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Kant on Beauty and Biology

An Interpretation of the Critique of Judgement

Rachel Zuckert

CAMBRIDGE

KANT ON BEAUTY AND BIOLOGY

Kant's *Critique of Judgment* has often been interpreted by scholars as comprising separate treatments of three uneasily connected topics: beauty, biology, and empirical knowledge. Rachel Zuckert's book is the first to interpret the *Critique* as a unified argument concerning all three domains. She argues that, on Kant's view, human beings demonstrate a distinctive cognitive ability in appreciating beauty and understanding organic life: an ability to anticipate a whole that we do not completely understand according to preconceived categories. This ability is necessary, moreover, for human beings to gain knowledge of nature in its empirical character as it is, not as we might assume it to be. Her wide-ranging and original study will be valuable for readers in all areas of Kant's philosophy.

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RACHEL ZUCKERT

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NOTE ON CITATIONS

Citations to Kant's works are to the title or abbreviated title of the work, and to the volume and page number of *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, Akademie Ausgabe (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1902–). Citations to the *Critique of Judgment* are to volume v and page number with no abbreviated title, and citations to the *Critique of Pure Reason* are to the customary A/B page numbers from the first and second editions.

Translations quoted are from the Cambridge University Press translations, except where noted below and in the text. Modifications to translations are noted in the text.

Abbreviated titles of Kant's works

<i>Anth</i>	<i>Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View</i> ; translations quoted are from Mary Gregor (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1974)
CAJ	Critique of Aesthetic Judgment
<i>CJ</i>	<i>Critique of Judgment</i>
<i>CPR</i>	<i>Critique of Pure Reason</i>
<i>CPrR</i>	<i>Critique of Practical Reason</i>
CTJ	Critique of Teleological Judgment
FI	the first, unpublished introduction to the <i>Critique of Judgment</i>
<i>GW</i>	<i>Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals</i>
<i>JL</i>	<i>Jäsche Logic</i>
<i>MFNS</i>	<i>Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science</i>
<i>MM</i>	<i>Metaphysics of Morals</i>
<i>Prol</i>	<i>Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics</i>

INTRODUCTION

In the introductions to his third *Critique*, the *Critique of Judgment*,¹ Kant claims that this work completes his critical project, for here he articulates and defends the principle of purposiveness without a purpose as the a priori, transcendental principle of judgment, the third and last main cognitive faculty to be treated in the critical philosophy. This principle is a necessary, transcendental principle of judgment, Kant argues, because it governs, justifies, and makes possible our aspirations to empirical knowledge, from its most basic form – our ability to formulate any empirical concepts – to its most sophisticated form – a complete, systematic science of empirical laws. This principle is, Kant claims moreover, “exhibited” paradigmatically in two forms of judgment: teleological judgment concerning organic behavior, and aesthetic judgment of natural beauty.² In teleological judgment, we judge organisms to be “natural purposes”; we

¹ In concert with the scholarly consensus, I draw on the first, unpublished introduction (referred to as FI) as well as the second, published introduction to the *CJ*. Partly inspired by Paul Guyer’s and Eric Matthews’ new translation of the *Critique*. It has become common to refer to this work as the “Critique of the *Power* of Judgment” in order to reflect accurately Kant’s “*Urteilkraft*.” Though I employ this translation in quotations in the text (unless otherwise noted), I use the old-fashioned title to avoid some awkwardness in English – “judgment” can mean power of judgment – and to retain the connotations of discernment in the English term “judgment.”

² I shall use the term “aesthetic” (qualifying judgment, experience, pleasure, etc.) to refer to judgments of taste, and the experience, pleasure, etc. of the *beautiful*. This

judge that they function purposively. In aesthetic judging, we find objects to be purposive “for cognition,” or to be characterized by “purposive form.” The main text of the *CJ* comprises, correspondingly, two subsidiary Critiques, the Critique of Teleological Judgment (CTJ) and the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment (CAJ), devoted to these two forms of judgment.

As in the other *Critiques*, then, the argument of the third *Critique* comprises a justification of an a priori principle, as one that does and must govern activity of one of our fundamental cognitive capacities. But the principle with which the *CJ* is concerned is rather different, Kant claims, from the principles of the understanding and of reason treated in his two preceding *Critiques*. The other two kinds of transcendental principles ground “doctrines” or bodies of knowledge: the principles of the *Critique of Pure Reason* ground a doctrine of physics articulated in the *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*, and the principle of the *Critique of Practical Reason*, viz., the moral law, is applied and specified in the doctrine articulated in the *Metaphysics of Morals*. By contrast, the principle of purposiveness is solely a principle for critique and does not ground a doctrine: this principle can be justified as a transcendental, a priori principle necessary for the possibility of judging, but it neither constitutes a priori knowledge itself, nor grounds a body of such knowledge. Indeed, Kant claims that, unlike the objective principles of cognition and of morality, this principle is a merely subjective principle, one needed and employed by subjects, but not properly applicable to objects; we may judge objects, Kant argues, only *as if* they are purposive.

Kant holds, likewise, that the two forms of judging that exhibit the principle of purposiveness, teleological and aesthetic judgment, do not comprise or ground any doctrine concerning objects. Kant argues that biologists not only do, but must, employ the concept of a natural purpose in their investigations of organisms. But this concept is a merely regulative concept, which is itself “inexplicable,” and does not truly explain organic functioning. Thus, by contrast to the way in which the principles of the *CPR* ground and license the “metaphysical” laws of nature of the *MFNS*, the principle of purposiveness does not license claims that there are teleological laws governing (organic) nature.

Aesthetic judgments do, Kant argues, have a priori validity: these judgments make justified claims to universality and necessity. Hence Kant

usage departs from Kant’s use of the term “aesthetic judgment” to include judgments of the agreeable, and of the sublime, as well as judgments of taste.

identifies the CAJ, specifically his deduction of the universal validity of judgments of taste, as the core of the *CJ* project. Indeed, Kant claims that the principle of purposiveness is the principle not only of judgment, but also of pleasure, as is revealed specifically and paradigmatically in aesthetic pleasure. The validity of aesthetic judgments is, however, merely subjective: when one judges that an object is beautiful, one claims, justifiably, that *all* other *subjects* ought to judge the object likewise, with pleasure, without making any objective claims concerning that object. These judgments neither constitute nor ground a doctrine of beauty or a science of aesthetics: though they make justified universal claims, they are neither grounded upon rules or concepts of the object, nor can they ground any such rules.

The ambiguous, necessary, yet subjective – or “as if” – character of the principle of purposiveness, and thus of Kant’s project in the *CJ*, may explain, in part, the anomalous reception of this work. The *CJ* has prompted discussion, dissent, and emulation in the history and philosophy of biology, in scholarship on Kant’s philosophy of science or epistemology, and – most of all – in aesthetics. The CAJ is the focus of ever-increasing scholarship, and has been influential on further work in aesthetics, in providing a sharp formulation of a central problem – the justification of the subjectively universal claims of aesthetic judgments – and prompting further articulations of such key concepts as disinterested pleasure or beautiful form. Many thinkers, from Goethe to Cavell and Lyotard, have found the *CJ* appealing and provocative in its suggested visions of nature as organized or living, and of human subjectivity as fundamentally communicative or creative. But the *CJ* remains the least studied among Kant’s critical works. Unlike Kant’s other *Critiques*, this work has often been treated by scholars not as a unified work nor as central to Kant’s critical project, but rather piecemeal, as an aesthetics or philosophy of biology or a discussion of empirical knowledge. Nor, more broadly, has the *CJ* spawned new philosophical works on this combination of topics (beauty, biology, and empirical knowledge) or neo-Kantian “doctrine” concerning purposiveness.³

It has been argued, more strongly, that the *CJ* is a fundamentally dis-unified work, a collection of discussions treating distinct questions: whether judgments involving pleasure can justifiably require others’ agreement

³ Perhaps the closest approximation is Dewey’s *Art as Experience*, a theory of aesthetic experience as grounded upon our cognitive and practical engagement with the world as organic beings.

(the CAJ); whether or how we can attain a complete empirical science (the introductions); why and to what degree teleological explanation of organisms is justified (the CTJ).⁴ Kant's attempt to unify these discussions by reference to the principle of purposiveness has been considered unsatisfactory, moreover, because it merely exploits the vagueness and ambiguity of this principle. Kant appears to employ this principle to mean, variously, the "as if" designedness by God, pleasureableness, suitability to cognitive purposes, and teleological causation, as is convenient in a particular context. Thus many scholars who attempt to connect Kant's concerns in the *CJ* in some way do so independently of the principle of purposiveness: this principle is employed in teleological judgments of organisms, to be sure, but it is not *the* principle of reflective judgment, nor do its vague, ambiguous meanings help to construe Kant's account of aesthetics.⁵

These are real problems: Kant's principle of purposiveness is more ambiguous than Kant's other a priori principles, Kant's questions in this work less easily identifiable as core philosophical questions, let alone a single such question, than are those addressed in the other two *Critiques* ("What can I know?" and "What ought I to do?"). And the *CJ*, as Kant himself notes, is a work of tortuousness of expression extreme even for a Kantian text.

In this book, I shall attempt to justify Kant's claims concerning the intention of this work and its integrity, by proposing a novel interpretation

⁴ Paul Guyer, *Kant and the Claims of Taste*, second edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Jens Kulenkampff, *Kants Logik des ästhetischen Urteils* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1978); Peter McLaughlin, *Kant's Critique of Teleology in Biological Explanation: Antinomy and Teleology* (Lewistown, NY: Mellen, 1990). The independence of these concerns is, more broadly, the operative assumption in the many treatments of the CAJ or CTJ that take little cognizance of the other, as well as the independent treatments of Kant's discussions of empirical knowledge in the introductions. See also John Zammito, *The Genesis of Kant's Critique of Judgment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992) and Konrad Marc-Wogau, *Vier Studien zu Kants Kritik der Urteilskraft* (Uppsala: Lundequistka Bokhandeln, 1938) for treatments of the *CJ* as a disunified work, on historical and philosophical grounds (respectively).

⁵ E.g., Henry Allison identifies not purposiveness, but the "heautonomy" of judgment, as the unifying concept of the *CJ*; correspondingly, he does not much discuss the CTJ. (*Kant's Theory of Taste* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001].) Similarly, Guyer suggests that all forms of judgment discussed in the *CJ* may be understood to be guided by regulative principles of systematicity, and downplays the role of the principle of purposiveness in all forms other than teleological judgments of organisms. ("Kant's Principles of Reflecting Judgment," in Paul Guyer, ed., *Kant's Critique of the Power of Judgment: Critical Essays* [Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003], 1–61.)

of Kant's principle of purposiveness and thereby of the *CJ* as a whole. I shall argue that the work may, then, be understood precisely as presenting a sustained argument that this principle is the a priori, transcendental principle of judgment, a subjective yet necessary condition for the possibility of empirical knowledge.⁶ This principle is a necessary, transcendental principle of judging, I argue, because it makes our comprehension of order among natural diversity possible, for it is the form of the "unity of the diverse" as such, or "the lawfulness of the contingent." The nature and functioning of this principle, as a principle of order among diversity, and of subjective abilities to discern such order, I argue, is developed in Kant's two subsidiary Critiques. We attribute purposiveness to organisms in order to describe their unity of diversity, i.e., the organized interrelation of diverse parts in organic functioning; and in aesthetic judging we represent an object as unified precisely with respect to its diverse, sensible, contingent aspects. This principle is, however, a merely subjective and regulative principle because, first, given Kant's theory of objective judgment, it cannot be applied justifiably to objects (whether organisms, beautiful objects, or natural objects in general), and therefore comprises and grounds no knowledge claim about them. Second, this principle is subjective in a positive sense: it serves as a structure of the subject's *practice* of judging. That is, in order to explain how the subject can represent a unity of diversity, the subject must be understood as judging *purposively* without a purpose, or, I shall argue, as engaged in a future-directed anticipation of an indeterminate, non-conceptually ordered whole.

As I shall suggest, this reading not only allows one to understand the *CJ* as a unified project, but can also illuminate otherwise puzzling claims in

⁶ My approach is in concert with the increasing scholarly interest in a unificatory interpretive approach to the *CJ*, in particular with Cristel Fricke, *Kants Theorie des reinen Geschmacksurteils* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1990), Clark Zumbach, *The Transcendent Science: Kant's Conception of Biological Methodology* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1984), Robert Pippin, "The Significance of Taste: Kant, Aesthetic, and Reflective Judgment," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 34 (1996), 549–69, and recent articles by Hannah Ginsborg, especially "Aesthetic and Biological Purposiveness," in Andrews Reath, Barbara Herman, and Christine Korsgaard, eds., *Reclaiming the History of Ethics: Essays for John Rawls* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 329–60. In this excellent article, Ginsborg emphasizes (as I shall) that purposiveness as the principle of both aesthetic and teleological judgment should be understood as the lawfulness of the contingent. None of these scholars, however, endorses the particular interpretation of purposiveness that I shall propose. Despite this interest, moreover, there has not been to date any monograph treating the whole of the *CJ* as a unified argument.

Kant's central discussions in this work. For example, by placing Kant's treatment of biology in the context of an investigation of subjective judging activities concerning the diverse as such, this interpretation can identify what precisely, on Kant's view, prompts and requires us to describe organisms in teleological terms (their unity of diversity). By drawing greater attention to Kant's discussion of biological purposiveness, we may also gain a richer understanding of the nature and function of this principle in Kant's accounts of aesthetic experience and of empirical knowledge. In both cases, Kant might seem to claim – and is often read to claim – that we find objects purposive because they are, vaguely, in some way suitable to us. Kant's accounts of these forms of judging consequently appear rather abstract, unmoored from the character of objects and not substantively governed by the principle of purposiveness. By contrast, I shall suggest, both forms of judging ought to be understood as engaged with objects (respectively, the beautiful object, and the system of empirical concepts) that are represented as teleologically structured, and are so represented by an irreducibly teleological activity of judging.

In proposing this interpretation, I mean to justify Kant's own claims concerning this work, and its principle, but I do not mean thereby to argue away the merely critical, problematic, or even philosophically marginal character of the *CJ*. As is suggested by his paradoxical phrase describing the principle of purposiveness – the “lawfulness of the contingent” – Kant's central philosophical problem in the *CJ* is one that stands at the limits of Kantian philosophy: in the *CJ*, Kant attempts to explain how we may come to comprehend the empirically given, the particular, the contingent as such – i.e., precisely that which is marginal to, or lies beyond, the universal forms, concepts, or laws with which Kantian (and much other) philosophy is concerned.⁷ As I shall argue, Kant's response to this question represents, too, a problematic, transitional moment within his critical project: in characterizing the subject as purposive without a purpose, Kant introduces a new conception of temporal, teleological subjectivity as a necessary ground for empirical knowledge, which points beyond his critical framework.

This interpretation may, then, explain the tortuousness of this text, and it can also indicate the historical significance of this work within the

⁷ This question is also identified as the central concern of the *CJ* (as the culmination of a rationalist tradition) by Alfred Bäumler in *Das Irrationalitätsproblem in der Ästhetik und Logik des 18 Jahrhunderts bis zur Kritik der Urteilskraft* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1974), though not as addressed by the principle of purposiveness.

German philosophical tradition – not indeed as doctrinal, but as a pivotal moment in that tradition. For the *CJ* may be understood to comprise both a transformation of one of the core philosophical concepts in that tradition, that of teleology, and, thereby, a transitional link between the pre-Kantian rationalist metaphysics of perfection and the post-Kantian metaphysics of the subject.

Kant's identification of purposiveness as the lawfulness of the contingent, or the form of unity of diversity, links Kant's project in the *CJ*, first, to the German rationalist tradition. The constellation of topics Kant treats in the *CJ* – the order of nature as a whole in its contingent character, the normative standards that govern empirical concepts, the ontological unity of organisms, and the nature of sensibility in aesthetic experience – are all, on the rationalist view, cases of superior, paradigmatic order or unity, i.e., “perfection,” and are explained to be such because of God's purposes.⁸

The rationalists hold that teleology – in the form of rational choice in accord with purposes – is necessary in order to explain the existence and specific nature of the contingent, to explain why these possible things exist or are actual rather than others. For choice concerns contingent (possible but not necessary) options, and provides a *reason* why one of these options is actual – not only because it was chosen, but also because it is good: the rational agent chooses in accord with purposes, because something is good. On the rationalist view, the most decisive rational agent is God, whose choice explains the contingent character of the world as a whole: this world is as it is, in its contingent character, because God chose it, and God so chose because this is the best of all possible worlds. Such purposive choice, moreover, not only provides a rational explanation for (i.e., “lawfulness” of) the contingent, but also engenders a unity of diversity in the world: this *is* the best of all possible worlds because it contains the most reality, or is the harmony of the greatest multiplicity (diversity); in Wolffian terms, it is perfect.

⁸ The view I sketch here is broadly Leibnizean, though there are differences among the German rationalists, signally between Wolff and Leibniz, and scholarly interpretive debates concerning them, which I cannot treat here. I wish to note, however, that the concept of perfection I discuss is a specifically Wolffian concept. For Leibniz, (a) perfection is the highest degree of reality of a property, e.g., omniscience (the highest degree of knowledge). The Wolffians preserve this concept of perfection, but take perfection more centrally to be the rational harmony among a multiplicity. These two concepts are related, however, for a harmony of a multiplicity would have a high degree of reality: it combines many realities, viz., the multiplicity that is harmonized.

For the rationalists, perfection (as harmony of multiplicity) functions, moreover, as an ontological standard concerning the unity of individual things, and an epistemic standard for our representations in ways that echo Kant's concerns in the *CJ*. A true individual, a truly unified object, is one in which all of the parts serve the whole, for reasons, by design. The rationalists famously identify the soul (or monad) as the true ontological individual, but organisms are also favored examples of objects that are truly unified (harmonies of multiplicity), as opposed to mere aggregates. God's ordering of the world grounds epistemic norms as well. It licenses investigation of nature guided by teleological concepts, indeed suggests that contingent things are most satisfactorily so explained. Thus, for example, Leibniz argues that in investigating nature, we may assume that nature takes the most efficient, most comprehensible course. Perfection also characterizes the best form of knowledge, to which we aspire, viz., God's knowledge of a thing, a fully articulated, rationally interconnected cognition of the object or of nature as a whole, in all its contingent (as well as necessary) aspects. Finally, for the rationalists, our representation of the beautiful is a sensible version of such ideal rational knowledge, a sensible representation of an object as an interconnected, unified whole in its sensible character.

As is well known, in the *CPR* Kant sharply opposes all but one of these rationalist doctrines. Our knowledge, Kant argues, should not be understood as an approximation to God's knowledge, but as different in kind: we are not intuitive intellects (as God is thought to be), but discursive intellects, who must receive information sensibly, and who organize and comprehend such information by "reflection," by forming and then using discursive concepts or universal, relatively abstract rules. Therefore, the rationalist standard of perfect knowledge – knowledge of objects through fully individualized concepts, in which all of the properties of the object are derivable from that concept – is an illegitimate standard for human knowledge. In claiming that truly unified objects *are* fully determinate, rationally interconnected, individual wholes, Kant argues moreover, the rationalists illegitimately render our "mere" forms of reflection, our logical forms of organizing empirical concepts, as a substantive, metaphysical concept of a thing.⁹

⁹ I have eschewed textual citation here in the introduction in order to give an uncluttered overview of my interpretation. The claim to which this note is appended, however, may be less familiar than the preceding claims: it characterizes one of Kant's arguments in the less frequently studied *Amphiboly* chapter. On the

On Kant's view, then, the rationalists propound an in principle unreachable goal for human cognition, and a corresponding, illegitimate ontology, for they fail to recognize the distinctive character of human cognition, specifically the distinct characters and roles of our receptive sensibility and discursive understanding. Correspondingly, Kant famously argues, the rationalists "intellectualize" sensibility, taking it (wrongly) to be merely "confused," proto-rational representation. A fortiori, then, the rationalists are wrong to understand our apprehension of beauty as a sensibly perfect representation, for this understanding rests both on the (wrong) conception of our rational cognition as similar to God's knowledge (perfect), and on the (also wrong) conception of sensible representation as confused rational representation. Indeed, the rationalist concept of perfection is itself, Kant argues, too vague, alone, to guide our judgments: we require a concept – of a kind of object or of the moral good – in order to judge that something is perfect, viz., is a good instance of that kind, has the multiplicity of properties that satisfy those conceptually specified requirements. The concept of perfection may not, then, serve as an a priori first principle, whether of ontology or for epistemology.

Kant argues too that the rationalists make illegitimate assumptions concerning our abilities to know God's intentions. The principle of teleological ordering of nature may, Kant allows, guide our investigation of nature as a "regulative principle." (This is the one respect in which Kant concurs in the *CPR* with the rationalist view sketched above, and it plays, too, a large role in the *CJ*.) But we may not claim to know that nature is teleologically ordered, by God's choice. What we can know a priori is that nature or the sum of all objects presented in space and time is governed by the formal laws that render space and time and the objects therein unified. Because Kant takes these laws to ground a mechanistic physics, the nature that we can and do know may, more specifically, be said to be Newtonian in character. The rest is a matter of empirical cognition, of contingent fact.

In the *CJ*, however, Kant seems to recognize that this conception of nature – and of our cognition of it – leaves out salient aspects of our experience that testify to a greater order than that established by mechanical laws; such laws give us no ground to expect, as Kant emphasizes, that nature be beautiful or contain organisms. These more highly unified and articulated experiences or entities might promise, too, that we

may aspire to greater knowledge of natural order and that we may conceive of nature in the consoling terms of the rationalists, as a world pervasively rational and meaningful, organized in accord with purposes.

Consistently with his philosophical commitments, however, in the *CJ* Kant does not endorse a metaphysical claim that there *are* purposes in nature, much less that these are *God's* purposes – a critical limitation expressed in Kant's conclusions concerning the merely subjective status of the principle of purposiveness, to which I alluded above. We do not know, and cannot objectively claim anything concerning, the purposes of nature. Likewise, Kant identifies purposiveness not as an ontological characteristic of objects or nature, but as an epistemic principle that governs the unity of representations or judgments.

Kant's reformulation of rationalist teleology as the subjective, epistemic principle of purposiveness not only reflects his critical commitments, but also has substantive, transformative effects on the concept of teleology itself. On Kant's account, purposiveness is a principle by which human subjects render comprehensible that which is not immediately comprehensible to us – viz., whatever intelligibility there might be in the empirically given world beyond that which derives from our a priori concepts. Thus, first, Kant places emphasis not on the purpose of the object, i.e., the good it serves, the reason why it exists or why a rational agent created it, but, rather, on the *kind* of order a purpose constitutes among parts or properties of an object, i.e., an order of diversity and of contingency. As a result, on Kant's view, we may and do represent such order in cases where we cannot identify any purpose for the object, i.e., in aesthetic and teleological judging, wherein we represent objects as complex unities of diversity, even though we do not identify a good (purpose) that the ordered parts are meant to serve.

Correspondingly, Kant takes this purposive ordering not to be engendered by an agent acting according to a prior reason (God acting in accord with the good), but to be represented by a subject's purposive activity of judging without a purpose, i.e., by the subject who *aims* at an unspecified end. Thus Kant both transforms the concept of teleology and narrows its (proper) extension: Kant's concept of purposiveness without a purpose is teleology not in the sense of *serving* a previously identified good, but of aiming *towards* an indeterminate future end, and this new form of teleology characterizes only and specifically human, judging subjects. Such purposiveness does not characterize the non-human natural world, for material nature cannot, on Kant's view, be understood so to "strive" for the future, towards an indeterminate end. Nor does this purposiveness characterize

pure rational intelligences like God: a pure rational intellect is neither a temporal intelligence nor a finite knower, and thus would not be a striving, anticipatory subject. In other words, purposiveness – as a principle of judgment – functions precisely as a principle of *human* knowledge as such, as finite and sensibly dependent. For it characterizes the activity – reflective judging – whereby we are able to come to understand that which is contingent, diverse, and empirically given, that which we must receive sensibly, but can comprehend only conceptually, that which we must conceptualize.

Finally, as a result of these conceptual transformations, aesthetic experience becomes far more important for Kant than it had been on the rationalist view, on which beauty is one among many instantiations of perfection. On Kant's view, our appreciation of beauty is the sole, pure, isolated case of our ability to represent unity in empirical diversity as such, without prior, empirical-conceptual direction. Thus aesthetic experience is uniquely revelatory of this subjective judgmental activity, of the subject's self-legislated openness to the empirically given world and of the subject's irreducibly purposive character.

These conceptual transformations were deeply influential on the post-Kantian German philosophical tradition. In a way unparalleled in the history of philosophy, this tradition takes aesthetics, usually in the form of philosophy of art, to be central to philosophy, and crucially revelatory of the nature of human beings. Kant's conception of purposiveness also introduces conceptions of human rationality and subjectivity – as systematic, teleological, and historical – that animate his Idealist (and other) successors. Indeed, his defense of the principle of purposiveness in the *CJ* might be understood as a turning point, within Kant's own philosophy, towards Idealist and other rejections of the limits of critical philosophy. Kant's critical formulation of the principle of purposiveness avoids, as suggested above, dogmatic metaphysical claims concerning purposes in nature. But if our representation of unity in empirical nature and thereby the possibility of empirical knowledge is grounded, instead, upon the subject's way of being, its purposiveness – its practical, teleological, anticipatory future-direction – then Kant's transcendental idealism is stretching beyond its formal, critical limits. For this argument suggests that epistemology may not be the foundational discipline in philosophy, which grounds any possible metaphysical claims (as on Kant's critical view), but rather that epistemology ought itself to be grounded upon metaphysical, phenomenological, historical, or pragmatic investigation of the subject. Thus the *CJ* may bear its full historical, philosophical fruit in the new philosophies of history, art, life, and society, the metaphysics of

human beings as organic, creative, historically systematizing beings, and phenomenologies of the qualitative, temporal character of human subjectivity, elaborated by Kant's successors.¹⁰

In this book I shall not be directly concerned with these broad claims concerning the historical origins and implications of the *CJ*, but shall present and defend the interpretation of the *CJ*, specifically of Kant's principle of purposiveness, on which they rest. I shall now turn to present an overview of that interpretation.

Overview

(1) The problem, a transcendental problem concerning the faculty of judgment. In the introductions to the *CJ*, Kant characterizes his project as a needed supplement to his epistemology as articulated in the *CPR*. In that work, Kant claims, he established that we have some necessary, universal knowledge of nature: the categorial principles are laws governing all of nature, necessarily, and are such because they are necessary conditions for our knowledge of nature and for the possibility of experience. But, Kant argues, they are not sufficient conditions for either: they do not provide knowledge of the given, particular character of objects, nor do they guide us as to how we ought to discern some order in nature with respect to those characteristics. And yet, unless we have some way of ordering the diversity in nature, we will have no knowledge of nature beyond that the categorial principles apply to it. Indeed we might be incapable of having any coherent experience at all, for we would be overwhelmed by natural diversity.

(1a) This problem concerns the faculty of judgment. Throughout his works, Kant provides a variety of definitions for the faculty or activity of judgment. But this problem may be understood, in three ways, to concern our faculty of judgment, as it is understood in (some) isolation from the faculty of the understanding, our faculty of concepts, with which judgment is often closely allied.

¹⁰ Post-Kantian philosophy might be divided into two general tendencies that expand (respectively) upon the *necessary* or the *subjective* status of Kant's principle of purposiveness. The post-Kantian systematizers (e.g., Schelling and Hegel) take purposiveness (teleology) to be a necessary, constitutive principle that characterizes the highest form both of knowledge and of being, and grounds a systematic unity of fact and value, individual and society, history and cosmos. The "subjectivists" (e.g., early Heidegger and Kierkegaard) by contrast resist such systematization on behalf of a conception of subjectivity understood (in part) in terms of a temporality radically distinct from that of the cognized, objective world.

First, the task with which Kant is concerned in the *CJ* – discerning an order among the diverse characteristics of nature – is a task for judgment understood as discernment, the ability to discriminate and recognize the nuances and particular character of things, as Kant sometimes speaks of judgment. This capacity of discernment is at once connected to the understanding and somewhat distinct from it. On Kant's view, our proper understanding of particulars is, generally, equivalent to our application of concepts *to* these particulars. Indeed, Kant defines judgment – a second definition – as the faculty of applying concepts to particular, sensibly given objects. This application of concepts to particulars is not fully accomplished by our faculty of concepts, but requires, in addition, our ability to discern the appropriateness of a concept to this particular (or vice versa), i.e., the capacity of judgment. The task with which Kant is concerned in the *CJ* is not to explain directly how such judging – which Kant terms “determinative judgment” – is accomplished. Rather, Kant articulates a broader condition for the possibility of thus applying concepts: in order to comprehend particular objects in their specific character (not simply as spatio-temporal objects), we must apply not only the categorial principles, but also empirical concepts. In order to apply such concepts, in turn, we must be able to engage in “reflective judgment,” our ability to form concepts for given particulars; we must first discern order in the diverse, given, and contingent.

Such conceptualization is, of course, not strictly speaking the *application* of a concept, but is a prior condition for such application. But it is also – third and finally – a form of the most fundamental transcendental activity of judgment on Kant's view: the activity of synthesis, of unifying a manifold of sensibility. This synthesis of the given, diverse characteristics of nature again takes a form somewhat distinct from the corresponding activity of judging treated in the *CPR*. Categorial determinative judging, on Kant's account in the *CPR*, comprises the unification of sensibly given, temporal manifolds in accord with the forms specified by the categories. Thus Kant closely allies such judging both in the *CPR* and in the *CJ* with the activity of the understanding. To make nature in its diversity intelligible, we also employ judgment as an ability to unify a manifold: such judging is an ability to discriminate among the diverse aspects of nature – apprehend a manifold as a manifold – *and* to attain a sense of how such diverse items can be conceptualized – unify that manifold. Here, however, judgment is not identical to the understanding, or to determinative judgment, for we unify the manifold precisely in accord with its diverse, contingent character, *not* solely as it falls under a universal concept

or rule, nor as a spatio-temporal manifold falling under the categorial principles.

(1b) This problem is a transcendental problem, though a somewhat tricky one. Precisely because Kant's question concerns how we are to understand order among the empirically given and contingent as such, such order may not simply be established by our own a priori legislation: we must (somehow) glean such order from experience, not dictate it to nature (as we do the categorial forms, principles, and resultant order). Indeed, for these reasons, in the *CPR* Kant dismisses the judgmental discrimination of particular characteristics of nature, or of the appropriateness of a concept to an empirical particular, as matters of *mere* judgment, a skill for which no principle can be given. This skill is necessary both for knowledge and for experience, but is not amenable to philosophical treatment, nor grounded upon its own principle. Indeed, if such judging concerns how we ought to apply concepts or principles, a further principle would not, Kant argues, guide such discernment, but engender a regress.

In the *CJ*, however, Kant argues that even this engagement with the empirically given requires an a priori principle: otherwise, such judgment would be arbitrary or even impossible. For first, on Kant's view, we cannot simply read order off experience, cannot simply "get" concepts from sensible items (say, in the form of the empiricists' simple ideas). We require principles of organization – indeed (usually) require concepts – in order for us to comprehend unity in the sensible manifold. Thus without some such principle, we might be stranded, cognitively inert in the face of nature's diversity. Moreover, even if we were able in *some* way to discern an order of the empirically given in its contingent character, without a *principled* way of discriminating among, and combining, diverse aspects of experience, such distinctions and combinations would rest purely on subjective whims or happenstance. Thus, and crucially given Kant's normative epistemological concerns, our claims concerning the empirical character of nature would never constitute justifiable knowledge claims. A principle of judgment is, then, necessary to supplement Kant's account of how knowledge is possible.

(2) The solution: the principle of purposiveness without a purpose. Purposiveness without a purpose is a structure or principle of ordering by which we can judge, i.e., discriminate among, and "lawfully" combine or synthesize, the contingent, diverse aspects of empirically given nature, objects, or qualities. Purposiveness is, first, a unifying form of relations – of means to ends – that holds among parts to form a whole. These parts

are, moreover, unified with one another and the whole, *as* diverse and contingent: in purposive relations, the parts (means) *must* have the specific, empirical, diverse, contingent characters that they do, in order for each to serve its particular function towards the end of the object, to play its part in the whole; correspondingly, the purpose of the object provides the reason why each part has the contingent character that it does. Thus purposiveness is the form of unity of diversity as such, or a lawfulness of the contingent.

(2a) Purposiveness *without* a purpose is an order of means–ends relations without an external purpose; it comprises *reciprocal* means–ends relations, in which each part is both means and end, in relation to the other parts. Thus purposiveness without a purpose is the form of fully systematic, internal relations. Because this principle constitutes a unity among heterogeneous, contingent parts, without a separate purpose or concept (the means–ends relations are reciprocal, not directed to a separate end), it is also that by which we can judge (discern and unify) the particular, unconceptualized characteristics of nature. For in judging according to this principle, we do not need to know what the purpose of the whole is supposed to be, do not need to employ a concept of such a purpose, in order to find this whole intelligible, and its parts unified with one another.

(2b) Like the principles in the *CPR*, which are principles of temporal order and thus apply to and order the objects given to us in intuition (for time is the form of all intuition), the principle of purposiveness without a purpose is a form of temporal relations that makes (this kind of) unity of a sensible manifold possible. In order to be able to represent parts as reciprocally related (as means to ends), the subject may not simply apprehend each of these parts successively and separately, but must project or anticipate the whole, must apprehend each of the parts as always already in relation to the whole (i.e., to the other parts). Purposiveness without a purpose is, thus, a form of temporal relations, in which the present is understood as a means towards, and as always already anticipating, the future.

(2c) Purposiveness without a purpose is, then, both a necessary and a subjective principle of judgment. It is a necessary principle because it enables us to unify the sensibly given in its contingent, heterogeneous character. It is a merely *subjective* principle, however, because it guides the subject's activity in organizing the sensibly given, but cannot ground objective claims concerning objects. It cannot ground objective claims, nor comprise a constitutive principle of objects, because the projective

temporal structure of purposiveness is incompatible with an objective time order.

(3) Aesthetic judging and teleological judging are paradigmatic instantiations of judgment in accord with this principle.

(3a) The function of purposiveness as a principle by which the judging subject can unify the diverse and contingent as such is exhibited in the unity we attribute to organisms in teleological judgment, and in the subject's experience in representing beautiful objects. In teleological judging, we attribute purposive relations to natural objects as "material" or "real": we claim that their parts are causally, reciprocally related to one another purposively, and we do so because this purposive order characterizes the unity of biological behavior as we observe it. In aesthetic judging, we experience an object as a unity, in which the heterogeneous sensible properties are unified reciprocally as means to ends not causally, but "formally" or cognitively, as complementing and contrasting with one another.

(3b) Aesthetic judgment and teleological judgment also illustrate why Kant concludes that the principle of purposiveness is a (merely) subjective principle. On Kant's analysis of teleological judging, it is the anticipation of the future whole or end, here the continuing survival of the organism as the sum of its interrelated parts, that (is judged to be that which) unifies the heterogeneous parts/functions of the organism. Yet such anticipation of the future cannot be objectively attributed to material natural objects; thus teleological judgments concerning organisms are not, Kant concludes, true explanations, but merely reflective judgments. In order to explain the possibility of aesthetic judging, of representing an object as unified but not as so unified under a concept, on the other hand, we *must* attribute such anticipation of the future to the aesthetically judging subject. We must take the subject to be engaged in an activity of judging that is itself purposive without a purpose, future-directed, anticipatory of a conceptually undetermined whole. And the subject is conscious of this state of future-directedness in the feeling of aesthetic pleasure, a state itself constituted by the principle of purposiveness without a purpose.

Thus, finally, (4) Kant hereby introduces a radically new conception of the human judging subject, quite distinct from his conceptions of the subject as the atemporal, transcendental subject of experience or practical rationality, the unknown, noumenal subject, or the object of empirical psychology. For the purposively judging subject is at once temporally determined (anticipatory) but also so determined in a way irreducible to an empirically conditioned, causally determined, psychological "object" – or,

that is, this subject is at once temporal and free. In its anticipation, the purposive subject is freely self-legislating, freely open to, and holding itself to, finding contingent, conceptually indeterminate unity in its representations.

Methodological remarks

As I have suggested, my main interpretive aim is to follow Kant's statements concerning his reasons for writing a critique of judgment, its role in his critical philosophy, and the place of his accounts of aesthetic and teleological judgment in this project. But, as should also be clear, this reading is reconstructive and controversial. Although reconstructive interpretation is rather common in current Kant scholarship, I wish to make explicit, and briefly to defend, some of my interpretive and methodological choices.

First, and most importantly: my interpretation of the principle of purposiveness as a principle of judgment – viz., as an anticipatory, temporal, and formal structure of the subject's judging activity, which makes possible the representation of a unity of diversity and contingency as such (as reciprocally means and ends) – both is the pivotal move in my interpretation of the *CJ*, and is not explicitly presented in the text. The plausibility of this interpretation of Kant's principle of purposiveness can only be evaluated, I believe, by seeing whether it sheds helpful light on Kant's discussions in the *CJ*. For, like many reconstructive interpretations, this reading is guided by a principle of charity; I shall argue that on this interpretation, for example, Kant's account of aesthetic judgment is a much richer, phenomenologically more recognizable account of aesthetic experience than is commonly believed, or than it is on other readings.

This justification for my interpretation is offered in subsequent chapters, but I wish to note here several more general reasons why this interpretation of the principle of purposiveness might be appealing. As noted above, it gives some concrete sense to the principle of purposiveness beyond the vague assumption that nature or a beautiful object is fit-for-us, or seems to be as-if-designed. It allows one to see, too, the continuity between Kant's descriptions of the practice of aesthetic judging (the "free harmony" of the faculties) as purposive, and of purposiveness as an "objective" structure holding of the parts/functions of an organism.

This reading of the principle of purposiveness also brings it closer (in some respects) to Kant's understanding of principles in the *CPR* as

formal-temporal structures whereby we unify the sensibly given. Yet purposiveness is also different from those principles: it is a temporal structure that cannot characterize objects, but instead characterizes the subject's judging activity. Further, because such a principle is a structure of the subject's very activity of judging, of unifying a manifold, it is also a good candidate to be "the" principle of the faculty of judgment. Finally, as I have suggested, this reading provides one explanation for the difficulty of this text, as one in which Kant is at once attempting to complete his critical philosophy and perhaps suggesting challenges to that project.

In formulating this interpretation, I have not only attended to the text of the *CJ* (and the First Introduction), but also have drawn on a range of Kant's works, including his lecture courses on logic, metaphysics, and anthropology. The lectures, as well as other published works, provide much-needed expansion of key terms and doctrines in the *CJ*, notably Kant's accounts of empirical concept formation, logical perfection, pleasure, and mechanism. I have, however, attempted to limit my reliance on the lectures, especially those based on rationalist textbooks, to corroborating footnote evidence, and have taken Kant's published works to trump in cases of doctrinal conflict. For example, I take Kant's denial that there is such a thing as sensible perfection in the *CJ* to be his considered view, by contrast to his apparent endorsement of this notion in the logic and metaphysics lectures (in which he taught texts by Baumgarten).

My aspirations to provide an overarching interpretation of the central, epistemological import of the *CJ* require, moreover, that I neglect several discussions in this work that are not part of Kant's justification of judgments employing the principle of purposiveness, notably those concerning fine art and genius, and the analytic of the sublime (in which Kant treats aesthetic appreciation of objects as "contra-purposive," rather than purposive). Moreover, I shall treat the connections Kant wishes to draw between aesthetic and teleological judgment and morality only briefly in the Conclusion, as implications of his central arguments. These connections are of great systematic import for Kant: the principle of purposiveness, he claims famously, can function as a "transition" between nature and freedom, between theoretical and moral philosophy. Nonetheless I take my concentration on epistemological concerns to be justified by Kant's focus in each of the main discussions of the work – the introductions, the deduction of aesthetic judgment, and the claims of teleological judgment – on epistemological, rather than practical, issues. In order to constitute a *transition* to morality, indeed, the principle of purposiveness must be

independently articulated and grounded; only then may it have such transitional implications – an argumentative strategy reflected in the structure of each of Kant’s discussions in the *CJ*, which proceed from epistemological concerns to moral implications.¹¹

Finally, I shall not treat Kant’s text as it unfolds, paragraph by paragraph, but shall concentrate instead on selected passages and considerations in support of the interpretation I propose. Thus, for example, Chapters *Five* through *Seven* might be characterized as an expansive reading of §§9–16 of Kant’s *Analytic of Taste*. A detailed discussion of the entirety of this work would be prohibitively long, and there are already many fine works on the CAJ or on the CTJ that do such work, from which, I should note, I have learned a great deal (despite the disagreements I shall mention). This approach is also dictated by my reconstructive aims: the *CJ* is, as I have noted, not a perspicuously, unproblematically unified work; I am not confident that an interpretation of the *CJ* (or even the CAJ) can be offered that at once identifies an informative, unifying line of argument, and can be reconciled with every passage of this difficult text. Indeed, as I have suggested, part of the interest of the *CJ* lies in Kant’s uncertainty in this work, which reflects both the ambition and the fault lines of the critical philosophy.

Thus, though this interpretation is guided by the principle of charity, it is not by the most extreme form of that principle, viz., that Kant is consistent and right in every claim, argument, and passage. Likewise, I cannot claim that the reading I propose can be squared with all passages, nor that it represents the sole line of argument that may be found in this complex and troubled work. I do hope, however, that it is a helpful, provocative reading, faithful to the spirit if not to every letter of this work, and also to its problematic complexity.

Chapter outline

I devote the first two chapters to discussion of Kant’s epistemological concerns in the *CJ*. I defend my construals of the central epistemological problem of this work – our need for a principle of the unity of diversity as such – and (preliminarily) of the principle of purposiveness without a

¹¹ The independence of Kant’s central arguments in the *CJ* from moral systematic connections, and their priority to the latter, have been defended by Allison, Kulenkampff, and Guyer in the works cited above (though Guyer argues differently concerning the CTJ in “Organisms and the Unity of Science,” in Eric Watkins, ed., *Kant and the Sciences* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001], 259–81).

purpose, both as the principle of judgment that is to respond to this problem, and as the principle that governs all three forms of judging centrally at issue in the *CJ*.

The bulk of the book comprises interpretation of the Critiques of Aesthetic and Teleological Judgment, through which a substantive understanding of this principle and its role in these forms of judging is developed. In Chapters [Three](#) and [Four](#), I present an interpretation of the CTJ, treating, respectively, Kant's arguments that it is necessary to judge organisms as purposive, and his reasons for holding, nonetheless, that this principle cannot truly explain organic behavior, but is a merely regulative, subjective principle, necessary solely as a guide to the subject's reflective judgment of organisms.

In Chapter [Three](#), I argue that according to Kant purposiveness is a necessary principle for our characterization of the particular character of organisms as they are distinct from inorganic objects or from objects conceived solely in terms of the mechanistic physics of the *MFNS*, i.e., in order to account for the "special" unity that obtains among the diverse parts of an organism *as* diverse. This unity, Kant argues, can be characterized in terms of reciprocal, purposive (means–ends) relations, which are grounded, in turn, upon a temporal, causal structure, in which future functioning influences the present as well as vice versa.

In Chapter [Four](#), I argue that purposiveness is a merely subjective principle that cannot, strictly speaking, explain the functioning of such objects – teleological judgment is merely reflective, not determinative, judgment – because such a temporal order cannot be an objective order on Kant's view. Kant's discussion of the Antinomy of Teleological Judgment establishes, however, that this principle is nonetheless necessary for the subject, who aims to judge organisms, in order to grasp the particular characteristics of organisms, indeed to formulate mechanistic laws concerning organic functioning.

My decision to discuss teleological judgment first contravenes Kant's own ordering of the *CJ* both textually and in order of importance: the CTJ is the second half of the *CJ*, and Kant claims that it is a mere "appendix" to his project. I begin by treating purposiveness as a principle of biological explanation, however, because in this context, where purposiveness is exhibited in an object and as a form of causal relations, it is more apparent than elsewhere in the *CJ* that purposiveness can be a substantive principle, and in particular that its substantive content comprises a form of means–ends relations holding among parts *as* diverse and contingent, which are made possible by a temporal structure of future-directedness.

This understanding of purposiveness may, then, be used to understand the more abstract, more purely subjective, purposiveness of judgment and pleasure discussed in Kant's CAJ. In Chapters [Five](#) through [Seven](#), I argue that the principle of purposiveness is constitutive of aesthetic experience, on Kant's view, for it characterizes the form of beautiful objects, aesthetic pleasure, and the activity of aesthetic judging. In Chapter [Five](#), I interpret Kant's claim that purposiveness without a purpose characterizes the form of beautiful objects to mean that we experience beautiful objects as individualized unities of diverse sensible properties under no determinate conceptual description. Such objects are purposive for cognition in that, in representing them, we are aware of such unity, a unity of the type requisite for ideal empirical conceptualization. But our representations of beautiful objects are only "subjectively" purposive for cognition, or purposive *without* a purpose, for without conceptual determination we cannot establish, objectively, in what this unity consists, cannot gain empirical knowledge of the object from this experience.

In Chapter [Six](#), I interpret Kant's claim that purposiveness without a purpose is the a priori principle of pleasure, as well as of judgment. Aesthetic pleasure is, I argue, a non-conceptual consciousness (feeling) of the self-propagating nature of our experience of beauty, of our tendency to "linger," as Kant writes, in such an experience. Thus the principle of purposiveness without a purpose constitutes aesthetic pleasure as a feeling that is anticipatory of the future states of the subject, and that is so future-directed independently of desire, i.e., of our conceptually defined ends for future action. (So I read Kant's much discussed claim that aesthetic pleasure is "disinterested.") Kant's account of aesthetic pleasure provides, then, the first suggestion of the new, radical conception of the aesthetic, purposive subject, as a subject characterized by irreducible future-directedness.

In Chapters [Seven](#) and [Eight](#), I turn to Kant's claims that purposiveness is the a priori principle of aesthetic judging. In Chapter [Seven](#), I argue that aesthetic judging, or the free harmony of the faculties, should be understood as an imaginative activity that anticipates and legislates to itself a grasp of a fully individuated whole, an activity in concert with the unificatory demands of the understanding, but free from conceptual constraints. The principle of purposiveness thus functions, I argue, as the structure of such activity as projective or future-directed. Such purposive activity, moreover, makes both aesthetic pleasure (as the consciousness of the subject's future-directedness) and our representation of beautiful form (as reciprocally, non-conceptually unified manifold) possible.

In Chapter [Eight](#), I turn to Kant's deduction of aesthetic judgments: the subjectively universal claims in aesthetic judgments are justified, I argue, because they are grounded in our activity of judging purposively without a purpose. All human subjects not only can, but ought to, engage in this cognitive activity because it is necessary for the possibility of aesthetic experience, and of empirical knowledge – and thus of experience in general. (Thus we may claim that all others ought to judge aesthetically as we do.) Here I return to the central question of the *CJ* – how we are justifiably to discriminate among, yet unify, the diverse empirical particulars given to us – and argue that such discernment is accomplished in an act of purposive judging without a purpose.

THE PROBLEM: THE UNITY OF THE DIVERSE

In the introductions to the *CJ*, Kant claims that his main concerns in this work – aesthetic judgment of beauty, teleological judgment of organisms, and various aspects of empirical knowledge from empirical concept formation to the representation of nature in a systematic natural science – are all products of the faculty of “reflective judgment,” the capacity to find the universal (i.e., a concept) for a given particular, rather than to subsume a particular under a given universal, the task of “determinative” judgment (v:179; FI, xx:211). Reflective judgment is, Kant claims moreover, governed by a transcendental principle, that of “purposiveness.”¹ And, though Kant had previously discussed these topics in the *CPR* (even if only to dismiss some of them as unfit for transcendental philosophical treatment),² Kant claims that they merit renewed critical attention because reflective judgment, governed by this principle, is

¹ I shall argue in the [next chapter](#) that this principle may be understood as that of purposiveness without a purpose in all three main discussions in the *CJ* (contra some of Kant’s terminological distinctions). In this chapter, however, I shall refer for the sake of concision to the principle of purposiveness simpliciter.

² Kant claims that aesthetic judgment is a subject matter for empirical psychology (not transcendental philosophy) at A21/B35–6n; and distinguishes “mere logic” (including empirical concept formation) from transcendental logic in passages I shall discuss below. Kant discusses investigation towards systematic science and, briefly, the status of teleological explanation of organisms in the Appendix to the *Dialectic*; I shall treat these discussions here and in [Chapter Three](#), respectively.

necessary for the possibility of empirical cognition and of experience; correspondingly, Kant provides a “deduction” for this principle (v:184).

In these two opening chapters I shall be concerned with the shape of the *CJ* project as so introduced, i.e., with Kant’s three main aims here: to introduce a new a priori principle as that of a newly identified faculty of reflective judging; to justify (judging in accord with) this principle as necessary for the possibility of experience; to argue that aesthetic and teleological judgment are cases of reflective judgment in accord with this principle. In this chapter I shall be primarily concerned with the second of these aims, viz., to identify the transcendental, epistemological problem Kant poses in the introductions concerning empirical knowledge, which is to be addressed by the principle of purposiveness. Kant argues, I shall suggest, that in order for empirical knowledge to be possible, in order for us to render given empirical diversity intelligible, and to do so justifiably, we require a principle that establishes a unity of the diverse as such, a form of lawfulness that holds for the contingent aspects of nature as such. In the [next chapter](#), I shall discuss (preliminarily) the first and third of these aims: this new principle is a form of the unity of the diverse as such, and it grounds such unity, or functions as a principle of judging, as the structure of the subject’s reflective judging activity itself. This function is, I shall suggest in [Chapter Two](#) and argue in subsequent chapters, exhibited in aesthetic and teleological judgment.

Before turning to the substantive discussion of Kant’s epistemological, transcendental argument, I wish to note an anomaly concerning this argument and my treatment of it. Kant’s argument has, first, an anomalous form by comparison to the transcendental arguments (justifications of a priori principles) of the *CPR*. Such arguments – paradigmatically, Kant’s justification of the causal principle – tend to concern (and begin with) a priori principles to which we are already *prima facie* committed, which we would like to justify; Kant then argues that such principles are justified by establishing that their employment is necessary for the possibility of experience: we must so judge – or else (a “threat”) experience would be impossible.³ In the *CJ*, Kant reverses this argumentative

³ This presentation of Kant’s argumentative strategy is schematic, but (I hope) uncontroversial, and consonant with a widely shared understanding of Kant’s method as regressive. (See, e.g., Karl Ameriks, *Interpreting Kant’s Critiques* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003], Introduction.) This schematic structure might also apply (with modifications, e.g., in substituting conditions for the possibility of willing for conditions for the possibility of experience) to Kant’s treatment of the moral law, particularly in the *GW*.

structure: he develops “threats” to the possibility of experience and cognition – specifically, I shall argue, the “threat of diversity” and the “threat of contingency” – and only then introduces an unfamiliar, even odd, principle, that of purposiveness, which thereby is to be justified as a necessary principle of judgment.⁴

In my discussion, I follow this anomalous argumentative structure, treating Kant’s “problem” first and then his response to it, in the form of judgment in accord with the principle of purposiveness. By contrast to most commentators, who treat both of these aspects of Kant’s argument in the introductions together, however, I shall also expand upon this anomalous structure. Because I take the character and function of this new principle to be better articulated in the CAJ and CTJ than in the introductions, I shall reserve my treatment of the way in which judging in accord with this subjective principle is meant to address the “threats” to experience and empirical cognition to the end of Chapter [Eight](#), as the fruit of my preceding discussions of the CTJ and CAJ, and, specifically, as the ultimate warrant for Kant’s justification of the claims of aesthetic judgment.

I shall now turn to my treatment of Kant’s epistemological concerns, beginning with an overview of his presentation thereof in the *CJ* introductions, and its connections to his account of the regulative principle(s) of systematicity in the Appendix to the Dialectic of the *CPR* (1.1). I shall then present an initial proposal concerning the character of Kant’s concerns; though this proposal is textually well grounded, I argue that it should be resisted because it renders Kant’s epistemological questions unanswerable by the defense of an a priori principle, and correspondingly entails a weak, thin reading of the principle of purposiveness (an understanding of purposiveness to which my interpretation is opposed here and in the following) (1.2–3). In the following sections, I shall defend my reading of Kant’s question as one concerning how, by which principle, we are to unify the empirical diversity of nature *as* diverse. This construal renders this problem one that may be addressed by a transcendental principle (as the form of such unity), and that may be understood as a pervasive concern of the *CJ* as a whole.

⁴ Guyer’s “Kant’s Principles” is the best reconstruction of Kant’s argument in the more common regressive form. As a result, however, his reconstruction significantly deemphasizes the new principle of purposiveness, in favor of the principle(s) of systematicity, i.e., familiar principles to which we are (arguably) already committed in scientific investigation.

1.1 Overview: The introductions to the *Critique of Judgment* and the *CPR* Appendix to the *Dialectic*

In the introductions, Kant repeatedly formulates his guiding concern in the *CJ*, the epistemological problem to be addressed by the faculty of reflective judgment and its principle. Kant writes, for example:

in spite of all the uniformity of things in nature in accordance with the universal laws, . . . 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, to divide its products into genera and species in order to use the principles for the explanation and the understanding of one for the explanation and comprehension of the other as well, and to make an interconnected experience out of material that is for us so confused (strictly speaking, only infinitely diverse⁵ and not fitted for our power of comprehension). (v:185)

In this passage, as elsewhere, Kant begins by referring to his conclusions in the *CPR*: he has proven that nature, in order to be a nature at all (as experienced or known by human beings), must be “uniform,” universally governed by transcendental, necessary laws, the categorial principles of the understanding. Kant emphasizes, however, that these laws do not provide complete knowledge of nature, nor do they establish the possibility of such further knowledge, for they underdetermine the nature of nature: they concern objects only with respect to what they have in common as “things of nature in general,” or establish the “interconnection of things only with respect to their genera,” i.e., as objects of nature as such, and do not comprise laws governing such objects “specifically . . . as particular beings.”⁶ The specific, empirical character of objects and

⁵ Kant’s term here is “*mannigfaltig*,” which Guyer and Matthews translate as “manifold.” This term – so translated – suggests an important connection (which I shall discuss in the [next chapter](#)) between reflective judging of an empirical manifold, and the transcendental activity of judging – the objective synthesis of the manifold – treated in the *CPR*. I shall often, however, translate this term as “diversity,” or “the diverse,” in order to reflect the problem that Kant poses, viz., not only that there might be infinitely *many* empirical laws or kinds, but that they might be so (qualitatively) *diverse* as to frustrate our attempts to cognize nature.

⁶ Kant suggests that we may also be confident that nature will be governed by mechanistic physics, viz., the universal laws of *material* nature, which, Kant claims, follow from the categorial principles as applied to the empirical concept of matter (v:181; this is also the main claim of the *MFNS*). Even if we do know that physical laws hold of nature, these laws also underdetermine most qualitative, specific aspects

events could, then, be “determined or . . . determinable” in “infinitely many ways”; there could be – so far as has been established by the arguments of the *CPR* – an “infinitely diverse” set of empirical laws governing these characteristics of natural objects.⁷

Kant identifies three types of empirical knowledge or knowability of nature in its empirical character that are not determined or guaranteed by the categorial principles. First, these principles do not guarantee the empirical conceptualizability of nature. Such conceptualizability is a further condition, beyond those articulated in the *CPR*, for the possibility of experience: if nature were infinitely diverse empirically, Kant argues, we would be incapable of forming any empirical concept, and would be overwhelmed by such diversity; the “understanding would not be able to find its way about in nature.”⁸ Second, Kant argues that the categorial principles do not guarantee that we are able to order natural objects, kinds, or events systematically, in order to obtain a complete, systematic science of nature or a “*thorough-going* interconnection of empirical cognitions into a whole of experience” (v:183; my emphasis). Specifically, we might not be able to systematize natural kinds or laws, to “divide [nature’s] products into genera and species” (v:185), or to subordinate “all empirical principles under equally empirical but higher principles, and . . . thus to ground the possibility of the systematic subordination of empirical principles under one another” (v:180). Third, Kant argues that our knowledge of the universal laws of nature does not guarantee that there are, or that we will be able to know, any properly *lawful* (viz., necessary) empirical laws at all.⁹ We know a priori, Kant argues, only the most general causal law governing experience – every event has a cause – or, in specific instances, that *this* event has a cause, but this does not entail that (we can know that) this kind of event has this kind of cause. Though the causal principle licenses – in a general way – our practice of induction (i.e., it is not unjustified to look for or propose empirical causal laws), it does not guarantee that any of our particular inductive inferences are justified.

These concerns about the possibility of empirical knowledge may all be described as concerns about the possibility, proper activity, indeed the “magnitude of the task” (v:184), of the faculty of reflective judgment, our

of nature, leaving Kant’s claims about our knowledge of empirical diversity largely unchanged; thus I shall leave this complication aside here.

⁷ Quotations in this paragraph are from v:183.

⁸ v:193; Pluhar translation.

