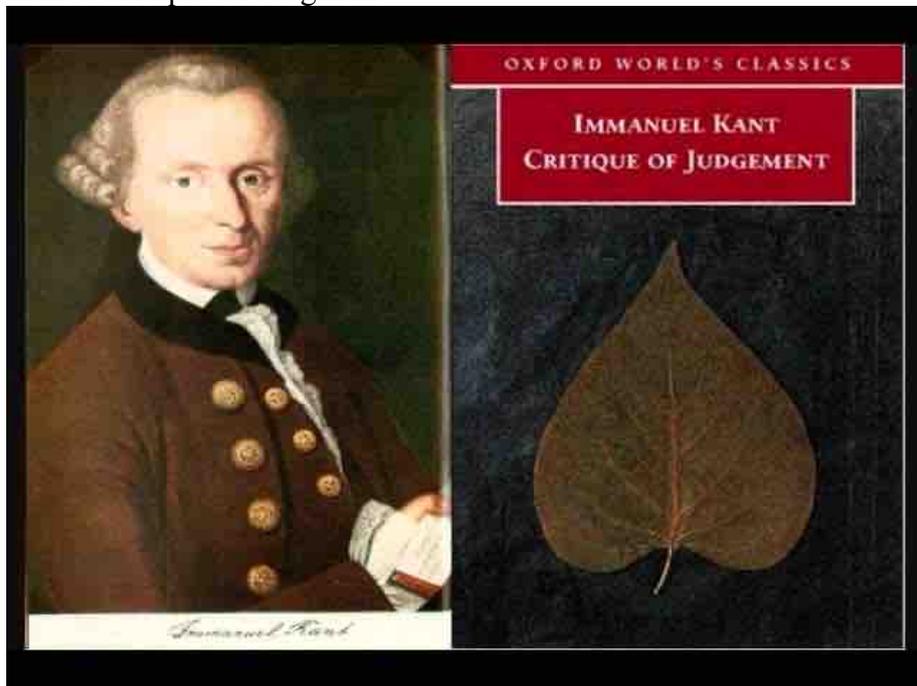


## Kant's Critique Of Judgment



Judgment has two functions therefore: determining and reflecting. Determining involves finding the right 'universal', that is concept or word for the situation at hand. Thus this function covers the choice of rule or aesthetic, that is, the metric of measurement. Reflective judgment is particularly relevant to the related activities of aesthetic choice and purposeful behaviour. It is the source of what Kant calls 'empirical concepts', that is, for my purposes, the range of aesthetic rules or metrics that one has at one's disposal.

Kant's ideas about beauty, although stimulating for my purposes, are not directly relevant to the issues of measurement. But his concept of the Sublime is. *"The experience of the sublime consists in a feeling of the superiority of our own power of reason, as a supersensible faculty, over nature."* The specific category of the 'mathematically sublime' appears especially important for empirical measurement.

My suggestion is that the mathematically sublime is the source of metrics, as both a range of alternatives and as a particular choice from among these. Metrics are not found in nature; they are imposed upon it. As far as we know, only human beings have this power of imposition. Things like numbers and metrics can't be considered as anything other than 'real', but their reality is the consequence of human reasoning not natural evolution. Sublimity strictly speaking *"is not contained in anything in nature, but only in our mind"*

In his previous critiques, Kant has analyzed the true (what can we know with certainty?) and the good (what ought I to do?), thereby addressing two members of Plato's holy trinity of good, the true, and the beautiful. In the third critique, Kant turns his attention to beauty, and in his analysis of aesthetics, he discerns a curious characteristic regarding the manner in which humans perceive and articulate aesthetic judgments: they regard their determinations of beauty as not merely expressions of personal taste, but as somehow binding for all people.

This recognition also raises the possibility of a 'morality of measurement'. If we inevitably impose our purposes on things measured, we have at least two moral responsibilities: to consider those purposes explicitly and to recognise that measurement is not a morally neutral or objective activity of inquiry. The aesthetic judgments involved in measurement are arguably the most significant and profound of any in science.

