Pure Reason teaches that an idea is "a necessary concept of reason to which no corresponding object can be given in sense experience."⁴ Such ideas are called the ideas of pure reason or rational ideas. Their unavoidable objective employment is transcendent and produces that illusion which is the subject of the Transcendental Dialectic. To say that their objective employment is transcendent means that there is no sensible intuition or imaginative sense content of which that concept which is the rational idea is valid. No sensible intuition is

⁴Kant, Pure Reason, p. 318 (A327-B383).

adequate to the idea. Thus, a rational idea, as spelled out in the First Critique, is a concept to which no sensible intuition is adequate.

The Critique of Aesthetic Judgment introduces the notion of an aesthetic idea. An aesthetic idea is not a concept at all; rather, it is a representation of the imagination or, what is the same, a sensible intuition, to which no concept is adequate. As Kant puts it:

By an aesthetic idea I mean that representation of the imagination which induces much thought, yet without the possibility of any definite thought whatsoever, i.e., concept, being adequate to it. . . . It is easily seen that an aesthetic idea is the counterpart (pendant) of a rational idea, which, conversely, is a concept, to which no intuition (representation of the imagination) can be adequate.⁵

And a few pages later Kant writes:

In a word, the aesthetic idea is a representation of the imagination, annexed to a given concept, with which, in the free employment of imagination, such a multiplicity of partial representations are bound up, that no expression indicating a definite concept can be found for it--one which on that account allows a concept to be supplemented in thought by much that is indefinable in words, and the feeling of which quickens the cognitive faculties, and with language, as a mere thing of the letter, binds up the spirit (soul) also.⁶

These representations of the imagination to which no concept is adequate are produced. In so far as we are concerned with the production of aesthetic ideas we must be

⁵Kant, Judgment (Meredith), pp. 175-176.

⁶Ibid., p. 179.

concerned with Kant's discussion of genius as the faculty of aesthetic ideas. These discussions, although couched in the rather difficult terminology of the Critical Philosophy indicate, as I shall attempt to show, certain rather crucial truths concerning both the production and the estimation of works of fine art.

Fine art, or the art which pleases by virtue of the form exhibited by a manifold of sensations in the imagination is, according to Kant, a product of genius. Genius, says Kant, is an "innate productive faculty," an "innate mental aptitude (ingenium) through which nature gives the rule to art."⁷ Nature, as Kant speaks of it here, is the "nature of the individual" which "gives the rule to art (as the production of the beautiful)."⁸ Or, cast in a slightly different way, "nature in the individual (and by virtue of the harmony of his faculties) must give the rule to art, i.e. fine art is only possible as a product of genius."⁹

Two rather important points are suggested by this preliminary look at the notion of genius as that which produces aesthetic ideas. First, the nature of the individual which constitutes genius involves the harmony of his

⁷Ibid., p. 168.

⁸Ibid., p. 212.

⁹Ibid., p. 168.

faculties. Kant explicitly states that "the mental powers whose union in a certain relation constitutes genius are imagination and understanding."¹⁰ We must look more closely into this. Second, the production of aesthetic ideas suggests an original spontaneity which would place Kant's theory of art in opposition to some versions of imitation-alism. We shall see more fully that this is indeed the case.

As soon as we begin to consider genius as a nature of the individual in which the faculties of imagination and understanding are in a certain relation we realize that we are on somewhat new ground. We have so far considered the pure aesthetic judgment, or judgment of taste, in which we were concerned with explaining Kant's teachings concerning the estimation of a work of art. We saw that the crucial notion was that of a certain pleasure resulting from the harmony of the cognitive faculties in the presentation of a work of fine art. If the form of the work of art was such that an analogue could be found for it in the faculty of rules, then that work of art was judged beautiful. Our concern, then, was with Kant's analysis of taste. "For estimating beautiful objects," Kant writes, "what is required is taste."¹¹ But we are now on new ground. For "the

¹⁰Ibid., p. 179.

¹¹Ibid., p. 172.

production of [beautiful objects], one needs genius."¹² We thus move from the consideration of the harmony of the cognitive faculties of the perceiver of the work of art to the relation of the cognitive faculties of the producer of the work of fine art. "Taste," says Kant, "is . . . merely a critical, not a productive faculty."¹³ For the production of a work of art, genius is necessary. Or, in other words, for the production of a work of fine art, a certain relation of the faculties of imagination and understanding of the artist is necessary.

