

# Chapter 9: Missing Aesthetic Judgment

## Chapter Overview

Hegel's understanding of aesthetics is contrasted with Kant's. It is proposed that a re-evaluation of Kant's aesthetics as well as theoretical and practical reason of the last two chapters opens access to a rich alternative to either Hegelian Idealism or Strauß' Materialism of 1872. Eight steps are followed to unpack the differences between Hegel and Kant on aesthetic judgment.

- I) Hegel on Apperception and Apprehension
- II) Hegel on Beauty
- III) Hegel on the Sublime
- IV) General Remarks on Kant's Beauty and the Sublime
- V) Kant on Beauty
- VI) Kant on the Sublime
- VII) On Hegel's Reading of Kant on Beauty and the Sublime
- VIII) On Hegel's Insistence that Kant's Reason is Weak

The thesis is developed further that a valuable, heuristic strategy not only for reading Hegel's/early Strauß' meta-narrative of Absolute Spirit's Double Negation but also to grasp Strauß' criticisms of Kant across his career is to view Hegel's metaphysics and epistemology as a 'reclined Plato. This reading takes Plato's Simile of the Line not to be a stick drawing of a static, standing human being but includes 'history' by viewing Plato's line horizontally. I take Hegel to have added a top-down dialectic of 'First Negation' to Plato's bottom-up dialectic of 'return' to the Good, which is Hegel's Absolute Spirit.

Although Strauß early on rejected Hegel's meta-narrative of Double Negation, he retained, but dramatically modified, Hegel's claim that 'linear history' is 'necessary' for understanding the human condition.

## I) Hegel on Apperception and Apprehension

Hegel equates 'apperception' and 'apprehension,' which is crucial not only for his understanding of the sublime but also for his equating of the sublime and beauty.

For Hegel, 'apperception' is 'apprehension,' as the *a posteriori* unity of *finite consciousness*, which Hegel takes to be causally 'necessary' for there to be conscious of an 'other' of nature's multiplicity and which, even if unaware of it, includes its own 'otherness' to finitude, that is, Absolute Unity/Absolute Spirit. In terms of Plato's Simile of the Line, Hegel takes *apperception as apprehension* to be what Plato calls the 'understanding' below 'reason.' With 'pure' reason as Absolute Unity/Spirit,<sup>1</sup> Hegel

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1. Hegel, of course, doesn't grasp that his Absolute Knowledge of Absolute Spirit is an assumption because he doesn't understand that all causal 'explanations' are a deduction on the part of reflecting judgment demanded by phenomena that themselves are only the effects of causality. Finite consciousness has no direct access to causes, and a logic of dialectic is incapable, except by a *μετάβασις εις ἄλλο γένος dictum (Machtspruch)*, of explaining the 'leap' across the gap between abstraction and representations. Hegel and Strauß overlook that Kant had already rejected the adequacy of dialectic to

provides a causal account of 'logical necessity' for Absolute Unity to become aware of Itself by the meta-narrative of Double Negation.

Given his reading of *apperception/apperception*, Hegel claims that Kant understands 'transcendental apperception' to mean 'perceptual apprehension' below 'reason.'

[...] the transcendental nature of [... the Kantian] categories [of the understanding<sup>2</sup>] is [...] that the 'I' is the unity which connects the empirical substrate of representations. This unity of self-consciousness is the transcendental unity of apperception; and the particular way in which this [empirical] substrate is connected in self-consciousness is a particular category [...] Kant says, these [categories] do not appear in perception [...] The [finite] thinking mind is thus the source [Quelle] of the categories, of the quite general determinations of thought [Denkbestimmungen]. In themselves these [categories] are empty, unrealized, and belong to thinking. [Categories] require a substrate in order that they may be realized.<sup>3</sup> [According to Kant], [t]hey have a content [Inhalt] only through the given manifold substrate of perception; they are the relation, the bringing into unity of the manifold substrates, and have meaning only through their connection with these substrates. This realization comes to us from sensuality, from perception, from contemplation, from feeling, and so on.<sup>4</sup> (emphasis added)

Here, then, we have an example of how Hegel shares metaphors with Kant but not the same meanings of those metaphors. Hegel is taking Kant's *apperception* to mean merely a dialectical synthesis of perceptible *apprehension* (*apprehensio*).<sup>5</sup> However, Kant distinguishes illimitable *apperception* (*comprehensio logica*), the sublime, from limited perception (*Anschauung*) *comprehensio aesthetica*.<sup>6</sup>

Aesthetic judgment for Kant is not limited to 'art' [*Kunst*] or Rousseau's 'Second Nature' of humanly constructed 'culture' on top of nature. Rather, Kant takes the term 'aesthetic' from the Greek αἰσθησις, which means 'to perceive' in the subjective sense of experiencing appearances in consciousness. In other words, aesthetic judgment

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establish the ultimate ground of all 'that is'. On Kant's rejection of dialectic for grounding the ultimate, causal ground of 'what is,' see *Critique of Pure Reason* 697 and Chapter 6: 670.

2. Kant distinguishes between the twelve categories of the understanding' (three each under 'Quantity,' 'Quality,' 'Relation,' and 'Modality' (*Critique of Pure Reason* B 106)) and the three 'ideas of pure reason' (the soul, cosmology/freedom, and God in his "System of Transcendental Ideas" (*Critique of Pure Reason* B 390 ff)).

3. Hegel's claim with respect to a 'substrate' is a classic example of what Kant means by subreption, a notion found already in his earliest writings that is retained across his corpus. See the "Preface:" 64, n. 84.

4. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie* GW XX: 346.

5. See below: "2) On the 'Mathematical' Sublime:" 896". Kant distinguishes between *comprehensio aesthetica* as comprehension (*Zusammenfassung*) in reference to the sublime and *apprehensio* (*Auffassung*), which he takes to be the conceptual understanding that occurs by grasping perceived phenomena. In short, *comprehensio aesthetica* turns 'inward' to consciousness whereas *apprehensio* is focused 'outward' to the world. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 251–252.

6. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 254.

is concerned with the subject's capacities to perceive and understand objects.<sup>7</sup> The 'how' of perception in aesthetic judgment requires a 'critique' to establish/deduce the *a priori* theoretical principles<sup>8</sup> (not empirical process) required by understanding in order for perception to occur. Kant takes the core of aesthetic judgment to rest on a distinction between the two capacities of judgment: *reflecting* judgment (*reflektierende Urteilskraft*) and *re-producing* judgment (*bestimmende Urteilskraft*). In short, *'aesthetic' judgment for Kant is concerned with sense perception/comprehension (Greek: αἴσθησις), not what Hegel calls either beauty or the sublime.*

As the quote just above makes clear, Hegel takes *reflecting* judgment to be the individual subject's construction as 'origin' (*Quelle*) of the concepts that it applies to a set of phenomena. He fails to grasp Kant's portrayal of reflecting judgment as the 'deductive' search for the appropriate concept out of the imperceptible relationality<sup>9</sup> of a set of phenomena of sense perception as the 'deducing' (but not creating and determining) of a concept that enables the understanding of the set of phenomena. Rather, Hegel not only turns Kant into a solipsistic, subjective constructivist in conformity with his reading of Fichte, but, *ignoring Kant's explicit rejection of 'constructivism' (Erdichtung)*,<sup>10</sup> he also entirely ignores what Kant means by 'apperception' and the sublime as '*comprehensio aesthetica*.'<sup>11</sup>

According to Hegel, as I present in what follows, both beauty and the sublime apply to 'reason' (absolute truth), not 'understanding' (subjectivity). They are indicators of the causal, 'logical' necessity of the 'highest unity' that is Absolute Spirit beyond all sensuousness.

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7. See Kant, "VII. On Aesthetic Representation of Nature's Purposiveness" in the "Introduction" to *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 188–189 where Kant distinguishes subjective, aesthetic judgment from objective 'knowledge': "The only thing that is subjective about *the idea of an object*, that is, its relation to the subject and not to the object, *is its aesthetic quality*; but what serves or can be used to determine the object (for cognition) is *its logical validity*. *In the knowledge of an object of the senses, both relations occur together.*

8. On Kant's distinction between the '*theoretical* principles' of aesthetic judgment and the '*metaphysical*' principles of theoretical and practical reason and, see below: "On Theoretical and Metaphysical Principles:' 873 ff.

9. On Kant's notions of wit and reflecting judgment that employ the *Law of Association* to deduce concepts and to rein in wit's imagination to subsume phenomena under a concept, see "On Imagination, the Law of association, and Reflecting Judgment" at: 86, n. 26.

10. See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B xxxix\*.

11. See the distinction between *comprehensio aesthetica* and *apprehensio*: 866, n. 5.

## II) Hegel on Beauty

Hegel presented the core element of his understanding of Kant on ‘beauty’ along with emphasizing Kant’s ‘failure’ to understanding the significance of Absolute Spirit already in 1802.

According to Kant, an aesthetic idea cannot become knowledge, because it is a perception of the imagination, which can never be found adequate to a concept. An Idea of reason can never become knowledge [McG: but remains a ‘regulative’, that is, a necessarily ‘assumed’ idea], because it contains a concept of the supersensible, to which a perception can never be found adequate.<sup>12</sup> The former [is] an inexponible concept of the imagination, the latter an indemonstrable concept of reason.<sup>13</sup>

Noteworthy about Hegel’s formulation of the issue of beauty is that Hegel is saying that Kant’s denial of a concept for beauty is because humanity only has access to appearances, which would mean that Kant denies the reality of concept, universally, not merely for beauty. Furthermore, Hegel maintains that beauty for Kant is concerned with objective phenomena and ignores Kant’s emphasis on the theme that beauty is a judgment *by and about the subject*. Hegel’s formulation with respect to the Absolute Concept ignores Kant’s insight that the three ‘ideas’ of reason (God, freedom/cosmos, and enduring identity of the self) are necessary *regulative ideas* (assumptions) that are required as the answer to the question: how are *a priori* syntghetic judgments possible, not as the Absolute causal explanation of all ‘that is’.

According to Plato, beauty, the Good, and truth are at the pinnacle, and the very principle, of the imperceptible unification that is ‘reality.’ Plato writes in the *Philebus* that the ‘Good’ is placed ‘above everything else’ in conjunction with beauty, proportion, and truth.<sup>14</sup> Because beauty is the highest value as ‘proper measure and proportion’ of multiplicity, it is the measure and proportion of all excellence.<sup>15</sup> To be sure, Plato subordinates ‘reason and pleasure’ to the Good *because reason and pleasure are ‘short of self-sufficiency’ and the quality of being ‘self-satisfaction’ and ‘perfect.’* However, their subordination to the Good is not because they are merely subjective assumptions and constructions. This Platonic understanding of the relationship among the Good in conjunction with beauty, proportion, and truth appears to govern Hegel’s aesthetics.

Hegel, having ‘reclined Plato’ on the *chaise lounge* (κλίνη) of the Symposium<sup>16</sup> and replaced the Platonic two-step (original and copy) account of creation by a historically

12. I take Hegel to be referring here to Kant’s three ‘ideas of pure reason’ in the *Critique of Pure Reason* See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 395\*.

13. Hegel, “Glauben und Wissen.” GW II: 323.

14. See Plato, *Philebus*: 65a.

15. See Plato, *Philebus*: 64d-e.

16. See Chapter 8: “Hegel’s Reclined Plato and Kant as a ‘Subjectivist’” 811 ff.

linear causal account of all ‘that is’, adds a ‘top-down,’ system of dialectical, causal explanation complementary to Plato’s bottom-up dialectic of epistemology.

For Hegel there are two forms of ‘unity’ or ‘synthesis:’ the singular, *a priori* unity/synthesis of Absolute Spirit and the multiple *a posteriori* unities/syntheses of dialectical apperception by finite consciousness. Hegel takes *the singular, a priori* synthesis of Absolute Spirit to be the ultimate, eminent causality of creation that *necessarily* generates a process of negation into multiplicity. The dialectical negations *within multiplicity* establish, eventually, the conditions for finite, conscious experience of the ‘point of indifference’ to return to Absolute Spirit.

One can map Hegel’s understanding of beauty and the sublime onto Plato’s discussion of beauty and the Good analogously to his mapping of reason and understanding onto Plato’s Simile of the Line. When one does, one is by no means surprised when one sees that Hegel equates beauty and the sublime. *All that is surprising about Hegel’s discussion of aesthetics is that he tries his best to squeeze Kant into his ‘Platonic’ framework.*

Hegel writes with clearly Kantian metaphors in his *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie* as he accuses Kant of failing to grasp that ‘beauty’ and the ‘sublime’ are identical to the extent that Kant ignores the ‘higher unity’ of Absolute Spirit. Employing Kantian metaphors, Hegel formulates his (Platonic) notions of beauty and the sublime:

[...] the first rational word about beauty [is]: the sensual is one moment of beauty. Then, [the second moment is] *beauty must reveal the mental, the Concept.*

*Beauty [das Schöne according to Hegel’s reading of Kant] is what is presented without subjective interest, – what is presented without concepts (determinations of reflection) as object of a general pleasure. It does not refer to any inclination, so the subject feels completely free in it [...] The sublime [according to Hegel’s reading of Kant] is the endeavor to represent an idea sensually, where at the same time the inadequacy, the inability of the idea to be grasped by the sensual is represented.*

[I]n the aesthetic capacity that is judgment [*Urteilkraft*], we see [McG: however, Kant didn’t] the immediate unity of the universal and the particular; for beauty is precisely this *conceptless, immediate unity*. Kant places it in the subject; and it is something subjective, or better, limited, – and as aesthetic also lower, insofar as it is not the conceived unity [Itself of the Absolute Concept].<sup>17</sup> (emphasis added)

According to Hegel, though, the ‘sublime’ is *the higher a priori unity of Absolute Spirit*, which is the causal ‘necessity’ for there to be multiplicity and which, in turn, is the cause of finite awareness in the first place. However, just as Plato’s Good is the beautiful, so, too, Hegel’s sublime and beauty are equivalent.

The opening paragraph of Hegel’s “The Concept of Beauty Itself” in his *Lectures on Aesthetics* confirm the relationship between the Concept (Absolute Spirit) and the ‘idea’ of beauty. Hegel employs his epistemological structure of content (*Inhalt*)

17. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie* GW XX: 378.

and form (*Vorstellungen*/representations) to establish the relationship between the Concept as ‘true’ content and beauty as ‘real’ form. Absolute Spirit and beauty are two sides of the same coin – ‘true’ Absolute Unity and the totality that is its ‘real’ multiplicity:’

We called *beauty the idea of beauty* [McG: Unlike Kant, Hegel’s beauty is an idea]. This is to be understood in such a way that beauty itself must be conceived as an idea, namely as an idea in a certain form, as an ideal. Now *idea in general is nothing else than the Concept, the reality of the Concept, and the unity of both*. For the Concept as such is not yet the idea, although concept and idea are often used promiscuously; but [the idea is] only the Concept present in its reality and set in unity with It [the Concept] is idea. This unity, however, must not be imagined as a mere neutralization of concept and reality, so that both lose their peculiarity and quality, as potash and acid neutralize each other in salt, in so far as they have blunted their opposition to each other. On the contrary, *in this unity the Concept remains the dominant thing*. For It is in Itself already this identity according to Its own nature and, therefore, produces from Itself the reality as Its own, in which It therefore, because It is It self-development, gives up nothing of Itself, but realizes in It only Itself, the Concept, and therefore remains in unity with Itself in Its objectivity. Such unity of the Concept and reality is the abstract definition of the idea [of beauty].<sup>18</sup> (emphasis added)

Hegel no more collapses together the Concept and beauty than Plato collapses the Good and beauty. However, Hegel makes it clear that, although there is a difference between the Concept and beauty, beauty is the ‘actuality’ (*Realität*) of the Concept whereas the Concept is the ultimate origin of all ‘actuality.’

### III) Hegel on the Sublime

Hegel formulates his elevated role of Absolute Spirit, the Concept, in his *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik*. Speaking of Absolute Spirit as ‘formless substance,’ Hegel writes that:

[...] substance is elevated above the individual appearance in which it is to be represented, although it can only be expressed in relation to that which appears in general, because as substance and essence it is in itself formless and inaccessible to concrete contemplation.<sup>19</sup>

Hegel then adds:

[...] [A]t this stage, substance is regarded as immanent in all its created accidents, which are therefore not yet degraded as serving and as mere ornaments for the glorification of the Absolute, but are affirmatively preserved by the inherent substance. The poet, who sees and admires this One in everything and, like the things, also immerses himself (*sic.*) in this

18. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik* GW XIII: 145.

19. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik* GW XIII: 468.

view, is thus able to maintain a positive relationship to the substance with which he links everything.<sup>20</sup>

Speaking of Absolute Spirit/Concept as 'God,' Hegel then claims that, properly understood, it is the origin and teleological goal all that is:

[...] [T]he power and glory of the one God [Absolute Spirit] we meet as real sublimity in Hebrew poetry. It abolishes the positive immanence of the Absolute in the created phenomena and places the one substance for itself as the Lord of the world on one side, opposite which the totality of creatures stands and, when brought in relation to God, [the totality of creatures] is set as the powerless and disappearing in itself. If now the power and wisdom of the One [Absolute Spirit] is to be *represented by the finiteness of natural things and human destinies*, then [...] the sublimity of God is brought closer to view by the fact that what is there [as the totality of creatures], with all its splendor, its magnificence, and glory,<sup>21</sup> is represented only as *a serving accent and a passing appearance in comparison with God's Being and strength*.<sup>22</sup> (emphasis added)

In his *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik*, as well, Hegel writes of the sublime that

*The sublime in general is the attempt to express the infinite without finding an object in the realm of appearances which would be suitable for this representation. The infinite, exactly because it is put out of the whole complex of the representational for Itself as invisible, formless meaning and is made inward, remains inexpressible according to Its infinity and sublime over every expression by finitude*.<sup>23</sup> (emphasis added)

The sublime is the imperceptible 'One' of 'formless substance' to all that is. In the experience of the sublime, "[...] substance is elevated above the individual appearance in which it is represented, although it can only be expressed in relation to that which appears in general, because as substance and essence *It is in Itself formless*<sup>24</sup> and *inaccessible to concrete contemplation*.<sup>25</sup> (emphasis added)

[The sublime] is the One that is substance in relation to the totality of appearances, which itself, as pure thought and is only for pure thought. Therefore, this substance now ceases to be able to have its form in something external, and, insofar as the actually symbolic character disappears. However, as unique in Itself, *It is only possible to perceive substance if It is conceived* [...] *as the creative power of all things* [...] [S]ubstance rises above individual appearances as such, as above their totality, whereby [...] it is purified from appearing particularity which is not appropriate to substance [...] This [external] presentation is sublimity, which is itself destroyed by that which interprets it, so that the interpretation of Its content [Inhalt] exposes the nullification [Aufheben] of that which is interpreted. *We*,

20. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik* GW XIII: 469.

21. In light of the opening paragraph of "The Concept of Beauty" above, Hegel's totality of finite, natural things in all its splendor, magnificence and glory is nothing other than the 'idea' of beauty.

22. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik* GW XIII: 469.

23. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik* GW XIII: 467.

24. The 'form' of the sublime/Concept is the totality of all representations, the very 'idea of beauty'.

25. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik* GW XIII: 468.

therefore, must not, as Kant does, relegate sublimity to the merely subjective of the mind and its ideas of reason, but must conceive it as the content [Inhalt] represented as the one, absolute substance. (emphasis added)<sup>26</sup>

As the case with Kant's notion of beauty, Hegel's criticism of Kant's notion of the sublime, as I will show below, is exactly the same. Mapped onto Plato's *pre-figured* account of the Similes of the Sun and Line and discussion of the Good and the beautiful, to which I referred above,<sup>27</sup> it seems clear that Hegel derives his conception of the commonality between the sublime and the beautiful from Plato. *The sublime, according to Hegel, is the Good (Hegel's Absolute Spirit) that Plato speaks of as the unity above concepts (Republic 509b: ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας), yet conjoined with beauty because beauty is the 'proper measure and proportion (harmony) of all excellence' expressed by Hegel as the 'immediate unity of the universal and the particular,' which is the same as sublimity but 'lower' because the particularities of the experience of beauty are 'limited,' 'lower,' and 'not the conceived unity Itself' of the Good/sublime. Hegel faults Kant for placing sublimity and beauty into the subject as a 'weak,' psychological judgment of understanding, not as a grasp of Absolute Reason's 'strength' as the Absolute Concept, Absolute Knowledge, and Absolute Freedom.,.*

#### IV) General Remarks on Kant's Beauty and the Sublime

An all too common attitude toward 'metaphor' and 'aesthetics' is that they are both merely 'frosting on the cake.' What 'really' matters are concrete facts not figurative embellishments. However, Kant demonstrates that *metaphor and the 'feelings' of 'aesthetics' experienced in beauty and the sublime are, actually, at the core of all experience, understanding, and exercising of responsible agency, not merely figurative embellishments or frosting on the cake baked out of merely empirical facts.*<sup>28</sup>

Although neither consists of 'conceptual knowledge,' the ability to experience the feeling of the beautiful and the feeling of the sublime are not tangential but essential to humanity, according to Kant. *Contrary to a popular impression that Kant was simply 'a*

26. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik* GW XIII: 467–468.

27. On the Similes of the Sun and Line, see Chapter 8: "Hegel's Reclined Plato and Kant as a 'Subjectivist'" 811 ff. On the Good and the Beautiful in Plato's *Philebus*, see Chapter 9: "Hegel on Beauty" 868 ff.

28. On the centrality of metaphor in experience and understanding formulated in terms of Paul Ricoeur's theory of metaphor, see "Reality as Vitality Metaphoric" in McGaughey, *Strangers and Pilgrims*: 263–266. Ricoeur's theory of metaphor can be mapped onto Kant's notion of 'reflecting' judgment. However, Kant goes much further than Ricoeur with his portrayal of the importance of the feelings of beauty and sublime, precisely as the *transcendental* principles (not *metaphysical* principles), for understanding the human condition as transcendental consciousness.