⁹ E.g., v:184–5.

capacity for “finding” universal concepts for given particulars. The paradigmatic form of such reflective judging is empirical concept formation: when we form empirical concepts, we judge given particulars in order to find a (not-given) universal for them. Because Kant holds (famously) that intuitions without concepts – here intuitions of empirical diversity – are “blind,” such concept formation is necessary for us to render empirical, sensibly given diversity intelligible at all. It is necessary, too, for our project of obtaining a systematic natural science: in order to classify objects as species under a genus, we must be able to form “higher but equally empirical” concepts of objects. Likewise, in order to formulate new empirical laws, or subordinate such laws to higher empirical laws in a systematic science, we must be able to form empirical concepts (of kinds governed by such laws). Indeed, because Kant’s “concept of an object of nature” as such includes the concept of cause, the formation of empirical concepts may well comprise identifying a kind of object *as* a cause of a particular sort, governed by empirical causal laws. Correspondingly, the subordination of such laws under higher empirical laws (or the development of a systematic science) may comprise subordinating species (causally defined kinds) to genera (more universal, causally defined kinds).¹⁰

Because the categorial principles alone do not guarantee that we will be able to employ the faculty of reflective judging, nor serve as guiding principles for such activity, Kant argues, a further principle, specifically for reflective judgment, is required in our attempts to gain empirical knowledge, whether (maximally) of a “thorough-going interconnection” of nature and experience, in a systematic science, or (minimally) the discernment of any order among empirical diversity, the formation of any

¹⁰ On Kant’s identification of the relation between general and particular laws with genera and species relations, and Kant’s corresponding classificatory model of perfected science, see A652–3/B680–1; J. D. McFarland, *Kant’s Concept of Teleology* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 1970), pp. 91–3; Paul Guyer, “Reason and Reflective Judgment: Kant on the Significance of Systematicity,” *Nous* 24 (1990), 17–43; 25. See also Michael Friedman’s reconstruction of Kant’s *Opus Postumum* as an attempt to ground transcendently the new science of chemistry developed by Lavoisier and his followers (*Kant and the Exact Sciences* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992], pp. 264–334). Friedman emphasizes Kant’s view that a true science is mathematizable, but his presentation of the new chemistry and Kant’s treatment thereof indicates that according to Kant chemistry has become more worthy of the status of a science (rather than an “art”) not only because of its mathematicized general laws, but because it is (correctly) classificatory.

empirical concepts. This principle is, Kant claims, the principle of purposiveness,¹¹ which he presents as follows:

this principle can be nothing other than this: that since universal laws of nature have their ground in our understanding, which prescribes them to nature (although only in accordance with the universal concept of it as nature), the particular empirical laws, in regard to that which is left undetermined in them by the [universal laws], must be considered in terms of the sort of unity they would have if an understanding (even if not ours) had . . . given them for the sake of our faculty of cognition, in order to make possible a system of experience in accordance with particular laws of nature . . . [That is, this] principle of the power of judgment in regard to the form of things in nature under empirical laws in general is the *purposiveness of nature* in its diversity. (v:180)

To explain how empirical knowledge is possible, we must assume that nature not only conforms to the universal laws we legislate to nature, but also is purposive for our understanding, is amenable to our need for, and aspirations to, knowledge of empirical diversity, as if it were made to be so by an understanding not our own.

In raising these concerns about the possibility and justifiability of empirical knowledge, particularly about our aspirations to attain a systematic natural science, Kant returns to issues treated in his earlier account of our aims in scientific investigation, and the principles that must govern it, in the Appendix to the Dialectic of the *CPR*. In the Appendix, Kant defends the cognitive value of the ideas of reason (God, the soul, the world as a whole) not as subject matters or sources of a priori knowledge, but as regulative, heuristic principles or maxims that guide empirical investigation, guide the understanding in *its* search for explanations or judgments of objects according to the categorial, constitutive principles (e.g., A671/B699, A674/B702). The idea of God and the corresponding regulative principle of the systematic unity of nature are the most important of these principles.¹² Kant argues that in order to consider nature as a systematic unity, to categorize nature in genera and species (A651–2/B679–80) – concerns familiar from the *CJ* – we must consider nature “as if” created by a supreme reason, as (if it is) arranged throughout systematically (A697–8/B725–6). Kant divides this regulative principle into three subsidiary principles of homogeneity, specificity, and

¹¹ See note 2.

¹² See Guyer, “Reason and Reflective Judgment,” 20–8, on the differences among the three regulative ideas.

affinity (A657–8/B685–6). (Versions of these subordinate principles of systematic unity reappear in the *CJ*, as maxims that are to guide reflective judgment, or “expressions” of the principle of purposiveness; see v:182, 185.) These regulative principles enjoin the scientist to seek, respectively, more universal empirical laws or higher genera, more specific, “determined” laws or lower species, and laws or relations of genera and species that are (as close as possible to) continuous.

In the Appendix, Kant argues that these principles are a priori, subjectively necessary, regulative principles. These principles are a priori because they cannot be derived from experience – we experience objects and events one by one, not systematically – but are requirements that go beyond what we have experienced, and that *we* have (or reason has) for what would constitute complete scientific knowledge.¹³

These principles are necessary for scientific practice because they serve as norms for investigation, demanding not only an extension of such knowledge (to greater generality or specificity), but also greater unity thereof. These principles guide investigation, too, so that we do not merely blindly fumble along, registering facts that come our way, without a thought to how they might fit together into a body of knowledge. As Kant writes in the *CJ*, “a system is *not made possible* by rummaging about and gathering up the many things that have been found during the course of inquiry, but is possible only if one [has] . . . the formal concept of a whole, a concept that at the same time contains in itself a priori the principle for a complete division.”¹⁴ Though we do not, in empirical investigation, have an a priori “principle for a complete division” of the system, the regulative principles articulate at least the form of such a system, without which guidance we could not even hope to attain systematic knowledge. Such principles, then, put an obligation on the understanding to try to organize its judgments into, or to seek further judgments that would fit into, a coherent, unified body of knowledge (e.g., A647/B675, A655–6/B693–4).

These principles are, Kant argues finally, only *subjectively*, not objectively, necessary – are regulative, rather than constitutive, principles – because we cannot know, cannot legislate, that objects of nature will conform to them. For, first, in accord with Kant’s strictures concerning

¹³ E.g., A681/B709.

¹⁴ FI, xx:242, my emphasis; cf. A645/B673. Here (as often) Kant endorses the hypothetico-deductive method, as opposed to an empiricist method of gathering observations.

what we can know a priori – the universal form of experience, rather than its varied empirical content – we must discover whether, how, and to what degree nature in its empirical character is systematically ordered.¹⁵ Second, these principles are too indeterminate, concern relations among (kinds of) objects or laws that are too broad, to be constitutive of objects as such; they tell us nothing about sensibly given objects directly, or strictly speaking (they are not “objective” in that sense).¹⁶ Rather, these principles articulate – in very general terms – what kinds of relations among kinds of objects or events we are to look for, or how we are to arrange the facts, observations, or judgments we make about particular objects.¹⁷ Such principles articulate our rational aim (systematic science), guide us in our investigations towards that end, and help us to transform observations into properly scientific form,¹⁸ but do not directly determine the nature of particular events or objects.

In the *CJ* introductions, Kant appears both to endorse this prior account of the regulative principles, and to suggest that it requires reformulation or supplementation. Kant continues to hold that systematic science is the ideal of empirical knowledge, and that the regulative principles of homogeneity, specificity, and affinity are necessary, heuristic principles for scientific investigation aiming to discover and formulate empirical concepts or laws, and/or a complete science. But Kant’s return to these issues and his claim that another principle is required to explain the possibility of empirical knowledge suggests that he also means to transform that earlier account. How and why, we may ask, does Kant modify his earlier treatment in the *CJ*? What further question or concern does Kant mean to pose, and to address?

1.2 An initial proposal: The contingency of empirical order and the assumption of design

As signalled by his identification of (reflective) *judgment*, rather than reason, as the faculty with which he is concerned in the *CJ*, Kant’s

¹⁵ A689/B717f. ¹⁶ A664/B692.

¹⁷ E.g., A643/B671–2; cf. Guyer, “Kant’s Principles,” 15.

¹⁸ See Guyer, “Reason and Reflective Judgment,” and “Kant’s Principles,” 4–5, 11, 16–18, for good articulations of these methodological functions of the regulative principles. See Friedman (*Exact Sciences*), McFarland (*Kant’s Concept*, pp. 30–1), and Martin Carrier, “Kant’s Theory of Matter and His Views on Chemistry,” in Eric Watkins, ed., *Kant and the Sciences* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 205–30, on the role of the regulative principles in the transformation of the “art” of chemistry into a science properly speaking.

concerns about the possibility and justifiability of empirical knowledge are considerably broadened, and deepened, in the *CJ*. In the Appendix, Kant argues that reason, a faculty concerned with higher-order, indeed total, organized unity, requires us to attempt to order the judgments already made by the understanding in systematic form, or to focus investigation in order to do so. By contrast, in identifying our tasks in acquiring empirical knowledge in the *CJ* as tasks for judgment, our cognitive engagement with empirical particulars, Kant suggests that he is concerned not only, or primarily, with such a further order of judgments we have made, but with conditions or principle(s) required for *any* empirical judgment to be made or justified – or indeed for experience to be possible, since (some) empirical conceptualization is required for us to employ the understanding at all. Likewise, Kant's claim that we cannot know that any particular empirical law we might formulate is truly lawful (necessary) suggests that perhaps none of our empirical judgments – specific causal judgments, inductive inferences, or proposed empirical laws – is justified.

Kant suggests that he adds these aspects of empirical knowledge to his consideration of systematic science because these more basic forms of knowledge – like systematic science – are contingent, not guaranteed by establishing the categorial principles as universal laws of nature, not definitively known to be possible or justifiable claims concerning nature. Correspondingly, Kant appears to ask not only what our aspirations to ideal (full, complete) empirical knowledge comprise and by which principles we should be guided in our investigation (as in the Appendix), but what *nature* must be like in order to make such aspirations realizable. In order for our aspirations to empirical knowledge (maximal or minimal) to be fulfilled, Kant emphasizes, natural objects must *be* classifiable into kinds, natural events must *be* describable by general empirical laws, such laws must *be* part of a systematic unity of nature, nature must *be* cognizable empirically, i.e., comparatively unified, not “infinitely diverse” (FI, xx:209–10). Such empirical orderliness of nature has not, however, been established by the arguments of the *CPR*.

The Appendix account suffers then, Kant suggests, from two lacunae: it does not acknowledge the full range of empirical knowledge undetermined by the categorial principles, and does not establish that nature is such as to be thus known. Together, these differences suggest that Kant's concern in the *CJ* – by contrast to the bulk of the Appendix – is not simply to articulate the ideal form of empirical knowledge, and justify a priori principles as regulative or heuristic (towards the accomplishment

of that aim), but is properly transcendental, i.e., concerns a priori conditions (reflective judging in accord with its a priori principle) necessary for the possibility of experience and (empirical) cognition, and attempts to address the question whether we may claim (justifiably) that objects or nature correspond to those necessary cognitive requirements.¹⁹ Kant emphasizes the question whether (we can know that) nature *is* such as to be empirically known (in these ways), even whether we could have *necessary* knowledge of nature in its empirical character (concerning empirical laws). And Kant does not simply present a goal for empirical investigation, to which we aspire, and which we hope is realizable, but argues that it is necessary that the subject *have* (some) such empirical knowledge (and therefore that nature be thus ordered) in order for “interconnected” experience to be possible.

Kant thereby suggests that he might aim in the *CJ* to provide a transcendental argument similar to those he provides in the *CPR* Analytic, viz., to justify not *subjective* or *regulative* principles, but *objective* principles, to establish the objective validity either of the principles of systematicity, or of a further principle that would warrant systematic or other empirical knowledge claims – on the grounds that such principle(s) are necessary for the possibility of experience, and must therefore characterize any

¹⁹ As Guyer notes, Kant refers to the regulative principles as “transcendental” principles in the Appendix; and he claims, too, to provide a transcendental deduction for their “objective validity” (A663/B691, A671/B699; “Kant’s Principles,” 12–13). By these claims, however, Kant means only (respectively) that these principles purport not simply to organize cognitions (systematically), but to make claims concerning objects (e.g., they are organized in genera/species relations), and that these principles are justified as regulative principles that guide the understanding in its investigation of nature. Thus Kant does not mean that he has proven that these principles hold, necessarily, of objects of experience. (That question, which occupies Kant in the *CJ*, is less central to the Appendix account, where Kant wishes to argue that these principles are legitimate – more weakly objectively valid – with reference to objects of experience, and *not* to God, the soul, or the world as a whole, the purported supersensible objects of the rational ideas. See Michelle Grier, *Kant’s Doctrine of Transcendental Illusion* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001], pp. 263–301, for a fascinating treatment.) Like Guyer, I shall take properly transcendental principles (by contrast to merely regulative, heuristic, or logical principles) thus to concern objects (“Kant’s Principles,” 4–5, 9, 11–13, 28) and/or properly transcendental argument to establish that objects are so characterized. Contra Guyer, however, I take such principles (and arguments concerning them) in addition to articulate necessary conditions for experience for *subjects*. This addition is important in discussing the *CJ* because Kant holds that the principle of purposiveness does not determine the character of objects (though it does contribute indirectly to empirical cognition thereof), but is, directly, a necessary condition for subjects to have experience or empirical cognition.

objects of experience. In particular, Kant argues that the categorical principles are insufficient to establish the possibility of experience because a nature governed by such principles might be “infinitely diverse” in its empirical character, and thus make it impossible for us to “orient” ourselves cognitively. (I shall term this the “threat of diversity.”) Here Kant indeed restates an argument for the objective validity of one of the principles of systematicity, which he had broached (briefly) in the Appendix:

If among the appearances offering themselves to us there were such a great variety – I will not say of form (for they might be similar to one another in that) but of content, i.e., regarding the manifoldness of existing beings – that even the most acute human understanding, through comparison of one with another, could not detect the least similarity (a case which can at least be thought), . . . [we should not have any] concept of a genus, nor any other universal concept, indeed no understanding at all would obtain, since it is the understanding that has to do with such concepts. The logical principle of genera [i.e., homogeneity] therefore presupposes a transcendental one if it is to be applied to nature . . . According to that principle, sameness of kind is necessarily presupposed in the manifold of possible experience (even though we are not in a position to determine its degree a priori); because without it no empirical concepts and hence no experience would be possible. (A653–4/B681–2)

Kant suggests here that the principle of homogeneity is not just a regulative principle that guides scientific inquiry, but articulates a necessary condition for the possibility of experience that holds, necessarily, of nature as it is given to us. Nature must be homogeneous as to its empirical “content,” *must* provide us with some empirical regularities in order for us to have empirical concepts, “and therefore” even experience, at all.

This line of argument may cause the reader of the *CPR* some difficulty,²⁰ for Kant seems to overstep his critical, methodological boundaries, his famed “epistemological modesty,” in claiming that we can (or must) know about nature a priori not just as to the form of objects but also as to their “content,”²¹ i.e., that it produce empirical regularities, that it

²⁰ See, e.g., R.-P. Horstmann, “Why Must There Be a Transcendental Deduction in Kant’s *Critique of Judgment?*,” and Reinhardt Brandt, “The Deductions in the *Critique of Judgment*,” both in Eckhart Förster, ed., *Kant’s Transcendental Deductions* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1989), for opposing positions.

²¹ See, e.g., A223–6/B270–4 for Kant’s assertion that we can know only the form of experience a priori.

be empirically homogeneous (enough). Moreover, Kant's sketch of a transcendental argument here – that nature must, necessarily, conform to this principle – is rather quick by Kant's standards, and seems insufficient to establish this claim. For unlike the categorial principles (as rules of objective time-determination), the principle of homogeneity is an indeterminate principle, and therefore cannot constitute (the experience of) objects. In the *Analytic of Principles*, Kant argues that the categorial principles are universal laws governing objects and events *because* objects or events must conform to the categories according to *determinate* requirements (e.g., their changes occur in irreversibly ordered temporal succession) in order to be an object or event and to make experience possible, in a coherent temporal order. But in virtue of what would objects conform to the principle of homogeneity? Presumably shared empirical properties of some sort. The a priori principle of homogeneity cannot, however, specify what these empirical properties are, in what sense objects are (to be judged) homogeneous. Thus in order to apply the principle of homogeneity to objects, we seem to require the possibility or actuality of the phenomena – i.e., empirical kinds governed by empirical concepts and our ability to form such concepts – the possibility of which the use of this principle is supposed to explain.

In pressing this “threat of diversity” in the *CJ*, Kant seems to recognize the insufficiency of that earlier sketch of a transcendental argument. Kant does not, however, claim to establish that the regulative principles of systematicity – or some other principle – are justified, objective principles that warrant empirical knowledge claims. Rather, Kant argues that the reflective judging subject requires a further a priori, *subjective* principle, that of purposiveness. Kant's formulation of this principle, and his identification of it as a subjective principle, reflect the problems attendant upon the Appendix argument.

In the *CJ* Kant takes explicit cognizance that the “threat of diversity” cannot be addressed – as he perhaps problematically suggests in the Appendix passage – by the subject's a priori legislation. We must discover the empirical character of nature through investigation, not stipulation. It is, he emphasizes, *contingent* that nature will be systematizable, governed by (knowable) empirical laws, not so “infinitely diverse” as to frustrate any human efforts at cognition (FI, xx:210, 213).

The contingency of empirical natural order is likewise reflected in Kant's formulation of this principle (at v:180, quoted above): precisely because we cannot legislate that there be empirical order in nature, this order will obtain only if nature is purposive for us. In order to assume that

nature is thus purposive, Kant suggests moreover, we must assume that an understanding “even if not ours” has designed nature with respect to particular laws; we can explain nature’s suitability to our cognitive purposes only by referring to an intelligent cause. By reference to the formal conditions for the possibility of our experience, Kant argues, we cannot establish that nature *has to* contain empirical regularities or be rationally ordered; thus, his argument appears to run, some other rational being must have made it that way.²²

Kant’s identification of purposiveness as the principle of reflective judgment seems, then, to be a transmutation of the argument from design: it is contingent that nature be ordered empirically; such order is beneficial to us, indeed needed by us (for experience and empirical cognition to be possible); thus we must assume that God, an intelligent, beneficent agent, ensures that nature fulfills our cognitive needs. This presupposition of intelligent design also, to anticipate the concerns of the [next chapter](#), links Kant’s concerns about the possibility of empirical knowledge with the topics of the CAJ and CTJ: if we need to assume that any contingent order in nature is designed, we particularly need to do so in the case of beautiful objects and organisms, as traditional arguments from design aver. “[H]ardly anyone other than a transcendental philosopher,” Kant writes, would admire nature for its “purposiveness . . . for a logical system of empirical concepts,”²³ but everyone remarks upon biological purposiveness, and the beautiful designedness of nature.

Kant takes care, however, not to violate his critical formal constraints even in his articulation of this principle: we cannot legislate, nor justifiably presuppose, that nature is in fact so purposive for cognition, but only judge nature “as if” it is so purposive. (Or: purposiveness is a merely subjective, not objective, principle.) Kant does not and cannot appeal directly to God’s intentional design to guarantee empirical order in nature: God’s intentions are vacuous, illegitimate explanations, according to Kant, for they lie outside the bounds of our knowledge. Further, because Kant believes that we cannot claim that (non-human) nature itself acts intentionally, in accord with concepts (purposes), we cannot claim that nature by itself is truly purposive. Because we cannot legitimately claim that nature is purposive (either of itself, or as designed by God), the principle of purposiveness does not legislate to nature, or determine

²² This reference to intelligent agency is central to Kant’s definitions of purposes and purposiveness, which I will discuss in the [next chapter](#).

²³ FI, xx:216; translation modified.

objects. We must, Kant argues, judge only “as if” nature is purposive, “as if” it is ordered by an “understanding not ours.” Reflective judgment legislates this principle, then, only to itself (v:185).

In sum: in the *CJ*, Kant identifies a wide range of types of empirical natural order – from minimal (empirical conceptualizability) to maximal (systematicity) – that are both necessary for the possibility of empirical knowledge and cannot be established to hold of nature, necessarily, or a priori (v:186). Therefore, Kant argues, we cannot prescribe, but must *assume*, that nature fits those cognitive requirements or aspirations. The principle of purposiveness is a further subjective maxim required in addition to the regulative principles of the Appendix: not only ought the investigator to seek more homogeneity, specificity, and affinity among objects as empirically determined, but also he must assume *that* nature is such as to make these investigations possible – i.e., is purposive for us.²⁴

1.3 Difficulties

This construal of Kant’s epistemological concerns and, correspondingly, of the status and content of the principle of purposiveness has considerable textual support, both in Kant’s emphasis upon the contingency of systematic or other empirical order, and in his presentation and subsequent glosses of the principle of purposiveness as the assumption of nature’s “suitability” or “amenability” (*Angemessenheit*) to our understanding in the introductions (e.g., v:186). But this initial proposal is also philosophically and interpretatively problematic. It might, indeed, ground the (disappointing) conclusions that have been drawn concerning the importance of the *CJ* within Kant’s critical project (and concerning the integrity of the *CJ* project, as I shall suggest in the [next chapter](#)). For on this construal, the principle of purposiveness is rendered a weak, uninformative principle, and Kant’s defense thereof seems, too, to establish a

²⁴ Some such construal of the principle of purposiveness is widely endorsed in the scholarship, e.g., by McFarland, *Kant’s Concept*, pp. 84–6; Michael Friedman, “Regulative and Constitutive,” *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 30 supplement (1991), 73–102; Guyer, *Claims of Taste*, e.g., pp. 41–2, arguing that the presupposition is that nature is so purposive in being *systematic* (cf. Guyer, “Purpose in Nature: What Is Living, and What Is Dead in Kant’s Teleology?,” in *Kant’s System of Nature and Freedom* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005], 344–6); and perhaps most inventively by Juliet Floyd, “Heautonomy: Kant on Reflective Judgment and Systematicity,” in Herman Parret, ed., *Kants Ästhetik/Kant’s Aesthetics/L’esthétique de Kant* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1998), 192–218.

weak claim: only that, with respect to any of our hopes for empirical knowledge, we must presuppose that nature will accommodate those aspirations.

Likewise, this argument (and this principle) appear to add little to Kant's Appendix account, and for good reason, viz., Kant's carefulness in respecting his own critical constraints concerning what we may legislate to nature. It may be argued, that is, that Kant identifies correctly the limits of his *CPR* epistemological doctrines in the *CJ*: Kant's defense of the regulative principles does not, indeed, rule out the threat of natural diversity or establish that nature is, necessarily, empirically lawful or systematic. But this, it seems, is as it should be: the categorial principles are exceptional instances of our knowledge of nature, according to Kant. We know a priori that nature is governed by such laws, for they constitute the nature of nature in general, the form of objects as such. Because we are finite intellects, however, we must learn the specific laws of nature a posteriori, from observation of what is empirically given. *Of course* we do not know and cannot legislate a priori that nature forms a systematic unity of empirical laws or comprises objects classifiable in genera and species (or according to certain empirical laws), but must investigate nature in order to discover what its empirical laws might be, whether objects fit under (which) empirical concepts, etc. We may well need nature to be empirically orderly in some way for us to have empirical cognition (or indeed any coherent experience), but we cannot dictate the character of such order a priori.²⁵

The principle of purposiveness seems, correspondingly, to constitute merely a recognition of that fact: when we look for contingent order in nature, we have to assume *that* nature *is* orderly, i.e., that it is “as if” designed for us so as to serve our cognitive purposes (e.g., be systematizable), to fit our cognitive needs (be homogeneous enough). But – as Kant emphasizes – judging in accord with this principle (and his justification thereof) does not guarantee, any more than the regulative principles do, that nature will *be* characterized by such order. We cannot “prescribe” that nature is purposive, Kant writes, “for reflection on the [particular] laws of nature is directed by nature,” in its actual, given, empirical character (v:180); thus its “principle does not of course *determine anything* with regard to the particular forms of nature, but the purposiveness of the latter must always be **given empirically**” (FI, xx:243; bold my emphasis). Kant's defense of the principle of purposiveness establishes only that the empirical investigator must *assume* that

²⁵ Cf. Allison, *Theory of Taste*, p. 39.

nature is empirically lawful and systematizable, and (legitimately) *can only* assume so, for such assumptions must be confirmed (or disproven) empirically, not a priori.

With respect to the “threat of diversity,” this principle (and Kant’s argument in defense of it) could at most be taken to express or ground gratitude and admiration for nature. In accord with Kant’s arguments, we may recognize that for all that we can establish a priori, we might be provided with intuitions so overwhelmingly diverse that we would be incapable of knowledge or coherent experience. As a matter of contingent fact, however, nature *does* present us with objects that are uniform enough for us to compare them, since (clearly) we can form empirical concepts.²⁶ Kant’s defense of the principle of purposiveness may make us aware of this fact, even “thankful” that nature is so. Indeed, with his invocation of (“as if”) purposes or intentions of a (rational) Creator, Kant comes considerably closer in the *CJ* than in the Appendix to recommending such gratitude: though in both, Kant suggests that the investigator ought to consider nature “as if” created by an intelligent agent (God), in the Appendix, God figures predominantly as an image or purported “substratum” of a complete, rationally unified reality, and/or of the corresponding complete, systematic knowledge to which we aspire.²⁷ In the *CJ*, by contrast, God appears to figure as a (presumed) intentional, beneficent agent, who ensures that nature is ordered “for the sake of”²⁸ our cognitive purposes.²⁹ But this presupposition does not

²⁶ See Horstmann, “Why Must There Be?,” 163, for a good statement of this difficulty. To be clear: one might also be “thankful” that nature conforms to the categorial principles, given the “hypothetical” character of Kant’s project in the *CPR*. Kant never claims that it is necessary that we have experience (or knowledge), only to establish what nature must be like *if* there is (to be) experience. Thus nature (or things themselves) *could* provide us with no intuitions whatsoever, or ones not amenable to judgment according to the categories; then we would have no experience. (See Ameriks, *Interpreting*, Introduction, for a good discussion of this “hypothetical” character of Kant’s arguments.) So too, we now learn, would we not have any experience if nature were infinitely diverse. By contrast to the findings of the *CPR*, however, on the basis of this recognition we cannot articulate any a priori claims, any determinate forms, that nature must take nor, thereby, justify any particular claims on that basis – e.g., importantly, of necessity concerning empirical laws.

²⁷ See, e.g., A677–8/B705–6, A697/B725f.

²⁸ v:180, quoted above.

²⁹ Brandt, “The Deductions,” and Cristel Fricke, “Explaining the Inexplicable: The Hypothesis of the Faculty of Reflective Judgment in Kant’s Third Critique,” *Nous* 24 (1990), 45–62, emphasize this aspect of Kant’s arguments in the *CJ*. In the Appendix, Kant does discuss a regulative assumption of God’s purposive,

ground or provide us with any a priori claims concerning determinate forms that nature might take, in its empirical character.

With respect to our more ambitious, less obviously fulfilled cognitive aims – systematization, justified empirical causal judgments – moreover, this presupposition seems neither to provide guidance in our task of formulating such knowledge claims, nor to justify them. Despite Kant’s claims, this principle appears to be an even less helpful “guideline for research into” the order of nature (v:185) than are the (already vague) regulative principles, since it comprises only a rather empty presupposition that whatever order we (already) hope or need to find in nature (whether systematic unity, empirical lawfulness, or empirical kinds) will be “there,” that nature will be amenable to our cognitive aims whatever they may be. (In the following, I shall refer to this understanding of purposiveness as the “thin utility” conception of purposiveness.)

This assumption may be a subjectively necessary (even psychologically necessary) principle for the scientific investigator – in order to investigate nature in its empirical character, and to do so rationally or consistently, one must assume that nature is thus knowable.³⁰ But there is nothing in Kant’s defense of this principle (as understood on this proposal) that would establish that we are, in any substantive sense, *justified* in so assuming. Or, to put this another way: Hume would not deny that in making inductive inferences we are assuming that such inferences are justified or reflect the nature of nature, that nature is governed by empirical laws. The argument that we “must” (subjectively) make this assumption does not, then, *answer* Hume’s questions concerning the justifiability of that assumption, but merely reaffirms that those questions are well-taken and perhaps unanswerable: it is contingent that the

intentional causality of nature (A686/B714f.), but this (brief) discussion concerns the attribution of teleological laws or ends to particular natural things, not the purposiveness of nature for our cognition more generally; I shall, therefore, discuss it in Chapter [Three](#).

³⁰ McFarland glosses the principle of (logical) purposiveness in this way. He argues, moreover, that Kant is wrong even concerning this claim: the investigator need not presuppose that nature is knowable, but must not *deny* that it is so; she can investigate in hope of being able to know it, without committing herself definitively to the assumption that it is so knowable. (*Kant’s Concept*, pp. 86–7; Guyer concurs, in “Purpose in Nature,” 348, 371–2.) Ginsborg glosses this presupposition similarly in “Reflective Judgment and Taste,” *Nous* 24 (1990), 63–78; 67, but adds an appeal to the universal (subjective) validity of such an assumption as a further ground for its justifiability; I shall return to this argument in Chapter [Eight](#), as it is inspired less by Kant’s discussions in the introductions than by those in the CAJ.

empirical laws we formulate really are (necessary) laws of nature, that our inductive inferences correspond to true natural kinds.³¹

The principle of purposiveness – and thus the *CJ* – on this interpretation add little to Kant's epistemological project, functioning perhaps as a disappointing recognition that many of our claims to empirical knowledge are (probably) unjustified. Nor, on this construal, does Kant's defense of the principle of purposiveness ground much substantive unity among the various aspects of empirical knowledge discussed in the introductions. Systematicity, empirical lawfulness, empirical conceptualization have in common only that they are underdetermined by the categorical principles (i.e., it is contingent that we will be able to have these forms of knowledge), are among the purposes we might have in empirical investigation, and thus are among the ways in which we hope nature will be amenable to

³¹ Guyer suggests more strongly that this assumption is self-delusory (*Claims of Taste*, pp. 43–4). Allison argues (*Theory of Taste*, pp. 39–42) that this argument answers Hume by rendering his concerns “idle”: contra Hume, we are not committed by *habit* to the belief that nature is empirically ordered, but “rationally justified” in so presupposing, for this constitutes a norm for empirical investigation. As I shall argue in Chapter Eight, I concur with Allison that purposiveness is a norm for judgment of empirical diversity. However, I cannot see how assuming that nature meets our cognitive requirements (“thin utility” purposiveness) could constitute a (normative) *constraint* on investigation of, or empirical judgments concerning, nature; if anything, this presupposition would seem to *license* whichever claims we might be inclined to make. (The same, I believe, can be objected against Floyd's account in “Heautonomy.”) Likewise, the argument that we are rationally committed to such a presupposition (just as we are rationally committed to presupposing ourselves to be free in our [moral] agency, as Allison suggests) – either as a norm (as Allison argues) or as a practical presupposition so that our attempts to gain empirical knowledge will not be pragmatically incoherent (i.e., so as not to be aiming at a goal we also take to be futile, as McFarland suggests) – does not seem to answer *Hume's* concern, nor in any obvious way to render it “idle.” Even if we cannot do otherwise in our practices, cannot we still ask whether our presuppositions are justified as true of *nature*? Here, in other words, Kant's distinction between theoretical and practical reason seems relevant: because the latter concerns “what I ought to do,” it is sufficient to establish that I ought to think of myself as free, as a norm for or presupposition of my action. Theoretical reason, by contrast, purports to establish how other things are; thus establishing that I cannot proceed otherwise does not seem sufficient for theoretical rationality. More generally, Allison's interpretation, like Guyer's suggestion that we are justified in assuming that the regulative principles are true of nature because they are useful and do not conflict with anything we know to be true (“Kant's Principles,” e.g., 13), seems to construe Kant's defense of a subjective principle of thin utility purposiveness at the cost of undercutting the apparent urgency of the concerns raised in the introductions.

our epistemic aspirations.³² (Nor, as I shall argue in the [next chapter](#), are such concerns hereby much connected to Kant's accounts of teleological or aesthetic judgment.)

This construal would, then, lead either to a dismissal of the *CJ* project – as adding little to Kant's critical epistemology – or to an interpretation of the *CJ* that places little emphasis on the principle of purposiveness (i.e., a piecemeal reading).³³ As I have suggested, this construal has both considerable textual support and a Kantian philosophical rationale. I shall argue, however, that the *CJ* may also support a more substantive interpretation of the principle of purposiveness, and thereby a more integrated, philosophically interesting reading of the *CJ* project. I shall begin, in the rest of this chapter, by proposing a reconstruction of Kant's overarching problem concerning the possibility of empirical knowledge. For the emptiness and weakness of the principle of purposiveness (on the initial proposal) is entailed by the construal of Kant's question in the *CJ* as one that would be satisfactorily answered only by the justification of an a priori principle as *objectively* valid – but which cannot, given Kant's critical constraints, be so addressed. By contrast, I shall now suggest, Kant's problem concerning our empirical cognition of nature may be understood as one that might be addressed by the articulation of an a priori principle, though (I shall argue) one that is merely subjective.

1.4 A reformulation of the problem: A principle of the unity of diversity

As we have seen, in the *CJ* Kant's epistemological concerns are multivalent, ranging from minimal empirical intelligibility to our most ambitious aims

³² E.g., Floyd (“Heautonomy”) suggests that on Kant's view judgment needs to follow the requirements for true scientific knowledge already, independently, established by reason (viz., systematicity). Other commentators who endorse this construal of the principle of purposiveness (in the introductions) do distinguish among these aspects of empirical knowledge. My claim here, however, is that *if* one endorses this (“thin utility”) conception of purposiveness and (broadly) the initial proposal conception of Kant's concern (that it is contingent that we have various kinds of empirical knowledge), the connections or distinctions one might suggest among these types of empirical knowledge are *irrelevant*, since purposiveness comprises merely a blanket, vague assumption of conformity with some non-guaranteed cognitive aim (otherwise specified).

³³ Thus, e.g., McFarland (*Kant's Concept*) treats the principle of purposiveness discussed in the CTJ as quite distinct from that discussed in the introductions, and Guyer (among many) tends to downplay the role of the principle of purposiveness in the CAJ.

for systematic science. On the initial proposal, it was suggested that Kant connects these concerns by adverting to the fact that it is *contingent whether* such empirical order (minimal or maximal) will be there to be found in nature. But they may be taken, I shall argue, to be more substantively related: in his concerns with empirical knowledge at each of these levels, Kant is arguing that in order for us to comprehend empirical diversity, for us to make justifiable causal judgments, we need, in addition to the categorial principles, a principle of another *kind* of order or unity that holds *for and among* the contingent – empirical, diverse – aspects of nature, i.e., a form of a “unity of diversity” as such.³⁴ Thus, the epistemological problem Kant poses in the introductions of the *CJ* may be read not as an (unanswerable) demand to prove that the contingent order in nature may be established to be necessary, a priori – nor would this argument establish a corresponding weak, subjective presupposition *that* such contingent order obtains. Rather, Kant is arguing that to render experience and empirical cognition possible, we must judge nature in its empirical character to be unified not only with respect to its necessary, universal characteristics, but also with respect to its diverse, contingent characteristics, as such – and thus (judging in accord with) a principle of such order is necessary for the subject to make sense of her experience and to aim at justifiable cognition.

I shall begin defending this interpretation by noting the much tighter connection Kant draws in the *CJ* between the principles of systematicity and empirical concept formation, by comparison to the Appendix. (I shall turn to Kant’s concerns about empirical lawfulness in the next section.)³⁵ As noted above, this connection is most straightforwardly understood to reflect

³⁴ Kant uses this language, e.g., at v:180. This suggestion – that the nature of the unity of the diverse is the guiding issue in the *CJ* – is not a new one. But it has not been taken very seriously. For example, Guyer (*Claims of Taste*, p. 98) raises the possibility of this reading, but dismisses it. Zumbach endorses something like this proposal (*Transcendent Science*, pp. 39–40), but says little more than that Kant is interested in unity in general, and that the kind of unity discussed in the *CJ* is different from that with which he is concerned in the *CPR*. Fricke (*Kants Theorie*) suggests that the *CJ* is concerned with a principle of “qualitative unity” (again as distinct from the unity under consideration in the *CPR*), which may, I shall argue in Chapters *Five* and *Seven*, be identified as a unity of diversity as such (though Fricke does not so argue).

³⁵ My approach here is broadly consonant with Allison’s (*Theory of Taste*) and Guyer’s (“Kant’s Principles,” and “Kant’s Conception of Empirical Law,” in *Kant’s System of Nature and Freedom* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005], 38–55); both emphasize the new role that the principles of systematicity play in the *CJ*, (respectively) as governing empirical conceptual classification, and as legitimating claims concerning empirical laws.

Kant's new focus on judgment, rather than reason, i.e., that he now concentrates not on the faculty that articulates the overarching aim of scientific investigation, but instead on the faculty responsible for articulating or finding the components of such a system, executing or applying this ideal form to our experience of particulars – which latter faculty is also responsible for finding more minimal order (empirical concept formation).³⁶

Kant suggests, however, a stronger and inverse relationship between these two aims of empirical knowledge in the *CJ*: that the principles of systematicity are necessary *for* empirical concept formation. This suggestion is reflected too in a less obvious difference between Kant's formulations in the *CJ* and in the Appendix than those previously discussed: in the brief Appendix argument concerning the threat of diversity, Kant argues that only one of the regulative principles *must* hold of empirical nature, the principle of homogeneity. In the *CJ*, by contrast, immediately after Kant has presented the same threat of "infinite" empirical diversity (v:185), he glosses the principle of purposiveness, as it is to address this threat, as "the *law of the specification of nature* with regard to its empirical laws" (v:186),³⁷ suggesting that all the regulative principles of systematicity, including those (specification and continuity) concerned with empirical diversity, are requisite for empirical knowledge, even of the most minimal kind. Likewise, and strikingly, Kant claims that

the comprehensibility of nature and the unity in its division into genera and species [is that] *by means of which alone* empirical concepts are possible . . . (v:187; my emphasis)

This condition [for the possibility of reflective judgment] is a principle of the representation of nature as a system for our power of judgment, in which the diverse, divided into genera and species, *makes it possible* to bring all empirical representations to concepts (of greater or less generality) through comparison. (FI, xx:211–12n; translation modified; my emphasis)

In these passages, Kant suggests that systematic arrangement (or genera/species relations) does not presuppose, but is a necessary condition *for*, empirical concept formation.

³⁶ As, e.g., Guyer suggests in "Kant's Principles."

³⁷ Cf. v:188 and FI, xx:214–19, where the task of reflective judgment is described as the "specification" and "division" of universal laws. More generally, in the Appendix Kant uses "systematic unity" to refer not only to a genera/species systematic order, but to any thoroughgoing unification, including the reduction of many powers to a single power, thus identifying systematization more with homogeneity than with the other two principles (e.g., A649–50/B677–8).

Kant does not explain how or why this should be; indeed, he discusses the character of empirical concept formation remarkably little in the *CJ*, writing only that we form empirical concepts by “comparison” in order to “arrive at concepts of that which is common to the different natural forms” (FI, xx:213). He cannot mean, of course, that we require a complete systematic science or classification of nature in order to form any empirical concept. (See indeed v:188; FI, xx:209.) Rather, I suggest, this claim should be read to mean that in forming empirical concepts we employ the *form* of systematicity – as we can see by turning to Kant’s account of empirical concept formation in the *Jäsche Logic*.³⁸

In the *JL* Kant presents concepts simply *as* related to one another as genera and/or species: some concepts are more universal, have a broader extension and more minimal conceptual content than others; they are genera of other “species” concepts, which have a narrower extension but richer, more determinate, conceptual content (ix:96–8). Moreover, with the exception of the concept of the “highest genus,” i.e., “something,”³⁹ Kant describes conceptual content in terms of systematic relations. The content of empirical concepts are other concepts, or “marks,” which figure as components of conceptual content as coordinated with and/or subordinated to one another (*JL* ix:59). Coordinated marks are “immediately” marks of the concept, conjoined with one another; e.g., the concept of carrot might include the coordinated marks orange and root vegetable. Subordinated marks include other “remote,” more generic marks within their content, e.g., the concept of root vegetable might include the mark plant product, which might include organic entity, and then material object, etc.; orange might include the marks color, visual property, etc. Conceptual content is therefore arranged in principle in systematic (genera/species) relations: most marks may be analyzed into more remote marks, i.e., their genera, and each concept must include at least one further, coordinated, differentiating or specific mark – or else the concept would be pleonastic, merely reproducing the generic concept.

These systematic relations among concepts or conceptual contents comprise, more specifically, three relations that correspond to the three forms of relation in judgment (categorical, hypothetical, and disjunctive).

³⁸ Kant’s conception of and works on “logic” concern not only more (currently) standard topics (e.g., justified forms of inference), but also the structure and formation of empirical concepts; in using “logic,” I shall be referring to this conception of logic.

³⁹ E.g., *JL* ix:95.

These judgmental relations establish “the unity of the consciousness of various representations, or the representation of their relation *insofar as they constitute a concept*” (*JL* 1x:101; my emphasis).⁴⁰ Categorical judgments articulate the relations that hold among coordinated marks, and to the overarching concept; vegetable and orange “agree” with one another (as characterizations of carrots). Hypothetical judgments characterize the relation between genus and species, and thus the subordinate relationship among marks; if something is a root vegetable, it is a plant product (*JL* 1x:105).

Disjunctive judgments add a new, and paradigmatically *systematic*, relationship among concepts/conceptual contents:

the division in disjunctive judgment indicates the coordination not of the parts of the whole concept, but rather all the parts of the sphere. Here [in disjunctive judgment] I think many things *through one concept*, there [in categorical judgment] *one thing through many concepts*, e.g., the *definitum* through all the marks of coordination. (*JL* 1x:108)

Disjunctive judgment “divides” a genus concept into its “sphere” of species concepts. Thus it articulates the systematic structure as a whole, in which other (intra-conceptual) relationships among marks have a place: the division of a genus into its sphere includes both species to genus (hypothetical) relations, and categorical relations of agreement and opposition (each specific differentiating mark agrees with the generic concept/mark[s] and opposes the other specific differences).

Like the activity of systematizing, disjunctive judgment may appear to be the cumulative arrangement of hypothetical or categorical judgments (or relations among marks) we have already formed. But Kant’s description in the *JL* of concept formation – the activity of comparison to which he refers in the *CJ* – reveals that this activity is first and foremost to be understood as employing disjunctive, systematic form. Specifically, it is (as I shall call it) an activity of “proto-disjunctive” judging. Kant writes:

To make concepts out of representation one must thus be able *to compare, to reflect, and to abstract*, for these three logical operations of the understanding are the essential and universal conditions for generation

⁴⁰ It is frequently emphasized that Kant analyzes concepts in terms of judgments, i.e., takes concepts primarily to be predicates or rules for judging. The articulation of conceptual content (i.e., that conceptual content is formed judgmentally) that I discuss here is, however, a somewhat different (perhaps more thoroughgoing) dependence of conceptualization on judgment. See Longuenesse, *Capacity to Judge*, Part Two, for a more complete discussion.

of every concept whatsoever.⁴¹ I see, e.g., a spruce, a willow, and a linden. By first comparing these objects with one another I note that they are different from one another in regard to the trunk, the branches, the leaves, etc.; but next I reflect on that which they have in common among themselves, trunk, branches, and leaves themselves, and I abstract from the quantity, the figure, etc. of these; thus I acquire a concept of a tree. (1x:94–5)

Kant suggests here that he understands the activity of concept formation to be (proto-)disjunctive in form, viz., we take particulars as disjuncts under a prospective, not yet explicitly formulated concept, as members of a not yet determinate “sphere.” In “comparison” and “reflection”⁴² we judge particulars *as* species, as different versions of the same kind of thing, i.e., see first that they are “different from one another in regard to the trunk, the branches, the leaves, etc.,” different with respect *to* “that which they have in common among themselves,” and *then* and on that basis we can articulate “what they have in common,” in a universal concept, their genus.⁴³

Thus, on Kant’s account, empirical concepts are systematically related to one another, constituted by systematic relations among marks, and, most importantly, *formed* by recognizing or instituting systematic (disjunctive) relations. Kant’s questions in the *CJ* concerning the possibility of minimal and maximal empirical intelligibility are, then, more tightly connected than it might appear, for both concern the systematization of objects in their empirical characters. Hence too Kant’s insistent connection between systematicity and logic in the *CJ*, particularly in the First Introduction.

This employment of systematic form in empirical concept formation may, moreover, allow us to (begin to) reconstrue Kant’s argument in

⁴¹ Kant claims that this process is necessary for the formation of all concepts, not only empirical concepts: “the form of a concept, as that of a discursive representation [viz., its universality], is always made” in “reflection” (*JL* 1x:93). Thus the categories are presumably “made” universal by “reflection” as well. I am concerned here, however, to argue only that systematic form is necessary for *empirical* concept formation and shall leave the question of how we form the a priori categories aside. (See Longuenesse, *Capacity to Judge*, pp. 120–1, 167ff., 191, on the formation of the categories.)

⁴² In the subsequent discussion in the *JL*, Kant claims that “abstraction” is a relatively inessential moment in concept formation; hence I leave it aside here.

⁴³ See Longuenesse, *Capacity to Judge*, Chapter 5, especially pp. 115–17; she argues that disjunctive judging is an arrangement of already formed concepts (or judgments), e.g., p. 147n21. See, however, *ibid.*, pp. 149–50 and 163f.

raising the “threat of diversity” as one not immediately concerning the character of nature, but rather as concerning the *subject’s* capacity to “orient” herself amid empirical diversity. In order to have empirical cognition, that is, *we* require more than our ability to judge objects using the categorial principles: we must also be able to “orient” ourselves among sensible diversity; we need the power of judgment to “provide concepts in the face of this excessive diversity in nature” (v:193). We must be able to note and conceptualize differences between objects, identify and differentiate the contingent characteristics that objects have beyond the necessary properties that they have qua (spatio-temporal) objects. And despite Kant’s extremist language in the *CJ* of potentially “infinite” diversity, this task is one we have in the face of *any* empirical diversity. If we do not have any way of sorting, making salient or intelligible, the diverse, contingent aspects of natural objects, such diversity might as well be infinite, overwhelming; any coherent experience will be impossible. Thus we require a principle – a form or type of order – of the unity of the diverse as such, in order to conceptualize empirical diversity as diversity, to understand the qualitative differences among objects.

This requirement explains Kant’s claims that empirical concept formation must proceed in accord with systematic form: systematicity is, precisely, an order of the diverse as such. The categorial principles, Kant writes, establish only the “analytic unity” of experience, not the “synthetic unity of experience *as a system*, in which the empirical laws are bound together under a principle *even with regard to that in which they differ*” (FI, xx:203–4n; my emphasis; translation modified). Systematic order does appear to be a “synthetic” unity of objects with respect to “that in which they differ”: such order – paradigmatically, the disjunctive division of a concept into its sphere – is formed as much by specification or differentiation as by homogenization. In a system, correspondingly, objects are related to one another not only as similar (of the same genus), but also as different from one another (as species, defined by differentiae), thus as parts of a diversified whole, not merely as abstractly similar to (all) other objects or as “analytically” unified.

Kant’s contrasting claim concerning the categorial principles – that they establish an “analytic,” not “synthetic,” unity of nature – must be treated with care. For Kant holds that the categories themselves are synthetically unified, together comprising the concept of an object of thought. Moreover, as he writes at xx:203n (prior to the passage quoted above), Kant holds that the categories ground the synthetic unity of an object of experience, and function as rules for the synthesis of objects.

Likewise, the relational categories institute relations between two or more “parts” as different from one another (substance to accident, cause to effect). Finally, systematic ordering (among concepts or conceptual contents) itself comprises a combination of judgmental relations, as we have seen, which relations are represented conceptually by the categories.⁴⁴

Insofar as the categories are considered specifically as the schematized categories or categorial principles, the universal laws that constitute the nature of nature “in general,” however, they may be taken to establish an “analytic” unity of nature. Such universal laws determine the necessary properties any object must have, or what all objects have in common, and thus represent properties that may be found in many (here: all) things, as Kant defines analytic unity (e.g., B133n). The categorial principles may, then, be said to apply to objects, and to order them (as parts of nature) *as* homogeneous to one another – specifically as spatio-temporal objects – regardless of their empirical, qualitative, contingent differences from one another.

As a result, the categorial principles cannot guide judgment of objects “in respect to that in which they differ” empirically, qualitatively. As Kant argues in the Amphiboly, the categorial principles do establish a priori identity/difference conditions (spatio-temporal position), and the axioms of intuition and anticipations of perception do give us some means of differentiating objects (as larger or smaller, etc.). But such quantitative differentiation does not enable us to negotiate among, or unite objects specifically with respect to, their qualitative, contingent differences.⁴⁵ For example, the categorial principle that corresponds to the disjunctive form of judgment, the principle of community treated in the Third Analogy, does not ground judgment of objects as unified *as* qualitatively different from one another. This principle establishes, rather, only that objects – each spatio-temporally individuated – are related in reciprocal causal relations and, in that sense, comprise a whole (see, e.g., A213–14/B260–1). Thus the Third Analogy does not institute a unity of *diversity*: objects here are taken as “different” and as parts of a whole because each, equally, occupies a portion of space and participates in causal relations. This unification of objects as homogeneous in turn may be grounded on the fact that the categorial principles determine objects *as* spatio-temporal, order

⁴⁴ This last claim is the purport of Kant’s “Metaphysical Deduction” of the categories in the *CPR*.

⁴⁵ See Longuenesse, *Capacity to Judge*, Introduction to Part Three and Chapter 9, on the categorial principles as rules of quantitative synthesis of experience, by contrast to the qualitative synthesis of reflection in empirical cognition.

them as parts of a single, objective (spatio-)temporal order. Though the parts of space and time have a similar relation to the whole of space as disjuncts do to a genus (the parts are “limitations” of that whole), such parts are, nonetheless, homogeneous and relate to one another as homogeneous: one part of space (and an object considered simply as “in” it) limits another merely by being “next to” the other, one part of time by being before or after another, not by being qualitatively different.

Thus the categorial principles not only underdetermine the nature of nature, as Kant emphasizes, but also provide no guidance in our task of reflective judging,⁴⁶ in which we seek “the universal for the particular that is offered to it by perception, and again *connection in the unity of this principle*, for all that is *different (though universal within any one species)*” (v:186; my emphasis). As Kant suggests in his *JL* account of empirical concept formation as proto-disjunctive judging, the principle by which we must be guided in judging “all that is different” is, rather, the form of systematicity.

This function of systematic form also allows us to address an objection raised against the *JL* account: Kant claims that “differences” are noted first in comparison (the willow, linden, and fir are different), but it is objected that the subject’s recognition of such differences in comparison seems to presuppose “reflection,” or prior recognition of their similarity. For these differences all concern tree-relevant characteristics (they are different with respect to their *branches*, *trunks*, and *leaves*). Thus, it has been suggested, Kant’s account must be read not to be sequential – first recognizing differences, then what objects have in common – but rather to be a single activity of comparing as well as reflecting, in which we come to recognize both at once.⁴⁷

Kant’s suggestion that empirical concept formation is grounded, pre-eminently, in the recognition of differences is, I am suggesting by contrast, justified. Because we are attending to representations in the absence of an empirical concept that would determine them as similar – i.e., the concept we aim to form – these particular representations are (as far as their empirical, qualitative “content” is concerned) *in principle* “different,” heterogeneous from one another (for us). Kant accentuates such differentiation in his example by choosing trees of three very different types as the comparison class, but this in principle differentiation applies

⁴⁶ As I shall discuss in the [next section](#), the categorial principles/the categorial concept of an object of experience as such do, however, constrain reflective judging.

⁴⁷ Longuenesse, *Capacity to Judge*, p. 116; Allison, *Theory of Taste*, p. 22.

to any comparison class in empirical concept formation. Three oak trees would also be of different heights, have differently arranged branches, leaves, etc.; each would present the subject with a complex manifold not recognizably similar without the concept “(oak) tree.” The proto-disjunctive form of judging (a form of judging differences) is appropriate, I submit, to this pre-conceptual “situation.” In aiming to form a concept, we aim to form a discursive representation, i.e., one that has the “form” of universality, or applies to a number of different representations or objects (has an extension).⁴⁸ Therefore, we must take our representations to be different from one another, viz., as separate instances or possible multiple members of the concept’s extension. More importantly, however, (proto-)disjunctive form is necessary for the subject to orient herself in the face of *in principle* diversity: if she sees the diversity in representations as (potentially) *specific* differences (viz., species differentiations under a not-yet-specified genus), the diversity of these representations is (potentially) not simply overwhelming, but may be meaningful. The different configurations of the willow’s, linden’s, and fir’s branches are, that is, not simply surd differences, but (possibly) species differences (variations of a generic structural possibility). In concept formation, then, we should certainly be understood as “aiming” at unity (reflecting), but Kant rightly emphasizes and prioritizes the “moment” of comparative differentiation.

Kant’s example is, I suggest finally, an idealized and retrospective characterization of empirical concept formation. The subject there described might be understood to have engaged in many attempts at proto-disjunctive judging, of which one – the branch–trunk–leaves variations – is successful, leads to forming the concept “tree.” Kant’s references to these differences may, then, be understood as a retrospective description of that successful case of proto-disjunctive reflective judging, informed precisely by the concept therein formed.

In sum: empirical concepts are formed, on Kant’s view, as genera to species by a proto-disjunctive activity of judging, through judging representations in accord with a principle not of homogeneity but of the unity of diversity or systematic unity. Thus Kant indicates in the *CJ*, more strongly than he had in the Appendix, why systematicity is a *necessary* form for empirical knowledge, a necessary goal in our investigation of nature. In the Appendix, Kant seems merely to assert that (due to a “natural need” or “interest” of reason) a complete science would be

⁴⁸ Cf. Longuenesse, *Capacity to Judge*, pp. 115–27.

systematically unified. If, however, the form of systematic unity is necessary for empirical concept formation, as Kant suggests in the *CJ*, it articulates a much less peripheral, optional goal for judging. In order for experience to be possible, we must, Kant writes, “regard nature a priori as characterized by a *logical system of its diversity* under empirical laws” (FI, xx:214; bold my emphasis).

1.5 Beyond logic: A transcendental problem

If Kant is, thus, arguing that systematicity, as a form of the unity of diversity, is the a priori structure of empirical concepts, and necessary for their formation, why does he introduce a new a priori, transcendental principle (purposiveness) of such unity? Or, as Kant puts this worry: logic already describes how we form empirical concepts through comparison; thus the principle of purposiveness might seem “tautological and to belong to mere logic.” Kant responds by noting that logic teaches us nothing “about whether, for each object, nature has many others to put forth as objects of comparison, which have much in common with the first in their form,” but this character of nature is the “condition of the possibility of the application of logic to nature” (FI, xx:211–12n).⁴⁹ Thus Kant seems to suggest that purposiveness is a (new) transcendental principle because it expresses our need that empirical nature *be* such that we are able to perform the logical activities of comparison and reflection. In other words, we seem to have returned to the initial proposal: we must presuppose that nature is “as if” purposive for us – now understood, more specifically, as the presupposition that nature *be* amenable to proto-disjunctive judging of unities of diversity.⁵⁰

We may, however, read this further required “condition for the possibility of the application of logic to nature” *not* as an ineffectual gesture towards establishing that which cannot be established a priori. By attending to Kant’s contrast between general logic and transcendental logic in the *CPR*, we may understand Kant to be asking how we may justify the logical form of systematicity *as it is taken* to characterize the nature of *sensibly given* objects, or, more specifically, by which principle or form of

⁴⁹ Contra Floyd, “Heautonomy,” 208, Kant does not worry that the principle of purposiveness is tautological in general, but in relation, specifically, to logic.

⁵⁰ Thus Allison too emphasizes the systematic character of empirical conceptual content (though not of empirical concept formation), but then identifies the principle of purposiveness as a presupposition that we are justified in so systematizing nature (*Theory of Taste*, pp. 28–34, 37–9).

lawfulness we may judge sensibly given, empirically diverse, natural objects in order to make possible and to warrant our logical formation and systematization of empirical concepts.

Kant argues in the *CPR*, famously, that our mere forms of thought, our a priori concepts, cannot – without a deduction – be taken to determine objects, for objects of experience must not only be thought, but also given in intuition. Thus Kant contrasts general logic and transcendental logic:

general logic abstracts from all content of cognition, and expects that representations will be given to it from elsewhere, wherever this may be, in order for it to transform them into concepts analytically. Transcendental logic, on the contrary, has a manifold of sensibility [viz., space and time] that lies before it a priori, which the transcendental aesthetic has offered to it, in order to provide the pure concepts of the understanding with a matter, without which they would be without any content, thus completely empty. (A76–7/B102)⁵¹

Transcendental logic may, Kant argues, be shown a priori to apply to objects of experience, for it comprises the rules for synthesis of the (spatio-) temporal manifold into one objective spatio-temporal order, and thus of objects as given, precisely, in intuition. By contrast, general logic “abstracts” from the “content” of representations that are “given” from “elsewhere”; it comprises mere forms for concepts and their combination, whether as marks of a concept, or in logical judgments. Kant suggests, too, that logical (empirical) concept *formation* – the “transformation” of representations into concepts – is, solely, an “analytic” activity, isolating (one presumes) that which representations have “in common.” Such general logical forms are not, then, necessarily connected to what is given *in sensibility*, and therefore neither provide synthetic a priori knowledge of objects, nor require a deduction to justify our use of them.⁵²

In raising the question whether and how logic may “apply” to nature in the *CJ*, however, Kant suggests that insofar as logic plays a role in empirical cognitive claims, logic may be understood as – substantively, even synthetically – connected to what is given in sensibility, to “nature,” and therefore requires both an explanation and a justification of the possibility of such application. This transcendental question concerning the relationship between our systematic empirical concepts (and concept

⁵¹ Cf. A55–63/B79–88: general logic is merely the “form of thinking” (A55/B79), whereas transcendental logic has “content” and thus is a “logic of truth” (A62/B87).

