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# Ogilby, Milton, Canary Wine, and the Red Scorpion

Another look at Kant's Deduction of Taste\*

## 1 The Ogilby Problem

In "Of the Standard of Taste" (1757), Hume introduces a classic puzzle regarding what he calls the "two species of common sense regarding taste." On the one hand, Hume says, when we theorize about taste at an abstract level we naturally think that beauty is "no quality in the things themselves [...] but exists only in the mind which contemplates them." As a result, we conclude that "every individual ought to acquiesce in his own sentiment, without pretending to regulate those of others."<sup>1</sup> At a suitably abstract level, it seems, we take it to be just obvious that *de gustibus non disputandum est*: you have your taste and I have mine, just as we do in genuinely gustatory matters.

On the other hand, Hume says, when we go to the level of particulars, there is something in common sense that resists this permissive attitude with respect to *aesthetic* taste. I don't mind that you adore cucumbers while I think they taste like dirty socks, but I do mind, says Hume, if our *aesthetic* reactions differ, at least with respect to paradigm cases. Here he cites our comparative evaluations of, on the one hand, John Milton, famous 17<sup>th</sup> century poet and author of the epic *Paradise*

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\* I am happy to dedicate this piece to Rolf-Peter Horstmann upon his retirement from teaching. Rolf has kindly hosted me (along with numerous other Ausländern) at the Humboldt University nearly every Sommersemester for the past twelve years or so. His generosity and warmth – combined with a healthy skepticism and complete intolerance for obscurantism – is a large part of what made turn-of-the-millennium Berlin such a vibrant place for those working on classical German philosophy. I am grateful to have been a part of it.

Quotations from Kant are translated from Kant, Immanuel. 1900–. *Immanuel Kants Schriften*. Berlin: Ausgabe der königlich preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (now de Gruyter). I will follow standard practice and cite the pagination from this edition as (volume:page), unless the first *Critique* is being referred to, in which case I cite it as (A-edition pagination/B-edition pagination). I have often consulted or used the English translations in Kant, Immanuel. 2000 (1790). *Critique of the Power of Judgement*. Trans. and eds. P. Guyer and E. Matthews. New York: Cambridge University Press, and Kant, Immanuel. 1987 (1790). *Critique of Judgment*. Trans. and ed. W. Pluhar. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company.

1 Hume, David. 1898 (1757). "Of the Standard of Taste," in: *Essays Moral, Political and Literary*, ed. by T. H. Green and T. H. Grose, London: Longmans, Green and Co., 269.

*Lost* and, on the other hand, John Ogilby, obscure 17<sup>th</sup> century author of the not-so-epic *Frog, or, the Netherland Nightingale, Sweet Singer of Amsterdam*. Ogilby was an important atlas-maker, but his poetry and translation work had already been derided by the likes of Dryden and Pope, as Hume would have known. At the level of particular objects or works such as these, says Hume, we don't readily tolerate disagreement: "Whoever would assert an equality of genius and elegance between OGILBY and MILTON," he writes,

would be thought to defend no less an extravagance, than if he had maintained a mole-hill to be as high as TENERIFFE, or a pond as extensive as the ocean. Though there may be found persons, who give the preference to [Ogilby]; no one pays attention to such a taste; and we pronounce without scruple the sentiment of these pretended critics to be absurd and ridiculous (269).

In the end, Hume appears to resolve the puzzle by simply jettisoning the first common sense thought about the indisputability of taste and holding onto the second one – i.e. the one according to which we must take someone who thinks Ogilby's poetry is more valuable than Milton's to be making a mistake akin to thinking a mole-hill is bigger than the largest volcano in the Canary Islands. Hume still thinks that beauty is a mere sentiment of the mind, but he claims that there has to be something about particular objects – including Milton's poems – that is disposed to produce that sentiment in all properly-functioning and properly-cultivated readers. He thus grounds the normativity of our judgments of taste – even if not their intersubjectivity – in dispositions such as these.

In the early parts of *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (1790) Kant goes through what he calls an "Analytic of the Beautiful" – an analysis of the main moments in a pure judgment of taste – and notices, in the process, the same puzzle that Hume did. On the one hand, a pure judgment of taste is a subjective and singular state that is generated by an individual beholder on the basis of sensory experience: as a result, it seems destined to be an expression of mere personal preference. On the other hand, there is a kind of universality or even normativity that attaches to our paradigmatic aesthetic judgments – those that are made in abstraction from any practical and economic interests we may have. They speak, as he puts it, with a "universal voice." This obviously raises a problem, which according to Kant

can be represented thus: How is a judgment possible which, merely from *one's own* feeling of pleasure in an object, independent of its concept, judges (*beurtheilte*) this pleasure as attached to the representation of *that same object in all other subjects*, and does so *a priori*, i.e., without having to wait for the assent of others? (5:288, my italics; cf. 5:290n)

We do judge that much of Milton's poetry is beautiful, and that much of Ogilby's is not, and without any consultation we expect, assume, or even *demand* (Kant

uses words like “*fordern*,” “*ansinnen*,” and “*zumuten*” in this context) that others will do so as well. When someone judges to the contrary, we are surprised and unimpressed; we typically ask him to take another look at *Paradise Lost* alongside *Frog, or, the Netherland Nightingale, Sweet Singer of Amsterdam*. If he persists in his judgment, we regard him askance – as somehow kidding us or kidding himself, as having some agenda or even an economic interest in Ogilby’s literary success, as missing the point or, worse, as maladjusted or malfunctioning. If we care about him or his reputation, we may seek to draw his attention to the features of *Paradise Lost* that we take to contribute to our feeling of disinterested pleasure in the object, or to the features of *Frog, or, the Netherland Nightingale* that we take to underwrite our feeling of distaste. But we do *not* simply accept his judgment as, in the undergraduate phrase, a “valid opinion,” and then remind ourselves that taste, after all, is not disputable.

Kant considered this problem in lectures dating back to the middle 1770s, but he only seriously tries to deal with it in the third *Critique*. In what follows I will sketch a solution to the problem that I think we find in Kant’s texts (even if it is not the *only* one that we find in Kant’s texts). The solution crucially involves what Kant calls “aesthetic ideas” and their capacity to symbolize rational ideas. Here I am joining commentators like Hermann Cohen, Anthony Savile, Heiner Bielefeldt, and Kenneth Rogerson in holding that the deduction of taste is only really completed in § 42 and following, when Kant begins the discussion of aesthetic ideas.<sup>2</sup> After sketching my own version of the proposal, I’ll go on to discuss how this kind of view can handle a further problem related to Hume’s question about Ogilby. Finally, I’ll note that Rolf-Peter Horstmann’s discussions of Kant’s “principle of purposiveness” in general offers a clue as to how the account that I sketch with respect to art objects might be extended to natural objects as well.