*talking head* for whom all that mattered was dis-interested, 'rational thought,' the very core of Kant's philosophy is feeling.

Any reading of Kant that claims that Kant sought to eliminate any sense of 'interest' in understanding and agency fatefully ignores Section II of the *Groundwork* in which Kant claims that, far from eliminating 'interest,' we are incapable of discerning whether or not we are acting out of self-interest. What we can know, though, is whether or not we are acting *exclusively* on the basis of self- or communal interest. With his 'critique' of the *transcendental* principles of reason in addition to the *metaphysical* principles illuminated by the first two *Critiques*, Kant demonstrates that at the core of transcendental consciousness is not 'cold rationalism' but feeling.

### 1) On Theoretical and Metaphysical Principles

Immediately following his presentation of the core distinction between *reflecting* and *re-producing* judgment in the "Introduction" of the *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment*, Kant presents the even more crucial theme of the distinction between 'metaphysical' and 'transcendental' principles.<sup>29</sup> *Both forms of principles are a priori synthetic judgments that must be 'added' to experience because they are not directly given in phenomena.* The logic of *metaphysical* principles is: given a physical world, these supersensible principles are what are required for there to be anything like understanding and responsible agency in that physical world.

Kant's first two *Critiques* are a presentation of the not merely assumed but also required *a priori*, *metaphysical* principles for understanding (theoretical reason) (the goal of the first *Critique*) and responsible agency (practical reason) *in the world* (the goal of the second *Critique*). Without these *metaphysical* principles, transcendental consciousness cannot be and do what it is/does. Theoretical and practical reason require and presuppose the same *metaphysical* principles of concepts, which are organized under the 'categories of the understanding' and culminate in the ultimate goal of the first *Critique* that is what Kant calls the 'ideas of pure reason' (God, the enduring identity of the self, and cosmology/freedom). These three 'ideas of pure reason' are required for both theoretical (understanding) and practical reason (responsible, active agency).

Kant's third *Critique*, the *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment*, is concerned not with *metaphysical* of theoretical and practical reason but with those *a priori transcendental* principles which *make possible transcendental consciousness itself*, rather than offering an account of the 'metaphysical conditions of possibility' In addition to, and simultaneously with, theoretical and practical reason with their focus on, and

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29. See section "V. The Principle of the Formal Purposiveness of Nature is a Transcendental Principle of Judgment" in Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 181 ff. See as well, below: "On Theoretical and Metaphysical Principles:" 873 ff.

dependence upon, both phenomena and the ‘ideas of pure reason, transcendental consciousness has its own capacities that are required for the experience of phenomena but not reducible to the metaphysical principles *a priori* concepts of the understanding and ideas of reason in general. *Kant calls judgments concerning transcendental consciousness itself aesthetic judgments. They are possible, yes, only because transcendental consciousness perceives phenomena in a world, but their concern is not directly with understanding and responsible agency in the world.*

To be sure, as far as we have ever experienced, there is no *transcendental* consciousness independent of the *phenomenal* world so that neither *metaphysical* nor *transcendental* principles have anything to do with some field, territory, or domain<sup>30</sup> beyond the world of concrete appearances. Note: Kant is not describing a metaphysical dualism! However, there is no experience of a world of appearances/sensation, just as there is no understanding of, or intentional agency in, a world of appearances/sensation without ‘supersensible,’ transcendental consciousness that is *different, but not separated, from* the sensible world of phenomena. Nonetheless, in order for us to experience, understand, and exercise responsible agency as we do, we must possess capacities that are entirely *supersensible* yet complementary to, but not *separable* from, the *sensible* world.

As the case with the deduction of the *metaphysical* principles, the deduction of the *transcendental* principles of consciousness first requires an ‘analytic,’ the distinguishing (*diairesis/dihairesis/διάκρισις*)<sup>31</sup> between and among those capacities of judgment that make any and all perception (aisthesis/ αἴσθησις) possible for a supersensible consciousness. There are two foci for Kants ‘analytic’ of the *transcendental* principles of consciousness. When it comes to the *transcendental* principles of consciousness (that is, the conditions of possibility for the *internal* functioning of transcendental consciousness itself) Kant begins by an ‘analytic’ *within consciousness* analogous to the *metaphysical* principles that make possible theoretical and practical reason’s *understanding* of external phenomena. The two foci are an analytic of beauty and an analytic of the sublime.

Both of these analytics are followed with a ‘deduction’ of the legitimacy of the claims arrived at in the ‘analytic’ of beauty and the sublime. It is this step of ‘deduction’ that justifies Kant’s use of the notion ‘critique’ in the title of the third *Critique*. Just as the first *Critique, Critique of Pure Reason*, presents the ‘deduction’ of the *metaphysical* concepts of the understanding in theoretical reason and the second *Critique* presents the ‘deduction’ of the *metaphysical* causality of autonomous freedom in practical reason, the third *Critique, Critique of the Capacity of Judgment*, presents a *transcendental* ‘deduction’ of the three capacities of consciousness that are required

30. On Kant’s distinctions among ‘field,’ ‘territory,’ and ‘domain,’ see Chapter 1: 116.

31. On *diairesis/dihairesis/διάκρισις*, see Chapter 3: “Academic Controversy:” the section “Academic Controversy Based on Criticism (*diairesis*):” 219 ff.

for both theoretical and practical reason to occur as they do. These three capacities of transcendental consciousness that are grounded in *transcendental* principles rather than being merely *metaphysical* principles are: 1) judgments of beauty; 2) judgments of the sublime; and 3) judgments of top-down, teleological purposiveness in nature.<sup>32</sup>

I return below to unpack the relationship of beauty (as ‘symbol of the moral’) and the sublime (as ‘feeling for moral ideas’).

Judgments of beauty and the sublime are distinct, but related, supersensible capacities of transcendental consciousness, according to Kant. They require their own ‘critique’ and ‘deduction’ because, unlike theoretical and practical reason (with their metaphysical principles illuminated by the ‘critiques’ and ‘deductions’ of the first two *Critiques*), the aim of judgments of beauty and the sublime is not a judgment about phenomena but, rather, a judgment about imperceptible consciousness itself – although judgments of beauty and the sublime are stimulated by perception of phenomena (αἴσθησις/aesthesis/perception). Beauty is to the sublime as understanding is to reason (beauty : sublime : understanding : reason). Beauty is the internal, harmonious play of the mind absent concepts, yet with a claim to universality, whereas the sublime is the reminder that everything is dependent upon reason’s lawfulness.<sup>33</sup> Together, beauty and the sublime are key to grasping the incalculable strength and extra-ordinary ‘capacity’<sup>34</sup> of judgment (*Urteils-kraft*) even in the face of the threatening power [*Kraft*] of nature.

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32. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* XX V: 193–194. Especially with respect to the judgment of teleological purposiveness in nature, Kant writes later in the *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* “[... It] cannot rest merely on grounds in experience but must have as its ground some sort of *a priori* principle, even if it is merely regulative and even if that end lies only in the idea of the one who judges and never in any efficient cause.” (V: 376) “[...] [T]his concept leads reason into an order of things entirely different from that of a mere mechanism of nature [...] An idea has to ground the possibility of the product of nature. However, because this is an absolute unity of the representation, while the matter is a multitude of things, which by itself can provide no determinate unity of composition, if that unity of the idea is even to serve as the determining ground *a priori* of a natural law of the causality of such a form of the composite, then the end of nature must extend to everything that lies in its produce. For once we have related such an effect in the whole to a supersensible determining ground beyond the blind mechanism of nature, we must also judge it entirely in accordance with this principle; and there is no ground for assuming that the form of such a thing is only partially dependent on the latter, for in such a case, in which two heterogeneous principles are jumbled together, no secure rule for judging would remain at all.” (V: 377).

33. Kant writes of beauty and the sublime: “[...] by means of [... the beautiful], freedom is represented more in play than as subject to a lawful business [...], whereas reason must exercise dominion over sensibility. [...] [I]n the aesthetic judgment of the sublime this dominion is represented as being exercised by the imagination itself, as an instrument of reason.” Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 268–269 Consisting of repulsion and attraction, the sublime’s repulsion is over the threat of the ‘abyss’ whereas its attraction is to ‘lawfulness.’ See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 258.

34. On my reasons for using ‘capacity’ of judgment rather than ‘power’ of judgment for *Urteilkraft*, see the “Introduction:” 86, n. 26.

In his *Anthropology in a Pragmatic Sense*, Kant described the distinction, yet similarities, between beauty and sublime as follows:

The sublime is awe-inspiring magnitude (*magnitudo reverenda*) according to the extent or degree to which approximating it (to be adequate to it with its forces) is *inviting* [pleasurable]. However, at the same time, the fear of one's own annihilation by comparison with it in its own estimation is a *deterrent* [displeasing] (e.g., the thunder above our head, or a high wild mountain); whereas, when one is safe oneself, gathering one's forces to grasp the phenomenon, and preoccupied with being able to reach its greatness, astonishment (a pleasant feeling through continuous overcoming of pain<sup>35</sup>) is aroused.

The sublime is the counterbalance, but not the antithesis, of the beautiful: because the effort and the attempt to rise to the apprehension of the object [in a judgment of sublimity] awakens in the subject a sense of her/his own greatness and capacity [*Kraft*]; but the conception of it in the description or representation can and must always be beautiful. Otherwise, astonishment becomes [merely] deterrence, which is very different from admiration as an appraisal in which one does not get tired of being astonished.<sup>36</sup>

Given the lack of a concept that governs judgments of beauty and the sublime, the *transcendental* principles investigated in the third *Critique* establish the central place of feeling permeating Kant's entire 'Philosophical Theology.' Because it is a judgment that has no concept under which the judgment of beauty can subsume the diversity of phenomena that it experiences as beautiful, the judgment of beauty is a *feeling*, not knowledge, of *harmonious unity of the 'play' of the mind's (!) capacities*. Furthermore, because it is a judgment that has no concept for grasping the mathematically, absolute whole of appearances or for grasping the power of autonomous freedom that can destroy the very nature that stimulates the experience of the sublime, the sublime is a *feeling*, not knowledge, of the absolute greatness and power of consciousness:

[...] in [...] the judgment of beauty] *the judgment (Urteilkraft) relates the imagination merely to the understanding, as the faculty of concepts, but because the latter [the judgment of sublime] relates the imagination to reason, as the faculty of [pure] ideas, we require it only under a subjective presupposition* (which, however, we believe ourselves to be justified in demanding of everyone), *namely, that of the moral feeling in humanity, and so we also ascribe necessity to this aesthetic judgment.*<sup>37</sup> (emphasis added)

*Aesthetic* judgment, then, has its 'logical validity' not because it is itself a judging by concepts but because it is concerned with sensation (αἴσθησις/aesthesis/perception) as a subjective experience of feeling.<sup>38</sup>

35. Note Kant's invoking his 'negative method' here. See "Kant's 'Negative Method'" at: 45, n. 28.

36. Kant, *Anthropology in a Pragmatic Sense* AA VII: 243.

37. Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 265–266.

38. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 189.

[...] [T]he subjective aspect in a representation [sensation], which cannot become an element of cognition [by concepts or ideas] whatsoever is the *pleasure or displeasure connected with it*; for through this I cognize nothing in the object of the representation although it can well be the effect of some cognition or other.<sup>39</sup> (emphasis added)

The 'subjective aspect' that is not conceptually experienced in appearances is the feeling of *pleasure or displeasure* that is connected with perception.<sup>40</sup> The experience of pleasure and displeasure precedes the cognition of an object as a judgment of 'purposiveness.'<sup>41</sup> In other words, *judgment of 'purposiveness' as judgment of pleasure or displeasure is an original moment of perception* (αἴσθησις). One experiences pleasure (or displeasure, if absent) not only whenever one discerns 'purposiveness' as cognitive or lawful 'order' (one would want today to include statistical significance and algorithmic insight) in experience, but also even when one understands the purpose-less purposiveness of beauty, the terror and confidence of the sublime, or top-down, teleological purpose in order to understand living organisms. Where one encounters the confusion of not understanding or mis-understanding because one cannot grasp any 'purpose' in experience, one's experiences displeasure.

There is an experience of purposiveness when it comes to theoretical and practical reason in that they are both governed by 'pleasing' lawfulness. When theoretical reason dis-covers the conceptual and/or lawful order of perception, it is pleasing. When practical reason applies a moral principle to govern its agency, it is pleasing – even when the application of the moral principle is contrary to the personal interest of the agent.

Kant speaks of the pleasure associated with the grasping of imperceptible 'order' in phenomena as follows:

[...] [I]t may certainly be thought that in spite of all the uniformity of things in nature in accordance with universal laws, without which the [mental] form of an experiential cognition in general would not be possible at all, *the specific diversity of the empirical laws of nature together with their effects could, nevertheless, be so great that it would be impossible for our understanding to discover in them an order that we can grasp* [...]

Judgment, therefore, also has a principle *a priori* for the possibility of nature, but only in a subjective respect, by which it prescribes a law, *not for nature* (as autonomy), *but for itself* (as heautonomy [as a subjective strategy of *reflecting* judgment]), for the reflection on it,<sup>42</sup> This law could be called the law of the specification of nature<sup>43</sup> with respect to its *empirical*

39. Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 189.

40. NOTE though: this is NOT Hegel's accusation that Kant is subjectivist! For Hegel, Kant is a subjectivist because he, according to Hegel, limits reason to 'understanding' on Plato's line simile.

41. Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 189.\

42. On Kant's notions of 'reflecting' and 're-producing' judgment, see in the "Introduction:" 86.

43. Kant defined this 'Law of Specification' in the *Critique of Pure Reason*: "*entium varietates non temere esse minuendas* ('the variety of entities should not be reduced to randomness') B 684.

laws, which it does not recognize a priori in nature, but assumes for the sake of an order of it that is recognizable to our understanding [...]<sup>44</sup>

There is no pleasure experienced merely in brute perception (although brute perception requires the presence of laws unawares) because in brute perception ‘understanding proceeds unintentionally.’

[...] [B]y contrast the [conscious] discovered compatibility of two or more empirical heterogeneous laws of nature under a principle that concerns them both is the cause of a very noticeable pleasure, often even of an admiration, even such that does not cease if one is already very familiar with [...] its object. To be sure, we no longer detect any noticeable pleasure in the comprehensibility of nature and the unity of its division into genera and species [...]. However, it [pleasure] must certainly have been there in its time and is [...] no longer specially noticed. – It thus requires study to make us attentive to the purposiveness of nature for our understanding [...] so that if we succeed [...] pleasure will be felt.<sup>45</sup>

The logic of *transcendental* principles is as follows: Given perception (αἴσθησις), these supersensible principles are what are required for there to be a transcendental consciousness capable of theoretical and practical reason with their own *metaphysical* principles that are required to experience the empirical phenomena that governs them. In contrast to such *metaphysical* principles, *transcendental* principles are concerned with capacities *inherent to transcendental consciousness itself* – not to understand the world or exercise responsible agency in the world. The *transcendental* principles are what elevate transcendental consciousness above nature and ground its esteem.

The three moments of transcendental consciousness that are grounded in *transcendental* principles rather than being merely *metaphysical* principles are: 1) judgments of beauty; 2) judgments of the sublime; and 3) judgments of top-down, teleological purposiveness in nature.<sup>46</sup>

44. Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 185–186.

45. Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* XX V: 187–188.

46. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* XX V: 193–194. Especially with respect to the judgment of teleological purposiveness in nature, Kant writes later in the *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* “[... It] cannot rest merely on grounds in experience but must have as its ground some sort of a *a priori* principle, even if it is merely regulative and even if that end lies only in the idea of the one who judges and never in any efficient cause.” (V: 376) “[...] [T]his concept leads reason into an order of things entirely different from that of a mere mechanism of nature [...] An idea has to ground the possibility of the product of nature. However, because this is an absolute unity of the representation, while the matter is a multitude of things, which by itself can provide no determinate unity of composition, if that unity of the idea is even to serve as the determining ground *a priori* of a natural law of the causality of such a form of the composite, then the end of nature must extend to everything that lies in its produce. For once we have related such an effect in the whole to a supersensible determining ground beyond the blind mechanism of nature, we must also judge it entirely in accordance with this principle; and there is no ground for assuming that the form of such a thing is only partially dependent on the latter, for in such a case, in which two heterogeneous principles are jumbled together, no secure rule for judging would remain at all.” (V: 377).

One might think that Kant is violating his own aphorism from the *Critique of Pure Reason* B 75 that ‘thoughts without content (perception) are empty’ because the notion of *transcendental* principles tells us nothing about particular perceptions, only something about transcendental consciousness itself. If, as the case with theoretical reason, the *transcendental* principle were to be required for the understanding of a perception or if, as the case with practical reason, the *transcendental* principle were to be required for specific, responsible agency, then the *transcendental* principle without empirical content would be an ‘empty’ thought because the supersensible, obviously, is imperceptible.

Nonetheless, even though *transcendental* principles are exclusively *a priori* judgments concerned with supersensible transcendental consciousness, *we have never experienced them as independent of perception*. Judgments of beauty begin with perception (aisthesis/ αἴσθησις); judgments of the sublime begin with perception (aisthesis/ αἴσθησις); judgments of top-down, teleological purpose in nature begin with perception (aisthesis/ αἴσθησις). However, unlike the conceptual order and lawfulness of nature (theoretical reason) and autonomous freedom and the law of morality (practical reason), or bottom-up causality in nature, generally, the ‘purpose’ of aesthetic judgment’s *transcendental* principle is *supersensible* within transcendental consciousness itself. *Transcendental* principles tell us something about our capabilities to experience taste (beauty), feeling (sublime), and heuristic, top-down causality (teleology in nature) *in the world*, but not knowledge about nature, morality, or the (divine) origin of top-down causality.

## 2) On the Place of Kant’s Reflections on Aesthetics in His Corpus

In addition to his concern for theoretical and practical ‘Philosophical Theology,’ Kant in the third *Critique*, the *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* [*Urteilkraft*], establishes the centrality of the capacity of ‘aesthetic’ judgment (from the Greek αἴσθησις, perception). The label aesthetic *judgment* is not accidental because for Kant the issue is not the ‘object’ that stimulates the formulation of an aesthetic judgment but the capacities of transcendental consciousness that make such a judgment possible, in the first place.

*Reflecting* judgment is the central focus of Kant’s third *Critique*, but what is deduced by the *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* as the conditions of possibility of both *reflecting* [*reflektierende*] and *re-producing* [*bestimmende*] judgment are three *transcendental* principles (that is, principles of ‘formal’ or mental, supersensible *purposefulness*), which are required for perceptual experience, generally.

The third *Critique* focuses on the *transcendental* principles of aesthetic judgment of beauty and the sublime with their confirmation of the profound role of feeling (pleasure and displeasure) for transcendental consciousness. In addition, Kant exam-

ines the *transcendental* principle of teleological purposiveness in nature.<sup>47</sup> I unpack the themes of the third *Critique* in what follows.

Transcendental consciousness does not possess ‘by birth’ concepts (understanding) or ideas (reason as a realm independent of the world of perception)<sup>48</sup> for processing sense perception as some kind of Platonic system of innate ideas. We also do not create concepts (not to speak of physical laws and moral principles) at will to require phenomena to be according to our conceptions, nor do we derive concepts directly from empirical phenomena (as the case with Nominalism). Rather, we dis- or un-cover concepts by means of deductive, *reflecting* judgment with respect to the relationalities that imperceptibly govern phenomena.<sup>49</sup>

It is not as if Kant buried his notion of heuristic, reflecting judgment in an obscure text. He writes in the crucial third *Critique*: As an activity of *reflecting* judgment,

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47. The ubiquitous presence of feeling of pleasure and displeasure of Kant’s philosophy could not be in greater contrast to the description that Heinrich Heine, who viewed Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* as “[...] the sword by which Deism was executed in Germany.” Heinrich Heine, *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland* in *Der Salon*, Vol. II (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1834): 188. Heine offers a fictitious description of Kant’s life some two decades after his death. “It is difficult to describe Immanuel Kant’s life because he had neither a life nor a story. He lived a mechanically structured, almost completely abstract life of a confirmed bachelor in a quiet, remote alley in Königsberg, one of the oldest cities at Germany’s northeast border. I don’t believe that the huge clock on the city’s cathedral accomplished its mighty, daily work more passionlessly and routinely than this citizen of the city, Immanuel Kant. Rising, drinking a cup of coffee, writing, teaching classes, eating, taking a walk, everything had its designated hour. The neighbors knew precisely that the clock struck 4:30 p.m. when Immanuel Kant exited his house in his gray cloak with Spanish cane in his hand heading toward the narrow Linden-alley that one has since named after him, “Philosopher’s Way.” He walked the route exactly eight times out and back, regardless of the time of year, and, should the weather be dismal or gray skies promise rain, one saw his servant, “old” Lampe, walking anxiously behind him with a large umbrella under his arm, like a quintessential picture of dutiful service.

There couldn’t be a more dramatic contrast between the external life of this man and his destructive, world-crushing [*weltzermalmernden* – an indirect reference to Mendelssohn’s judgment over Kant], thought! Truly, when encountering him, were the citizens of Königsberg to have suspected the comprehensive meaning of his thought, they would have experienced a far greater fear than answering to an executioner who only condemned people to death – but the good people saw in him nothing other than a professor of philosophy, and when he passed by at the stipulated hour, they greeted him warmly and set their watches accordingly.” Heinrich Heine, *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland*: 189–191.

48. Kant distinguishes between ‘concepts of understanding’ and the ‘pure’ ideas of reason as the key regions of the mind. He is surely influenced by Plato’s account of the Simile of the Line in the *Republic* Book VI that I describe below in relationship to Hegel. However, Plato’s distinctions among ‘imagination,’ ‘understanding,’ and ‘reason’ are a common property throughout the subsequent history of philosophical reflection – even as what is meant by ‘understanding’ and ‘reason’ is unpacked differently.