Now it strikes me that this relation of imagination and understanding in the artist must be such a harmony of those faculties as the work of art itself, when estimated through a judgment of taste, arouses in the perceiver of that work of art. Moreover, I think that the crucial difference between the harmony of the cognitive faculties of the creator and the critic must lie in the element of spontaneity or originality in the play of the imagination of the artist. This would account for our calling a work of art "original"; in other words, the artist endows his product with new, original forms. In our estimation of that work of art we sense that those forms are original--that our imagination has not heretofore been aroused to

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid., p. 174.

precisely that free conformity to conceptual analogues. What the truly creative artist accomplishes, then, is the production of certain relations among sensations, that is, intuitions possessing forms, which are analogues of indefinite thoughts or concepts, and for which, as such, no definite thought or concept is adequate. The artist in the production of aesthetic ideas (those representations of the imagination possessing figure and play) is at the same time finding original and new aesthetic ideas, new sensible intuitions, which are exhibitions of indefinite thoughts or concepts. This is what we might call creative intuition.

Kant writes:

It may be seen that genius properly consists in the happy relation, which science cannot teach nor industry learn, enabling one to find out ideas for a given concept, and, besides, to hit upon the expression for them--the expression by means of which the subjective mental condition induced by the ideas as the concomitant of a concept may be communicated to others.¹⁴

The artist, then, is the originator of new possible relations among sensations, new forms, which are concomitants or analogues of indefinite thoughts or concepts. He is the originator of new imaginative contents. But this is not enough. The artist must also hit upon the proper expression for those aesthetic ideas; that is, he must hit upon that expression of them which will permit the harmony of his imagination and understanding to be aroused within

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 179-180.

the perceiver of his work of art--he must, in other words, find the best way to communicate his intuition. We may thus quite easily see the rationale for the division of the fine arts. Since beauty is the expression of aesthetic ideas, the way in which those ideas are expressed supplies Kant nicely with his rationale.

The second point we raised above was that aesthetic ideas suggest an original spontaneity on the part of the truly creative artist. Kant, in my estimation, is attempting to explain what seems to me to be an indisputable characteristic of our aesthetic experience, namely, that we find certain works of art new, original and refreshing. How often have we left the museum or concert hall with just these appellations for a new work? And, conversely, how often have we left with the opposite estimation? Kant's point is that creative genius or creative intuition cannot be taught or learned--it is a spontaneity, a discovery of new forms. Beethoven did not learn the forms of the Ninth Symphony nor Michelangelo the forms of the Sistine Chapel. No observance of past rule, no imitation of this or that canon could have brought about these expressions of genius. And they are just that: productions of genius--productions stemming from the nature of the individual, from the new

and undesigned harmony of form and concept. As Kant puts it:

The unsought and undesigned subjective finality in the free harmonizing of the imagination with the understanding's conformity to law presupposes a proportion and accord between these faculties such as cannot be brought about by any observance of rules, whether of science or mechanical imitation, but can only be produced by the nature of the individual.¹⁵

At this point our considerations in the fourth chapter concerning the notion of form and things-in-themselves begin, I think, to take on new meaning. We saw in that chapter that the form of an appearance is that particular form because that appearance is an appearance of a thing as it is in itself. The form of an appearance, which is that ordering of the thing as it appears, is just that form or ordering of sensations which the imagination, in conformity with the rules of the understanding, would project freely.¹⁶ The suggestion in the fourth chapter was that aesthetic experience is a window, so to speak, into the noumenal world. Our approach there was from the standpoint of the explanation of the judgment of taste and, thus, from the standpoint of the estimation of works of art and not specifically their production. However, I think that in our present considerations upon the production of art objects, we

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 180-181.

¹⁶Supra, p. 109.

may see an equally important illustration of the relation between form and the noumenal world.

In the Dialectic of Aesthetic Judgment Kant spells out the meaning of the "supersensible"¹⁷ in three ways:

Firstly, there is the supersensible in general, without further determination, as substrate of nature; secondly, this same supersensible as principle of the subjective finality of nature for our cognitive faculties; thirdly, the same supersensible again, as principle of the ends of freedom, and principle of the common accord of these ends with freedom in the moral sphere.¹⁸

What could this mean to speak of the supersensible (as the thing-in-itself) as the principle for the subjective finality of nature for our cognitive faculties?¹⁹ It was pointed out in chapter three²⁰ that the judgment of taste was a universal judgment; its universality rested upon the assumption of a common sense. But, nevertheless, the judgment of taste remained subjective, not objective and cognitive, because the object of sense judged beautiful

¹⁷I take "supersensible" to be the same thing as noumenon in the negative sense, that is, a thing so far as it is not an object of our sensible intuition, rather than noumenon in the positive sense, that is, as an object of a non-sensible intuition. The very term "supersensible" itself suggests, I think, that we ought take it as noumenon in the negative sense.