⁵² Cf. A262/B318, A279/B335, where Kant describes logical reflection as mere comparison among concepts.

formation) and nature takes, I suggest more specifically, two forms, corresponding to Kant's ambiguous use of "nature" in the *CJ* introductions. Kant uses this term to refer both to the empirically given particular "contents" of sensibility underdetermined by the categorial principles (as, e.g., at xx:211n), and to the "analytic unity" of nature or "nature as such," viz., the single spatio-temporal order of objects ruled by universal, formal laws. I shall take these two concepts of nature – and the explanatory and justificatory questions they pose concerning our activities of reflective judging or logical systematization – in turn.

Reflective judgment of nature, as the particular, sensible given

In empirical concept formation, we "transform" representations into concepts, which representations must, indeed, be given "from elsewhere" – specifically from sensible representations of empirical characteristics of objects. In such concept formation, we do not have "an objective determining ground . . . (from a cognition of things in themselves)" (FI, xx:214), but must rather engage with the *sensibly* given precisely as such, must glean such concepts from particulars offered "in perception" (v:186). As noted above, Kant correspondingly emphasizes that we cannot dictate, but can only presuppose, that nature will be amenable to our reflective-comparative engagement with it. But again we may also ask not whether nature is so amenable, but what makes it possible *for us* to discern the particular, contingent, diverse "content" of the sensibly given. That is, the diversity of the empirically given may, as suggested above, be rendered meaningful if it is understood as specific differentiation or in the form of (proto-)disjunctive relations. But there is a further, more difficult, question facing Kant's account of empirical concept formation: how is the judging subject to recognize or institute proto-disjunctive relationships among those sensibly given, in principle heterogeneous, particulars – *in the absence of* a concept by which the subject might group and compare them? If, as Kant famously holds, intuitions without concepts are blind, how can we come to recognize empirical, unconceptualized aspects of the sensibly given manifold as salient (in order to take them as parts of a disjunctive sphere)? Does Kant's account of empirical concept formation beg this question by implicitly presupposing the subject's prior possession of the concept (comparing trees to trees, in light of tree-relevant characteristics)?⁵³

⁵³ This problem is posed forcefully in Robert Pippin, *Kant's Theory of Form: An Essay on the Critique of Pure Reason* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), and Hannah

Specifically, on the interpretation of the *JL* account given above, the logical, “analytic,” abstracting identification of what the proto-disjuncts have in common presupposes a prior *synthesis* of a sensible manifold – not to form an object, but a sphere of objects. This synthesized unity must be of the sensibly given, undirected by prior concepts, but also be so unified in a way that (then) may be expressed by a (new, empirical) discursive concept. As is well known, however, Kant argues in the *CPR* Deductions that such unifying, intelligible synthesis is possible only if the judging, synthesizing subject follows a prior conceptual rule. In the case of empirical concept formation, however, this conceptual rule must be understood (a fortiori) to derive from, not to govern, the subject’s synthesis. Thus, on a Kantian view, in order to explain the possibility of forming empirical concepts, one must explain how such non-conceptually guided, but nonetheless proto-conceptual (i.e., unifying), synthesis of the sensibly given manifold is possible.

This question is also a justificatory question. For even if – as we find – empirically given nature *is* logically classifiable, and we are (somehow) able to engage with the sensibly given proto-disjunctively, we must still be concerned with the accuracy of these disjunctions *to* what is empirically given. Thus we must ask not only how it is possible, initially, to engage with the empirically given in order to conceptualize it somehow, but also how we are to allow the empirically given in sensibility to *constrain* our logical classifications – or, in Kant’s nice phrase, we must guard against a “surreptitious substitution of *what we make out of nature* for what *nature is*” (FI, xx:243). Why and how may we determine that one disjunction is superior to another, more accurate to how nature is, *as* sensibly given? How may we allow what is sensibly given to challenge the conceptual classifications we have already made? Though the form of logical systematization is necessary for the possibility of experience, as the form governing the activity of reflective judging, one must explain and justify such judging *as* it engages with, is to be gleaned from and reflect the character of, the sensibly given nature of objects.⁵⁴

Ginsborg, “Lawfulness Without Law,” *Philosophical Topics* 12 (1997), 37–81, especially 39, 53–4, 57.

⁵⁴ This problem is similar to the neo-Kantian problems John McDowell poses in *Mind and World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994) concerning empirical cognition. Like Robert Pippin (“Leaving Nature Behind; or Two Cheers for Subjectivism,” in Nick Smith, ed., *Reading McDowell: Essays on Mind and World* [New York and London: Routledge, 2002], 58–75), I take McDowell’s response to this problem – to stipulate that our sensibility is (by “[second] nature”) intelligible or

“Nature as such”

Kant also uses “nature” in the introductions to refer to the sum of all objects governed by the categorial principles or to “nature as such.” For example, in Kant’s gloss of the principle of purposiveness as a “law of nature’s specification,” “nature” refers not to the empirically, sensibly given – this is what “specifies” the universal laws – but to nature as constituted by universal laws. These laws concern objects or nature as sensibly given as well, however, not as to their particular, diverse “content,” but rather as given in time (and space). This conception of nature places a further justificatory demand upon our activities of logical reflection, insofar as these activities are to be used to specify not any generic concept, but the categorial-schematic concept of an object of nature as such.

As noted above, logic comprises the form and corresponding activities of systematic ordering of concepts, of which the highest genus is, simply, “something”; logical systematic form is composed, specifically, of judgmental connections of agreement or opposition, ground/consequence, and division into a sphere. It has, however, been established in the *CPR* that objects of *nature* or experience are not simply to be understood, conceptually, as “something” and that the categories are not merely conceptual representations of those judgmental forms. Rather, as rules for synthesis of the sensibly given (temporal) manifold, the categories constitute not only the *Objekt* of thought, but also the *Gegenstand* of experience.⁵⁵ Thus as schematized, or in the form of the principles, the categories constitute the “highest genus” of a *natural*

such as would constrain conceptualization – to be unavailable to Kant: not only does Kant deny that sensibility by itself constrains judgment, he also takes it to be a philosophical *task* to explain why and how conceptualization *does and must* form and conform to that which is given in sensibility. In the *CPR* account of the objective validity of the categories, such formation and conformity is established by arguments that the categorial principles are forms of time-determination, and that all objects given in sensibility must be given in time, the universal form of intuition. In the *CJ*, where Kant is concerned with the qualitatively diverse character of the empirically given – the “content” of such temporal form – this response too is unavailable, though I shall argue that the principle of purposiveness does (indirectly) constitute a response to this concern as a form of (subjective) temporality.

⁵⁵ See Henry Allison, *Kant’s Transcendental Idealism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), pp. 135–6, on the *Objekt/Gegenstand* distinction. Allison’s proposal of this distinction has been much criticized, but I employ it because it is in principle Kantian (between an object merely of thought, and one of experience), marked terminologically (as it is difficult to do in English), even if it cannot be proven to be Kant’s own terminological distinction.

object.⁵⁶ Correspondingly, if and when we are attempting to classify the empirical characteristics of *nature*, we are engaged in a task not simply of classifying various “somethings” into some classificatory scheme or other, but of specifying that categorial, schematically determined concept of an object. These specifications are, in turn, to be understood as proposing natural kinds or empirical laws.⁵⁷

This activity of logical specification is, moreover, a necessary condition for all claims to empirical knowledge proper. As we have seen, the categorial principles do not determine which empirical properties there are, which among them are to be taken as causal properties, or as together characterizing natural kinds, i.e., which empirical properties are to be used to “specify” the concepts of cause or substance. Or, in less classificatory terms: in empirical judgments (of experience), we employ the categorial principles, for these are not only the universal laws of nature, but also the forms of objective judgment.⁵⁸ But in such judgments we also identify objects in terms of logically reflected empirical concepts. To make empirical judgments, then, we must engage in logical reflection; as it contributes to such judgments, such reflection functions not merely as a form of thinking, but as a (purported) ground for empirical *cognition* of sensibly given objects.⁵⁹

As we have seen, as a result of the categorial underdetermination of particular laws or kinds, Kant raises justificatory worries concerning

⁵⁶ See, e.g., v:183: the universal laws determine things with respect to their “genera” as things of nature. See Longuenesse, *Capacity to Judge*, pp. 151–2, 161.

⁵⁷ I am, then, sympathetic to Makkreel’s construal of the project of the *CJ* (Rudolph Makkreel, *Imagination and Interpretation in Kant: The Hermeneutical Import of the Critique of Judgment* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990], pp. 56–8): this work concerns the principle by which we “specify” the categories. Kant sometimes appears to suggest that reflective judgment (including this activity of specification) does not employ the categories. As I shall argue in Chapter Seven, pure *aesthetic* judging is a judgmental activity governed exclusively by the principle of purposiveness without a purpose (not by categorial principles). In most reflective judging proper (empirical concept formation), however, *some* a priori category/ies may be involved, e.g., when forming the empirical concept “table,” one employs the category of substance. As I discuss here, moreover, reflective judgment must be constrained by the requirements of the categorial principles, as norms for (correct/justifiable) empirical concepts. Thus, I suggest, reflective judgment employs the categories but does something else “in addition,” i.e., unifies empirical diversity. In doing this “something else,” reflective judgment operates without the categories (or beyond them); it must search for *that* unity “on its own,” in accord with its own principle (which principle and corresponding unity is that which is revealed essentially, and alone, in aesthetic judging).

⁵⁸ *Prol* iv:296f.

⁵⁹ Cf. Allison, *Theory of Taste*, pp. 33–5; Guyer, “Empirical Law,” and Ginsborg, “Lawfulness Without Law,” 56.

empirical knowledge claims: the categorial principles do not, alone, guarantee that proposed empirical laws are lawful, that inductive inferences are justified, that the empirical kinds we identify are natural kinds. I suggest that we may understand these worries *not* to concern the question whether nature *does* comprise stable, empirically determined substances governed by empirical laws – in other words, Hume’s problem.⁶⁰ Rather, Kant argues that we need a principle that would govern our logical systematization, a principle that would guide us in *lawfully* dividing or specifying nature as such.

In formulating his concerns about the contingency of empirical laws, Kant writes:

there **must** . . . also be laws . . . which, as empirical, may seem to be contingent in accordance with the insight of *our* understanding, **but . . . if they are to be called laws (as is also required by the concept of a nature), [they] must be regarded as necessary on a principle of the unity of the diverse**, even if that principle is unknown to us. (v:180; bold my emphasis)

Kant raises here the concern that particular proposed laws are only contingently known by us (by induction, not a priori), and thus have only contingent status (as far as we have “insight”), or may not truly be (necessary) laws of nature. But Kant suggests too, and importantly, that a (strong, substantive) principle of the “unity of the diverse” – i.e., of the *lawfulness* or correctness of our logical systematization – would address this problem. This would determine the correct “division” of the categorial concept of an object into empirical concepts and corresponding empirical laws,⁶¹ which *would* justify the claim that any particular law *is* a (necessary) law: given the classificatory framework of the system, a particular law could be “deduced” from the categorial principles as “major premises,” via the intermediary classificatory strata (generic and specific relations) of the system.⁶² Thus, by the necessity of the premise, and

⁶⁰ This is not to say that Kant never formulates his worries so, but that they may be reformulated in a way that may be addressed.

⁶¹ These laws “correspond” to empirical concepts because, as noted above, the categorial concept of an object as such includes the concept of cause; thus specifications of the former would also comprise specifications of the latter.

⁶² Such syllogistic deductive inference is Kant’s model for scientific explanation. See v:412; McFarland, *Kant’s Concept*, p. 13, and Guyer, “Empirical Law,” for more extensive discussion. Contra Zumbach, Kant’s concerns with the necessity of empirical laws and his vaunted empirical realism cannot, I believe, allow Kant to have the view that Zumbach attributes to him, i.e., that there are a variety of different, equally defensible systems of science (*Transcendent Science*, p. 118).

by the principles of inference, we could know a particular law to be necessary.

Hence Kant's references in the *CJ* introductions (and in §§76–7) to God's intellect: on Kant's view, for God there would be no distinction between the possible and the actual, between the formal, universal, necessary laws of experience and empirical contingency or diversity (v:402). Systematic science would be the closest we could come to such divine knowledge: if we were to have such a system, we could know that particular laws concerning specific aspects of nature are necessary. Therefore, Kant suggests that the concept of nature as such – of the “thoroughgoing” interconnection of things of nature – requires us to (try to) formulate a *single* system of empirical concepts or laws, i.e., “from” the categorial principles “down to” the most particular laws governing objects in their particular characters. Correspondingly, Kant claims that, in reflective judging, the subject ought to aim to formulate ever higher empirical concepts or laws, or subsume more particular concepts or laws to such higher concepts; such subsumption is required for the accomplishment of a complete system, and thereby the justification of empirical laws.

This suggestion – that a complete system of empirical laws is necessary in order to justify claims concerning the lawfulness of any proposed empirical law – states an extremely strong requirement for the (ultimate) justifiability of our empirical judgments, and one we can only hope for. For, as Kant writes, we do not *know* the (strong, substantive) principle of the unity of the diverse or “objective determining ground” of nature's divisions; we do not have a comprehensive principle to guide empirical classification. Kant also may be read, however, to articulate here a somewhat more modest justificatory requirement for the activity of reflective judging. Kant suggests in the above passage (and elsewhere) that, as formal laws of nature or forms of judgment, the categorial principles *require* that we treat logical systematization as the “application” of categorial principles to objects in their particular character: we “must” treat empirical kinds as natural kinds, governed by laws.⁶³ Thus the

According to the categories, indeed, there are a “variety of ways in which we can cut up the world” (in Zumbach's terms); our task in reflective judgment is to discern the right way.

⁶³ Similarly, Kant argues that because “the objects of empirical cognition . . . have in common” that they “belong to nature in general,” or are governed by the causal principle, each aspect of their “specifically distinct natures” “*must* (in accordance with the concept of a cause in general) have its rule, which is a law, and hence brings necessity with it” (v:183; my emphasis).

categorial principles *also require* that we formulate empirical concepts and empirical laws non-arbitrarily. In other words, as Pippin has argued, Kant's defense of the categorial principles as forms of empirical judgment raises a "guidedness" problem: these principles do not guide us in determining to which empirical kinds, to which objects under which empirical descriptions, they ought to be applied. Thus, in the absence of some standards by which we would correct and justify empirical classifications and concepts, some way to determine rightful or wrongful empirical "application" of the categorial principles, empirical judgments would constitute merely arbitrary claims about objects.⁶⁴ Kant's concern with the justifiability of inductive inferences (applications of the causal principle) is, I suggest then, less that we are never justified in making causal claims about nature in its empirical character – for we are justified, indeed required, to do so by the causal principle (as Kant has defended it) – than that we must have some way of discerning which among such claims are more (or less) justified.⁶⁵

In order to explain and justify empirical knowledge claims, then, we must not only address a "threat of diversity" – that natural diversity might be unintelligible to us – but also a "threat of contingency," viz., that our (logically formed) empirical concepts or proposed empirical laws are merely arbitrary.⁶⁶ We must not merely be able to reflect, to find higher genera or specify them, but must do so lawfully, or in accord with a principle; we must form concepts that could, at least in principle, count as natural kinds, reflecting not only possible, conceptually determined agreement or experienced, associated coordination of properties, but a synthetic, lawful *unity* among these characteristics of objects. In reflective judging, in empirical concept formation and systematization, "it is required," Kant writes, "that we be able to judge the particular as contained

⁶⁴ Pippin, *Theory of Form*, pp. 40–53, 129–43.

⁶⁵ In formulating Kant's problem as that of induction, concerning the nature of things, that is, commentators have neglected to take account of Kant's language ("must" and "require") in describing the relationship between the causal principle and our claims concerning empirical laws: the causal principle not only *licenses* but also *requires* that we make such claims.

⁶⁶ We must, in other words, be able to avoid the "insanity" corresponding to the malfunctioning of judgment, where "the mind is held captive by analogies that it mistakes for concepts of things similar to each other, so the imagination leads the patient to believe that its own play in connecting disparate things, which resembles understanding, is the universal under which these ideas are contained" (*Anth* VII:215).

under the general *and* subsume it under the concept of a nature” (FI, xx:202; my emphasis).

In sum: reflective judging, empirical conceptualization in accord with systematic form, must be governed by a (further) principle – of a *lawful* unity of diversity (a lawful connection among the [for us] contingent aspects of nature) that makes possible and justifies logical systematization *as* applied to objects. Judgment in accord with this principle must address the dual epistemic demands set by “nature”: it must be both *responsive to* nature as sensibly given, and *responsible to* the requirements of lawfulness concerning sensibly given nature as set by the categorial principles. These two demands, indeed, reflect the nature of the task of reflective judging: to ascend from the particular to the universal (v:180). Without such a principle, however, “all reflection would become arbitrary and blind,” and we would not have “any well-grounded expectation of its agreement with nature.”⁶⁷

1.6 Conclusion: The project

Kant’s epistemological discussions in the *CJ* introductions may be understood, I have argued, to comprise an argument that in order to have coherent experience, to render empirical knowledge possible and justified, we require a principle in addition to the categorial principles to guide reflective judging, a principle in accord with which the subject may discern the unity of the diverse as such, or a lawfulness that holds for the contingent aspects of things, *in and of* the empirically, sensibly given. This construal renders Kant’s concerns ones that may be addressed by an a priori principle that could serve as a form of such unification or lawfulness. Indeed, these concerns, it would seem, may be addressed only by an a priori principle: as a principle of lawfulness, this principle must be a priori, for lawfulness cannot, on Kant’s view, be simply “read off” of nature. Because it is required, moreover, both to render empirical knowledge possible and to warrant empirical claims, it cannot be an empirical principle itself. Because this principle governs our projects of attaining empirical knowledge as such, however, it also cannot be an objective a priori principle, or an “objective determining ground” of nature – we do not legislate, but learn, the empirical character of nature;

⁶⁷ FI, xx:212. Kant’s term “nature” in this quotation should, I suggest again, be read to mean both the empirical, contingent characteristics of objects, and nature as determined by categorial principles.

for this reason (and others I shall discuss), this principle must be a distinctively subjective *a priori* principle.⁶⁸

This construal also will allow us substantively to connect the CAJ and CTJ to Kant's epistemological concerns in the introductions, for, I shall argue, in aesthetic and teleological judgment we judge particular, sensibly given objects as unities of diversity. In this chapter, I have identified such unity as the desideratum in Kant's arguments concerning empirical knowledge, as that unity that would hold of empirical properties, kinds, or laws, making possible and warranting systematic, logical classification thereof as it is to hold for the sensibly given. But this desideratum may be characterized in general terms, as a unity that would hold (1) among diverse items (2) *as* diverse, i.e., both (2a) in their contingent, empirically diverse characters and (2b) as different from each other, and (3) as unified, rather than merely aggregated.⁶⁹ These characteristics would hold, on Kant's view, for a properly formed system of nature or knowledge, by contrast to the "uniformity" or "analytic unity" of nature established by the categorial principles. But a single object may also be judged to be thus unified, by contrast (respectively) to (1) an object composed of homogeneous parts, e.g., space or a line, and (2) an object composed of diverse parts, when such diversity is irrelevant to the way in which the object is judged to be unified. For example, a rock composed of diverse elements might judged to be unified as an object according to the categorial principles or as a material object, physically unified by the forces that characterize all matter, i.e., with respect to its necessary, homogeneous characteristics (whether as spatio-temporal or material); here the contingent, empirically diverse characteristics of the parts of the rock (different colors, densities, etc.) are irrelevant to representing the object as unified. Finally, (3) if we were to attend to these diverse characteristics of the rock's parts, the rock might well be judged not to be unified, but to be an aggregate, a mere collection of different parts, which do not seem to

⁶⁸ These two apparently opposed characteristics of the principle of purposiveness are nicely stated at v:186.

⁶⁹ Two notes: first, this characterization of such unity is rather abstract – because it is a desideratum; the principle of purposiveness is a necessary principle of judgment precisely because it articulates a specific form of relations (reciprocal means–ends relations) whereby such (desired) unity may be established. Second, the characteristics under (2) are, I believe, the most distinctive aspects of my interpretation, by contrast to other scholars (e.g., Allison, Fricke, Zumbach) who also argue that Kant is concerned to explain how we may grasp unity among empirical diversity. (I owe these observations to anonymous reviewers for Cambridge University Press.)

belong together, or to have the diverse, empirical, contingent properties that they do, for any particular reason.

As I shall argue, in aesthetic and teleological judgment, objects (beautiful and biological) are judged to be unities of diversity: their diverse properties or parts (respectively) are taken, as diverse, to belong together in the whole, to have the empirical, diverse, contingent characteristics they do for that reason. Indeed, in both cases, the particular, contingent character of a part influences that of other parts; each has its particular character only in the context of the others. The subject judges these objects to be so unified, moreover, by employing the principle of purposiveness not as a mere presupposition that nature is as we hope or need that it be, but as the form of “the lawfulness of the contingent” (v:404), of the lawful unification of the empirically diverse as such. (As I shall argue in Chapter [Eight](#), then, judging in accord with this principle may also address Kant’s epistemological concerns.) But I shall now turn to a preliminary treatment of the character of this principle, and of judging in accord with it.

REFLECTIVE JUDGMENT AND ITS PRINCIPLE: PRELIMINARY REMARKS

In the *CJ* introductions, Kant not only raises the epistemological concerns discussed in the [previous chapter](#), but also claims that they are to be addressed by reflective judging in accord with its own a priori principle – and that aesthetic judgment and teleological judgment are “exhibitions” of such judging.¹ In the following chapters, I shall interpret these claims to mean that in all of these forms of judging, the subject represents objects (or sets of objects) as unities of diversity as such – and does so by judging in accord with the principle of purposiveness without a purpose. This principle is not, moreover, to be understood as a mere assumption that objects satisfy some cognitive requirement, and/or that if they do so, contingently, they are “as if” made to be so. Rather, it is a form of relations that holds among diverse, contingent, sensibly given items, rendering them (as such) lawfully, non-arbitrarily unified – and that structures the judgmental activity of so representing them. Before turning to more detailed arguments for these interpretive claims, however, I shall in this chapter (preliminarily) present my general strategy, and defend it against interpretive questions that might be raised and common global objections to Kant’s claims.

¹ v:193. Guyer and Matthews translate *Darstellung* as “presentation”; I shall modify their translation, throughout, to render it as “exhibition,” in concert with long-standing practice in Kant translation.

2.1 Reflective, aesthetic, and teleological judging: The questions

As we have seen, Kant's questions concerning the possibility and justifiability of empirical cognition may be understood to concern the activity of reflective judging, our ability to "find" universals for particulars² (whether unconceptualized sensible particulars, or particulars

² Kant also describes reflective judging as the comparison of one's representations to one's cognitive faculties (e.g., FI, xx:211), which description is reminiscent of Kant's definition of "transcendental reflection" in the *CPR* Amphiboly as the "comparison" of representations to our cognitive faculties. I cannot enter fully into the relationship between the *CJ* and the Amphiboly here, but there are several reasons to distinguish the two sorts of reflection, and to leave aside the second definition of reflection, particularly with respect to reflective judging proper.

First: in the Amphiboly, Kant seems to hold that in "transcendental reflection" we make one basic "comparison": between representations of the understanding or of sensibility and their respective faculties. Transcendental reflection seems to characterize Kant's *own* activity in formulating the philosophical claims of the *CPR* – i.e., identifying representations as belonging either to the understanding or to sensibility, and sharply distinguishing between the representations of the two faculties. (See Houston Smit, "The Role of Reflection in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*," *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 80 [1999], 203–23.) This activity can hardly be equivalent to reflective judging engaged with objects as presented empirically, nor play a (direct) role in explaining the possibility or justifiability thereof: that about which we judge in reflective judging is sensible, but knowing this does not help us understand how we form concepts "out of" such data, or how we may engage in (justifiable) comparison or "division" of universal laws.

Moreover, Kant's characterization of transcendental reflection as "comparison" to our faculties in the Amphiboly is a rather awkward one (why not say that we "recognize" the cognitive origin of representations?). I suggest that this characterization reflects – somewhat misleadingly – the facts that, on Kant's view, comparison is the primary act of reflective judging (concept formation) and that the Amphiboly in part concerns the conditions for the possibility of such comparison. Kant argues there that the schematized categories (and not merely metaphysically interpreted concepts of comparison, as on Leibniz's view) establish a priori criteria of identification and distinction of objects (objective spatio-temporal position). In the *CJ* Kant is concerned again with a priori conditions for comparison, but those for our ability to discern and unify the "contents" of sensible representation, i.e., the empirically diverse characters of objects (beyond such spatio-temporal criteria). See Longuenesse (*Capacity to Judge*, pp. 122–30) for a similar strategy in connecting and distinguishing transcendental and logical reflection.

Finally, Kant uses the language of "comparing" a representation to the faculty of judgment in the *CJ* as a rather obscure way to characterize aesthetic judging in particular (e.g., v:190), as I shall discuss in Chapters Six and following. This claim does not, then, concern reflective judging proper and thus, as many commentators have argued, Kant's disjunctive definition of reflective judging (either as concept formation or as comparison to our own faculties) does not by itself *connect* aesthetic and reflective judging, but only identifies them as somewhat different types of non-determinative judging.

conceived according to lower concepts or laws, for which the subject attempts to formulate higher laws). As many commentators have noted, however, neither aesthetic nor teleological judgment fits this definition of reflective judging. In aesthetic judgment, we claim that an object is beautiful, a judgment in which, Kant claims, we neither apply a concept to that object, *nor* seek one (v:209). In judging organisms teleologically, we may formulate a (new) concept for a given particular – e.g., come to formulate the concept of sparrow – but usually – e.g., in judging that the heart is for pumping blood – we appear not to seek concepts for particulars, but rather make claims concerning the relations among their parts (as means to ends). Indeed, Kant suggests that in such judgment we do not *seek* a universal, but *apply* an a priori concept – that of “natural purpose” – to particulars: we claim that a particular is an organism (or a natural purpose), that its parts are related as means to ends (v:372–4).

Kant’s claim that these judgments are instances of reflective judgment cannot, then, stand as so stated. Reflective judging proper (by which term I shall henceforth refer only to the epistemic activities of empirical concept formation, seeking higher laws, etc.), aesthetic, and teleological judging may, however, be understood more weakly to have in common that they are cases of *non-determinative* judging. In none of these cases, that is, does the subject apply a concept to a particular, and thereby (objectively) *determine* the character of that object: in aesthetic judgment we do not apply a concept to an object, and in reflective judging we do not apply, but seek, a concept. Even teleological judgment is non-determinative judgment, I shall argue (in Chapter Four), for the concept of natural purpose cannot on Kant’s view be determinatively, objectively applied to objects of experience, as given in time.

This weaker commonality among the three forms of judging raises, however, a further concern: what does it mean to engage in an activity of *judging*, if one is not applying concepts (as, particularly, in aesthetic or reflective judging)? What *is* such judgment if it is not predication? Indeed, how are we to understand Kant’s suggestion (e.g., in terming this work the *Critique of Judgment*) that such judging is somehow paradigmatic of the activity of the faculty of judging itself?

This weak, merely negative connection among these forms of judging does not, moreover, establish a significant relationship among these three forms of judging: many types of judgment on Kant’s view are non-determinative judgments, e.g., all judgments about supersensible entities. Kant’s claim that, in all three types of judgment, the subject employs the principle of purposiveness promises, however, to establish a stronger

connection among them. As we have seen, Kant claims that in reflective judging proper, we judge in accord with the principle of purposiveness, taking nature to be “as if designed,” and this seems, too, to be true of aesthetic judgment of natural beauty and of teleological judgment of organisms. In or through biological organisms, nature seems to be acting according to purposes, according to purposive (teleological) laws, or to be designed. Likewise, beautiful objects in nature seem similar to products of art, designed according to a purpose.

This proposal concerning the relation among these forms of judging poses interpretive and philosophical problems as well, particularly if the principle of purposiveness is understood (as on the “initial proposal” of the [previous chapter](#)) as an assumption *that* nature is as if designed. The possible, problematic ambiguities of this principle are suggested by Kant’s terminological qualifications concerning the principle of purposiveness in different contexts, e.g., as “logical,” “material,” “subjective,” “formal,” “for our understanding,” or “without a purpose.” More substantively, the principle of (“objective,” “material”) purposiveness employed in teleological judgment appears quite different from the principle of “[logical] purposiveness for our understanding” employed in reflective judging: in the former, we judge organisms to operate purposively, i.e., to have parts related in teleological causal relations, whereas in the latter, we take nature to be organized systematically in cognitive terms (i.e., a systematic relation among kinds or laws), or (on the initial proposal) as “amenable” to cognition in various ways. Kant claims in the introductions that teleological judgment is less central to his project than is aesthetic judgment (v:193), but it may appear that it is included in the project only (and not very persuasively) by a rather broad ambiguity in the concept of purposiveness.³

By contrast to teleological judgment, aesthetic judgment is supposed to be grounded essentially upon the cognitive, transcendental principle of purposiveness (ibid.). Kant suggests that our pleasure in beautiful natural objects derives from the fact that they are purposive for our cognition, in the sense that, in representing such objects, we are in a state of the free harmony of the cognitive faculties, in which we represent the object as unified, but do so without conceptual guidance. This state, Kant argues, is purposive for cognition, and therefore when objects are such that we can so represent them, we find experience of them pleasing. Because this state is a condition for experience for all subjects, moreover, we are

³ So, e.g., McFarland concludes in *Kant’s Concept*.

justified in claiming that all others ought to share our pleasure in those objects, or agree with our aesthetic judgments.⁴

The connection Kant draws between reflective and aesthetic judgment here appears at best to be uninformative, however, particularly if purposiveness is understood as “thin utility.” In both cases we may be said to be concerned with nature, or objects, as purposive for (amenable to) our cognitive faculties, whether as empirically intelligible, systematically orderable, etc., or as non-conceptually unifiable. But “amenability” in the latter sense is not clearly of the same kind as the (various) cognitive amenabilities Kant discusses in the introductions, all of which involve the assumption precisely of the conceptualizability of the object(s) in question. Nor does the principle of purposiveness seem to function as a *subjective* principle of judging in the same way in the two cases: in appreciating beautiful objects, we neither do nor need to *assume that* they will be amenable to cognition. Rather, we find them to be so, and “subjectively” so in the sense that we find them amenable for *producing* a subjective state (the free harmony of the faculties and/or pleasure).

Thus, it may be argued, though one might describe Kant’s claims about aesthetic experience in terms of purposiveness, such descriptions seem not to employ the same conception of purposiveness as that which functions as a principle of reflective judgment (or perhaps even as one another). Moreover, these descriptions seem merely to gloss Kant’s claims concerning aesthetic judgment, but not to aid in the real work of understanding them (e.g., what the free harmony of the faculties is, why it is pleasurable, how it is a subjective condition for the possibility of experience, or what renders the representation of an object suitable for appreciation by a subject in such a state). Thus Kant’s invocation of the principle of purposiveness does not seem to ground or explain the claims of aesthetic judging.⁵

These difficulties in articulating an unambiguous, informative conception of the principle of purposiveness as it functions in all three cases might again lead one to formulate a piecemeal reading of the *CJ*, and/or one that places little emphasis on the principle of purposiveness. In the

⁴ These claims are expressed in the introductions at v:189–90. My summary here is schematic; these claims will be discussed in more detail in Chapters [Five](#) through [Eight](#).

⁵ See Guyer, *Claims of Taste*, pp. 50–7; Allison, *Theory of Taste*, pp. 59–62; Kulenkampff, *Kants Logik*, Chapter [Two](#); Hannah Ginsborg, *The Role of Taste in Kant’s Theory of Cognition* (New York: Garland, 1990), pp. 57–8, 178–80, for more extensive discussion of these difficulties.

interests of a unified reading of the *CJ*, then, one must ask: can these three forms of judging be understood to employ *one* principle of purposiveness? Specifically, can this principle be understood in each of these cases, as I contend, to be the principle of purposiveness *without a purpose*? And if, as I have suggested, these difficulties arise particularly on the “initial proposal” interpretation, how otherwise are we to understand it, and its function as a *subjective* principle of judgment?

2.2 The activity of reflective judging

Current conceptions of judgment identify the fundamental activity of judgment as predication, or as that which produces propositional judgments, paradigmatically assertions. Thus Kant’s suggestions that reflective and aesthetic judging are forms of judging that do not apply concepts (or predicates) appear paradoxical. These activities may, nonetheless, be understood as activities of judging in a recognizable, Kantian (though not unproblematic) sense, as we may see by attending, first, to Kant’s views concerning determinative cognitive judgment.

Kant recognizes that judgment is often conceived as predication (as by his rationalist contemporaries), writing, for example, that each judgment “contains two predicates which we compare with one another,”⁶ and referring to the act of judging as that of “comparing” two concepts with one another, which are then linked in accord with the logical forms of judgment (e.g., universal or particular, assertoric, etc.) to comprise a unified representation. In the *CPR*, however, Kant argues that this understanding of judgment is superficial, for cognitive judgment proper purports not only to compare and connect concepts, but to make claims concerning objects.⁷ This reference to an object is grounded, Kant argues, in a more fundamental judgmental activity: the synthesis of a manifold of intuitions in accord with conceptual (including categorial) rules to form the representation of a unified object. Indeed, Kant argues, we would be incapable of coherent, objective experience – of representing objects – were we not thus to synthesize intuitive manifolds. Experience therefore “consists,” Kant claims, “of judgments”⁸; the activity of judging, transcendently considered, is “an act by which given representations

⁶ *Reflexion* 4634, quoted in Allison, *Transcendental Idealism*, p. 71.

⁷ A79/B104–5 and §19.

⁸ Kant’s notes in his copy of the first edition of the *CPR*, reproduced in the Guyer and Wood translation, p. 202.

[viz., the manifold] first become cognitions of an object”⁹ – or, as Kant defines determinative judgment in the *CJ*, an act of “subsuming” a particular (given, sensible object) under a universal (concept).¹⁰

Kant’s conceptions of reflective, aesthetic, and teleological judging may all be understood as similar activities of synthesis, to produce unified representations. Though aesthetic and teleological judging may produce and be expressed in propositional judgments (*Urteilen*) – e.g., this is beautiful, the heart is for pumping blood – these propositions are grounded upon a more fundamental activity of representing objects as beautiful or as natural purposes. These representations are, I shall argue, representations of objects as complex unities (i.e., unities of a manifold). Reflective judging, as suggested in the [previous chapter](#), likewise comprises synthesis of a manifold (or an attempt to do so), though not of an individual object, but of a sphere of objects as species to an undetermined genus.¹¹

These forms of judging may, moreover, be understood as paradigmatic of the activity of judging, on Kant’s view, as it is taken as distinct from the understanding, the faculty of universal rules or concepts. (Kant does not always unequivocally distinguish between the faculties of [determinative] judgment and of the understanding, for in determinative judging, the subject synthesizes the manifold in accord with conceptual rules and logical forms; this activity of judging is, then, also an exercise of our ability to employ concepts, or the understanding [A69/B94].) In reflective judging, as we have seen, we unify a sensible manifold *as* diverse, recognizing difference as well as unity in a manifold; so too, I shall argue, do aesthetic and teleological judging represent objects as unified with respect to their contingent, specific, and diverse characteristics or parts.

Such synthetic representation thus appears to belong to the domain of judgment on another common understanding of it, i.e., as discernment or

⁹ *MFNS* IV:476n.

¹⁰ See Allison, *Transcendental Idealism*, pp. 115–29, and *Theory of Taste*, pp. 18–20, for good discussions, and Longuenesse, *Capacity to Judge*, for the magisterial treatment, of Kant’s theory of judgment. On the role of the categorial rules and implicit propositional form in the synthesis of objects, see Dieter Henrich, *The Unity of Reason: Essays on Kant’s Philosophy*, ed. Richard Velkley, tr. Jeffrey Edwards (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994).

¹¹ Kant’s identification of the activity of judging as synthesis is controversial; I cannot defend it here, but wish to argue only that insofar as reflective and aesthetic judging are (appropriately) synthesizing activities, they are on Kant’s view also judgmental activities.

discrimination, the capacity to make subtle distinctions or identifications. Kant himself uses “judgment” (especially when he divorces it from the faculty of the understanding) to refer to such discerning engagement with particulars *as* particular, noting their specific and different characters: “[j]udgment’s task is to note the *differences* in a manifold that is identical in part,”¹² a quite apt description (I note) of reflective proto-disjunctive judging.

More problematically, the synthesizing activities in reflective and aesthetic judging are paradigmatic of judging, as distinct from the functioning of the understanding, because they are not guided by a conceptual rule. (In teleological judgment, the representation of the object is unified in accord with a concept – of natural purpose – though this concept does not determine, or provide objective knowledge of, the object.) As noted in the [previous chapter](#), such unifying synthesis without following a conceptual rule would seem not to be possible on Kant’s view; so too, we may add, does it seem difficult to characterize as an activity of judgment. For this faculty is responsible, on Kant’s view, precisely for the application of concepts to particulars. I shall return to these difficult questions in [Chapter Seven](#), to argue that such synthesis ought to be understood as judgmental, even though it is not guided by (does not apply) a concept to the manifold, because it is an activity of “taking” an object to be a certain way, or implicitly making a claim concerning how one ought to connect representations. In the meantime, however, I note that the task of reflective judging as characterized in the [previous chapter](#) – briefly, the responsive, lawful, systematic ordering of the empirically given – does seem to comprise the task of the faculty of judgment in general, for it mediates between the particular character of the sensibly given *as* particular or contingent and the categorially legislated order of nature. Thus such judging is, more broadly, subsumptive, for it establishes a (deductive, systematic) connection between universals (the categorical principles) and sensibly given objects, or makes possible a “progress” from the “universal analogy” of experience to particulars (v:184).

¹² *Anth* VII:201. Cf. *Metaphysik Mrongovius* XXIX:881, *Metaphysik L1* XXVIII:243. Kant continues in the *Anthropology* by claiming that we exercise not judgment, but “wit,” in noting the “identity of a manifold that is different in part,” but Kant tends not to distinguish strongly between (this kind of) “judgment” and “wit.” See Bäumler, *Irrationalitätsproblem*, on the tradition prior to Kant of treating judgment and wit as closely related faculties.

An objection

This final claim might raise a more specifically Kantian objection concerning my construal of the activity of reflective judging in particular: that Kant does not conceive of such subsumption (primarily) as mediated by systematization, but, more directly, as the subsumption of *a* particular to *a* universal, the synthesis of *this* manifold in accord with a concept to form the representation of this object, or to determine it as one of a kind. Correspondingly, in Kant's paired definitions of reflective and determinative judging, he suggests a parallel between the two, i.e., that we do the "same thing" in these activities, only in different "directions" (start with the universal, or start with the particular). As Kant notes at FI, xx:212–13n, however, the reflective-comparative (or, as I have argued, proto-disjunctive) synthetic unification of a manifold is not such direct subsumption, but an attempt to represent a "synthetic [systematic] unity of nature as a whole" (or, at least, of some objects in a sphere), rather than of an object itself. Thus, one might argue, reflective judging ought not to be understood, primarily, as proto-disjunctive judging, but to be our capacity to apply rules, specifically our activity of synthesizing a given, sensible particular towards understanding it as appropriately classed as one of a kind, or as falling under some empirical concept.¹³

Indeed, in a famous passage in the *CPR*, Kant identifies such recognition – another form of judgmental discernment – as that activity which must be attributed to the faculty of judgment, as distinct from the understanding. Unlike the understanding (the faculty of rules), one may not, Kant argues, specify a rule for judgment (so understood), because such a rule "would demand another instruction for the power of judgment, and so it becomes clear that although the understanding is certainly capable of being instructed and equipped through rules, the power of judgment is a special talent that cannot be taught but only practiced" (A133/B172). In the *CJ* Preface Kant repeats this argument (though with a crucial change to which I shall return), again to explain why the faculty of judgment can have no objective a priori principle of its own:

Great difficulties must be involved in finding a special principle for [the faculty of judgment] . . . , which [principle] . . . must not be derived from concepts a priori; for they belong to the understanding, and the power of judgment is concerned only with their application. It therefore has to

¹³ This is a common interpretation of Kant's conception of reflective judging; see, e.g., Ginsborg, "Lawfulness Without Law."

provide a concept itself, through which no thing is actually cognized, but which only serves as a rule for it, but not as an objective rule to which it can conform its judgment, since for that yet another power of judgment would be required in order to be able to decide whether it is a case of the rule or not. (v:169)

Kant suggests here that the principle of reflective judging, with which he is concerned in the *CJ*, governs the activity of judging directly in the subsumptive sense, viz., as that which “decides” whether a particular is a “case of the rule.”

I suggest, however, that this judgmental task ought also to be understood as one that requires reflective judging *as* proto-disjunctive, comparative judging. We may note, first, that Kant identifies this task as one that pertains specifically to *empirical* judging. The *CPR* passage concerns general logic, and Kant proceeds to argue that “things are quite different with *transcendental* logic,” for “in addition to the rule . . . , which is given in the pure concept of the understanding, it can at the same time indicate a priori the case to which the rules ought to be applied” (A135/B174–5). The categories, that is, may be schematized as forms of time-determination, and thus apply to a “case” specified a priori: an object *qua* given in time. In the *CJ* passage above, Kant suggests – apparently to the contrary – that the power of judgment (as distinct from the understanding) is required to apply such a priori concepts.¹⁴ But in the introductions more broadly, as in the *CPR*, Kant claims that categorial, schematizing judgment requires no special principle, no special exercise of our faculty of judging independently from our ability to employ the rules of the understanding. (See, e.g., v:183.)¹⁵ Thus if Kant means to explain how we identify objects as “cases” of rules, he means, specifically, to explain the possibility of

¹⁴ This claim might be read to be referring to the “threat of contingency” (discussed in the [previous chapter](#)): though we may apply the categories to an object considered as such via the schemata, even justifiably (i.e., in some sense we are always justified in taking temporally presented representations as objects in objective time), their justified empirical application (or specification) requires, in addition to the schemata, a justified systematic empirical classification or (reflective) judging in accord with its own principle.

¹⁵ As a number of commentators have argued, and as Kant’s claim that schematization is a “hidden art in the depths of the human soul” (A141/B180–1) suggests, it may be more difficult than Kant indicates here to explain how such schematizing determinative judgment is possible. See, e.g., David Bell, “The Art of Judgment,” *Mind* 96 (1987), 221–44. Contra Bell, however, Kant denies that our ability to apply a priori concepts is directly at issue in the *CJ*.

empirical determinative judgment, the identification (or synthesis) of an object as a member of an empirical kind.

It is not immediately clear, however, why determinative empirical judgment requires such a “special principle” to explain or justify its application of concepts to particulars. For in the *CPR* Schematism chapter, Kant argues that we apply empirical concepts, too, in accord with schemata: the concept of dog, he suggests, has a schema, or way in “which my imagination can specify the shape of a four-footed animal in general” (A141/B180). More broadly, as we have seen, empirical concepts have marks (e.g., four-footed and animal) that provide criteria (or perhaps schemata)¹⁶ for determining whether an object is to be classed as an object of that kind. (Though Kant therefore identifies all determinative judging as “schematizing” in the *CPR*, to remain consistent with Kant’s terminology in the *CJ*, I shall use “schematizing judgment” to refer only to judgment applying the categorial schemata.)

But by contrast to schematizing judgment, justified empirical determinative judgment of particular objects does not require solely that we be able thus to schematize our concepts, but requires another guarantee of its legitimacy. In schematizing judgment, we are, simply and non-optionally, applying the concept of an object (of nature or of experience) as such, characterizing the object in its sensible, yet universal and necessary, character as an object given in time. In empirical determinative judgment, by contrast, we must *select* which concept to apply, to which among the indeterminately many, contingent, empirical properties we

¹⁶ There has been considerable debate concerning whether the schemata are pleonastic in Kant’s account. Some (e.g., Jonathan Bennett, *Kant’s Analytic* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992]) argue that if a subject does, properly, “have” a concept, this simply means that he is able to use it as a rule, to apply it to particulars; for similar reasons, Kulenkampff (*Kants Logik*) argues that Kant is wrong to identify a special faculty of reflective judging. The most powerful defenses of the schematism are provided, on the other hand, in Martin Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, tr. Richard Taft, fifth edition (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997) and Longuenesse, *Capacity to Judge*. I shall not enter into this debate, however. My account here of the necessity and function of reflective judging for empirical cognition does not turn on a vindication of Kant’s claims concerning schemata.

I note also that there is considerable debate in contemporary philosophy concerning the nature and function of concepts; I shall not enter into this debate either, but follow what I take to be the standard understanding of what concepts are on Kant’s view: universal representations that function as discursive rules, have other concepts (marks) as their conceptual content (which may serve as criteria for applying the concept to an object), and serve both as predicates in (propositional) judgments and rules for unification in (judgmental) synthesis.

should attend in classifying the object.¹⁷ Thus, though the subject may correctly identify the properties of an object as specified by the marks of an empirical concept (and/or correctly schematize the object accordingly), there might be *another* empirical concept that is more appropriate, or further unnoticed properties of the object that might countervene or complicate this classification.¹⁸ For example, a four-legged, wooden, waist-high object might more appropriately be judged a desk than a table.

This type of judgmental failure cannot be addressed by the subject's competence in applying an empirical concept or capacity for determinative empirical judgment alone. For in order to avoid such failure, we must attend to those aspects of the object that are *not* "selected" by that concept and its marks. This problem is, I suggest, addressed instead by

¹⁷ My account is in considerable sympathy with Longuenesse's in *Capacity to Judge*. Here, however, I depart from her view that every act of determinative judging – including categorial schematizing judgment – “also” involves an act of reflection, empirical concept “formation” (viz., synthesis of the particular as conceptualizable/conceptualized). Longuenesse does argue that on Kant's view there are “merely reflective” (and not determinative) judgments, and that these are the main concerns of the *CJ*. I am suggesting here, more strongly, that these “merely reflective” judgments are *not* cases of an activity of judging that is also (and usually) conjoined with determinative judgment, and *are* required for specifically empirical cognition (and not for schematizing judgment). I cannot argue fully against Longuenesse's global conception of Kant's theory of judgment, but shall merely suggest that the textual evidence in the *CJ* supports my claim that Kant distinguishes between empirical and schematizing judgment, and claims to provide a further condition only for the former (v:179; FI, xx:248). In support of her claims that all determinative judgment is also reflective, Longuenesse points to a *CJ* passage: in schematizing judgment, Kant writes, the subject “not only reflects but also determines” (FI, xx:212; Pluhar translation). This passage occurs, however, in a context in which Kant is distinguishing between schematizing judgment and reflective judging in the service of empirical cognition: in schematizing judgment, Kant argues, “the power of judgment requires no special principle of reflection,” but reflects and determines in accord with the very same principles, i.e., the rules of the understanding. (Cf. Allison, *Theory of Taste*, pp. 16–17.) I suggest that Kant here distinguishes between schematizing and empirical judgment precisely in the way I have proposed: in schematizing judgment, the principles by which we determine an object to be such *also* establish the identity and difference conditions of objects (spatio-temporal position), whereas in empirical judgment, we require a different principle for the comparison (identification and distinction) of kinds of objects – a principle for (“mere”) reflective judging – distinct from the (particular, empirical) concepts we use, directly, to determine objects.

¹⁸ Ginsborg is the only other commentator of whom I am aware who suggests that this selective character of empirical judgment raises questions concerning its justifiability (“Lawfulness Without Law,” 57); she does not, however, argue that Kant takes this problem to be addressed by proto-disjunctive judging.

reflective-comparative judging (and by its principle). In reflective-comparative judging, we attend to what is “different” in the sensible manifold, including that which might differentiate this object from those we classify under this concept, that which is not conceptualized in the object under the empirical concept we have selected. Thus we may correct (or reaffirm) our empirical determinative judgment – e.g., of the object as a table – by comparing it to other tables and other items of furniture, thereby rendering salient properties of that object that are not selected for attention by the concept of table (e.g., having a drawer or not). In order to engage, justifiably, in empirical determinative judging – to correct or reaffirm the empirical determinative judgments we make – we must also engage in reflective proto-disjunctive judging. We must be able not only justifiably to form empirical concepts (as discussed in the [previous chapter](#)), but also to refine, reformulate, and challenge our determination of an object as one of an empirical kind.

2.3 The subjective principle of reflective judging: Purposiveness without a purpose

This distinction between categorical schematizing judgment and empirical determinative judgment can begin to elucidate the nature and origin of the “special principle” of the power of judgment that Kant aims to defend in the *CJ*, the “concept” that the faculty of judgment provides itself, viz., purposiveness. (Kant’s reference to this concept or principle is the notable difference between the *CPR* and *CJ* passages quoted above.) As I have suggested, in empirical judging, we do and must attend *selectively* to some among the contingent, empirical properties of the object – whereas in schematizing judgment, we are concerned with objects as characterized by their necessary, homogeneous properties (i.e., as spatio-temporal). Kant characterizes this difference by claiming that schematizing judgment is a “mechanical” operation of judging, which simply follows the dictates of the pure understanding. By contrast, “the *power of judgment* is properly technical.”¹⁹ That is, I suggest: empirical judging is purposive. The principle of purposiveness characterizes and derives from the “procedure”²⁰ of empirical judging: in cognitive engagement with empirically diverse and contingent aspects of objects, we judge *purposively*.

In *reflective* empirical judging, we judge purposively *without* a purpose. Such judging retains the form of empirical determinative judging – selection

¹⁹ FI, xx:220. ²⁰ Ibid.

and unification of empirical, diverse properties – but without guidance by an empirical concept, which serves as the “purpose” in judging, the rule whereby we select properties for attention and synthesis. Purposiveness without a purpose is, then, the “form (the special *action* of the power of judgment), by means of which it *strives* to rise from intuitions to concepts in general” (FI, xx:249, my emphasis). This concept or principle does not, that is, comprise another universal propositional principle to be applied by judgment or rule by which we unify intuitions, but characterizes what we *do* when we apply empirical concepts or when – “without a [determinate] purpose” – we “strive” to form empirical concepts. Purposiveness characterizes what it is to *engage in the practice* of judging, “regardless,” as Kant writes, of which concept we are applying, or which concept we aim to form.

Thus purposiveness is a subjective principle of judging, not because (as on the initial proposal) it is a mere assumption or heuristic principle, without objective validity. Rather, this principle is a subjective principle because it characterizes, forms, the subject’s own practice of judging. As I shall argue, however, purposiveness without a purpose may also serve as a norm and a guideline in our search for justifiable empirical concepts, as a form of the unity of diversity or the lawfulness of the contingent, precisely concerning objects as sensibly given. (As I shall argue, however, it does not *objectively* determine such objects, or serve as an objective principle.) Purposiveness without a purpose, as a structure of the subject’s judging activity, both makes it possible for us to find the empirical diversity given in nature intelligible, and places normative demands on how we ought to judge, to avoid “making nature into what we take it to be” – the “technic” of empirical determinative judgment – to allow it to constrain our empirical classifications.

The character of this principle, as a form of the unity of diversity, of the lawfulness of the contingent, may be gleaned, I argue, less from Kant’s discussions in the introductions (which largely do support the “initial proposal”) than from Kant’s more extensive treatments of aesthetic and teleological judgment. For in these judgments, the principle of the procedure of judging, or “the concept of the reflecting power of judgment, which makes possible the inner perception of a purposiveness of representations,” is “applied to the representation of the object as contained under it” (FI, xx:220). In particular, aesthetic judging is judging in accord with this principle “unmixed” with other cognitive principles of other faculties (e.g., in the case of reflective judging proper, the principles of logical systematization; FI, xx:243). Thus, though neither aesthetic nor teleological judgment is a form of reflective judging strictly

speaking, Kant's accounts of these judgments are integral to his *CJ* project, for in them purposiveness without a purpose is revealed as the form of a "particular *kind* of systematic unity, namely that in accordance with the representation of a purpose," which makes possible the "logical use of the power of judgment in experience" (FI, xx:219; my emphasis).

These claims – that purposiveness without a purpose is the principle of all three forms of judging, and that it may structure experience of certain objects, and thereby ground substantive, albeit problematic (non-objective) claims concerning them – are, however, faced by two *prima facie* objections. First, as noted above, Kant suggests at least terminologically that there are a number of different principles of purposiveness under discussion in the *CJ*; he reserves the term "purposiveness *without* a purpose" to describe aesthetic judging, thus suggesting that it may not be the particular form of the principle of purposiveness employed in the other two cases.

Second, though Kant claims that (some version of) this principle governs the subject's reflective judging in each of these cases, he appears to deny that it may function as a substantive principle of judgment concerning the character of objects (as I contend). Thus Kant writes that "this transcendental concept of a purposiveness of nature . . . 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" (v:184; my emphasis). Kant appears to make similar claims concerning aesthetic judgment, often emphasizing (for example) that beautiful objects are only or merely "subjectively" purposive. In teleological judgment, we do attribute purposiveness to objects, but this objective reference might be taken, precisely, as marking the difference between such "objective purposiveness" and the principle of purposiveness as the principle of reflective or aesthetic judging.

To respond to these objections (preliminarily), we may turn to Kant's core definitions of purpose, purposiveness, and purposiveness without a purpose in §10. "A purpose," Kant writes, "is the object of a concept insofar as we regard this concept as the object's cause," while purposiveness is "the causality that a *concept* has with regard to its *object*."²¹ (In the following chapters, I shall refer to these definitions as D1 and D2, respectively.) Kant's most basic understanding of teleology – of purpose,

²¹ v:220. As elsewhere, Guyer and Matthews translate *Zweck* here as "end"; I shall modify their translation throughout, to translate this term as "purpose."

and of purposiveness – is intentional: purpose and purposiveness are understood to characterize the nature of rational agency. A purpose is an agent's aim, the object²² that an agent aims to create, as described by her intention (conceptual representation of that object). "Purposive" describes the causality of such an agent, viz., that she produces an object in accordance with her intentions. (Kant's claim that "purposive" describes the causality of a concept should be understood as shorthand for the claim that a conceptually guided agent was the cause of this object.) Kant adds that an object so produced may also be characterized as "purposive." I shall refer to this additional claim as D2 as well: purposiveness (with a purpose) describes either activity, or objects produced by activity, in accord with conceptual intentions.

The characterization "purposive" purports, then, to explain how an object came to exist, in the form that it does, by identifying the kind of cause that produced it. In his subsequent definition of "purposiveness *without* a purpose" (D3), Kant suggests, however, that we may expand our conception of purposiveness:

An object or state of mind or even an action . . . even if its possibility does not necessarily presuppose the representation of a purpose, is called purposive merely because its possibility can be explained and grasped by us insofar as we assume as its ground a causality in accordance with purposes, i.e., a will that has arranged it so in accordance with the representation of a certain rule. Purposiveness can thus exist without a purpose, 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 . . . Thus we can at least observe a purposiveness as to form, even without basing it in a purpose (as the matter of the *nexus finalis*), and notice it in objects, although in no other way than by reflection. (v:220; translation modified)

We may understand an object as purposive in reflection or "as to form," Kant claims here, without claiming that it *was* created by an intentional agent. This claim significantly modifies D2: in calling an object "purposive," we need not be making an *actual* causal explanatory claim, but suggest only that we could "grasp" its possibility by referring to such an intentional agent, even though we are not doing so; we judge it "as if" it were so brought into existence.

²² In Kant's discussions of rational agency, the term "object" should be understood to refer not only to a physical object (e.g., a table) that an agent envisions making, but also to any action she aims to perform.

We may note that despite the fact that Kant presents D₃ in §10 of the CAJ, in order to characterize, specifically, the beauty or the “purposive form” of objects, this definition applies to the other two primary types of purposiveness treated in the *CJ*. Kant glosses the principle of reflective judging proper in the introductions, e.g., as that of the purposiveness or technic of nature, “logical purposiveness,” or “purposiveness for our understanding.” But, as Kant suggests in glossing this principle as a claim that we should consider the empirical order of nature to be “as if designed by an understanding not ours,” this purposiveness is D₃ purposiveness as well: we judge nature as (if it is) the product of intentional, rational causality, but do not and cannot legitimately claim that it *was* so caused.²³ Likewise, Kant holds that in teleological judgment we judge organisms only “as if” they are the products of intentional purposive causality (FI, xx:240). More broadly, *any* purposiveness of nature is purposiveness without a purpose, for non-human nature does not act in accord with conceptual intentions.