49. On concepts as deduced relationalities/functions rather than Platonically innate or Nominalistic constructions, see the “Foreword:” 20, n. 3, Chapter 5: “Traces of an Intellectual Crisis:” 575, n. 54; and Chapter 6: “Grand Narratives of Theoretical Reason:” 709, n. 204. On the role of the ‘law of association’ for deducing concepts out of the relationalities of appearances, see “On Imagination, the Law of Association, and Reflecting Judgment” at: 86, n. 26.

the business of *finding a universal* for a manifold "[...] is [...] *neither prescribing (vorschreiben) a law to nature nor learning one from it by means of observation (although that principle can be confirmed by the latter)*"<sup>50</sup> (emphasis added) as if the universal was perceptible in, and abstracted from, the phenomena.

The claim that ideas are innate and precede (creative) agency is a product of an anthropomorphic analogy that takes finite, human teleological agency (thought occurs before action because it establishes the 'goal' of action) to constitute the explanation of the origin of the entire cosmos by means of an infinite consciousness. In contrast, in acknowledgement of the hubris of such a claim, Traditional Christian Theology employs this analogy to assert that finite, human consciousness possesses only a fragment (image) of the system of *a priori* ideas employed by 'God'/Absolute Spirit to create the cosmos. Nonetheless, the primary analogate for consciousness is finite, human consciousness, which can only by slight of hand escape humanity's hubris.<sup>51</sup>

Whereas innate ideas grounded in a literal analogy that humanity applies to a Personal God elevate humanity to the 'throne of God' *analogically*, the claim that humanity 'constructs' and 'imposes' ideas/concepts/laws onto nature replaces the Personal God with humanity, *literally*. In other words, Traditional Christian Theology places the human on the very throne of God, and, were Kant to have claimed that the individual creates and prescribes concepts and laws (both physical and moral, as well as time and space) to *determine* the way that nature 'is,' he would have succumbed to the crassest of form of relativism, solipsism. In fact, though, he only claims that concepts and laws are 'given' indirectly through phenomena and have to be discovered in the mind by a species who possesses transcendental consciousness. Unlike Nominalism, though, Kant does not claim that humanity creates merely abstract ideas out of its experience of phenomena. To take abstractions to be only *a posteriori* human construction would overlook the assumption on the part of abstraction that the physical world is already organized according to ideas (by a teleological Mind/God!). Only if there already exists an order structured by ideas is it possible for abstractions to draw out those abstractions from the experience of phenomena. In dramatic contrast, Kant only claims that in order for transcendental consciousness to understand and exercise responsible agency in the world, it is required to approach phenomena and its own, finite, teleological agency *as if it were governed by an 'architectonic' of imperceptible, coherent concepts and laws*. Finite consciousness has an experience of ideas only because it possesses a supersensible capacity (the transcendental consciousness) that is 'above,' but experienced only as 'in,' an already organized physical and moral order.

However, to claim that a divine teleological Mind/God, therefore, must actually exist as the origin of that already organized physical and moral order is to overstep the limits to finite consciousness and to place humanity on the throne of God. Kant

50. Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 186. See the "Introduction:" 86, n. 26.

51. David Hume had already said as much in his *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*: 14–15.

rejects such literal, anthropomorphic projections and acknowledges only that there is a legitimate use of 'symbolic,' anthropomorphic projections not to claim to know something about a divine, teleological Mind/God but *only to aid our understanding and guide our agency in the world*.<sup>52</sup>

According to Kant, the limits of our reason allow us to claim only that we must learn to 'un-cover' the concepts 'given' to *finite consciousness indirectly through phenomena* that are required for us to 'make sense of' phenomena. Kant calls *reflecting* judgment the transcendental capacity to 'un-cover' concepts and physical laws of theoretical reason and moral principles of practical reason, as well as the 'ideas' of 'pure' reason (God, enduring identity, and cosmology/freedom).

*Reflecting* judgment is the mental activity of 'deducing the appropriate concept' out of the relationalities of appearances in order to classify a set of phenomena that we do not yet understand. Once one has discerned the appropriate concept, then one has established a *re-producible* judgment<sup>53</sup> upon which one can build further reflection. However, at some point, all *re-produced* judgments were *reflecting* judgments.<sup>54</sup>

In addition to the *metaphysical* principles of the first two *Critiques*, *reflecting* judgment of the third *Critique* is itself an indicator of the incredible significance of transcendental consciousness. The critique of *aesthetic* judgment illuminates the supersensible, *transcendental* principle of *reflecting* judgment at the core of 'beauty,' the 'sublime,' and 'teleological purpose' in nature that are the ultimate, finite, transcendental conditions of possibility for theoretical (understanding of nature) and practical (agency of accountability).

From experience in the world, we have not encountered any other species that possesses transcendental consciousness of understanding what cannot be seen in phenomena to the degree that our species does, which is not to be confused with a

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52. See Kant, *Prolegomena* AA IV: 356, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 353, and the warnings against anthropomorphic projections onto God in *Religion* AA VI: 64\*, 141–142, and 168–169. Kant proposes speaking of a "symbolic anthropomorphism" when it comes to the "God question," in order to avoid the usage of "analogy." On the heuristic value for understanding of the anthropomorphic analogy for understanding biological phenomena as well as Kant's emphasis stressing that these projections onto the divine Noumenon in no way justify drawing conclusions about "divine predicates," only conclusions about what is necessary for finite, human understanding, see "Part Two: Critique of Teleological Judgment" in *The Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 359 f. and, especially as well, *Religion* VI: 64\*.]

53. Kant doesn't claim that transcendental consciousness *prescribes* laws (or concepts) to govern nature, it *dis-covers* them by the heuristic strategy of *reflecting* judgment. Kant wrote a page earlier: "Understanding [...] possesses] *a priori* universal laws of nature without which nature could not be an object of experience at all; but still it requires in addition a certain order of nature [...], which can only be known to it empirically and which from its point of view are contingent. These rules [...] it must think as laws (i.e., as necessary [Kant's parentheses]), because otherwise they would not constitute an order of nature, *even if he did not recognize their necessity or could not ever see it.*" (emphasis added) Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 184.

54. On *reflecting* and *re-producing* judgment, see Kant, *The Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 179–180.

speciesism argument! Because we possess a kind of causal autonomy ‘above’ but compatible with nature, we possess a degree of practical reason not merely intentionally to act but also to assume responsibility for that agency in ways that nature cannot. Yet, theoretical and practical reason could be merely a parallel aggregation of two kinds of *a priori* synthetic judgment. The *critique* of mental perception of phenomena (*aisthesis*/ αἴσθησις) in and of themselves, not the *critique* of their content of understanding and responsible agency), that is, the determination of the *a priori* synthetic elements that constitute mental reflection for itself, allows the deduction of a transcendental capacity of *a priori* aesthetic judgment in addition to theoretical and practical reason with this transcendental capacity being necessary for both theoretical and practical reason.

The transcendental capacities of *aesthetic* judgment are the very core of transcendental consciousness, and they are anchored in *feeling* that drives *reflecting* judgments respect for lawfulness. No more, though, than practical reason's *autonomous freedom* is a merely spontaneous, random exercising of the will, the *feeling that drives aesthetic, reflecting judgment* is no random, vague, amorphous feeling. Rather, the feeling of *aesthetic* judgment is a pleasure and displeasure over *lawfulness* in experience, which, paradoxically, in the case of beauty has no conceptual order although great pleasure through the play of the mind's transcendental capacities, in the case of the sublime indicates an order that is unlimited and capable of ultimate destruction possessed by the same transcendental capacities, and in the case of teleological judgment allows those same transcendental capacities to approach nature *as if* it were ordered by top-down and not merely bottom-up causality.

Far from being merely *frosting on the cake* of empirical experience, *aesthetic judgment* and its *feeling for order* are at the very heart of theoretical and practical *reason*.

Kant came to recognize the presupposition of *reflecting* judgment in the first two *Critiques* as both a *heuristic strategy* for understanding (theoretical reason) and the exercising of autonomous freedom (practical reason). However, ‘aesthetic judgment (with *reflecting* judgment at its core) requires a ‘critique’ of its own. This is because there is a whole other set of principles, *theoretical* principles, that govern it that illuminate capacities of transcendental consciousness and the supersensible grounds to legitimate the ‘esteem’ and ‘strength’ of transcendental consciousness far ‘above’ the esteem and strength of theoretical and practical reason – as remarkable as the latter are. In other words, the ‘capacity’ [*Kraft*] of judgment is most profoundly apparent when it comes to transcendental consciousness’ capacity to make judgments of beauty, sublime, and exercise teleological judgment in nature, generally, and the key to aesthetic judgment is the ‘capacity’ [*Kraft*] of *reflecting* judgment that *drives* all *a priori* synthetic judgment as anchored in the *feeling* for order.

Our ability ‘to see things that are not there’ is the sharpest indicator that transcendental consciousness is not reducible to physical processes alone. Transcendental consciousness is able to *add elements* to the phenomena by means of *a priori* syn-

thetic judgment not directly given with the phenomena. It is this capacity to *add elements to* phenomena that makes it possible for transcendental consciousness to make sense of experience (theoretical reason) and to exercise responsible agency in the world (practical reason) to a degree encountered nowhere else in nature. *Reflecting* judgment, though, is the *imperceptible*, transcendental condition that makes transcendental consciousness both attractive and repulsive, precarious and dangerous as well as the source of profound satisfaction to the degree that it discovers lawful order in experience.<sup>55</sup> In the language of aesthetic judgment, transcendental consciousness itself is both attractive and repulsive – although absolutely dependent upon physical processes for its experience.

Remarkably, as thorough and rigorous as Strauß is in his reflections, he does not discuss Kant's critique of aesthetic judgment. He employed the third *Critique* only for its discussion of teleological purpose in nature as if teleological judgment was merely some kind of Platonic, innate capacity to reality,<sup>56</sup> but Hegel's *pre-figuration* of Kant so limited Strauß' appreciation of Kant that an investigation of aesthetic judgment was not seriously considered by Strauß.

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55. Kant is as well aware of the precariousness of transcendental consciousness as he is of the destructive capacity of transcendental consciousness. See Kant's statement on the fragility and precariousness of the human condition in *Groundwork* AA IV: 425–426. However transcendental consciousness' precariousness is NOT to be overcome by Absolute Knowledge nor truth *κατ' ἀλήθειαν* (truth 'in itself') but precisely because without precariousness we could not experience, understand, and act *κατ' ἄνθρωπον* (truth 'for us'). See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 462–463 and *Critique of Pure Reason* B 767–768.

When one adds these limits to reason to a causality that is capable intentionally of initiating sequences of events that left on its own nature cannot initiate, one has in humanity's transcendental *autonomy* the conditions for destroying nature. Kant understood the danger of humanity's precariousness already in 1774/1775. See Kant, *Vorlesung zur Moralphilosophie* (*Lecture on Moral Philosophy*: 177: "If freedom is not restricted by objective rules, then the greatest wild disorder results, for it is uncertain whether man will not use his powers to destroy himself, others, and the whole of nature."

56. Strauß refers to the teleology of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Critique, but he claims that Darwin destroyed the notions of miracle and of "ends" (teleology) in Nature. See § 67 of Strauß, *Der alte und neue Glaube*: 210 ff. Strauß distorts the significance of Kant's comment on Newton and the explanation of a blade of grass to mean that Kant was claiming that no material causal explanation of organic nature is possible. See Strauß, *Der alte und neue Glaube*: 216. In fact, Kant didn't claim that there could never be a causal explanation of the organic, he only points out that no such causal explanation can come about without *presupposing* teleology in nature. See Chapter 7: "Practical Reason Elevates Theoretical Reason:" 783, n. 238. Furthermore, Strauß doesn't appear to grasp the "as if" nature of "law" in the natural sciences (especially for biology) that Kant insists upon but without embracing a literal anthropomorphism that is a teleological (physico-theological) argument for God (Kant defends only a symbolic anthropomorphism). This is surprising because of Strauß' embracing of the natural sciences as the "new", modern world view. He is not only a "materialist" (reductionist) when it comes to the sciences ("[...] *aus einem Hegelianer [sei Strauß] ein Sensualist und Materialist geworden* [...]") Ziegler II: 694), but he also has not grasped the significance of the Copernican Turn to *theoretical reason* much less the significance of *aesthetic judgment* in Kant. On Kant's 'Copernican Turn', see the "Preface:" 47, n. 35.

Contrary to Hegel, Kant's reason is by no means 'weak' or 'barbarous.' *Reflecting judgment* with its transcendental principles, according to Kant, are precisely the key to the 'strength' of reason. The *strength of finite* reason is far more than instrumental reason alone but is the entirety of theoretical and practical reason (not the sovereignty and dominance of Hegel's Absolute Spirit). Yet along with theoretical and practical reason, this *strength of finite* reason is illuminated by finite reason's transcendental capacities of *aesthetic* judgment (beauty, the sublime, and teleological purposiveness in nature) that are the condition of possibility for *reflecting judgment*, which unites (as a function, not a substance) theoretical and practical reason in a *passion for order* and under the umbrella of *sensus communis*.<sup>57</sup> Hegel and Strauß not only left out of consideration crucial elements of Kant's presentation of *reflecting* judgment, but they also imposed a reading upon Kant thoroughly shaped by Hegel's claims for his own notions of the Absolute Concept, Absolute Knowledge, and Absolute Freedom. The consequence is a distortion of Kant that makes Kant unrecognizable, and Hegel appears to stand triumphant over Kant's philosophy of 'subjectivity,' 'empty ideas,' and 'weak/barbaric' notion of reason.

When Strauß was ready to employ Kantian material in his formulation of religion as morality in 1864, Hegel's meta-narrative project of Absolute Spirit had long since collapsed for him, but it, apparently, never occurred to him that Hegel's reading of Kant was fundamentally distorted. My claim is that in 1864 when Strauß drew on Kant for his understanding of religion, Strauß obviously had not personally studied Kant carefully. With no other understanding of Kant's practical reason than that which Hegel called 'The Moral View of the World' in the *Phenomenology* (but also found in his earliest Jena writings of 1802/3), Strauß was left with no other alternative for understanding the human condition than Feuerbach's materialism, which so shaped Strauß' final work in 1872. I claim here, contrary to Hegel and Strauß, that, rather than Kant's notion of reason being 'weak,' 'barbarous,' and dogmatic, it is Hegel who engaged in the futile attempt of a dove wishing to fly in a vacuum rejuvenated the dogmatic anthropomorphisms of traditional metaphysics in a reactionary defense of Scholastic Medieval Intellectualism and Occasionalism/Voluntarism.

## V) Kant on Beauty

*When it comes to beauty, Hegel has a Concept without representations in the imagination whereas Kant's understanding of beauty is that it is a judgment that has representations in the imagination but without a concept.*

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57. See the discussion of *sensus communis* and *sensus proprio* below: 901, n. 131.

Having reclined Plato on his side and added a top-down causal dialectic to account for the generation of all ‘that is,’ Hegel’s Concept is, essentially, Plato’s ‘Good.’ Plato’s ‘Good’ is entirely *without representations in the imagination* because it is ‘above Being: ἐπίκεινα τῆς οὐσίας (*Republic* 509b). Plato essentially equates the Good and beauty, and in this respect, as well, Hegel agrees with him.<sup>58</sup>

In contrast, Kant calls the experience of beauty a judgment that is formulated *with representations in the imagination but without a concept*. Succinctly, *A judgment of beauty occurs without a concept*,<sup>59</sup> which for Hegel and Strauß is impossible.<sup>60</sup> There is no experience that is not derived and does not ultimately lead to the Concept that is the *raison d’être* as cause of all ‘that is.’

According to Kant, *one does not (and cannot) obtain understanding simply by ‘closing one’s eyes’* (to experience Hegel’s causal, Absolute Concept) *or by merely ‘opening one’s eyes’* (materialist reductionism, which without *a priori* synthetic judgments being added to perceptions is a *mere aggregate* without coherence). One has to experience a world (‘open one’s eyes’) and, simultaneously, *add imperceptible things to what one sees* (‘close one’s eyes’) in order to experience and understand, generally, and especially when it comes to a judgment of beauty. Although one cannot experience beauty, according to Kant, without a set of phenomena that one judges to be beautiful, the experience of beauty is *not* a judgment about the objective representations that stimulate it, but beauty refers to imperceptible capacities that cannot be given in the phenomena.

According to Kant, then, Beauty is a ‘transcendental principle’ (along with the sublime and the use of teleological judgment to understand nature) that is a necessary presupposition of aesthetic judgment in order for transcendental consciousness to employ reflecting judgment in order to, understand (theoretical reason) and exercise responsible agency (practical reason). Beauty is the ‘free play’ of those imperceptible *a priori* capacities possessed by transcendental consciousness, which are stimulated by the phenomena. The judgment of beauty is a quintessential example of an *a priori* synthetic judgment because it is a *symbolic* judgment *added to* a set of phenomena.

Kant justifies the need for the *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* by observing:

[...Aesthetic judgments] are [...] subject to a critique with regard to their possibility because [... their possibility] presupposes an *a priori* principle although this principle is neither a cognitive principle for the understanding [theoretical reason] nor a practical

58. See Chapter 8: "Strauß' Kant Reading Over His Career:" 719, n. 26.

59. Kant calls ‘aesthetic judgment’ the conclusion of ‘purposiveness’ (lawfulness) in the free play of judgment (see the *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 270, 217). On beauty as a judgment without a concept, see the "Analytic of Aesthetic Judgment; First Book; Analytic of the Beautiful" in *Ibid.*, especially, AA V: 207–208 and § 6.

60. On Hegel’s and Strauß’ mis-reading of Kant on ‘aesthetic judgment,’ see Chapter 8: "Strauß' Kant Reading Over His Career:" "IV) Kant’s Aesthetic Judgment: Distorted by Hegel, Overlooked by Strauß:" 862 ff.

principle for the will [practical reason] and, thus, is not *a priori re-productive* [bestimmend] whatsoever.<sup>61</sup>

Kant here is accounting for his ‘third critique,’ following the *Critique of Pure Reason* and the *Critique of Practical Reason*, because beauty, the sublime, and top-down teleological judgment of nature are ‘transcendental’ principles of aesthetic (perceptual) judgment, not ‘metaphysical’ principles of theoretical and practical reason themselves. These ‘transcendental’ principles are not required directly for understanding of phenomena (theoretical reason) or for the responsible exercising of autonomous freedom (practical reason). Aesthetic judgments of beauty, the sublime, and top-down teleological judgment are quintessential occasions of *reflecting judgment* with respect to the capacities of transcendental consciousness presupposed by both theoretical reason and practical reason.

As an initial example of a *transcendental* principle, Kant points to the judgment that nature is ‘purposive’/teleological, that is, that nature is structured intentionally, top-down *for consciousness* (in order for us to understand nature, generally, and, especially, to be able to understand organic nature). However, the judgment that nature is teleological is nowhere derived directly from objects and events. Rather, it is a necessary heuristic strategy required by transcendental consciousness to be and do what it is/does. The judgment that nature is governed by purposiveness is an *a priori presupposition* of transcendental consciousness in order for transcendental consciousness to be able to understand phenomena that, absent transcendental consciousness, are incomprehensible. For example, in the case of nature’s purposiveness, the *transcendental* principle is *assuming heuristically an objective, universal, non-empirical cause* (intentional purpose) to phenomena as the *a priori* condition under which the cognition of the objects of nature (particularly, organic nature) is possible at all.

Neither teleological cause nor the laws that govern nature are given directly in sense perception. Yet, we must think of nature as governed by laws. Otherwise, nature would have no order.<sup>62</sup>

The attraction to lawfulness and repulsion against lawfulness constitutes the profound depth of feeling in theoretical and practical reason, and they are possible only enabled by the transcendental principles of aesthetic judgment.<sup>63</sup> The very ‘*discovery*’ of a law for a set of phenomena is a source of pleasure whereas failure to identify a law is displeasing.<sup>64</sup> Establishment of an appropriate law is both exciting and confirmation of the judgment (without establishing a proof in fact) of purposiveness in nature. Pleasure and displeasure (attraction and repulsion) are at the core of experience because

61. Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 191–192.

62. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 184.

63. Kant does not equate reason and feeling, but he identifies the ‘passion for order’ to be the fundamental motivator for reason. See Kant, *What does it Mean to Orient Oneself in Thinking?* (“Was heißt: sich im Denken orientieren?”) AA VIII: 136 and 139\*.

64. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 188.

transcendental consciousness encounters nature as so organized that transcendental consciousness is able to grasp its lawful order. Nonetheless,

[... The] transcendental concept of a purposiveness of nature is neither a concept of nature [theoretical reason] nor a concept of freedom [practical reason] because it attributes nothing at all to the object (of nature) but rather only represents the unique way in which we must proceed in reflection on the objects of nature with the aim of a thoroughly interconnected experience. Consequently, [...] we are also delighted (strictly speaking, relieved of a need) when we encounter such a systematic unity among merely empirical laws, just as if it were a happy accident which happened to favor our aim, even though we necessarily had to assume that there is such a unity, yet without having been able to gain insight into it and to prove it.<sup>65</sup>

Kant distinguishes among three kinds of judgments of ‘purposiveness’ in *aesthetic* judgment concerned with transcendental consciousness itself. *The first* form of ‘purposiveness’ Kant calls a ‘purposiveness without purpose,’ that is, ‘*free beauty*’. *The second* form of ‘purposiveness’ Kant calls judgments of *the sublime*. *The third* form of ‘purposiveness’ is the requirement of transcendental consciousness that it approach organic phenomena *as if* governed by top-down teleological purpose.

In addition to the experience of pleasure because of the *metaphysical* principle of the Law of Specificity of concepts and lawfulness in nature, then, we also have the experience of a pleasure of purposiveness *although we make no claim to know* phenomena by means of either a concept or a law. This occurs in a judgment of taste/beauty.