¹⁸Kant, Judgment (Meredith), p. 215.

¹⁹Kant specifically remarks ibid., p. 213, that the "sensible, . . . rest[s] upon something supersensible (the intelligible substrate of external and internal nature) as the thing-in-itself."

²⁰Supra, p. 84.

was not, in that judgment, subsumed under a concept of the understanding. However, the universality and hence the necessity of the judgment of taste must, Kant thinks, rest upon some concept, but not a concept which provides knowledge of the object being estimated. What kind of a concept is this? Kant tells us in this passage:

The mere pure rational concept of the supersensible lying at the basis of the object (and of the judging Subject for that matter) as object of sense, and thus as phenomenon, is just such a concept.²¹

Universality and necessity can be postulated of the judgment of taste because the object of sense which is judged is the thing-in-itself as it appears. Certain characteristics of appearing things, namely, their size, shape, design, delineation or, in a word, the characteristic which we have called empirical form, are determinations not due to our mode of perceiving those things, but are particular determinations which are due to the things themselves. It is this form, in so far as it is exhibited by an imaginative sense content, which is in search of a universal, namely, an indeterminate analogue in the understanding. Kant's point here, I think, is that since the particular determinations (forms) of phenomenal objects are due to the fact that the phenomenal object is the appearance of a thing-in-itself, the judgment of taste, which is a judgment

²¹Kant, Judgment (Meredith), p. 207.

upon those particular determinations as analogues of rules, may be said to possess universality. Presumably, the reason for this is that given the presupposition of a common sense, those unchanging forms would provide the basis of the same judgment in all men who perceive those forms. In other words, if I judge object "x" to be beautiful, then I have felt a pleasurable sensation in the harmony of my cognitive faculties, a pleasurable sensation which ultimately rests upon the form of the object of sense. Since that form is not a determination dependent upon me, but upon things, I may assume that that same object possessing those same formal properties would lead as well to a harmony of your cognitive faculties. We may therefore assert that the judgment of taste is universal although, because no determinate concept of the understanding is involved, subjective nevertheless. Thus, by means of the concept of the thing-in-itself "underlying" the phenomenal object the judgment of taste "acquires . . . validity of everyone (but with each individual, no doubt, as a singular judgment immediately accompanying his intuition)." ²²

This, however, only takes into account the estimation of a beautiful object whereas we are more interested now in the production of beautiful objects. But we have, I think, received some direction here. In so far as estimation is

²²Ibid., p. 208.

concerned, the key is the notion of the supersensible "underlying" phenomenal objects; in so far as the production of the beautiful is concerned, the key is the indeterminate idea of the supersensible within us.

What, I think, Kant has in mind here is that the artist, as creative genius, captures that form or gives to his work of art that form, which serves to "quicken" the cognitive faculties into harmonious interplay. This he is able to accomplish only because genius consists in a certain happy relation of the cognitive faculties. This happy relation, which cannot be taught or learned, is that which leads to the production of aesthetic ideas, that is, ideas which are analogues of indeterminate concepts. In other words, the creative artist, in the production of aesthetic ideas, is attuning his imagination to accord with the faculty of concepts generally; the work of fine art is a sensible presentation of those ideas. Thus it is the very nature of the artist, explainable in terms of the relation of his imagination and understanding, which gives the rule to works of fine art. They are produced in accordance with his "nature." Now what Kant claims at this point, although I find it not altogether clear, is that the standard of fine art must be sought in the supersensible substrate of the artist's faculties and that the production of the accord of the faculties of understanding and imagination "is the ultimate end set by the intelligible basis of our

nature."²³ The best sense I can make out of this is, first, that the artist, as creative genius, is he who not only produces but expresses, in sensible products, forms which are windows into the supersensible substrate of being. Second, the natural endowments of the artist, as a particular relation of his cognitive faculties, are his supersensible nature--that is, his real, non-phenomenal self. This noumenal nature of the artist becomes manifest in his production of works of fine art. Third, and what I totally fail to understand, is that the accord of cognitive faculties is meant to be the case or, as Kant puts it, "the ultimate end set by the intelligible basis of our nature."