In a move that cements this work as one of inspired genius, Kant then applies his analysis of human judgment to the domain of teleology, arguing that our determinations that certain things are "for" some purpose is a judgment of the same faculty - an intersubjective judgment that is not merely our personal opinion.

This is where Kant's book got really exciting for me, and where I believe his work most anticipates systems theory. His analysis of things as functional wholes finds that objects of experience must be perceived as organic totalities in order to be perceived as purposive, and this strongly relates to how, for example, the biologist Stuart Kauffman explains self-organization as a driver of evolution. The point that Kauffman and many others make is that individual organisms do not merely evolve as individuals, their populations evolve as well, because selective pressures operate at multiple levels of analysis. The objects of nature that we regard as purposive do show qualities of emergence -

that is, behaviors that are irreducible to the sum of the individual acts of their component parts - and this phenomenon has been well described by many branches of science in the last fifty years.

Kant concludes the critique with a long "appendix" on theology which I found completely without value, and one of the most boring things I've encountered in his entire corpus.

Most people will probably have heard of this book principally for its discussion of the *sublime*, which you may notice I have not mentioned yet. It is an interesting argument that would have some special relevance for the Romantics in particular, but compared to what I regard as the primary value of this work, I found it relatively unimportant.

For people generally interested in aesthetics or the roots of Romanticism, I would not recommend this book. If you are not committed to Kant's larger project, then you will surely be repelled by this work.

Nietzsche would suggest that this is part of the problem of philosophers, that they seek to be teachers and thus are left with a latent content that enables stability of identity, forcing incoherencies to occur in what is otherwise unthinkably incoherent/inconsistent. I agree. Kant's attempt is valiant here but ultimately centered around human subjectivity, undeniably so, because it must be so presented for him to advance as he did.

With this last critique, Kant presents in many ways, the seed for all modern inconsistency and reason with Godel, Turing and Russell. He presents the archetype of ideological state apparatuses that Althusser and Foucault would present as logically singular points of consideration founded on nothing but its own purposefulness and in this manner, we still live in Kant's shadow as he outlined the very structures and their limitations so that others later on could verify the same problems in countless different ways.

In the first part, Kant argues that Aesthetical Judgments - which deal with our sensual perception of the phenomenal world, according to our notions of time and space and the 12 categories - are reflective. With reflective, he means that we observe particular instances and try to generalize from these to universal statements. (A person with the right background knowledge sees in this the scientific method of induction by which we abstract mathematical equations as explanations from a collection of particular instances; this is the problem that led David Hume to radical scepticism and Immanuel Kant to his Transcendental Idealism). This is the only knowledge we can have about our world, gained a posteriori, and therefore an imperfect representation of the world as it is in itself.

For Kant, there are only four types of reflective (aesthetical) judgments: (1) the agreeable, (2) the good, (3) the beautiful, and (4) the sublime. He is able to trace these four types of reflective judgments to his original table of judgments (as published in the first *Kritik*) of quantity, quality, relation and modality. In essence, Kant tries to explain how we judge on agreeableness, goodness, beauty and sublime - these are all phenomena and in that sense aesthetical and subjective.

Now, what does Kant tell us about these four types of judgments?

(1) Judgments on the agreeable are subjective and sensual. I like the smell of this flower, I like the taste of this wine, I like the view of this landscape. These are 'just' personal remarks.

(2) Judgments on the good are objective and ethical. I fulfil my duty towards the Moral Law or not (as outlined in the second *Kritik*), and I observe that others do this too or not.

(3) Judgments on the beautiful are related to the purposiveness of objects. Kant claims that we look for beauty in objects that seem to have a certain functionality or purpose, but are in reality functionless or purposeless. In other words: the form of the object pleases our mind and triggers our faculties of imagination and cognition.