According to Kant, the aesthetic judgment of beauty is an example of *reflecting judgment* that is ‘strange and anomalous’<sup>66</sup> because it contains no concept but is “[...] a feeling of pleasure (consequently not a concept at all [Kant’s parenthetical]) which [...] is [...] nevertheless to be expected of everyone and connected with [...] representation [...] ‘*as if* it were a predicate associated with the cognition of an object.’”<sup>67</sup>

Unlike Kant’s observation in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (B 75) that thoughts without appearances are empty and perceptions without a concept are blind, in the experience of beauty we have *a judgment without a concept drawn about a subjective experience* that is stimulated by appearances, to be sure, but *not governed by an understanding of appearances*. In short, *we have a subjective experience without a concept that we take to be universal and that gives us pleasure*.

With his distinction between reflecting and re-producing judgment, Kant reminds us that a judgment involves the subsumption of a set of phenomena under a concept.<sup>68</sup> Yet, when it comes to a judgment of beauty, there is no concept under which we can subsume all of the phenomena that we experience as beautiful. Even the notion of

65. Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 184.

66. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 191.

67. Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 191.

68. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 179.

‘harmony’ is a metaphor, especially when applied to phenomena. There is nothing in common between what we call the ‘harmony’ that is beautiful of a rose and the ‘harmony’ that is beautiful of a sunset. ‘Harmony’ applies to the subjective capacities that make a judgment without a concept possible, not a judgment of subreption that says something about objects and scenes in nature as beautiful.

This is a ‘strange and anomalous’ judgment because the condition of possibility of its experience is thoroughly a *transcendental* principle and nothing of a *metaphysical* principle, which is required by the object. If it were a judgment necessitated by a *metaphysical* principle, it would depend upon something empirical for its content. Yet, here we have a purely subjective judgment that involves a reflective judgment of purposiveness in nature but is not derived from nature.<sup>69</sup> Nature is subjectively experienced as purposefully structured to give us the pleasure of beauty, which is an experience that is not governed by any concept or law.

In a judgment of beauty, we are not concerned with ‘a play of unity in sensations,’ which would mean a judgment of beauty is concerned with empirical phenomena, but a ‘unison in the place of the capacities of the mind:’

[...] [A]n aesthetic judgment is a unique [*einzig*] kind and affords absolutely no knowledge [*Erkenntnis*] (not even a confused one) of the object, which happens only in a logical judgment. The former [aesthetic judgment] by contrast relates the representation by which an object is given solely to the subject and does not bring to our attention any property of the object but *only the purposive form in the determination of the powers of representation that are occupied with it*.<sup>70</sup> The judgment is also called aesthetic precisely because *its determining ground is not a concept but the feeling (of inner sense) of that unison in the play of the capacities of the mind, insofar as they can only be felt [empfundem]*. In contrast, if one wanted to call confused concepts and the objective judgment on which they are based aesthetic, one would have an understanding that judges [merely] sensually, or a sense that imagines its objects [merely] through concepts, which together contradict one another. Understanding is the faculty of concepts, be they confused or distinct. Although to the judgment of taste, as an aesthetic judgment, also belongs (as to all judgments) understanding, it does not belong to it as the faculty of recognizing an object [*Erkenntnis*], but as the faculty of determining the judgment and its conception (without a concept)

69. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 350: “[...] [W]hat is at issue is not what nature is or even what it is for us as a purpose but how we take it in. It would always be an objective purposiveness of nature if it had created its forms for our satisfaction, and not a subjective purposiveness, which rests on the play of the imagination in its freedom, where it is a favor with which we take nature in and not a favor that it shows to us. That nature has the property of containing an occasion for us to perceive the inner purposiveness in the relationship of our mental powers in the judging of certain of its products [...] cannot be an end of nature, or rather be judged by us as such a thing: because otherwise the judgment that would thereby be determined would be grounded in heteronomy and would not, as befits a judgment of taste, be free and grounded in autonomy.”

70. That is, experience of beauty is with respect to the internal determination of the subjective judgment that the experience is a product of purposiveness.

according to the relation of the latter to the subject and its inner feeling, and that insofar as this judgment is possible according to a general rule.<sup>71</sup>

The 'unison' in an aesthetic judgment of beauty does not depend upon a unity in the 'object' but on the internal, harmonious 'play of the powers of the mind' in feeling (not knowledge) that we maintain as universal, not merely subjective. In other words, the unison is a deduction of the faculty of judgment, not by a concept of mere 'unity' or 'harmony.'

### 1) Beauty Grasped by means of the Four Moments of the 'Logic of Judgment:'

Kant's examination of beauty consists of applying the four moments of the 'logic of judgment,'<sup>72</sup> independent of objects,<sup>73</sup> which are not to be confused for the 'categories of the understanding' that, unlike logic, are concerned with judgments governed by concepts in relationship to objects., Kant unpacks the logical elements of the judgment of taste, which is not a matter of conceptual knowledge concerning an object but of the subjective judgment without a concept as a 'harmonious play of powers of the mind' in terms of the notions of quantity, quality, relation, and modality.

Although in the Table of Pure Logical Functions" the first group is 'quantity,' Kant' begins his investigation with the second group, 'quality.'<sup>74</sup> The judgment of taste's logical, 'First Moment,' therefore, of 'quality' establishes the 'subjective' role of the imagination and feeling in a judgment of taste that involves 'satisfaction,' which is in contrast to a judgment of understanding governed by representation that involves a concept.<sup>75</sup> However, the 'subjectivity' of a judgment of taste is *independent of self-inter-*

71. Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 228–229. Kant contrasts this unity of the 'play of the powers of the mind' in contemplation that occurs in the judgment of beauty with the conflict between imagination and understanding in the judgment of the sublime. See *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 258.

72. Kant discusses the four moments of the logic of judgment in the "Table of Pure Logical Functions" of the *Critique of Pure Reason* B 95 ff. He distinguishes between the 'logical function of judgment' (*Critique of Pure Reason* B 95 ff) and the 'categories of the understanding' (*Critique of Pure Reason* B 106 ff).

73. As 'pure concepts of the understanding,' the categories of understanding are "[...] related a priori to objects, which general logic is incapable of doing." Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 105.

74. See Kant's note already in the title of the 'First Moment' of his analysis of the logical judgment of beauty in *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 203\*. Although the logical function of 'quantity' is first in the table of logical functions (B 95), Kant explains (*Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 247) that he begins with 'quantity' in his investigation of the logic of a judgment of beauty because beauty is concerned with the (mental) 'form' of the object, which leads to a unifying 'play of the powers of the mind' in contemplation whereas the logic of the sublime is concerned with a 'formlessness,' which leads to a the 'greater unity' of the faculty of reason in the idea of the absolute whole as a consequence of a conflict between displeasure and pleasure. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* V: 259–260.

75. Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 203–204.

*est* (not to be confused for *independent of desire* that drives the cognition of reason<sup>76</sup>). In other words, the popular aphorism that ‘everyone has her/his own’ taste is valid with respect to what is ‘agreeable,’ which is grounded in private feeling and ‘restricted merely to her/his own person,’<sup>77</sup> but it is not valid when it comes to the ‘judgment of taste,’ which is taken to apply to everyone.

The judgment of taste’s logical, ‘Second Moment’ of ‘quantity’ emphasizes the universal claim made by a judgment of taste.<sup>78</sup> Something is beautiful not because we, personally, are interested in it, but we are interested in it because it is beautiful.

The judgment of taste’s logical, ‘Third Moment’ of ‘relation’ is concerned with the teleological aspect of a judgment of taste, its purposive purpose-lessness. Kant here emphasizes that we can distinguish between two kinds of ‘teleological goals:’ *forma finalis* (final form) and *nexus finalis* (final link). *Forma finalis* is the teleological goal established by a concept.<sup>79</sup> *Nexus finalis* is a teleological goal independent of a concept. Unlike desire, which is the will determined only by concepts, a judgment of taste must be thought ‘symbolically anthropomorphically’ by ‘assuming as its ground a causality in accordance with ends’ [...] ‘*insofar as we do not place the causes of this form in a will but can still make the explanation of its possibility conceivable to ourselves only by deriving it from a will.*’<sup>80</sup> (emphasis added) This is a purposiveness not governed by ‘form’ (concept) but graspable by *reflecting* judgment (as a linking). The ‘linking’ that is the ‘harmonious play of the powers of the mind’ in a judgment of taste/beauty is grounded in the ‘pleasure’ of its judgment as ‘[...] a causality in [...] of its own], namely that of maintaining the state of the representation of the mind and the occupation of the cognitive powers without a further aim. *We linger over the consideration of the beautiful* because this consideration [in the mind] strengthens and reproduces itself [...]’<sup>81</sup> Thus, aesthetic judgment of taste without a concept is a quintessential example of the ‘capacity’ of judgment (the *Urteilkraft*)

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76. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 196–197 and 220. Hegel takes the ‘desire’ of cognition as an indicator of Kant’s self-deception when it comes to the claim for ‘independence of interest’ in morality and aesthetic judgment. For Hegel (and Daub, above) as a ‘subjectivist’ Kant’s theoretical and practical reason ‘must’ be *exclusively* driven by personal desire and self-interest. Neither Hegel nor Daub grasped Kant’s distinction between cognitive ‘desire’ and the eclipsing of ‘interest’ in practical reason and aesthetic judgment.

Apparently in Daub’s case, he has taken Kant’s label for reason as the *Begehrungsvermögen* to mean the capacity for sensuous desire rather than as the ‘appetitive capacity’ for ‘lawfulness’. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V. 198. On Kant’s notions of *Lust* (interest) and *Unlust* (aversion), see Birgit Recki, “Der Kanon der reinen Vernunft (A795/B823-A832/B859). ‘... Nichts Mehr, Als Zwei Glaubensartikel?’” In *Immanuel Kant: Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, G. Mohr and M. Willaschek (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1998): 597–616, and *Ästhetik der Sitten*.

77. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 212.

78. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 211–212.

79. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 219–220.

80. Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 220.

81. Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 222.

[...] related solely to the subject, and the pleasure [it experiences] can express nothing but its suitability to the cognitive faculties that are in play in [...] reflecting judgment, insofar as they are in play, and thus merely a subjective formal purposiveness of the object. For [...] apprehension of forms in the imagination can never take place without *reflecting* judgment, even if unintentionally, at least comparing them to its faculty for relating intuitions to concepts.<sup>82</sup>

Kant then distinguishes between two kinds of beauty: free beauty (*pulchritudo vaga*) and merely adherent beauty (*pulchritudo adhaerens*).<sup>83</sup>

The first [free beauty] presupposes no concept of what the object out to be; the second [adherent beauty] does presupposes such a concept and the perfection of the object in accordance with it. The first are called (self-subsisting) beauties of this or that thing; the latter as adhering to a concept (conditioned beauty), are ascribed to objects that stand under the concept of a particular end.<sup>84</sup>

‘Free’ beauty is the beauty experienced in nature. ‘Adherent’ beauty (for example, *appearance* of a human being, a building, a sunset, presupposes a concept of the end that determines what the thing should be, hence a concept of its perfection [...]).<sup>85</sup> The conclusion that Kant draws from *this ‘Third Moment’* is that “[b]eauty is the form of

82. Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 189–190.

83. Furthermore, Kant distinguishes between the ‘free’ beauty that is nature and the ‘adhering’ beauty of art. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 301. “Beautiful art, unlike nature, is deceptive; as an art that can interest only through its end and never in itself” Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 301. In addition to being governed by a teleological concept, beautiful art requires technical skill, which nature does not require. Consequently, because ‘genius’ is a matter of ‘art,’ Kant’s entire discussion of ‘genius’ is focused on ‘adhering’ beauty, not ‘free’ beauty, which is the form of beauty that he distinguishes from the sublime. Kant says of *genius* that it “[...] is the talent (natural gift) that gives the rule to art. Because the talent, as an inborn productive faculty of the artist, itself belongs to nature, this could also be expressed thus: *Genius is the inborn predisposition of the mind (ingenium) through which nature gives the rule to art* [...] [E]very art presupposes rules [...] [However,] beautiful art[...] does not allow the judgment concerning the beauty of its product to be derived from any sort of rule that has a concept for its determining ground [...] Thus beautiful art cannot itself think up the rule [...] [N]ature in the subject [...] must give the rule to art, that is, beautiful art is possible only as a product of genius [...] The genius [...] cannot [...] describe or indicate scientifically how it brings its product into being, but rather that it gives the rule as nature, and hence the author of a product that he owes to his genius does not know her-/himself how the ideas for it come to her/him [...]” (emphasis added) Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 308. The genius neither produces her-/himself a concept/rule that governs her/his creativity nor can s/he explain how s/he ‘creates’ the beautiful art. The genius can only acknowledge the receipt of a ‘gift’ from nature. To be sure, the genius must cultivate the technical talent appropriate to the gift, but that capacity of technical talent is a general capacity given to all transcendental consciousness. See as well § “32) On Genius” in *Menschenkunde* AA XXV,2: 1055–1067; Olms ed.: 233–246.

84. Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 229.

85. Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 230. Kant places his discussion of ‘genius’ under adherent beauty not only because genius is teleological, that is, governed by concepts, but also because genius involves the cultivation of technical skills. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* §§ 43–54, especially §§ 43–46.

*purposiveness of an object, insofar as it is perceived in it without representation of an end.*<sup>86</sup> Succinctly, it is a judgment of purposiveness without a conceptual purpose.

The judgment of taste's logical, 'Fourth Moment' of modality is its function of 'exemplary necessity.' "The judgment of taste suggests assent on the part of everyone, and whoever declares something to be beautiful wishes that everyone *should* approve of the object in question and similarly declare it to be beautiful."<sup>87</sup> The subjective principle that drives this 'should' is 'common sense' NOT with respect to external phenomena but with respect to the 'free play of our cognitive powers' is a capacity shared in common with all.<sup>88</sup> Judgments of taste

[...] must [...] have a subjective principle, which determines what pleases or displeases *only through feeling and not through concepts*, but yet with universal validity. Such a principle, however, could only be regarded as a *common sense*, which is essentially different from the common understanding that is sometimes called common sense (*sensus communis*) because the latter judges not by feeling but always by concepts, although commonly only in the form of obscurely represented principles.

Thus only under the presupposition that there is a *common sense* (by which, however, we do not mean any external sense but rather *the effect of the free play of our cognitive powers*), only under the presupposition of such a common sense [...] can the judgment of taste be made.<sup>89</sup> (emphasis added)

Because of this subjective principle:

In all judgments by which we declare something to be beautiful, we allow no one to be of a different opinion, without, however, grounding our judgment on concepts, but only on our feeling, which we therefore make our ground not as a private feeling, but as a common one. Now this common sense cannot be grounded on experience for this purpose, for it is to justify judgments that contain a 'should:' it does not say that everyone *will* concur with our judgment that everyone *should* agree with it.<sup>90</sup>

Kant's conclusion with the logical, 'Fourth Moment' of the judgment of taste: "That is beautiful which is cognized without a concept as object of a necessary satisfaction"<sup>91</sup> that has the power of 'should.'

86. Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 235.

87. Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 237.

88. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 238.

89. Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 238.

90. Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 239.

91. Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 240.

## 2) On Beauty as Symbol of the Moral:

The ‘harmonious play of the powers of the mind’ by means of *reflecting* judgment is what makes our experience of free beauty a symbol for the moral because it ennobles and elevates us and encourages our esteem of others:

[...] the beautiful is the symbol of the morally good [...] in which the mind is at the same time aware of a certain ennoblement and elevation above the mere receptivity for a pleasure from sensible impressions,<sup>92</sup> and also esteems the value of others in accordance with a similar maxim of their judgment [...] In this, the faculty of judgment does not see itself, as is otherwise the case in empirical judging, as subjected to a heteronomy of laws of experience [...] [I]t gives the law to itself, just as reason does with regard to the faculty of desire [McG: practical reason (V: 198)]. Both on account of this inner possibility in the subject as well as on account of the outer possibility of a nature that corresponds to it, it sees *itself as related to something in the subject itself and outside of it, which is neither nature [theoretical reason] nor freedom [practical reason] but which is connected with the ground of the latter [autonomous freedom], namely the supersensible in which [... theoretical reason] is combined with practical [practical reason] in a mutual and unknown way to form a unity.*<sup>93</sup> (emphasis added)

However, this is NOT a ‘unity’ of a common substance or concept (for example, Hegel’s Absolute Spirit) but a ‘unity’ of *reflecting* judgment achieved precisely *without a concept* that, nonetheless, experiences a purposeless purpose in the ‘free play of our cognitive powers.’

Kant distinguishes between beauty and the sublime on the basis of their relationship to the moral. Whereas both ‘elevate’ humanity above (but not separate from) nature, beauty does so by freedom’s ‘play’ whereas the sublime does so by the mind’s ‘domination over nature by reason.’<sup>94</sup>

## VI) Kant on the Sublime

Although by no means limiting reflecting judgment to judgments of beauty and the sublime, Kant examines what appear to be outlier aesthetic judgments of ‘beauty’ and the ‘sublime’ along with the *sensus communis* of reflecting judgment to illuminate the theoretical principles of transcendental consciousness.

Although in Kant’s reflections ‘free’ beauty and the sublime are *subjective* experiences, not an aspect of objective phenomena themselves, both ‘free’ beauty and

92. That is, the pleasure/displeasure of *reflecting* judgment that is felt when it discovers or doesn’t discern a concept/law appropriate to the phenomena. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 188.

93. Kant, See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 353

94. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* V: 268–269.

the mental forms of the sublime illuminate different aspects of humanity's *finite*, supersensible, *transcendental* capacities *in the world*. Both beauty and the sublime are *stimulated by, but not grounded in, sense perception*.

When it comes to the 'sublime,' Kant distinguishes between the 'mathematical' and the 'dynamical' sublime to illuminate the paradox of transcendental consciousness' initial experience of its insignificance and weakness but, more importantly, subsequently, to experience its *superiority* (!) over-against nature. The sublime

[...] is related through the imagination either to the capacity of understanding [*Erkenntnisvermögen*] or to the capacity of the will [*Begehrungsvermögen*],<sup>95</sup> but in both relations, the purposiveness of the given representation is judged only with regard to the capacities (without an end or interest). Thereby, the first is attributed to the object as a mathematical feeling [of size] of the imagination, the second as a dynamical feeling [*Stimmung*] [of strength/power] of the imagination [...]<sup>96</sup>

Neither the mathematical nor dynamical sublime refers to some external phenomena directly, but they are the two forms of aesthetic judgment<sup>97</sup> that say something profound about consciousness itself.

Given that there are no beginnings nor ends to consciousness, the mathematical sublime is the experience of the indivisible and illimitable consciousness itself. With respect to the dynamical sublime, is the experience of the extra-ordinary causal 'capacity' that nature cannot accomplish on its own, which in principle gives consciousness the power to destroy all of nature.<sup>98</sup> In other words, the mathematical and dynamical sublime are saying something about consciousness itself, not the external, objective content of phenomena.

Negatively, the sublime, then, is limit-less consciousness itself, which has no beginnings nor ends because there is no determination where its content start and stop in consciousness. Positively, the sublime is a unity because there is no divisible 'this' or 'that' in consciousness.<sup>99</sup> There is a supersensible, 'groundless ground' in which there are no limits/distinctions between and among concepts/ideas/laws that as ground is the condition of possibility not only for consciousness itself but also for any and all experience, understanding, and responsible agency in the world. This 'groundless ground' is a required *transcendental* principle of aesthetic judgment (in distinction

95. For a graphic of these capacities of understanding as well as the capacity of judgment, see Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 198. On the 'faculty of desire' [*Begehrungsvermögen*], see the 'Introduction' to the *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 177–178.

96. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 247.

97. The sublime is ultimately concerned with the transcendental conditions that make a certain kind of sense perception (an unlimited universe and an overwhelming natural power capable of destroying the individual) in which the individual is reduced to "meaninglessness."

98. See Kant, *Vorlesung zur Moralphilosophie*: 177.

99. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 244.

from a *mathematical* principle of theoretical and practical reason) in order for there to be theoretical and practical reason, whatsoever.

In the experience of the sublime, Kant points out, what is at stake is not a judgment about the "object" but, rather, in the case of the mathematical sublime, at stake is an experience of the incredible, illimitable totality of consciousness itself and, in the case of the dynamical sublime, at stake is an experience of the sovereignty of consciousness over even nature's tremendous physical power.

### 1) Sublime Grasped by Means of the Four Moments of the 'Logic of Judgment:'

Kant examines the sublime on the basis of the same four moments of the 'logic of judgment' (not the 'categories of the understanding' that are concerned with judgments grounded in concepts in relation to objects<sup>100</sup>), which he applied to the experience of beauty in nature, Kant unpacks the logical elements of the judgment of the sublime in terms of the notions of quantity, quality, relation, and modality.

He distinguishes between the 'mathematical' (size) and 'dynamical' (power/cause)<sup>101</sup> sublime. The 'mathematical' sublime is the concern of the first two moments of the 'logic of judgment,' quantity and quality, whereas the 'dynamical' sublime is the concern of the last two moments, relation and modality. The 'mathematical' the sublime is concerned with 'unlimited greatness' whereas the characteristic mark of the 'dynamical' sublime is 'unlimited movement/power/causality' in contrast to aesthetic judgment of taste (beauty) because the characteristic mark of beauty is 'calm contemplation.'<sup>102</sup>

### 2) On the 'Mathematical' Sublime:

The mathematically sublime is concerned with the '*absolutely great*' as 'beyond all comparison.' It can be neither a pure concept of the understanding, which would require comparison, nor can it be experienced in perception directly, which we could comprehend, nor is it an idea of reason, which would be a *metaphysical* principle of understanding.<sup>103</sup>

The logical, 'First Moment' of the sublime is mathematical and consists of its 'quantity as a [*supersensible*] *faculty of mind that surpasses every measure of the*

100. As 'pure concepts of the understanding,' the categories of understanding are "[...] related *a priori* to objects, which general logic is incapable of doing." Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 105.

101. Kant remains true to his division in the *Critique of Pure Reason* between the 'mathematical' and the 'dynamical.' See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 110

102. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 247.

103. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 248.

senses.<sup>104</sup> Here he draws on a crucial distinction between apprehension (*Auffassung/ apprehensio*), and comprehension (*Zusammenfassung* as *comprehensio aesthetica*).<sup>105</sup>

In other words, a judgment of sublimity is not a mathematically 'ascribed' [*mathematisch-bestimmten*], objective judgment of magnitude "[...] but only an aesthetic (perceptual), subjective judgment of size "[...] because it is a merely subjective measure [*Maßstab*] on which *reflecting judgment* bases size."<sup>106</sup> Furthermore, it is a judgment about 'raw nature'<sup>107</sup> that is 'not mixed up with anything teleological,' for example as in art because the sublime is not present "[...] where a human end determines the form [...]"<sup>108</sup>

That is sublime in comparison with which everything else is small [... Thus nothing that can be an object of the senses is [...] to be called sublime. Simply because *there is in our imagination a striving to advance to the infinite*, while in our reason there lies *a claim to absolute totality* [...] [T]he very inadequacy of our faculty for estimating the magnitude of the things of the sensible world awakens *the feeling of a supersensible faculty in us* [...] Hence, it is the disposition of the mind resulting from a certain representation as the concern of *reflective judgment*, but not the object, which is to be called sublime. [...] *That is sublime which even to be able to think of it demonstrates a faculty of the mind that surpasses every measure in the senses.*<sup>109</sup> (emphasis added)

To think the infinite requires a faculty in the human mind that is supersensible. This supersensible substrate Kant calls the noumenon in contrast to phenomena.<sup>110</sup> It is only because of this supersensible substrate

[...] and its idea of a noumenon, which admits of no perception [*sinnliche Anschauung*] of the world as mere appearance, that the infinite of the sensible world is completely *comprehended in the pure intellectual estimation of magnitude under a concept, even though it can never be completely thought [...] through numerical concepts* [... A] faculty [...] to think the infinite of supersensible intuition [...] is] an enlargement of the mind which feels itself empowered to overstep the limits of sensibility [...]"<sup>111</sup>

104. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 250.

105. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 251.

106. Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 249.

107. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 253.

108. Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 253.

109. Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 250.

110. In the *Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant calls this distinction that between *homo noumenon* and *homo phaenomenon* (AA VI: 418), which is not to be confused for his notion of "Noumenon" that is, the 'regulative' idea of pure reason, God, as the assumption of the necessary unity required for us to make sense of experience. See *Critique of Pure Reason* B 713–714.

111. Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 255.

Rather than the sublime referring to empirical phenomena and events of perception, even "[...][n]ature is sublime in those of its appearances of perception [*Anschauung*] that bring with them the idea of its infinity"<sup>112</sup> solely *in the mind*.<sup>113</sup>

The logical, 'Second Moment' of the sublime is also mathematical as a 'quality'. The judgment of the mathematical sublime's 'quality' is concerned with the sublime's universality in two sense: 1) an experience of the limitless, supersensible subject and 2) a simultaneous repulsion and attraction.

The first sense of the mathematically sublime is that it is *for everyone a subjective* aesthetic experience of *objective* phenomena whose significance is what it says about the supersensible subject, not the perceptible object. He points out that the further perception proceeds in apprehension the less there is direct comprehension.<sup>114</sup> Taking 'external space' as an example: the more our awareness of the expanse of external space increases, the less our ability to understand the phenomena. Rather than *comprehensio aesthetica* conceptually comprehending the expanse of 'external space,' it experiences that ever-expanding 'size' with a feeling, not a concept. This 'feeling' consists of a 'feeling of the whole' rather than an understanding of the whole. The 'infinite'

[...] is absolutely (not merely comparatively) great. Compared with [... the infinite], everything else [...] is small. However, what is most important is that even being able to think of it as a whole indicates *a faculty of the mind which surpasses every standard of sense*.<sup>115</sup> (emphasis added)

The "feeling of the inadequacy of our capacity for the attainment of an idea that is a law for us is *respect*."<sup>116</sup> Kant already emphasized the notion of 'respect' in his discussion of the 'First Moment' of 'quantity' when he observed that a judgment of the mathematical sublime is *not a mathematically re-producing* [*bestimmend*] judgment but a mere *reflecting* judgment of reflection about its representation, that serves a specific purpose of our epistemological powers [*Kräfte*], with which "[...] *we always*

112. Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 255.

113. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 256.

114. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 252.

115. Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 254. See as well: "[...] when a [mathematically conceptual] magnitude [*apprehensio*] in one perception [*sinnliche Anschauung*], almost reaches the outermost limit of our capacity of comprehension [*Zusammenfassung/ comprehensio aesthetica*] and, nevertheless, the imagination is challenged by mathematical concepts (for which we are aware of our capacity as unlimited) to aesthetically comprehend [*Zusammenfassung*] them by a larger unit, *we feel ourselves* trapped by aesthetic limits [perception]. However, the displeasure [as a result of our limitedness] is represented as purposive, nonetheless, when it comes to the necessary, adequate extension of the imagination with that which is unlimited in the capacity of reason, namely, *the idea of an absolute whole along with the purposelessness of the capacity of the imagination for the ideas of reason and awareness of them*." (emphasis added) Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* V: 259–260.

116. Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 257.

combine a kind of respect with the representation [...]”<sup>117</sup>. (emphasis added) What is this ‘respect’ for the law and its relationship to ‘quantity’?

However, the second sense of the mathematically sublime is that it involves a profound ‘conflict’ of a rapidly alternating *repulsion from* (as it were an abyss) and *attraction to* (not mathematical excess but lawfulness) in one and the same object.<sup>118</sup> The ‘quality’ of the mathematical sublime

[...] represents [...] the subjective, harmonious play of the powers of the mind (imagination and reason) as harmonious even in their contrast [... by means of] *a feeling that we have a pure self-sufficient reason*, or a faculty for estimating magnitude, whose preeminence cannot be made perceptible [*anschaulich*] through anything except the inadequacy of that faculty [repulsion] which is itself unbounded [attraction] in the presentation of magnitudes (of sensible objects).<sup>119</sup>

In short the ‘quality’ of the feeling of the mathematically sublime is a feeling of displeasure with respect to an object that is simultaneously positive and negative. It is positively ‘purposive’ because it brings the subject to realize that its own incapacity, which *causes repulsion* before the limitlessness of nature, reveals the *supersensible, unlimited capacity of consciousness to grasp the lawfulness that governs the totality of the supersensible*. It is at the same time the very same limited subject which *causes limitless attraction* to the supersensible capacity.<sup>120</sup> In other words, whereas *the logical estimation of magnitude mathematically* demonstrates the unattainability (displeasure) of a ‘totality’ through progressive sequence of perceptible units (*apprehensio*), *in an aesthetic estimation of magnitude*, in contrast, the numerical concept is insignificant and *comprehension (comprehensio aesthetica) constitutes the sole purpose of the sublime*, which is ‘the necessary enlargement of the imagination (pleasure) to the point of adequacy for the idea of the absolute whole [...]’<sup>121</sup> (emphasis added) Aesthetic judgment of the sublime is the imagination’s enlargement as the source of intellectual comprehension beyond aesthetic comprehension (*comprehensio aesthetica*), “[... which is thereby,] purposive for reason, *as the source of ideas*, that is, *for an intellectual comprehension [...]*; and the object is taken up as sublime with a pleasure that is possible only by means of a displeasure.”<sup>122</sup> In short, nature is not sublime because, as far as finite consciousness can determine, it has no feeling of either the mathematical or the dynamical sublime. Only transcendental consciousness, in our experience, experiences such a feeling.

117. Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment*: AA V: 249.

118. Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 258.

119. Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 258.

120. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 259.

121. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 259. As an ‘idea’ of the whole it is a regulative not a constitutive idea of reason, which can only be grasped by an aesthetic judgment of sublimity of limitlessness.

122. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 260.

### 3) On the 'Dynamical' Sublime:

With the logical moments of relation and modality, Kant turns to the 'dynamical' sublime. Here the focus shifts from a concern with the 'size' of the sublime to the dynamic (movement and power/*Macht*) aspect of the sublime.

*Dynamis* as movement and power (*Macht*) is not a measure of size but an experience of causal efficacy. Something is moved either by something else with as much reality as its effect (efficient causality), or something is moved by something possessing greater reality than its effect (eminent causality).

The logical 'Third Moment' of the sublime is concerned with 'relation' (causality). As in the aesthetic judgment of taste (beauty), relation is taken with respect to the sublime as the sense of 'purpose.' Although he labels no specific paragraph as addressing the relationality of the dynamic sublime, § 28 is labelled "On Nature as a Power." In a first step of analysis of the 'relational' or causal significance of the sublime, Kant examines nature as an immensely, powerful causality, but our experience of the brute power of nature, while terrifying, also experientially shows us that *the supersensible capacities of transcendental consciousness are even more powerful*. In a second step of analysis of the 'relational' or causal significance of the sublime, Kant addresses the issue of the 'purpose' of the sublime for our understanding of our supersensible capacities.

*Whereas the purpose of beauty is purpose-less, the harmonious play of the powers of the mind as a unity, the 'purpose' of the sublime is to confront transcendental consciousness with its 'vocation,' which is the realization of its supersensible capacities.*

The sublime, then, is the experience of a supersensible power above nature that is at the core of humanity's transcendental vocation. This supersensible power is confirmed nowhere else in experience as it is in the terrifying experience of the brute power of nature. Yet, when such an experience is understood as the dynamically sublime, nature is experienced as having no dominion over the mind.<sup>123</sup> Nature is fearful, but one is not afraid.<sup>124</sup>

Stated from the perspective of the sublime: nature demonstrates our insignificance (mathematically, for example, by the vastness of space; dynamically, for example, by the brute power of nature), but our supersensible capacities are superior to it because they are capable not only of feeling the immensity and the power of nature as a totality like we find nowhere else in nature to such a degree, but our supersensible faculties possess a causal power of autonomous freedom, the ability intentionally (and not merely instinctually) to initiate sequences of events that nature on its own cannot ever initiate.

123. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 260.

124. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 260.

Speaking of the brute power of nature first, Kant writes:

[...] we gladly call these objects [thunder clouds/lightening, volcanoes, hurricanes, raging ocean, lofty waterfall on a mighty river] sublime because they elevate the strength of our soul above its usual level, and allow us to discover within ourselves a capacity for resistance of quite another kind, which gives us the courage to measure ourselves against the apparent all-powerfulness of nature.<sup>125</sup>

In other words, we find "[...] *in our own faculty of reason* another, nonsensible standard, which has that very infinity under itself as a unit against which everything in nature is small, and thus found in our own mind a superiority over nature [...]"<sup>126</sup> (emphasis added) "[We] recognize our physical powerlessness, but at the same time it reveals a capacity for judging ourselves as independent of it and a superiority over nature on which is grounded a self-preservation of quite another kind than that which can be threatened and endangered by nature outside us [...]"<sup>127</sup> In short, "nature is judged as sublime not insofar as it arouses fear, but rather because it calls forth our power [*Kraft!!!!*] [...]"<sup>128</sup>

Nature is called sublime "[...] because it raises the imagination to the point of presenting those cases in which the mind can make palpable to itself the sublimity of its own vocation even above [*über*] nature."<sup>129</sup> The sublime not only makes our vocation 'palpable,' but it also establishes the 'necessity' of fulfilling our vocation. The judgment of the sublime's logical 'Fourth Moment,' then, is 'modality' (necessity). The issue here is: in what respect does necessity play a role in the experience of the sublime? The short answer is that the sublime is necessary for the encouragement of the 'culture of morals'<sup>130</sup> that is to be expected of everyone as 'common sense' (*sensus*

125. Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 261.

126. Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 261.

127. Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 261.

128. Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 262.

129. Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 262.

130. On the distinction between the "culture of the will/moral improvement" and the "culture of skills," see *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* (AA V: 431–432) and: 848, n. 161.

131. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 293. Already in *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*: Kant distinguished 'common sense' (*sensus communis*) from 'plain, common sense' [der gemeinen Menschenverstand]. Common sense (*sensus communis*) "[...] must be shown in deeds by well-considered and reasonable thoughts and words, not by appealing to it [as does plain, common sense] as an oracle when no no rational justification of oneself can be advanced'. To appeal to plain, common sense when insight and science fails [...is the 'convenient method of plain, common sense'] that is 'an appeal to the opinion of the multitude, of whose applause the philosopher is ashamed.'" *Prolegomena* AA V: 259

### *Sensus communis and sensus proprio*

In his *Menschenkunde* lectures, Kant distinguishes common sense (*sensus communis*) from proper (vulgar) sense (*sensu proprio*), which is not to be confused with concept deduction by means of asso-

*communis*). However, ‘common sense’ here is not a ‘vulgar’ shared agreement with others.<sup>131</sup> What is ‘common’ in judgments of taste is the ability of *sensus communis*, “[...] to elevate ourselves above the senses to higher, cognitive capacities.”<sup>132</sup>

Kant writes of *sensus communis*:<sup>133</sup>

[...] the idea of a communal sense, i.e., a faculty for judging that in its reflection *takes account (a priori) of everyone else’s way of representing in thought, in order as it were to hold its judgment up to human reason as a whole [...]* [T]his happens by one holding [her-]/his judgment up not so much to the actual as to the merely possible judgments of others, and putting [her-]himself into the position of everyone else [...]<sup>134</sup> (emphasis added)

Kant lists the following in order to illustrate the ‘fundamental principles’ of taste:

1. To think for oneself; the Unprejudiced way of thinking (not to simply embrace passive prejudice but to engage in active liberation or enlightenment from ‘super-

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ciation’ (*Vergesellschaftung*) (On “On Imagination, the Law of association, and Reflecting Judgment,” see; 86, n. 26): “We must prove even the judgment of our senses by the judgment of the senses of others; above all, our judgment of the intellect always needs to be proved by the judgment of others, for truth is agreement with the common understanding of man. Our judgment may have the support of appearances, but we cannot always know whether our thoughts agree with the objects; we must therefore take the external touchstone, the judgment of others, which we do not always use in things that we are accustomed to every day. However, in things that are only moderately doubtful we have recourse to the common understanding, and there we always have great suspicion in our judgment if it does not agree with the common judgment. Therefore we like to have people who accept our opinion; for we feel a distrust of ourselves when our opinion does not agree with the judgment of others who accept it. This inner vocation of determining every judgment from the point of view of the way of thinking of others is the common sense in human beings; consequently we can say that the *sensus communis* is the *bon sens*, that is, the agreement of the way of thinking of many people with one another. *Sensus communis* is distinguished from the *sensu proprio*, where no care is taken for the judgment of others; the disturbed man judges everything by the *sensu proprio* and can consider nothing from the standpoint of the *sensus communis*; he always consults only his private sense for other objects.” *Menschenkunde* AA XXV,2: 1013–1014 [Olms ed.: 184–185]

This deference to *sensus communis* is no embracing of communal systematic distortion. *Sensus communis* is grounded in the universal, *a priori* capacities of transcendental consciousness with its passion (*Begehrung*) for lawfulness. It is precisely the only set of ingredients for combating systematic distortion. (On systematic distortion, see in the “Conclusion:” “A Blind Spot in Dewey’s Hermeneutics:” 937 ff.)

Kant proposes criteria for *sensus communis* as: “1. To think for oneself; 2. To think in the position of everyone else; 3. Always to think in accord with oneself [in accord with one’s highest capacities – see *Vorlesung zur Moralphilosophie*: 180]. The first is the maxim of unprejudiced thinking, the second of broad-minded thinking, and the third that of consistency.” *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 293. See Kant’s *Menschenkunde*: 184–185 and *Anweisung* Olms ed.: 94.

132. Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 293.

133. The ‘shared understanding’ that is *sensus communis* is not to be confused for the ‘association’ (*Vergesellschaftung*) that is the deduction of concepts. (On “On Imagination, the Law of association, and Reflecting Judgment,” see: 86, n. 26.)

134. Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 293–294.

stition'). According to the table of the 'higher faculties of reason,'<sup>135</sup> this is *the maxim of understanding*.

2. To think in the position of someone else; the Broad-minded way of thinking from a universal standpoint. According to the table of the 'higher faculties of reason,' this is *the maxim of judgment*.
3. Always to think in accord with oneself;<sup>136</sup> the Consistent way of thinking. According to the table of the 'higher faculties of reason,' this is *the maxim of reason*.<sup>137</sup> [Consistency here meaning consistent with reason's metaphysical and transcendental principles, especially one's highest capacity of autonomous freedom.]

The 'Culture of Morals' is the imperceptible community across history that encourages the exercising of the moral capacities. Moral agency requires that there be 1) the capacity (*Anlage*) of autonomous freedom that is intentionally able to initiate sequences of events that nature's causal system on its own can never achieve and 2) a lawful order to autonomous freedom's causality analogous to the lawful order that is physical nature.<sup>138</sup> 3)

In the *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment*, however, Kant is providing an account of the required, complementary, common order between the causal systems between the two 'domains' (*ditio*) of nature and autonomous freedom.<sup>139</sup> *The complementary, common order between the causal systems is no common substance* because causality is 'no-thing.' *Equally, it is neither a 'concept' of the understanding*, which would require it to be a 'thing among things' *nor is it an 'idea of reason'* (God, the enduring identity of the soul, and cosmology), all of which are 'things' (God as Noumenon, not necessarily a Personal God but in contrast to phenomena; souls as multiple; and cosmology as the collection of things).

The issue for Kant, then, is two-fold: 1) Is there something about experience that suggests that it is possible that a complementary, common order between the causal systems of nature and freedom is more than wishful thinking or merely a demand of logic? Even more importantly, 2) on what ground is it *necessary* to acknowledge that complementary, common order between the causal systems of nature and freedom?

As the 'unifying link' between theoretical reason's understanding of the physical world (nature) and practical reason's responsible agency (autonomous freedom) in

135. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 198.

136. Already in his *Vorlesung zur Moralphilosophie* (1774/1775), Kant suggested that consistence with oneself refers to one's consistency with one's highest capacity, the capacity of autonomous freedom. See Kant, *Vorlesung zur Moralphilosophie*: 180.

137. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 294–295.

138. See especially the footnote 4\* of the *Critique of Practical Reason* AA V: 4 where Kant calls autonomous freedom the *ratio essendi* (the essential ground) of morals and the moral law the *ratio cognoscendi* (the ground for recognizing autonomous freedom). See, as well, the 'Remark' at *ibid.*, AA V: 29–30.

139. On the differences among 'field,' 'territory,' and 'domain,' see Chapter 1: 116.

the physical world Kant clearly places ‘aesthetic judgment’ based on appearances (aisthesis/αἴσθησις), not things-in-themselves or even the *metaphysical* principles required for theoretical and practical reason.<sup>140</sup> The ‘unifying link’ between theoretical and practical reason, again, is no common substance or ‘highest idea’ of reason. Rather, it “[...] is the capacity (*Kraft*) of judgment [...] about which one has cause to presume [...] a proper principle of its own for seeking laws [...]”<sup>141</sup> by means of *reflecting* judgment.<sup>142</sup> This unifying link is clearly no concept or substance. Clearly, Kant not only is identifying the ‘unifying link’ as the very capacity (*Kraft*) of judgment as a heuristic strategy for achieving ‘new understanding’ but also is profiling that *reflecting* judgment has its own *transcendental* principles of the ‘harmonious unity of the play of the mind’s capacities *without concepts*’ in judgments of beauty and the ‘elevation of the imagination’ to an *absolute* whole/totality of the supersensible in the experience of transcendental consciousness that, in turn, serve as the condition for transcendental consciousness’ ability to *seek out laws and concepts* in unfamiliar phenomena.

With the fourth ‘Moment of Modality’ of the analytic or determination of the conditions of possibility of the Sublime, Kant establishes that it is the *transcendental* principle of the feeling (by no means a substance or an idea) for the sublime that is the condition of possibility for ‘*reflecting* judgment in its capacity to understand theoretical and practical reason as ‘unified.’

Again, the ‘synthesis’ of the ‘antitheses’ of theoretical and practical reason is a *feeling*, not a substance or an idea. However, this is no capricious warm and fuzzy feeling with which we subjectively construct and with which we cuddle up in order to empower our confidence in our understanding and responsible agency. Rather than subjective, wishful thinking, it is an unwelcome feeling of terror (repulsion) and confidence (attraction) that generates our acknowledgement of a ‘higher,’ supersensible, *absolute* whole beyond all mathematical size and threatening power of nature, even beyond the ‘harmonious, unifying play of mental faculties’ that is beauty, which elevates the imagination ‘above’ nature and turns our initial displeasure into pleasure.

The sublime, then, as stimulated by an object of nature whose representation [*Vorstellung*] results in the recognition that the mind is incapable of giving an account [*Darstellung*] of the totality of nature by means of ideas.<sup>143</sup>

140. In section "III. On the *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* as a Means for Combining the two Parts of Philosophy into one Whole" of the *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment*, Kant observes: "[...] in the family of the higher faculties of knowledge [*Erkenntnis*] [that is theoretical and practical reason] there is [...] an intermediary between the understanding and reason." Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* V: 177.

141. Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* V: 177.

142. See Kant’s distinction between reflecting (*reflektierend*) and re-producing (*bestimmend*) judgment in section IV of the *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* V: 179–181. See as well, "On Imagination, the Law of Association, and Reflecting Judgment" at 86, n. 26.

143. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 268.

This effort [to think an absolute totality], and the feeling of the unattainability of the idea by means of the imagination, is itself a presentation [*Darstellung*] of the subjective purposiveness of our mind [...] and compels us to think nature itself in its totality, as the presentation of something supersensible, subjectively, without being able to produce this presentation objectively [...]