The net result of this is, I think, that we have seen Kant attempting to explain the familiar fact that there is something which we call artistic originality. Original spontaneity, the bringing of something new into the world, at least in the Kantian sense of exhibiting, through the formal properties of works of art, the noumenal substrate of the phenomenal world, does not yield itself to easy explanation. What I think Kant has indicated is that in matters of fine art, both in their estimation and production, there is no objective standard or rule to which we can appeal. The artist, in his productive capacity, follows no canon other than the subjective harmony of his cognitive

²³Ibid., p. 212.

faculties. Such a subjective harmony, or the harmony which brought about that work of art, suggests a certain nature of the artist--a certain supersensible nature. The perceiver of the work of art, in his estimation of it, has no objective rule to follow in his estimation, but only the subjective principle of the harmony of his cognitive faculties. As Kant himself puts it:

The subjective principle--that is to say, the indeterminate idea of the supersensible within us--can only be indicated as the unique key to the riddle of this faculty [of taste], itself concealed from us in its sources; and there is no means for making it any more intelligible.²⁴

Genius, however, merely accounts for the production of aesthetic ideas. To bring that idea into its best expression, into its most beautiful representation, taste must be coupled with genius. This aspect of the production of works of fine art points up to another aesthetic fact. We might express our attitude toward a new work of art by saying that it "possesses originality but is without taste." As Kant says: "In a would-be work of fine art we may frequently recognize genius without taste, and in others taste without genius."²⁵ What I think Kant means here is that it requires taste on the part of the artist to give to the aesthetic idea its best possible expression, to make manifest most adequately the form in the work of fine

²⁴Ibid., pp. 208-209.

²⁵Ibid., p. 175.

art. The artist, in other words, may have great ideas, yet not find the proper or most happy mode for their expression. The harmony of genius, as the original talent for fine art and that which, in fact, makes fine art possible, and taste, as the element of restraint upon the imaginative free swing of genius, is that harmony which produces the great works of art. Kant, then, is quite aware that great art requires not only the free inspiration of genius, but the hard labor of finding the best possible expression for that inspiration. On this I think that Kant is certainly correct. He reminds us of the combination of labor and inspiration in this passage:

It is not amiss, however, to remind the reader of this: that in all the free arts something of a compulsory character is still required, or, as it is called, a mechanism, without which the soul, which in art must be free, and which alone gives life to the work, would be bodyless and evanescent (e.g. in the poetic art there must be correctness and wealth of language, likewise prosody and metre). For not a few leaders of the newer school believe that the best way to promote a free art is to sweep away all restraint, and convert it from labour into mere play.²⁶

Except, perhaps, for the specific example used in connection with poetry, I believe that Kant's point is as valid today as it was over a century and a half ago.

So much, then, for the involvement of the notion of form with certain aspects of Kant's theory of art. Hopefully, this chapter has added some measure of completeness to

²⁶Ibid., p. 164.

the investigations of chapters three and four as well as pointing out that Kant's teachings, although put in the somewhat obscure terminology of the Critical Philosophy, indicate certain empirical truths concerning the estimation and production of works of fine art. I think it is the case that the production of works of fine art requires something like original spontaneity but yet, at the same time, requires a restriction to attain the finest expression. Moreover, it seems to me in aesthetic experience man is enabled to in some sense "see further"; to realize aspects of being in general which we are not able to realize in other ways. This is perhaps what Kant has in mind when he speaks of the supersensible in connection with the production of works of art, but I am not at all sure of this. And finally, I think that his account of creative genius is, in direction at least, probably not far from wrong. However, my concern is not so much with the truth of Kant's claims as with their explanation. I think it should suffice to say that Kant has brought to our attention meaningful suggestions concerning aesthetic experience and art in general--and for that reason they are important.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Our investigation into the notion of form in the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment and our consideration of that notion in juxtaposition with relevant parts of the Critique of Pure Reason has indicated that even though the determination of objects of experience is achieved by the subsumption of intuitions under concepts, a multiplicity of particular determinations is still possible consistently with the universal determinations of the objects of experience. This, I think, is a somewhat neglected aspect of Kant's philosophy which our investigation has emphasized. The doctrine of determinant judgments points to universals as necessary for the determination of objects as objects; however, the doctrine of determinant judgments does not account for the great variation in the particular qualities, characteristics or determinations of things. For the possibility of experience of objects as objects we must look to the doctrine of the categories; for the possibility of the particular determinations of objects we must look to the doctrine of empirical form.

In so far as our concern is Kant's aesthetic, our investigation has centered on an affinity between the forms of nature and our cognitive faculties. Certain forms of nature seem as if they are particularly well suited to bring about the harmony of our faculties. We thus suppose a certain subjective teleology between those forms and our faculties. When there is a pleasurable sensation resulting from the harmony of the form of that object of sense and the cognitive faculties, that object is judged to be a beautiful object of sense. Now we have no theoretical knowledge of the adaptation of these forms--we can only suppose that they are so fitted. We postulate this aesthetic teleology not with a view to greater understanding of the sensible object. Rather, we postulate it only in order to develop a satisfactory critique of beauty and to explain the feeling of beauty in the human mind.