## 2 The Gap in the Deduction of Taste

To understand Kant’s approach to this problem, we first need to know more about the proximate basis of an aesthetic judgment for him, given that it isn’t any physical feature of the object itself and also isn’t any sort of interest or desire on the

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<sup>2</sup> Cohen, Hermann. 1889. *Kants Begründung der Ästhetik*, Berlin: Dümmler; Bielefeldt, Heiner. 2001. *Kants Symbolik: Ein Schlüssel zur kritischen Freiheitsphilosophie*, Freiburg: Karl Alber; Savile, Anthony. 1987. *Aesthetic Reconstructions: The Seminal Writings of Lessing, Kant, and Schiller*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell; Rogerson, Kenneth. 2008. *The Problem of Free Harmony in Kant’s Aesthetics*, Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

part of the subject. Here is just a brief sketch of what I take to be his view:<sup>3</sup> In ordinary experience, the faculty of understanding (*Verstand*) employs concepts to synthesize and sort the material presented by the senses. But, says Kant, in the course of some exceptional experiences, the world comes to us in such a way that it seems *especially* intelligible or significant, even apart from its susceptibility to the usual conceptualization. The object or vista we're (disinterestedly) contemplating seems to be unusually deep, to have a supra-conceptual significance, to point beyond itself to something of ultimate importance. Another way to put this is to say that the object, as well as the episode that it occasions, strike us as extraordinarily "purposive" (*Zweckmässig*) even apart from our use of a concept to determine the object's actual nature or "purpose" (*Zweck*) (5:188 ff.). There seems to be a kind of *cognitive* coyness about the object: we find that we are not able to apply concepts to it in such a way that we feel we've fully analyzed its significance for us. We can of course bring it under *some* concepts – concepts of a painting or a sculpture or a work of music, of representing an Italian woman or the painter himself or an ancient Egyptian queen. But, again, there is something special about this object that seems to resist normal cognitive techniques – a kind of inarticulable depth or richness or import that brings the understanding up short with respect to its drive to categorize, conceptualize, analyze, and dissect.

A surprising feature of this cognitive coyness in beautiful objects is that we respond to it not with annoyance or enervation, but rather with an exquisite kind of fascination.<sup>4</sup> The object presents itself to us as somehow full of purport, and so we keep looking, trying out different analyses, taking new critical angles, trying to pluck out the heart of its mystery even while enjoying, in a unique way, the fact that we do not succeed. We also reject critical efforts to spell out in some finalized way the *true* and complete significance of the object. This state or series of states, I think, is a large part of what Kant dubs the "free play" or "unexpected harmony" of the faculties of cognition. It is a *free* play, because the information offered by sense/imagination is not fully captured by determinate concepts in the usual way. It is unexpectedly *harmonious* because, despite our self-conscious lack of full understanding, we still feel that what is presented is somehow purposive or significant for us – that it promises a kind of happiness (to use Alexander Ne-

<sup>3</sup> See Chignell, Andrew. 2007. "Kant on the Normativity of Taste: The Role of Aesthetic Ideas," in: *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 85 (3), 415–33, for more. I have drawn on this paper for some of the exposition of my view here. The discussion of the Ogilby problem, however, is entirely new and, indeed, formulated in response to feedback on this earlier piece.

<sup>4</sup> On the cognitive "reflection without frustration" involved here, see Joseph Cannon's very illuminating 2008. "Intentionality of Judgments of Taste in Kant's Critique of Judgment," in: *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 66 (1), 53–65.

hamas' phrase), or seeks to tell us something important, even if we can't place our finger on precisely what.<sup>5</sup> It is on the basis of – or in virtue of having – the pleasure occasioned by such harmonious free play that an authentic judgment of taste is made (5:186–8).<sup>6</sup>

It should be clear that, from the point of view of grounding the universality of *particular judgments of taste*, there is still a significant slip between cup and lip. The fact that we all possess faculties that make us capable of this experience of free play does not entail that we all *will* have that experience in the presence of *the same objects*. This is a problem that Paul Guyer brought out in his early work on Kant's aesthetics, starting in the late 1970's, though it was implicit in previous commentators such as Donald Crawford.<sup>7</sup> The problem points to a gap in the Deduction of Taste, one that subsequent commentators have responded to either by trying to fill it using resources from other parts of the third *Critique*, or by denying that the gap needs filling at all.

My own preferred approach is to view Kant as going along with Hume in response to the puzzle with which we started, at least for some distance. That is, I think Kant ultimately locates the cause of the free play in something about the *object* of the judgment. But he does so in a unique way, or so I want to suggest – one that is not fundamentally at odds with the “subjective” and “singular” characteristics of aesthetic judgment that he highlights in the Analytic.

### 3 Filling the Gap: Rational Ideas, Aesthetic Ideas, Aesthetic Attributes

We need a few more conceptual building blocks in order to see how (I submit) the gap in the Deduction can be filled. They are the concepts of (1) a rational idea; (2) an aesthetic idea; and (3) an aesthetic attribute. By *rational or transcendental idea* Kant means a concept to which we are led “in an entirely necessary way by reason according to its original laws,” but which refers to something beyond our cognitive

<sup>5</sup> Nehamas, Alexander. 2007. *Only the Promise of Happiness*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

<sup>6</sup> I articulate the view in this way in order to stay neutral between competing positions on whether the judgment or the pleasure is more fundamental. See §9 of the *Critique* as well as the classic discussion of this issue in Ginsborg, Hannah. 1991. “On the Key to Kant's Critique of Taste,” in: *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 72 (4), 290–313.

<sup>7</sup> Crawford, Donald. 1974. *Kant's Aesthetic Theory*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press; Guyer, Paul. 1997 (1979). *Kant and the Claims of Taste*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, New York: Cambridge University Press.

ken (*KrV* A 339/B 397). Included among these ideas are not just representations of the familiar supersensibilia of metaphysics and theology, but also mathematical ideas of infinity, the infinitesimal, and “the maximum” generally; various cosmological ideas of absolute motions, temperatures and distances, the cosmic whole, and the first moment of time; exemplary ideas of a perfect human body or a perfect example of a species; and also moral ideas of perfect virtue or perfect love or freedom unconstrained by natural laws. Finally, there is the important idea of full and complete natural systematicity. This idea is really the synthesis of two other ideas: that of the infinitely expansive empirical cosmos or world-whole, and that of a perfect epistemological system in which concepts of particulars fall under concepts of contingent empirical laws which are in turn arranged hierarchically such that minds like ours can aim at full scientific comprehension.