These definitions do not, however, exhaustively characterize Kant’s usage of “purposiveness,” as in his locution, “purposiveness *for* our understanding.” Here Kant employs a conception of purposiveness not only in the D₂ (or D₃) sense, but to mean goodness *for* a purpose or utility.²⁴ Correspondingly, Kant defines judgments of utility as judgments of external, objective purposiveness (v:226). Thus, for example, I might judge – objectively, as Kant suggests²⁵ – that a knife is useful for me, for the purpose of cutting vegetables.

Contra Kant’s official definitions, such judgments do not comprise causal explanatory claims concerning the object’s existence (though they might comprise causal claims concerning the characteristic effects of such objects, i.e., that they can bring about the end envisioned by the agent). I shall discuss the relationship of this type of purposiveness to D₁–3 in a moment, but suggest first that on this conception of purposiveness the

²³ I shall modify this claim in what follows; for now, I wish to argue only that the purposiveness of nature for our understanding may, on the most straightforward reading, be taken as purposiveness without a purpose.

²⁴ Cf. Fricke, *Kants Theorie*, Chapter Four, and “Explaining the Inexplicable.”

²⁵ I shall discuss Kant’s distinctions between “objective” and “subjective” purposiveness in subsequent chapters, but I note in anticipation that, in terming judgments of utility judgments of “objective” purposiveness, Kant suggests that purposiveness “for us” need not be understood as equivalent to “merely subjective” purposiveness. Correlatively, aesthetic “subjective” purposiveness need not be understood (as it frequently is) to mean – simply – serving our purposes (whether as pleasing, or occasioning the harmony of the faculties).

three main types of purposiveness with which Kant is concerned ought, again, to be understood as purposiveness without a purpose. For judgments of utility rely too upon a prior concept “of” a purpose, although not causally: I must have a concept of a knife and/or of my purpose (cutting) in order to judge that this object is useful. In other words, this object is purposive (useful) only relative to a specified purpose: if I were to judge the same object as a toy, it would not be purposive (useful) but dangerous. (Hence, as I shall discuss in Chapter [Five](#), Kant’s insistence that judgments of the good and of perfection must be based on concepts.) Thus one might propose three alternative definitions to D1–3: a purpose is a concept that specifies the use or good (end) to which the subject would put the object; purposiveness is an object’s suitability to that use or its character as means to that end; and purposiveness without a purpose characterizes an object that seems to be useful for a purpose (that we can only “grasp” as such), but we do not know for which purpose, do not claim that it is in fact so useful. On these definitions, reflective and aesthetic judging are judgments of purposiveness without a purpose: in such judgments the subject does not have, or judge an object to be purposive (useful) according to, a prior concept. In teleological judgment, we do claim that parts of the object are means to an end, e.g., that the hollow bones of a bird are useful for (a means to) flight, and so for the bird’s survival. But, Kant claims, we do not know the purpose of the bird’s (or an organism’s) existence (e.g., v:426). Thus, though we make proximate conceptual judgments concerning means to determinate ends in teleological judgment, organic purposiveness may too, ultimately, be described as purposiveness without a purpose.²⁶

Kant appears, then, to have two conceptions of purposiveness and, on both conceptions, the “logical” purposiveness of nature (for reflective judgment), the purposiveness of beautiful form, and the purposiveness of organisms may be said to be purposiveness without a purpose. In all three cases, Kant appears to hold that we judge objects both only “as if” they are *made* in accord with concepts, and only “as if” they *serve* conceptually specified ends.

This “as if” character of purposiveness without a purpose brings us, however, to the second objection above: that judging in accord with this principle does not and cannot ground any substantive claims concerning objects on Kant’s view. For on either conception of purposiveness without a purpose, it appears that, in judging an object according to this

²⁶ These claims will be discussed further in Chapter [Three](#).

principle, we make weak, nearly empty claims concerning objects. We can only “grasp their possibility” if we think of them “as if” they are caused intentionally – though we cannot identify what the intention might be, nor claim that they were so caused – or we judge that they seem useful, but not in any particular way, not for any specified purpose.

Despite Kant’s denials that purposiveness applies to nature or objects (quoted above), Kant also suggests that we do use the “rule” or principle of purposiveness to judge objects in aesthetic and teleological judgments:

The aesthetic power of judgment is thus a special faculty for judging *things* in accordance with a rule, but not in accordance with concepts. The teleological power of judgment is not a special faculty, but only the reflective power of judgment in general . . . with regard to certain *objects* in nature, in accordance with particular principles, namely, those of a power of judgment that is merely reflecting (v:194, my emphasis)

Closer consideration of the relationship between the two conceptions of purposiveness (caused by a concept and utility) may, I suggest moreover, provide some substantive content for this “rule” in accord with which we judge. In glossing purposiveness as “technic,” Kant suggests that the connection between the two sorts of purposiveness and the definitional primacy of the causal conception thereof are grounded in an understanding of artifacts. Artifacts are, of course, created intentionally, and they are also the most frequent, salient type of useful objects. Artifacts *are* thus useful, moreover, precisely *because* they are made by human beings, who had that purpose “in mind” in assembling the object. Thus Kant suggests – as quoted in the [previous chapter](#) – that insofar as we presuppose that nature is useful to us (cognitively), we also thereby assume that nature is (as if) caused, intentionally, to be so. More broadly, in presenting D₃ as a modified version of D₂, Kant suggests that we infer from the character of an object to an (as if) claim about its causal origins.

On a “thin utility” reading of purposiveness, this inference appears weak and unjustified. One might argue that *if* an agent aims to produce an object, she thinks that that object is good (if she is a rational agent in a stronger, normative sense, viz., in having good reasons for acting), and thus that objects so created are good for purposes. But this gives little reason to infer from goodness or utility of an object to an intentional cause. For we can judge objectively that natural objects are useful, e.g., this stone is useful for building a wall, and need not infer that this stone was created intentionally for such a purpose, or even claim that it is “as if” it were so. As Kant writes, “human reason knows how to bring things into

correspondence with his own arbitrary inspirations” (v:368), which correspondence indicates nothing much concerning the causal origin of those objects. Even in the case of artifacts, the two kinds of judgments can diverge: a volume of Kant’s *Gesammelte Werke* serves well as a doorstep – it is the right size, shape, weight – and I can, objectively, judge it to be so. But I need not infer that the concept that guided its production was that of doorstep; nor are the properties on the basis of which I judge it to be useful for *my* purpose ones that the *producer’s* purpose determined or that the producer “had in mind” in making the object.

Kant’s core definitions do not, however, centrally concern the goodness or utility of the object, but are structural: as we have seen, “purposive” describes the structure of rational agency and/or of objects so produced, i.e., in accord with a concept. As Kant suggests in his presentation of D₃, such agency is characterized not by goodness of its reasons or aims, but by its rule-governedness, i.e., its being directed by concepts. Correspondingly, I suggest, it is the unity of an object that, on Kant’s view, grounds an inference to such a causal origin, for it can explain why the object would be produced as unified, i.e., itself governed by a unifying rule. More specifically, this unity ought to be understood as a unity of diversity or of the contingent (parts, properties) as such, a unity formed by means–ends relations among the parts. In the most easily understood cases, judgments of utility and artifactual production, we may identify such unity as characteristic of objects judged to be purposive in either sense. Judgments of utility concern, and are grounded upon, the contingent, qualitatively diverse, empirical properties of things: not just any object can serve a purpose, nor does an object do so in virtue of its necessary properties that constitute its objecthood in general. In such judgments, moreover, we take a *number* (manifold) of the object’s contingent properties to belong, together, to the object, *because* all of them are means to an end; thus, e.g., the thinness of the knife blade, its sharpness, the length and shape of the handle, etc., in *combination* render the knife useful for cutting and are, for this reason, taken to be salient properties of the knife (whereas the knife’s color is not thus salient, though it would be in our judgments of a stop sign [as useful]).²⁷ We may say likewise concerning objects that we aim to create, or have created, in purposive (D₂) activity: we do not aim to create an object as such, i.e., with the necessary properties of any object, but as

²⁷ I cannot think of a purpose for which there is a property that alone serves as a necessary and sufficient condition of utility – except circularly, as, e.g., opium and its dormitive power, or edibility and the purpose of nutrition.

determined by specific, contingent, empirical properties, under specific descriptions. Correspondingly, the objects thus produced *have* a set of diverse, contingent properties and have such properties for a reason, viz., that they make the object conform to the producer's purpose. Thus purposiveness may be understood, I suggest, to be a "lawfulness of the contingent," an order that holds among contingent (diverse) parts, and unifies them, explains why they belong together, for reasons.²⁸

Kant suggests that the more specific the purpose, the greater the complexity of the object, the more the unity in the object is contingent, the more we are justified in inferring that this object was created by an intentional cause, could "only be possible" – or can only be "grasped" by us as possible – as so caused.²⁹ But I suggest that, in part contra D1–3, we need not so quickly collapse claims of purposiveness (without a purpose) into this inference.

First, this understanding of our license so to infer provides a substantive conception of what it means – prior to making the inference – to find or judge an object to be purposive without a purpose: the unity of diversity of an object is *that characteristic of objects which we cannot "grasp"*

²⁸ v:404. In "Aesthetic and Biological Purposiveness," Ginsborg also emphasizes both the rule-governedness of purposive causality and this Kantian gloss of purposiveness (as lawfulness of the contingent), and argues that this gloss shows how purposiveness is the principle of all three main forms of judging in the *CJ*. Ginsborg construes this gloss, however, to mean that purposiveness is a normative principle, making a claim that things "ought to be" (a certain way, as specified by the rule or concept). This interpretation, and her application of it to aesthetic and teleological judging, is a powerful alternative to my proposal. I shall raise concerns about its application to aesthetic and teleological judgment below, but note here two more general reservations. First, all Kantian principles are, arguably, normative (do not necessarily, but "contingently," hold, as per Ginsborg's construal of "lawfulness of the contingent"): the moral law clearly is a normative principle, but the principles of logic too (for example) are principles, in accord with which subjects do not always judge, but ought to judge. The normativity of this principle cannot, I submit then, exhaust its content, nor explain why it is a "lawfulness of the contingent." Second, this construal does not accommodate Kant's suggested connection (particularly in the CTJ) between purposiveness and means–ends relations, a connection that not only corresponds to commonsensical conceptions of purposiveness, but also endows this principle with more substantive, and perhaps less question-begging, content (it connects parts of a manifold as means to ends, rather than characterizing an object, or way of judging, simply as how it "ought to be," on, perhaps, no further grounds).

²⁹ E.g., v:242. This argument is presented most explicitly on the grounds of complexity in Kant's contrast between a stone and an eye at FI, xx:240. As indicated in the [previous chapter](#), I contend that this argument ought to be read to concern the facts not only that the order in the object is contingent, but also and more importantly that it is an order among the contingent (diverse) properties of the object.

without referring it to an (as if) purposive cause; or, if one likes, such unity of diversity is what it means for an object to have the “look” of design (a common gloss of Kant’s conception of purposiveness without a purpose³⁰). As I shall argue, objects that we judge as purposive without a purpose are, more specifically, judged to be characterized by a fully systematic unity of diversity, a unity established not (as in the case of utility and artifactual production) by relations of means to a separate, conceptually articulated end, but by *reciprocal* means–ends relations among the parts.

Second, judgments of objects as thus purposive without a purpose do raise questions concerning the possibility of such unity or how we may grasp it, but these questions are not always to be answered by an inference to an “as if” intentional, conceptual *cause*. As I argue in Chapter Four, in order to grasp the possibility of *material* (causal), reciprocal purposive relations in organisms, on Kant’s view, we must take such relations to be (as if) intentionally caused. But there is another, “formal” sense in which concepts are prior purposes that ground purposive relations or the unity of diversity in objects: not as causes of the object’s existence or of the relation among its parts, but as guidelines or rules that ground our *recognition* of the object as a unified manifold in *judgment*. As suggested above, empirical judging is itself a purposive activity (with a purpose): in empirical judgment, the concept of an empirical kind is the purpose of judging; we unify the manifold of the object as “serving” that purpose.³¹ For example, the concept “knife” not only allows us to identify an object as useful for certain purposes (which define that concept), but also allows us to note and unify the requisite, empirically diverse properties of the object, which serve to make that object what it is. Kant thus “internalizes” his conception of purposive (D2) activity into the activity of judging itself: we do not merely judge *that* an object is (as if) purposively caused, but (some) forms of judging are themselves purposive activities, i.e., activities guided by a concept as purpose. In aesthetic and reflective judging, I shall argue, we do so only “as if” guided by such a concept, or judge purposively without a purpose. In these two activities of judging, we represent a sensible manifold as a unity of diversity, as (specifically) reciprocally, purposively, unified, but without a concept as the purpose guiding that activity of representation. As in the case of organic purposive unity (reciprocal causal means–ends relations), we must explain the possibility of such purposive unification, but this explanation does *not* comprise an

³⁰ E.g., Zumbach, *Transcendent Science*. ³¹ For such language, see v:229–30.

inference to an (as if) purposive cause of the object's existence. For the object's cause is irrelevant to the question of how we can grasp this unity. Rather, such representation is made possible by a newly discovered ability of judging, i.e., purposive judging without a purpose, or, as I shall argue, the ability to be anticipatory, or future-directed, imaginatively to project a systematically unified, diversified whole.

As I shall argue, then, like purposiveness with a purpose (on D2), purposiveness without a purpose has two components: (1) a represented order in the object, which is made possible by (2) a form of causality or temporal relations. Purposiveness without a purpose comprises a form of unity of diversity in an object – reciprocal means–ends relations – that is made possible by non-conceptually-guided future-directedness. This structure is common, I shall argue, to aesthetic, teleological, and reflective judging. As I have just suggested, however, Kant's distinction between “material” (causal) and “formal” (cognitive) purposiveness is a key distinction. In reflective and aesthetic judging, such means–ends relations are formal, or comprise *cognitive* relationships among properties or aspects of (a representation of) an object or objects, relations made possible by the subject's judgmental activity as itself structured purposively (as future-directed). This function of the principle of purposiveness without a purpose is its most significant, and proper, function, as a principle of the faculty of judgment itself. In teleological judgment, by contrast, we *attribute* this structure – means–ends relations that constitute a unity of diversity, made possible by future-anticipation – *to* an object.³² This structure is interpreted not as a set of cognitive relations, but as causal relations, i.e., such purposiveness is “objective” and “material” purposiveness. Though this material interpretation of the principle of purposiveness without a purpose is less central to the *CJ* project, it nonetheless most clearly demonstrates the substantive character of this principle, by exhibiting it as a form of relations among an object's parts. Before turning to the more central role of purposiveness without a purpose in aesthetic judgment, therefore, I shall now turn to Kant's account of teleological judgment.

³² v:194, quoted above.

PART I

TELEOLOGICAL JUDGMENT

THE ANALYTIC OF TELEOLOGICAL JUDGMENT: PURPOSIVE UNITY IS THE “HIGHEST FORMAL UNITY”

As we have seen, Kant argues in the introductions to the *CJ* that, in order to make (justifiable) empirical knowledge claims, we require a principle of the unity of the diverse as such, which requirement is in part enunciated as a normative demand that we aim at a unified, systematic science. It seems somewhat odd, then, that Kant devotes the second part of the *CJ*, the Critique of Teleological Judgment, to defending the autonomy of teleological judgment in biology within natural science, i.e., to an argument that we must judge organisms in a way distinct from physical, mechanical explanation. As I shall discuss in the [next chapter](#), Kant is himself ambivalent concerning this argument, in part for such systematic scientific reasons, and therefore restricts these conclusions: teleological judgment is *merely* reflective judgment, not explanation properly speaking;¹ we ought to look for mechanical, not teleological, explanations of biological functioning as much as possible (e.g., v:418). In this chapter, however, I shall concentrate on Kant’s positive treatment of teleological explanation, his argument that it *is* necessary to judge organisms

¹ In order to be consistent with current usage, and to reflect the fact that Kant understands teleological judgment to comprise a form of causal judgment (albeit one that is not an objective causal judgment), I shall use “teleological explanation” to refer to teleological judgment. I do not mean to deny, thereby, that on Kant’s view teleological judgment is, strictly speaking, non-explanatory.

teleologically.² I shall suggest that Kant's defense of teleological explanation of organisms is not as anti-systematic as it may seem. Kant associates natural teleology with the systematic unity of nature (and science) already in the *CPR* Appendix to the Dialectic and, though Kant modifies this view in the CTJ, he nonetheless continues to link the two: organisms are, Kant holds, "systematic in form," unities of the diverse as such, and thus instantiate the type of unity he seeks to ground in judgment, science, or nature. This chapter is, accordingly, framed by discussions of the connections between natural teleology and the systematic unity of nature in the Appendix, and in the CTJ (sections and).

The bulk of the chapter is devoted, however, to a reconstruction of Kant's CTJ argument that we must judge organisms in accord with the principle of purposiveness. This argument, I shall argue, may be read as follows: organisms are characterized by a unity of the diverse (3.3, 3.5), which cannot be explained mechanically (3.4), but can be characterized as purposive (3.6), more specifically, as governed by the principle of purposiveness without a purpose (3.7). This argument too is a crucial contribution to the *CJ* project as a whole, for in this account Kant provides an articulated conception of the principle of purposiveness without a purpose as a form of reciprocal means–ends relations, grounded in internal temporal relations (of present to future, and future to present), which form grounds a unity of the diverse as such, and serves as the lawfulness of the contingent.

3.1 Systematicity and natural teleology as "additional" unity: The Appendix account

In the *CPR* Appendix to the Dialectic, Kant includes a discussion of natural teleology in his discussion of the regulative idea of the systematic unity of nature and natural science. This account, though brief, is significant for two reasons. First, it suggests that, unlike many philosophers of science, Kant closely connects natural teleology to the systematic unity of science and nature even in the *CPR*. Second, I shall suggest that several

² This chapter and the next correspond, then, to the "Analytic" and "Dialectic" aspects of Kant's treatment of teleological judgment, i.e., respectively his defense and his critical limitations upon the "necessity" of teleological judgment. They do not, however, strictly correspond to the two sections of the text, particularly because Kant qualifies his claims concerning teleological explanation even in the Analytic (e.g., it is merely reflective judgment; v:375), which qualifications I shall ignore here, to be discussed in the following chapter.

inadequacies in Kant's Appendix account of natural teleology, sketchy as it is, led him to reopen the question of teleological explanation as part of his broader investigation into systematic unity and purposiveness in the *CJ*.³

As discussed above, in the Appendix Kant argues that regulative principles of the systematic unity of nature are heuristic principles required for empirical investigation of nature. Kant suggests that the principle of natural teleology is a corollary of these principles, indeed that it is the *best* version of systematicity, for the "highest formal unity . . . is the *purposive* unity of things" (A686/B714).⁴

Kant glosses this claim by stating that "[t]he *speculative* interest of reason makes it necessary to regard all order in the world **as if** it had originated in the purpose [*Absicht*] of a supreme reason."⁵ One might, therefore, take Kant to be arguing that we must regulatively assume that God created the world according to a wise purpose and, therefore, that the highest, purposive unity is a unity created *on* purpose, by a supreme reason – a claim reprised in the *CJ*, as we have seen. Kant claims, however, that because the highest unity is a purposive one, we are permitted to formulate *specific* teleological laws (A688/B716). Such laws, Kant argues, are justified as instances of the regulative principle of teleology (itself justified as a form of systematic unity). Like the other regulative principles, natural teleology is not, Kant argues, to be considered constitutive of nature or of objects, but he notes too that we cannot prove that it is *not* a good explanation of objects either (A688/B716). And because formulating teleological laws promotes our aims at a unified, systematic science, we are permitted, and indeed ought, to try to do so.

Thus the highest formal unity is not only a unity (assumed to be) created on purpose, but a unity of objects and events unified *by* teleological laws. This teleological unity is the highest form of systematic unity, Kant

³ I wish, that is, to resist a somewhat common scholarly explanation of why Kant returns to questions of teleology in the *CJ*: because Kant noticed developments in biology that he found either interesting in themselves, or that required him to supplement his philosophy of science; and then Kant somewhat artificially attached his treatment thereof in the CTJ to the *CJ*. (E.g., McLaughlin, *Critique of Teleology*, p.40; this view is held to some degree by McFarland and Zammito as well.) Biological discoveries may well have drawn Kant's attention to teleological explanation in the time between the first edition of the *CPR* and the *CJ* (on which, see Philip Sloan, "Preforming the Categories: Eighteenth Century Generation Theory and the Biological Roots of the A Priori," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 40 [2002], 229–53), but the CTJ may, I suggest, be understood as more integral to Kant's project in the *CJ*.

⁴ See McFarland, *Kant's Concept*, pp. 30–2.

⁵ A687/B715, Kemp Smith translation; bold my emphasis.

suggests, because teleological laws would provide “additional unity” not provided by causal laws alone. Kant does not explain this claim, which he seems to have inherited from the rationalist tradition.⁶ We may infer, however, that the additional unity provided by teleological explanations would be a further explanation, i.e., not only *how* objects came to be (in accord with efficient causal laws) but also what purpose they serve, *why* they are as they are, why these particular efficient causal laws rather than others are the laws of nature. Thus ideal scientific knowledge of nature would treat nature as governed by efficient causal laws, which laws are as they are, or are arranged, for a reason, for purposes. One may, then, as Leibniz argues, use teleological considerations regulatively in order to discover efficient causal laws.⁷

Though Kant does not conjoin natural teleology and organic behavior as closely in the *CPR* as he does in the *CJ*, his discussion of the architectonic (systematic method) of pure reason as an organic unity suggests another, somewhat more metaphorical, reason why he may think that the highest formal unity of nature is purposive. The architectonic, he writes, is an “organic” whole and is, therefore, absolutely complete, having grown “from within . . . not by external addition . . . [it is, therefore,] like an animal body, the growth of which is not by the addition of a new member, but by the rendering of each member stronger” (A833/B861).⁸ Systematic, rational, properly scientific knowledge is understood to be, likewise, knowledge that has determined itself, and therefore is complete, to which nothing external could be added, and in which (the knowledge of) every element, object, property, event, or law has its proper, purposive place – as an organic being’s organs each play their proper roles in the self-determining organism. Such knowledge would be complete because one would know each and every element, and why it is as it is; one would also know *that* such knowledge was complete, for there would be no “place” or reason for another type of event to occur, another type of object to exist (A832–3/B860–1).

In the Appendix, then, Kant assimilates natural teleology and teleological laws to the regulative principle that nature be treated as a

⁶ On this historical inheritance, see McFarland, *Kant’s Concept*, p. 38 and chapters 3–4; and Reinhard Löw, *Philosophie des Lebendigen* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1980), pp. 48–53.

⁷ See, e.g., *Discourse on Metaphysics*, §22.

⁸ Kemp Smith translation. On the use of these metaphors, see J. Wubnig, “The Epigenesis of Pure Reason,” *Kant-Studien* 60 (1968–9), 147–52, and Sloan, “Preforming the Categories.”

systematic unity, or (in the terms of the *CJ*) as “purposive for our understanding.” This tight connection between teleological lawfulness and systematicity would link Kant’s epistemological concerns in the introductions to the *CJ* and his CTJ treatment of teleological judgment; the principle of systematic unity of nature (or natural science) sought would be that which governs organisms as well: teleological lawfulness.

There are, however, several inadequacies in this account. First, as noted, Kant does not explain precisely in what way teleology provides additional unity to efficient causal laws or (therefore) why a purposive unity ought to be understood as the highest formal unity. It seems in principle possible, moreover, that for every efficient causal law we discovered, we could identify a separate purpose for it. These purposes might allow us to know *more* about the objects governed by each causal law, but they would not unify the causal laws with one another into a systematic unity. Such unity among laws requires, it would seem, a further premise: that the purposes are chosen by one agent (God), and guided by one overarching purpose. One might, in other words, level a version of Kant’s criticism of Spinoza in the CTJ against his own account in the Appendix. Kant criticizes Spinoza for attempting to ground the purposive unity of nature in God as a mere “ontological unity” (v:393), which proposal fails, Kant argues, because it does not articulate how the parts of nature are unified *with* one another in a particular form (i.e., a purposive one; *ibid.*; cf. v:421). Though Kant’s proposal in the Appendix is not thus ontological (he does not argue that natural systematic unity is grounded upon the fact that nature is, or is “in,” one being), it also leaves unarticulated the way in which laws (or objects) are unified with one another, except as (presumed) products of a single rational being.

Second, Kant’s Appendix account does not satisfactorily establish the legitimacy of specific teleological laws governing particular (types of) objects or events. Even if one granted that one should find teleological reasons (or one governing reason) why efficient causal laws are the way they are, or that such considerations might serve as some constraint on which empirical laws or concepts we formulate, it would not follow that one would be justified in formulating particular laws in teleological form. As Kant puts this point in the *CJ*, the regulative principle of the systematic unity of nature – even when reformulated as a principle of purposiveness – gives us “no basis” a priori for claiming “that things of nature serve one another as means to ends, and that their possibility itself should be adequately intelligible only through this

[purposive] kind of causality” or should be ruled by an “entirely unique lawlikeness” (v:359).

In other words, one might say that Kant’s treatment of the teleological, systematic unity of nature in the Appendix is a heuristic version of the seventeenth-century deistic model of nature – we are to regard nature as if it were clockwork designed by God. Clockwork, however purposively arranged, does not itself operate according to teleological laws, but only efficient causal laws. The only teleology in nature on this view is at the highest level, i.e., of the organization of the laws of nature – as, indeed, is consonant with Kant’s argument in the Appendix that the regulative principles (here of natural teleology) should apply as broadly and indeterminately to nature as possible.

Thus Kant’s argument in the Appendix concerns a rather attenuated version of teleology, which seems, moreover, to conflict with his use of organic metaphors. Because teleology is a regulative principle on the Appendix account, we ought to apply it generally to all of nature, yet, as Kant’s use of organic metaphors suggests, we tend to find teleological explanations more pertinent in biology than in other sciences.

When Kant re-raises the question of teleological explanation in the CTJ, he corrects these earlier problematic assumptions. As just noted, Kant rejects his earlier justification of teleological laws: even if we are justified in assuming that nature as a whole is systematically unified (and thus purposive for our understanding), this does not entail that we are justified in formulating laws of a teleological form, a lawlikeness, Kant now argues, that is “heterogeneous” from (not merely possibly an addition to) mechanical or efficient causal lawfulness. Likewise, in the CTJ, Kant argues that organisms, alone, must be judged teleologically: the “teleological way of judging,” Kant writes, applies only to a “special class” of natural objects (v:382). Between the *CPR* and the *CJ*, then, Kant appears to have realized that organisms did not just happen to provide good metaphors for systematic, purposive unity.

Despite these differences, Kant’s Appendix treatment of natural teleology gives us some clues concerning how to interpret his CTJ account and its place in the *CJ* project as a whole. Kant’s guiding interest in discussing natural teleology remains, I suggest, the same in the CTJ as in the Appendix: Kant again understands teleology or purposiveness to characterize systematic unity. So Kant suggests even in his arguments criticizing his earlier view: we may not infer, Kant writes, from our epistemic principle enjoining us to “interconnect . . . empirical laws . . . with others in a system of logical division,” that there are “individual

things” in nature that “display the *form of a system* in themselves” (FI, xx:217, emphasis and translation altered).⁹ In the *CJ*, then, Kant continues to endorse his Appendix claim that the highest formal unity is purposive, but defends a more specific claim that organisms, as a special case, are to be judged as thus purposive. In so doing, I argue, Kant indeed develops a conception of purposiveness that better confirms his claim that the “highest formal unity” is a purposive one; it is, specifically, a form of unity of the diverse as such.

3.2 Kant’s argument in the CTJ: Some questions

In concert with his rejection of his earlier view, Kant begins the CTJ by dismissing several sorts of claims purporting to identify purposiveness in nature. We should not characterize the utility and comprehensibility of geometrical figures as a purpose of nature, Kant argues, for we construct such figures, and thus introduce purposiveness into them (v:365). Geometrical purposiveness is merely, in other words, a case of human technic, purposiveness not of or in nature, but produced by us. Inorganic objects or relations between them are not to be described as purposive,¹⁰ moreover, nor need we describe relations of benefit between organic and other objects – e.g., sand is beneficial to fir trees (nourishes them) – as cases of natural purposiveness (§63).

Instead, Kant argues, we ought to judge the internal functioning of organisms, alone, teleologically. Kant’s claims in the CTJ are thus narrower than those in the Appendix, but they are also stronger: Kant does not argue that we *may* use teleological considerations regulatively to discover efficient causal laws or to propose how these laws might be unified, or that we are *permitted* to formulate teleological laws, but that we *must* judge organisms teleologically. An organism is, Kant claims, “possible only as a purpose” (v:369); our consideration of such an object “necessarily carries with it the concept of [it] as a natural purpose” (v:378); we “can only” consider these objects “in accordance with the concept of final causes” (v:380). Or, famously: there will never be, Kant asserts, a “Newton for a blade of grass” (v:400).

⁹ Here I concur with Zumbach, *Transcendent Science*, pp. 122–4, 151–2.

¹⁰ E.g., v:382, where Kant argues, contra his earlier view and more generally Leibnizean views, that the comprehensibility of arithmetical or physical laws, and their utility for solving problems or manipulating nature, should not be understood as natural purposiveness.

Kant's argument for this stronger claim runs, briefly, as follows:

If one adduces, e.g., the structure of a bird, the hollowness of its bones, the placement of its wings for movement and of its tail for steering, etc., one says that given the mere *nexus effectivus* in nature, without the help of a special kind of causality, namely that of ends (*nexus finalis*), this is all in the highest degree contingent: i.e., that nature, considered as a mere mechanism, could have formed itself in a thousand different ways without hitting precisely upon the unity in accordance with such a rule, and that it is therefore only outside the concept of nature, not within it, that one could have even the least ground a priori for hoping to find such a principle. (v:360)

Kant argues here that something about organic entities cannot be explained mechanically – and/or in accord with an efficient causal “nexus” – and, therefore, they must be explained teleologically. (Correspondingly, Kant argues that the “external” relations of benefit – sand for fir trees – need not be judged teleologically, because they may be explained adequately by natural [mechanical] laws [v:369].) Kant seems, then, to be engaging in a favorite form of argument, the disjunctive argument with a suppressed premise. In this case: [Mechanical explanation and teleological explanation are the two sole and exclusive explanatory options]; x cannot be explained mechanically; therefore, x *must* be explained teleologically.

This argument raises several questions. First, such Kantian arguments have been criticized, particularly for the suppressed premise, in other contexts,¹¹ and this criticism seems warranted here: why should we take mechanical and teleological explanation to be the sole explanatory options? What, moreover, is the relationship between mechanism and efficient causality, presumably the paradigmatic explanatory principle on Kant's view? Are they identical, as Kant seems to suggest here, or would efficient causality comprise a third explanatory option?

Second, it is not clear *what* about organic entities cannot be explained mechanically. It has been suggested that it is the appearance of design in organisms,¹² and in the above passage Kant suggests so: what needs to be explained is the “unity [of organisms] in accordance with such a rule,” an order or design that we cannot attribute to chance, to the “mere”

¹¹ Notably the so-called “missing alternative” objection to Kant's argument for the ideality of space and time; see, e.g., Paul Guyer, *Kant and the Claims of Knowledge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 345–7.

¹² E.g., Zumbach, *Transcendent Science*, pp. 7f.

mechanism of nature. Kant suggests that this design is, more specifically, design of parts for ends (viz., hollow bones and wings “for” flight), and thus that the object’s “unity in accordance with a rule” is a unity in accord with a *teleological* rule.

On this construal, however, Kant’s argument appears circular or definitional: mechanism is blind (does not design), and/or does not institute relations of means to ends (it is not identical to teleology), thus it does not explain purposive design. As an argument that we *must* judge organisms teleologically, this argument seems weak, nearly circular – we must judge organic entities as purposive, viz., as if they were designed, because they (must?) appear to us as purposive – or simply bad, an inference from an “is” to an “ought”: because we *do* judge organic entities teleologically, we *must* judge organic entities teleologically.¹³ Thus we may ask: does Kant provide a way to *justify* teleological judgment of organisms other than pointing, circularly, to their purported teleological character?

The bulk of the *Analytic of Teleological Judgment* appears to be devoted not to further elaboration of this argument, but rather to analysis of the concept of “natural purpose,” i.e., of what we are claiming about organisms when we judge them teleologically. Kant defines the concept of “natural purpose” first as the concept of an object as “cause and effect of itself” (v:370–1) and then, more precisely, as the concept of an object that is cause and effect of itself *as* an organized being. A natural purpose, that is, is organized – its parts’ existence and form are “possible” only through their relation to the whole – and self-organizing – its parts are not caused to be such by the idea of a whole (by an external, rational agent), but rather by the organism itself (v:374).

This analysis is crucial to my interpretation of the *CJ* project, because in it Kant articulates the structure of purposiveness without a purpose (reciprocal means–ends relations). With respect to our current concerns, however, Kant’s analysis of the concept of natural purpose does not appear to constitute an argument that organisms must be judged in accord with this concept – except again definitionally. In defining the concept of a natural purpose Kant appears also to be defining

¹³ Cf. v:389: “[n]o one has doubted . . . the fundamental principle that certain things in nature (organized beings) and their possibility must be judged in accordance with the concept of final causes.” Though one might argue that Kant is here, as elsewhere, preserving the “appearances” or justifying ordinary practices of judgment, and that our (or Kant’s) inability to describe organisms without using teleological vocabulary itself shows that we find such language necessary, the mere fact that we do so describe organisms does not justify such judgments.

“organism,” i.e., a natural object, the parts of which we judge to be “organs” (instruments). Indeed, Kant introduces this characterization of natural purpose by discussing an example of an organism, a tree, and suggests that the concept of natural purpose is “occasioned” by, perhaps even “derived” from, our experience of organisms (v:376).¹⁴ Thus Kant seems to leave no room between our experience of organisms and teleological judgment thereof that might ground an argument that we must judge organisms teleologically; rather, we simply do judge (experience) them so.

I shall now suggest, however, that this analysis may provide some less circular grounds for Kant’s claims both that something about organic objects cannot be explained mechanically, and that they should be explained teleologically. Kant identifies a characteristic that is “special” or “particular” to organisms, which need not (circularly) be identified as designed or as purposive: their unity of diverse (heterogeneous) parts *as* diverse.¹⁵ This type of unity, moreover, cannot be characterized mechanically, but can be characterized teleologically. Thus, teleological explanation is necessary if we are to understand such objects.¹⁶

3.3 Organic unity I: The whole is prior to the parts

As noted above, Kant uses the example of a tree in preliminarily defining a natural purpose as “a thing [that] is *both cause and effect of itself*” (v:370). It is so, Kant claims, in three ways. The tree reproduces itself and was produced by the reproduction of its species. It grows by changing raw materials into parts of itself, a change that Kant distinguishes from “any

¹⁴ Thus Kant suggests that the concept of natural purpose might be empirical, though he also argues (at *ibid.*) that its content is at least partly contributed by us, a priori (cf. v:396). I shall return to this odd status of this concept or the principle of material purposiveness in the [next chapter](#).

¹⁵ I shall not, that is, employ the vocabulary of purposiveness or of “design” in describing this unity (to which Kant often refers as the “unity of a purpose”), the *explanandum* for which, I suggest, purposiveness is the *explanans*.

¹⁶ As for most Kantian arguments, there are two different but interrelated levels of argument here: an ontological argument about the nature of organic objects and an epistemological argument concerning how we can understand such an object. For Kant, the epistemological argument is primary, in the CTJ as elsewhere: as I shall discuss in the [next chapter](#), Kant concludes (ultimately) that teleological judgments are not determinative of their objects – but are “subjectively necessary” – precisely because of the nature and tasks of our own faculty of judgment. In this chapter, however, I shall concentrate on these claims as (if they were) claims concerning the nature of objects.

increase in size according to mechanical laws.” And, third, its parts depend on one another and on the whole tree as the sum of those parts for their continued existence (v:371–2). Kant adds plasticity, the living being’s ability to adapt, to change the functioning of its parts, which allows it to maintain equilibrium or continued similar activity, despite injury or obstacles.¹⁷

Though Kant initially presents the three aspects of organisms as equally important, he tends to neglect the first in his further discussion (e.g., in his “proper” articulation of the concept of natural purpose at v:373–4), concentrating instead on the composition of the individual organic object, its “internal form” or “internal organization” (v:378), the dependence of parts on the whole.¹⁸ Growth and plasticity are, moreover, specific examples of this dependence of part upon whole: in growth, the whole organism manufactures its parts by transforming raw material, the existence of which parts (in a particular form) thereby presupposes

¹⁷ Kant emphasizes this characteristic of organisms in his early *One Possible Basis for a Demonstration of the Existence of God* (11:126). Plasticity is more emphatically identified as the signal characteristic of organic functioning, and a ground for the autonomy of biological explanation in twentieth-century philosophy of biology; e.g., Ernest Nagel, “Teleology Revisited,” in *Teleology Revisited and Other Essays* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), pp. 278–9, 286–9. See McLaughlin (*Critique of Teleology*, pp. 15–19, 31), however, on the historical importance of plasticity for the philosophy of biology of Kant’s time.

¹⁸ The unity of a species ought, perhaps, to interest Kant more than it does, for it could help in our systematic project of classifying objects into empirical natural kinds, as, e.g., Michael Kraft suggests (“Kant’s Theory of Teleology,” *International Philosophical Quarterly* 22 [1982], 41–9). Though Kraft rightly stresses the connection between systematicity and Kant’s interest in organisms, his claim that, according to Kant, “the proper object of biological studies is not the organism as an individual, but the life of the species, which is carried out in the individual” (p. 46) seems unjustified by Kant’s text. (One exception is Kant’s discussion of male/female differentiation at v:425.) Similarly, Ginsborg rightly identifies Kant’s interest in organic behavior as connected to his epistemological questions concerning the possibility of our knowledge of empirical lawfulness (Hannah Ginsborg, “Kant on Understanding Organisms as Natural Purposes,” in Watkins, ed., *Kant and the Sciences*, pp. 231–58). But Ginsborg’s suggestion that Kant defends teleological explanation of organisms because it can explain the “regularity” of organic behavior (e.g., all sparrows behave similarly) seems likewise inaccurate to Kant’s discussions: Kant does endorse comparative anatomy in the CTJ Method (v:418), and presumably would also endorse observations about regular behaviors of organisms, as a method for biological investigation. But in his defense of teleological judgment of organisms, Kant emphasizes instead the unity of an individual organism (e.g., growth, or that a [single] bird has hollow bones, wings of a certain configuration, etc., all of which together are useful for flying).

the whole; in plasticity, the parts' activity is modified by (or in concert with the circumstances of) the whole.

Kant identifies such dependence of parts upon whole with purposiveness: the dependence of part upon the whole, he claims, is characteristic of objects produced by purposive causality (v:373; FI, xx:236), and so too, as we shall see, does he identify reciprocal causal relations (being cause and effect of itself) as purposive. But I suggest that Kant here indicates an aspect of organisms that may be taken as an independent ground for his defense of teleological judgment. For one might take the various manifestations of self-causation, self-affection, or self-determination Kant identifies not to be, already and by definition, purposive, but rather simply to suggest that organic entities are characterized by a particular unity among their parts. In broad terms, Kant is suggesting that an organic part is part of an organism, say a hand in a human body, in a different, stronger way than that in which a bit of granite is part of a rock, or than that in which a gear is part of a watch. One might say that the bit of granite, if separated from the rock, remains that same bit of granite; a gear, outside of a watch, is still the same (formed) bit of metal. But a hand, cut off from the rest of the body, is a hand only "homonymously" (to use Aristotelian terminology); its characteristic properties, behaviors, effects seem to presuppose or depend on its connection to and place in the whole human body.¹⁹ Most simply: if cut off from the body, a hand is dead.²⁰

The organic parts' characteristic activities appear, that is, to be internally related: they adapt themselves to one another and to changed circumstances, and thereby preserve the equilibrium or continued activity of the whole. The stomach, liver, kidneys, small and large intestines do

¹⁹ Hence perhaps our reactions to representations of dismembered yet still functioning, "living" limbs (e.g., in horror movies or Surrealist art) – horror, disgust, alienation, a sense of absurdity.

²⁰ Kant himself claims, however, that organisms should be understood only "analogously" to life (v:374–5). Kant refers here to his conception of "life" as "the causality of a representation with respect to its object" (*Metaphysics Mrongovius*, xxix:894), or, that is, as desire. (Cf. *MFNS* iv:544, where Kant characterizes life similarly and claims that to explain such causality one must adduce "another substance different from matter.") These claims have an obvious limitation: though they may include animals in the category of the living (their behavior is understood as caused by pain, pleasure, or "pathological" desire), they do not apply easily to plants. (See *Dreams of a Spirit Seer* 11:329–32 for Kant's early struggles with this problem.) Kant's use of a tree in the CTJ as a central example suggests – though Kant does not so claim – that with the concept of natural purpose Kant articulates a more inclusive (and perhaps less metaphysically problematic) conception of life.

not operate independently, serially, or parallel to one another, but cooperate to form the digestive system; each adapts its functioning²¹ (within certain parameters) depending on the state, functioning, or circumstances of the other organs. Similarly, given different external circumstances, organic parts/functions modify themselves, coordinately, to these changes (e.g., the body's maintenance of a relatively stable temperature despite external temperature changes).

Thus the parts of an organic object and activities thereof seem to be more truly unified with one another than the parts of an inorganic object, to be what they are or do what they do only because, only if and when, they are parts of this whole. Because organisms are thus unified – and do not (question-beggingly) appear designed – I shall now argue, they cannot be explained mechanically; or, that is, I shall now turn to the first, negative prong of Kant's argument that organisms must be judged teleologically. This argument, as I shall suggest, also shows that we may characterize organic unity more specifically as a unity of parts as diverse, or in their contingent characters.

3.4 Mechanism and the concept of matter

As many scholars have noted, Kant uses the terminology of “mechanism” in a variety of ways in the *Cj* and elsewhere.²² We may, however, identify

²¹ In accord with my attempt to avoid Kant's question-begging manner of describing organisms (as already purposive), I use “function” here not to imply anything about purposes, intentions, or design, but merely to mean the dynamic behavior of a part or “what the thing does.” Zumbach (*Transcendent Science*, p. 15) argues contra Kant's usage that causal relations (of which teleological relations among organic functions are a particular case) are relations between events rather than objects (or parts of objects). I follow Kant's usage (of “object” or “part” often to mean event or function) because Kant holds in general that the concept of cause is a component of the concept of an object as such, and, specifically, he understands organisms as dynamically unified beings; thus, e.g., the existence and nature of a part of an organism can be seen as an event, as the effect of the process of growth. References to “objects” or “parts” in Kant ought, then, to be understood to include such dynamic connotations.

²² For the best treatments, see Ginsborg, “Kant on Understanding Organisms” and “Two Kinds of Mechanical Inexplicability in Kant and Aristotle,” *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 42 (2004), 33–65. Like Ginsborg, I take Kant's conception of mechanism to be *crucially* connected to his conception of matter and the universal, necessary laws (of physics) governing motion. As I shall argue in a moment, however, I take these laws to entail explanation of wholes by independent parts (as McLaughlin argues, and against which Ginsborg argues), and also, contra Ginsborg, believe that one must identify some such further meaning of mechanism (beyond the laws governing matter) to explain how Kant can conceive of “mechanism” as a

three primary meanings thereof in the CTJ. First, Kant identifies mechanical explanation with explanation of wholes by reference to the independent character of their parts: “if one regards the parts for . . . a possible whole as already completely given, then the division proceeds mechanically . . . and the whole becomes an aggregate . . .” (FI, xx:247). I shall refer to this conception of mechanism as the “mechanical principle”: it identifies an approach whereby one might explain objects or events. This principle may ground one kind of determinative claim about an object – i.e., it is a whole made up of or generated by these independently “given” parts – but it is also a regulative principle for scientific investigation – i.e., we ought to try to explain this whole by trying to identify its independent parts and their properties.

Second, as at v:360 (quoted above), Kant appears to identify mechanism with efficient causation.²³ This understanding is not identical to the “mechanical principle”: we may make efficient causal judgments (e.g., cold freezes water) that are not, at least apparently, explanations of wholes by their parts – and vice versa (e.g., the rug is soft because it is made of silk fibers). More generally, explaining an event by a necessarily preceding event – in accord with the efficient causal principle – is not, it would seem, identical to explaining a whole by its parts.²⁴

Third, Kant identifies mechanism not with efficient causality generally, but with *physical* efficient causal explanation, writing, for example, that “merely mechanical laws” are “the true physical grounds of explanation, the interconnection of which constitutes scientific cognition of nature through reason.”²⁵ Kant here refers to his doctrine of physics in the *MFNS*, in which he “constructs” the empirical concept of matter; matter as such is, Kant argues, governed by universal laws that comprise “natural necessity” – the laws of mechanical physics.²⁶

regulative principle, for the laws of physics are constitutive principles of matter as such.

²³ See also *GW* iv:458; *CPrR* v:6n, 29, 87, 97, 100, 114.

²⁴ This distinction is stressed by McLaughlin, *Critique of Teleology*, pp. 141–4; Henry Allison, “Kant’s Antinomy of Teleological Judgment,” *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 30 supplement (1991), 27–8; Véronique Zanetti, “Die Antinomie der teleologischen Urteilskraft,” *Kant-Studien* 84 (1993), 352.

²⁵ FI, xx:235. Likewise, Kant refers frequently in the CTJ to the “laws of motion” (i.e., the laws of physical mechanics) as the laws of “natural mechanism.”

²⁶ In the context of Kant’s discussions of physics, we may identify yet another meaning of “mechanical,” for Kant criticizes “mathematical-mechanical” physics, which – unlike Kant’s “dynamic” physics – does not invoke a concept of force to explain the interactions of bodies. See *MFNS* iv:532–3; Daniel Warren, “Kant’s Dynamics,” in Watkins, ed., *Kant and the Sciences*, pp. 93–116. I shall not consider this sort of

This third concept of mechanism (which I shall call “physical mechanism”), I suggest, is the core meaning of “mechanism” in the CTJ, which unites the other two. For, first, efficient causality, as it applies to material objects (as such), takes this form, viz., the physical-mechanical laws governing matter. Thus with respect to material nature as such, physical mechanism and efficient causality are identical. Kant’s physics also entails, as I shall now argue, that we understand the character and generation of material objects as grounded upon the independent characters and operations of their parts, i.e., that the efficient causal laws that govern matter *are* laws that explain objects and events in accord with the mechanical principle.²⁷

Identifying physical mechanism as Kant’s core understanding of mechanism can thus address several of the questions raised above about Kant’s v:360 argument (that organisms must be judged teleologically, because they cannot be judged mechanically). It explains Kant’s identification there, as just noted, between efficient causation and mechanism, and Kant’s identification of mechanism with the principle that governs (material) nature. Thus this meaning of mechanism also grounds Kant’s strong presumption in his argument at v:360 and elsewhere that nature is to be judged mechanically if possible (e.g., in arguing that we ought to explain the sand’s presence on the coast not because it is useful to the fir trees there, but because of the *motions* of the sea): material things should be explained as behaving in accord with the universal laws governing matter and motion, the laws of physical mechanism.

Moreover, if physical mechanism involves explanation in accord with the mechanical principle, then it will follow that these fundamental laws of nature cannot explain organic unity. For explanation in accord with the mechanical principle does not explain parts as dependent on the whole but vice versa, and thus does not – a fortiori – explain the special character of an organism, as sketched above, for this consists precisely in unity, viz., the dependence of parts on a whole.²⁸ More broadly, as Kant suggests at xx:247 (quoted above), if one explains a whole mechanically, this whole will be understood as an “aggregate” (of independent parts),

mechanism here, however, for Kant’s references to physical mechanism in the CTJ refer to his own physics.

²⁷ As I shall discuss in the [next chapter](#), Kant’s physics also grounds his claim that we ought to employ this principle as a regulative principle in our search for more particular laws of nature.

²⁸ McLaughlin (*Critique of Teleology*) emphasizes this central line of argument in the Analytic of the CTJ as well, though he does not ground it in Kant’s physics.

not as a unity of internally related parts, or a true whole. So Kant suggests as well concerning the laws that define the character of matter itself:

matter is a multitude of things, which *by itself* can provide no determinate unity of composition . . . (v:377; my emphasis)

if the cause is sought merely in *matter*, as an *aggregate* of numerous substances *external* to one another, the unity of the principle for the intrinsically purposive form of its formation is entirely lacking. (v:421, my emphasis)

Material objects understood as such are, Kant suggests here, not “determinately” unified, but are mere “aggregates” of independently given parts “external to one another.” To see why this is so, I shall now turn briefly to Kant’s account of matter in the *MFNS*.

The concept of matter in the MFNS

In the *MFNS*, Kant constructs the concept of matter and the universal laws that govern it in three stages: phoronomy (the laws of motion in space), dynamics (the laws of force as filling space), mechanics (the laws of moving forces in space). The corresponding definitions of matter are: “the movable in space” (iv:480); “the movable insofar as it fills a space” (iv:496); “the movable insofar as it . . . has moving force” (iv:536). Material objects as such are, then, universally and necessarily governed by the laws of geometry, which rule the configuration and motion of matter within space; the laws of dynamics, which rule the cohesion of (parts of) material objects; and the laws of mechanics, which govern the interactions among material objects and the communication of motion.²⁹

On the basis of these three sets of laws or properties of material objects, one might extrapolate three criteria for the identity or unity of a material object. A material object is the same, unified object if it has a spatio-temporal position and if its motion is spatio-temporally continuous from that original spatio-temporal position. Second, dynamically, a material object is unified if it more or less impenetrably fills a particular spatial position or, on Kant’s more detailed account, if the repulsive and cohesive forces in it are in balance with one another. Third, a material object is

²⁹ I omit the last section (“phenomenology”) of the *MFNS* because it treats the way in which the observer must understand herself to be positioned vis à vis the observed object, not the concept of matter itself.

unified if it or the combination of its parts interact(s) “as one” with other material objects, i.e., if its dynamical/mechanical interaction with other objects can be considered as placed at one geometric point.

It is the second, dynamic criterion that primarily establishes the unity of a material object: a material object is unified if its parts cohere in one area, and repel other matter from entering that space. The centrality of this dynamic criterion rests on Kant’s most basic definition of matter – as that which fills space. For Kant justifies his claim that there are two fundamental material forces (cohesive and repulsive) by arguing that they are needed in order to explain how matter can fill space (1v:497f., 524).

This most fundamental definition of matter entails, I suggest, that material wholes are, on Kant’s view, always mechanical in the sense of the mechanical principle, viz., always in principle to be understood as composed of, and explicable in terms of, independent parts. Because material objects, and their parts, are defined dynamically by their (filling, cohering, repelling) presence in space, the parts of material objects are (literally) “external to one another” (v:4201): they are essentially conditioned by space as the form of external relations, or the relation of “being outside of.”³⁰ Moreover, each material object can, in principle, be divided into indefinitely smaller portions of matter, each of which fills its own bit of space – itself in principle indefinitely divisible – because of its own repulsive and cohesive forces (1v:503–4).³¹

Material parts can, moreover, be seen to be governed by the physical-mechanical laws of interaction between separate, material (space-occupying, movable) objects, related by impact or attraction, viz., the laws governing the interaction of objects as characterized by precisely the same forces – repulsive and cohesive – insofar as they cause motion.³²

³⁰ So Kant defines space: it is the formal condition of “outer” intuition, of things not only outside us, but also – importantly here – outside of one another (A26/B42, A264/B320; *MFNS* 1v:503).

³¹ Thus in the *MFNS*, Kant applies his conclusions in the Second Antinomy concerning the potentially infinite divisibility of objects as represented in space to the empirical concept of matter. See A526–7/B555–6, where Kant also contrasts thus divisible matter to the character of organisms. See Eric Watkins, “Kant’s Justification of the Laws of Mechanics,” in *Kant and the Sciences*, pp. 136–59, on this claim as a response to rationalist debates.

³² In the *MFNS*, Kant distinguishes between dynamics and mechanics on the grounds that the latter concerns, specifically, moving forces, not those posited to explain filling space. These motive forces are, however, ultimately grounded upon the dynamic repulsive and cohesive forces (though the laws governing these forces, as motive forces, are not identical to the dynamic laws). The “mechanics” of the *MFNS* thus constitutes a synthesis of the geometrical laws (of motion) and dynamical laws

These relations among parts are in turn external (causal) relations, according to Kant. Matter, Kant claims, is “lifeless” or cannot move itself, but will only move due to external forces, whether impact or attraction of other bits of matter (iv:544). A material whole is, thus, not merely composed of individually given parts, but may also be understood as the result of generation in accord with the mechanical principle: each part is autonomous, filling its own space, and “stuck onto” the others by (and interacting with one another in accord with) external forces.³³ Causal connections among material objects may, likewise, be analyzed into causal relations among (added) parts.

Thus, because Kant defines matter in terms of space (that which moves in and fills space), according to physical mechanism, we must conceive of material objects as such, as mechanically composed aggregates.³⁴ A material object is always to be understood in principle as an assemblage or aggregate, a “multitude” or plurality; it is always appropriate (even desirable) to explain the generation, character, and effects of such an object in terms of its parts.³⁵ “All parts of matter,” Kant writes, are, like

(of force), such that – broadly speaking – the latter may be taken to explain the former. (This explains, I suggest, why Kant refers globally to the laws of material nature as “mechanical” laws.) One might argue that because Kant conceives of physical mechanics, narrowly, as laws governing the communication of motion, the material parts of an object need not themselves be considered as related mechanically (but only dynamically), for they may not in fact move one another. But I suggest that the parts should be understood as having come to an equilibrium of such forces, without which the parts would in fact move one another (i.e., they are in a mechanical state, viz., rest). In any case, the generation of such a whole would proceed in accord with the laws of physical mechanics, since Kant holds that all change of matter as such is caused by an external force (*MFNS* iv:543f.).

³³ By characterizing material parts as “independent” and externally moved, I do not mean to deny that such parts are defined in terms of forces, and thus in terms of their effects on other objects (force is a relational property), but only to claim that, unlike the relational characteristics of organic parts, these relational properties will remain unchanged – have the same effects – with respect to any or all other material objects, whether or not the part, defined by these forces, is taken to be part of this particular material object or another.

³⁴ At v:408–9, Kant refers to his *MFNS* concept of matter, defined as that which fills space, in claiming that if we conceive of material objects as the ultimately real things (or things in themselves), the only unity that would hold of such objects is the unity of space. Thus Kant’s position is more complex than I suggest: as an intuition, space itself is represented as a whole, of which particular spaces are represented as “limitations” (and thus as parts of this whole); material parts of objects, as space-filling, are unified in the sense that they are within space (itself a unified whole). This, however, does not entail that any single material object is a determinate, non-arbitrarily identified unity itself – or, as Kant argues at v:409, a “real” (causal/dynamic) unity.

³⁵ *MFNS* iv:537f.

the wholes of which they are parts, “substances” (*MFNS* iv:503). It is for this reason too that objects understood as governed by physical-mechanical laws are understood to be governed by “blind” mechanism: their movement and cohesion are to be explained by external forces. Thus, as Kant writes, unless we invoke another condition for unity (specifically purposiveness), “all unity [in nature] is mere natural necessity, and if it is nevertheless ascribed to things that we *represent as external to one another*, [it is] blind necessity.”³⁶

A material object as such cannot, thus, constitute a “determinate unity” (v:377). As noted above, Kant identifies spatio-temporal position as an *a priori* criterion of identity in the *Amphiboly*, and, as I have suggested, Kant may also identify the spatial boundaries of an impenetrable object as determinative of its identity as a material (space-filling) object. But physical-mechanical explanation of matter also establishes that these criteria are somewhat arbitrary. This conception of matter entails that the material parts of these objects have equal claim to being considered as individuals in their own right, or that these material objects, or the events/motions they undergo, might just as well be taken to be parts of some broader material interactions or objects (explained, in turn, by these objects [the parts] and their forces). Even disintegration of an initial material object (e.g., a rock eroded into sand) can be taken not to be destruction of that object, but merely to be a series of causes and effects, which ends in the spatial dispersal of its material parts, i.e., as a new spatial configuration of the actual objects, the parts. Because all mechanical relations of part to part in objects are external – one piece of matter next to another (defined by space), moved or attracted by the homogeneous (space-filling) forces of the next – we cannot, it seems, non-arbitrarily decide where to “stop,” which object (or part of an object) should “count” as *one* object.³⁷

³⁶ v:393–4; my emphasis.

³⁷ The arguments in this section are akin to Leibniz’s arguments concerning the merely aggregative character of matter by contrast to the unity of organisms and the true unity of monads. On these arguments, see Donald Rutherford, *Leibniz and the Rational Order of Nature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), chapters 5–6, 9–10. In identifying the limitations of material unity, Kant may be modifying his criticism of Leibnizean arguments concerning identity criteria of an object in the *Amphiboly*, or (perhaps more properly) providing a place within his system for the Leibnizean distinctions, not as the most fundamental (metaphysical) characterization of objects, but as significant for our judgmental recognition of the particular characteristics of natural objects.