This idea of the supersensible, [...] which [...] we cannot further determine, so that we cannot cognize nature as a presentation [*Darstellung*] of it but can only think it, is awakened in us by means of an object the aesthetic judging of which stretches imagination to its limit, whether that of enlargement (mathematically) or of its power over the mind (dynamically), in that it is grounded in *the feeling of a vocation of the mind* that entirely oversteps the domain of [...] (moral feeling), in regard to which the presentation of the object [of the aesthetic judging of appearances] is judged as subjectively purposive.<sup>144</sup> (emphasis added)

As Kant had suggested earlier: "The sublime "[...] indicates nothing purposive in nature itself, but only in the possible use of its perceptions [*Anschaungen*] to make palpable in ourselves a purposiveness that is entirely independent of nature."<sup>145</sup> *This purposiveness, 'entirely independent of nature,' is humanity's vocation of exercising its supersensible capacities to experience, understand, and exercise responsible agency as a community in the world.*

#### 4) On the Relationship of Beauty and the Sublime to the Moral:

Both the sublime and the beautiful have a relationship to the moral. Beauty 's relation to the moral is that its harmonious, 'play of the powers of the mind by means of a unity without any concept' that arises out of contemplation of appearances (aisthesis/ αἴσθησις) is a symbol of the capacity to self-select (but not create) a moral principle to govern agency that is not derived from the senses.

The mathematical sublime's relation to the moral is it constituting an experience of the unitary whole or totality of the supersensible, whereas the dynamical sublime's relation to the moral is the 'strength' of the supersensible over nature that comes with our autonomous freedom, which the ability to initiate a sequence of events that nature cannot accomplish on its own.

*Whereas beauty is a symbol of the autonomous freedom of the moral because it demonstrates a supersensible play of the unitary power of the mind necessary for reflecting judgment but itself not governed by assigned concepts, the sublime evokes the experience of an esteem of the individual's and the community's experience of an absolute whole of the supersensible as governed by lawfulness.*

The sublime consists merely in the relation in which the sensuous in the conception of nature is judged to be suitable for a possible supersensuous use of it. – The absolute good,

144. Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 268.

145. Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 246.

subjectively judged according to the feeling it inspires, (the object of moral feeling) as the determinability of the subject's powers through the idea of an absolutely necessary law, is distinguished primarily through the modality of a necessity based on concepts *a priori*, which contains not only a claim, but also a command of applause for everyone, and does not in itself belong to the aesthetic [perception], but to the pure intellectual power of judgment; It is also not attributed in a merely reflecting, but with a re-producing [*bestimmenden*] judgment, not to nature, but to [autonomous] freedom. However, the determinability of the subject by this idea, and indeed of a subject that can feel obstacles in itself in its perceptions, but at the same time superiority over them by overcoming the obstacle as a modification of its perception, i.e., through moral feeling, is nevertheless related to the aesthetic power of judgment and its formal conditions to such an extent that it can serve to make the lawfulness of action out of duty simultaneously presentable as aesthetic, i.e., as sublime, or also as beautiful, without losing its purity: which would not take place if one wanted to put it in natural connection with the feeling of pleasantness.<sup>146</sup>

"The object of a pure and unconditioned intellectual satisfaction is *the moral law* in all its power [...]" which is *antecedent* "[...] *in us over each and every incentive of the mind.*"<sup>147</sup> (emphasis added) Whereas *beauty* is the 'free play of our cognitive faculties' that '*requires us to love nature without interest*'<sup>148</sup> (that is, the satisfaction of beauty with respect to nature is solely 'positive' when it comes to a judgment of taste/beauty<sup>149</sup>), *the sublime* '*requires us to esteem consciousness* 'positively' contrary to our 'negative,' sensible interest because of the displeasure (of insignificance or threat) that occurs in perceptions judged as inspiring the sublime.<sup>150</sup> That is, the satisfaction of the sublime with respect to nature is both 'negative' and 'positive.'<sup>151</sup> Hence intellectually purposive, moral good judged aesthetically must not be represented so much as beautiful but as sublime, soaring above certain obstacles of sensibility by means of moral principles and, thereby, becoming interesting.<sup>152</sup>

*Beauty's freedom is represented 'more as a harmonious playing than as subject to lawfulness,' whereas with the experience of the sublime, the mind's dominion over nature is exercised by the imagination itself as an autonomous, causal, hence, lawful 'instrument of reason.*

Feeling for the sublime "[...] cannot even be conceived without [...]moral feeling [*Stimmung*]; and, although the beautiful in nature likewise presupposes and cultivates a certain liberality in [...] thinking, that is, *independence of the satisfaction from merely sensory enjoyment, nevertheless by means of [... the beautiful] freedom is represented more as in harmonious play than as subject to a lawful affairs* [*Genshaft*], which is the genuine property of human morality, where reason must exercise dominion over sensibility. It is

146. Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 266–267.

147. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 271.

148. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 267.

149. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 269.

150. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 267.

151. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 269.

152. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 271.

just that *in aesthetic judgment of the sublime this control [Grewal] is represented as being exercised by the imagination itself, as an instrument of reason.*<sup>153</sup> (emphasis added)

Unlike aesthetic taste (beauty), which we can expect of everyone, Kant recognizes that not everyone experiences the 'pleasure' of the sublime as elevating to a 'unifying, absolute whole above the perceptions that instigate the experience of terror that is the sublime. In what sounds initially like a ridiculous claim, Kant appears to dogmatically assert that the 'pleasure' of the sublime requires an openness to the moral, which is not directly given in the experience of the sublime and which *requires a 'moral culture'* to expand one's openness to the sublime. Unlike the experience of beauty, which we may expect of everyone, the sublime requires "a far greater culture, not merely of the aesthetic power of judgment, but also of the epistemological capacities [*Erkenntnisvermögen*] on which it is based [...]"<sup>154</sup> "The disposition of the mind to the feeling of the sublime requires its receptivity to ideas [...]"<sup>155</sup> However, not a disposition to just any ideas! Especially, "[...] *without the development of moral ideas, that which we, prepared by culture* [moral culture, not the 'culture of skills'<sup>156</sup>], *call sublime will appear merely repellent to the unrefined person. S/he will see in the proofs of the dominion of nature [...] only [...] distress, danger, and need [...]*"<sup>157</sup> (emphasis added)

Although 'moral culture' is necessary for a judgment of the sublime in nature, the judgment of the sublime "[...] is not, therefore, first generated by culture and so to speak introduced into society merely as a matter of convention. Rather, [*... the sublime*] *has its foundation in human nature, and indeed in that which can be required of everyone [that is, universally] and demanded of him along with healthy understanding, namely in the 'capacity' [Anlage] of the feeling for (practical [Kant's parentheses]) ideas, i.e., to that which is moral.*"<sup>158</sup> (emphasis added)

[...] [J]ust as we reproach someone who is indifferent in judging an object in nature that we find beautiful with lack of taste, so we say of someone who remains unmoved by that which we judge to be sublime that s/he has no feeling. We demand both [... taste and feeling] of every human being, and also presuppose it in everyone who has any culture – only with this difference, that *we immediately require the former [taste] of everyone because in it the capacity of judgment [Urteils-kraft] relates the imagination merely to the understanding, as the faculty of concepts, but because the latter (feeling/sublime) relates the imagination to reason, as the faculty of ideas, we require it only under a subjective presupposition* (which, however, we believe ourselves to be justified in demanding of everyone), *namely, that of*

153. Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 268–269.

154. Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* V: 264.

155. Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* V: 265.

156. On the distinction between 'moral culture' and the 'culture of skills,' see 848, n. 161.

157. Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* V: 265.

158. Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* V: 265.

*the moral feeling in humanity, and so we also ascribe necessity to this aesthetic judgment.*<sup>159</sup>  
(emphasis added)

The 'presumed necessity' of universal taste and feeling for morality on the part of aesthetic judgments '[m]akes us cognizant of an *a priori* [*transcendental*] principle in them. With respect to beauty, it is the *transcendental* principle of the harmonious unity of the 'play' of the mind absent concepts. With respect to the sublime, it is the *transcendental* principle of the *absolute whole* or *totality* of our supersensible capacity beyond all mathematical enumeration, yet, endowing us with a 'capacity' (*Kraft*) capable of destroying nature.

## VII) Hegel's Reading of Kant on Beauty and the Sublime. Beauty and the Sublime are not Identical for Kant

Hegel faults Kant for having intentionally limited reason to 'subjective understanding.' The framework for Hegel's accusation is illustrated by Plato's line, which has reason 'higher' than understanding. Hegel claims to have reached reason, the highest religion of the mind, and he is charging Kant with being intentionally stuck in understanding, below reason.

Kant, however, does not frame his reflections on reason according to Plato's Simile of the Line. Wherever Hegel's scheme comes from, consciously or unconsciously, Hegel is pouring the new Kantian wine into old wineskins by squeezing Kant into a pre-figured framework that is inappropriate for understanding him.

'Reason,' according to Kant, is not 'above' understanding and the perceptible world of action. This is a *hierarchical relationship* of causality, according to Hegel's way of understanding 'theoretical reason' and 'practical reason' with reason (pure Absolute Spirit) being *the causal origin* of the true content and actual conditions that are the phenomenal world in which practical reason can exercise its agency.

For Kant, reason itself is divided into two domains of order/lawfulness: theoretical and practical reason. Neither domain of reason is 'higher' than the other with respect to one being the causal explanation of the other. Theoretical reason is concerned with the lawful order that makes it possible for a finite, imperceptible consciousness to be able to understand a world of perceptible phenomena. Practical reason is concerned with the lawful order that makes it possible for that same finite, imperceptible consciousness, intentionally, to be able to initiate sequences of events in perceptible phenomena that its own lawful causal order cannot initiate by itself. Theoretical reason is, then, concerned with 'what is' whereas practical reason is concerned with 'what ought to be.' Only a finite consciousness in possession of the imperceptible capacities of

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159. Kant, Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* V: 265–266.

both theoretical and practical reason can be in a world the way that humanity is able. That conclusion does not exclude the possibility that there are other versions of finite, transcendental consciousness elsewhere in the universe, but, if there are others, they have to possess similar imperceptible capacities as we if they experience phenomena the way that we do.

When it comes to theoretical and practical reason, we possess ‘certainty,’ according to Kant, only to the degree that we can determine what is *necessary* (in the sense of required, not determining causation) for our understanding of, and responsible agency in, the world. Among those transcendental conditions of possibility is ‘God,’ but we leave the domain of certainty when we apply predicates to God that are not required for experience, understanding, and responsible agency in the world.

Hegel’s account of Kant in “Glauben und Wissen” as well as in his *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie* take Kant’s discussion of ‘beauty’ in the *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* to be the crucial indicator that Kant is a ‘mere’ ‘weak’ and ‘barbarous’<sup>160</sup> dogmatist,<sup>161</sup> who failed to recognize that absolute ‘reason thinks itself’ through finite consciousness.<sup>162</sup> Yet, far from weakening ‘reason’ and presenting a barbaric philosophy that denies absolute truth, Kant identified the necessary conditions required for any and all understanding and responsible agency that are illuminated in finite, conscious experience of beauty and the sublime to anchor transcendental consciousness in the world as a responsible agent.<sup>163</sup>

Among the necessary conditions, that is among the certainties of understanding, are the capacity for judgments of beauty and the sublime, which along with the assumption of teleological purposiveness in nature are the *transcendental principles* of finite consciousness. Those *transcendental principles* along with the *metaphysical principles* of theoretical and practical reason are the cornerstone of reason.

The fact that the cornerstone of reason, according to Kant, is feeling rather than philosophy being merely of matter of detached, ‘talking head’ is a front-on, anticipatory ridiculing of Hegel’s Absolute Spirit, Absolute Knowledge, and Absolute Freedom. Furthermore, far from being a solipsistic ‘constructivist’<sup>164</sup> who takes each individual to determine the conceptual and lawful order of nature and responsible agency, Kant places ‘reflecting judgment’<sup>165</sup> as the connecting strategy that unites theoretical and

160. See Hegel, “Glauben und Wissen” GW II: 287–288.

161. See Hegel, “Glauben und Wissen” GW II: 319.

162. See Hegel, “Glauben und Wissen.” GW II: 327.

163. In other words, there Kant is by no means calling for an escape from sensuousness with his moral theory as do Hegel/Strauß. This Kant makes especially clear with his discussion of the sublime’s relation to sensuousness, see above in Chapter 8: 834.

164. Again, a charge that Kant explicitly rejects in the *Critique of Pure Reason* B xxix.”

165. See the “Introduction:” 86, n. 26, Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 386–387, and *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 179–180 with ‘reflecting’ judgment consisting of the activity of transcendental consciousness that deduces (does not create!) the appropriate concept for a set of phenomena that is ambiguous for it. When ‘reflecting’ judgment successfully completes its task, it can

practical reason, and he explicitly rejects the claim that reflecting judgment is subjectively imposing a conceptual order on the world.

Hegel claims that Kant dogmatically eliminates 'Reason' as Absolute Knowledge and 'limits' 'reason' merely to 'weak,' subjective understanding. However, not only has Kant already anticipated Hegel's Idealism and rapturous (*schwärmerische*) attempts<sup>166</sup> at Absolute Knowledge to be like a dove dreaming that it can fly in a vacuum, but also Kant speaks of 'limits' to reason are not because Reason Itself (independent of finite consciousness) is 'limited.' Rather, in order to experience, understand, and exercise responsible agency in the world, as it does, reason cannot be anything else but finite. Anything more is a deceptive employment of literal, anthropomorphic analogies in an attempt to place humanity (in Hegel's case, a 'Platonic' theoretical reason as a 'logical' process imminent to history) on the throne of God. In short, Hegel divinizes humanity and eclipses any 'real' significance to finite experience in the world. The phenomenal world is only a temporary 'place holder' that is a matter of indifference for Absolute Spirit's Absolute non-difference.

Hegel writes of Kant's subjectivist, 'feeling' that cannot reach 'true' objectivity:

[...] the objective, which is to establish the contrast, is itself equally subjective, does not belong to my feeling, but remains enclosed in the circle of the subject, in the pure 'I' of my self-consciousness, the area of thinking understanding. On the one hand, I have feeling content. On the other hand, I am active over against it. I do not leave it in its accidental determination but make it universal. However, this is also subjective, and so we do not recognize the thing by itself. On the one hand, there are determinations of feeling, which are connected with our organs. On the other hand, there are determinations of thinking, which are in my 'I;' so they are only appearances, which we recognize and determine. In this respect Kant's philosophy called itself idealism: we deal only with our determinations, we do not come to the In-Itself [An-sich]; we do not come to the truly objective [Absolute Spirit].<sup>167</sup>

Hegel speaks of finite consciousness as the 'location' where Absolute Reason 'thinks Itself.' In dramatic contrast, Hegel complains:

[...] [For Kant] a true unity, an organic unity of an intuitive understanding, is not to be thought once and for all. *It is not reason that knows here*, but it is [...] *the principle of [reflecting] judgment, to think as if nature were determined by a consciousness possessing understanding.*<sup>168</sup>

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apply the already deduced concept to a new set of phenomena by making a 're-produced' [*bestimmende*] judgment.

166. On the difference between 'enthusiasm' and 'rapture,' see page 7, n. (footnote # will be inserted in this editing process)

167. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie* GW XX: 351.

168. Hegel, "Glauben und Wissen." GW II: 327.

*According to Hegel, beauty and the sublime are equivalent because they both are the external, phenomenal side of internal, Absolute Spirit. Both beauty and the sublime are an 'idea' as the ideal of the totality of 'actuality' (the dimension of representations. The purpose of beauty and the sublime is to elevate humanity out of the world into Spirit as the point of indifference that is Absolute Spirit's Second Negation. In other words, Absolute Spirit is the unifying link between Absolute Freedom and nature. The contrast between Hegel and Kant on beauty and the sublime could not be greater.*

*According to Kant, neither beauty nor the sublime are concerned with external phenomena but with internal, transcendental capacities of consciousness. Beauty is explicitly not a concept or idea or a perceptible ideal. The unifying link between autonomous freedom and the will is reflecting judgment, not a 'formless' substance of Absolute Spirit. Both beauty and the sublime are inseparable from the moral with the former as the 'symbol of the moral' that confirms humanity's extra-ordinary conscious capacities of reflecting judgment and with the latter a confirmation of the magnitude and strength of theoretical and practical reason.*

### VIII) On Hegel's Insistence that Kant's Reason is 'Weak,' 'Barbarous,' and 'Dogmatic' or Hegel's Erroneous Insistence on What Kant 'Must Mean' by Theoretical and Practical Reason

Hegel's Reading of Kant on aesthetic judgment is a classic example of 'reading-in' (eisegesis/εισήγησις) what is 'read-out-of' (exegesis/ἐξήγησις) a Text. Hegel succumbs over-and-over to assumptions that drive a 'blind,' hermeneutical circle. This closed, hermeneutical circle is manifest throughout Hegel's reading of Kant.

Hegel approaches Kant with a pre-conceived notion of Absolute Knowledge/Absolute Spirit as 'true,' objective (scientific) knowledge that is the ultimate source of Kant's philosophy of merely subjective understanding. Hegel reads Kant as aware of the 'ultimate source,' yet he chose to ignore it. Hence, Kant's reason is 'weak' and 'barbaric,' and his notion of Enlightenment as 'think for oneself' consists of nothing other than the pursuit of personal desire and interest. Because Kant's practical reason is exclusively shaping of empirical phenomena, it cannot escape the sensuous world. Therefore, it can never achieve 'freedom' above history.

By taking Hegel's reading of Kant as situating him on Plato's simile of the line at the level of 'understanding' (albeit, as a horizontal, immanent, historical, cataphasis/apophasis, logical dialectic that turns finite consciousness into the 'place holder' that is the 'point' of indifference returning to non-difference), one can 'see' that, according to Hegel, Kant has decapitated 'Reason.' Insisting that synthesis' must mean the product of a tripartite dialectical structure (thesis, antithesis, synthesis), Hegel claims that there is only one *a priori* synthesis of Absolute Spirit that becomes aware of itself 'at the end of history:' the Owl of Minerva flies in the evening.

Kant's 'ignoring' of Absolute Being means, for Hegel, that he could not possibly grasp the 'true' meaning of 'beauty' and the sublime because Kant is unable to see them as two forms of the same 'truth' that shining through nature is the Absolute ground of Absolute Spirit/Knowledge. One can also 'see' the pre-figured dualistic structure that Hegel imposes upon Kant in Plato's distinction between Mind as 'Being' and the perceptible realm as transient copies of mere 'Becoming.' This compulsory dualism allows Hegel to read Kant as a defender of merely subjective, 'empty abstractions' because Kant's ideas/concepts (Hegel does not distinguish between 'concepts' and 'ideas' as does Kant) are not objective Ideas of 'the' ultimate Idea but only subjective creations of solipsistic consciousness that prescribe the way the world 'is.'

Reflecting judgment' can only be a metaphor for subjective 'constructivism,' according to Hegel. Furthermore, Hegel not only ridicules Kant's 'theoretical reason' as 'empty abstractions,' but he takes Kant to mean by 'practical reason' a merely 'analytical' concern with the 'empirical.' Consequently, Absolute 'freedom' is an escaping from sensuousness because finite freedom with its efforts at morality is entrapped in what Plato called the status of 'prisoner' in a world of shadows that circumscribes freedom.

Furthermore, the demand to fulfil perfectly the demands of 'duty' is truncated by the existential push-back of restricting nature's own 'freedom' that results in the individual's concrete situation transforming the 'I should' of duty into an 'I can't.' It is only Hegel's Absolute Spirit as the 'cunning of reason' that can accomplish the perfect realization of history's teleological goal by means of the dialectic of Double Negation – in spite of the limitations on finite consciousness.

In addition, reading Hegel philosophy as a con-figuration of Plato's Simile of the Line aids understanding of Hegel's distinction between 'theoretical reason' and 'practical reason.' For Hegel, 'theoretical reason' is the Absolute Unity of above the '*divisible-I*' of mental ideality (*Ideele*)<sup>169</sup> and over against the material world of 'practical reason,' which in contrast to Kant Hegel speaks of as the 'unreasonable many' of the '*divisible non-I*' that is empirical actuality (*Realität*). Hegel engages in a Platonic-Christian, anthropomorphic portrayal of God as Mind/'Reason' above 'Understanding' while silently, yet no-less dogmatically, claiming that all multiplicity (or the realm of practical reason's 'becoming') arises out of the 'divisible-I' (Absolute Spirit):

[... the] real opposite [to Absolute Unity] is, on one side, manifold being or finitude, and opposite to [... the manifold of multiplicity] is infinity as negation of multiplicity and positively as pure unity. The absolute concept, thus constituted, [... is] this unity [...] called pure reason. However, the relationship of pure unity to the manifold being that is its opposite is a double relation, [...] for if the existence of both were absolute, there would be no relation between them at all, and if the complete annihilation of both were set, there would be no existence of either. This partial existence and partial negation of both – the *opposing of a divisible-I to a divisible non-I in the I* [...] is the absolute principle of

169. On Hegel's distinctions among the non-divisible I, the divisible-I, and the divisible non-I, see 160.

this [Hegel's] philosophy. In the first [the divisible-I], the positive relation, pure unity is called theoretical reason whereas the negative relation is practical reason. Because in [... practical reason] the negation of the opposition occurs first [as a negation in the unity of theoretical reason], the unity [of theoretical reason] is the more existing whereas in [... practical reason] the opposition is first, that is, multiplicity is first, and the more existing, practical reason occurs as the real (*reelle*), but theoretical reason as the ideal (*ideelle*) [...] because in opposition, actuality [*Realität/reelle*] is multiplicity, but ideality [*ideelle*] is unity.<sup>170</sup> (emphasis added)

Hegel wrote of the difference between 'theoretical' and 'practical' Spirit in an "Addendum" to the *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaft*:

While, on the one hand, because consciousness has the object directly, it cannot be said to have urge, on the other hand, Spirit must be conceived as an urge because it is essentially activity, and first of all, it is a) that activity by which the apparently foreign object, instead of taking the form of something given, isolated, and accidental, takes on the form of something remembered,<sup>171</sup> subjective, general, necessary, and reasonable. By making this change with respect to the object, Spirit reacts against the one-sidedness of consciousness, which refers to objects as immediately existing, and, not knowing them as subjective consciousness, it is thus theoretical Spirit. In this, the urge or drive for knowledge prevails. With respect to the content [*Inhalt*] of knowledge [for theoretical Spirit], I know that it is, that it has objectivity, – and, at the same time, I know that it is in me, that is, subjective. The object, therefore, no longer has the determination of a negative against the I, as it does from the standpoint of consciousness. b) The practical spirit takes the opposite starting point. It does not begin, as the theoretical spirit does, from the *apparently independent* object, but from its purposes and interests, that is, from subjective determinations, and only proceeds to make these into an object. In so doing, this spirit reacts just as much against the one-sided subjectivity of self-consciousness closed in on itself as the theoretical spirit does against consciousness dependent on a given object. Theoretical and practical spirit, therefore, integrate each other, precisely because they are distinguished from each other in the manner indicated. This difference, however, is not an absolute one, for the theoretical mind also has to do with its own determinations, with thoughts; and conversely, the purposes of the rational will are not something belonging to the particular subject, but something existing in and for itself. Both ways of Spirit are forms of reason; for both in the theoretical and in the practical Spirit is produced that in which reason consists: a unity of the subjective and the objective although in different ways. – At the same time, however, *these two forms of subjective Spirit have in common with each other the defect that in both of them the apparent separateness of the subjective and the objective is assumed and that the unity of these opposite determinations is first to be brought forth* – a defect that lies in the nature of Spirit because it is not an existing, immediately completed thing, but rather that which brings itself forth, the pure activity, the abolition of the presupposition, made by itself, of the opposition of the subjective and the objective.<sup>172</sup> (emphasis added)

170. Hegel, "Wissenschaftliche Behandlungsarten" GW II: 455–456. On Hegel's distinction between the real (*reelle*) and ideal thought (*ideelle*) see the "Preface:" 46, n. 31.