As recent commentators (including Horstmann) have pointed out, the principle of natural systematicity grows in significance for Kant over the course of his career.<sup>8</sup> Initially in the *Critique of Pure Reason* he took it to be a merely “logical” maxim of reason – a subjective heuristic device that we can use in order to make provisional claims about the goal-directed character of certain parts of nature. Later, and most clearly in the introductions to the third *Critique*, he seems to view it as a necessary presupposition of empirical concept-formation, and thus of scientific inquiry about the empirical world.

Unlike determinate empirical concepts such as *flower* or *fork*, rational ideas cannot be adequately ‘exemplified’ by any empirical experience [A 327/B 383]. Moreover, speculative reason cannot prove *a priori* that these ideas have actual instances – Kant famously rejects the attempts of his scholastic/rationalist predecessors to use speculative considerations to prove that, for instance, the First Cause of the world, or the Most Real Being, or the free will, or the bounded world-whole, or the immaterial soul exist. Although we can’t demonstrate that there are objects of these rational ideas via either pure reason or experience, Kant notes that we have a strong natural and rational propensity to generate these ideas and then just *presume* that they have actual objects. Reason has the drive to go to a maximum, to have a complete explanation, to find rest in a systematic whole, to locate “the therefore to every wherefore” (*zu allem Warum das Darum*) (A 585/B 613). This is one of Kant’s great innovations: using a kind of erotic apostrophe, he ascribes

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<sup>8</sup> See Ginsborg, Hannah. 2006. “Aesthetic Judgment and Perceptual Normativity,” in: *Inquiry* 49 (5), 403–37; Zuckert, Rachel. 2007. *Kant on Beauty and Biology: An Interpretation of the “Critique of Judgment”*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Ostaric, Lara. 2009. “Kant’s Account of Nature’s Systematicity and the Unity of Theoretical and Practical Reason,” in: *Inquiry* 52 (2), 155–78; and the Horstmann papers discussed below.

to *reason* itself various “needs,” “inclinations,” “drives,” “propensities” that ultimately lead us to accept uncritical theory-building principles like the rationalist’s Principle of Sufficient Reason. In this way Kant rejects (or at least considerably complicates) the Platonic/Christian view of reason as the faculty that whips the horses of the passions into shape and keeps the chariot of the self moving in the right direction, as well as the Humean view of reason as the slave of the passions, meekly brought along to find rationalizations for and means to the ends set by the non-rational passions that truly rule us. Rather, reason’s own inherent and natural inclinations towards fully articulate explanations are often what get us into speculative trouble.

When faced with these natural but illegitimate aspirations of reason, Kant says that we must take up our *Critiques* and resist: “Our age is an age of critique, and to critique all must be subjected” (*KrV* A xi). But since it is reason itself that generates these ideas, such critique is also an exercise in self-mortification, and through it one

can be spared many difficult and nevertheless fruitless efforts, since [we] would not attribute to reason anything which obviously exceeds its capacity, but would rather subject reason, which does not gladly suffer constraint in the paroxysms of its lust for speculative expansion, to the discipline of abstinence (A 786/B 814).

Thus the second half of the first *Critique* is an extended meditation on the various ways in which reason seduces us into the forbidden realm of things-in-themselves, often via the Principle of Sufficient Reason, and a therapeutic attempt to convince us that these illicit inclinations in reason must be identified and, as far as possible, extirpated or suppressed.

Despite the fact that we must discipline ourselves to the fact that we cannot have theoretical cognition (*Erkenntnis*) or knowledge (*Wissen*) that there are objects of any rational ideas we still naturally find these ideas fascinating and important. Many of them have heuristic or pedagogical uses, others provide moral ideals that we try to approximate, and some provide the content of the Belief (*Glaube*) for which Kant says he has to deny knowledge in the first place. So we’re certain to be fascinated by any attempts to represent these ideas or even any hints that their objects are really possible.

(2) This brings us to our second piece of terminology: An *aesthetic idea* is characterized by Kant as a phenomenon to which “no determinate thought, i.e., *concept*, can be adequate, so that no language can fully attain to it or make it understandable” (5:314). The reason that an aesthetic idea cannot be captured by a determinate concept is exactly because it is the sensible expression or “counterpart (pendant) of a rational idea.” An aesthetic idea deserves the name “idea” just insofar as it is a sensible representation which “strives toward something that lies

beyond the bounds of experience, and hence seeks to approximate an exhibition of rational ideas” (*ibid.*).

Although Kant sometimes calls it a “representation” (*Vorstellung*) in the singular, I have argued in other work that an important and indeed essential aspect of an aesthetic idea is that it involves a *plurality* of representations linked together by a certain theme.<sup>9</sup> Kant seems to affirm this when he remarks that the “supplementary representations of the imagination [...] which let one think more than one can express in a concept determined by words [...] yield (*geben*) an aesthetic idea” (5:315). This suggests that, on the subject side of the equation anyway, an aesthetic idea is constituted by an “inexhaustible” and “non-exponible” *series* or *multitude* of representations. The series is unified by a certain theme, perhaps, but is too rich to be fully comprehended (5:342). Put another way, an aesthetic idea is a “coherent whole,” but a “coherent whole of an unspeakable fullness of thought” (5:329). It is this unfinalizable series of associations, rather than any particular state, that “aspires” to exhibit a rational idea – an idea that, strictly speaking, cannot be sensibly exhibited at all.

A psychological corollary of this view about the structure of an aesthetic idea is that the mental episode of *having* or *undergoing* such an idea will have certain essential features. Someone having an aesthetic idea will experience a “quicken- ing” of her cognitive faculties, for instance, as her associative imagination brings to mind this “wealth of sensations and supplementary representations for which no expression is found” (5:316). This quickening, I submit, is just another way of characterizing the “animated feeling” or “pleasure” that accompanies or constitutes the harmonious free play of the faculties discussed earlier: the imagination runs through a series of representations that are associated with the object somehow, a series that yet seems so inexhaustible and unfinalizable as to elude capture by determinate concepts. The main point for our purposes, however, is that it is not the *content* of these representations that is of primary importance, but rather the *formal* manner in which they are strung together by the mind into a “coherent whole” that has the phenomenological feel of both unity and inexhaustibility. It is on the basis of having an experience with this formal structure (and that is thus accompanied by a feeling of pleasure) that we can judge the object that occasioned it to be beautiful.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Again, see Chignell “Kant Normativity of Taste” for more details.