However, not all natural forms adapted to our faculty of reflective judgment are beautiful forms. Rather, only those adapted in a special way may be judged beautiful. And, as we have seen, that special way is when the form of the object of sense agrees with the faculties engaged in its perception and produces that accord which is pleasurable. This pleasurable sensation is the subjective side of our awareness of objects. It is that subjective side which alone is important in the analysis of the reflective judgment of taste.

Moreover, not all objects which we judge to be beautiful are natural objects. What our investigation of form has not yet clearly indicated is the difference between beautiful natural objects and beautiful works of fine art. Yet the beauty of both hinges upon the notion of form. Whatever is beautiful pleases in the mere reflection upon its form.

Kant titles Section 45: "Fine art is an art, so far as it has at the same time the appearance of being nature."¹ The first paragraph of this section reads:

A product of fine art must be recognized to be art and not nature. Nevertheless the finality in its form must appear just as free from the constraint of arbitrary rules as if it were a product of mere nature. Upon this feeling of freedom in the play of our cognitive faculties--which play has at the same time to be final--rests that pleasure which alone is universally communicable to others without being based on concepts. Nature proved beautiful when it wore the appearance of art; and art can only be termed beautiful, where we are conscious of its being art, while yet it has the appearance of nature.²

A few pages later we find this remark:

A beauty of nature is a beautiful thing; beauty of art is a beautiful representation of a thing.³

I quote these passages and bring up the whole issue of the difference between natural beauty and the beauty of

¹Kant, Judgment (Meredith), p. 166.

²Ibid., pp. 166-167.

³Ibid., p. 172.

fine art because it strikes me that one thing we ought not attribute to Kant is the doctrine that fine art imitates nature, in the same sense of a piece of sculpture imitating (copying) the human form. The last passage cited above may seem to suggest imitationalism as does Kant's very direct remark that a "mere piece of sculpture, made simply to be looked at, . . . is, . . . a mere imitation of nature."⁴ The important qualification to be introduced here is that the artist, as creative genius, produces a work of art in accordance with the free play of his mental powers. He expresses aesthetic ideas. To express an aesthetic idea is to give form a specific sensuous embodiment; that is, the artist produces and expresses forms which are fitted for our taking them in. Such forms are exactly those same kinds of forms which, found in nature, are judged beautiful. The artist freely and spontaneously creates those forms which have the appearance of being natural forms, for they are forms which are final for our cognitive powers. In this sense, then, and only in this sense, does the artist imitate nature. In this sense, then, fine art has the appearance of being nature. Moreover, nature itself, in presenting to us forms, forms which seem as if some intelligence has produced or established them, and established them with a view toward our taking them in, therefore wears the

⁴Ibid., p. 187.

appearance of fine art. The crucial point is that genius is a creative faculty producing the same kinds of forms which nature freely presents to us--forms which lead to a subjective, pleasurable harmony of imagination and understanding. A piece of sculpture, then, may be an imitation of nature, but only in the sense that the sculpture expresses forms of the same kind as beautiful natural forms (or in the sense that the sculptor produces these forms). It is not an imitation of nature in the sense of being a copy of a thing found in nature. If it were, then the sculptor would have before him a definite rule, as a child tracing a design follows a definite rule. For the production of fine art, not imitation, but genius is necessary; this eliminates, I think, any ascription to Kant of a rudimentary imitationalism. Mere imitation, without critical judgment "result[s] in genius being stifled, and, with it, also the freedom of the imagination in its very conformity to law--a freedom without which fine art is not possible, nor even as much as a correct taste of one's own for estimating it."⁵

Genius, then, for the production of fine art and taste for its estimation; in both we see the crucial importance of form. In a sense, this doctrine of form suggests an aesthetic Copernican Revolution; the perceiver of a beautiful thing and its producer, if it is a work of fine

⁵Ibid., p. 226.

art, are placed at the center of the aesthetic situation, for Kant's concern is not with any property of an object, but fundamentally with the disposition of the cognitive faculties of producer and perceiver. The artist's originality and the perceiver's taste are the touchstones of the beautiful. But with this element of subjectivity, with this concern for the subject and not the object, Kant did not destroy universality in aesthetics. For as we have seen, subjective universality is, for Kant, not only possible but real and perhaps points to that kind of general validity in aesthetics which is the most for which we may hope.

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