171. Surely an echo, at the least, of Plato's notion of 'knowledge' as 'remembering' ('anamnesis') in the *Meno* 80 d and *Phaedo* 66 b–d.

172. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaft* GW X: 237.

Hegel goes on to speak of practical reason as containing the conditions for encountering Absolute Spirit in empirical, practical reason, but empirical practical reason on its own fails to understand Absolute Spirit because practical reason ‘remains absolutely opposed’ to the ‘ideal.’

[...] only the formal idea [as a representation] of identity of the ideal (*Ideellen*) and the real (*Reellen*) can be recognized in what is called practical reason, and this idea should be the absolute point of indifference in these systems; but the idea of indifference does not come out of difference, and the ideal (*Ideelle*) does not come to reality (*Realität*) for *in spite of the fact that the ideal (Ideelle) [content] and the actual (Reelle) [form] are identical in practical reason [as concrete experience in the world], the actual (Reelle) nevertheless remains absolutely opposed [to the ideal].*<sup>173</sup> (emphasis added)

In the presentation of "The New German Philosophy" in Part III, Section 3 of his *Vorlesungen über the Geschichte der Philosophie*, Hegel equates Kant and Fichte as ‘subjectivists’ for whom the ‘I’ is limited to judgments of Cartesian ‘certainty’ rather than the ‘truth’ of what Hegel calls Absolute Spirit:

*The [subjective] ‘I’ is certain, but philosophy wants the true [Absolute Spirit].* The certain [for Fichte] is the subjective. That which is certain shall remain the foundation. What comes in addition is also subjective. The [subjective] form cannot be eliminated. We saw this ‘I’ also with Kant’s transcendental apperception:<sup>174</sup> ‘I’ is the source of the categories and ideas, it is a linking. All ideas, thoughts are such syntheses, – manifold things synthesized by thinking. Unlike Kant, Fichte does not go to work narratively by beginning with the ‘I,’ that is the great thing about him. Everything is to be derived from the ‘I,’ narration is to be abolished. – What is in me, that I know; it is pure, abstract knowledge, this is the ‘I’ itself. This is Fichte’s starting point. Kant takes up the assignations [*Bestimmungen*] of pure knowledge, the categories, empirically from [analytic] logic [resulting in a *posteriori* synthesis of ideas through dialectic], – a quite unphilosophical, unjustified procedure.<sup>175</sup> (emphasis added)

However, just as ‘ideas’ for Plato can be employed to ‘look down’ the line to the imagination to ‘make sense’ of representations of the copies and shadows that are the realm of empirical ‘becoming’ or ‘to ‘look up’ the line by means of dialectic to contemplate (*θεωρία*, *theoria*) the Absolute Good ‘above Being’ (*Republic* 509b: *ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας*), so too with Hegel, ideas are employed to guide understanding and action ‘down the line’ *in the empirical world of practical reason – without awareness of their ‘more proper’ function in the higher realm of theoretical reason.* Furthermore, because, according to Hegel, the ideas of practical reason are generated (*werden*

173. Hegel, "Wissenschaftliche Behandlungsarten" GW II: 456.

174. See above where I demonstrate that Hegel takes Kant’s ‘apperception’ to mean ‘perception.’

175. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie* GW XX: 392–393.

*gesetzt*) by the subject<sup>176</sup> by an analytic that generates ideas by means of an *a posteriori* dialectic because they are not directly 'given' in perception, the 'common' take on understanding and ethical agency in the empirical world, according to Hegel, entirely neglects 'theoretical reason' and experiences the debilitating frustration and pain that its finitude and the limits of its empirical circumstances make it impossible for it to 'live up to' the 'pure' standard of moral duty contained in the necessity of moral principles.<sup>177</sup> In short, theoretical reason's "[...] moment of the Absolute is 'dispersed' (*zerstreut*) in the empirical that consists of a linear, dialectical sequence, and the empirical appears as fragmentary (*zersplittert*).<sup>178</sup> The consequence is that the absolute necessity of moral duty, which is 'established' (*gesetzt*) by the agent, is not Absolute Spirit Itself but the 'divisible non-I's' finitude within recognition that it occurs in the 'divisible I' of Absolute Spirit. Whereas moral duty is taken to be a 'truly absolute' expectation, it is, in fact, an unattainable perfection given the limitations of empirical nature.

Without any exegetical accounting in Kant and insisting that Kant speaks only of freedom 'freedom-from' with no acknowledgement of Kant's notion of creative, autonomous 'freedom-for,' Hegel insists that his own account of 'practical reason' and morality is what Kant means by practical reason and morality. Stated otherwise, Hegel takes practical reason to be 'analytical' absent any *a priori* synthetic judgment – with the exception of Absolute Spirit as its ultimate cause.: it 'must be the case' because Kant is a subjectivist].

Hegel's "Glauben und Wissen" concludes:

The pure concept [...] or infinity as the abyss of nothingness in which all being sinks, has to replace the infinite pain, which before was only historical in formation as the feeling upon which the religion of our day is based – *the feeling: God himself is dead* (that which was, as it were, only empirically expressed with Pascal's expressions: "la nature est telle qu'elle marque partout un Dieu perdu et dans l'homme et hors de l'homme"[ "Nature is such that everywhere, both in man and outside of man, it points to a lost God (and to the corruption of nature)"], *purely as a moment, but also not as more than a moment of the highest Idea*, and thus giving a philosophical existence to what was also, for instance, either moral prescription of a sacrifice of the empirical being or the concept of formal abstraction, and *thus giving philosophy the idea of Absolute Freedom and thus giving, as well, absolute suffering or speculative Good Friday, which was otherwise historical, and restore it itself in all the truth and harshness of its godlessness, out of which [...] the highest*

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176. See Walter Tydecks, "Konstruktion des Subjekts und seiner Wirklichkeit nach der *Wissenschaft der Logik* von Hegel." 9: "Wenn Hegel von »gesetzt« oder »setzen« spricht, dann meint er damit, wie eine Aussage gesetzt wird, die nur innerhalb eines vorausgesetzten Bedeutungssystems zu verstehen ist." [http://www.tydecks.info/online/logik\\_kraft\\_subjekt.html](http://www.tydecks.info/online/logik_kraft_subjekt.html) (29 August 2022)

177. See Hegel, "Wissenschaftliche Betrachtungsweise " GW II: 457 ff. Here in 1803, Hegel already formulates what he calls "The Moral View of the World. "

178. See Hegel, "Wissenschaftliche Betrachtungsweise " GW II: 459.

*totality can and must arise in all its seriousness and from its deepest depths, at the same time all-embracing and in the most cheerful freedom of its form.*<sup>179</sup> (emphasis added)

In other words, for Hegel 'practical reason' is a distorted and mis-apprehension of Absolute Spirit for which God and nature are dead. It is only with the grasp and embracing of the absolute suffering of the speculative Good Friday (the grasping and positive embracing of the turning 'point to absolute indifference') that godlessness is replaced with 'the highest totality,' and one embraces, cheerfully, Absolute Freedom of liberation from sensuousness and the frustrated efforts of the ethical. Humanity is then divinized.

Platonic 'blindness' prevent Hegel from grasping the significance and strength (!) that is reason for Kant. The 'capacity' of judgment is what elevates transcendental consciousness (finite reason) above nature because it is the transcendental condition of possibility for theoretical and practical reason. Kant concludes:

In speaking of laws of duty (not laws of nature) and, among these, of laws for human beings' external relations with one another, we consider ourselves in a moral (intelligible) world where, by analogy with the physical world, attraction and repulsion bind together rational beings (on earth). The principle of mutual love admonishes them constantly to come closer to one another; that of the respect they owe one another, to keep themselves at a distance from one another; and should one of these great moral forces fail, 'then nothingness (immortality), with gaping throat, would drink up the whole kingdom of (moral) beings like a drop of water' (if I may use Haller's words, but in a different reference).<sup>180</sup>

## Why Strauß' Failed Kantian Turn Matters

Strauß appears never to have engaged Kant on aesthetic judgment. A key element in his increasingly materialistic metaphysics (although he himself acknowledges huge gaps in materialism) was his focus on 'culture.' I read Strauß' focus on Rousseau's

179. Hegel, "Glauben und Wissen:" GW II: 432–433.

180. Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals* AA VI: 449. The passage in Haller's poem, "Unvollkommene Ode über die Ewigkeit" ("Incomplete Ode on Eternity"), is:

O God! You alone are the reason for everything!  
 You, sun, are the measure of immense time,  
 You stand by balanced power and constant noon,  
 You never rise, nor will you set,  
 A single moment in you is eternity!  
 Yes, could the stable forces sink only because of you,  
 Shortly, with a wide open throat,  
 A universal nothingness would drink the whole cosmos,  
 Time and eternity at once,  
 As the ocean drinks a drop of water.

Second Nature notion of culture not as educational nationalistic Philistinism, as did Nietzsche, but as analogous to the understanding of 'religion' as a cultural expression of a 'people' (*Volk*) as emphasized by Hegel and Daub. An understanding of culture merely as Second Nature only takes culture to be an expression of intellectual skills.

Were he aware of Hegel's aesthetics, there would have been nothing in Hegel's that could have attracted him to aesthetics because for Hegel aesthetics is just another set of metaphors for Hegel's meta-narrative of Double Negation. There is, however, no indication that Strauß ever engaged Kant on aesthetic judgment. Certainly, Hegel's ridiculing of Kant's aesthetic judgment provided, unfortunately, no incentive to examine Kant on aesthetic judgment.

Absent a serious engagement on his own of Kant generally, and on aesthetic judgment in particular, Strauß' understanding of 'culture' as the (religious) *character* of a people (*Volk*) left him with only a truncated notion of 'reason' as *instrumental reason* that is, the cultivation of instrumental reason. In other words, from a Kantian perspective, his focus was on the *narrow*, perceptible 'consequences' of what Kant calls 'theoretical reason,' not on the imperceptible, capacities and *a priori* conditions of possibility for transcendental consciousness to be a creative, responsible agent in the world grounded in 'moral culture.'

The 'Return to Kant Movement' among his friends in the 1860s that resulted in his tepid engagement of Kant's moral theory in the 1864 *LJEGP* and the sketchy formulation of a 'religion of humanity' treats morality as it does *instrumental reason* in terms of perceptible consequences. Yet, his dependence for the understanding of moral duty and consequentialist ethics from Hegel's "The Moral View of the World" left his 'religion of humanity' as an ethics focuses on the *species* for any sense of moral improvement.

Not only is there no rigorous engagement on either Kant's *theoretical* or *practical* reason, there is no hint of the notion of 'moral culture' or the understanding of culture as 'the promotion of the moral will' that is grounded in the cornerstone of the *feeling of attraction and repulsion to lawfulness of reflecting judgment* in Kant's presentation of aesthetic judgment as the 'bridge' between autonomous freedom and responsible agency in the world.

Strauß' Kantian 'blind spot' is truly striking, and it contributed immensely to his turn to 'faith in materialism' in the 1872 *The Old and the New Faith*.

If we think that all we have to do is merely *open our eyes* to experience reality, then we are building our lives on sand, not a solid foundation. This is because merely 'opening one's eyes' involves a profound paradox. We can only perceive the effects of causality, not directly, causes themselves. Casual explanations are constructions (though, not creations) of *reflecting judgment*. They presuppose a lawfulness (both of theoretical and practical reason) that *attracts us to seek a causal explanation, in the first place*.

Because we have no direct access to causes in perception, out of which all quest for causal explanation arises and to which all causal explanation must return for its

validation (not proof!), the limits to our reason not only prevent us from proving or disproving our convictions but also requires our recognition that every other conviction with respect to causal explanation and reality enjoys the same advantage and disadvantage as our own.

This raises the specter that all causal explanations, 'properly' understood, are equal. If for no other reason, this superficial claim that is a popular form of 'pluralism' today, is reason enough to be chilled by the ignoring of Kant's Critical Idealism.

Critical Idealism's *necessary or required conditions of possibility, which make possible theoretical and practical reason as grounded in aesthetic judgment* opens before us an entirely different strategy for achieving understanding than merely "opening our eyes."

If all we must do is open our eyes to "see" reality, then it is patently absurd to say that the sun is standing still. Although there is no position that we can take on this planet to demonstrate it, every school child today "knows" that the sun is standing still and the earth is turning on its axis and travelling around the sun. The "fact" that we are rotating at some 1,000 miles/hour and travelling around the sun at the rate of some 65,000 miles/hour is ridiculous for those who insist that truth is merely a matter of perception.

What "must necessarily" be the case if we are to think that the sun is standing still and that we are moving at such imperceptible speeds when sense perception confirms exactly the opposite? To think so, we must not only be able, but also are required, (that is, it is *necessary*) to *add something to the phenomena of our perception of the sun in relation to the earth that is not directly present in our perception of them.*

Here we have with the understanding of nature an *amoral necessity/requirement*. It is a requirement demanded for proper understanding, but it is not a moral requirement that governs personal behavior. *Understanding of physical phenomena requires necessarily paying attention to the enduring order that always and already shapes nature.* That order may be a physical law but also a statistically significant outcome of investigation or an algorithm applied to the phenomena in those 'territories' where a physical law is not yet discernible.

In contrast, *moral necessity* does not always and already shape the behavior that it seeks to govern because that behavior is not grounded in nature per se but in the individual's ability intentionally to do something that nature on its own cannot do. In other words, nature imposes on the observer/agent the *heteronomous* physical and social laws/rules that govern it whereas the creative agent imposes on her-/himself the *autonomous, moral laws/rules* that govern her/his autonomous freedom "above" but never "separated" from nature, as far as we have ever experienced.

Heteronomous and autonomous necessity are not merely capricious assumptions of opinion about objective phenomena whether we're talking about nature or the scriptures. To be sure, they are assumptions, but they are *necessary/required assumptions* for there to be any understanding and proper intentional action in the world *in the first place.*

We can quarrel over the opinion whether the Christ is *exclusive* or *inclusive*, whether Jesus was a mere reformer of Judaism, a teacher of Socratic, Stoic, or Cynic wisdom, or the solution to Augustine of Hippo's original sin, as well as about any other set of religious convictions mediated by the scriptures. However, what we can't quarrel over is the requirement of our assumption of coherent order not only for our experience of the world but also for governing our own creative lives. This is why Strauß' work matters yet today.

### The Significance of Strauß and Kant for Today:

Humanity has reached a crossroads that Kant anticipated but surely could not have consciously imagined. Kant wrote in 1775 that we in principle have the power to destroy the world. It took some 175 years, but, in 1945 with the unleashing of nuclear power, we realized that capacity. Our creative capacity is *instrumental reason*,<sup>181</sup> that is, the degree to which we can *intentionally* cause events to happen that nature on its own could never achieve, has brought about in Rousseau's "Second Nature" not only the destructiveness of nuclear power but also material consumption and self-aggrandizement, all of which threaten to snuff out the very creative spirit that for millennia was devoted to survival.

As a species we appear to have placed all of our eggs in one basket: self-interest! The god of self-interest will protect us from exercising our capacity to destroy the world, and we believe, following the prophetess Ayn Rand,<sup>182</sup> that self-interest is the driving mechanism that is going to bring benefit, particularly prosperity, to everyone.

When combined with the desire for recognition in the eyes of others and the worship of competition, we are like Cronos, a monster who devours its own children. Rather than think about humanity as a species, we celebrate and reward the achievements only of the few. The headlines (famous politicians, movie stars, musicians, moguls of industry and finance) live real lives, the rest of us are cogs in the machine graphically portrayed by Fritz Lang's famous movie "Metropolis." Yet, we wait in vain for a "savior" (a politician, actor/actress, sport's star, businessman, investment guru) because no individual can be a substitute for the many. If humanity is to be saved, it must save itself as individuals of an entire species by assuming responsibility for its creative agency!

What is wrong with self-interest, the desire for recognition in the eyes of others, and competition? Haven't they brought us the amazing accomplishments from which we all benefit? "Yes" and "No!" If we only look at outcomes, the answer appears to be: "Yes!" In a pragmatic age, of course, outcomes are all that matter. We live under the

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181. Again, it is to be stressed that *instrumental* reason is only the *consequentialist* aspect of *theoretical* reason.

182. See Ayn Rand, *Atlas Shrugged* (New York: Random House, 1957).

mantra of Utilitarianism that the good is that which benefits the many. However, we forget that, as a finite species, we are incapable of calculating the actual consequences of our decisions and actions. Big data and algorithms are exponentially increasing the quantity of variables that we are capable of including in our calculations, but algorithms are only as good as their authors and *big data is a smoke screen that present us with the illusion that we can consider all the factors of a situation.*

Whether attributable to Mark Twain or the British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli, "there are three kinds of lies: lies, damned lies, and statistics." *Statistics depend upon the assumptions that drive them*, and those assumptions are imprecise, by definition, and malleable, in fact. We can make statistics say almost anything that we want them to say. Statistics present us with the *appearance of order* that, of course, is necessary for us to understand phenomena, but they are not demanded by the phenomena as in the case of physical laws.<sup>183</sup>

What has "brought us the amazing accomplishments from which we all benefit" is not self-interest, the desire for recognition in the eyes of others, and/or competition, but, rather, the one capacity that in degree is shared by all human beings and, as a consequence, is the anchor of dignity: autonomous freedom! However, freedom has become so equated with *spontaneous liberty of choice* that we have buried the significance of autonomous freedom under human accomplishments.

*Autonomous freedom is not spontaneous liberty of choice!* It is surely related to liberty, but one can be incarcerated in solitary confinement and still be free although one has lost one's liberty. Freedom is not simply "no one is going to tell me what to do!" Freedom is not even merely "choice," which only appears to be increased the more options we have between and among the physical toys available to us from which to choose.

Furthermore, *autonomous freedom is not just "independence" from tradition and the institutions that shape our lives.* Autonomous freedom is precisely the degree to which we are able, intentionally, to cause things that nature on its own is incapable of achieving. In other words, it is not self-interest, the desire for recognition in the eyes of others, or competition that have brought us all the toys that enhance our lives. It is autonomous freedom that is so concealed by its ubiquity that we take it for granted without considering its significance for understanding who we are and our responsibilities that arise because of this extra-ordinary capacity.

Though, surely, self-interest, the desire for recognition in the eyes of others, and competition have played a central role in all human accomplishment! Of course! Their denial would be just as blind as the denial of autonomous freedom's role. Yet,

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183. Kant speaks of lawfulness in experience applying to two 'domains:' nature and autonomous freedom. Where there is no possibility of discernment of lawfulness, he calls that region of experience a 'field' (*Feld*). Where lawfulness is not yet discerned, he speaks of a 'territory' (*Boden*). Transcendental consciousness has 'dominion' (*ditio*) over the two 'domains' of nature (theoretical reason) and autonomous freedom (practical freedom). See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 174.

whereas self-interest, the desire for recognition, and competition have their pragmatic rewards (and disastrous failures), it contains no corrective to hubris and self-aggrandizement. Yes, they are driven by "what is" and "what can be," but "what is" and "what can be" are incapable of aiding us in determining "what *ought* to be!" As far as we are able to determine there is no other species that even raises the question of what *ought* to be – precisely because we possess *autonomous freedom*.

Self-interest, the desire for recognition, and competition can be so overwhelming that they actually encourage us to suppress the very question of "what *ought* to be." We develop all kinds of strategies to squelch the issue. Most popular today is the notion that all moral principles are culturally relative. Yet, we overlook that this notion is a two-edged sword. Yes, it fosters "pluralism" and the embracing of difference as valuable, but it also leaves us complicit in the injustices caused of others AND of our own culture without any compass to guide the pursuit of virtue, compassion, and justice. Our legitimate desire to call out cultural imperialism in this manner leaves us incapable of criticizing ourselves as well as the other. The ground for legitimate questioning our own as well as the other's systematic distortions is *transcendental critique*, not insisting on merely celebrating superficial, empirical differences. Without transcendental critique, we are left with only the superficial descriptions of *diairesis* (the dialectic of identities and differences).<sup>184</sup> Transcendental critique grounds our understanding in faith in universal conditions and capacities with commitment to the architectonic of universal lawfulness (physical and moral). This is, of course, convenient because it allows us to ignore the negative consequences of human agency under the mantra: "We meant well!"

However, by ignoring the question of "what *ought* to be?," we also overlook a pernicious dimension to self-interest, the desire for recognition in the eyes of others, and competition that is in play with them. By suppressing their dependence upon autonomous freedom, each in its own way can contribute to destroying the very human dignity that they are meant to enhance.