<sup>10</sup> Hannah Ginsborg asks, in discussion, why it is that we wouldn’t just stop the account of the Deduction at a claim about the harmonious free play of the faculties itself. In other words, why not just say that any object that can lead to that mental phenomenon will count as beautiful for Kant? I agree that we might leave the account there, but find an advantage in the present interpretation’s ability to further explain (though still only partially) *what* in the object generates the relevant



(3) A final piece of terminology: Kant distinguishes in § 49 between two different *kinds* of attributes that objects can have – *logical attributes* and *aesthetic attributes*. The logical attributes of a beautiful object are what we commonly think of as *its* attributes – being a painting, being a meadow, representing an Italian woman or an Egyptian queen, depicting the Roman god Jupiter. Aesthetic attributes, by contrast, “accompany the logical ones,” says Kant, and yet perform a distinct function (5:315–6). Of the Jupiter painting, for example, he says that the content of the painting possesses logical attributes such as “having long, flowing hair” or “sitting atop a large throne.” Under the right circumstances, our mind does not just present these logical attributes of the object of a beautiful work of art, however: it also “calls to mind” a series of “supplementary representations [...] expressing the concept’s implications (*Folgen*) and its affinity (*Verwandtschaft*) with other concepts.” *These* representations in the mind are the aesthetic attributes of the object. The main example that Kant offers in connection with Jupiter is that of an “eagle with lightning in its claws” – an image traditionally associated with Jupiter in Roman mythology. Presumably, however, the imagination, together with reflective judgment, also conjures up countless other “related representations” that it associates, in some loose and free fashion, with the rational idea of God and the “sublimity and majesty of creation” that Jupiter symbolizes. Because Jupiter is an object whose concept is a rational idea – i.e., the rational idea of a creative deity – it will possess a richness such that the set of aesthetic attributes which “animate it” by way of these mental associations will seem inexhaustible to the properly-situated subject (5:315–6).

Another example that Kant provides in the *Critique* itself comes from contemporary literature. Kant didn’t encounter much visual art, having never left the area around Königsberg, and presumably didn’t hear music very often (apart from the prisoners singing hymns in the castle near his house). But he certainly read a great deal, and he explicitly claims that poetry or letters is the best art form for expressing rational ideas. The literary example he provides is a poem composed not by Milton (though Kant is far more influenced by Milton than the average Prussian philosopher, as a recent book by Sanford Budick makes clear),<sup>11</sup> but rather by Friedrich der Große. In the poem, which was written in French, the proper attitude toward death is compared to the resigned and dignified passing of the sun over the horizon at sunset:

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feeling of “animation.” I will suggest below that it is because an object symbolically presents a rational idea (in a particularly effective way) that it leads to the generation of an aesthetic idea, and thus to the characteristic feeling of mental harmony that Kant calls “free play”.

<sup>11</sup> See Budick, Sanford. 2010. *Kant and Milton*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Oui, finissons sans trouble, et mourons sans regrets,  
 En laissant l'Univers comblé de nos bienfaits.  
 Ainsi l'Astre du jour, au bout de sa carrière,  
 Répand sur l'horizon une douce lumière,  
 Et les derniers rayons qu'il darde dans les airs  
 Sont ses derniers soupirs qu'il donne à l'Univers.  
 (Quoted by Kant at 5:315–6)

Let's set possible political motives aside and take Kant at his word when he says that the poem is beautiful and thus demands a positive judgment from all properly disinterested readers. Why does he say this? Clearly there are formal and material attributes of the object (subject-matter) of the poem: *being a sunset* is the major one; *being compared to death*, and *being characterized as having gentle light* are some others. But the imagination of the disinterested reader, in considering these attributes and in “remembering all the pleasures of a completed beautiful summer day,” will also (says Kant) conjure up a rich series of thoughts which it associates with its theme – the rational idea of “cosmopolitan virtue.” The series of representations brought to mind by the free play of the faculties in the contemplation of such an object will not exhaust its content (there is always more to say about great art!), but each thought in that series will, “to be sure, pertain to the concept of the object” (5:315). And so the reader, in reflecting on this whole experience, will connect the having of the aesthetic idea to the object itself.

Now it is always *possible* in principle for the imagination to call to mind a string of associations in connection with experience of any object and any subject-matter. But Kant thinks that such an attempt with respect to a non-beautiful object will be neither easy nor pleasurable. Contemplation of such things “leaves nothing behind as an idea and makes the spirit dull, the object gradually disgusting, and the mind dissatisfied with itself and moody because it is conscious that in reason’s judgment its disposition is contrapurposive”. Significant for our discussion is that he concludes this comment by saying that “if the beautiful arts are not combined, whether closely or remotely with [...] ideas – which alone carry with them a self-sufficient satisfaction – then the latter is their ultimate fate” (5:326). This may or may not provide the basis for an account of the ugly, but it certainly suggests that Kant wants to leave room for the aesthetically neutral.

The account just sketched lies at the heart of Kant’s solution to Hume’s problem: aesthetic ideas – with their exhilarating, provocative, and yet pleasurable phenomenology – will only be reliably occasioned in us by objects that “sensibly render” or, as Kant puts it elsewhere, “symbolize” a rational idea. As a result, “taste is basically a faculty for judging (*Beurteilungsvermögen*) the sensible rendering (*Versinnlichung*) of (rational) ideas” (5:356). Or, in the somewhat overstated phrase of a lecture, “the entire utility of the beautiful arts is that they set

[...] propositions of reason in their full glory and powerfully support them” (25:33). This also hints at an explanation of why we keep coming back to particular works: not for the sensible renderings of rational ideas *per se*, but rather for the pleasure they occasion in us *by* sensibly rendering the ideas in the particular *way* that they do.<sup>12</sup>

## 4 The Lingering Ogilby Problem

By now it should be obvious why Ogilby presents such a problem for this reading of Kant. I have been arguing that the way to make sense of Kant’s claims about the universality of our aesthetic judgments while retaining a subjective basis of these judgments is to focus on the features of particular art-objects that can be regarded as symbolically exhibiting a rational idea. But Ogilby’s poetry, too, (not to mention Bunyan’s allegories, which Hume also denigrates from an aesthetic point of view) can be regarded as taking various moral virtues or mathematical and dynamical “maxima,” supersensibilia, and so forth as its themes. Thus the account so far cannot rule out Ogilby’s or Bunyan’s work as a plausible occasion for the production of aesthetic ideas. Indeed, reference to rational ideas is pretty easy to come by, and given a suitably powerful capacity for associative imagination it seems that almost *anything* could provoke the rich series of seeming endless representations that constitutes an aesthetic idea and involves the free play of the faculties. So how, if at all, are we able justifiably to judge (with a universal voice) that Milton’s sonnets and Friedrich’s stanzas are beautiful, while Ogilby’s doggerel is not?