(4) The last type of judgments deal with the sublime. According to Kant, these judgments have their origin in objects that (seem) to lay beyond our mental capacity. We cannot comprehend these objects and this triggers some sort of fear in us, which leaves us in awe of the object.

According to Kant, we perceive a purposiveness in nature. We look at bees, flowers and horses and see functionality. It looks as if these objects are designed for a specific purpose. This is called teleology (from the Greek word 'telos' meaning goal): when looking at nature, we abstract the apparent design of these objects and form teleological judgments.

Kant explains that we see nature as having an objective purposiveness (compared to the subjective purposiveness in objects that we perceive as beauty), but this objective purposiveness is and remains our reflective aesthetical judgment. This, in other words, means that we judge as if (!) nature is teleologically constituted - our aesthetic judgments constitute a purposive nature around us, but this is and remains our own subjective judgment. We cannot know if nature has an objective purpose as a thing in itself, since this is not attainable for us, as Kant explained in the first Kritik.

Kant even claims that man is justified to see nature as a grand teleological system, in the sense that nothing exists without a purpose and everything has to be expected to be the most suitable design for that particular purpose. But even though this seems to sound a lot like William Paley (who would later use the apparent teleology of nature as a proof for the existence of God, as a master watchmaker), Kant has to add the caveat that this is not real objective teleology. He has to do this, because in the first Kritik he explained that ALL of our aesthetical judgments are imperfect representations of the world as it is in itself. Therefore, it is logically impossible for us to know if nature truly is teleological. So this is a sort of bridge between the first and the third Kritik.

With this last critique, Kant presents in many ways, the seed for all modern inconsistency and reason with Godel, Turing and Russell. He presents the archetype of ideological state apparatuses that Althusser and Foucault would present as logically singular points of consideration founded on nothing but its own purposefulness and in this manner, we still live in Kant's shadow as he outlined the very structures and their limitations so that others later on could verify the same problems in countless different ways.

Like Critique of Pure Reason Kant comes prepared to give aesthetics the same kind of workout he is famous for. Not surprising was the way he put the objective aspects of art and beauty through their paces in a similar comprehensive style he has used in Pure Reason but the subjective aspects were where he really surprised me.

The universal feeling here means, that there are no subjective grounds for the idea of beauty – because there doesn't have to be an intuition of the object of beauty – for here the person posits that our cognitive skills work in a similar fashion to each others', and so everyone simply *have to* regard beauty similarly. Once again, this doesn't mean that this person is objectively correct (since beauty has nothing to do with concepts) but it simply means that the nature of our judgment can't help but to posit this so-called "common sense". The funny thing is, that there is still an element of subjectivity at play, since beauty is not a concept, but then again, the intuition is also lacking – beauty can only be defined in judgment.

Art is by nature an elusive and subjective phenomenon in human experience and Kant finally flirts with the relevance of spirituality after prefacing his remarks to this point that one must suspend reason in considering them. Ironically I felt that this really made this a truly profound book. Kant wrote more extensively on aesthetics than most other philosophers and if you are interested in aesthetics then this is essential reading.

Judgment is the ability to think the particular as contained under the universal. The subjective character of an object consists in its aesthetic value. That portion of the Object which is based on the understanding of an object constitutes the objective aspect of an object of sense. In understanding an object both subjective and objective references are important. An object is called as purposive only if it is directly connected to the feeling of pleasure. Our ability to judge by such pleasure is called taste. The universal validity of an object is very much important in the aesthetic judgment. We use imagination not just understanding in order to decide something is beautiful. Interest is what we call the liking which is associated with the presentation of an object's existence.