3.5 Organic unity II: Unity of diversity

Organic unity, understood as the dependence of part upon whole, thus cannot, as Kant argues, be explained by the terms of physical mechanism, which entails that one explain wholes by the operations of their independent, externally related parts, and thus as aggregates. More substantively, as we have seen, material parts as such do not change their character, i.e., their intrinsic, space-occupying forces, when they are within a material whole, whereas organic parts seem to be or act as they are, to alter their characters and effects, depending on the state of the whole or the activities of the other parts. And again, by contrast to material objects understood solely as such, we identify stronger identity and unity conditions for organisms than spatial contiguity or cohesion: one can demarcate where the organic object and its proper parts “stop”; false fingernails, despite their spatial contiguity with, and cohesion to, the hand, are not parts of the hand or the body – for they do not grow, are not made by the body. Organic objects seem, by contrast to material objects as such, to be identifiable non-arbitrarily as single, unified objects (or a unified, dynamic set of activities), or closed systems.³⁸

We may, moreover, now identify a bit more precisely the character of organic unity, that which is not mechanically explicable. For an organism is, of course, a material object or “body” (v:373). Organisms occupy, and move in, space, and thus are to be understood as governed by the laws of physical mechanism. When a bird flies into a window, is repulsed, and falls, these events are governed by physical-mechanical laws. An organism’s parts, likewise, coexist and cohere in accord with the dynamic laws that govern all material parts. Correspondingly, Kant argues against “hylozoism” – the doctrine that organisms are composed of special, “living” matter – that it defines matter inappropriately. All matter, including that of organisms, is to be understood as “lifeless,” Kant claims, for such “lifelessness” or “inertia” is the “essential” characteristic of matter; the matter in organisms is also to be conceived as matter as such, viz., as governed by the physical laws of the *MFNS*.³⁹

Kant argues, then, not that organisms cannot be explained by reference to physical mechanism at all, but that “what is specific” about organic

³⁸ Cf. Charles Taylor, *The Explanation of Behaviour* (London: Routledge, Kegan and Paul, 1964), pp. 10, 24, 38, 107, 113, 216, 231–5.

³⁹ v:374, 394. Zumbach (*Transcendent Science*, p. 87) thus rightly characterizes Kant as an “ontological reductionist.”

beings cannot be so explained (v:388). “What is specific” ought, I argue, to be glossed not only as unity, but more specifically as a unity obtaining *among* particular, contingent, diverse properties of parts, the dependence of parts on the whole *in* their particular characters.

Like the categorial principles, that is, the universal, physical-mechanical laws of physics treat objects (here material objects as such) as homogeneous to one another, and thus also underdetermine the particular character of all material objects, for they concern precisely the universally shared characteristics of all matter. On the physical-mechanical view, that is, matter is understood as thoroughly homogeneous, as composed of homogeneous parts (i.e., space-filling parts) related to one another in virtue of the same forces that render them material (viz., the dynamic properties of matter *qua* matter).⁴⁰ The homogeneity of matter on the physical-mechanical view constitutes the great advantage of Newtonian physics, according to Kant, for it not only allows one to formulate universal laws of nature, by leaving aside the particular differences among kinds of matter, but also renders matter, its parts, forces, and interactions mathematically describable (i.e., in terms of homogeneous units, here primarily of force). By necessity, then, the physical-mechanical treatment of matter underdetermines the particular, diverse characteristics of material objects.

Some such characteristics (e.g., heat and cold) might ultimately be reduced to mathematically describable, physical characteristics (e.g., of motion and rest). What appears to be “specific” to organisms is, Kant suggests however, rather different, not merely a further, underdetermined characteristic of the object, but one that requires a different principle. Because what is specific to organisms is unity, this specific character cannot be explained by physical mechanics; such unity is contingent, not necessitated by physical laws (as Kant argues at v:360).

Organic unity is not only a unity that is contingent, moreover, but also one that holds among parts *qua* contingent and diverse, viz., not solely as characterized by their necessary, homogeneous character as material but as particular, diverse, empirically determined, in their contingent character(s). In growth, for example, parts come to “exist” through the

⁴⁰ Because these forces may differ by degree, Kant argues that his own dynamic physics does not treat matter as “absolutely” homogeneous (by contrast to Cartesian strictly “mechanical” physics; *MFNS* iv:525). Nonetheless, on Kant’s conception, all material parts are understood as characterized by these same forces, and the differences between the forces may be mathematically, quantitatively described (as differences of [quantitative] degree).

actions of the whole not qua material – the “raw materials” for growth are provided, as Kant writes, by nature external to the organism – but insofar as they have a “quality peculiar to that species” (v:371). A merely “homonymous” hand, dead or separate from the body, is thus “homonymous” not as material (it retains such properties), but because it no longer has particular, contingent characteristics, e.g., blood moving through its veins and consequent color, or grasping motions. Kant’s claim, then, that organic parts depend on the whole may be understood, more specifically, as a claim that organic parts (or their activities) depend on their wholes *as* heterogeneous, and with respect to their *contingent* properties, i.e., not as parts considered solely as material, in terms of their necessary, homogeneous properties as such. Moreover, such parts are unified not only with respect to their contingent, heterogeneous characters, but also as heterogeneous from one another. The stomach, liver, and intestines cooperate in the digestive system, the heart, lungs, etc., in maintaining body temperature, not only in having particular, contingent effects, but in having effects that are heterogeneous *from one another*: e.g., the lungs absorb oxygen, the heart contracts and expands and circulates blood, etc. Such interdependent unity – of diverse parts as diverse – is, I submit, what it means to be “organized.”

To clarify this point, we might contrast cases of inorganic objects composed of heterogeneous materials, e.g., a rock composed of granite and quartz, or a hunk of iron that rusts (oxidizes), i.e., changes due to the addition of oxygen molecules. These diverse parts are not, first, apparently interdependent or transformed by their place in this whole; granite is such whether or not it is part of a rock composed also of some quartz. Nor are these objects understood to be more unified if one attends to the contingent, heterogeneous characters of these parts than if they are considered merely as material; they seem, simply, to be mishmashes of heterogeneous parts – iron or granite plus something else. Indeed, one can *better* consider these parts to be unified in terms of the homogeneous forces of matter as such; the parts qua material are next to one another, cohere, and repulse other objects, in a way explicable by mathematically describable forces.

By contrast, organisms are unified, their parts depend on the whole, not in spite of, but because of, the contingent, diverse characteristics of the parts. *Hence* organisms may have stronger identity and unity conditions than those that govern material objects as such. For, as we have seen, material “unity” is provisional and somewhat arbitrary. This provisionality may also, I now suggest, be understood to derive from the

homogeneity of matter as such: objects described in physical-mechanical terms are understood to have homogeneous parts, which are related to one another in homogeneous relations; *because* these parts and relations are homogeneous, these relations hold not only among parts of the same object, but also among all material objects. As Kant's arguments in the first and third *CPR* Antinomies suggest, relations among homogeneous parts (whether mathematical [spatio-temporal], or causal) are merely, and strictly, serial, never definitively completed or unified: no part of the series, in and of itself, can show itself to be, or be identified as, a final or distinctive part. One can, at best, know the "totality" or the "plurality" of such a series, though it is unclear whether one would ever know whether one actually had found such a totality. Precisely because and insofar as organic parts are understood as contingent and diverse (including heterogeneous from one another), they may be understood as unified, rather than merely aggregated.

3.6 An analogy for organic unity: Technic

The argument as presented so far – that mechanism cannot explain unity, specifically unity of the diverse – does not in itself establish that this unity can, much less *must*, be explained teleologically. (Unless one defends Kant's disjunctive premise, which I shall not attempt to do here.) As suggested by the passages above, Kant appears to come to this conclusion via definitional claims, e.g., such unity is a "unity of a purpose," or purposiveness simply is the order of parts that depend on wholes. Kant does, however, also provide an argument for this claim. As we have seen, Kant defines purposiveness as characteristic of intentional, conceptually guided causality or of an object so caused (D2). A purposive object is one caused by an agent in accord with a concept or rule, and thus would display "unity in accord with a rule." In one of his introductory examples of purposiveness (or inferences to a purposive cause) in the CTJ, Kant argues, accordingly:

If someone were to perceive . . . a regular hexagon, drawn in the sand in an apparently uninhabited land, his reflection, working with a concept of it, would become aware of *the unity of the principle of its generation by means of reason* . . . and thus, in accordance with this, would not be able to judge as a ground of the possibility of such a shape, the sand, the nearby sea, the wind, the footprints of any known animals, or any other non-rational cause, because the contingency of coinciding with such a concept, which is possible only in reason, would seem to him . . . infinitely great . . . (v:370, my emphasis; cf. FI, xx:228)

We must explain the drawn hexagon as a “product of art” (as purposively caused), Kant argues here, first because it is unified in accord with a concept (the hexagon), and second because such unity is contingent, i.e., does not appear likely to be caused by the regular course of natural laws (the sea, the sand, the wind, operating in accord with the necessary, physical-mechanical laws of material nature). Because what is “special” about organisms is their unity, and because this unity is contingent too with respect to the necessary (physical) laws of nature, one might suggest, organisms ought also to be characterized as purposive, to be (as if) caused by a conceptually guided, rational agent.

This quick argument is, however, unsatisfying in three respects. First, as McLaughlin argues, it seems to concern formal, rather than final, causality: it is the form (indeed unified form) of the object that is here to be explained.⁴¹ Though this argument accords with D1 and D2, that is, it does not have much to do with final causality as directedness to or utility for ends. Kant does, however, invoke precisely this connotation of purposiveness elsewhere: e.g., he characterizes judgments that sand is useful for fir trees as judgments of (extrinsic) purposiveness, and claims that the concept of natural purpose establishes that organisms have parts that are organs or “instruments.” This analogical argument does not, however, establish that we must judge organisms or their parts to be purposive in this more substantive sense.

Second, though organic unity is, as I have argued, contingent with respect to the necessary laws of nature, like the hexagon, it is so in a somewhat different way. Kant argues that a hexagon is a concept of reason and thus “must” be judged to be caused by a rational being. But our inference in the case of the hexagon is not, I suggest, solely based on the character of the hexagon itself. Kant himself notes that some inorganic, purely natural objects are geometrically regular, but does not argue that we must judge *these* forms teleologically.⁴² More generally, Kant cannot argue that anything we judge to instantiate a rational concept must be understood to be caused to be such by a rational being: we understand purely material objects to be unified in accord with laws and

⁴¹ McLaughlin, *Critique of Teleology*, p. 39. McLaughlin does not offer this as a criticism, but rather concludes that Kant is in fact concerned with formal causal explanation in the CTJ. Kant not only refers to such causality as final or teleological causality, however, but also provides evidence that he conceives of this form more specifically as comprising means–ends relations.

⁴² v:411; Kant is troubled, however, by the case of crystals (contrast, e.g., v:348–9 with FI, xx:217).

to fall under “concepts of reason,” but do not thereby hold them to be caused to be such by a rational agent.⁴³ The inference in the case of the hexagon is not then solely based on the fact that it falls under a concept of reason, but also on the fact that, in this context, this shape is *unusual* – and in that sense contingent, prompting us to look for a different, unusual cause, as an alternative to the normal rule of nature (and *then* because the hexagon falls under a concept of reason, we justifiably infer that this cause is likely to be a human being, who can draw in accord with concepts). Organisms are, however, not unusual or contingent(ly unified) in that sense: organisms, unlike hexagons drawn in the sand, are pervasive in nature.

Third, and relatedly, the hexagon itself seems not to be characterized by a unity particularly similar to that of organisms. The hexagon’s parts are, that is, neither unified as heterogeneous from one another, nor in and by dynamic relations to one another, nor are they dependent on the whole.⁴⁴ Each of the hexagon’s subordinate lines would not, it is true, have been drawn (where it is, in relation to the others) unless the agent had a concept of the hexagon, and had drawn in accord with that concept (as Kant argues, concerning the way in which we may “make” a representation of a single line, in the A Deduction). But understood simply as parts of the object, these lines have the character they do quite independently of their places in the hexagon, do not have different (or perhaps any) effects, because they are parts of this whole. Thus the hexagon does not seem to have the characteristics Kant identifies as “special” in organisms, which are to be explained by purposiveness.

Kant’s hexagon argument – or the general line of argument from (some) contingent order to purposive causal origin – ought for these reasons to be understood, I suggest, as a “first pass” at his argument that

⁴³ Kant’s transcendental idealism might be read to comprise just such a claim: i.e., that objects, as unified and law-governed (i.e., as falling under concepts of the understanding), may be understood to be such only as constructed by human understandings. So Kant suggests perhaps, in the *CJ* introductions, in arguing that we must presuppose that an “understanding not ours” legislates those (empirical) laws not legislated by us. Though I would resist this reading of Kant’s idealism, the inference under discussion here would not be justified even then, for it is a causal judgment we make “within” nature or falls within the domain of Kant’s empirical realism.

⁴⁴ I would argue that this distinction also explains Kant’s (apparently) considered judgment that crystals need not be judged teleologically: because crystals are more regularly ordered, their components homogeneous to one another – by contrast to organic unity as a unity of heterogeneous parts in heterogeneous relations – one can understand crystals as “assemblages.”

organic unity ought to be judged teleologically. In his more detailed analysis of the concept of a natural purpose, Kant proposes, however, a “second pass” at an analogy of organic unity to technic more narrowly understood: Kant’s examples there of purposive objects – a house and a watch – are artifacts, not simply objects made in accord with concepts, but made to be useful (v:372, 374). Thus Kant suggests that we ought to understand organisms on analogy not to just any conceptually guided activity and its products, but to such activity and products *as* directed towards ends or uses, i.e., artifacts made and used in accord with concepts *of* purposes. As I shall now suggest, we may indeed attain a closer approximation to the unity of organisms, and more specific reasons for judging this unity as purposive, by attending to the character of such artifacts.

Like organisms, artifacts are material objects ruled by the universal, necessary, physical-mechanical laws. Also like organisms, artifacts have a “determinate unity” – of parts as diverse – beyond mere mechanical, material aggregation. For example, if a car rusts, i.e., adds oxygen molecules by mechanical accretion, these molecules are part of the car, in accord with physical criteria of identity: they move along with, are spatially contiguous to, and cohere to, the car. If we consider the car as an artifact, however, these molecules do not constitute parts of the car (but rather a blemish). This determinate unity of the artifact is, moreover, a unity of parts that are “there” in the object because of their contingent or heterogeneous properties or characteristic effects (functions). Thus a car is composed of parts made of a variety of materials – rubber, plastic, metal, leather – in a variety of shapes or configurations. Far from making the car merely a mishmash of heterogeneous stuffs that are unified only due to the necessary, universal properties of matter, this heterogeneity, the contingent nature of the parts, is precisely what makes these parts belong to the car and be related to one another as they are. The tires (shaped in the particular way they are, composed of the particular material they are) perform the function of rolling along the road and turn around the axles (shaped in their particular way, composed of their particular material, both heterogeneous from that of the tires). Nor do such parts continue to have the same effects if separated from the whole object – separated tires do not stand perpendicular to the road, nor roll parallel to one another. And if other parts of the object change or are absent, such parts likewise change their contingent functioning; just as organisms die, artifacts break. Thus, like the parts of an organism (and unlike the parts of a hexagon), the parts and their characteristic activities

of such artifacts are dynamically related to one another, and to the whole; indeed the contingent, diverse, particular character of each part depends on the whole.⁴⁵

This dynamic interrelation among parts, and the dependence of the particular function of the parts upon the whole in artifacts, may, moreover, be explained teleologically, in a stronger sense than in the hexagon case. As we have seen, Kant suggests that form, design, order, or arrangement is not possible (or we cannot understand it to be possible) by blind chance or mere natural necessity, but only if it is caused to be such by an intentional, rational agent. And indeed the reason why the particular parts of an artifact are “there,” arranged with others as they are, and have their particular character, is the act of an intentional designer, e.g., the engineer, who designed the car in accord with her concept. In paradigmatic cases of technical production of artifacts, however, this concept is based on the concept *of* a purpose: the engineer designs the car not simply in accord with some concept (as in the hexagon case), but a concept of an object *as* serving a purpose, accomplishing an end, as having particular effects. Thus, Kant writes, in purposive relations “the idea of the effect” is “subsumed under the causality of its cause as the

⁴⁵ I concur, then, with Ginsborg, e.g., “Mechanical Inexplicability,” 37, that Kant holds that artifacts, *like* organisms, cannot be explained by physical mechanism and must rather be explained teleologically. Ginsborg argues, however, that artifacts and organisms cannot be so explained because they are characterized by some kind of regularity, by contrast to my contention that they share a unity of the diverse as such that cannot be so explained. As should be clear, moreover, I resist Ginsborg’s attempt to separate this claim from the dependence of part on whole (which comprises the very unity in question) and, more broadly, from the dynamic relations among parts, whether of organisms or of artifacts. Correspondingly, I shall argue in the [next section](#) that the organism’s self-causation or institution of such relations is itself a form of *purposive* causation (as Ginsborg, I believe, would deny).

One might object (perhaps on Ginsborg’s behalf) that my example here does too much to establish my claim that artifacts are composed of heterogeneous parts, which are, particularly, related to one another *dynamically* – as (say) a spoon does not appear to be. We may, however, identify a similar set of relations among a spoon’s parts (albeit in a simpler form), especially if this object is considered in the context of use (which, I shall suggest, is the context in which we understand artifacts as purposive proper). Though a spoon may be made of one material (say, silver), the straightness and width of the spoon’s handle, the smoothness and curve of its lip, the concavity of its head, are all heterogeneous properties of the spoon’s parts, which belong to the spoon *as* heterogeneous, and are (in use) related dynamically to one another as such (the straight handle keeps the concave “head” of the spoon level enough to hold food, which it does because it is concave, etc.). If one of these parts is altered (say, bent), the spoon – like the car – may well break, and the other parts lose their heterogeneous functions.

underlying condition of [its] possibility” (v:367). The engineer chooses the material and shape of the axles, and chooses rubber to be shaped into tires *because* the particular properties of rubber in this shape suit it for rolling along a road, i.e., for having a particular effect. The axles (in their particular character, shape, and material) serve as means to this end, which in turn is a means to the ultimate end of the object.

In an artifact, then, the character of the parts and their interrelations – the unity of the object – is due not only to the concept of the designer, which causes the object’s existence, but also to the functions they can perform *for* (the purpose of) the whole object – which purpose informs the designer’s original concept. The relations among the parts themselves may, thus, themselves be characterized as purposive, viz., means–ends, relations: they are related to one another because of their characteristic, particular effects, i.e., as means to ends, whether subordinated – as the axles are to the tires – or coordinated – as the steering column and the tires both serve the overarching end of the car.

In his analysis of the “determinate concept” of a natural purpose, Kant defines purposive relations, correspondingly, as follows:

The causal nexus, insofar as it is conceived merely by the understanding, is a connection that constitutes a series (of causes and effects) that is always descending; the things themselves, which as effects presuppose others as their causes, cannot conversely be causes of these at the same time. This causal nexus is called that of efficient causes (*nexus effectivus*). In contrast, however, a causal nexus can also be conceived in accordance with a concept of reason (of purposes), which, if considered as a series, would carry with it ascending as well as descending dependency, in which the thing which is on the one hand designated as an effect nevertheless deserves, in ascent, the name of a cause of the same thing of which it is the effect. (v:372)

I shall return to the contrast Kant draws here between purposive and efficient (rather than mechanical) causality in a moment. First, however, we may note that Kant expressly characterizes purposiveness as a type of relations, indeed of dynamic relations, i.e., purposiveness on this characterization is not simply the fact of having been caused by a concept-having agent, as on D2 or the hexagon argument, but is an order of relations that characterizes the whole “series” of “things” in relation to one another. Kant identifies the central characteristic of purposive relations, specifically, as a “dependence” of “things” (parts, functions) upon one another both “as the series ascends” and as it “descends,” that a

thing's effect may also be understood to be its cause. Or, as I have suggested: when an object is understood as purposive, its parts cause effects (what they do serves ends), and are "there" precisely because they will have those effects.⁴⁶

Kant's analogy to technic and his analysis of purposive relations at v:372 thus provide a more substantive understanding than D2 of the nature of a "unity of a purpose" or, that is, of the principle of purposiveness as a principle of judgment whereby we recognize an object as unified, specifically as a unity of the diverse as such. That is: purposiveness on this characterization is a type of relations (among parts, events) as means to ends, which relations hold among parts considered in their contingent characters, and thus constitute a unity of the diverse or a lawfulness of the contingent. In an artifact, the diverse parts *necessarily* or lawfully perform their contingent, empirical, diverse functions: for the car to operate, the tires and axles *must* have the particular effects that they do; their contingent properties matter. Moreover, these contingent functions must be different from one another, are related to one another *as* diverse: precisely and only because the axles are made of different materials, shaped differently, and therefore function differently than the tires, can they serve as means to the tires' functioning (and in turn to the purpose of the car). Or, to use another analogy Kant uses elsewhere in the *CJ*, the artifact is like a mill or any work involving the division of labor: in a mill, there *must* be different parts (or people) who specialize in different types of labor, and belong to the whole precisely because they perform those specific, diverse roles. Thus the principle of purposiveness – as a principle of means–ends relations – comprises a form of the lawfulness of the contingent, a "necessity" that holds precisely for and of the particular, contingent, diverse character of (parts of) objects.

Kant's connection and contrast (at v:372) between purposive and *efficient* causality suggests, moreover, that purposive relations establish unity not as relations in the form of space (on the nature of which, as suggested above, physical-mechanical laws are based), but in the other a priori form of intuition, time. As is well known, and as is echoed in the above passage, Kant understands efficient causation to comprise necessary succession in time (the present conditioned by the past). In his contrast of purposive causality to efficient causality, Kant suggests that purposive relations

⁴⁶ Kant's analysis thus resembles Larry Wright's in "Functions," *Philosophical Review* 82 (1973), 139–68.

comprise relations both of succession (past to present) and of future-directedness (present to future).

This characterization seems quite apt concerning both the technical production of an artifact and the unity constituted thereby among the artifact's parts. In technical activity, the producer's concept initiates and guides the productive process (the choice, shaping, and combination of the parts) and does so by referring to the end of the productive process, viz., the effects this object will have (for use). Correspondingly, the parts of the artifact so produced are conditioned by the past (the concept according to which the artifact was constructed) but also, thereby, as directed towards the future; they are "there" in the object and related to one another because of the effects they *will* have, as means to future ends. Intentional, purposive activity is, then, a more unified "event" (action) than a unidirectional series of causes and effects – and produces a correspondingly unified object – not only because it is rule-governed, but also because of the temporal structure of such activity, in which the first and last states depend upon and refer to one another; they, and therefore also the intervening states, are connected in "ascending" and "descending" order.⁴⁷ Thus, though Kant's central argument in the CTJ appears to concern a contrast between mechanical (material) and teleological explanation, viz., between part/whole and whole/part explanation, Kant's analysis of purposive relations suggests that the dependence of part upon whole, the unity of the purposive object, is instantiated in, and made possible by, reciprocal relations between past causes and future effects – i.e., by the structure of purposive (as opposed to efficient) *causality*.

We appear, then, to have reached the conclusion of Kant's argument: mechanical explanation cannot, and teleological explanation can, explain the "special" unity of organisms and their behavior. The determinate unity of the artifact is a unity of the kind that (I have suggested) characterizes organisms on Kant's view – a unity of the diverse as such (of parts qua heterogeneous or in their contingent character) – and such unity is constituted by dynamic, purposive relations, made possible by purposive causality. In his analysis of the concept of natural purpose, however, Kant states that the technical analogy is not an "exact" one (v:375), and it does not, I suggest, complete Kant's argument: his conclusion is that

⁴⁷ Charles Taylor emphasizes this sort of contrast between the uni-directional relations between "antecedent" and "consequent" in what he calls atomistic (merely efficient causal) laws and "non-contingent" relations between antecedent and consequent in teleological laws (*Explanation of Behaviour*, pp. 44, 50–2, 58–9).

we must judge organisms to be – more specifically – purposive *without* a purpose, and it is to this final stage of the argument that I now turn.

3.7 The limits of the technical analogy: Intrinsic purposiveness or purposiveness without a purpose

Kant's distinction between judgments of artifacts and of organisms and his hesitations concerning the technical analogy may be read, straightforwardly, to comprise a claim that we judge organisms to be purposive in the D₃, rather than D₂, sense: as *natural* beings, organisms are not caused to exist by intelligent agents in accord with concepts (v:373–4). In judging organisms teleologically, we are, then, judging them to be only as if caused by a purposive agent. Thus, as argued in Chapter Two above, the purposiveness of a natural purpose is, in accord with D₃, a purposiveness without a(n actual, conceptual) purpose as its cause.⁴⁸

Kant's hesitations concerning the technical analogy are not, however, primarily of this negative, restrictive sort: the technical analogy does not suggest too much, i.e., that there is a conceptually guided, purposive cause for this object, Kant writes, but rather “says *far too little* about nature and its capacity in organized products” (v:374; my emphasis). Though the parts of artifacts do depend on the whole (in their particular character/function), as we have seen, artifacts do indeed lack the characteristics that Kant identifies as definitive of the special character of organisms: artifacts (watches, in Kant's example) do not reproduce, grow, exhibit plasticity, maintain, or fix themselves (v:374). The technical analogy is thus insufficient, I argue, because organisms ought to be understood as more thoroughly, *intrinsically* purposive than artifacts. Organisms are to be judged as purposive without a purpose, not merely in the negative sense (as if purposive), but rather, and positively, to be internally purposive – purposive in and for themselves, not because of or for an external, imposed purpose – and thus to be constituted by *reciprocal* means–ends relations among their parts.

⁴⁸ Cf. Fricke, “Explaining the Inexplicable,” 56–7. This is also more or less the interpretation (though not in terms of purposiveness without a purpose) endorsed by Zumbach (*Transcendent Science*) and by Richard Aquila, “Unity of Organism, Unity of Thought, and the Unity of the *Critique of Judgment*,” *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 30 suppl. (1991), 139–56: both take Kant to be claiming that we judge organisms as if they are created by (an agent acting in accord with) ideas. Aquila suggests somewhat strangely, however, that it is *because* we take organisms to be created by God's ideas that we find them to be unified.

Artifacts may be identified as externally purposive in two senses. As Kant notes, the parts of artifacts are organized, viz., arranged and interact in accord with means–ends relations, but are so arranged by an external cause, viz., human beings. Though Kant does not emphasize this point, we may add that the artifact *serves* an external purpose, i.e., is useful for the producer or other human beings.⁴⁹ The purposiveness of artifacts is, correspondingly, purposiveness *with* a purpose: the purposive (means–ends) relations among an artifact’s parts are instituted by a causality that operates in accord with a concept or purpose (as on D1) – and in turn (usually) is, and is judged to be, useful for that conceptually articulated purpose.

This external character of artifactual purposiveness with a purpose entails, moreover, some modifications of the conception of purposive relations among artifactual parts provided in the [previous section](#). As there articulated, purposiveness comprises two related components: means–ends relations that unify the parts of the object (in their contingent characters), and the purposive activity that institutes such relations, by reciprocal causal, temporal (past–present, present–future) relations. In the case of artifacts, this second factor, purposive causality, is attributed not to the artifact itself, but to an external agent. This external attribution means, I suggest now, that artifactual part–part or part–whole relations need not themselves be understood as thoroughly, irreducibly purposive. Artifactual purposiveness may, that is, be analyzed as a combination of two separate elements: the agent’s concept, consequent arrangement of the object, and use thereof – in brief, the purpose – which is “added to” *mechanical* relations among the object’s parts. The parts of an artifact *may* (as in the [previous section](#)) be described as related to one another as means to ends, either one for another (e.g., the axles to the tires), or to the end of the object (e.g., transportation). To judge the parts of an artifact to be so related, however, we must at least implicitly take the human producer and user into account: the part “is there” because of the effect it will have *because* the producer envisioned it thus, and serves as a means to an end *because* the user employs the artifact for this purpose. If we isolate the purpose of the (external) agent – the combination of the artifact’s parts (into a “form”) and the use to which the object is put – we may, however, redescribe artifactual part–part relations mechanically. Given the form (as an initial condition prior to the artifact’s actual

⁴⁹ See Klaus Düsing, *Die Teleologie in Kants Weltbegriff. Kant-Studien Ergänzungshefte* 96 (Bonn: H. Bouvier u. Co. Verlag, 1968), p. 116.

functioning), the parts themselves operate according to their independently given characters, usually according to physical-mechanical laws. Then the combined effect may be taken or used by a human being to serve her ends.⁵⁰

This reduction of purposive, means–ends relations in artifacts to mechanical interactions among parts plus an external human agent reflects, more generally, the character of technical activity, as Kant understands it. In the First Introduction, Kant argues that technical propositions (i.e., claims concerning means–ends relations governing artifactual production and use) are not irreducibly practical. Rather, Kant argues, such propositions differ from theoretical propositions

in the way in which they are presented, [but] *do not on that account differ in their content* . . . [Technical propositions] *are nothing more than the theory of that which belongs to the nature of things*, only applied to the way in which they can be generated by us in accordance with a principle, i.e., their possibility is represented through a voluntary action (which belongs among natural causes as well). Thus the solution to the problem in mechanics of finding the respective lengths of the arms of a lever by means of which a given force will be in equilibrium with a given weight, is of course expressed as a practical formula, but it contains nothing other than the theoretical proposition that the length of the arms is in inverse proportion to the force and the weight if these are in equilibrium (FI, xx:196, my emphasis)

Kant suggests here that claims concerning technical means–ends relations are mere restatements of theoretical claims: “if x then y,” or “x causes y,” is reformulated as “if you want to do y, then you need to do x” or “x can serve the purpose y.” The “content” of these propositions – the relationship between x and y – is not different in the two cases, but merely the “form”: in both cases, x and y are related to one another theoretically, specifically as (efficient) cause to effect, but this relationship may be described in technical “form” (as means to end). The same may be said, I am suggesting, concerning the relations among the parts of artifacts: once

⁵⁰ Though I cannot argue for this claim here, I would suggest that Cummins’ reductive analysis of function as, merely, “what a thing does” (Robert Cummins, “Functional Analysis,” *Journal of Philosophy* 72 [1975], 741–65) is akin to this view of artifactual functions, though without explicit recognition of the external agent’s role. That is, *given* a whole understood as an arrangement (for a purpose) that identifies which aspects of parts are relevant to one’s analysis, i.e., what each part should be taken to do (as, I think, heterogeneous from others), the part’s function can be analyzed as “what it does” as Cummins does.

the human being has assembled them, the parts of a watch (an instructive example) interact mechanically.

Indeed, Kant plausibly claims that in order to produce things technically, we need to know the mechanical laws that would govern the relations among the things' parts (v:383).⁵¹ In assembling artifacts (in accord with concepts envisioning the use to which these objects will be put), in deciding which parts to combine and how to combine them, we must be able to rely on the fact that each part, in its independent character, produces an effect, and will produce that effect when combined with the other parts of the artifact to produce the desired, combined final effect or end.

The artifact may, then, be understood as composed of mechanically interacting parts that serve an external, and externally imposed, purpose; only the intentional agent's activity (and, if one likes, *derivatively* the artifact) is properly understood as purposive, i.e., as a cause determined by its effect (as determining the concept – use – that in turn guides the production of the artifact). Technical purposes are – as on Kant's earlier Appendix model of natural teleology – additional to efficient causal or mechanical relations, responsible for the arrangement of parts, but not fundamentally characterizing the interactions of the parts themselves.

By contrast, natural purposes are not organized by an external (human, rational) cause, but are self-organizing (and fix themselves, etc.).⁵² This contrast comprises, I suggest, a claim that organisms, unlike artifacts, ought to be judged to have *both* factors of purposiveness: the parts of the organism are related as means to ends, *and* the organism itself is characterized by the purposive causality that makes possible such organization. We ought, Kant writes, to understand organisms not only on analogy with artifacts but also “in accordance with an analogy with our own *causality* in the technical use of reason” (v:383; my emphasis). Thus the organism is judged to be characterized positively by purposiveness without a purpose, specifically purposive causality without a purpose: the organism institutes the means–ends relations among its parts and “uses” its parts as “instruments” (acts purposively), but does not do so as guided by concepts (purposes) – organic functioning is purposive, but not

⁵¹ On this claim, see Fricke, “Explaining the Inexplicable,” 50–2; Zanetti, “Die Antinomie,” 347–8.

⁵² Kant is of course aware that organisms have an external cause in some sense (natural reproduction), but their on-going self-maintenance is a causal process to be attributed to the individual organisms.

intentional (v:374). Likewise, we judge the organism “in accordance with a purpose that lies in it itself” (FI, xx:250).⁵³

This identification of organic purposiveness as internal purposiveness does not merely identify the “location” of purposive causality and end (internal to the organism) and its character (not conceptually guided), but also entails that the relations among organic parts are a distinct type of means–end relations. As we have seen, the purposiveness *with* a purpose of artifacts comprises relations among parts as (subordinately or coordinately) means to an external end (e.g., transportation or telling time) identified and established by the producer’s concept. Organic purposive relations without a purpose are, by contrast, *reciprocal* means–ends relations. Because the organism is understood as self-organizing (and self-promoting), we must understand “its parts [as] combined in a whole by being *reciprocally* the cause and effect of their form” (v:373; my emphasis), and thus “*everything is an end and reciprocally a means as well*” (v:376); “each part is conceived as if existing for the sake of the others and on account of the whole, i.e., as an organ . . . [but one] that produces the other

⁵³ Kant refers here to this judgment as a “judgment of perfection,” suggesting that we judge an organism to be a good one of its kind (its purpose); cf. v:373, where Kant writes that the “idea of the whole” is not the cause of organic form, but is the “ground for the cognition of the systematic unity of the form and the combination of the manifold . . . for someone who judges it.” Such passages provide support for an interpretation like Ginsborg’s (“Kant on Understanding Organisms”): we judge that an organism’s parts (its manifold) are unified as making a good member of its kind (according to our “idea”), and thus that it is purposive *with* a conceptually identified purpose, i.e., is what (the kind of thing) it ought to be. (See, indeed, FI, xx:240.) I note, however, that this purpose would still be an internal purpose in the ways I identify in the text. Moreover, though in most teleological judgments we may judge so – viz., not only that a sparrow’s wings are means to its flight, but also that this sparrow’s wings are normal for its kind – these two judgments ought to be distinguished (as Kant does elsewhere, e.g., at v:394). We can judge that wings are means to flight without considering their normality for the kind. As I shall argue in Chapter Five, moreover, judgments of perfection are indeed judgments of purposiveness *with* a purpose, but they do not conform to the D1 and D2 characterizations of purposiveness in causal terms; in such judgments, we do not attribute any causal relations to the object – by contrast to teleological judgments proper, in which we do. Meanwhile, however, I argue that judgments of perfection concerning organic kinds are *dependent* on teleological judgment proper: the concept of sparrow includes within it the concept of a natural purpose (sparrows are entities, the parts of which we judge to be reciprocally ends and means, causally). A perfect (good or adequate) sparrow is one that has all properties of being a sparrow, including having parts that do thus reciprocally serve one another. Thus, I submit, Kant’s conception of purposive causal relations without a purpose is more central to his CTJ account than judging that a thing is the kind of thing it “ought to be.”

parts (consequently each produces the others reciprocally)” (v:374–5).⁵⁴ The functioning of an organic part is a means to the functioning of the other parts and of the whole, i.e., the continuing survival of the organism, which survival in turn comprises this very (combined) functioning of the parts, and serves thereby the functioning of each part.

Organic purposive relations without a purpose are, then, not “lesser” or merely “as if” purposive relations by contrast to artifactual purposiveness. Rather, such relations accord *fully* with Kant’s v:372 articulation of purposiveness: purposive relations without a purpose comprise a thoroughgoing dependence of “things” (parts) in both “ascending” and “descending” order, viz., as reciprocally ends and means. These relations may not, in other words, be “reduced” – as in the artifactual case – to a separate form and use “added” to mechanical (material, efficient causal) relations among parts.

Thus the organism, judged as purposive without a purpose, may also itself be understood as governed by reciprocal, internal temporal relations. As suggested above, purposiveness grounds the unity of the diverse through dynamic, reciprocal relations between past, present, and future: as means to ends, the parts of the object are unified with one another, and with the whole – they are “there” because of the effects they *will* have (useful for one another or the whole). In the case of the artifact, as we have seen, the parts function mechanically and serially (past to present), while the reciprocal relation between present and future holds only of the activity of the external human agent, who produces the object in accord with her purpose (past/present concept of future use), and then uses the object accordingly. As *internally* purposive, the organism must be understood, by contrast, as characterized by internal purposive temporal relations among its parts/functions, which are not only influenced by one another, but also “anticipate” the future states of the organism. That is, the present functioning of the liver cell is not only to be understood as an end (or effect), influenced by the functioning of other parts, but also as a

⁵⁴ This internal, reciprocal character of such purposive relations explains, I suggest, why Kant does not seem to think that it matters what form teleological judgment takes (by contrast to his explicit characterization of the paradigm aesthetic judgment, “x is beautiful”). Whether one judges that “this part performs this useful function” or “this is a natural purpose,” etc., one is invoking the organism as a whole (as a natural purpose), in which all parts are purposively, reciprocally related. One obvious objection to Kant’s claim here – that organs like the appendix (or Stephen Jay Gould’s “spandrels”) are judged not to serve any purpose – may, I believe, also be so answered: this judgment still invokes a teleological conception of the organism as a whole, and makes a (negative) teleological claim.

means towards the end of the organism's survival, as intrinsically, internally directed towards the future (to do what it does because it will have certain effects). That future state, as purpose, defines the present activities of the parts, but it also, reciprocally, is understood as determined by the present state and functioning of the parts, for it constitutes survival, i.e., the continuation precisely of the present, interdependent functioning of those parts. The purposive functioning of an organism is not an externally related series of events, but an internally future-directed, interdependent system of dynamic relations. As purposive without a purpose, organisms have, in other words, histories, not merely chronologies; they are characterized, as Kant writes, by an entirely new form of causality,⁵⁵ one (I suggest) with a different temporal form.⁵⁶

These internal temporal relations characterize, finally, the "special" unity of the organism, as Kant initially identifies it: in growth, plasticity, and self-maintenance, the parts of an organism "anticipate" the future needs of the organism as a whole, providing different parts (of particular characters) because they will have useful effects for the whole, adjusting their functioning towards (future) equilibrium, etc. The organism, described as a natural purpose, makes up a true whole: it is not merely a material aggregate of independent, serially related parts, not merely an object unified by an externally imposed unity, but an object with the "form of a system," a self-determining whole. Moreover, though Kant does not so claim, this temporal structure of internal, anticipatory, reciprocal means-ends relations is also, I suggest, a good characterization of life. Life, like internal, reciprocal purposiveness without a purpose, comprises the dynamic continuance of the same diversified object/set of activities, a self-propagating unity holding among (e.g.) the activities of liver cells, the liver, the whole body, symmetrically in "ascending" and "descending" orders. Kant suggests this connection between purposiveness and life briefly in writing that it is "contrary to reason" that "life should have arisen from the lifeless," i.e., that "matter should have been able to arrange itself in the form of a *self-preserving purposiveness*" (v:424, my emphasis). Life is end-directed, not to a separate end, but rather to its own continuation.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ v:375.

⁵⁶ Cf. Daniel Kolb, "Kant, Teleology, and Evolution," *Synthese* 91 (1992), 12–13.

⁵⁷ See note 20 above. I would therefore suggest, contra Guyer ("From Nature to Morality: Kant's New Argument in the 'Critique of Teleological Judgment'," in *Kant's System of Nature and Freedom* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005], 320–3), that Kant's arguments that organisms cannot be explained mechanically because

3.8 Teleology and systematicity, again

As I have argued, Kant argues that the resources of physical mechanism cannot explain organic behavior; rather, we must judge organisms teleologically, in order to explain their “special” character, their dynamic unity of the diverse and contingent as such. This argument is more limited than Kant often seems to suggest: it does not establish that organic behavior cannot be explained mechanically simpliciter, but only that one aspect of organisms/organic behavior (the “special unity”) cannot be so explained. (As we have seen, Kant is, in any case, committed to the view that organisms, treated merely as material objects, must be explained in accord with the universal laws of mechanical physics.) A proponent of reductive mechanical explanation could admit that mechanical explanation does not explain the “special” unity of organisms – but reply that he does not care to explain such unity, for it is illusory, merely an artifact of our “folk” experiences, scientifically irrelevant, etc. On further investigation, the mechanist might continue, we could discover mechanical explanations for all these supposedly mutually influencing functions. Indeed, as I shall discuss in the [next chapter](#), Kant concludes the Dialectic of Teleological Judgment by enjoining scientists to seek such explanations.

This limitation on Kant’s argument is not, I submit, damaging to his analytic project in the CTJ, particularly as it plays a role in the *CJ* project as a whole. Kant might respond to such objections that the unity of the diverse in organisms is not merely some aspect of such objects, but rather their defining characteristic, and thus is precisely that which must be explained. More importantly, Kant’s broader project in the *CJ* concerns our – independent, epistemic – need for a structure of the unity of the diverse or lawfulness of the contingent as such. Given this context for Kant’s investigation of organic behavior and teleological judgment thereof, it is enough for Kant to show that mechanical explanation cannot supply such a lawfulness, and that purposiveness does so. And, in articulating his concept of natural purpose, Kant has – by contrast to the Appendix account – provided an account of *how* and *why* purposiveness without a purpose constitutes such a (“highest formal”) unity, viz., as the form of reciprocal means–ends relations grounded in a temporal, anticipatory structure, a form of relations that holds of and unifies parts precisely as diverse and contingent.

they appear to be characterized by a different causal order, and because they are living, may be understood as two formulations of the same argument.

The contrast of the CTJ argument to the Appendix also suggests, however, that Kant cannot directly use this principle, so articulated, as the principle of systematic unity of nature and natural science. As noted above, by contrast to the Appendix account, Kant's CTJ defense of teleological judgment rests on an emphatic distinction between organisms and other natural objects. Unlike the Appendix argument, then, the CTJ Analytic does *not* license a claim that all objects/events in nature are to be judged (and thereby unified) in accord with teleological laws – quite the contrary. Nor could this account justify a conception of nature as a whole as a systematic unity of the diverse because it is thus intrinsically purposive without a purpose – that is, as itself a natural purpose, or as one big organism, in which all the parts (objects, events, kinds) are reciprocally means and ends. More generally, Kant's desideratum in the CTJ Analytic and in the *CJ* introductions is, as I have suggested, the same – viz., to articulate a principle that forms a unity of diversity as such, that serves as a lawfulness of the contingent. The unity (and principle thereof) Kant seeks in the latter case is, however, not a causal, dynamic unity of parts (as in organisms) but cognitive unity – of diverse empirical properties as salient, meaningful components of justified disjunctions, as appropriately combined in concepts of natural kinds, as specifications of the concept of the object in general. Thus the principle – of causal relations – that Kant formulates in order to characterize the dynamic unity of the diverse in organisms would not directly constitute the form of such cognitive unity (of systematic natural science).⁵⁸

This principle might, however, serve indirectly to respond to some of Kant's worries concerning empirical knowledge. Teleological judgment of organisms might allow Kant, first, to address his worries concerning the arbitrariness of our judgments concerning the empirically given, contingent character of objects, at least concerning these objects: through considering organisms as natural purposes, we may understand and classify their contingent, diverse properties, functions, or parts not

⁵⁸ As I shall argue in Part II (particularly in Chapter [Eight](#)), the systematic, cognitive unity of the diverse is to be grounded in the principle of purposiveness without a purpose, not as a "material" principle of causal relations attributed or applied to objects, but as a "formal" principle guiding the activity of reflective judgment, and articulating cognitive relations among properties of objects (and constituting aesthetic experience as well). This formal principle is, however, to be understood (*mutatis mutandis*) on the model of the material principle of organic purposiveness: it too is a form of reciprocal means–ends relations grounded in temporal anticipation (of the judging subject).

arbitrarily but as lawfully determined and related to one another.⁵⁹ Kant's defense of teleological judgment also might contribute to a systematic identification of natural kinds. It would seem, first, to ground one basic disjunction – that between organic and inorganic objects, and correspondingly types of laws that govern them (teleological or physical-mechanical, respectively). And insofar as purposively unified organisms not only exhibit intrinsic unity, but also naturally reproduce, they may be judged to sort themselves, naturally, into kinds, perhaps even into kinds that may be understood in natural history, Kant suggests, to derive from one “proto-mother” (v:418–9).

Kant argues, more strongly, that “the teleological judging of nature by means of natural purposes, which have been made evident to us by organized beings, has justified in us the idea of a great system of the purposes of nature” (v:380) or even “*necessarily* leads to the idea of the whole of nature as a system in accordance with the rule of purposes” (v:379, my emphasis).⁶⁰ Individual organisms (and/or classes thereof) may, that is, be judged to be related to one another and to inorganic objects in relations of *extrinsic* purposiveness – grass is useful for sheep, sand for fir trees – which relations would constitute a unified nature not as itself intrinsically purposive, but as a system *of* purposes (of individual purposes, then related to one another, and to inorganic, non-intrinsically-purposive things; v:425f.). As discussed above, Kant denies that we must judge extrinsic relations of benefit purposively: we cannot establish that the sand was *caused* to be there precisely because it would serve the fir trees, and can explain its presence by reference to the laws of motion governing the oceans. However, on the basis of necessary judgment of organisms in teleological terms, we may judge that the sand *does* serve the purpose of fir trees – given that we are justified in understanding the trees' nutrition as a teleological process, to which the sand is a means. Such judgment would not lead us to understand inorganic objects such as sand to be governed by teleological laws, but it might render salient the

⁵⁹ Cf. Rudolph Makkreel, “Regulative and Reflective Uses of Purposiveness in Kant,” *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 30 supplement (1991), 49–63.

⁶⁰ Translations modified. Here, as elsewhere (e.g., v:425, 436–7), Kant argues that it is *only* on the *basis* of (justified) teleological judgment of individual organisms that we may propound a conception of nature as a system of ends. Thus, contra Guyer (“Organisms”), Kant may not, I contend, be read to argue that such teleological judgment is to be justified *because* it plays a role in a systematic understanding of nature in teleological terms (as, ultimately, directed towards the “final purpose” of the [realization of] human morality). Guyer’s “From Nature to Morality,” and “Purpose in Nature,” pp. 353, 364, are better on this point.

empirical, diverse, contingent characteristics of such inorganic kinds (e.g., differing mineral contents), which properties could then be used to develop a non-arbitrary concept of a natural kind ([this sort of] sand), and to formulate more particular laws that might govern this sort of inorganic matter. Such a system of nature might, then, ground a justifiable systematic natural science, in which individual intrinsically purposive entities (organisms) would be taken to be governed by teleological laws, which laws unify and explain the organisms' diverse, contingent properties and functions, identify natural organic kinds, and also non-arbitrarily establish criteria for identification of inorganic natural kinds (i.e., by empirical, contingent properties that render them useful for organisms), which would be taken to be governed both by physical-mechanical laws and also by more specific (e.g., chemical) laws.

In his treatment of teleological judgment, then, Kant has articulated a form of lawfulness of the contingent that not only governs a particular class of objects, but also might ground a unified, systematic conception of empirically determined nature. Though Kant praises this way of viewing nature as "entertaining,"⁶¹ however, he quite decisively does *not* conclude that the systematic science of nature ought to be based – even thus, indirectly – upon the principle of "objective" or "material" purposiveness. Indeed, as noted at the beginning of this chapter, Kant holds that even the necessary teleological judgment of organisms is "merely reflective" judgment, mere natural "description," not proper scientific explanation. The principle of purposiveness, as employed in teleological judgment, is a *merely* regulative, subjective principle. And I shall now turn to examine the grounds for these critical, limiting claims.

⁶¹ v:379. Kant also takes this conception of nature to be fruitful for moral concerns, as I shall discuss in the Conclusion.

A MERELY SUBJECTIVE PRINCIPLE: TIME AND THE “PECULIARITIES” OF OUR INTELLECTS

Kant argues, as we have seen, that in order to understand what is specific to organisms we must judge them teleologically; we may understand the unity of heterogeneous parts as such in an organism only by employing the principle of purposiveness. Kant also, however, pervasively qualifies these claims. Teleological judgment is, Kant claims, *merely* reflective, not determinative, judgment; the principle of natural purposiveness may be necessary in order to judge organisms, but it does not “explain” their behavior (v:360). This principle is not an objective principle that characterizes objects, but merely a subjective principle, a maxim or a “critical” concept “lawful” only in relation to “our cognitive faculties, . . . the subjective conditions for thinking,” only for reflective judgment (v:395). Indeed, Kant concludes his Dialectic of Teleological Judgment by claiming – in stark contrast to his arguments concerning the necessity of teleological judgment of organisms – that we have an “obligation to give a mechanical explanation of *all* products and events in nature, *even the most purposive*, as far as it is in our capacity to do so.”¹

Kant suggests that these qualifications derive from the relationship of the principle of purposiveness to the “peculiar” character (*Eigentümlichkeit*) of our intellects. Teleological judgment is merely reflective, the principle of

¹ v:415; my emphasis. See Guyer, “Organisms,” on the progressive weakening of Kant’s claims in the CTJ (and in works following the *CJ*).

(material natural) purposiveness merely regulative, because such judgment is necessary “only for us”: because of the peculiar nature of human, discursive intellects, *we* must judge organisms teleologically, but this does not mean that this principle does, objectively, apply to organisms or explain their possibility (v:399–400). As I shall suggest in a moment, this argument is unsatisfactory as it stands. I shall argue, however, that Kant’s relegation of teleological judgment and its principle to merely reflective, subjective status *does* rest on his doctrines concerning the particular, discursive character of our intellects, specifically on the doctrine of the schematism. As discursive intellects, we must apply a priori concepts to sensibly given objects through schemata, through determining time, the a priori form of intuitions. The principle of purposiveness cannot, however, be schematized, and therefore cannot be determinatively predicated of sensible objects given in time; rather, it is a merely regulative principle that may be only reflectively judged to apply to objects (4.1–2).

In the second half of this chapter (4.3f.), I shall turn to Kant’s treatment of the antinomial conflict between the regulative principles of purposiveness and of mechanism as principles that guide reflective judgment in the Dialectic of Teleological Judgment. Kant’s resolution of this antinomy establishes, I shall argue, a complex conclusion: because reflective judging should be part of scientific, systematic investigation, we ought to privilege the mechanical principle, and to eschew use of the principle of purposiveness, as far as possible in reflective judging. But the latter principle must nonetheless be recognized as a necessary, ineliminable, subjective principle of judgment for intellects such as our own. Both Kant’s limitations of the scope of the regulative principle of purposiveness, and his vindication of it as a subjectively necessary principle in this discussion, again stem, I shall argue, from Kant’s conception of the “peculiar character” of discursive human intellects, here with respect to empirical cognition. As discursive intellects, we must cognize particulars in terms of universal laws or concepts, which underdetermine the diverse, empirical characteristics of those objects. Hence the necessity of reflective judging for us in general; and hence too, I shall argue, the subjective necessity of the principle of purposiveness in reflective judgment of organisms.

4.1 Merely reflective judgment

We may begin by noting two difficulties attendant on Kant’s claims concerning the merely reflective status of teleological judgment and the

regulative status of the principle of purposiveness. First, teleological judgment does not seem to fit Kant's definition of reflective judgment: it employs concepts (e.g., bird, hollow bones, and flight), as well as the overarching concept of a natural purpose or principle of causal relations, viz., natural, objective purposiveness without a purpose or reciprocal means–ends relations. Nor does natural purposiveness seem to fit the model of regulative principles as developed in the *CPR* Appendix: it is not merely a maxim for scientific investigation in general, but grounds specific claims concerning the functions or characters of the parts of an organism, as they serve the functioning of the whole; unlike those regulative principles, that is, this principle apparently has a domain of objects to which it applies.

Second, Kant's suggested argument for these claims – because such judgment, in accord with this principle, is necessary “only for us” – is problematic. As Henry Allison glosses this argument, Kant apparently argues that only if “every conceivable understanding (including God's) must conceive living organisms in precisely the same manner [as we do], it would follow that the principle of purposiveness is objectively valid as a constitutive principle.”² As Allison points out, however, this line of argument is unsatisfactory, given Kant's transcendental idealism: “in the first *Critique* Kant in effect regards space, time, and the categories as grounded in the peculiarity of our understanding (and sensibility), while still affirming their objective reality with respect to the phenomenal realm.”³ That is, on Kant's view in the *CPR*, objective, constitutive principles or concepts *are* objective because they are at once necessary principles of our judgment, and constitutive of the possibility of objects (of experience). In teleological judgment of organisms, the principle of purposiveness seems to satisfy both these conditions. “[I]t is quite certain,” Kant writes, “that we can never adequately come to know the organized beings and their internal possibility in accordance with merely mechanical principles of nature” (v:400); rather, the “teleological

² Allison, “Kant's Antinomy,” 36. Cf. McLaughlin, *Critique of Teleology*, p. 179; Makkreel, “Regulative and Reflective,” 57.

³ Allison, “Kant's Antinomy,” 36; cf. Makkreel, “Regulative and Reflective,” 53. Allison argues that Kant aims to take a middle, critical path in claiming that teleological judgment is reflective, avoiding dogmatic metaphysics (whether “idealism” or “realism”) concerning purposes. But, as Allison notes, such metaphysical agnosticism cannot explain Kant's relegation of teleological judgment to the realm of reflective judgment either: Kant is metaphysically agnostic throughout his critical period, yet deems many types of judgment to be determinative of (phenomenal) nature.

connection of causes and effects is entirely indispensable for the possibility of such an object for the power of judgment" (v:410). Kant apparently holds, that is, that purposiveness is necessary both as the "condition for the possibility" of organisms, and as a principle for intellects like ours to judge such entities.

As I shall now argue, however, we may reconstruct a more complex argument for Kant's claims that teleological judgment must be merely reflective – on the grounds, indeed, of the peculiarities of our understanding (though not because it is necessary "only for us"; I shall turn to this line of argument in the second half of this chapter). As I shall argue, Kant concludes that teleological judgment is merely reflective judgment because he is caught between two equally unacceptable alternative views of determinative teleological judgment: either we must invoke God as intentional, rational cause of purposes in nature (unacceptable reference to the supersensible) or we must allow there to be a kind of causality that does not meet the minimum criterion of causality, i.e., necessary temporal succession (unacceptable as a causal determinative judgment). Neither of these alternatives can count as a determinative, objective judgment concerning sensible objects given in time, that is, for intellects like ours.

Alternative 1: Kant's explicit argument

Kant claims that teleological judgment is reflective not only because it is necessary "only for us," but also, more concretely, because "nothing is gained for the theory of nature or the mechanical explanation of its phenomena by its efficient causes when they are considered in light of the relation of ends to one another" (v:417). Such teleological consideration is mere "description" of organisms that provides "no information at all about the origination and the inner possibility of these forms, although [this] is that with which theoretical natural science [and determinative judgment] is properly concerned" (ibid.). Thus, Kant suggests, teleological judgment is merely reflective judgment because it tells us "nothing" concerning the "efficient causes" or "origination" of organisms.

Kant appears, further, to have a very specific idea as to what this origin would be: in teleological judgment,

[n]o cause acting in accordance with the representation of purposes, i.e., no *intentionally* acting cause, is thereby attributed to nature, which **would be a determining judgment** and as such transcendent, since it would suggest a causality that lies beyond the bounds of nature. (FI, xx:236, bold my emphasis)

If we were to make determinative teleological judgments, Kant suggests here, we would have to say that a “transcendent” intelligent being (God) caused organic objects to exist intentionally.⁴

This argument is based on Kant’s definitions of purpose and purposiveness in intentional terms (D1 and D2). In concert with these definitions, Kant asserts frequently that purposive causality may only be (determinatively) attributed to intelligent beings, those that have concepts (i.e., purposes).⁵ If one adds that (by definition for Kant) matter is not rational and does not act in accord with intentions, and that human beings do not cause organisms to exist (they are *natural* beings), Kant’s claim that determinative teleological judgment must invoke God (or some supersensible intelligent being)⁶ follows quite straightforwardly. If purposes are (by definition) concepts, and matter/nature cannot have concepts itself, and we want or need to judge that some (material) natural objects act purposively (in accord with concepts), we have no choice but to say that God caused these natural objects to be purposive according to his concepts. For only some supersensible intelligent being can be the rational being who caused organic objects to exist in accordance with his concepts.

It is clear, moreover, that Kant cannot endorse such determinative teleological judgment as legitimate scientific explanation of nature or indeed as legitimate determinative or objective judgment more broadly. According to the arguments of the *CPR*, any judgment about nature that employs the idea of God is illegitimate because we cannot prove the objectivity of this idea, cannot ground such judgments appropriately in experience.⁷ Correspondingly, Kant argues, teleological judgment cannot be objective judgment because it “places [God’s] reason as cause into a relation with [natural] things, as the ground of their possibility, in a way which we cannot know through any experience” (FI, xx:234).⁸

⁴ Cf. v:361.

⁵ E.g., FI, xx:240, v:369–70; Kant’s denomination of Epicurean and Spinozist metaphysics, according to which purposes are unintentional, as “idealisms” concerning purposes also reflects this (near) identification of purposes and intentions of an intelligent being (v:391f.).