Apart from simply conceding that *anything* that can be in some way connected with rational ideas is beautiful, there seem to be two main options here. First, we might say that only *some* of the objects that symbolically exhibit rational ideas are productive of *genuine* aesthetic ideas in properly situated beholders. The symbolic exhibition of rational ideas thus becomes something like a necessary but not a sufficient condition of beauty on this view, and we have to say there is something more to the successful art-object – the *way* it symbolizes ideas – that makes it a suitable object of positive aesthetic judgments.

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<sup>12</sup> But why doesn’t Kant talk about the role of aesthetic ideas in judgments of beauty early on in the *Analytic*? My guess is that he only realizes that he needs to bring together his discussions of the beauty of nature and of the role of aesthetic ideas later on when he is thinking through the argument of the *Deduction*. Thanks to Franz Knappik for discussion here.

Alternatively, we could say that *only* the objects that occasion aesthetic pleasure in properly-situated beholders succeed in truly or fully *symbolizing* rational ideas. There might be other ways in which objects refer or allude to a rational idea, but only beautiful objects succeed in genuinely *symbolizing* or *symbolically exhibiting* such a topic or theme (correlatively, a genius is an artist who is able to produce or perform such exhibitions).

The distinction between these two alternatives may be largely verbal. Both say that a successful work will symbolically exhibit a rational idea by way of its content and/or form, and thereby occasion an aesthetic idea and the concomitant pleasure in properly-situated beholders. Both agree that a rational idea can be in some way associated with or referred to by an object, even if that object is not aesthetically successful. And both agree that this is an idealized sort of criterion that tells us what a successful work will do, even though (as Kant often points out) we may not always have the ability to tell, in a given case, whether we are suitably disposed and sufficiently disinterested to apply this criterion effectively. The alternatives differ merely over whether unsuccessful works like (say) Ogilby's should count as genuinely *symbolizing* rational ideas or not. But since it seems that Kantian "symbolization" is something that admits of rules or formulae (as Kant himself says when telling us what an analogical "symbol" is in § 59), perhaps the first alternative is preferable – the one according to which *lots* of objects manage to symbolize rational ideas in their content or their form, but only those that do so in a *particularly effective way* are proper occasions for a positive judgment of taste.

The proposed solution to the Ogilby problem also ensures that it is not easy to create successful art: one cannot just flat-footedly symbolize the content or structure of a rational idea and trust that it is the adequate basis for the production of aesthetic ideas. Rather, the specific *way* that a great artwork fits a certain content to a particular form becomes an essential ingredient of aesthetic success. That said, perhaps we can allow that beauty is partial or comes in degrees: by focusing intently on almost any object we may be able to make *some* associations to rational ideas, and then get some short-lived free play going in such a way as to cause a few murmurs of aesthetic pleasure. (Even Ogilby had his fans.) But paradigmatic beauties will powerfully induce us to such activity as a result of the unique and compelling "way" that their content/form symbolically exhibits rational ideas. Note that this suggests that there is room for degrees of beauty in the account, or at least for judgments of degrees of beauty.

Putting all of this together, we now have the resources to formulate a Kantian account of artistic beauty:

An artwork is beautiful, for Kant, if its content and/or form symbolizes a rational idea *in such a way* that it occasions in properly-situated subjects an aesthetic idea (the having of which involves the “free” and “harmonious” play of the faculties, and is thus uniquely pleasurable).

The “way” in which a particular artwork symbolizes a rational idea will be exceedingly complex and difficult to analyze, and so the account remains inarticulate and uninformative at just this juncture. But this inarticulacy is salutary, I think, since any simple rules or formulae regarding *how* rational ideas must be symbolized in successful art would be inconsistent with Kant’s overall opposition to a science of beauty, and his endorsement of the “singular” or first-person character of aesthetic judgments. Indeed, the artist herself will often be unable to work out or even be aware of all the complex ways in which her work symbolizes rational ideas, and we may as a result be willing to credit her success to a kind of “spirit” (*Geist*) working through her rather than to a self-conscious and calculated effort.<sup>13</sup>

An interesting implication of this proposal is that a Kantian critic will want to focus his attentions not merely on the rational ideas symbolized in the work, but on the complex “ways” in which the artist has achieved this symbolic exhibition in a particular physical or literary medium, and on the new aesthetic ideas that these ways occasion in him. With respect to the very greatest of works, however, even the most acute understanding and the most penetrating critic will find the effort to pluck out its mystery frustrated. That mystery will consist in the work’s unique way of symbolically exhibiting or picturing rational ideas – a content that can’t really be sensibly exhibited at all. It is part of the unanalyzable *je ne sais quoi* of a great work – the aspect that, again, makes a science of the beautiful based on explicit principles or rules impossible.

## 5 Systematicity and the Deduction of Taste

It would be worth filling out the general picture I am sketching here and comparing it to some of the other broadly expressionistic interpretations of Kant. It would also be worth saying more about the role of genius or spirit in the production of beautiful art, and about the role of the Kantian art critic. Here, however, I want to focus on how judgments of beauty in nature fit into this expressionistic account. This is important because Kant famously says in the third *Critique* that beauty in

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<sup>13</sup> It should be clear, then, that the view I am sketching here provides an idealized account of the normativity of a true judgment of beauty, rather than a criterion that allows us, in a particular cases, to know who is getting it right, and who is getting it wrong.

nature as well as beauty in art has to do with aesthetic ideas (5:320). It will prove useful to do this in the context of discussing Rolf-Peter Horstmann's illuminating work on the deduction of the principle of purposiveness generally.