There is also another aspect called agreeable in the aesthetic judgment. It is that which the senses like in sensation. It is a person's inclination towards an object of beauty. In order to consider some object as good one should know what the purpose of an object is but it is not necessary to find beauty in a thing. The concepts of agreeable and good are both different in the sense that agreeable concerns just the senses but the good refers to the usefulness or the intrinsic goodness of an object. But both of them are connected by the aspect of interest in their objects. We call agreeable that gratifies our senses, beautiful what we just like and good that we endorse. Taste is the ability to judge an object, or a way of presenting it, by means of a liking or disliking devoid of all interest. In making a judgment of taste we require everyone to like the object without this liking's being based on a concept. We call something as beautiful which is the object of such liking.

Judgment of taste involves the consciousness that all interest is kept out of it. Agreeable caters only to a subjective person who experiences it. A thing which is agreeable to a person may not be agreeable to another person. When we

come to the notion of beautiful it is not the case. A person cannot just proclaim that something is beautiful only based on his subjective inclination.

Thus the judgments about the agreeable are private but the judgments of beauty are based on common consent. It follows logically thus that the judgments of agreeable are taste of sense and taste regarding the beautiful are called taste of reflection. If we judge objects merely based on concepts we lose all presentation of beauty. So there is no such law (and cannot be) that a house with a prescribed length and width is beautiful.

There can be a doubt with regard to what comes first in a judgment of taste.

A judgment of taste cannot be based on subjective purpose. Any kind of interest ruins a judgment of taste and makes it partial. Any kind of aesthetic judgment will remain to be rudimentary if it is biased by charms, emotions or pains. Therefore a pure judgment of taste should be based merely on the purposiveness of the form.

Aesthetic judgment can be divided into pure and empirical. An aesthetic judgment is empirical if it is based on the agreeability or disagreeability of an object or its presentation. Pure judgments are those that assert the beauty of an object. An aesthetic judgment cannot be entirely constituted by charm (or based on charm) but it can act only as a supplement in aesthetic judgment.

In almost all kinds of art forms taste is not what gratifies our sensation but what we like on account of its form. Design and composition is that which adorns the first place in matters concerning the aesthetic judgment. Sublimity not emotion belongs to the aesthetic judgment. There are two kinds of beauty namely free beauty and accessory beauty. Free beauty is not based on the purposiveness or meaning of the object but accessory beauty is based on that. Many things in the natural world like flowers, birds etc. can be said as free beauties. Our judgment is pure when we judge a free beauty.

Judgment mediates two notions of the supersensible. Practical reason, autonomy, must be able to bring about change in the natural world, the world disclosed to us by understanding and cognition ("ought implies can"). Thus nature must at least "harmonize" with freedom (AA 176). This harmony rests on a non-cognitive concept of unity between two notions of the super-sensible: "So there must after all be a basis uniting the supersensible that underlies nature and the supersensible that the concept of freedom contains practically, even though the concept of this basis does not reach cognition of it ..."

judgment mediates the relation of the subject to itself. Judgment, as determining feeling of pleasure and pain, mediates reason as faculty of desire (freedom) and understanding as faculty of knowledge (nature).

in fact, we do not feel pleasure at fit of nature w/ categories, because these are unintentional; but w/ finding unity in diversity of empirical laws, we do feel pleasure, even admiration; now this pleasure at the level of particular laws, was once there at a higher level, the unity of nature into genus and species that makes possible such particular laws; but since the unity of nature into genus and species is necessary for even common experience this primordial pleasure faded when mixed w/ mere cognition; so now we need successful completion of conscious effort at finding unity in diversity to feel the pleasure of harmony of nature and cognition

pleasure is idiosyncratically subjective: it contributes nothing to [intersubjectively verifiable] cognition; purposiveness is not a characteristic of the object; purposiveness is thus felt as pleasure; pleasure in formal apprehension expresses fit of object and cognitive powers put into play in RJ on the object [we like the way the object provokes our powers]

we must presuppose condition under which it is possible to achieve the final purpose [=highest good = virtuous happiness]; that is, we must presuppose harmony of nature and freedom in order to act practically; AJ presupposes just such a harmony in concept of purposiveness of nature; the ultimate condition for this harmony can only be thought of as moral author.