This claim surely appears counter-intuitive: How can self-interest, the desire for recognition, and competition of the few that bring the pragmatic benefits enjoyed by the many be corrupting of the human species? Again, rather than look at achievements (or outcomes), we can benefit by looking at capacities (or inputs). In other words, human finitude does not consist of a zero-sum game in which finite resources can be counted up and distributed (or denied) with the "winners" being those who end up with the greatest quantities. Human finitude is precisely that entry into the "natural" system that is open-ended, not closed – until it turns its own finitude against itself! Self-interest, the desire for recognition, and competition can just as well be vehicles for finitude's turning against itself as they can be vehicles for positive enhancement of life. In fact, they can illuminate the ultimate challenge placed before us by our own

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184. On *diairesis* (διάίρεσις), see Chapter 3: "Academic Controversy:" the section "Academic Controversy Based on Criticism (*diairesis*):" 219 ff. [166?]

autonomous freedom: the challenge of the difference between *what is* and *what ought to be*.

Autonomous freedom (not liberty!) is what makes it possible for us to even raise the questions of "dignity" and "what *ought* to be?" This is because only autonomous freedom contains the conditions that makes these questions *real*, not just an illusion. The question of "ought" can only arise where there is an alternative available to the agent who is capable of assuming personal responsibility for her/his actions. The mechanical causality of natural processes do not allow alternatives. You can't step off a cliff and expect nature to offer an alternative to falling. All of our understanding of "natural" events is dependent upon there being a "mechanical," predictable order to them – if not at the level of a physical "law" then as the result of a predictable, "significant" statistical outcome or in conformity with an (ultimately) humanly created algorithm. The anomaly confronts us with the challenge of "seeing" how it conforms to some "rule." Without this assumption, there would or could be no understanding.

Humanity's autonomous freedom plays with different rules. To be sure, it cannot ignore the "rules" of nature. However, *there is an openness to the natural system announced by autonomous freedom's ability intentionally to bring about things that nature cannot*. This openness introduces a dimension into the "natural" system that is incalculable and unpredictable – as much as behavioral patterns can be discerned. We can document how "most people" will act in a particular circumstance but ascertaining a pattern neither provides us with the precise determination of what any particular individual is going to do much less with moral, normative principles to govern behavior. In other words, we cannot get from "is" to "ought." Behavioral patterns are a form of determination of "what is" usually the case, but they neither can determine what will be the case – even if there's a "significant" statistical probability – nor, most significantly, can they determine what *ought* to be the case. Autonomous freedom in itself, of course, also cannot say what morally *ought* to be the case for someone else, but it does establish the condition for the individual's raising the question of the *moral ought* for her-/himself.

We can establish *legal oughts* for one another, and this is the task of societies, governments, and institutions. These *legal oughts* are concerned with rules that govern our shared world of things. *Legal oughts* are not themselves universal. They are rules that seek to protect *interests* between and among individuals and groups with respect to physical things. The civic law is different between and among cultures with the degree of universality to the rules that are the civic law depending upon the degree of universality to the interests of the agents involved.

Yet, there is a *necessary*, universal law that is "higher" than *legal oughts* and *civic laws*. This "higher law" is most manifest, positively, by the recognition that one can do everything legally and still perpetrate an injustice. This "higher, wider law" is most manifest, negatively, in that there are evils that one cannot legislate away, for example, racism, sexism, homophobia, etc. The norms that are in play with this

recognition of injustice and the identification of racism, etc., are *subjective*, universal norms grounded in human dignity and autonomous freedom, not in *objective*, legal *oughts* and civic laws. Combating injustice requires the subjective understanding of the *necessary* conditions of possibility that make it possible for all human beings to be and to become human. In short, combating injustice requires the acknowledgement of the dignity of all and the requirement of *internal* respect for the law (both physical and moral) by all.<sup>185</sup>

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185. The notions of dignity and respect for the law are the key, though not the only key, to rejecting the frequently expressed conviction that Kant was (must have been) a racist. Kant writes in *Determination of the Concept of a Human Race* AA VIII: 99–100: "The class of whites is not distinguished as a special species in the human genus from that of blacks; and there are no different kinds of human beings." (See Georg Geismann, "Kant's Alleged Racism: The Failure of Charles W. Mills (and all too many others)" at [https://www.academia.edu/43558508/Kant\\_s\\_Alleged\\_Racism\\_The\\_Failure\\_of\\_Charles\\_W\\_Mills\\_and\\_all\\_too\\_many\\_others\\_](https://www.academia.edu/43558508/Kant_s_Alleged_Racism_The_Failure_of_Charles_W_Mills_and_all_too_many_others_), in addition to, Geismann, "Why Kant was not a 'Racist'." As if Kant's explicit acknowledgement that all human beings come from the same phylum and that there is no difference in species between whites and peoples of color, whom he called the same 'species' according to Bufon's rule of propagation, his epistemological distinction between appearances and things in themselves is a strong indicator that 'color' (appearance) was not a determination of the human status of an individual/group. See *On the Different Races of Human Beings* [Note: not 'species'] AA II: 429; 434–442. In addition to an argument against racism (and all other forms of prejudice based on sense perception) given humanity's 'universal' capacities, in Section "18) How the representations of perception jade us, and how they can be elevated so that they don't" of his *Menschenkunde* (AA XXV,2: 936–940; Olms ed.: 95–101) Kant offers an argument from the perspective of 'particularities' whereby diversity of particularities is crucial for extending human understanding. Equally significant is Kant's thesis from Section "17 On deception of the senses" (AA XXV,2: 928–935; Olms ed.: 85–95) in the *Menschenkunde* that 'deception' in humanity is both positive and negative. It is positive because it presupposes 'propriety' (*Sittlichkeit*) that can lead to morality (*Moral*). In this spirit, Kant says that "one must take people as they are" (AA XXV,2: 932; Olms ed.: 91) and "not become a moral purist" (AA XXV,2: 932; Olms ed.: 91) or else one sinks into misanthropy (AA XXV,2: 932; Olms ed.: 91). Although we should not wag a moral finger in the face of the other, deception is negative in ourselves because it hinders our dignity (true worth). "[...] [W]e must be careful to seek out [...] in ourselves in every possible way and try to destroy the false appearance in order to be able to value ourselves according to our true worth." (AA XXV,2: 933; Olms ed.: 92)

An important passage from the "Doctrine of Virtue" from the *Metaphysics of Morals* (AA VI: 467–468) clearly rejects judgments of the other based solely on appearances. Dignity and respect for the moral law are the key, imperceptible moments that define humanity as a species: "Remark: Given the title to what has just been discussed ["On Vices that Violate the Duty of Respect Owed to Other Persons], it is clear that what has been said here does not so much extol virtues as, more importantly, condemns their contrary. However, this lies in the concept of respect [*Achtung*] that we are obliged to demonstrate toward others, which is only a negative duty. – I am not [!] obliged to venerate others, positively [!], by demonstrating my esteem for them (merely observable as people). The only respect to which I am obligated by nature is that which comes from the law as absolute (*reverere legem*) [i.e., the moral law because it alone is "absolute" and "unconditional"], and this, not to esteem others generally (*reverentia adversus hominem*) or to render some particular obligation to them, is the universal and unconditional duty owed to other persons, which can be expected from everyone as the original respect [*Achtung*] owed to all.

"Other forms of respect, which need demonstration, that is, with respect to human nature [*Beschaffenheit der Menschen*] or the individual's particular circumstances, namely, age, sex, genealogy [*Abstammung*], strengths or weaknesses, or even the individual's status and prestige [*Standes und ... Würde*

There is no other species that remotely to the same degree can raise the question of *moral ought* because all other species of which we are aware are "determined" by natural causes to a far higher degree than humanity. We compromise our own dignity when we insist that adherence to *legal oughts* and the civic law are all *that is necessary* because this attitude undermines a fundamental and profound human capacity: the ability to take moral responsibility (not just legal responsibility) for our decisions and actions.

When we exercise our autonomous freedom intentionally to initiate a unique causal sequence that can change nature in ways that nature on its own cannot, we establish the conditions under which the question of "what morally *ought* to be done?" can arise. Precisely because the conditions for such a question are the capacity of autonomous freedom, grounded in but *above* nature, this causality on its own (independent of an agent) is *incapable of determining* (!) what *ought* to occur. However, just as so-called "natural" causal systems are predictable orders to which their events conform, autonomous freedom presupposes a predictable order to which its events conform. The difference is that natural, causal systems *must conform* whereas events initiated by autonomous freedom *can but they don't have to conform*. That is what makes autonomous freedom not only the condition for moral agency in contrast to merely, mechanical necessity but also the condition for our being able to talk of anything remotely like human dignity: that each and every individual possesses this inviolable and inalienable capacity and moral responsibility. The predictable order of autonomous freedom is the moral order, not the merely physical or legal order.

It is precisely the predictable, causal order of autonomous freedom that is capable of requiring us to act *contrary to our self-interest* in the name of a moral principle that we hold "above nature" and "above ourselves." Humanity appears to be the only species that (certainly to the degree) is capable of self-imposing a moral principle to govern its agency.

Yet, we quickly want to retort: "There are no moral principles that apply to all times and all places! There are only relative principles created by particular (not universal) social groups! There are no "Ten Commandments" that we can inscribe in stone and place in our courthouses!" However, the "Ten Commandments" of Exodus 20 illustrate in perhaps an unexpected fashion precisely the point of universal, moral

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mean "status and prestige" because "*Würde*" in the sense of human dignity from Section II of the *Groundwork* is absolute, not capricious], which in part are due to capricious dispositions, have no place and require no classification in the presentation of the first principles of the doctrine of virtue because here one is concerned only with the pure principles of reason." See McGaughey, "Was Kant a Racist? with Addendum on South Sea Islanders." <https://criticalidealism.org/was-kant-a-racist-with-addendum-on-south-sea-islanders-01-may-2017/>.

Thanks to Birgit Recki who cited the second of the two paragraphs of this "Remark" from the *Metaphysics of Morals* for a very different but equally laudable purpose in her *Ästhetik der Sitten*: 255, n. 43.

principles.<sup>186</sup> However, the latter (unlike the Ten Commandments) are nothing that can be used to confront the other with a wagging finger.

We only need to identify one moral principle in order to confirm that there is such a capacity of autonomous freedom (not liberty) because only autonomous freedom presents us with the conditions necessary for there to be a moral decision with respect to what morally *ought* to be. In other words, autonomous freedom is the *necessary/required* condition of possibility for there to be ‘wide,’ moral principles.

There is no social group that insists that lying is fundamental to its social order. Social groups can encourage deception “for a greater purpose” (for example, Sparta encouraged its children to steal) but such deception is always an exception, not a general rule, that confirms the rule honesty. Were lying to be a universally (!) acceptable principle governing behavior, then there could be no social order in the first place.

The “reality” of a moral principle can serve to recognize the *necessity* of autonomous freedom, but the *necessity* (not as predeterminism) of autonomous freedom is the condition of possibility for our experiencing a moral principle to govern our agency – even a principle that requires us to act contrary to our own (and our group’s) self-interest. As Immanuel Kant pointed out in the *Groundwork*, this “circularity” (between a moral principle illuminating the capacity of autonomous freedom with autonomous freedom being the condition that makes the moral principle possible and necessary in the first place) is no “vicious circle” in which the *explanandum* blindly presupposes the *explanans*.<sup>187</sup>

Experience is possible for us only if there are two *inseparable, yet irreducible, universal orders* to experience. If we are to adequately understand ourselves, it is *necessary* that our account of who we are in the order of things involves both physical and non-physical aspects: the ‘sensible’ and the ‘suprasensible.’ Because all events involve the ‘sensible’ and the ‘suprasensible,’ we are capable of understanding for all understanding requires both – given that “laws” and “concepts”/“causes” are inaccessible to the senses. In other words, there is a “circularity” but not *vicious* circularity to all understanding. What breaks the *viciousness* of circularity in understanding is *universal order*.

All understanding requires that we *assume* the two universal orders to experience. The relationship between autonomous freedom and the moral order is no different in this respect than the relationship between physical events and the physical order – although the two “orders” are irreducible one to the other! We are the species that can consciously choose to violate (or employ to achieve new ends) these two, universal “orders,” but we are “successful” (not necessarily, materially successful) when we conform to both.

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186. On the relativism of the Ten Commandments and their functioning as ‘civic law’ (the Doctrine of Right), not ‘moral law’ (the Doctrine of Virtue) see Chapter 8: “Strauß’ Kant Reading Over His Career.” 849, n. 162.

187. See Kant, *Groundwork* AA IV: 451–453.

The ability to act contrary to our self-interest, then, is an extra-ordinary capacity that serves as a species marker. It is what indicates who we are in the *order of things*. We are the species that can be (but is not required to be) moral. We can choose to be moral not because we fear punishment but because it is what it means to be human. We need no divine judge of Personal Theism to be moral, we merely (but it is a huge "merely") need to want to be human.

A moral system that is grounded in fear in the face of an "external" judge (either human or divine) is no moral system because it is not concerned with "doing the right thing because it is right" but, rather, with "doing the right thing because it furthers my 'interest' in achieving status and/or prestige in the eyes of others or of God in light of punishment and reward. Here we encounter the limit that illuminates the crippling aspect of "recognition" in the eyes of others as a motivator for human achievement.

There is no doubt that the desire to be recognized and rewarded by others for one's achievements is a powerful motivation. It can evoke amazing actions – even of ultimate self-sacrifice. Yet the desire for recognition and reward has a dark side that can motivate individuals and groups to perpetrate horrible atrocities both culturally systematic as well as specific horrifying actions. In short, the beneficial effect of recognition, status, and prestige depends upon those bestowing it being governed by a moral compass. In the absence of a moral compass to guide them, the dispensers of recognition, status, and prestige are, more likely than not, only agents of merely self-interest. Above all, they constitute for the individual an external "authority" over which the individual has no control and, most damaging for human dignity, they constitute an external "authority" that is substituted for the individual's own assumption of moral responsibility for her/his agency. However, recognition, status, and prestige all presuppose the capacity of creative autonomous freedom and personal moral responsibility that they are supposed to ground. Rather than fostering moral achievement, they undermine the very conditions that make the cultivation of moral achievement possible in the first place. Rather than establishing human dignity, they presuppose it.

Competition can be even further removed from the conditions of creativity and moral responsibility that make its remarkable human achievements possible. To the extent that the focus is on the goal of reward for the achievement of competition, competition becomes ensnared in the ambiguities of recognition, status, and prestige. We are all too familiar with the consequences: doping-, bribery-, payoffs-, fixed competition, tax evasion, team-, league-, division-, and even world governing-body financial scandals, etc. One creates and, manipulates data, steals theses, production techniques, and even products from students, colleagues, corporate competitors, exercises political power to move one's name to the head of the "authors" list (a metaphor for hierarchical status), and engages in character assassination to get to the "top." The end is taken to justify the means, and, as a consequence, the individual athlete, researcher, employee, etc., can easily, often subtly, be caught up in a whirlwind of moral ambiguity that cripples human dignity.

Humanity has reached a crucial crossroad in its development. More is at stake than humanity's creative power to transform nature in ways that nature is incapable of accomplishing on its own. As long as there has been "humanity," Kant reminds us in his *Lecture on Moral Philosophy* (1774/5), humanity in principle has possessed the power to destroy nature. More is at stake, then, than Ernst Jünger's "total mobilization" of technological functionality and efficiency or Martin Heidegger's "forgottenness" of technology in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*.<sup>188</sup> Since Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781) and *Conjectural Origins* (1786), humanity has been called to take moral responsibility for its autonomous power over against nature. The crossroad that confronts us today is a shift from the use of our autonomous creative freedom from focusing on survival to pursue innovation merely for the sake of status and prestige fueled by competition. We are left with only the ledger in a zero sum game.

Our response cannot be simply to stick our head in the sand and wish for "the good old days." Nor is it enough to wait for divine grace to save us from ourselves or to wait for the epochal dispensation by the possibilities that are Being (or non-Being). The same ambiguous capacities that enabled survival in the past are what make for the ambiguities that drive self-interest, the desire for recognition, and competition today. There is no institutional or social situation to which we could "return" (certainly not "paradise") in which humanity's creative capacity was exercised "perfectly" and from which we have "fallen." Humanity as a species commences precisely at that point in time at which emerge not only its capacities but also the condition of moral responsibility. No institution, social situation, grace, or event (*Ereignis*) of Being can absolve the individual of her/his moral responsibility that is the consequence of her/his capacity of autonomous freedom.

This is why David Friedrich Strauss and the 1839 Revolution in Zurich, Switzerland, remain significant for today. It is not possible to prove that the literal reading of the Bible is wrong, but there is also no way to prove that it is right. However, even if the literal reading is right, the narrative of salvation that biblical literalists claim is found in the bible is simply not empirically there in the text. It is a narrative that the reader must bring to the text just as the gospel authors (and other 'Second' Testament authors) did in their collection of anecdotes and teaching from (and regarding) Jesus of Nazareth. Hence, the literal reading is in this respect a violation of the text.

It is also not possible to prove that the Rationalist reading of the Bible is wrong, but it, too, is incapable of proof that it is right. However, what matters is not the empirical evidence of some external authority – be it a text, an institution, or an economic system. *What matters is the conditions that make possible the creation of texts, institutions, and economic systems, in the first place. That condition is creative, autonomous freedom with its condition for moral responsibility.*

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188. Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* (New York: Harper and Row, 1977).

Far more valuable than attainment of a supposed 'salvation' or the ubiquitous pursuit of money as the goal and measure of success would be the measurement of success according to the Copernican Turn. This turn is away from exclusive valuing of the perceptible to focus, instead, on imperceptible capacities and the encouragement of the individual's own imperceptible assumption of responsibility for understanding and agency. Such encouragement is based on the desire to be human as a participant in the internal Commonwealth of God as the more valuable understanding of culture than a zero-sum game of financial ledgers. The *pure* religion of *practical* reason provides humanity with the only satisfaction that matters in life: the personal awareness that one made one's best moral effort under the profound limits that circumscribe the human condition.<sup>189</sup>

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189. *Pure* religion has its ground in *practical* reason, which result in *pure* religion being far more than a "reduction of religion to morality" as one might superficially conclude under the rubric of the fostering of a "culture of rearing" (rather than a mere "culture of skills"). On the notion of 'pure' in Kant, see: 558 n. 109.

There is one aspect of Christianity, forgiveness, that, unquestionably, is devoted to individual self-interest, not the creation of culture grounded in humanity's capacity to make its best effort – despite the possible consequences for one's own or one's community's self-interest.

Obviously, the very conditions of possibility for individual, moral effort are imperfect. The most popular forms of Latin Christianity specifically address this imperfection with two strategies that are embedded in its central doctrine and rituals: 1) The fact of imperfection is "explained" on the basis of an, at best, speculative translation of Romans 5:12, and since Augustine of Hippo in the 5<sup>th</sup> C has been called *original sin*. 2) The rupture between God and humanity that is captured by the notion of *original sin* demands by the logic of economy: payment of its debt. The debt that is owed for our inherited and personal errors needs to be paid in order for the individual to be reconciled with God for having violated God's gifts. That debt, according to Anselm of Canterbury's famous *Cur deus homo*, cannot be paid by the individual because the individual "owes perfection" to God so that, even were one to be perfect after the point of moral conversion, there can be no moral surplus generated by one's perfection. That *gap* between one's inherited and generated evil can only be paid by the *bloody sacrifice* of God's own illimitable, perfect son. Only this exclusive child of God is capable of providing the grace of *forgiveness* to enable reconciliation with God.

This narrative is found nowhere in the scriptures, but that, of course, does not mean that it is wrong. As we have seen, though, there is no way of determining whether or not the story is fantasy or fact. In the absence of certainty, we have two options: 1) faith in the veracity of the story or 2) concern about the story's debilitating impact upon the very capacities that are necessary for us to be and to become human beings.

The *pure* religion devoted to the "culture of rearing" indicates just how damaging these two pillars of self-interest in popular, Latin Christianity really are because they constitute an arrow in the heart of humanity's moral capacity, which in turn means an arrow in the heart of humanity's efforts to achieve justice through democratic institutions, international cooperation, and cosmopolitanism. One cannot serve two masters: self-interest *and* universal, moral principles. The latter most effectively are violated where self-interest is the exclusive principle that grounds one's decisions and actions. As we have seen, we can never escape self-interest, but we can know whether or not we are acting solely on the basis of self-interest.

Here, though, we encounter a serious question: If one is incapable of being perfect, why should one make any moral effort? The answer from the perspective of *pure* religion is as simple as it is complex: *because we can*. As far as we know, there is no other species with which we are familiar that comes remotely close to having the capacity to take personal responsibility for its decisions and actions. This is

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as close to a species-marker as one can get. If we have the capacity, why should we intentionally seek to be less than what we can be?

Nonetheless, as long as it has not been beaten out of us or we have not trained ourselves to be impervious to it, concomitant with our imperfection is our experience of guilt in the form of regret and remorse for our failing to have lived up to our own self-selected ideals. Rather than guilt crippling our efforts, its value is that it is a spur to increase our efforts in order to avoid further guilt. Already in 1775 in his *Vorlesung zur Moralphilosophie* (*Lecture on Moral Philosophy* (357)), Kant proposed that remorse is the motivation to make a better effort in the future. See as well, the "Doctrine of Virtue" in the *Metaphysics of Morals* (AA VI: 435), the *Critique of Practical Reason* (AA V: 97–100), and *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* (AA V: 264).

Yet, where there is guilt, there is a desire for forgiveness. In the "Sermon on the Mount" (Matthew 5:24), one encounters a notion of the value of *horizontal* over *vertical* forgiveness. Whereas *vertical forgiveness* offers absolution top-down by God, which constitutes a "second wounding" of the victim by rewarding the perpetrator, *horizontal forgiveness* requires seeking out one's victim and cooperatively seeking a new range of possibilities together that can only occur through acknowledgement of the dignity of both victim and agent. Forgiveness can never mean "forgive and forget." See as well, McGaughey, "Über die Rolle der Religion in der moralischen Entwicklung" in *Braucht Werterziehung Religion?*, Hans Joas hrsg. (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2007): 101–135.