Horstmann has two main pieces on the issue: one in a volume on transcendental deductions edited by Eckart Förster and commented on by Reinhard Brandt, the second in a forthcoming volume.<sup>14</sup> Again, the main focus of both is not the deduction of taste in particular but the deduction of the overarching principle of purposiveness.

According to Horstmann, the purposiveness that the natural world presents consists (at least in part) in its susceptibility to being known by us, especially in its contingent aspects – the empirical particulars that fall under empirical laws. Horstmann thinks of this as a claim about the “material of sensation” rather than about the things-in-themselves: the claim is that this material could have been so chaotic or recalcitrant to our understanding of it that, even if we were able to categorize it in some very general way, we wouldn't have been able to bring it under specific empirical laws or concepts.

Fortunately for us, however, it isn't recalcitrant in that way: there is a systematic purposiveness in empirical things that allows us to know them, to predict events reliably, to study natural objects and systems, to construct scientific theories, and to live in the natural world without fear of unlawful chaos. Horstmann claims that in the third *Critique* this principle of purposiveness becomes, for Kant, a necessary condition “for the unity of knowledge in view of the multitude of empirical laws” (Horstmann 1989, 169). Indeed, Kant's recognition of its importance leads him to assign it a new status: it is no longer a merely “logical” maxim, as it was in the first *Critique*, but rather a new kind of “subjective transcendental principle,” one that Horstmann is willing to call “constitutive” in his second paper on the topic. The content of the principle, again, is that we encounter in experience a *systematic* natural world: a world whose features can be known not just *a priori* but also empirically because it is structured in terms of part and wholes, kinds, empirical laws, affinities, and hierarchies.

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**14** Horstmann, Rolf-Peter. 1989. “Why must there be a Transcendental Deduction in the Critique of Judgment?” in: E. Förster (ed.). *Kant's Transcendental Deductions. The Three Critiques and the Opus postumum*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press; and Horstmann, Rolf-Peter. forthcoming 2013. “Kant and the Problem of Purposiveness, or How to deal with Organisms (and Empirical Laws and Beauty) in an Idealistic Framework” (this essay is forthcoming in a volume in honor of Paul Guyer's 60<sup>th</sup> birthday). Here I cite from a draft, and so the page numbers will presumably be different in the published version.

But what is the connection between all this and the critique of taste? Horstmann argues that aesthetic experience of beauty simply is a pleasing sense of the present sensory manifold as especially cognitively purposive:

It is at the very center of [Kant's] argument that if, when we contemplate an object, all conditions are fulfilled that would have to be fulfilled in order to put us in the position of acquiring a concept of that object, then this object produces in us the feeling of pleasure. This feeling in turn indicates that the object is purposive for our faculty of reflective judgment, and it is because of this that we call the object beautiful. Now these conditions of concept acquisition presuppose the transcendental principle of purposiveness, and this implies that the very possibility of an aesthetic judgment of reflection is based on that principle (*ibid.*, 174).

A worry we might have about this way of construing Kant's point is that the apparent purposiveness of the world looks like it will be sufficient *on its own* for a positive judgment of taste. But if the transcendental principle of purposiveness is applied universally, as Horstmann indicates that it is, then we are threatened with an account on which everything becomes beautiful, or at least capable of being the object of positive aesthetic judgment, in much too easy a way. This makes it puzzling that Horstmann goes on to follow Guyer in holding that there is a gap between an aesthetic judgment of this sort, grounded in the principle of purposiveness, and the claim that it is intersubjectively valid (*ibid.*, 173). For presumably the very deduction of that principle that Horstmann discusses is, like all Kantian deductions, supposed to be intersubjectively valid, and so it is hard to see where the gap would be with respect to any subject and any experience of an object.

Horstmann appears to recognize this problem in the second paper, and simply leaves it as an “interesting question” whether there can be “aesthetically neutral objects [...] or (whether) every possible object of knowledge has an aesthetic value” (*ibid.*, 17). Setting that issue aside, however, I now want to sketch a slightly different account of how the connection between natural systematicity and a judgment of taste might be made. The account here is implicit in something else that Horstmann says in the more recent paper: that beauty in nature “points to or hints at a purposefully organized nature” (*ibid.*, 16). His own explanation of this is, once again, a direct and transcendental one: beauty could not be “explained as belonging to the objective elements of constituted nature without relying on the notion of purposiveness” (*ibid.*).

I want to suggest, by contrast, that beauty in nature and art “points to or hints at a purposefully organized nature” in a less direct and more roundabout way – namely, by *symbolically exhibiting* the rational idea of it. Just as an art object that symbolizes the idea of a mathematical maximum or a creative deity in a partic-

ularly rich way induces in us an aesthetic idea that in turn provides the basis for our judgment that it is beautiful, so too an object in *nature* can symbolize the idea of natural systematicity and in that way produce in us the right kind of aesthetic idea.

Before describing how this symbolization might go, let me note first a well-known passage in which I take Kant to be making precisely this point while discussing natural beauty in particular:

Although our concept of a subjective purposiveness of nature in its forms, in accordance with empirical laws, is not a concept of the object at all, but only a principle of the power of judgement for providing concepts in the face of this excessive multiplicity in nature (in order to be able to be oriented in it), we nevertheless hereby ascribe to nature as it were (*gleichsam*) a regard to our faculty of cognition, in accordance with the analogy of an end; and thus we can view *natural beauty* as the *exhibition* (*Darstellung*) of the concept of formal (merely subjective) purposiveness and *natural ends* as the exhibition of the concept of a real (objective) purposiveness, one of which we judge through taste (aesthetically, by means of the feeling of pleasure), the other through understanding and reason (logically, in accordance with concepts) (5:193).

The first part of this passage says that natural systematicity isn't something that we first run across in the world and then somehow "logically" grasp with concepts. Instead we presuppose in an *a priori* albeit *subjectively* justified way that the world is systematically ordered under hierarchies of laws such that it has, in Kant's words, "a regard to our faculty of cognition." In the unpublished Introduction, Kant suggests that the presupposition is downright *required* for us rationally to engage in scientific inquiry, and even to form any empirical concepts whatsoever.<sup>15</sup>

For present purposes, the more interesting part of the passage just quoted from 5:193 comes next: "natural beauty" counts as an "exhibition of the concept of formal (merely subjective) purposiveness [...] which we judge through taste (aesthetically, by means of the feeling of pleasure)." *Formal subjective purposiveness* here refers to the structure, exhibited by systems, that allows them to be cognized and comprehended by our minds and methods. Kant is thus saying that there is something in natural beauty that "exhibits" this structure somehow. But how? Later in the *Critique* he explains that

To exhibit (*darstellen*) the reality of our concepts, intuitions are always required. If they are empirical concepts, then the latter are called *examples*. If they are pure concepts of the understanding, then the latter are called *schemata* (5:351).