⁶ In the CJT Method, Kant argues that teleological judgment need not invoke God specifically – the single, omnipotent, omniscient, moral being – as the intelligent causes of organic entities (it could be demons or pagan gods; v:437f.). For concision, however, I shall refer to the putative intelligent, supersensible cause as “God.”

⁷ A592/B620f.

⁸ Zumbach (*Transcendent Science*, pp. 97–9, 117–19) argues that we cannot judge organisms determinatively to be teleological because, in so doing, we would be attributing to them a *free* (non-natural) causality. This explanation of the

If we wish (or need) to apply the principle of purposiveness to natural objects, as in teleological judgment, yet also to stay within the realm of phenomena and not to refer to transcendent intelligent beings, we must therefore suspend an essential part of the very concept of purposive causality, viz., that it inheres in rational beings. Teleological judgment, which employs this principle to judge natural objects in just such an attitude of willed ignorance, must then be reflective: it does not determine the object through the concept it employs, but employs it only “problematically” (v:360; cf. v:389). In teleological judgment, we judge organisms to be purposive only in the D₃ sense, only “as if” they were intentionally caused. This “as if” claim also grounds Kant’s claim that teleological judgment does not really “explain” organisms or their behavior because it does not determine its “origin”: in judging organisms teleologically, we prescind claims, precisely, concerning their ultimate origins (God).

Kant’s premises for this argument seem, however, dogmatic or definitional. One might grant Kant that we do not consider matter to be rational or to act intentionally. But why couldn’t one conceive of purposes or purposiveness as non-intentional? Kant’s own concept of natural purpose seems indeed to do so, by articulating a structure of purposive relations that does not, at least obviously, invoke a supersensible cause or a concept of intentional purposes. Kant argues, in other words, that we may judge about efficient causes determinatively without needing to invoke an ultimate metaphysical cause. Why cannot he do the same for purposive causality? Why would any determinative claim about purposiveness in nature invoke God?

Alternative 2: Purposiveness, time, and schematism

Kant’s apparently dogmatic claims concerning the intentionality of purposiveness derive, I argue, from his doctrines concerning the “peculiarities” of our discursive intellects: we must apply a priori concepts to

reflectiveness of teleological judgment seems, however, largely alien to the text. Kant does term teleology “another kind of causality” from mechanical causality, and refers once to it as “spontaneous” (v:411). Kant far more frequently, however, refers to this “other” causality as “ideal” causality or as that “in accord with intentions” (v:396). Thus, I contend, passages in which Kant worries about introducing a new kind of causality into nature may more straightforwardly be read to concern introducing God as a cause into discussions of nature (see v:389, 396) – or, as I shall suggest in a moment, a kind of causality that does not comprise necessary temporal succession.

sensible particulars as given in time, the universal a priori form of intuition. Unless purposive causality is understood as intentional, however, it cannot be judged objectively to determine time; correspondingly, the principle of natural, non-intentional purposiveness may not be used by us as a principle for (determinative) judgment of sensible objects.

As we have seen, Kant articulates the structure of purposive causality, by contrast to that of efficient causality, as a symmetry of “ascending” and “descending” relations (v:372). This symmetry in purposive relations provides Kant with a structure that describes the “specific” unity found in organisms. But this very symmetry of (non-intentional, reciprocal) purposive relations in time drives purposive causality into conflict with the law of causality and the nature of time, as Kant conceives it in the *CPR*.

Kant argues in the Second Analogy that the a priori concept “cause” (or the category of ground/consequent), can and must justifiably be applied to sensible experience because it determines an objective time order, specifically necessary succession (e.g., A193–4/B239–40).⁹ Thus, even more than non-intentional purposes, causation backwards in time is a conceptual impossibility for Kant. “Backwards” causation does seem to be implied, however, in the reversibility of purposive causal relations as well as by the general structure of teleological judgment, in which we understand a present means as directed towards, or “caused by,” some future end. Thus it is hard to see how purposiveness (without a purpose) can be a legitimate, comprehensible type of causality, on Kant’s view.

Purposive relations not only involve this “backwards” causality, but also are reversible relations that “telescope” within the present: chains of reciprocal means and ends do not seem (properly speaking) to be a series of separable states, but to coexist with one another (they have the relation of part to whole, not of succession, though they are also dynamic relations). Purposive entities or states thus are judged at once to be “caused” by a future state (the continuing existence or flourishing of the organic entity) and to be relations of part to whole *within* the present (the liver helps the whole body survive at the same time that the body maintains the liver’s existence).

This “telescoping” of purposive relations seems to violate a further, implicit assumption on Kant’s part about causal judgment. Kant seems to hold that causal judgments relate two (or more) conceptually and perhaps

⁹ Though Kant does not conceive causes (fundamentally) as powers or forces, one might put this problem in dynamic terms as well: how can the future, which does not yet exist, influence presently existing things? See *Anth* VII:187.

existentially distinguishable events (or event types) of which one is the cause and one the effect (see, e.g., B232–4). Necessary succession in time is, correspondingly, a succession of one time segment (“containing” the cause) by another (“containing” the effect). Thus, Kant writes:

[if] I perceive or anticipate that there is in this sequence [of representations] a relation to the preceding state, from which the representation follows in accordance with a rule, I represent something as an occurrence, as something that happens, i.e., I cognize an object that I must place in time in *a determinate position*, which, after the preceding state, cannot be otherwise assigned to it. Thus if I perceive that something happens, then the first thing contained in this representation is that something precedes, for it is just in relation to this that the appearance *acquires its temporal relation, namely, that of existing after a preceding time in which it did not*. (A198/B243; my emphasis)

Only through such distinction between the two events (and temporal moments) does the rule of cause and effect establish an objective time order, viz., one event distinctly *after* the other.¹⁰

The telescoping relations in natural purposiveness do not, however, fit this criterion of (causal) lawfulness.¹¹ To return to an earlier example: the liver cell’s function and the whole liver’s function are not, described teleologically, fully separable. Nor is the temporal succession in these relations easy to discern: how would one distinguish the time “containing” the liver cell’s functioning from the time “containing” the whole liver’s functioning?

Because natural purposiveness is incompatible in this way with efficient causality, moreover, it is inapplicable, at least determinately or objectively, to objects given in time more broadly.¹² For on Kant’s view, causation backwards in time is not only inconceivable as a kind of causation,

¹⁰ Kant’s treatment of possible counterexamples – e.g., a stove that causes a room to be warm (the activity of the stove and the warmth of the room are simultaneous, yet the one causes the other) – at A202–3/B247–8 suggests a similar view: he argues that one can identify an initial point in time before the effect occurred (when the causal event did occur) – the stove begins to burn before the room is warm. Thus the time order of cause succeeded by effect might hold even if over elapsed time they are simultaneous.

¹¹ Cf. Taylor, *Explanation of Behaviour*, pp. 11–16.

¹² This is not to say that purposiveness has no temporal “meaning” or relation to time: as I have suggested, purposively related things do have temporal “markers” – the end is the “future” for the means. The point here, however, is that these temporal meanings in reciprocal purposive relations cannot be determinations of *objective* time. As I shall argue in Chapter Six and following, future-directedness is a *subjective* temporal order.

but also controverts the nature of time itself. Kant implicitly assumes, that is, that time itself is (forwards) succession.¹³ Though Kant insists that we cannot intuit time in itself,¹⁴ he nonetheless indicates that he endorses such a view of time in characterizing it as a line, and in writing, e.g., that “time is the a priori sensible condition of the possibility of a continuous *progress* of that which exists *to* that which follows it” (A210/B256; my emphasis). The time-line thus has an irreversible “forwards” direction: “it is a necessary law of our sensibility . . . that the preceding time necessarily determines the following time (in that I cannot arrive at the following time except by passing through the preceding one)” (A199/B244).¹⁵ Thus, the causal determination of irreversible temporal order, Kant writes, corresponds to the a priori character of “time itself” (A199–200/B245).

One might, in sum, formulate the conflict between purposiveness and objective time by restating Kant’s articulation of the Second Analogy (A188) – “Everything that happens . . . presupposes something upon which it follows according to a rule” – to describe purposive relations without a purpose: “Everything that happens presupposes some [one] thing which it at once follows and precedes (and with which it also coexists).” This type of relation cannot be held, objectively, to be a temporal sequence;

¹³ Three clarificatory remarks: first, this is not to say that the moments of time succeed one another – as Kant argues, one would then have to say that there is another time, in which such succession takes place (A183/B226) – but rather that time *is* (the form of) succession. Second, Kant holds that time is an intuition, which we represent as an infinitely given whole, of which the parts are determined by “limitation” of this whole (A31–2/B47–8). Thus time is not made up of separate moments then conjoined; rather (at *ibid.*) Kant holds that this intuition of time as a whole establishes that any moment of time (identified by “limiting”) is to be understood as “at a different time” or (as it were) place in the succession from any other such moment. Third: Kant does identify three “modes” of time – succession, permanence, and coexistence – which correspond to the three Analogies that allow us to establish an *objective* time order among states as successive, permanent, or coexistent (e.g., A177/B219–20). The three modes of time are not, however, equally important, for the two latter are dependent upon succession, as the primary character of time. Permanence is merely presence in each moment of a succession, or the “substratum” of alterations (e.g., A144/B183, A185–6/B228–9, B291), and the Third Analogy treatment of coexistence may be taken as the construction of simultaneity out of (more primary) successions.

¹⁴ E.g., B225, B233, A200/B245, B257.

¹⁵ That this is Kant’s view of time is also attested by the thesis argument of the First Antinomy, which, as P. F. Strawson (*The Bounds of Sense* [London: Routledge, 1966], pp. 23, 176–82) and Jonathan Bennett (*Kant’s Dialectic* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990], pp. 117–21) suggest, does not work – as Kant claims that it does – unless one conceives of time as uni-directional.

sensible objects given in time cannot be determinatively characterized by such relations.

An objection

The above restatement makes the temporal confusions in purposiveness and its conflict with the Second Analogy apparent, but it opens my argument to the following objection. The Third Analogy seems to say just this – A and B are simultaneous, or in “community,” if A causes B and is caused by B (e.g., A212/B259). Kant does not consider the Third Analogy to be in conflict with the Second. Why, then, does purposiveness conflict with the Second Analogy if the Third Analogy does not? Why could it not be construed as a more complex (but not thereby more problematic) version of the Third Analogy?

The Third Analogy has been read in two ways, but on neither of these readings, I suggest, does the Third Analogy conflict with the Second in the ways that purposiveness does. Nor, correspondingly, may purposiveness be held to cohere with the Second Analogy on the model of the Third on either reading.

First, some¹⁶ have understood the Third Analogy not to concern events (or the objective successions $A \rightarrow B$ and $B \rightarrow A$), but rather quasi-permanent, simultaneously coexisting objects, and the succession of perceptual events (i.e., perceptions of those objects). The famous house example (A190/B235) suggests such a reading, as does Kant’s initial claim in his discussion of the Third Analogy: “Things are *simultaneous* if in empirical intuition the perception of one can follow the perception of the other *reciprocally* (which in the temporal sequence of appearances, as has been shown in the case of the second principle, cannot happen)” (B256–7). The Third Analogy might be taken to establish, then, that A and B are in community if I can perceive A then B, and then/also perceive B then A.

Unlike ascribed purposive relations, the principle of the Third Analogy on this reading need not conflict with the Second, as Kant indicates: there are, here, two successions in perception (both *forwards* in time), but not two objective successions. A is not judged to be preceding and succeeding B, that is, but to be simultaneous or coexistent with B; there is no need, here, to assert any form of “backwards” causation. The Third Analogy on this reading is, therefore, not at all analogous to the principle of natural purposiveness. Though teleological judgment does concern

¹⁶ E.g., Strawson, *Bounds of Sense*, pp. 139–44.

part-whole relations as does Kant's house example, in teleological judgment we do not attribute simultaneity to objects (no succession whatsoever), as opposed to purely subjective successions. Rather, we take natural purposiveness to characterize the parts' dynamic relations to one another and to the whole; we attribute causal *relations* ("backwards" as well as "forwards") to the objects' parts.

Second, the Third Analogy has been interpreted as a principle of actual, reciprocal causal connections.¹⁷ So Kant suggests, in arguing that in order for us to judge A and B to coexist,

there must . . . be something through which A determines the position of B in time, and conversely also something by which B does the same for A . . . Now only that determines the position of another in time which is the cause of it or its determinations. Thus each substance . . . must simultaneously contain the causality of certain determinations in the other and the effects of the causality of the other, i.e., they must stand in dynamical community . . . if their simultaneity is to be cognized in any possible experience. (A213–14/B259)

This reading renders the Third Analogy claim more akin to the reciprocal, symmetrical causation of purposive relations. Nonetheless, even here the Third Analogy does not conflict with the Second as do symmetrical purposive relations. Kant suggests that each of the two substances, A and B, is to have effects upon the other's "determinations," but these effects need not be taken, themselves, as causes of their causes (or to be both "before" and "after" those causes). B could cause one "determination" in A (one forwards succession), while other aspects of A could cause a "determination" of B quite distinct from that which causally influences A (another forwards succession).

Moreover, even if the reciprocal causal influence here were taken to concern one single event (or cause–effect connection), the way in which Kant applies this Analogy in the form of a physical-mechanical law (roughly, the Newtonian law of equal action and reaction) in the *MFNS* (IV:544f.) indicates that Kant does not conceive of this interaction as a succession of $A \rightarrow B$ combined with the (backwards) succession of $B \rightarrow A$ or vice versa. Rather, the event (motion or relative lack thereof, in the *MFNS*) is taken to be half caused by A and half caused by B (or A is half of the event and B is the other half). Thus even if simultaneity or community

¹⁷ E.g., Friedman, *Exact Sciences*, pp. 14, 34, 182–6; Guyer, *Claims of Knowledge*, chapter 11. Both emphasize Kant's pre-critical interest in the problem of real interaction between substances to support this reading.

of objects/events is grounded in reciprocal causal relations, this community is not a reversible causal succession, but is rather the addition of two separate causal successions, both forwards in time.

This second way of reconciling reciprocal causation and the principle of efficient causality is not, then, analogous to purposive relations either. For the part-whole purposive relations cannot be analyzed into two ("forwards") causal successions that occur at the same time and produce a combined effect. Judged teleologically, the activity of the whole organism is of course intimately connected to the functions of the various parts, but it is difficult to see how the relations among parts and whole can be reinterpreted into two (or multiple) separate, forwards-in-time, causal successions that cancel or balance one another. Nor does it seem that the parts' relations to one another can be thus considered, for the point in teleological judgment is that the parts' functions cannot, in themselves, be understood (*as* separable causal successions) without reference to the activity of the whole. Thus the relation of part to part is mediated by each part's relation to the whole (or to a bigger part). Again, even on this reading of the Third Analogy, one attributes only simultaneity to objects (simultaneous influence upon one another). In purposive relations, however, ends and means are not only supposed to be simultaneous, but are also by their very meanings labeled temporally as well (the end is the future for the means). Thus, in order to assimilate natural purposiveness to this model of the Third Analogy, we would have to judge that the future and present coexist or are simultaneous (as contrary to the nature of time).

These difficulties, I submit, ground Kant's definitions of purposiveness as intentional. For intentional activity provides Kant with a reductive account of purposive causality that is assimilable to the efficient causal time order of necessary, irreversible succession, of separable moments or events.¹⁸ In a purposive action of an intelligent being, the future "causes"

¹⁸ McFarland, *Kant's Concept*, pp. 102–6, and George Schrader, "The Status of Teleological Judgment in the Critical Philosophy," *Kant-Studien* 45 (1953), 229–30, also endorse this explanation for Kant's intentional definition of purposiveness. Neither, however, connects this problem to Kant's conclusion that teleological judgment is reflective; Guyer suggests a similar view to mine in emphasizing that (temporally) uni-directional causality is *our* conception of causality ("From Nature to Morality," 321–5). McLaughlin argues that it is not such temporal considerations but rather the production of a part by a whole that is problematic from Kant's point of view (*Critique of Teleology*, pp. 152–6). Kant's concept of causation is *defined*, however, in temporal terms and, as I have just suggested, the problems with whole-to-part causation (when not understood as intentional causation) may also be

the present (action or event) to take place only in a certain sense: it is not the future *state/event* that causes the present action, event, or state to occur, but rather the present *idea of* that future state. Thus one may place the sequence of events in an irreversible, comprehensible temporal order: I have a concept or idea of the money I'll earn by building and then renting out a house, then I build a house, then I receive the money from rent (v:372). Likewise, though the idea is of the house and the money, it is an ontologically separable cause/event from the house and the money themselves. Thus Kant terms purposive causality *with* a purpose "ideal" causality: an *idea* causes the event to take place (along with various material conditions).¹⁹

Intentional purposive causality may, thus, be reconciled with the necessary, efficient causal, irreversible time order: when one understands purposive causality to be a causality in accord with a concept, Kant writes, "the connection of efficient causes" may "at the same time be judged as an effect through final causes" (v:373). Indeed, as we have seen, Kant claims that teleological judgments governing the products and activity of (human) "technic" may be understood as (mere) subjective redescriptions of efficient causal, even mechanical, events (formulated for the guidance of the will as one among the "natural causes"). Thus, though Kant suggests at v:372–3 that ideal causality is distinct from efficient causality ("there are only two kinds of causality," Kant writes, "real" [efficient] and "ideal" [purposive]), an *ideal* purposive cause ought, in fact, to be understood as an efficient cause: here the "preceding" state, from which the subsequent state must follow, is an idea. So Kant suggests in terming the (purported) cause of natural purposes (viz., God) the "intelligent *efficient* cause."²⁰

We may now, I suggest, understand Kant's claim that "*we* cannot conceive of the purposiveness which must be made the basis *even of our cognition* of the internal possibility of many things in nature and make it comprehensible except by representing them . . . as a product of an intelligent cause (a God)" (v:400, my emphasis). Understood as the technic of a rational intelligent being, purposive causality would be unproblematic as a type of causality, on our concept of causality.

understood in temporal terms, which moreover thereby tightly connects Kant's objections to such causation to a central Kantian "peculiarity" of our understandings, instead of taking it to be a new asserted fact about our intellects.

¹⁹ v:373. Kant cannot believe that the idea is the sole cause of the house's existence, but must hold that material causes (in Aristotelian terms) are also necessary. See McFarland, *Kant's Concept*, p. 78; McLaughlin, *Critique of Teleology*, pp. 38–9, 48–9.

²⁰ v:426, translation modified.

4.2 A form of reflective judgment

Kant's full argument that teleological judgment is merely reflective runs, then, as follows. Because of the nature of time and of the efficient causally determined objective time order, purposive causality can be determinatively, objectively judged to occur only if one understands the purpose as a concept that, as an intention, is the efficient causal beginning state for the series of events/actions that follow it, rather than as a future state. Nature or matter does not have such concepts, and we do not cause natural purposes to exist. In order to make a determinative teleological judgment, then, one must invoke God as the concept-having cause of natural purposes. Yet one cannot determinatively invoke God as an explanation of natural events. Therefore, teleological judgment cannot be determinative; "objective" natural purposiveness turns out, on Kant's view, not to be objective.

These conclusions concerning teleological judgment and its principle derive, moreover, precisely from the "peculiarity" of the human intellect: we must employ the categories (here the concept of cause) and must apply these categories to objects given in sensibility, in time. We may, correspondingly, identify a quite specific sense in which teleological judgment is reflective, not determinative, judgment, not a (proper) case of applying a concept to a particular, despite the fact that teleological judgment does not fit Kant's explicit definition of reflective judgment. For determinative judgment is, paradigmatically, schematizing judgment, the application of a priori concepts to objects *by* schematizing them, rendering them as principles of time determination. Natural purposiveness is a form of lawfulness or unity that grounds claims that parts *must* be as they are, ought to be as they are (in their particular characters), in order to perform their functions in the organism. Thus, on Kant's view, it is an a priori principle (FI, xx:240). The incompatibility between natural, non-intentional purposiveness and objective causal/temporal succession means, however, that we are unable to schematize this principle; we cannot use it as a principle of determinative judgment.

Teleological judgment, our usage of the a priori principle of objective natural purposiveness to describe organisms, is, then, a strange, perhaps unique, form of judging. For, Kant writes, the concept of a natural purpose is like

ideas [of reason] for which no appropriate objects can be given in experience, and which could therefore serve us only as regulative principles in the pursuit of experience . . . as far as the cause [God] of

the possibility of such a predicate [natural purpose] is concerned, which can only lie in the idea; but the consequence that answers to it (the product) is still given in nature, and the concept of a causality of the latter, as a being acting in accordance with ends, seems to make the idea of a natural end into a constitutive principle of nature, and in this it differs from all other ideas. (v:405)

In teleological judgment, we judge in accord with an a priori principle, and we experience particular objects that seem to be instances of this concept/principle, indeed appear to be constituted by it. More strongly, in opening his treatment of natural purposes with an example (a tree), Kant suggests that our formulation of this a priori idea is occasioned by experience of particular objects.²¹ Despite its apparent sensible instantiation, however, we cannot determinatively use this a priori principle to *judge* sensibly given objects. For in order to render this principle consonant with the causal principle and the nature of time – i.e., to render it a principle that might be applied, in determinative judgment, to sensible objects – we must invoke an intelligent cause, but again that purported cause exists, for us, “only in an idea.”²² Thus we may not use this principle “dogmatically,” for we cannot “consider [it] as contained under another concept [viz., cause] of the object.” Nor can this principle be explanatory. For Kant understands “explanation” in a strict sense as syllogistic derivation from higher principles – “to explain means to derive from a principle” (v:412), here the causal principle. But we cannot know about God’s causation of natural things, nor can purposiveness without a purpose be so derived, i.e., treated as an application of the schematized causal principle of necessary succession. The a priori principle of natural purposiveness, though it *seems* to apply to certain objects, is “inexplicable”

²¹ Thus, as suggested in the [previous chapter](#), the concept of natural purpose might seem to be an empirical concept (and see indeed v:476). I suggest that we may understand this concept (or the principle of material purposiveness without a purpose) to be a priori, though in an odd way: the principle of purposiveness, as a form of lawfulness, is an a priori principle, specifically one that structures the activity of reflective judging. The objective (causal) *interpretation* of this principle is formulated in response to our experience of organisms, though as a form of purposiveness, and as a form of *causal* lawfulness, it too cannot directly be derived from that experience.

²² This phrase from the above quotation (*die nur in der Idee liegen kann*) refers both to the status of God as an idea (of ours), and to Kant’s view that we can conceive of a purposive cause only as an idea (of a maker). Kant appears frequently to conflate these two claims, suggesting both that *we* can conceive of this causality only by *our* reason – i.e., reason (not sense experience) gives us the idea of God – and that God’s (putative) causality *itself* operates by reason, i.e., intentionally.

(v:395). Material, natural, sensible objects given in time cannot be judged objectively to be natural purposes; teleological judgment cannot, strictly, be determinative, explanatory judgment.

Teleological judgments are therefore, negatively, “merely reflective” (not determinative) judgments, their principle a merely subjective, not objective, principle. As we have seen, however, Kant also allocates a positive epistemic function to reflective judging and to regulative principles: such judging is to seek new empirical concepts and laws, unifying the particular, empirical, diverse, contingent characteristics of objects – as guided by regulative principles, which provide constraints on which empirical concepts may be formed, and indicate possible “formats” or aims (e.g., of mechanical form, more general, more specific) for candidates for empirical laws. The concept of natural purpose and/or the principle of purposiveness without a purpose may function as a regulative principle guiding the reflective judgment of organisms in this positive sense. In light of these regulative ideas, that is, we may come to identify particular, contingent, diverse parts as salient, even “lawfully” part of the organism, i.e., as useful for particular ends within the organism. Thus, for example, in judging that sparrows’ hollow bones are useful for flight, one identifies a contingent, empirical characteristic (hollowness) *as* salient (as useful) – and does so in the context of considering (regulatively, reflectively) the overarching, reciprocally purposive functioning (survival) of the bird. Indeed, as argued in the [previous chapter](#), the principle of purposiveness is ideally suited thus to serve as a regulative principle, for it is a form of relations that holds, precisely, among parts as contingent and diverse.

This positive, regulative function of the principle of purposiveness is, indeed, a primary concern of the Dialectic of Teleological Judgment. This claim is solely a part, however, of the more comprehensive concern of the Dialectic: Kant’s presentation and resolution of an antinomy of judgment. This antinomy comprises a(n apparent) conflict not between the putatively objective principle of natural purposiveness and the constitutive objective principle of efficient causality (as I have so far discussed), but between the *regulative* principles of natural purposiveness and of “universal mechanism.” In his treatment of this conflict, Kant appears further to qualify his claims concerning the principle of natural purposiveness, for Kant concludes the Dialectic by claiming (as quoted above) that, though purposiveness is a subjectively necessary maxim for reflective judgment of organisms, even in reflective judging we ought nonetheless to seek mechanical explanations, “even of the most purposive” objects. In

order, then, to understand Kant's complete conclusions concerning the status of teleological judgment and its principle, I shall now turn to Kant's Antinomy and Solution. Kant's discussion and resolution of this antinomy, I shall argue, again rests on his conception of the "peculiarity" of our discursive intellect, specifically as it sets the task for reflective judging: to formulate concepts of and from empirically given diversity, which concepts must cohere with our universal cognitive principles.

4.3 The Antinomy of Teleological Judgment

Like the antinomies of the *CPR*, the Antinomy of Teleological Judgment comprises an apparent conflict between two principles, a conflict that may be explained and resolved, Kant suggests, using the resources of transcendental idealism. As Kant has argued, in judging organisms we must judge in accord with the regulative principle of purposiveness in order to discern the lawfulness or necessity of their contingent, diverse parts or functions. This principle seems, however, to conflict with the regulative principle of universal mechanism – that we ought to judge everything in nature mechanically – for it requires us to judge that some things cannot be so judged.

Unlike the antinomies of reason in the *CPR*, Kant emphasizes, this antinomy is not a(n apparent) conflict between two a priori, metaphysical claims – the determinative versions of these principles (that "all generation of material things is possible in accordance with merely mechanical laws" – or is not, respectively) are not a priori, but empirical, principles (and thus would not generate an antinomial conflict). Rather, the antinomy holds between two *regulative* principles or "maxims" for reflective judging, which are to guide empirical investigation to find particular laws of nature, specifically governing organisms:

thesis: All generation of material things and their forms **must be judged as possible** in accordance with merely mechanical laws . . .

antithesis: Some products of material nature **cannot be judged as possible** in terms of merely mechanical laws (judging them requires an entirely different law of causality, namely, that of final causes). (v:387; my emphasis)

In his "Preparation for the resolution of the above antinomy" (§71), Kant further specifies that this antinomy is not a conflict between determinative principles because the principle of *natural purposiveness* is a merely regulative principle, teleological judgment merely reflective judgment.

We cannot, therefore, claim determinatively that there is non-mechanical causality in nature – nor, properly understood, do we make such claims in reflective teleological judgments (v:389).

Despite the fact that Kant thus distinguishes this antinomy from the antinomies of reason, he proceeds to provide an apparently similar dialectical resolution. The apparent conflict stems, Kant argues, from our mistaken belief that the principles of mechanism and natural purposiveness apply to things in themselves, and from our corresponding failure to recognize that these principles – again particularly that of natural purposiveness – reflect only the nature of our own limited cognitive capabilities. These two principles purport, that is, to explain how natural, sensible things are produced by reference to their ultimate causes – either by God’s intentional causality (according to the principle of natural purposiveness) or by material interactions alone (according to the principle of mechanism). Like the *CPR* Antinomies, the apparent conflict between these principles arises, then, because of our rational propensity to seek ultimate metaphysical grounds, here the “internal ground”²³ of nature, its ultimate productive cause (v:390). This temptation is particularly strong, Kant suggests, in the case of the principle of teleological judgment, for it promises to support our cherished hopes to transcend nature and “connect [causes] to the highest point in the series of causes [God]” (ibid.). And, again like the claims of the *CPR* Antinomies, this conflict is manifested, Kant suggests, in the traditional, dogmatic, and conflicting metaphysical “systems” that endorse one or the other of these principles to the exclusion of the other: physical idealism, hyperphysical idealism, physical realism, hyperphysical realism.²⁴

One can allow for the force of each of these principles, but also avoid metaphysical conflict between them, Kant argues, if one remains agnostic concerning the ultimate, supersensible ground of nature – as we, limited discursive intellects, ought to do. The ultimate internal ground of nature cannot be known by us, nor can either of the conflicting metaphysical

²³ v:388.

²⁴ §§72–3. Idealism and realism refer to doctrines claiming the illusion or truth (respectively) of purposes in nature; physical and hyperphysical indicate whether matter or God is responsible for the (illusory or real) purposiveness in nature. Thus, physical idealism (Epicurus) is the view that chance material interactions generate the illusion of purposes in nature. Hyperphysical idealism (Spinoza) is the view that a necessary being beyond the physical (God) creates the illusion of purposes in the world. Physical realism (hylozoism) is the view that matter/nature is itself purposive, or living, and hyperphysical realism (theism) is the view that God intentionally causes organisms to exist.

claims attributed to these two principles be proven (v:395). To rule out the possibility that natural purposiveness applies to objects, that is, the mechanist would have to rule *out* the possibility that God causes some (or all) natural beings, to establish that there is nothing but matter (v:408–9). To assert that natural purposes must have been created by God, the teleologist would have to prove that the productive powers of material nature could not be in themselves “adequate for that which we judge as formed . . . in accordance with the idea of ends” (v:388). But such proofs concerning things in themselves are impossible for us.

Thus, just as Kant argues in his solution to the Third Antinomy (a similar apparent conflict between a universal claim [causal determinism] and an exceptionalist claim [that some acts are free]),²⁵ Kant argues here that the transcendental idealist recognition that these principles are merely principles by which we judge sensibly given objects, that we are correspondingly unable to know the supersensible, provides a way to resolve the antinomial conflict. We cannot see how these two principles could be combined in one kind of causality or in one nature. But, Kant argues,

since it is . . . at least possible to consider the material world as a mere appearance, and to conceive of something as a thing in itself (which is not an appearance) as substratum, . . . there would then be a supersensible real ground for nature, although it is unknowable for us . . . in which that which is necessary in it as object of the senses can be considered in accordance with mechanical laws, while the agreement and unity of the particular laws and corresponding forms [of organisms], which in regard to the mechanical laws we must judge as contingent, can at the same time be considered in it, as object of reason (indeed the whole of nature as a system) in accordance with teleological laws, and the material world would thus be judged in accordance with two kinds of principles, without the mechanical mode of explanation being excluded by the teleological mode, as if they contradicted one another. (v:409)

Thus, given the insights of transcendental idealism, we may reconcile the principles of universal mechanism and (exceptional) natural purposiveness. The natural world, in its necessary characteristics, may be held to be governed universally by mechanical laws, but the contingent character of organisms may, *also*, be judged (reflectively) to be caused by a supersensible intelligent ground. The latter judgment is not ruled out by the

²⁵ See McLaughlin, *Critique of Teleology*, pp. 110–26, on the similarity between these antinomies.

mechanical laws of matter, for they do not determine the character of the “real ground” of nature.

Even the exceptional cases that we must judge teleologically (organisms) may be judged consonantly with the principle of universal mechanism, Kant argues moreover, if we “subordinate” mechanism to natural purposiveness (v:414). We ought, that is, reflectively to consider organisms to be caused by God’s technical (intentional) causality, which – on analogy to our own technical causality – may be judged to use mechanical operations as means to its ends. Thus, Kant suggests, while the unity of organisms will reflectively be understood as the result of intelligent design, the workings of organisms themselves may be judged to be mechanical, as we are “obliged” to judge concerning all of nature, as far as possible (v:415).²⁶

4.4 Questions

This Antinomy and Solution have puzzled commentators, for good reason. It is not, first, clear whether Kant establishes an antinomy, viz., an at least *prima facie* conflict among principles. Only reason, not judgment, can generate a true antinomy, Kant himself claims, for the faculty of judgment does not itself make claims about objects or nature, but either applies the claims of the understanding to nature (determinative judgment) or – as in this case – makes methodological recommendations about how we might engage in empirical investigation (reflective judgment) (v:385–6). Kant seems to need nothing more, then, than the specification that the principles involved in the Antinomy *are* merely regulative principles to defuse any apparent conflict between them.²⁷

²⁶ In the opening paragraphs of the CTJ Method, Kant specifies this dialectical solution further: biological investigators ought to endorse a hypothesis of epigenetic “prestadilism,” broadly speaking the view that organisms reproduce mechanically and “pass on” an organization that directs both the individual organism’s mechanical operations (a combined operation that Kant, following Blumenbach, terms a “formative drive”) and the subsequent developments of organisms into differing forms. As opposed to hypotheses of occasionalism or individual preformation, this hypothesis, Kant argues, allows the investigator to make the “least possible appeal to the supernatural” (v:424), for it pushes the role of the (putative) supersensible designer back to the original institution of life, and then – given this presupposition – takes organisms themselves to operate mechanically. (See Sloan, “Preforming the Categories,” 232–7, on these various biological hypotheses, and Kant’s anticipation of this conclusion in *The One Possible Basis for a Demonstration of the Existence of God*.)

²⁷ See McFarland (*Kant’s Concept*, pp. 120–1) and McLaughlin (*Critique of Teleology*, p. 138) on previous commentators who took the Antinomy to be so resolved.

These regulative principles make no assertions about the nature of objects that *could* conflict, it would seem, but only different recommendations about what we ought to look for, or how we ought to look, when investigating nature (v:387).

So Kant argues concerning the regulative principles of systematicity of the *CPR* Appendix. These principles give us different, even perhaps opposing, “advice” about how to direct investigation: we ought both to generalize and to specify, to look for higher genera, and to find more particular species. These maxims do not, however, conflict:²⁸ both recommendations may lead us to formulate true determinative judgments – i.e., it may well be true both that there are higher genera and more determined species to be found for any empirical kind we have identified – and, more generally, we could be guided by one or the other at different times, when it is more useful or productive and so on.

The principles of mechanism and natural purposiveness do seem to prompt a *choice* in a way that those other regulative principles do not. For – as Kant suggests in his formulation of the Antinomy – these two principles are not only “heterogeneous principles” but also “exclude one another”: the principle of mechanism suggests that *all* objects are to be judged as mechanically generated, the principle of purposiveness that some are not to be so judged; the principle of mechanism requires that we try to explain wholes in terms of their parts, purposiveness that we try to explain parts by their wholes. As we have seen, Kant’s defense of natural purposiveness as a necessary principle for judging organisms depends on such heterogeneity and exclusivity. In trying to judge a particular object (or event or set thereof), the situation Kant describes as prompting this Antinomy, then, we do seem to be faced by a conflict, or at least an exclusive choice, between these two principles: *either* we judge that this object is a product of its parts *or* that the parts are products of the whole. Kant writes concerning these principles interpreted as determinative principles, “[t]he two principles cannot be united in one and the same thing in nature as fundamental principles for the explanation (deduction) of one from the other” (v:411); the same might be said about them interpreted as regulative principles.

²⁸ A666–7/B694–5. Kant suggests that the principles might conflict if they were constitutive principles; I concur with Guyer, however, that it is “less than clear” that this would be so (Guyer, “Reason and Reflective Judgment,” 32). Kant’s main point – that the two (regulative) principles merely provide different recommendations for investigation – is, however, more directly relevant here.

Nonetheless it seems that we could have sufficiently varied scientific practices that we could be guided by one or the other principle as appropriate to different empirical contexts. In general, perhaps, one ought to judge in accord with the principle of mechanism, but (as it turns out) this principle does not adequately guide judgment of organisms. Kant indeed claims that the principle of mechanism cannot be proven a priori to be true of all nature – it is a guide to empirical investigation – and thus, though it is a helpful regulative principle, it may turn out not to be applicable in a particular case. Therefore we could elect the principle of purposiveness in that case, even if this would provide us with no knowledge proper of nature. Thus, as Kant writes, although we ought to follow the principle of mechanism in order to obtain “proper cognition” of nature, “this is not an obstacle to the second maxim for searching after a principle and reflecting upon it which is quite different from explanation in accordance with the mechanisms of nature” (v:387).

The limited, merely reflective status of *all* teleological judgment – emphasized in §71 – sharpens these questions. We do not, indeed, know a priori that all events or characteristics of objects, down to their most contingent, particular aspects, may be explained mechanically; the principle of universal mechanism is a regulative, not constitutive, principle. Unlike the principle of purposiveness – and like the regulative principles of the *CPR* Appendix – however, the regulative principle of mechanism *may* lead us to determinative judgments (that such an event is caused, or such an object is generated, mechanically). By contrast, as a principle that grounds – at best, and merely – natural *description* alone, the principle of purposiveness would seem to constitute no opposition to the mechanical principle: it provides a way of judging things, but never any potentially conflicting determinative judgment. Thus Kant again, and prior to his solution to the antinomy, claims that there is no true conflict: “[a]ll appearance of an antinomy between the maxims of that kind of explanation which is genuinely physical (mechanical) and that which is teleological (technical) therefore rests on confusing a . . . principle of reflective judgment,” natural purposiveness, “with one of determinative judgment . . .” (v:389; translation altered, and my emphasis).

Kant’s solution poses further questions. As suggested above, the solution appears similar to that of the Third Antinomy, but it therefore seems to ignore Kant’s presentation of the Antinomy: unlike the Third Antinomy, which concerns the constitutive (a priori, necessary) principle of efficient causality, the Antinomy of Teleological Judgment concerns merely regulative principles. In the solution, however, Kant seems to treat

these principles as determinative, specifically as overreaching claims concerning the inner ground of nature. In the context of this discussion, that is, the principle of natural purposiveness appears to constitute the claim that God causes organisms, i.e., to be the (problematic, non-objective) principle of *determinative* teleological judgment (whereas, as argued above, in *reflective* teleological judgment, we are precisely *not* claiming that God is such a cause). Likewise, Kant appears here to interpret “mechanism” as the determinative doctrines of physics, i.e., the laws governing material motion, interaction, and generation: the purported conflicting claim, on the side of “mechanism,” is that *matter* alone is the source of everything in nature.²⁹ Thus, though Kant’s arguments here – that we cannot know the inner ground of nature, and thus that the two (determinative) principles need not be taken to conflict – are recognizably Kantian, it is not clear how they address the Antinomy. For it is unclear why either *regulative* principle would be taken to determine anything phenomenal, much less supersensible,³⁰ nor, correspondingly, does this possible metaphysical compatibility of the two principles – interpreted as determinative – seem to address whatever conflict there might be between two regulative principles.

Kant’s final, reconciling solution adds to these difficulties. As noted above, Kant claims that these principles are “heterogeneous principles,” and that either “kind of explanation excludes the other, *even on the supposition that* objectively both grounds of the possibility [of an object] rest on a single one, but one of which we take no account” (v:412; my emphasis). A solution strictly parallel to that of the Third Antinomy would seem appropriate to this mutual exclusivity, but, after leading us to expect such a solution, Kant suggests instead that we ought to reconcile these two principles as (fully) compatible, into one regulative idea, viz., God’s purposive causality, to which mechanism is subordinated.³¹

In sum, we may ask: if these two principles make no assertions, but are merely guides to reflective judgment, how *can* they conflict, even

²⁹ E.g., v:390–2. Allison explains this slippage by arguing that, on Kant’s view, this slippage may be a natural temptation for judgment/reason (“Kant’s Antinomy,” 31–2); this is a reasonable proposal, but does not explain how this solution addresses the antinomy Kant presents.

³⁰ Cf. McLaughlin, *Critique of Teleology*, pp. 128–9. Kant occasionally suggests that, though *reflective* judgment cannot determine the nature of things in themselves, determinative judgment can do so (v:388, 408). This cannot be Kant’s considered position, however, given his arguments in the *CPR*.

³¹ Hence many commentators ignore this last step of the Solution; see McLaughlin, *Critique of Teleology*, pp. 131–3 and notes.

apparently? What, in other words, *is* an antinomy of judgment? Why, second, should an antinomy between regulative principles be solved by showing that we cannot know the supersensible? And, third, why must – or how can – two opposing, exclusive principles be reconciled into one combined principle?

4.5 An antinomy of the faculty of judgment

We may take our guidance in answering these questions by attending to a section of Kant's discussion that I have so far left out of account: the "digression" of §§76–7, between the "Preliminary to the Solution" and the solution proper, in which Kant makes general comments concerning the "peculiarity" of the human, discursive intellect as compared to the divine, intuitive intellect. Kant argues, in brief, that the divine intellect, unlike the human intellect, requires neither formal concepts to order sensibly given experience, nor a faculty of sensibility to discover which of its concepts represent actual things; rather, in thinking of things, it creates them (v:401–2). For the divine intellect, then, there is no distinction between possibility and actuality, between representation and reality (v:402–3). Our distinctions between possibility and actuality, by contrast, rest upon the nature of our intellects, the "two entirely heterogeneous elements required" for our cognition: our "concepts . . . pertain merely to the possibility of an object," while "sensible intuitions . . . give us something" and thus establish the actuality of an object (v:402).

Kant famously argues in the *CPR* that this peculiarity of our intellects grounds and justifies our knowledge of the synthetic a priori principles. In §77 Kant emphasizes, however, the implications of these doctrines for *empirical* knowledge of the particular characteristics of objects. Because "our understanding is a faculty of concepts, i.e., a discursive understanding," our concepts are formal or "analytic" universals, Kant argues, through which "the particular is not [fully] determined, and it is contingent in how many different ways distinct things that nevertheless coincide in a common characteristic can be presented to our perception" (v:406). Thus, reprising his concerns from the *CJ* Introductions, Kant argues that whereas for the divine intellect there would be no distinction between necessity and contingency, between the formal laws of nature and the given, particular character of objects, for us the "contingency of the agreement of nature in its products in accordance with *particular* laws of the understanding . . . makes it . . . difficult . . . to bring the manifold [of the particular laws] to the unity of cognition" (ibid.).

In this discussion, then, Kant restates his basic doctrines concerning the discursive, finite character of human knowledge and identifies this special character with our faculty of judgment, viz., our application of concepts to sensible particulars, or, in the case of reflective judgment, our need to form empirical concepts, and thereby to harmonize sensibly given, contingent particulars with the demands set by the universal laws of experience. In light of this discussion, I argue, the Antinomy of Teleological Judgment may be read as an antinomy of and for the faculty of judgment, specifically of reflective judging, the faculty that must address the contingency of our knowledge of the empirically given. Precisely because we are discursive, judging intellects, that is, we are confronted by situations such as that which gives rise to the Antinomy, i.e., where we must find laws we do not yet know, those governing the particular character of given objects.

As discussed in Chapter One, moreover, the task of reflective judgment in finding such laws is twofold: just as determinative judgment constitutes at once the application of concepts to the sensibly given, and the synthesis of the sensibly given into unities, so too, in order to generate empirical knowledge, in reflective judging, we ought both to “specify” the necessary, universal laws of nature (“from above”), and to unify the sensibly given, the diverse as such (“from below”). As I shall suggest, the mechanical principle and the principle of purposiveness are the two maxims that guide the activity of reflective judging, as it engages with organisms, towards these two aims (respectively). Because reflective judgment is required to pursue both of these aims, to bring sensible particulars into harmony with universals, the (apparent) exclusivity of the two principles does present a conflict for reflective judgment. These two maxims must, moreover, be made compatible in order for such reflective judging (of organisms) to be a unified activity – hence Kant’s final, reconciling solution to the antinomy.

4.6 The conflict 1: The principle of mechanism

As we have seen, Kant devotes much of the Dialectic to discussing (and limiting) the status of the principle of natural purposiveness, but in order to understand the antinomy it is equally necessary to understand the status of the principle of mechanism. Indeed, the questions above concerning whether there is an antinomial conflict at all might be formulated to concern this principle alone: if the principle of mechanism is a merely regulative principle, methodological “advice” about how to proceed in

investigation, why must we (apparently) *always* judge *all* objects to be possible only mechanically? Why, in other words, would it be a problem to suspend that principle when – as in the case of organisms – it appears to be inadequate?³² Throughout the Dialectic, however, Kant does not even consider this option, and appears to accord a far stronger status to this principle than that of a mere methodological recommendation: without mechanical explanation, Kant writes, we can have “no proper cognition of nature”; we are “obliged” to judge (material) nature mechanically. It is this strong, universal claim (together with the necessity of the principle of purposiveness in judging organisms) that drives the antinomial conflict, and thus must be explained – as it may be, I shall suggest, by the connection between the regulative principle of mechanism and Kant’s two other meanings of “mechanism” in the CTJ.

As noted in the preceding chapter, Kant uses “mechanism” in the CTJ to refer not only to the regulative “mechanical principle,” which enjoins us to try to explain wholes by reference to the independently given properties and causal powers of the parts, but also to the constitutive principle of efficient causality³³ and to the mechanical laws of physics. The regulative mechanical principle is most directly at issue in the Antinomy as a purported conflict between two regulative principles, i.e., ways to find, or forms for, particular empirical laws, but it has been tempting to scholars to take the “principle of universal mechanism” of the Antinomy to refer to the efficient causal principle. For this principle alone appears to ground Kant’s strong claims in the antinomy concerning the universality and necessity of judging in accord with the principle of mechanism; this constitutive a priori principle holds for any experience, nature, or objective event. As noted above, however, neither physical mechanism nor the mechanical principle is identical to efficient

³² This question ought to be pressed against those interpretations that (rightly) stress the regulative status of this principle, e.g., McFarland (*Kant’s Concept*, p. 120), who claims that the principle of mechanism is only one among many possible approaches to investigating nature. McFarland’s discussion of the antinomial conflict in terms of differing “vocabularies” suggests a similar problem in identifying even a possible conflict – how can a vocabulary *conflict with* another vocabulary?

³³ E.g., v:417: “the theory of nature or the *mechanical explanation* of its phenomena by its *efficient causes*” (my emphasis). As Friedman points out (“Regulative and Constitutive,” 75–6, 78–82), in the *CPR* Kant refers to the causal principle as regulative, as opposed to the constitutive principles of quality and quantity (e.g., A180/B222). However, in the *CPR* Appendix (A664/B692) and in the *CJ* introductions (e.g., v:183), Kant treats the causal principle as a transcendental, universal, constitutive principle or natural law.

causality.³⁴ The principles of mechanical physics constitute the concept of matter and are thus less universal in extension than the causal principle: they concern only “outer things” (existing in space). Moreover, physical-mechanical laws are quasi-empirical, for the concept of matter is based not only on the a priori categories and the pure forms of intuition (space and time), but also on empirical, sensed experiences of matter – as impenetrable (*filling* space) and as moving.³⁵ Likewise, explanation of wholes by parts as enjoined by the mechanical principle is not identical to explanation by necessarily preceding events as required by the causal principle. More broadly, as a maxim for empirical investigation, the mechanical principle suggests an approach or form for particular empirical laws for which we search, laws that are, as Kant emphasizes in the *CJ*, underdetermined by the causal principle – it is not, itself, a determinate law governing objects or events.

Though the mechanical principle cannot be identified with the causal principle, its relationship to the causal principle and to the physical-mechanical laws do ground its universal status: explanation in terms of independently given, prior parts constitutes one form of explanation by independent, preceding objects or events. Indeed, Kant argues that just as the “peculiarity” of our understanding dictates that the principle of natural purposiveness may not be determinative, *so too* does it dictate that we must judge in accord with the mechanical principle:

In accordance with the constitution of our understanding, . . . a real whole of nature is to be regarded only as the effect of the concurrent moving forces of the parts. Thus if we would not represent the possibility of the whole as depending on the parts, **as is appropriate for our discursive understanding**, but would rather, after the model of the intuitive (archetypal) understanding, represent the possibility of the parts (as far as both their constitution and their combination is concerned) as depending on the whole, then, given the very **same** peculiarity of our understanding, this cannot come about by the whole being the ground of the possibility of the connection of the parts (**which would be a contradiction in the discursive kind of cognition**), but only by the *representation* of a whole containing the ground of the possibility

³⁴ Cf. McLaughlin, *Critique of Teleology*, e.g., pp. 141–4; Allison, “Kant’s Antinomy,” 27–8; Zanetti, “Die Antinomie,” 352.

³⁵ At A207/B252, Kant identifies impenetrability as an “empirical intuition.” More broadly, Kant claims that the empirical concept of matter is not based on any “specific experiences,” but also that it is “intrinsically empirical” (*MFNS* IV:472). I see no other way to make sense of these claims.

of its form and of the connection of parts that belongs to that. (v:407–8, translation altered; bold my emphasis)

In the final sentence of this passage, Kant argues that purposiveness must be construed intentionally in order for it to be intelligible to us (as discussed above). But, as follows from the exclusivity of the regulative principles of purposiveness and mechanism, Kant also argues here that the mechanical principle *is* the principle by which we, as discursive understandings, ought to judge: in judging material (“real”) wholes, we may not judge that wholes precede parts, but must judge that parts precede wholes; otherwise, as argued above, our judgments cannot be reconciled to the causal principle, a constitutive principle of nature for us.³⁶ Though Kant does not emphasize this point, the mechanical principle *as well as* that of natural purposiveness is a principle whereby *we* judge the phenomenal, material world, as given sensibly – because of the “same” peculiarity of our intellects.³⁷

The consonance between explanation in accord with the mechanical principle and the causal principle establishes a privilege of the mechanical principle over that of natural purposiveness: we may come to formulate *determinative* judgments when we judge in accord with the mechanical principle, and it is thus a better principle to guide reflective judgment (which aims, indeed, at cognition, or determinative judgment). But the connection of the mechanical principle to efficient causality and physical mechanism (to which Kant refers, crucially, in the above quotation) also establishes, more strongly, an *obligation* for reflective judgment to be guided by the mechanical principle. For the principles of mechanical physics could be said to be “contained under” or (loosely)

³⁶ Thus I take Kant to state his view rather weakly in writing that the determining power of judgment “would perhaps even like to know everything to be traced back to a mechanical sort of explanation” (FI, xx:218).

³⁷ Kant muddies the waters by suggesting that God would be able to explain organisms mechanically (v:406, 418). Thus our “peculiarity” would account only for our need to judge organisms teleologically (not to judge material objects mechanically). But, as suggested in the v:407–8 passage, this must be wrong: God (putatively) knows things by “synthetic universals,” i.e., by concepts of the whole that completely determine the parts and not as constructed out of their parts (in accord with the mechanical principle). (Thus, as Hegel emphasizes, Kant implies, if anything, that God judges teleologically.) Further, since physical mechanism is closely connected to the nature of space, and God (putatively) does not intuit things in space or time, it seems nonsensical to say that God would explain things mechanically. Thus *both* mechanism and purposiveness are maxims for judgment that reflect our peculiarities as discursive intellects.

“derived from” the efficient causal principle.³⁸ Though these laws are (partly) empirical, they nonetheless concern the *universal* properties of matter, and are based upon very few empirical claims about matter.³⁹ Thus Kant terms physical mechanism a “composite” of empirical and a priori principles (FI, xx:237); the empirical concept of matter is “contained under” and determined in accord with the concept of an object in general, or is a “dogmatic” concept in that it constitutes the application of the concept of an object in general to an object as it, specifically, fills and moves in space.⁴⁰ The attribution of moving and repulsive forces to a body is, Kant suggests, a paradigm example of cognition, in which “I determine its concept as an object in general by means of the category of causality through that which pertains to it . . . as object of the senses.”⁴¹ The physical-mechanical laws are as close as any empirical laws can come to being legislated a priori or derived from the concept of an object in general; as Friedman has argued, mechanical physics comprises, then, the first step in the (almost) deductive systematic empirical science Kant envisions in the Appendix to the Dialectic.⁴²

As Kant’s frequent allusions to physical mechanism in the antinomy discussion suggests, this status of physical mechanism has implications for the status of the mechanical principle as a principle of *reflective* judgment, specifically of material objects (e.g., FI, xx:235). As argued in the [previous chapter](#), the explanatory priority of part to whole enjoined by the mechanical principle is an integral part of the *MFNS* definition of matter in terms of that which fills space, the form of external relations. In enjoining the form of explanation proper to matter as such, then, the mechanical principle represents one aspect of the task of reflective judgment, our project of scientific investigation: that we must aim to subsume more particular laws under more universal laws, that we ought to aim to formulate laws that may constitute *laws* of nature. For, as argued above, according to Kant it is only through relations of derivation from the categorial principles that we truly know that specific empirical laws are *laws*, necessarily true of nature, and Kant holds that physical

³⁸ All three Analogies are in fact foundational for Kant’s physics, but for the sake of concision I shall refer solely to the causal principle.

³⁹ Cf. Friedman, “Regulative and Constitutive,” 81.

⁴⁰ See v:395 for Kant’s discussion of “dogmatic” use of concepts.

⁴¹ v:483; translation modified.

⁴² Friedman, *Exact Sciences*, especially chapters 3–4; Michael Friedman, “Causal Laws and the Foundations of Natural Science,” in Paul Guyer, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Kant* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 161–99.

mechanism satisfies this criterion. Thus, if we are engaged in reflective judging of natural *material* objects, we will come to have “proper cognition” of nature only if we proceed in accord with the mechanical principle: judgment in accord with this principle alone will generate candidates for empirical lawfulness that may be ordered under, be conceived as derivable from, the laws of physical mechanics, itself contained under the schematized principle of efficient causality. If in reflective judging we are to aim at systematic science, then, the mechanical principle may not be suspended or contravened by inconsistent regulative principles for judging specific types of material objects, in this case, the regulative principle of purposiveness. With regard to material objects, we are obliged to be guided, in reflective judging, by the thesis that all objects are mechanically explicable.

4.7 The conflict 2: The activity of reflective judging

In order to come to *know* the particular character of any material object, including organisms, to judge them according to necessary laws, to formulate appropriate candidates for lawfulness, then, we must reflectively judge such objects according to the mechanical principle. The mechanical principle is, however, insufficient to guide reflective judging (v:383). For this principle gives us no ground to distinguish any particular, qualitative differences from any others: its status as an implication of the universal principles governing material nature, that it is to apply universally to material objects of whatever kind, also renders judgment in accord with the mechanical principle incapable of making any more particular distinctions, by which we could differentiate classes of (material) objects or concerning which we could propose more particular laws (of mechanical form). The mechanical principle thus expresses an imperative – we ought to judge particular objects mechanically – but does not determine that or how such particular objects, in their diversity, are governed by particular mechanical laws (v:415). Or, in other words, in judging in accord with the mechanical principle, we aspire to a subsumption of particular laws under more universal laws, here those of material nature. But in order for such subsumption to be possible, in order for it to produce knowledge of particular qualities/events/kinds of objects, one must have more specific concepts than “object” or even “matter,” more specific concepts than the mechanical principle – derivative as it is precisely from the concept of matter – cannot provide, or guide us to form.

This insufficiency of the mechanical principle is, then, an instance of a more general difficulty occasioned by the character of our intellects, as Kant describes it in §77:

Our understanding . . . has the peculiarity that in its cognition, e.g., of the cause of a product, it must go from the *analytical universal* (of concepts) to the particular (of the given empirical intuition), in which it determines nothing with regard to the diversity of the latter. (v:407; translation modified)

In any case of reflective empirical judging, the activity of reflective judgment aiming at the goal instantiated in the mechanical principle – that our concepts or candidates for empirical laws ought to cohere with the universal, transcendental concepts and laws of nature – must be complemented by another, equally necessary activity of reflective judgment: to form more particular empirical concepts, to render the diversity in the given particulars intelligible.

In the case of reflective judging concerning *organisms*, in particular, as we have seen, neither physical mechanism nor judgment in accord with the mechanical principle can describe or explain “what is particular” to organisms. Rather, judgment in accord with the principle of natural purposiveness accomplishes this complementary task: it allows us to understand, judge, identify not only the particular character of organisms (as opposed to other kinds of objects), but also the contingent properties of parts or functions of organisms as part of a lawful unity among diverse parts as diverse. Thus, although natural purposiveness is a strange way – an inapplicable, “inexplicable” concept – to do so, nonetheless it furthers the work of reflective judgment as it seeks to find particular laws.⁴³ Or, in

⁴³ Thus I concur with Allison (“Kant’s Antinomy”) and Robert Butts (“Teleology and Scientific Method,” *Nous* 24 [1990], 1–16) that this antinomy is closely connected to Kant’s concerns with reflective judgment in the *CJ* more broadly. Butts too quickly assimilates the principle of purposiveness as a principle of *causal* relations that is used to judge *this* set of objects, however, to the principle of purposiveness (a principle of formal, not causal, relations) as a principle of reflective judging more broadly (which is instantiated, I shall argue, not so much in teleological, as in aesthetic, judgment). Thus, too, contra Guyer (“From Nature to Morality,” 319–20, 340–1; “Purpose in Nature,” 359), though the principle of purposiveness is justified here as subjectively necessary because it helps us to respond to the general problem of reflective judging (that we need to come to understand the lawfulness of the contingent), Kant’s solution nonetheless does concern the judgment of organisms in particular. For as a (regulative) principle of *causal* relations, it plays a special role in reflective judgment of *organisms* – in allowing us to characterize, precisely, what is “specific” to them and the behavior of their parts.

other words, though this principle is a “merely” subjective principle, it is also a subjectively *necessary* principle, in that it is necessary for the subject’s activity of reflective judgment of organisms.

The principles of mechanism and of natural purposiveness are, then, regulative principles that guide reflective judgment in performing its task, that represent the maxims governing reflective judgmental activity in the two different “directions” that characterize judgmental activity in general. The mechanical principle expresses the requirement that we try to find particular laws that are specified applications of, derivable from, universal, necessary laws, while natural purposiveness is the principle that guides the “estimation” or unification of these contingent particulars as such. Or, in terms of Kant’s discussion of the “peculiarity” of our intellects, these regulative principles reflect, respectively, our need to determine particulars by universals (to see that they fall under necessary laws), and our need to have more specific empirical concepts (species or differentia) by which we can recognize their contingency and diversity.

Thus it constitutes a(n at least apparent) conflict for the activity of reflective judgment that, in order to understand the contingent character of these particulars (organisms), we must judge them according to a lawfulness (purposiveness) that conflicts with – cannot be “deduced” from or subsumed under – the universal principles that would provide us with knowledge (proper determinative judgment) of those particulars. That is, though the mechanical principle is insufficient to guide all cases of reflective judgment in search of more particular laws, and requires some supplementation by other principles or regulative ideas, it is so in the case of judging organisms in a particularly problematic sense: judgment in accord with the principle of natural purposiveness appears, precisely, to exclude mechanical explanation of the objects so judged.⁴⁴

This conflict is, as Kant claims, not a conflict between two claims concerning objects, or determinative principles. Rather, it is a conflict

⁴⁴ To elucidate the nature of this conflict, one might compare the case of organisms to that of chemistry, in which we ought also, on Kant’s view, to be guided by the “idea of mechanism” in attempting to formulate particular (chemical) laws. The “idea of mechanism” is insufficient to determine the character of chemical laws (as it is to determine biological laws), and presumably we require further regulative principles in order to articulate “what is specific” to chemical reactions. Kant indeed suggests that we ought also to use the regulative ideas of “pure” chemical “elements.” (See Carrier, “Kant’s Theory of Matter.”) But this supplementary regulative idea – unlike the concept of a natural purpose – is not incompatible with the “idea of mechanism” or the mechanical principle, and thus might be used in addition, without any conflict.

between two *aims* or goals for judging: in order for us to *perform the activity* of reflective judgment, we must engage in both judgmental tasks, be guided by both principles.⁴⁵ In order, that is, for reflective judging of these particular things to be one coherent act, both the apparently contradictory, exclusive maxims must be employed at once: natural purposiveness to guide us in distinguishing particular properties/functions of these organisms, the mechanical principle to guide us towards finding laws governing them, of which we could have cognition. This conflict is, then, rightly understood as a conflict of and for the faculty of judging as such, for it comprises an (apparent) incompatibility between the two aspects of the paradigmatic judgmental activity, viz., to unify particular manifolds, and to apply universal concepts.

4.8 Solution to the Antinomy

Now we are in a position to address Kant's solution, and to see, specifically, why this solution must combine these two principles. Kant's solution, as mentioned above, consists in "subordinating" mechanism to teleology, in viewing organisms as if they are caused by God in accord with his purposes, employing mechanical means; we should consider the parts of organisms to be organized (in accord with God's idea), but to be related to one another mechanically, just as parts of a human-made, technically produced object like a watch interact with one another mechanically. Because it invokes God a cause, judgment guided by this idea can never be determinative. It can, however, at least be (quasi-)comprehensible as a causal judgment (viz., concerning intentional causality) – and can be reconciled to physical mechanism. The initial causal origin of an object so judged cannot, indeed, be reduced to mechanical causality (God is not a mechanical cause); nor does it strictly explain the object: God's purposes are not explanatory for us, but are "transcendent" (v:410, 412–13). Nonetheless, as an idea employed in reflective judgment, this idea *can* allow us to perform both tasks of reflective judging: the continuing teleological character of this idea (of God's technical activity) would

⁴⁵ This conflict is, then, perhaps more similar to a conflict among duties or to the antinomy of the *CPrR* concerning how to combine the two overarching ends of human action (morality and happiness) than to the antinomial conflicts among principles in the *CPR*: it arises not because we (appear to) have proven two conflicting claims a priori, but rather that the faculty of (reflective) judgment appears to be confronted by two incompatible requirements or tasks. So Guyer suggests as well ("From Nature to Morality," 337n36).

allow us to have a (non-explanatory) sense of the whole of the object, as is necessary for us in order to identify the particular parts of the object and their functions. But the material parts of the object would be judged to interact mechanically with one another. Thus, on having identified hollow bones as useful for flight, we may then identify the mechanisms by which the bones are produced, as hollow, without claiming that such bones (as part of the organism as a whole) cause these causal mechanisms. Our judgments concerning these functions (resultant from such reflective judging) would, then, comprise determinative judgments in concert with the mechanical principle (and thus with physical mechanism, and the causal principle); likewise, the only laws governing organisms that we would find using this combined principle would be mechanical in form, laws that may govern material nature (v:417–18, 422).⁴⁶

The point of Kant's preliminary to his solution, and of his puzzling apparent "slippage" in the following paragraphs to discuss the principles of purposiveness and mechanism as if they were determinative principles, may also now be made clearer. Kant's insistence that the principle of purposiveness is merely regulative, that it is only necessary *for us* to interpret such purposiveness as intentional (God's purposes), is designed to "ward off" possible dogmatic misapprehensions of his solution. As we have seen, both purposiveness and the mechanical principle are regulative principles, and both express requirements for knowledge relative to our intellects. But the principle of purposiveness constitutes a greater dogmatic threat: the mechanical principle (or physical mechanism) does not generally tempt us illegitimately to make claims about the supersensible; these principles explicitly apply to objects as presented in space and time, and lie firmly within the domain of empirical science. By contrast, the principle of natural purposiveness appears to drive us to make claims concerning the supersensible, and in the solution Kant himself suggests that we conceive of organisms as designed by God. Thus in the preliminary to the solution Kant must emphasize that we may not

⁴⁶ Cf. McFarland, *Kant's Concept*, pp. 121–2; Guyer, "From Nature to Morality," 338, "Purpose in Nature," 355, 362–3. Contra Makkreel, who argues that natural purposiveness is "inexplicable" because "teleological explanations can never be self-sufficient" because they "must always coexist with mechanical explanations" ("Regulative and Reflective," 54), Kant holds that establishing this "coexistence" is a significant theoretical achievement, and renders our judgment of organisms *closer* to proper explanation. At v:383 Kant suggests a different, more pragmatic reason for this reductive solution: because then we might be able to reproduce organic events in experimentation.

prove that God exists from organic design, that purposiveness is a principle necessary only for our judging, that the solution is *merely* a regulative idea useful for finding mechanical laws.

Kant's ensuing transcendental idealist argument that neither principle is provably false, that both might be true, is, in turn, not primarily meant to restrict illicit claims about the supersensible or to defuse conflict between the two principles interpreted as determinative (though it is consistent for Kant to do this as well). Kant's arguments here are, rather, meant to make it "all right" for reflective judgment to use the complex regulative idea/principle proposed in the solution: God technically causes purposively unified objects, the parts of which are mechanically related to one another. Kant employs his transcendental idealism, specifically his establishment of the indeterminacy of the noumenal, in order to show that this regulative idea, asserting a compatibility of purposiveness and mechanism, is not self-contradictory or nonsensical (v:413). Physical mechanism does not, that is, rule about the supersensible (or demonstrate that God could *not* be the cause of material things), so that it is possible to find mechanical explanations while using the regulative idea of God's intentional causality. This idea is thus a coherent idea to guide reflective judging, to make it possible for reflective teleological judgment of organisms to be a unified judgmental activity, to reconcile its maxims so that it may engage in a single, non-conflictual task.

Conclusion and transition to aesthetic judgment

At the close of the CTJ, Kant leaves us with a rather weak defense of teleology: the principle of purposiveness is, Kant continues to hold, a subjectively necessary principle to guide us in judging certain objects, but it does not ground biological teleological laws as legitimate scientific laws. Because purposiveness cannot be reconciled with the objective temporal succession of experience established by the principle of efficient causality – whether as reciprocal causation, or as God's intentional causation – Kant denies the objectivity of natural "objective" (causal, material) purposiveness. Purposive causality cannot be attributed to (purely material) objects, and teleological judgment is merely reflective judgment that employs an inexplicable concept.

Despite its reconciling character, moreover, Kant's solution to the Antinomy is reductive as well. As we have seen, this solution, like those in the *CPR* Dialectic, comprises a critical limitation on our temptations to make claims concerning the supersensible. But this solution also

transforms the claims of the principle of purposiveness itself, even as a principle used immanently (in experience) as a guide for reflective empirical judging. This principle is, Kant concludes, merely a heuristic device for discovering mechanical laws, to be done away with as far as possible. There may never be a “Newton for a blade of grass,” according to Kant, in that we may characterize the *unity* of organic behavior only in teleological form. We may never, in other words, be able to formulate a set of simple, basic, universal, mechanical laws that govern the heterogeneity and multiplicity of organic functions, as Newton had done for physics, but instead only (at best) a plethora of particular mechanical laws governing particular interactions among organic parts. But those mechanical laws – even if not unified and elegant – will be the only laws we will ever know concerning organisms.

Moreover, even when we reflect teleologically upon organisms, we are to attribute to these objects an external purposiveness, not intrinsic purposiveness, or reciprocal means–ends relations among parts. For in accord with Kant’s solution, we reflectively attribute their purposiveness to an external efficient cause (God), we judge organisms to be the products of technic.⁴⁷ The two principles are reconciled in Kant’s solution, in other words, by transforming the principle of intrinsic purposiveness into a claim of technical purposiveness, in which the parts do not form themselves, are not reciprocally purposive. This reductive regulative idea allows us to “bracket” the organisms’ self-organizing character, and

⁴⁷ Once Kant has made this argument, he may also pose the question, as he does in the CTJ Method, concerning what these objects are *for*, what the “final purpose” of nature is, as opposed to holding them to be purposive without a purpose, or purposive only for themselves, their own maintenance. Kant thus ends his treatment of natural purposes by fully assimilating them to technical purposiveness, viz., by attributing to them not only an external *cause* (for their purposive design) but also an external *end*. Again, then, I resist Guyer’s claim that Kant is concerned with this “final purpose” even in §76–7, for reasons Guyer implicitly admits: organisms do not *have* purposes outside themselves on our initial judgment of them (it is precisely this that distinguishes them from technically produced objects); it is only our inability to understand this internal purposiveness that leads us to consider them in the terms of design, God, and final, external purposes. (Paul Guyer, “Natural Ends and the End of Nature,” *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 30 suppl. [1991], 157–66; see also “Organisms.”) Contra Guyer’s arguments in later articles (e.g., “From Nature to Morality”), moreover, the CTJ Method argument may not be based solely on the general argument that in reflective judging we must presuppose an intelligent designer of nature in order to discern order among contingency. For this argument requires that we reflectively judge nature not only as *cognitively* purposive, but also as comprising objects that are materially, causally purposive, i.e., serve ends, whether organisms, their parts, or the inorganic objects that serve organic ends.

indeed the parts' place in an organized whole, to concentrate on particular interactions, and to judge them to operate mechanically, viz., as produced by, and as operating in, uni-directional causal series of independent events that arise through the interaction of independently "given" parts.⁴⁸ Thus, by the end of the CTJ Kant not only restricts the status of the principle of purposiveness, but also transforms this principle from one that articulates a unity of the diverse as such, a fully systematic unity, into a principle of externally, conceptually (intentionally) imposed order among mechanically related parts.

A reservation about these reductive conclusions is, however, in order: Kant's reductive solution does not eliminate the subjective necessity of the principle of purposiveness without a purpose, of the form of *internal*, non-technical, reciprocal means–ends relations, in our own reflective judging of actual, given organisms. Though we reflectively attribute the purposiveness of organisms to God's intentional causality, which allows us to reconstrue purposive relations as externally ordered, mechanical relations, that idea (of God's technical activity in accord with his purpose) is not informative, does not guide our judgment of these objects – for we have no insight into God's purposes. We do not have a concept that determines the single identifiable end (purpose) of the organism independently of the functioning of the parts in concert with one another (the concept that God as supposed technical creator of these objects would have), by which to order the parts of an organism or to identify to what end each organ's function serves as means. Instead, in reflective teleological judging, we judge parts and functions of an organism as they are purposively, *internally*, related to one another. For example, in discovering what the heart does, what its pumping actions accomplish – the *circulation* of the blood – Harvey was not guided by a concept of the overarching purpose of the human organism, to which the heart is a means, for he did not have such a concept. Rather, he considered the functioning of the heart *together with* – as reciprocally means and end for – the functioning of the blood (to bring materials to extremities by circulating, as demonstrated by the loop form of blood vessels, also discovered by Harvey) and of the lungs (to provide such materials, viz., oxygen) – and one might add the functioning of the kidneys (purification of waste products from the blood) as well, as part of the clarification of "what the

⁴⁸ As suggested in the [previous chapter](#), this construal of teleological judgment is similar to Cummins' account of functional analysis, and perhaps also to Nagel's more sophisticated model of organic functioning as that of "feedback mechanisms."

heart does.” Something like Kant’s reductive solution may allow scientists *thereafter*, perhaps, to characterize the functioning of the heart separately and mechanically. But the initial reflective judging of an organ, to identify this function, does not involve the prior conceptual recognition of the overall form of the object, its purpose, but rather a “bootstrapping” consideration of this part in reciprocal purposive relations to the other parts and functions. In judging organisms teleologically, more generally, we judge in light of our idea of a whole that is not, cannot be, fully conceptually determined, for such a whole comprises the (reciprocally determined) interrelation of all of the parts – precisely that which we attempt to identify in such judging.

I suggest, therefore, a double interpretation of Kant’s claims that we judge organisms not only “as if” they are caused by God, but also on analogy with our own agency.⁴⁹ Kant means this, first, straightforwardly: we don’t know what God’s intentional causality is like. Indeed, because there is putatively no difference for God between concepts of a possible thing and the actual existence of that thing, God would not, strictly speaking, engage in technical activity like ours (i.e., concept/productive activity over time guided by the concept/existence of the product); nor, for similar reasons, would God use previously established or known mechanical laws/relations as means to accomplish his purposes, as we do. Thus, in accord with Kant’s solution, we judge organisms to be generated on analogy with our technical causality, for we attribute such human causality (reflectively) to God.⁵⁰

One could also, however, take Kant’s claims to mean that we judge organisms on analogy with our activity of reflective teleological *judging*, or, as Kant puts it, with the “subjective basis on which we connect representations within us.”⁵¹ For the structure of internal, natural, “objective” purposiveness without a purpose does seem to describe (*mutatis mutandis*) the activity of reflective teleological judging. Reflective teleological judging is not a cause of representations, nor are the parts of a representation reciprocally causally related. Rather, in reflective teleological judging we represent the causal relation among organic parts *as*

⁴⁹ As discussed in the [previous chapter](#), Kant deems this analogy a “remote” one at v:375 because it cannot capture the intrinsic, self-directing, reciprocal purposiveness of organisms, but I shall suggest (in a moment) that the analogy to our activity of reflective judging is closer.

⁵⁰ v:464n, 484. In both passages Kant argues that this analogical conception does not constitute *knowledge* of God.

⁵¹ v:360; translation altered.

one of reciprocal purposiveness. In doing so, however, we engage in a unifying judgmental activity not itself guided by an external, preceding, empirical concept of the organism's purpose. In such judging we must be, as Kant has argued, guided by the regulative principle of purposiveness without a purpose (or the idea of a natural purpose) – we attribute reciprocal means–ends relations to the parts of the organism – and we may well employ various empirical concepts, e.g., of the heart, lungs, blood, hollow bones, or sparrow. But as I have just suggested, in the paradigm cases of teleological judgment as reflective judgment proper, viz., in attempting to identify the functions of specific parts of an organism, we seek reciprocal purposive relations among the parts – and do so without a determinate empirical concept of the overarching purpose of this organism; we engage in an activity of judging, of unification of representations, which is not (fully) determined by a preceding rule.⁵²

Thus, though Kant does not so claim explicitly, one might say that in teleological judging we not only attribute to the object purposiveness without a purpose, but also engage in an activity that is itself purposive without a (determinate, conceptual, external) purpose, an activity of judging that finds unity among specific, empirical, diverse, contingent representations (here of specifically determined parts or functions) as diverse, without a prior, determinate conception of how such representations are to be unified.⁵³ Kant's analogy suggests, then, that

⁵² The concept of the organic kind (e.g., heron), to which a particular organism belongs, and according to which we judge that this one is functioning well or poorly may seem to serve as such a concept – it is the “purpose” of a single heron to be a (good, healthy) heron (as Ginsborg suggests in “Kant on Understanding Organisms”). But, as argued above, these kinds of concepts are ultimately grounded upon a more general conception of a living being, i.e., one that is self-generating and self-preserving, in which the parts are reciprocally purposive. This self-maintenance, the reciprocal relation among parts, is the ultimate standard for judging the functioning of a heron as poor, normal, or superior; similarly, such reciprocal relations are those investigated in reflective teleological judging.

⁵³ Aquila argues, similarly, that if we are able to represent “unified wholes of the special kind that natural purposes are supposed to be, then [these] discursive representations *themselves* must be unified wholes of a special kind . . .” (“Unity of Organism,” 140). In the following, I shall argue more strongly that our abilities to judge purposively without a purpose transcend the *discursivity* of our intellects. In other words, I concur – to some degree – with Hegel's claim that “the *Idea* of this archetypal intellect [in 76–7] is at bottom nothing else but the *same Idea* of the transcendental imagination” in human reflective judging (G. W. F. Hegel, *Faith and Knowledge*, tr. Walter Cerf and H. S. Harris [Albany: SUNY Press, 1977], p. 89). For just as the intuitive intellect does not rely upon discursive conceptual rules but

reflective judging may itself be an activity that is purposive without a purpose, and I propose in the following chapters to invert this analogy: to take this account of organic, internal, reciprocal purposiveness without a purpose as a model for understanding how reflective judging, especially aesthetic judging, itself functions, in what, that is, the “subjective ground for the connection of representations” in reflective judging concerning the diverse and contingent as such comprises. Though the principle of purposiveness without a purpose, interpreted as a principle of *causal* relations, cannot be applied determinatively to objects on Kant’s view, as we have seen, I shall argue that as a formal principle governing relations among representations it does govern the activity of the reflectively judging subject.

cognizes objects as “synthetic universals,” so too in reflective judging (the work of the transcendental imagination), and paradigmatically in aesthetic judging, we represent formal unities among particular intuitions, without discursive conceptual guidance. Contra B. Tüschling (“The System of Transcendental Idealism: Questions Raised and Left Open in the *Kritik der Urteilskraft*,” *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 30 supplement [1991], 109–27), who announces that Kant has become an idealist in the Hegelian/Schellingean sense in the CTJ, however, one must take into account Kant’s explicit *contrast* between our intellects and divine intellectual intuition in §§76–7; it is in the CAJ, not the CTJ, that Kant suggests that we may transcend the limits of discursive cognition.

PART II

AESTHETIC JUDGMENT

INTRODUCTION TO PART II

As we have seen, Kant argues that we must judge according to the principle of purposiveness without a purpose in order to characterize the dynamic unity of the diverse that characterizes organisms, but that this principle is merely subjectively necessary: it is needed to aid us in discovering laws governing these objects, but it cannot be determinatively applied to them. In the CAJ, Kant's conclusions appear similar: aesthetic judgments have only subjective universal validity, or make claims only to subjective necessity. Beauty – like organic purposiveness – is not a property of objects, but is (as it were) in the eye of the beholder. Yet Kant's question here is somewhat different than that in the CTJ: he is not concerned here to find a principle by which we could explain material unity in objects (though he does hold that beautiful objects are “formally” or “in their representation” unified) but instead to explain how something that is subjective (pleasure) could be the basis of universal or necessary claims. Thus here Kant argues not for *mere* subjective necessity, but for necessity in the realm of the subject. As I shall argue, Kant's account in the CAJ is nonetheless closely connected to the CTJ, for the aesthetically judging subject must itself be understood as purposive without a purpose, to be engaged in a judging activity structured by this principle.

As is well known, Kant organizes his remarks about aesthetic judgment in four “moments,” following the “guiding thread” of his *CPR* logical

theory of judgment, in which he identifies four core characteristics of such judgment: disinterestedness (quality), universality (quantity), purposiveness of form (relation), and necessity (modality). Despite Kant's reference to the logical forms of judgment, these moments do not characterize the logical form of aesthetic judgment (*das ästhetische Urteil*) understood as a proposition – paradigmatically, “x is beautiful” – for this judgment is logically affirmative (quality), singular (quantity), categorical (relation), and assertoric (modality).¹ Rather, in the four moments Kant provides an analysis of the normative status of such judgments, and, more broadly, a characterization of aesthetic experience. Kant claims that aesthetic *pleasure* is disinterested; that when we experience *objects* as beautiful, we represent them as having purposive form; and that in aesthetic judgment we make claims with universal, necessary, normative status, viz., that *all* others *ought* to share our pleasure in experiencing such objects.

Throughout the four moments and subsequently, Kant also characterizes aesthetic experience and judgment by contrasting them to two other sorts of judgments made in relation to pleasure: the agreeable (*Annehmlichkeit*), wherein we find an object immediately, sensuously pleasing and then judge that it is so pleasing, and the good (*das Gute*), wherein we judge the object to be good (morally or as useful) for conceptually articulated reasons, and therefore “approve” (*billigen*) of the object, take pleasure in it for those reasons.² These contrasting cases serve Kant to specify the character of aesthetic experience – e.g., aesthetic pleasure is disinterested, by contrast to the other pleasures – but also to pose his central question concerning aesthetic judgment.

Like judgments of the agreeable, aesthetic judgment is “based on” pleasure, a liking we have for objects “immediately” (e.g., v:230); thus, in “deciding” that an object is beautiful, we “relate it to the subject and its feeling of pleasure” (v:203). By contrast to judgments of the agreeable, however, when we judge that something is beautiful, we do not take ourselves to be registering a personal taste or subjective whim. Rather, we seem to be doing something like stating a fact about the object, for we claim that others ought to agree with our judgment, indeed that everyone ought to agree.³ Here aesthetic pleasure and judgment are akin

¹ As Kant notes with respect to quantity (v:215). See Guyer, *Claims of Taste*, pp. 114ff.

² Kant's full terminological distinction between these types of pleasures (and judgments) runs as follows: “we call *agreeable* [*angenehm*] what *gratifies* us [*vergnügen*], *beautiful* [*schön*] what we *just like* [*gefallen*], *good* what we *esteem* [*schätzen*] or *endorse* [*billigen*], i.e., that to which we attribute an objective value” (v:210).

³ v:212–13.

to the case of the good: we may require agreement from others in our approval of objects as good, because we may require that they concur with the conceptually grounded judgments that ground pleasure in the good. Aesthetic judgment is, however, also distinct from such approval, for it is not based on conceptually articulated reasons: there are no rules or proofs that something is beautiful, no concept of beauty (v:215). Rather, one must experience the object, for oneself and with pleasure, in order to judge it beautiful.

Thus aesthetic judgments both make claims to universal validity and are essentially subjective. In aesthetic judging, Kant claims, we connect our representation of the object not with a conceptual, objective predicate, but with pleasure, which cannot be attributed to objects (v:204). We misspeak, then, when we say that an *object* is beautiful; more properly, we should say, “I take pleasure in representing this object, and all should take pleasure in it too (though for no specifiable reason, on the basis of no objective property of the object).” Thus aesthetic judgments make claims to merely “subjective necessity”⁴ or “subjectively universal validity.”⁵

Hence Kant’s central question in the CAJ: how can this claim to subjective universality and necessity in aesthetic judgment be justified? Kant’s justificatory task in response to this question is a difficult one: if one must feel pleasure in order to make an aesthetic judgment, then it seems difficult to see how one could *require* others to agree (how can one *require* that someone *feel* a certain way?). And Kant denies that the claims may be justified by reference to any concepts, rules, or proofs, or objective characteristics of the object. More strongly, the universality and necessity claims in aesthetic judgments indicate that aesthetic judgments make some sort of a priori claim (v:288–9).⁶ Thus such judgments require a deduction: experience cannot (and does not) support the claim that all necessarily do, or ought to, feel pleasure in this beautiful object.

Kant argues that these claims are justified because we may “presuppose . . . in every human being the same subjective conditions of the power of judgment that we find in ourselves” (v:290; Pluhar translation). Aesthetic pleasure, Kant argues, is based on an activity of judging (*Beurteilung*)⁷ that is a “free play” of the cognitive faculties, imagination and understanding, in which these faculties are in “free harmony.” Such harmony comprises

⁴ Titles of §§19 and 22. ⁵ v:215.

⁶ Kant qualifies this claim, however, as I shall discuss in Chapter [Eight](#).

⁷ See Fricke, *Kants Theorie*, pp. 3–4 and Chapter [Three](#), on the distinction between the aesthetic *Urteil*, “this is beautiful,” and the activity of aesthetic judging (*Beurteilung*); I shall refer to these as aesthetic “judgment” and “judging,” respectively.

a subjective condition for the possibility of experience; all subjects must therefore (be able to) engage in such judging, and find such judging pleasurable.

Kant's project in the CAJ thus resembles his project in the *CPR*. Aesthetic judgments, Kant argues, are not only a priori, but also synthetic: they "go beyond the concept of the object, and even the intuition of the object, and add . . . as a predicate something that is not even cognition at all: namely a feeling of pleasure . . ." (v:288).⁸ As in the *CPR*, Kant attempts to justify such synthetic a priori judgments by providing an account of the synthetic judgmental activity (here, the harmony of the faculties) that grounds such judgments. More broadly, just as Kant attempts in the *CPR* to mediate between rationalist and empiricist epistemologies, in the CAJ he attempts to reconcile rationalist and empiricist aesthetics, as he indicates in restating his central question as a conflict between empiricist and rationalist claims.⁹ Kant agrees with the empiricists (e.g., Hume and Burke) that, in order to judge that something is beautiful, I must find the object pleasing and, consequently, that taste is subjective, controversial, not based upon proofs. But Kant also endorses at least one aspect of rationalist aesthetics (e.g., that of Lessing, Baumgarten, or Mendelssohn): on the rationalist view, there is a right answer to the question, "Is this object beautiful?" – or, in Kant's terms, aesthetic judgments rightfully make claims to universal validity. Thus for Kant, as for the rationalists, there is a reason *to* have controversy about taste, not merely to shrug one's shoulders and say "to each his own": because judgments of taste rest upon some sort of judgment of the object, specifically of the object's form.

Kant's claims that aesthetic judgment has both subjective and universal status, and that it concerns a type of experience involving both pleasure and an activity of judging, thus reconcile rationalist and empiricist claims.

⁸ This characterization of aesthetic experience also connects the CAJ to Kant's moral theory, in which Kant also purports to be treating a synthetic a priori principle. And, though Kant's account of morality has traditionally been understood exclusively to identify morality with the employment of rational rules, recent treatments present it as understanding moral (and other) principles of action as involving a synthesis of sensible origins of action (incentives) and rational concepts or rules (the categorical imperative and/or the moral law), in a manner somewhat similar to Kant's analysis of cognition as requiring both intuitions and concepts. See, e.g., Henry Allison, *Kant's Theory of Freedom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), Chapter Six; Barbara Herman, *The Practice of Moral Judgment* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), Chapters 4 and 7.

⁹ In the Antinomy of Taste, §§55–7.

But just as Kant argues in the *CPR* that on a rationalist or an empiricist account knowledge is impossible, he claims that, on the empiricist and rationalist views, experience of the beautiful is impossible (v:346). To adapt the terms of Kant's famous criticism of Locke and Leibniz in the *CPR*:¹⁰ the empiricists wrongly "sensualize" aesthetic experience (assimilate it to the agreeable), whereas the rationalists wrongly "intellectualize" it (assimilate it to the good). The empiricists render aesthetic judgment either entirely subjective or an empirical prediction: when one judges that something is beautiful on an empiricist account (e.g., Burke's aesthetics), one is reporting that one is pleased by that object. Thus at best an aesthetic judge might be able to predict that others will feel what she does (if they encounter the object in similar circumstances, and have similar natural constitutions), but not to claim that others ought to agree with her (v:213, 278).

On a rationalist account, by contrast, one could explain why we justifiably require others to agree with our aesthetic judgments – by providing conceptual rules of beauty, often the rule that beauty is sensible perfection (as in Baumgarten's aesthetics). Kant objects not only that we cannot formulate any such determinate rules of beauty, but also that this view fails to recognize the distinctive character of taste: "from concepts, there is no transition to the feeling of pleasure or displeasure" (v:211). The rationalists cannot explain, that is, why there are objects fitting their theories that no one finds beautiful (pleasing), or why it seems possible that two observers both notice (cognize) the same properties of the object, yet one feel aesthetic pleasure and the other not. Most importantly, the rationalists cannot account for the "autonomy" of taste, viz., that we are not licensed to judge that an object is beautiful merely by elaborating conceptual rules, unless we experience it as such (pleasurable) *ourselves* (e.g., v:281) – just as we are not, according to Kant, licensed to judge cognitively about objects without requisite experience of them.

This final objection identifies a *justificatory* and not merely a descriptive failing of the rationalist theory, as one can see through a comparison with empiricist criticisms of rationalist epistemology (particularly as understood by Kant). The empiricists not only present an alternative psychological description of human processes of knowledge but also level a justificatory challenge against the rationalists: rationalist claims or concepts (substance and cause) are *unjustified* because they cannot be given a concrete meaning from experience, and cannot be shown justifiably to

¹⁰ A271/B327.

apply to the objects we experience. To see the parallel point with respect to aesthetics, consider the example of a person who states, “*Paradise Lost* is beautiful, but I don’t like it.” We should take this person – I submit – to be reporting that *other* people find *Paradise Lost* beautiful (they like it), but he doesn’t. One might call such an aesthetic judge “hypocritical” or “inauthentic.” (This accusation – of inauthenticity – as opposed to the more impersonal accusation that someone lacks empirical evidence for his claims, reflects, as I shall argue below, the subject-centered nature of aesthetic judging.) As in his epistemology, Kant expands and transforms this empiricist justificatory challenge: we must (understand ourselves to) judge beauty “autonomously” not only to have a “touchstone” for our claims in experience, a ground for our claims in our own pleasure, but also to make justifiably universal and necessary claims in judgments of taste. For such claims must be *a priori*, not *a posteriori*, and thus must derive from our own approach to nature, not be learned, empirically, from nature (v:350).

In the CAJ, as in the *CPR*, Kant aims, then, not only to reconcile these views, but to supply the justification for aesthetic judgment missing on both accounts: the empiricists cannot explain the normativity of aesthetic judgment, the rationalists cannot explain the role of pleasure as a condition for (being able properly to make an) aesthetic judgment. I have lingered on this comparison because I propose to interpret Kant’s justification of aesthetic judgments as similar in form to that he provides for the synthetic *a priori* judgments in the *CPR*: that such judgments are grounded in the necessary conditions for objectivity, experience, and judging (A158/B197). This parallel is not a strict one because aesthetic judgments are not based on objective principles, or concepts.¹¹ But the principle of purposiveness, I shall argue, plays a parallel role in aesthetic experience to that of the categorical principles in experience in general: it is constitutive of aesthetic experience – aesthetic representation and pleasure – and of the objects of such experience – objects represented as

¹¹ The strictly parallel argument would be that there are necessary conditions for the possibility of (this kind of) experience and object – and that these constitute something like rules of aesthetic criticism. Thus aesthetic judgments would be objectively valid, and thereby make justifiable normative claims to intersubjective agreement. This is more or less Ameriks’ line of interpretation, i.e., that Kant (despite numerous statements to the contrary) does, or ought to, believe that beauty is a concept. (Karl Ameriks, “How to Save Kant’s Deduction of Taste,” *Journal of Value Inquiry* 16 [1982], 295–302.) More precisely, Ameriks takes aesthetic judgments to be similar to empirical, not *a priori*, cognitive judgments; I shall return to my more specific disagreements with his view below.

beautiful – and judging in accord with this principle makes that experience possible. And just as in the *CPR* Kant justifies synthetic a priori judgments by providing an analysis of human cognition and experience (of which these judgments articulate the necessary conditions), this account of aesthetic experience as governed by the principle of purposiveness grounds Kant's deduction of aesthetic judgments.¹²

Schematically, one may note that Kant suggests that purposiveness plays all three of the constitutive roles I have just suggested: Kant introduces purposiveness in §10 as a characteristic of beautiful objects (purposive form). He also claims that it is the “constitutive” principle of aesthetic pleasure (v:196–7), and characterizes the harmonious play of the faculties (or aesthetic *Beurteilung*) as a purposive state of the faculties (e.g., v:222). More substantively, I shall use the account of purposiveness developed in the preceding chapters as a model to argue that this principle constitutes aesthetic experience: purposiveness without a purpose is a substantive principle of the unity of diversity, as a structure of reciprocal means–end relations that obtain among parts as heterogeneous or contingent, unified by an anticipatory future-directedness. In Kant's account of aesthetic experience, this model is “internalized”: it does not characterize the causal relations we attribute to an object (as in teleological judgment), but rather the subject's representations and experience, most fundamentally its activity of judging. The beautiful form of an object, I shall argue, is represented as a unity of its diverse properties, a unity comparable (though not identical) to the unity we judge to characterize organisms. Aesthetic pleasure is constituted a priori by purposiveness without a purpose as a feeling of the subject's purposive anticipation of the future (or the “feeling of life”). Finally, aesthetic judging is an activity structured by the principle of purposiveness without a purpose: it is a future-directed imaginative activity, in which the subject projects a representation of the object as a whole.

The first two of these claims comprise Kant's critical modifications of the rationalist aesthetics of perfection, and the empiricist aesthetics of

¹² I concur, then, with Allison that Kant's account in the CAJ comprises an account of both the *quid facti* and the *quid juris* (i.e., in what a judgment of taste consists, and a justification of the claims in such judgments), and with Ameriks that Kant's argumentative method is here (as often) regressive: Kant provides an account of aesthetic experience, and defends judgments employing the principle of purposiveness regressively, because this principle makes such experience possible. Unlike both, however, I take Kant to be providing a substantive descriptive account of aesthetic experience as characterized by purposiveness.

sensory pleasure, respectively. Contra the rationalists, beautiful objects are not represented as objectively purposive (perfect), but merely as subjectively purposive. Contra the empiricists, aesthetic pleasure must be understood as an intentional state governed by an a priori principle (purposiveness), not as a mere sensation, to be investigated empirically. And just as Kant both reconciles rationalism and empiricism in the *CPR* – in claiming that both concepts and intuitions are necessary for experience and cognition – and grounds the possibility thereof in a judgmental act of synthesis, so too, I argue, does Kant reconcile and ground rationalist and empiricist claims in aesthetics. For Kant holds that the representation of objects as beautiful and aesthetic pleasure are both necessary to aesthetic experience, and inextricable therein, and here too he argues that such experience is made possible by the synthetic activity of aesthetic judging. And Kant concludes that we are justified in claiming that others ought to share our pleasure (the aesthetic judgment or *Urteil*), because this judgment is grounded in the activity of judging that is necessary not only for the possibility of aesthetic experience, but also for the possibility of empirical cognition, and thus for experience.

In concert with this interpretive proposal, I shall not proceed by following Kant's own order of presentation (the four moments), but shall devote a chapter each to the three central components of aesthetic experience – the representation of objects as beautiful (Chapter [Five](#)), aesthetic pleasure (Chapter [Six](#)), and our judgmental activity in such experience (Chapter [Seven](#)). I shall turn, then, in Chapter Eight to discuss how this account of aesthetic experience can justify the claims to subjective universality in aesthetic judgments.

BEAUTIFUL OBJECTS: SUBJECTIVELY PURPOSIVE FORM

Kant claims that when we find an object beautiful, we are appreciating its “purposive form,” a claim that has been both extremely influential and widely criticized. Using the preceding analysis of purposiveness as the principle of teleological judgment as a model, I shall suggest a novel interpretation of this claim: just as purposiveness describes the unity of the diverse as grounded in the reciprocal means–ends relations among parts/functions of an organism (in teleological judgment), so too does purposiveness characterize the unity of the diverse as such (purposive form) that holds among the sensible properties of an object experienced as beautiful. The form of the beautiful object is, however, “formally,” rather than “materially,” purposive: the relations among its properties are not causal relations, but reciprocal relations of contrast and complement that render the object intelligible, or unify it as purposive for cognition. Thus, I shall suggest, Kant holds that in aesthetic experience the beautiful object is appreciated as an individual, as a unity, as comprising indeterminately many of its sensible properties as inextricably interrelated to make the object what it is; in aesthetic judging, we appreciate what has been called an object’s individual form.

As I shall argue, this reading of Kant’s aesthetic formalism renders his aesthetic theory a richer, more plausible, and less narrowly subjectivist description of aesthetic experience than is frequently believed. The “objectivist” reading of Kant’s aesthetics I propose is, I shall argue

however, consistent with Kant's denials that aesthetic judgments are objective judgments. For just as teleological judgment is not objective, because internal purposive relations among parts cannot be objectively attributed to objects, so too (*mutatis mutandis*) does our representation of beautiful, purposive form fail to be appropriately grounded in concepts, as is required for objective judgment. Our apprehension of such purposive relations is, then, merely subjective, and provides "no cognition," as Kant claims, of the object.

I shall begin defending these controversial claims by presenting Kant's exposition of his aesthetic formalism (5.1) and common criticisms of it (5.2). In sections 5.3–5, I shall then present my interpretation, and argue that it allows Kant to avoid these criticisms and is (largely) consistent with his exposition. I shall then turn to a more technical discussion concerning Kant's conception of beautiful form as purposive, specifically as "formally" purposive, and merely subjectively so, as (that is) both similar to, and distinct from, perfection, or "objective" formal purposiveness (5.6–7).

5.1 Kant's exposition

Kant presents his aesthetic formalism in the third moment of his *Analytic of Taste*, §§10–17 of the *CJ*. In the preceding two moments, Kant has argued that aesthetic pleasure is disinterested, and that in aesthetic judgments we claim that all others ought to share our pleasure in experiencing the beautiful object. In the third moment, Kant turns to consider *what* about the object thus pleases, and claims that "[b]eauty is the form of *purposiveness* of an object insofar as it is perceived in it *without the representation of a purpose*" (v:240; translation modified). In this statement, Kant suggests that his claims that the beautiful object is purposive, and that its form is what makes it beautiful, are inextricable from one another; and I shall suggest that they ought to be so understood. For the meantime, however, I shall present Kant's apparent position as to form independently of purposiveness, as it is often read.

Consistently with his general procedure in his discussion of taste, Kant presents and defends his aesthetic formalism via arguments by contrast and elimination: he articulates what form is, and why it is the source of an object's beauty, by identifying what it is not. In particular, Kant contrasts the "form" of an object with two sorts of "matter": sensations, which are the "matter" of experience, and concepts, which are the "matter" of

judgment.¹ (These two contrasts correspond to Kant's contrasts between the beautiful, and [respectively] the agreeable and the good.)

In §§13–14, Kant contrasts beauty with “charms,” i.e., pleasures in mere sensations. Kant asserts that properly aesthetic pleasure stems only from attention to an object's form as distinct from the “material” components in our perception of it, i.e., colors and tones; if these latter play any role in (representing) the beauty of an object, it is only to highlight its form (v:224–6). By contrast, Kant glosses form as the “shape,” “outline,” or “design” of the object (v:225), or (for temporally changing objects) the “play of shapes (in space, namely, mimetic art and dance), or . . . of sensations (in time) [i.e., music]” (v:225).

In §§15–16, Kant contrasts aesthetic judging of an object's form with the judgment and approval of an object according to concepts, in particular with a judgment of perfection, viz., that an object has all the requisite properties of the kind of thing it “is supposed to be” (*was es sein solle* or *was für ein Ding es sein solle*). When we judge that a flower is beautiful, Kant argues, we are not concerned with its botanical categorization or with its function in the plant's life; we need not know these things to find the flower beautiful, and even if we do, we judge that the flower is beautiful on different grounds, its form (v:229).

Unlike his more explicit statements in §§13–14 concerning what these “different grounds” might be (shape,² play), in §15 Kant suggests only that “what is formal in the representation of a thing [is] the harmony of its manifold to [form] a unity (where it is indeterminate what it is supposed to be) . . .” (v:227). Kant's characterization of form here is cryptic, but it suggests that (the representation of) beautiful form is similar to our representation of an object as falling under a concept or our judgment of it as perfect because it is a representation of a unified manifold, but dissimilar in that it is not so unified by being subsumed to a concept.

On the basis of this contrast between form and judgments of perfection, in §16 Kant distinguishes between “pure” aesthetic judgments of “free” beauty, according to “mere form,” and judgments of “dependent” (*anhängend*) beauty, in which we do take the object's perfection into account. Kant suggests that we appreciate horses, human beings, artifacts, and many artworks as thus dependently beautiful; specifically, in judging

¹ See, e.g., v:290 for such language, and *JL* ix:101 on the distinction between the “given representations” or concepts that are the “matter” of the judgment (combined in a logical judgment), as contrasted to the “form” (universal, singular, assertoric, etc.) of judgment.

² Kant refers once to form as “shape” at v:230.

representational works of art, Kant claims, we employ concepts to judge what the art work is meant to represent (v:229).³ Thus Kant suggests that judgments concerning the representational content of artworks are not relevant to judging their beauty (form) as such, or that (most) artistic beauty (as well as the beauty of some natural objects and artifacts) is an inferior (impure, dependent) type of beauty, the representation of which is “restricted” by concepts (v:230).

Kant’s defense of his aesthetic formalism may be restated as a disjunctive argument corresponding to these contrasts, employing his similar threefold distinction among types of representations in the *CPR*: (i) aesthetic judgments must be based either on sensations or on form or on concepts because these three options exhaust the kinds of representations we can have;⁴ but (ii) aesthetic judgments are not based on concepts; and (iii) they are not based on sensations. So (iv) they must be based on form. Claims (ii) and (iii) are presented in §§15–16 and 13–14 respectively; with the addition of (i), the disjunctive premise, they entail Kant’s formalist conclusion.

Kant’s reasons for holding (ii) are as follows: if aesthetic judgments of beauty were to rest on concepts, specifically if we were to have a concept of beauty, we would be able to prove that an object is beautiful by showing that it had the requisite properties to fall under that concept. If aesthetic judgments were based on other concepts, an object’s belonging to a particular kind would entail that the object is beautiful. But, Kant argues, we cannot find properties that all beautiful objects share, nor can we identify a kind of object that is always beautiful; we can neither predict nor prove that an object will be found beautiful based on conceptual criteria (marks). Rather, each of us must experience the object (with

³ It would appear in fact that we use two concepts in such judgment: a concept of the art object, i.e., that it “is supposed to be” a representation, and a concept of the kind of thing that is being represented. In §16, Kant suggests that only the latter type of concept is relevant, but later writes that, in appreciating art, we must be “aware” that it is art, suggesting that we employ the first sort of concept as well (v:306; cf. 311–12).

⁴ One might argue (as does Kenneth Rogerson, in *Kant’s Aesthetic: The Roles of Form and Expression* [MD: University Press of America, 1986], e.g., pp. 34, 97–8) that rational ideas, a further option, are the basis of aesthetic pleasure. The *CJ* might appear to provide textual evidence for such a view in the term “aesthetic ideas.” Given Kant’s assertions that one can appreciate beauty only by perceiving it, however, rational ideas seem unlikely candidates as the ground for judging an object as beautiful, nor (as I shall discuss below) are aesthetic ideas identical to or derivative from rational ideas; see indeed v:350–1.

pleasure) in order to find it beautiful. Thus aesthetic judgments cannot be based on concepts (v:215–16, 286).⁵

Kant's justification for (iii) is based on his prior argument (in the second moment) that in aesthetic judgments we require universal agreement from others. Therefore, Kant argues, these judgments must concern a representation that is shareable by all or "universally communicable."⁶ Sensations are, however, not universally communicable, but particular to each person, or private.⁷ Thus they cannot ground aesthetic judgments.

Kant thus suggests that beautiful form is divorced not only from purely sensory appeal, but also from any consideration of the object's kind, fitness, or meaning. On the bases of Kant's glosses in §§13–14, and of his identification of space and time as the forms of intuition in the *CPR*, moreover, it seems plausible to understand such form as comprising the spatial and/or temporal properties of the object, and so it is frequently read.⁸ This conception of form is consonant, too, with a long philosophical and art theoretical tradition of identifying beauty with properties such as proportion and symmetry. In accord with his view that there are no rules of beauty, however, Kant rejects such formalist, e.g., geometrical,

⁵ It would seem that one cannot, therefore, make universal judgments of beauty, e.g., all roses are beautiful, on Kant's view. Kant attempts in both of these passages to explain the possibility of such judgments, as logical judgments "grounded on" aesthetic judgments, i.e., broadly speaking, judgments in which one collates one's prior aesthetic experiences (of particular roses) and then makes a (cognitive) judgment that in each of those cases the object was a rose. For discussion of the difficulties attendant upon this claim, see Ted Cohen, "Three Problems in Kant's Aesthetics," *British Journal of Aesthetics* 42 (2002), 1–12, and Miles Rind, "Kant's Beautiful Roses, a Response to Cohen's 'Second Problem,'" *British Journal of Aesthetics* 43 (2003), 65–74.

⁶ Contra the frequent scholarly assimilation of universal communicability and universal validity (e.g., Ginsborg, *Role of Taste*, pp. 71–2, 75–7, 83, 145), one ought to distinguish the two, as Kant indicates terminologically: universal communicability indicates only that the experience of beauty *can* be communicated, not that claims about it are (more strongly) normative for others (though the latter claim may well presuppose the former: how could one justifiably require others to share something if they are incapable of doing so?). That these claims are separable on Kant's view is attested by his treatment of aesthetic pleasure in the Anthropology lectures in years before the *CJ*, in which he argues that aesthetic pleasure is universally communicable ("public"), but not that aesthetic judgment is universally valid, viz., involves normative claims on others' agreement. (See, e.g., Busolt lectures [1788–9?], xxv.2:1509–13.) Here I am concerned only with the weaker claim.

⁷ E.g., v:224, 291–2, 306.

⁸ E.g., among many others, Donald Crawford (*Kant's Aesthetic Theory* [Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1974], pp. 96–9) and Rogerson (*Kant's Aesthetic*, p. 160).

rules of beauty (v:241–3); his only explicit description of beautiful form is, rather, that it is purposive without a purpose.

In his presentation of this claim, Kant introduces his definitions of purpose and purposiveness (D1–3), and specifies that beautiful form is pleasing neither because it serves subjective purposes, nor because it is objectively purposive, viz., it is not deemed to fit conceptual determinations of a purpose that would make an object good or perfect (v:221, v:226). Instead, beautiful form is characterized by merely “subjective purposiveness,” or the “mere form of purposiveness in the representation through which an object is given to us” (v:221). Here Kant suggests that beautiful form is that characteristic of an object which grounds the “ease in apprehending [this object] in the imagination” (v:227), or prompts the cognitive faculties to be in play (itself characterized by a “merely formal purposiveness”), which “animates” the cognitive powers and is therefore pleasing (v:222).

Thus Kant suggests that what we appreciate in a beautiful object is its form, and that we take pleasure in such form because it is purposive, as if designed for our representation of it (see v:245). As noted above, these claims come under considerable criticism, to which I now turn.

5.2 Criticisms

Kant’s claim that aesthetic pleasure concerns only form (so understood) seems, first, inaccurate to aesthetic experience: do we really appreciate only spatial or temporal properties of objects when we find them beautiful? Specifically, the representational content of a work of art seems to contribute to its beauty, as is reflected in other philosophical characterizations of beauty as the unity of form and content. Likewise, Kant’s arguments that sensory properties of the object must not be considered in aesthetic judging seem questionable. Is it possible (one might ask in a Berkeleyan vein) to distinguish firmly between “formal” and “material” properties of a sensed object, particularly one aesthetically experienced?⁹

⁹ This objection is raised by Francis Coleman, *The Harmony of Reason: A Study in Kant’s Aesthetics* (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press, 1974), pp. 46–8; Crawford, *Kant’s Aesthetic Theory*, pp. 102–10; Mary McCloskey, *Kant’s Aesthetic* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1987), pp. 64–5. Kant suggests a different difficulty in distinguishing sensation from form: “we cannot say with certainty whether a color or tone (sound) is merely an agreeable sensation or whether it is of itself already a beautiful play of sensations and as such carries with it, as we judge it aesthetically, a liking for its form,” which appreciation of form may include our pleasure in “pure” colors, because of their

Moreover: in what sense are our perceptions of colors or tones more private than our (non-conceptualized) perception of temporal or spatial form?¹⁰ Even if one grants Kant this point, the universal communicability of the experience *that* an object has a particular form remains at best a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for the claim that form is the basis for aesthetic judgment. For we have not yet got to the particular kind of privacy or publicity with which Kant is concerned. In aesthetic judgment we are not claiming that *x* has some property *y*, but rather that *x*, in virtue of its property *y*, is pleasing and should be pleasing to others. It does not follow, however, from the shareability of perception of forms that there is a corresponding shareability of pleasure therein. On Kant's own view, not all forms are found beautiful or pleasing (overly regular ones are not), yet all forms are apparently universally communicable. Finally, even if Kant has good grounds for asserting that our sensations are private, our apprehension of form universally communicable, and our pleasures therein (respectively) private and universally communicable, he may still be begging the question as to the purported universal validity of our aesthetic judgments: it may be that our sensations are private, and are

temporal or spatial vibrations or "unity of a manifold in them" (v:224–5; cf. 324–5). As will be discussed below, these passages (with the exception of Kant's claim that pure colors are "formally" simple [v:224–5]) indicate that Kant's distinction between form and (sensory) matter rests on complexity (form involves more than one part).

¹⁰ Kant's claim that sensations are private is, moreover, problematic given Kant's unclarity concerning the status of Lockean "secondary qualities": Kant suggests sometimes (e.g., in the *Prolegomena*) that qualities like color and warmth are "subjective," merely describe how objects "seem" to me, but at v:206 Kant characterizes green as an "objective sensation," suggesting that it may objectively be judged to belong to objects. Further, it does not seem that sensations are less communicable than forms: we *do* communicate about them – we have concepts/words for "red," "blue," "pain," etc., and make judgments using them, in which we appear to communicate to others. Perhaps, in the context of aesthetic appreciation, we may avoid these difficulties: when we communicate about red, we use a concept (see *JL* ix:95: red is an "abstracting" concept), but in the *CJ* Kant appears to be concerned not with this concept, but with something like "qualia": though we all refer to red, "we cannot assume that in all subjects the sensations themselves agree *in quality*" (v:224, my emphasis). Kant might, then, be arguing that each of us finds only some instances of red (or other colors) pleasing, and the only way that this could be so is if our pleasure in these colors is due to their qualitative quality (as it were), which is incommunicable – just how something looks (or sounds) to me, here and now. As I indicate, however, this turn to identifying the relevant characteristic of the object in terms of its pleasingness means that Kant's argument that form is universally communicable and therefore the source of beauty must be supplemented by an argument that we all (should) find the universally communicable form pleasing.

intimately involved in our aesthetic experience of objects; so much the worse, then, for the universal validity of such judgments.

To sum up these various lines of objection: as usual for Kant's disjunctive arguments, the premise here is open to the objection that there are missing alternatives. Why not add another disjunct, e.g., *both* sensations and form or *both* conceptual judgment and form, as alternative, more descriptively persuasive bases for aesthetic judgment?¹¹

Current readers of Kant's aesthetics tend to endorse these criticisms, and to add another: Kant's formalism is inconsistent with his most fundamental claims about aesthetic judgment – that it is subjective because it is based not on the nature of the object (form or otherwise), but determined by the subject's pleasure – and (moreover) with his explanation for such pleasure. As noted above, Kant argues that we feel pleasure in representing beautiful objects because they are purposive for cognition: we can represent them easily, they allow us to engage in the free play of the faculties. It is unclear, however, that spatio-temporal form (in particular) is what would make objects peculiarly representable, in such free play. Conversely, because space and time are necessary forms of intuition for all human beings, all (experienced) objects have spatio-temporal form of some sort, which renders such objects representable, judgeable (as governed by the categories/schemata). If this is what Kant means by judgeable, however, then all objects ought to be found beautiful.¹² Otherwise, one must specify which kind of spatio-temporal form is, thus, "purposive" for judging. If Kant then distinguishes purposive from non-purposive form only by saying that the former elicits the free, harmonious play of the faculties, then his formalist claims may well be extraneous to his account. For Kant does not need the purported universal communicability of form to justify our claims on others in aesthetic judgment: the free play of the faculties is itself (Kant argues) a state that is universally communicable to others (for they have the same cognitive faculties that can be so harmonized; v:217–18, 290n). The purposiveness of beautiful objects may then be read to mean nothing determinate about them, just that they have the disposition to elicit a certain (universally communicable, pleasurable) state in a subject perceiving them. Thus, it is argued, we may eliminate Kant's formalism as an implausible doctrine

¹¹ E.g., Guyer, *Claims of Taste*, pp. 204–5.

¹² This objection also may be raised against Kant's deduction of aesthetic judgments, as I shall discuss in Chapter [Eight](#).

and an incoherent “mistake” from a (reconstructive) account of Kant’s aesthetics.¹³

The cost of such interpretive elimination of Kant’s formalism is, however, rather high. For I think most of us – at least in our un-theory-laden moments – would be loth to describe aesthetic experience as self-absorbed attention to our own mental states, or to characterize a beautiful object as pleasing because it has “whatever it might be” that occasions a shareable mental state. If anything, aesthetic experience seems to be a rapt absorption in (perceiving) the *object*.¹⁴ Kant himself suggests that aesthetic judgments (of the beautiful) do concern objects in comparing them to judgments of the sublime: the latter do not require a deduction, Kant writes, because they make no claims about nature (or objects) but “merely [about] . . . our way of thinking,” whereas aesthetic judgments do, because they purport to make claims about objects (v:280). Moreover, on both of the interpretive proposals so far discussed (the spatio-temporal form reading, and the partially reconstructive subjectivist reading), the link Kant wishes to draw (via purposiveness) between the beauty of objects, biological functions, and empirical knowledge of the contingent aspects of nature is lost, exchanged either for an arid, mathematical aesthetic, or for an abstract aesthetic subjectivism.¹⁵

¹³ Thus Crawford (*Kant’s Aesthetic Theory*, p. 110) and Guyer (*Claims of Taste*, e.g., pp. 206, 225) conclude. Allison concurs (*Theory of Taste*, pp. 133–5), and, more broadly, emphasizes the subjectivism of Kant’s aesthetics: “[according to Kant] it is not merely that the discriminations of taste are made by something subjective [viz., pleasure] . . . that makes judgments of taste irredeemably subjective; it is rather that what is *discriminated* is a state of the subject (a mental state of harmony or discord) of which one can only become aware by feeling” (ibid., p. 129). Similarly, Ginsborg’s suggestion that on Kant’s view aesthetic pleasure is a “feeling of” (its own) universal communicability, and that aesthetic judging is equivalent to such pleasure, eliminates any role for the object’s form in aesthetic experience (*Role of Taste*, e.g., p. 23; cf. “Reflective Judgment and Taste”).

¹⁴ This concern holds particularly against interpretations like Allison’s and Ginsborg’s (at least in earlier work): though they are textually grounded, they render Kant’s account unsatisfactory as a description of aesthetic experience: aesthetic judgment and pleasure are purely self-referential (about themselves/each other/their own universal communicability) and thus peculiarly empty. It is difficult to see why we should believe that this is what we’re experiencing, claiming, or feeling in aesthetic experience.

¹⁵ Commentators recognize that Kant’s aesthetic formalism is embroiled with the principle of purposiveness, but often take this connection to be a further reason reconstructively to eliminate Kant’s formalism, arguing that this principle is obscure (e.g., Guyer, *Claims of Taste*, pp. 70–4) or problematically ambiguous (Allison, *Theory of Taste*, pp. 60–4). Ginsborg’s later, powerful account in “Aesthetic and Biological Purposiveness” meets this interpretive demand without reference to form, and thus competes with the interpretation offered here; as I shall suggest, however, her

5.3 Purposive form

These dismaying conclusions stem, I suggest, from failing to take seriously Kant's intimate connection between purposiveness and form – from reading “form” (separately) to mean spatio-temporal properties, and then trying (and failing) to see such properties as aesthetically pleasing or purposive. By contrast, I suggest that we can read purposiveness as *characterizing* the form of beautiful objects as experienced (not simply as describing the object as occasioning a certain mental state), as *descriptive* – and plausibly so – of what we find pleasing in a beautiful object.¹⁶ In the spirit of Kant's statement, “whether this assumption [that nature is purposive for us] is correct is as yet very doubtful, while the actuality of natural beauties is patent to experience” (v:291), I shall start with a broadly Kantian characterization of what that “actual” experience is like, and then develop an account of purposive form, on parallel to the purposiveness of organic functioning, as a characterization of what pleases us in such an experience. Though I shall not deny that such form is spatio-temporal, I argue that it is not (a collection of) formal properties, but rather the interrelatedness-in-space/time of the sensible properties of an object to form a unity of heterogeneous, contingent, sensible properties – or the “individual form” of the object.¹⁷

In aesthetic experience we tend to understand ourselves as being pleased by certain objects (and not others), given what they are like. Whether or not we believe that formal properties explain our pleasure in beautiful objects, we tend to take properties of those objects to explain why we find them beautiful, or to “make” them beautiful. Say, for example, the particular yellow and the particular curve of a daffodil's

account of aesthetic purposiveness might be consonant with my interpretation of purposive form.