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<sup>15</sup> Cf. 20:203.



So some sort of intuitional content is required for exhibition. Kant goes on to say, however, that transcendental ideas cannot have their reality exhibited in either of these ways, but we can at least exhibit some of them *symbolically*:

All *hypotyposis* (presentation, *subjecto sub adspectum*), as making something sensible, is of one of two kinds: either *schematic*, where to a concept grasped by the understanding the corresponding intuition is given *a priori*; or *symbolic*, where to a concept which only reason can think, and to which no sensible intuition can be adequate, an intuition is attributed with which the power of judgement proceeds in a way merely analogous to that which it observes in schematization (*ibid.*).

Kant is asserting here that *non-empirical* concepts may acquire intuitional content either through the process of schematism or through symbolization. Ideas, unlike categories, can't be schematized, and so if they are to have any positive content at all it must be symbolic content.

Return now to the quotation from 5:193: many commentators, Horstmann included, assume that the exhibition of formal subjective purposiveness here goes by way of a straightforward “example”: we find ourselves confronting, in an experience of a beautiful object, something that seems especially suited to our understanding. But this is pretty vague, and again it leaves us with the question about whether there *can even be* aesthetically neutral objects, since we are already in the context of the transcendental presupposition that everything we encounter in nature is suited for our understanding.

My own suggestion is that Kant thinks of natural beauty as providing a kind of content to the idea of subjective purposiveness – itself a component of the complex idea of natural systematicity – via *symbolic* exhibition rather than straightforward example. Natural structures that seem complete in their internal relations, whose parts bear various organic value relations to the whole, and in which the diversity of forms and colors are brought together into a discrete articulate object, present us with an exhibition *by analogy* of the rational idea of full and complete systematicity. This in turn leads, in the ways described earlier, to the production of an aesthetic idea in us, and ultimately to the pleasure that is the basis of a judgment of taste.

Let me emphasize again that I'm not saying that certain bits of nature exhibit natural systematicity, full-stop, and that this is the basis of their aesthetic appeal. I'm saying rather that objects in nature (and art) – in particular those with the kinds of features that the rationalist tradition in aesthetics focused on – can symbolize (rather than provide an example of) the relations of unity and harmony amid diversity that is characteristic of systematicity. I am also not claiming that this is what Kant is arguing for in §59 of the third *Critique*, according to which “beauty is a symbol of morality.” The point there has to do with analogies

between the way our faculties operate in aesthetic contexts and the way they operate in moral contexts. Rather, my claim here is that the qualities of unity amidst diversity, internal relations that seem somehow complete, and perfect part-whole interconnections allow an object to symbolically serve as a kind of analogical exhibition of the rational idea of *natural systematicity*, even apart from any connection to morality.<sup>16</sup>

In order to make this clearer, let me try to give an example from the world of art. I'm wary in the context of an aesthetics paper of trying to do justice to well-known works. So since this volume is in honor of Rolf-Peter Horstmann, I'll take the example of a more obscure artistic creation that he has clearly relished over the years in the context of our post-colloquium discussions – something called “The Red Scorpion.” A quick search online reveals a couple of items that go by the title “The Red Scorpion.” Actually on google.de the first thing that comes up is a strip tease artist who, for a certain price, will come to your party dressed in a very elaborate and very red scorpion costume – described on the website as “exotic” – and proceed to remove the costume to the thrill of your assembled guests. Fortunately, however, this is not the Red Scorpion of which Professor Horstmann is a devotee.

The other main item that the internet delivers, fittingly enough in the context of a discussion of the third *Critique*, is a biological organism – namely, a scorpion with a red spot on its back. According to the information I could find, this kind of scorpion comes out only at night, and is one of the most dangerous predators in the desert ecosystem. People who know Kant's works extremely well might know that Kant himself talks about scorpions in his lectures on physical geography, and I think we can assume for the sake of argument here that they were the red kind:

The scorpion is, in Italy, no bigger than a little finger, has a crab-like shape and wounds its enemy with its tail, which contains a hook. One has to avail oneself of the crushed scorpion, in order to place it on the wound and pull the poison back out. In emergencies involving such a poisonous bite, the Indians further take to burning the place that was bitten. In India they are much bigger. It is said that when one places a scorpion under a glass and then blows tobacco smoke under it, it will kill itself with its own tail (9:352).

But obviously this has nothing to do with aesthetics, and Kant's report about the tobacco smoke would be an unfitting theme in a paper devoted to Horstmann,

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<sup>16</sup> See Chignell, Andrew. 2006. “Beauty as a Symbol of Natural Systematicity,” in: *British Journal of Aesthetics* 46; and Chignell, Andrew. 2010. “Real Repugnance and Belief about Things-in-Themselves,” in: *Kant's Moral Metaphysics*, B. Lipscomb and J. Krueger (eds.), Berlin: de Gruyter, 177–209; for more expansive versions of this argument and of the claims about symbolization generally.

from whom many of us have received in gratitude the occasional tobacco item of a summer's evening in Berlin.

Somewhat closer to aesthetics is Kant's intriguing remark, earlier in the same lecture material, that someone who is bitten by tarantulas

will alternately cry, laugh, dance, and be sad. Such a person cannot tolerate [the colors] black or blue. One cures him through music, primarily of the cither, oboe, trumpet, and violin, via which, when one achieves the right tone and the most fitting melody, he is brought to dancing, sweating, and ultimately to health. *Those who are stung by scorpions also love music, chiefly the sackpipe and drums* (9:350, my emphasis).

The connection Kant draws here between the purpose of curing someone who has been bitten by a scorpion and the purposive aesthetic qualities of danceable sackpipe music is, to say the least, somewhat strained. Fortunately, this too is not the kind of Red Scorpion we are concerned with here, although the biological kind may be the ultimate origin of the term.

The Red Scorpion I'm referring to, rather, is a product of the cocktail artist at a bistro called *Via Nova*, just a block away from our colloquium's meeting place at the Humboldt Universität zu Berlin. Like its namesake, this Red Scorpion tends to be seen only at night, and it has a bright red color – a result of an artful mixture of brown rum, white rum, maracuja syrup, triple sec, lemon juice and orange juice.<sup>17</sup> In place of a stinging tail, the Red Scorpion is served with one of those wooden toothpick umbrellas that can, if you're not careful while sipping from the glass, effect a minor injury to the face or eye.

Now Kant himself would not have approved of the thought that a drink could be aesthetically appealing: he cites "Canary wine" as something that is entirely agreeable but not pleasurable in the aesthetic way, even if it comes from Teneriffe. But let's suppose, in honor of Rolf, that a cocktail like the Red Scorpion really is a kind of artwork ... the way it appeals to the eye with a scarlet that is deeper than cinnabar, the way the bright umbrella seems rise, effortlessly, from the carefully arrayed Eiswürfel (so hard to find in Germany!), the way its coolness and heft feels in the hand as one brings it to the lips, the internal relations between the taste of rums and marajuca and orange and lemon creating a whole that is much more than the sum of its parts. It is this kind of articulated and yet somehow sealed-off and complete structure in the Red Scorpion that allows it perfectly to complement

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<sup>17</sup> Citation for this recipe is from the *Via Nova* menu, Summer 2011 edition, which lists their cocktails alphabetically. Red Scorpion has an auspicious place just after a drink called "Melon Kiss" and just before the familiar drink called "Sex on the Beach" and the somewhat less familiar variation "Sex on the Swimming Pool."

a slice of *Via Nova's* Pizza Napoli and provide us with grounds to abandon our Stammkneipe of many years – the trusty *Deponie* on Georgenstraße – for the sake of *Via Nova*, despite their awful table service. It is this kind of (apparently!) effortless combination of aesthetic qualities, indicative of real genius on the part of the bartender, that makes it reasonable for the devotee of the Red Scorpion (after urging everyone else in the colloquium to try it and encountering responses ranging from feigned appreciation to neutrality to open repulsion from those who did) to follow the example of Kant's young poet in the third *Critique* and maintain that only he is engaging in a truly disinterested and properly aesthetic evaluation of it (5:282–3).

But, getting back to our serious inquiry here, it is also precisely these qualities of unity amidst diversity, internal relations that seem somehow complete, and perfect part-whole interconnections that allow it symbolically to serve as an analogical exhibition of the rational idea of systematicity. And this would be true not only of a brilliant *Gesamtkunstwerk* like the Red Scorpion, but also of natural objects that displayed these kinds of properties.<sup>18</sup> Significantly, then, formal relations *as well as form-content relations in the objects* – either natural or artificial – can symbolically exhibit a key rational idea: that of systematicity in nature. When they do so in a particularly rich or effective way, we are led, via the richness of this ideational content, naturally to reflect in a kind of associative fashion on what is being presented, to call up the object's various aesthetic attributes and other associations, and ultimately to undergo the experience of an aesthetic idea. The pleasure in the subjective form of this experience is essential to the aesthetic judgment, but the connection to a particular object goes by way of the latter's ability to symbolize – in a particularly rich and effective way – the object of a rational idea, and thus to cause an aesthetic idea in us.

An objector might worry that Kant's theory of taste on this interpretation threatens to be too narrow – it ascribes beauty only to those objects, works, or vistas that can be associated somehow with rational ideas. Like Plato on a common reading of the *Symposium*, Kant on the present interpretation is so fixated on the ideas of reason that he denigrates important this-worldly aspects of art and nature, aspects which clearly contribute to their aesthetic success.

But note, as an initial response to this worry, that although this would be a problem for readings that insist that an appeal to *moral* ideas is the only way to fill the gap in the Deduction, Kant's own appeal to the example of Friedrich's poem

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<sup>18</sup> For example, a proportionate and well-formed egg (which, it is worth noting, has traditionally been thought preferable to a scorpion of any sort – see, e.g., the rhetorical question at *Luke* 11:12: “Or if he asks you for an egg, would you give him a scorpion?”).

highlights the fact that the domain of ideas, for him, is quite vast. It is not that all great art points narrowly to the One or the Good; rather, there is a huge array of cosmological, metaphysical, mathematical, and (yes) moral ideas that can be symbolized in art – even in purely formalistic art, it turns out – and all such symbolizations (when they are wrought in a certain “way”) can serve as the occasion for aesthetic response.

By way of further response, however, it is worth admitting that there is an unmistakable Platonic flavor to the theory. Kant is suggesting that one of the main goals of art- and nature-appreciation is to help us catch sight of the transcendent objects of ideas. His language is that of both aesthetic appreciation and Platonic *eros* when he asks, in the first *Critique*:

Why has Providence set many objects, although they are intimately connected with our highest interest, so high that it is barely granted to us to encounter them in an indistinct perception, doubted even by ourselves, through which our searching glance is more enticed than satisfied?” (A 743–4/B 771–2).

According to the picture presented here, one answer would be: So that we would make beautiful things, and learn to appreciate beautiful nature. That kind of beauty entices us by giving us symbols – indistinct perceptions, doubted even by ourselves – of rational ideas.

The account as I’ve begun to outline it here meets the conditions set out by the Analytic: aesthetic pleasure arises out of the form and feeling of the subjective experience and is not based directly in any intellectual or empirical interests. It just happens that, for Kant, rational ideas are (or offer) the only themes rich enough to evoke aesthetic ideas in us. So the metaphysical, mathematical, cosmological, or moral content of the artwork will be *indirectly* – Kant says “remotely” – connected to the judgment that the object is beautiful (5:326). However, this content itself – whatever other interests it may satisfy or engender – is not the direct basis for a judgment of taste. Rather, the disinterested pleasure involved in experiencing aesthetic ideas is. Thus we can say – *a priori*, as Kant puts it – that only those objects that occasion aesthetic ideas by way of symbolically exhibiting rational ideas *in a particularly fruitful way* will be beautiful for every beholder. The clause about the “way,” of course, is what allows us to rule out Ogilby on Kant’s behalf.

We have also seen that this condition provides a sense of what sort of art critic a true Kantian would be. She would seek to be fastidiously disinterested herself, and would point out the possible prejudices and interests that lead people to make misleading judgments in a given context. The claim in this paper is that the ideal Kantian critic would also seek to draw our attention to the subtle, creative, and

hard-to-describe ways in which ideas are symbolically expressed in successful artworks and beautiful nature, and thus to the complex manner in which metaphysical, moral, cosmological and mathematical content impinges on the domain of aesthetic taste.<sup>19</sup>

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