¹⁶ Here I concur with Kulenkampff (*Kants Logik*, pp. 118–35), who argues, however, that Kant fails to characterize beautiful form because he cannot articulate a non-tautological description thereof; here I attempt to remedy this problem. Contra Guyer (*Claims of Taste*, pp. 205–8), moreover, Kant should not be understood to be trying (unsuccessfully) to give *criteria* for picking out beautiful from not-beautiful objects, but simple to *describe* what we appreciate in beautiful objects.

¹⁷ Though I attempt more extensively to describe the “individuality” of an object experienced as beautiful, I concur with Fricke (*Kants Theorie*, pp. 8, 119) and with Bäumler (*Irrationalitätsproblem*) concerning the nature, and the cognitive significance, of aesthetic representation (that it represents objects as individuals). For a non-Kantian proposal of a similar view, see David Wiggins, “Reply to Richard Wollheim,” *Ratio* 20 (1978), 52–68.

petals, or Klimt's use of many vertical, almost-parallel lines and the tones of soft blue and green in his *Tannenwald-I*.

Such properties seem to serve as grounds for finding an object beautiful. They are not, however, necessary or sufficient conditions for beauty. Obviously none is a necessary condition for beauty, as one can see from the vast differences among the beautiful objects of the various fine arts or between visual and aural natural beauties. Nor are they sufficient conditions for beauty, or even (more loosely) generally applicable reasons for finding something beautiful. Bozo the Clown's neck ruff may be curved in the same way as a daffodil's petals, and his clothing may be the same shade of yellow; a sketch I might make of a jail cell may involve a large number of almost parallel vertical lines and may be colored (inventively) soft blue and green. Yet I do not find either of these latter objects beautiful, nor am I more likely to find them beautiful if these properties, shared with objects I do find beautiful, are pointed out.

As we have seen, this sort of consideration leads Kant to argue that beauty is not a concept, that there are no rules of taste or proofs of beauty, that aesthetic judgments are not logical or cognitive judgments. In aesthetic judging we do not judge objects insofar as they fall under the concept of a kind, according to marks, as in cognitive judgment; instead, we appreciate beautiful objects as "singular" representations.¹⁸

This claim is perhaps the least controversial in the CAJ, considered to be a banal refutation of rationalist aesthetics. I suggest, however, that it also serves as a positive characterization of beautiful objects, specifically as characterized by purposive form. That is, the "singularity" of objects represented as beautiful not only means (as a negative claim) that beautiful objects are *not* found beautiful in virtue of the recognized fact that they belong to some class, but also (as a positive claim) that we appreciate the object *as* the empirically complex, particular, "singular" individual it is. Precisely because the properties of a beautiful object are taken as grounds for pleasure in *this* object alone, aesthetically valuable only in the context of this very object, we experience the object as an individual unity,

¹⁸ E.g., v:219, 289, 339. Arnold Isenberg is the most noted proponent of this view in twentieth-century aesthetics, and I have drawn here on his essay, "Critical Communication," in *Aesthetics and the Theory of Criticism*, ed. William Callaghan, Leigh Cauman, and Carl Hempel (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), pp. 156–71.

specifically, as a unity of diversity as such¹⁹ or a purposive, “organic” unity.²⁰

As argued above, purposiveness, as characterizing organic functioning, constitutes a unity of diverse parts as diverse – as empirically, contingently determined, and as heterogeneous from one another – unified by reciprocal means–ends relationships. *Mutatis mutandis* (substituting sensible properties for parts/functions), this description is also apt for objects experienced as beautiful. As suggested by the examples above, the properties that we identify as relevant to our experience of an object as beautiful are contingent, empirical, and heterogeneous. No object is beautiful merely by being an object; only its contingent, empirical properties render it so. Each of these properties seems, too, to be precisely right, in its particular character. Just as in an organism, (we judge that all of) the heterogeneous parts ought to be the specific way that they are, to perform their functions in the organism, to serve one another reciprocally as means to ends – the necessity or lawfulness of the contingent – so too do we have a sense of inevitability concerning the specific empirical characteristics of beautiful objects – “of course” *that* and only *that* (color, chord, line, event, word) could belong there or then in this object.

Further, just as organisms (judged as purposive) involve relations among parts as different from one another, these contingent properties are relevant to the object’s beauty as different from one another. A color or a line is beautiful in a certain object due to its relations of contrast or complementarity with other, different colors, lines, etc.; these properties “belong” together, harmonize to form a complex whole. A painting of only one color or comprising only one line seems an unlikely, even impossible, candidate for beauty.²¹ More controversially, this view

¹⁹ Kant refers to beautiful forms as combining “variety and unity” at v:359, thus suggesting that he agrees with the common view in eighteenth-century aesthetics that beauty is the unity of variety (as, e.g., in Hutcheson’s and Mendelssohn’s aesthetics) – and so, I argue, he should be read.

²⁰ Though Kant does not explicitly do so, beauty has often been glossed as organic unity – not only, as, e.g., Schelling and Coleridge, by those under the influence of the *CJ*, but also in aesthetics predating Kant’s, e.g., by Mendelssohn, Kames, and Gerard. Kant of course suggests some such connection by using the term “purposiveness” in both cases. See Theodore Gracyzk, “Kant’s Shifting Debt to British Aesthetics,” *British Journal of Aesthetics* 26 (1986), 215, on the connection between Kant and the Scottish figures.

²¹ Color field painting (e.g., that of Ellsworth Kelly) may be a counterexample to this claim, but one might (plausibly) suggest that such paintings are not found beautiful, but rather conceptually or historically interesting – indeed, precisely because they

likewise entails that geometrically regular objects – such as a simple oval vase – are not found beautiful: the parts of these objects (their sensible properties) are not heterogeneous enough from one another to sustain ongoing aesthetic appreciation. So Kant claims (v:242–3), suggesting that such objects are not aesthetically, but cognitively, approved, i.e., as comprehensible because they fall cleanly under recognizable geometrical concepts. (They also are, therefore, approved for pragmatic reasons: such regularity renders them easily manipulable, as, e.g., it might be easier to fill a simple vase with flowers, or to use it in different settings.)²²

The contingent, heterogeneous properties of an object experienced as beautiful function coordinately with one another, are reciprocally “in tune” with one another, in our experience of the object, moreover, in a way analogous to the way in which heterogeneous parts function in an organism: they are internally related to one another, and thus dependent upon the whole. Just as a hand qua living hand is unintelligible (or not what it is) except as part of a body as a whole, so do the vertical lines in Klimt’s painting function in the aesthetic experience of that painting as they do in no other context. These vertical lines are what they are only as presented in combination with – as contrasting with, complementing, highlighting, playing off of – the other elements of the painting, e.g., the soft blues and greens, that it is a representation of a forest, the mixture of pointillist and other brushwork techniques, etc. In my drawing of a jail, the almost-parallel lines are not “the same” lines (even if they are the same length and distance from one another, in the same spatial position on a same-sized piece of paper, etc.) because they are not related to, in the context of, the other visual properties of the Klimt painting. Each property serves as “means” to the representation of the particular character of the others, and each is specified, represented in its particular character, likewise, by means of the others. Thus there seems to be the same reciprocity of relations among parts, and hence the same priority of whole to part, in (the experience of) beautiful objects as there is in organisms.²³

self-consciously push the limits of the aesthetic. Other abstract painters, e.g., Barnett Newman and Mark Rothko, by contrast, employ a great deal of heterogeneity (of shade, value, tonality of color – and texture) to create beautiful effects. (I owe these considerations to conversations with Anne Eaton.)

²² One might soften Kant’s claim here by suggesting that such objects could be found beautiful as part of a larger array of sensible properties – e.g., a complex play of light and shade surrounding the oval vase – or, as I shall suggest below, as dependently beautiful.

²³ In his precritical logic lectures, Kant suggests consonantly that cognitive analysis of our representation of an object into distinct properties destroys our experience of it

Kant's claim that beautiful objects are beautiful in virtue of their purposive form can, I submit then, be taken to mean that beautiful objects are beautiful in virtue of all (or indeterminately many of) their sensible properties as they are reciprocally related to one another, i.e., briefly, in virtue of their overall design or arrangement – their form. If one is looking for a characteristic that belongs to all beautiful objects, this appears to be the only answer:²⁴ all objects experienced as beautiful are arguably characterized by precisely *that* characteristic, i.e., the inter-relatedness of their properties (complementarity or contrast) and, correspondingly, the non-translatability of those properties (or of pleasure in them) from one object to another.²⁵ Each beautiful object is appreciated as a unity of diversity.

as beautiful (*Blomberg Logic*, xxiv:48, *Vienna Logic*, xxiv:844–5); these lectures are, however, heavily influenced by Wolffian rationalist texts.

²⁴ Unless one identifies beautiful objects by a distinctive cause (e.g., artistic activity) or effect (e.g., appreciator's response).

²⁵ Using the concept of supervenience, one might question this claim: if two or more objects have identical sensible properties (and arrangement thereof), why could we not infer from the experience of one as beautiful to the claim that the other is beautiful (on the grounds that such beauty is supervenient upon those sensible properties)? I do not mean to deny that there could be two qualitatively identical objects, which could offer the "same" aesthetic experience, but rather to argue that on Kant's view one cannot *infer* from experience of one object's beauty ("as" individual) to another's. Kant's resistance to such a view rests on his doctrine concerning the nature of human cognition (as discursive), as I shall discuss in a moment: we cannot so infer because inferences are mediated by concepts, which, as discursive concepts, are too intensionally "thin" to characterize *all* the sensible properties of an object in reciprocal relations of contrast and complement and thus could not ground an inference concerning such relations. Leaving aside this argument, one might well be able to (or even ought to, given Kant's arguments concerning the normative status of aesthetic judgments) replicate one's experience of the first object as beautiful in experiencing the second identical object (or, indeed, in experiencing the first object as beautiful tomorrow). Such replicated experience would, however, require that one not merely note *that* the object has such properties – the same ones that the first object has – but consider them as related to one another, in this object alone, not as characteristics that belong to a class of objects. This difference in "structure" between classificatory representation of properties and representation of such properties as beautiful may explain why, psychologically speaking, such replication is difficult, or why our rapt aesthetic absorption in an individual object is (often) disrupted by a recognition that there are others "just like it," as happens (e.g.) in the context of mass reproduction. This is not (primarily) because such works have lost their novelty, I suggest, but because our repeated experiences of similar objects can prevent us from attending to the complex relationships that hold among the sensible properties of the object within itself, by encouraging us to see the object merely, abstractedly, as representative of a kind (for example, as a Monet-water-lily-painting, which just standardly has soft colors, impressionist brushwork, etc.).

Though this is an abstract account of beauty, it captures our experience of beauty more persuasively than the claims that spatio-temporal form or whatever happens to occasion a particular mental state makes an object beautiful. Indeed this account reflects the fact that aesthetic experience is a deep engagement with an object as the particular object that it is, attending to the potentially inexhaustible interplay among its sensible properties.

5.4 Two objections: Kant's exclusionary claims

As noted above, Kant appears to claim that beautiful form is spatio-temporal, and that it is strictly distinct both from sensations and from conceptually governed representation of an object as good or perfect. On the reading I have proposed, however, both sensory qualities and conceptual descriptions seem to play a role in purposive form, as part of the whole, individual object represented as beautiful – nor does beautiful form appear to be particularly spatio-temporal in character. Can this interpretation be reconciled with these two Kantian claims?

We may note first that this reading is consistent with Kant's description of form as "shape" or "play" in space and time, for form (as the reciprocal relation among sensible properties) must be represented in space and time, in which all sensible properties are represented, and in which alone (sensibly represented) relations – in this case, relations of contrast and complement – among sensible properties obtain. This is, indeed, a somewhat loose connection between spatio-temporality and beautiful form, but this too is consistent with the tenor of Kant's discussions. Kant associates beautiful form with space and time less tightly than many readers recognize. He glosses form once as "outline" and several times as "shape" (*Gestalt*), but never speaks of, formal properties (plural),²⁶ only of "form" (singular).²⁷ Here one might, too, contrast Kant's discussion in the CAJ with some of his pre-critical *Reflexionen*, in which he identifies beautiful form with spatio-temporal properties (e.g., regularity and proportion), and argues that our judgment of and pleasure in such form is therefore universally valid, a solution to his question concerning

²⁶ Contra Crawford, *Kant's Aesthetic Theory*, pp. 96–9, and Rogerson, *Kant's Aesthetic*, p. 160, who use "formal properties" interchangeably with form.

²⁷ Kant refers once to "forms" (plural) (v:326), but since this refers to elements of a poem's content), it seems unlikely that he is referring to spatio-temporal, formal properties.

the universal validity of aesthetic judgments that Kant notably eschews in the CAJ.²⁸

Instead, Kant frequently glosses purposive form as “design” or “arrangement” (often, *Zusammenstellung*),²⁹ terms that are not implausibly understood to refer to the interrelation of sensible properties. Likewise, Kant’s most explicit description (apart from “purposive”) of what kind of form is beautiful is (as quoted above) that it is the unity of the manifold in our representation of an object where it is not conceptually determined what it “is supposed to be” (v:227). Even in one of Kant’s closest assimilations of spatio-temporal properties and beautiful form, i.e., when he suggests that the mathematizability of “proportional” relationships among tones in music demonstrates that such relationships constitute form, Kant argues that such mathematizable form is merely a “condition” for purposive form proper, viz., “that proportion of the impressions, in their combination as well as in their alternation, by means of which it becomes possible to grasp them together and to prevent them from destroying one another” (v:329). Kant’s qualification here confirms, I suggest, that the decisive sense of beautiful form is *not* mathematizable, spatio-temporal, properties/relations themselves.³⁰

Finally, Kant himself notes and rejects the terminological, architectonic temptation to align the “aesthetic” of aesthetic judgment (taste) more strongly with the Transcendental Aesthetic of space and time: these are not to be confused, Kant writes, because space and time are not judgments, but intuitions, and thus do not comprise aesthetic judgments.³¹ One might, I think, argue the same, more specifically, for Kant’s

²⁸ See Günther Wohlfart, “Transzendente Ästhetik und kritischer Ästhetik,” *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung* 36 (1982), 64–76; Bäumler, *Irrationalitätsproblem*, pp. 267–9, 275–6, on these *Reflexionen*. Kant’s deduction in the CAJ is so read by Wohlfart, McCloskey (*Kant’s Aesthetic*, pp. 59–62, 80), and Coleman (*Harmony*, p. 43). Though Kant refers to form in the deduction (v:279, 289–90), however, he argues that aesthetic judgments are justified because they rest on subjective conditions (cognitive activities) necessary for experience, not because they refer to a universally valid property of objects.

²⁹ E.g., v:323.

³⁰ Gasché suggests, consonantly, that Kant’s text be read as a progressive articulation of his position, from initial claims in §§13–14 that beautiful form might be similar to spatial shape, to his own, somewhat different, conception of beautiful form (as an unconceptualized unity) in §15 (Rodolphe Gasché, *The Idea of Form* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press [2003], pp. 60–77). Gasché suggests a rhetorical reason for this progression (to persuade formalist theorists following Winkelmann), but it might also reflect Kant’s own development from his earlier identification of beautiful form with spatio-temporal properties to understanding such form as purposive.

³¹ FI, xx:222–3; cf. A21/B36n.

conception of form: Kant's description of purposive form as unity in a manifold suggests that such form is less like spatial or temporal properties (though, again, it is represented as an array in space and/or time) than it is like the "form" of an object as judged. (It should be remembered that in the *CPR* Kant uses "form" to describe the forms of judgment, and the form of an object as constituted by the categories, as well as space and time.) And, though I shall postpone full discussion of the activity of aesthetic judging to Chapters [Seven](#) and [Eight](#), the account of beautiful form I have proposed suggests that aesthetic appreciation, the representation of such form – a unity of a manifold – might well be a judgmental activity, involving synthesis of a manifold (indeed, perhaps, one that takes properties as "reasons" or as making the object what it is) – as Kant suggests in characterizing our aesthetic engagement with an object as *Beurteilung* (e.g., v:218).

Second, though on my reading purposive form does not absolutely exclude the sensory or conceptual components of our representation of an object, I believe we can still make good sense of Kant's contrasts between form and sensations, and between aesthetic *Beurteilung* of form and judgment according to concepts. Kant's contrast between form and sensations can be understood as a contrast between the representation of an object as complex (as an ordered manifold of heterogeneous aspects) and sensations, which are simple representations, "absolute unities" composed of only one part.³² If the account of aesthetic experience I've given is right, complexity (not uniformity) is a necessary factor in our appreciation of an object as beautiful.³³ (The representation of such complexity is also, I note, akin to the kind of judgeability with which Kant is concerned in the *CJ* generally – an order among empirically given,

³² See Agg on the "absolute unity" of intuitions, and Kant's definitional statement concerning the "form" of appearances: "Within appearances, that which corresponds to sensation I call the *matter* of appearance, but that which makes it that the **multiplicity** of appearance can be **ordered in specific relations** I call the *form* of appearance, [which] **cannot itself again be sensation . . .**" (A20/B34; bold my emphasis).

³³ See Bell, "Art of Judgment," and Paul Crowther, "The Significance of Kant's Pure Aesthetic Judgment," *British Journal of Aesthetics* 36 (1996), for consonant phenomenological discussions of the complexity of beautiful form, though neither argues that beauty is an order of *heterogeneous* items *as such*. Contra Bell, then, I would argue that our ability to discern such order is distinct from our ability to schematize, viz., apply the categories to a homogeneous (temporal) manifold; contra Crowther (to anticipate the arguments I will make in a moment), that the representation of such unity is not simply in fact not conceptual, but is *in principle* not discursively conceptualizable.

contingent aspects of objects – by contrast [again] to sensations, which are the chaotic empirical data that need to be ordered, conceptualized, in order for us to know anything.)

The complexity of beautiful form, the heterogeneity of beauty-relevant properties in each beautiful object, can also explain Kant's claim that aesthetic pleasure in form is universally communicable (by contrast to charms or sensations) without relying on Kant's bald assertion that sensations are private. For the complexity of beautiful form allows us to communicate our experience of and pleasure in beautiful objects in a way that we cannot concerning atomic sensory states: we can indicate the different component properties to one another, can suggest how they relate to (contrast with or complement) many of the other properties of the object.³⁴ One could, then, learn (sort of) to find something aesthetically pleasurable, not by having the beauty of the object proved to one (according to rules), but by having properties and their relations pointed out, and then coming to "see" those properties in relation to one another, in the context of the whole. Kant suggests such an Isenbergian picture of critical communication: "the critique of taste . . . is the art, or science, of finding rules for the reciprocal relation that the understanding and sensibility have in the *given* representation (*without reference to* prior sensation or concept)" (v:286, translation modified, and my emphasis).

Perhaps more troubling for my reading is Kant's exclusion of concepts from aesthetic judging. Kant's denial that we judge aesthetically according to concepts might be read to mean that we do not have a concept of *beauty*, a rule – articulable into marks – by which we would prove an object to be beautiful. This claim is consistent with, indeed central to, my reading. Nonetheless, Kant's denial that we employ concepts in (pure) aesthetic judging seems to run deeper, viz., to a denial that any concept plays any role in such judging.

This strong claim has led to considerable scholarly debate concerning the role of the categories in aesthetic judging. I shall discuss this question further in Chapter [Seven](#); for now, I suggest that, just as judgments concerning the purposiveness of organic functioning are supplemental to

³⁴ See the *Busolt Anthropology* (xxv.2:1509) for Kant's presentation of the universal communicability of aesthetic form, by contrast to sensations, in such terms; and *Reflexion* 624 (xv:270), in which he describes the "representation" in taste as "synthetic not through reason, . . . intuitive . . . , concerning the proportions of sensations directly . . . and not a bare sensation but that from which comparisons of sensations arises." (My attention was drawn to this *Reflexion* by Gracyk, in "Kant's Shifting Debt.")

the judgment of such objects as natural objects (according to the categorial principles) or as material objects (according to mechanical physics), so should aesthetic judging be understood as (at least) supplemental to categorial determination. For, I have argued, our representation of an object as beautiful concerns its contingent, empirical, and diverse properties. Thus those properties of beautiful objects that may ground their conformity to the categories are not, as such, relevant to aesthetic judging, nor can categorial judgment ground a representation of beauty, viz., of a unity among an object's contingent, diverse, empirical properties as such.

Kant's examples of the contrast between aesthetic and conceptually grounded judgments suggest, correspondingly, that his denial that concepts are determinative of aesthetic judging concerns *empirical* concepts (as, e.g., between aesthetic appreciation of a flower and judgment of that flower as a reproductive part of a plant).³⁵ I have suggested, however, that on Kant's view we do employ concepts in aesthetic judging, in identifying properties of beautiful objects, either as grounds for finding the object beautiful, or to communicate our experience of the object to others.

This presence of conceptual description in appreciation of beautiful form does not, however, render aesthetic judging of form a conceptually determined judgment, understood more precisely. First, such concepts might be said to "indicate" that which we represent sensibly, viz., to point to this particular shade of yellow here, not to ground a judgment that the object is (to be categorized as) yellow. More significantly, however, we use concepts or identify properties in our estimation of beautiful objects in a way contrary to the way in which we usually, "logically," use them, in classifying objects or making objective judgments. We usually use concepts to class objects as similar despite the fact that these objects also differ from one another in other ways. Concepts are thus "abstracting," and, via empirical judgment employing such concepts, serve to homogenize experience, to emphasize shared properties in objects. In aesthetic judging, by contrast, we are not "indicating the relation of objects to *others* according to concepts" (v:279, my emphasis). Rather, we use concepts (parallel line, curve, yellow, etc.) to point out certain properties of *this particular* object, as they are embedded in relations to one another that hold "in the *given* representation" alone (v:286).³⁶ These conceptually

³⁵ See Christopher Janaway, "Kant's Aesthetics and the 'Empty Cognitive Stock,'" *Philosophical Quarterly* 47 (1997), 459–76, for further arguments in support of this claim.

³⁶ This is why I refer to the object (experienced as beautiful) as "individual" rather than as "unique": a claim of uniqueness presupposes comparison of the object to

indicated properties do not operate, as they would in objective judgment, as reasons or criteria by which we could apply another concept (in this case, a concept of beauty), or, more broadly, in order to compare objects to others as similar or different. Nor do they function, properly speaking, as properties in their own right: these “properties” are experienced as specific to the individual object, and thus do not and cannot classify objects.

Indeed, that which we point out in aesthetic communication and represent in aesthetic experience *must* be inaccurately represented by concepts, according to Kant. For we are, Kant famously holds, not intuitive but discursive intellects. As discursive intellects, we require concepts of less intensional content but wider applicability, i.e., abstract rules for judgment, rules given by the understanding to guide the imagination in unifying sense information. The concept of any property involved in our experience of the object as beautiful would have to include, however, its relation to indeterminately many of the object’s sensible properties (almost-parallel-lines-as-they-relate-to,-contrast-with,-and-complement-the-other-visual-properties-of-*Tannenwald-I*) – or something like a Leibnizean concept of an individual object as fully determined. Indeed, Kant claims that if one insisted that aesthetic judgments were conceptual, logical judgments, one would in effect be claiming that we have intuitive (divine) understandings (FI, xx:227). But Kant of course rejects this view of concepts, and the corresponding model of divine knowledge, as inapplicable to human understandings.

Like Ameriks, then, I take it to be consistent with Kant’s position that there is “some use” of concepts, or a “kind of conceptualism” in aesthetic judging.³⁷ Contra Ameriks, however, which *way* concepts are used matters: in objective judgment(al synthesis), concepts serve either as rules for the unification of an object (as on Kant’s presentation of recognitional synthesis in the A Deduction), or as grounds for such conceptual unification (as marks). If, as I suggest, we use concepts in aesthetic judging solely to “indicate” aspects of the whole, this “kind of conceptualism” does not render these judgments objective: no concept is here the “determining ground” of the judgment (v:228) or of the represented unification of the object. Nor *can* Kant hold that the aesthetic

others, whereas in appreciating a beautiful object we attend only to the relations among its properties themselves, not as they make it similar to or different from other objects.

³⁷ Ameriks, *Interpreting*, pp. 316f.

apprehension of a fully individualized and unified whole is conceptual, unless Kant were to reject his doctrine that concepts are discursive.³⁸ In principle, the form of an object represented as beautiful cannot be articulated by a discursive concept.³⁹

This resistance of beautiful purposive form to discursive conceptual representation may also explain Kant's puzzling suggestion that all beauty – even natural beauty – is the “expression” of “aesthetic ideas” (v:320). Kant introduces the concept of aesthetic ideas to characterize the thematic, ideational (non-sensible) “content” of fine art: aesthetic ideas are that which spirit or genius contributes to the work of art, which intellectually and emotionally “animate” the appreciator of the work, and give the work significance beyond its beautiful form (v:313–14).⁴⁰ Thus aesthetic ideas are, narrowly understood, distinct from beautiful form, and – as non-sensible, representational “content” – seem relevant to the aesthetic value of artworks alone.

Beautiful, purposive form is, however, similar in structure to aesthetic ideas. Kant describes such ideas as follows:

Just as in the case of a rational idea the *imagination* with its intuitions does not reach the given concept, so in the case of an aesthetic idea the *understanding* with its concepts never reaches the entire inner intuition that the imagination has and connects with a given representation. (v:343)

Kant's somewhat odd term, an aesthetic (sensible) idea, thus reflects not an identity between these representations and rational ideas (or the objects thereof), but a structural similarity between them: ideas represent totalities that transcend discursive conceptual understanding. Aesthetic ideas transcend the understanding, however, not because the represented object lies beyond its proper experiential application (as do the objects of the rational ideas), but because the understanding cannot grasp the fully

³⁸ Here, that is, Ameriks' comparison between secondary qualities and beauty breaks down: though the sensation of red may be subjective in some sense, and is not a concept on Kant's view, we can formulate a concept of red, for it has determinate, isolable marks (e.g., color, visible property) and does not include within it any or all other sensible properties a red object might have.

³⁹ Cf. Fricke, *Kants Theorie*, pp. 127–8.

⁴⁰ Kant's doctrine of aesthetic ideas is sketchy, and seems to concern a broad range of phenomena that might belong to the “content” of a work of art – metaphors, the themes of a work, emotional resonance, etc., as well as the object to which a representational work refers more narrowly. I employ the vague term “content” to remain neutral among these possibilities.

unified, rich character of such ideas in determinate, discursive conceptual representation (v:314, 316, 326).⁴¹ The same may be said, I have argued, for beautiful form. Thus Kant's claim that all beauty is an "expression" of aesthetic ideas might be read as a claim that aesthetic experience instantiates aesthetic ideas broadly understood, viz., that in aesthetic appreciation – whether of complex thematic content of representational works, or of beautiful, purposive form – we represent the object as a unity of a manifold too rich, complete, and internally related to be articulable in discursive conceptual representation, thus transcending the domain of the understanding.

Beautiful form may, then, include both sensory and conceptually described components, but is, nonetheless, distinct from purely sensory or conceptually determined representation of an object. For it comprises a spatio-temporally arranged, ordered complex of properties (as opposed to the "absolute unity" of sensations), and is an imaginatively represented array richer, more complete, and more internally unified than can be discursively, conceptually represented. In suggesting that beautiful form is thus akin to aesthetic ideas, and in using the Klimt painting as an example, I have suggested that Kant's formalist claims can characterize artistic as well as natural beauty, contra Kant's apparent suggestions in his discussion of dependent beauty. Now, however, I shall turn to discuss Kant's accounts of dependent and artistic beauty more explicitly.

5.5 Dependent beauty and fine art

By contrast to our representation of free beauty, Kant claims, in judgments of dependent beauty we not only appreciate the object's form, but also take into account what the object "is supposed to be," i.e., we judge it

⁴¹ Contra interpretations of aesthetic ideas that take them to be representations of rational ideas, or to refer to the supersensible (e.g., Crawford *Kant's Aesthetic Theory*, pp. 145–59; Rogerson, *Kant's Aesthetic*, pp. 157–65), I note that Kant stresses this "structural" claim as definitive of aesthetic ideas. Kant does describe the imagination, in its creation of aesthetic ideas, as "stepping beyond nature," or "beyond the limits of experience" (v:314). The imagination does so not by transcending sensible representation altogether (unlike reason in the production of rational ideas), however, but by recombining "materials" given by experience in new arrangements not dictated by the course of experience or by the law of association. The holistic, evocative character of aesthetic ideas – and the corresponding freedom of the imagination in representing them – would, however, render them suitable for symbolic representation of rational (or specifically moral) ideas when such is one's aim, and they may have rational ideas as (part of) their content.

as perfect, to be an adequate exemplar of its kind (man, woman, church, horse). In appreciating art on Kant's account, we not only attend to the object's dependent beauty, but are also animated – emotionally, intellectually – by the work's aesthetic idea(s), and take into consideration the artwork's place in a tradition (whether as original, as employing artistic conventions skillfully, or as “exemplary,” creating new styles or conventions).⁴² These types of appreciation of objects are, then, more complex than appreciation of objects as freely beautiful or “merely” according to form, but Kant describes them nonetheless as (in part) appreciations of beauty or purposive form, and I shall concentrate here on the ways in which they may be understood as such, beginning with dependent beauty, before turning to fine art.

Two questions are raised by Kant's distinction between free and dependent beauty. First, how can dependent beauty be understood as a kind of beauty at all? That is, how can the role of concepts in judging dependent beauty be reconciled with Kant's denial that concepts play a role in aesthetic judging?⁴³ Second, if one can make sense of that claim, what is the relationship between the conceptually determined judgment (of the object as perfect) and judging the object as (dependently) beautiful?

The first of these questions in its strongest form is unproblematic on my reading, for I have suggested that concepts may play *some* role in aesthetic judging even of free beauty, but are used differently in aesthetic judging than in determinative cognitive judgment. But a more specific version of this worry is still pressing: in judgments of dependent beauty, we employ empirical concepts in precisely the normal, cognitive manner. We use the concept of an empirical kind to identify (discursively) the properties an object must have in order to be perfect (of its kind).

Judgments of dependent beauty may nonetheless be understood as a type of aesthetic judging, I suggest, because in such judging the judgment of the object as perfect is “incorporated” into an (overarching) representation of the object as an individual, of the object's purposive form. This incorporation renders the representation of dependent beauty a distinctive kind of representation of beauty, for here neither the kind-concept nor its marks play a *purely* “indicative” role in representing the

⁴² Kant is therefore not an absolute formalist concerning the value of fine art, despite frequent characterization of him as such. Kant does not explicitly characterize originality and exemplarity as artistic values dependent upon historical context, but implies this in his descriptions of both in terms of comparison to other artists.

⁴³ See Ruth Lorand, “Free and Dependent Beauty,” *British Journal of Aesthetics* 29:1 (1989), 32–40.

object as a whole (as in the representation of free beauty), but do serve to class the object as one of its kind – and then *as such* are taken to be related purposively to the object's other sensible properties. More specifically (in response to the second question), judgment of the object's perfection plays a dual role in judging dependent beauty: negatively, as a constraint upon aesthetic judging, and positively, as influencing the way in which the properties that render the object perfect are taken up as part of the play of properties in beautiful form.

That is, first: Kant's formulations suggest a negative, constraining role for conceptual judgment of perfection in judgments of dependent beauty. An object's adequacy as an exemplar of its kind, Kant writes, is a "foundation" or "indispensable condition" for its dependent beauty (v:311–12). Thus, for example, our judgment that a house is beautiful might be constrained by the concept of a house as defined by its purposes of shelter and living, so that characteristics inconsonant with that purpose, e.g., dangerously leaning walls, will prevent us from judging the house to be beautiful; a cat's furless belly might, likewise, prevent us from judging that the cat is beautiful because we judge that this cat is an inadequate (perhaps unhealthy) cat.

This constraint marks a difference between dependent and free beauty, for we may specify some necessary conditions for the former. These conditions are not, however, "universal" (v:230), but will vary across kinds of objects; the absence of fur on human bellies does not render them imperfect, and would not prevent us from finding them beautiful. Such constraint does not, however, render our estimation of dependent beauty a case of conceptually determined judging itself (or, that is, non-aesthetic judging).⁴⁴ Like any other property considered in aesthetic judging, the object's adequacy to such conditions is insufficient to render it beautiful (does not determine aesthetic judgment): we may judge that a house or cat is an adequate one (like many others), but not, thereby, find it (dependently) beautiful. In order to find it beautiful, we must attend in

⁴⁴ Similar views are proposed by Guyer, *Claims of Taste*, pp. 219–20; Allison, *Theory of Taste*, pp. 141–2; Malcolm Budd, "Kant on Aesthetic Appreciation," Part I, *British Journal of Aesthetics* 38 (1998), 1–18; Janaway, "The 'Empty Cognitive Stock.'" Janaway's position is slightly different, viz., that in judgments of dependent beauty we find the object *pleasurable* not only as beautiful, but also as perfect. Though Kant makes such claims at v:230–1, contra Janaway I would argue that on Kant's considered opinion judgments of perfection do not ground pleasure, and need not contribute an extra pleasure to the experience of dependent beauty, except in the moral case (see, e.g., FI, xx:228–9: judgments of perfection concerning organisms do not ground pleasure).

addition to further properties specific to this individual house or cat, in richer, sensible detail, and in varied, reciprocal relations of contrast and complementarity. The conceptual judgment is (itself) “fixed,” Kant writes, but it is not a “rule of taste” (v:230).

This constraining role for conceptual judgment in aesthetic judging of dependent beauty is not, however, sufficient to capture the distinctive *aesthetic* character of such judging, whether commonsensically or theoretically. Commonsensically speaking, Kant’s category of dependent beauty ought to describe cases where one appreciates the object “as” a house, human being, or painting – e.g., the shiny finish and contours of a Jaguar are aesthetically appreciated not only as complementing one another, but “as” belonging to a car, “as” suggesting speed; the sleekness of a cat’s fur might be found beautiful not only as complementing the cat’s shape, but also because it connotes health. Kant’s term *anhängend* (translated here as “dependent”) suggests a similar view, in its connotations of “accessory” or “adherent.”

Theoretically speaking, it may appear so far that aesthetic judging of dependent beauty is not a different kind of aesthetic judging, but simply a case of appreciating free beauty, added to and constrained by the (prior) conceptual judgment that the object is an adequate exemplar of its kind. The conceptual judgment may, that is, remove the possibility of a non-aesthetic disapproval (of the object as imperfect) that might interfere with aesthetic appreciation. Once this “interference” has been eliminated, however, the properly aesthetic judging would seem to be no different from that in the case of free beauty, not a distinct kind of (representing) beauty.⁴⁵ On my interpretation, moreover, the conceptual judgment ought to contribute, positively, to our representation of beautiful form, given that (I have argued) aesthetic judging comprises attention to all the empirical, sensibly apprehended properties of an object in “play,” as reciprocally, internally unified. If we are, in the case of dependent beauty, judging the object as belonging to its kind, i.e., interpreting some of its sensible properties as making it one of that kind, then this interpretation ought to play some role in the holistic aesthetic appreciation of the object.

Though Kant does not explicitly so claim, his examples suggest that conceptual judgment may thus contribute to (the aesthetic representation

⁴⁵ As argued by Lorand, “Free and Dependent Beauty,” 34, and Philip Malaband, “Understanding Kant’s Distinction between Free and Dependent Beauty,” *Philosophical Quarterly* 52 (2002), 66–81.

of) the object's form. In presenting his example of judging a church as dependently beautiful, Kant writes that "[o]ne would be able to add much to a building that would be pleasing in the intuition of it if only it were not supposed to be a church" (v:230). Kant suggests the constraint view here: the concept of a church precludes ornate decorations as inconsistent with that kind of thing. But this claim also suggests that the church may be found beautiful if it is judged conceptually (and not otherwise). A proper Protestant church, simple and regular in color, line, shape, and arrangement, that is, might be insufficiently rich and varied – too boring or plain – to be found freely beautiful. But if one *does* take its church-hood into account, Kant implies, one might find it beautiful.⁴⁶

Kant gives little indication of what this positive, beauty-contributing role for empirical conceptual judgment might be, but I suggest that Kendall Walton's distinctions between "standard" and "variable" properties of objects appreciated aesthetically may be of help.⁴⁷ If one judges the church aesthetically "as" a church, its simplicity and regularity might be taken simply as "standard," i.e., as marks of a church dictated by that concept – just as flatness is standard to a painting. As a result, their boring, plain character might be ignored, discounted as an aesthetic flaw, and one might concentrate instead on the other, "variable," not-conceptually-dictated properties of the object – e.g., the angle of its roof, its permissible decorations, the varied tonalities of grey in the stone, the specific heights and dimensions of the regular columns. Or, as in the cases of the Jaguar or cat, one might take the object's conceptually determined property of functionality (the purpose of transportation or organic functioning) itself to be in "play" with the object's other sensible properties. This aesthetic role for the (conceptually determined) judgment of functionality differs, I note, from that judgment alone: the Jaguar's shiny contours probably do not contribute to its speed, nor are all beautifying appearances of health veridical. Such properties are not, then, judged as marks of functionality, but rather as pleasing in their

⁴⁶ This connotation of Kant's examples is brought out well in Malaband, *ibid.* See also Robert Wicks, "Dependent Beauty as the Appreciation of Teleological Style," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 55 (1997), 387–400.

⁴⁷ Kendall Walton, "Categories of Art," *Philosophical Review* 79 (1970), 334–67. Walton's "counterstandard" properties might count as aesthetically valuable in art on Kant's view (say, as signaling the "boldness" of an artistic genius; see v:318), but on the whole will constitute aesthetic flaws (in judging dependent beauty) insofar as they are violations of the concept of the kind of object it is supposed to be, e.g., of an artistic genre.

evocative connections or reciprocal play with the object's (conceptually identified) function.⁴⁸ Or, to combine these two suggestions, with respect to an earlier example: in appreciating a simple oval vase as dependently beautiful, its regularity might be either discounted (as standard for its kind), to concentrate on the smoothness, color tonalities, and reflective properties of the porcelain, or might itself (as on a Bauhaus aesthetic) be appreciated aesthetically as *connoting* this object's usefulness (in play with its other properties).

In representing dependent beauty, then, we appreciate an object "as" a church, house, or car; the properties that make it an adequate member of its kind are taken to be aesthetically relevant as such *within* aesthetic judging. None of these properties is taken to be determinative of the beauty of the object independently of its relation to indeterminately many of the object's other properties, but only as incorporated into an overarching representation of the object's purposive form. Correspondingly, Kant's distinction between free and dependent beauty characterizes two ways in which one may represent and interpret some sensible properties of an object – as marks for an empirical concept or not – in taking them (overall) to be reciprocally related or beautiful.

As Kant suggests in the conclusion to §16, one may well come to different aesthetic conclusions about the same object, depending on whether one judges it to be dependently or freely beautiful.⁴⁹ For example, the

⁴⁸ Thus, I agree with Wicks ("Teleological Style") that dependent beauty must be in "internal relation" to perfection, and with his emphasis upon the purposive character of free, as well as dependent, beauty. But one ought, I think, to invert the relationship he suggests between them (dependent beauty, on his view, is "teleological style" or "how well" an object satisfies its purpose). This ingenious view threatens to collapse either into an identification of dependent beauty and perfection (fulfilling a purpose "well" sounds like perfection), or into a combinatorial view (the dependently beautiful object fulfills its purpose and, in addition, has free beauty). It also seems descriptively implausible: in judging an object as a beautiful one of its kind, we take many more properties into account than those that render it a good member of its kind, which properties do not seem rightly described as part of "how" the object satisfies its purpose. Instead, I suggest, the object's perfection plays a *subordinate* role in judgments of dependent beauty (as Kant's language of "condition" suggests), as a component of our representation of beautiful purposive form.

⁴⁹ This distinction should not (that is) be understood as an ontological distinction between kinds of objects (as appropriately judged dependently, or freely, beautiful), as Kant suggests at v:311, in writing that one "commonly" takes the concept of the kind of thing into account when judging the beauty of organisms, thus suggesting that one might also not do so. (See Crawford, *Kant's Aesthetic Theory*, p. 116.) As Wicks argues ("Teleological Style"), however, human beauty may be a special case,

leaning walls of a house may prevent us from finding it dependently beautiful, but the angles, cracks, and crumbles of such walls might be found freely beautiful, part of a non-conceptually constrained play of the object's sensible properties, together with its colors, in the context of the surrounding landscape, etc. (Though Kant does not do so, the same might be said about judgments of dependent beauty that employ different empirical concepts; e.g., as Hogarth suggests, a horse might be found to be beautiful "as" a warhorse, but not "as" a racehorse.⁵⁰) In general: if beauty is the unity of properties as reciprocally contrasting and complementary, the incorporation of conceptual judgment may "add" something to this whole that would otherwise have been missing (e.g., tolerable simplicity), or institute uglifying "clashes" that disrupt the representation of the object as a unified whole (e.g., its failure to be an adequate instance of its kind).

Thus, judging dependent beauty is rightly understood as aesthetic judging, but it is also an "impure" form thereof. In such judging, the subject does represent the object in accord with the a priori principle of purposiveness (in taking the object to be a unity of diversity, of properties as reciprocally ends and means), but also attends to the object in light of empirical concepts of kinds, their properties, and their suitability for empirical purposes. As a result, such judging is not pure (in accord with the a priori principle of purposiveness, alone) and may, correspondingly, vary historically or culturally; e.g., the different concepts held by Protestants and Catholics concerning the proper character of churches would ensue in differing judgments of a church's dependent beauty (e.g., as too ornate, or as appropriately, richly decorated). By contrast to judgments of free beauty, in which we make justified claims to universal assent because we employ a universally valid a priori principle (as Kant argues), correspondingly, judgments of dependent beauty may make only a hypothetical claim on others: if one shares my concept of this object's kind, then one ought to find this object (dependently) beautiful.

This impurity of judgments of dependent beauty renders them less central to Kant's transcendental philosophical concerns, but it does not entail that such objects are less aesthetically valuable on Kant's view.⁵¹

for on Kant's view we are arguably under a moral imperative to judge other human beings as such.

⁵⁰ William Hogarth, *The Analysis of Beauty*, ed. Ronald Paulson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), pp. 63, 69–73.

⁵¹ Cf. Eva Schaper, "Free Beauty and Dependent Beauty," in *Studies in Kant's Aesthetics* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 1979).

Indeed the “incorporation” of conceptual judging into the appreciation of the purposive form of the object can render the object (so experienced) a richer, more expansive, purposive unity. For this incorporation not only involves, as I have suggested, a different “interpretation” of some sensible properties of objects (e.g., as standard), but may also introduce new, non-sensible components, concepts associated with the concept of the object, to the unified play of sensible properties (form) in the aesthetically appreciated object. The simplicity of the church might be appreciated, for example, not only as unified (mutually complementing and contrasting) with other sensible properties of the church (shades of grey, heights of columns), but also with connotations of the concept of a church – e.g., the simplicity of the soul in meditation or of Christian love, human humility towards God, etc.

The appreciation of an object as dependently beautiful introduces, in other words, the possibility of appreciating an object as expressing aesthetic ideas (narrowly understood), a possibility best exploited in appreciation of works of fine art. As in the case of dependent beauty more broadly, the aesthetic experience of fine art is an experience of representing purposive form, but it is also a different modality of such aesthetic experience. Here, aesthetic representation includes not only a judgment of the object as dependently beautiful, but also the representation of an even more expansive unity of ideational content as well as of sensible properties.⁵²

As suggested above, aesthetic ideas and the representation of beautiful form are similar in that both constitute unities of manifolds that transcend discursive conceptual articulation. Aesthetic ideas narrowly understood (as the thematic “content” of works of art) also have an isomorphic structure to that of beautiful, purposive form, viz., reciprocal relatedness, or a non-conceptualizable unity of diversity. Such a reciprocal relationship (here of ideational themes) seems, again, to capture aesthetic experience of representational art well: the fact that Dante’s *Divine Comedy* represents hell, purgatory, and heaven is not sufficient to render it beautiful, but this fact – as presented in an epic alluding to ancient epics and myths, as refracted in similitudes between the fires of romantic love

⁵² Appreciation of artworks does involve judging them as dependently beautiful, i.e., as works of a particular kind (e.g., painting); I shall not discuss this, however, since it should fit the above account of dependent beauty, and shall concentrate instead on that which is particular to art, i.e., aesthetic ideas. See Guyer, *Claims of Taste*, pp. 215–17, Schaper, “Free Beauty,” and Robert Stecker, “Free Beauty, Dependent Beauty, and Art,” *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 21 (1987), 89–99, for good treatments.

and the tranquility of God's heavenly love, and so on – constitutes a "reason" (in the context of the other elements of the poem) to find this work beautiful. Despite Kant's suggestions that such ideas are distinct from their sensible "expressions," these conceptual themes ought also, I suggest, to be understood as represented in purposive unity with the sensible properties in aesthetic judging of a work of art as beautiful; e.g., Dante's presentation of Christian theology is beautiful not only as thematically enriched by its connections to other concepts presented in the poem, but also as complemented by ("expressed in") the poem's sensible properties, such as the softly progressing rhythms of the verse in "Purgatorio."

Thus, like beautiful form, the work of fine art is appreciated as an individual, a rich, holistic unity of indeterminately many of its sensible and conceptual "properties" contrasting with and complementing one another. This representation too, Kant argues, transcends discursive conceptual representation, though in a somewhat different way than does the representation of beautiful form. In appreciating aesthetic ideas, Kant claims, we experience an "expansion" of discursive conceptual representation by the addition of imaginatively related representations beyond the marks of the concept, which "enlarge the concept itself in an unbounded way," giving "more to think about than can be grasped and made distinct in it" (v:315).⁵³ Here again we do not use concepts (whether the core concept or the "partial" representations) to compare this

⁵³ Kant's examples are primarily of metaphors and allegories. See Bäumler, *Irrationalitätsproblem*, pp. 141–59, on the historical context of this paradigmatic role for metaphor; and Kirk Pillow, "Jupiter's Eagle and the Despot's Hand Mill: Two Views on Metaphor in Kant," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 59 (2001), 193–209, and *Sublime Understanding* (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 2000), for more detailed consideration of Kant's doctrines concerning metaphor and fine art. Pillow's suggestion in the latter work that our representation of metaphors and/or appreciation of aesthetic ideas is akin to our representation of the sublime is, I argue however, mistaken. Though metaphors and aesthetic ideas do (like the sublime) transcend discursive conceptual representation, they should be linked not to the sublime, but to the beautiful (as Kant does). Though the unity of the aesthetic idea is not conceptualizable, we experience it as unified, coherent; each new aspect or "partial representation" is not yet another part to be added to an attempted, unsuccessful imaginative representation of the whole (as in the sublime), but an enriching articulation of an aspect of the holistic experience, and is greeted recognitionally, as if it had been "always already" present within one's experience (thus akin to the experience of beautiful form, on my view). Pillow's analysis, however, quite suggestively expands Kant's account to characterize the distinctive, pleasingly frustrating, fragmentary and disunified, sublime aesthetics of some modernist and post-modern works.

work to other objects. Rather, the richness of aesthetic ideas consists in the thematic, symbolic, associative connections *among* the component concepts. So, for example, the aesthetic idea of *King Lear* might comprise the concept of mortal frailty, presented as conjoined with related conceptual representations, such as the failing physical and mental powers of the aging, the ingratitude of children, the blindness of judgment in those who have held power unchallenged too long, the (in)justice of social relationships based on natural orders of birth, etc.⁵⁴ Because aesthetic ideas are, on Kant's view, not discursively paraphraseable, this "etc." is ineliminable, and there can be no fixed conceptual rules either for the judgment or the production of fine art; rather, the production of such art requires genius, a natural capacity beyond that for technical (conceptually guided) productive activity.⁵⁵

In sum: Kant may consistently hold that our appreciation both of dependent beauty and of fine art is a case of aesthetic judging of beautiful form (albeit, in the latter case, as combined with other values, e.g., originality). For, as I have argued, the reciprocal, means–end, contrast/complement relations among sensible properties that make for beautiful form can obtain too among aspects of the "content" of representational artworks or among these and the sensible properties of the object, thus

⁵⁴ As suggested above, I correspondingly propose an aesthetic – rather than moralizing – interpretation of Kant's apparent claims that the artist aims to portray rational ideas, specifically *moral* ideas (v:314), or that art is not satisfying unless it concerns moral ideas (v:326). Kant may, I suggest, be read not as claiming that we take pleasure in beautiful (art) objects *because* they symbolize moral ideas, but that such ideas, because of their complex, holistic, transcendent content (e.g., virtue as constituting a whole moral life, God as the *ens realissimum*), are ideally suited *aesthetically* for artistic representational content. (Thus, Kant writes, a poet may "animate" a representation of sense "*by means of* the idea of the supersensible," for example, the idea of virtue, which "spreads in the mind a multitude of sublime and calming feelings" [v:316].) This is not to deny that we may take moral pleasure in artistic representations of moral ideas, or that art might have both aesthetic and moral value, but to deny that the value of art may be reduced to moral value on Kant's view.

⁵⁵ v:306f. Art production is in part conceptually determined (aimed at making a work of a certain kind), but, unlike technical production, is significantly under-determined by such conceptual intentions, for the artist aims to produce a beautiful object, perhaps with aesthetic ideas as its representational content – an aim that cannot be (entirely) discursively articulated. Kant suggests that there are some rules governing "academic form" (v:307) and seems to associate such rules with that which is required by "judgment" or taste in art (v:310, 313); here, I think, Kant insufficiently distinguishes one conception of form – beautiful form proper, which is not rule-governed – from another – the requirements set by concepts of art forms, e.g., conventions of representational painting.

including something like the unity of form and content.⁵⁶ What is crucial in Kant's conception of purposive form is that such form comprises (our imaginative representation of) an *arrangement* of diverse, empirical properties of an object as interrelated, complementing and contrasting with one another, unified as diverse.

It is time, however, to attend more closely to the nature of such purposiveness. Using the analogy to organic purposiveness, I have suggested that the purposiveness of beautiful form may be understood as a reciprocal relation of properties as complementary and contrasting, and thus as a unity among diverse parts as such. But it is now time to qualify this analogy: we judge that organisms are unified through reciprocal causal relations of their parts, whereas the relations of properties in beautiful form are not causal relations.⁵⁷ Correspondingly, Kant distinguishes between the "real" or "material" purposiveness of organisms and the "formal" purposiveness of beautiful objects.⁵⁸ In order to determine the character of beautiful purposiveness more precisely, I shall now turn to discuss Kant's conception of perfection, or (as he glosses it) objective, intrinsic purposiveness, in more detail.⁵⁹ As I shall suggest, Kant's concept of specifically formal perfection can clarify the nature of the purposiveness of beautiful form, for the purposiveness of beautiful form is both similar to such perfection (as formal) and contrasted (as merely subjective).

⁵⁶ Strictly speaking, the term "beautiful form" might be reserved to describe this relationship as holding specifically among sensible properties/aspects of the manifold in free beauty. I attempt to suggest here, however, that representations of dependent and artistic beauty share the same (purposive) form, are likewise individualized representations.

⁵⁷ This contrast is exemplified in Kant's treatment of crystallization at v:348–50: crystallized forms are beautiful, but may be caused by "a mechanical tendency" of nature (v:348). At v:236n, Kant also suggests that causal-historical concerns are absent from judgments of beautiful form: unlike the judgment that an object is an artifact (even though we don't know what it was made for, or according to which intention), in judging beautiful form, Kant writes, we find something "purposive . . . in our perception of it, which [purposiveness] . . . is not related to any purpose at all."

⁵⁸ v:193; FI, xx:221, 232–4. Kant also frequently glosses this contrast as one between "objective" and "subjective" purposiveness (e.g., v:359), i.e., organisms are (judged to be) purposes for themselves, not to be purposive for us (the judging subject). I do not use this terminological distinction because it is misleading: as we have seen, Kant concludes that teleological judgments of objective purposiveness are not objective judgments; conversely, as noted in Chapter Two, there are objective judgments of purposiveness for us, e.g., judgments of utility.

⁵⁹ Kant characterizes perfection as objective, intrinsic purposiveness at v:226, and identifies a core meaning of perfection as formal at FI, xx:228.

5.6 Perfection as objective formal purposiveness

As we have seen, Kant conceives of judgments of perfection as judgments that an object is an adequate exemplar of a kind. This claim comprises, however, part of a more complex doctrine of several types of perfection. In his compressed discussion of perfection in the First Introduction (xx:228–9), Kant identifies at least five conceptions thereof: ontological, formal, practical, technical, and teleological perfections. Across these variations (to which I shall return), however, Kant defines perfection as the unity of a manifold – the “completeness of the many as together constituting a unity,” “the concept of the totality of something composite,” or “the harmony of the manifold to [form] a unity.”⁶⁰ In §15, Kant correspondingly articulates two subsidiary concepts of perfection, viz., quantitative and qualitative perfection, which express the two “halves” of these definitions – multiplicity (manifoldness) and unity (harmony):

the harmony of the thing’s manifold with this concept [of what it is “supposed to be”] (which provides the rule for connecting this manifold) is the thing’s *qualitative* perfection. Qualitative perfection is quite distinct from *quantitative* perfection. The latter is the completeness that any thing has as a thing of its kind. It is a mere concept of magnitude (of totality); in its case *what the thing is supposed to be* is already thought in advance as determined, and the only question is whether the thing has *everything* that is required for being a thing of that kind. (v:227)

Kant’s conception of perfection is thus consonant with the Wolffian rationalist concept of perfection as the harmony of multiplicity. The rationalists employ, specifically, what Kant calls an “ontological” conception of perfection in order to claim that different objects can have greater or lesser degrees thereof.⁶¹ Such perfection (attributed absolutely to God) comprises the greatest amount of diversity, the most “reality,” viz., the highest number of different positive determinations (properties) that can be united in one thing, as well as the greatest degree of individual properties (e.g., not just power but omnipotence).⁶²

⁶⁰ Pluhar translation, modified. Cf. *JL* 1x:39: “With . . . perfections . . . two things are always to be found, which in their harmonious union make up perfection in general, namely, *manifoldness* and *unity*.”

⁶¹ See, e.g., Moses Mendelssohn, *Philosophical Writings*, tr. and ed. Daniel Dahlstrom (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 23–4, 131–3.

⁶² As noted in the Introduction, this last is Leibniz’ (primary) concept of perfection (see Robert Adams, *Leibniz: Determinist, Theist, Idealist* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994], Chapter 4); this Kant terms “a perfection.” The Wolffian concept of

Kant criticizes the ontological concept of perfection on the grounds that it is vague: one must have another determinate concept in order to judge an object's perfection; a thing can be judged perfect only as the kind of thing that it "is supposed to be." Kant does not argue for this claim, but I suggest that he has two cognitive considerations in mind. First, in order to judge the comparative ontological perfection of an object, we would have to know all the properties of that object (and/or of those to which we are to compare it). Such comprehensive understanding is, however, impossible for us on Kant's view: "all our comprehension is only *relative*, i.e., sufficient for a certain purpose; we do not comprehend anything *without qualification*" (*JL* 1x:65). Second, Kant suggests that one is incapable of identifying which properties (of which degree) would render an object perfect without a concept by which to guide one's selection – or that different concepts might yield different results in such judgment. "One thing can have several qualitative perfections" (*MM*, vi:386), depending on the concept in accord with which one judges; sharpness, for example, is a positive determination, or contributes to the perfection, of an object if it is judged as a knife, but not if it is judged as a wrench or a toy.⁶³

Thus judgments of perfection proper, on Kant's view, are relative to a concept (F) that establishes which properties count as positive determinations of the object (as an F). Hence Kant's somewhat misleading association of perfection with the "inner possibility" of a thing (e.g., v:227). This language suggests that judgments of perfection might concern causal conditions. But when we judge that an object is perfect, we judge that a thing is an (adequate) F in virtue of F-determined properties. This is not a causal judgment; it has nothing to do with how the object came to have these properties. Rather, these properties constitute the object's F-ness; this judgment concerns the "inner possibility" of x being what it is, as an F.

On Kant's view, then, judgments of perfection are objective judgments: we attribute a multiplicity of properties to objects (an objective claim) and, on that basis, attribute another property, i.e., perfection or the

perfection is, however, drawn from another of Leibniz' views: his theodical-metaphysical claim that the actual world is actual because it is the most perfect, i.e., combines the largest degree of diversity in one compossible (harmonious) world (e.g., "Monadology," §58, in G. W. Leibniz, *Discourse on Metaphysics and Other Essays*, tr. Daniel Garber and Roger Ariew [Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991], p. 76).

⁶³ Kant suggests this line of argument at FI, xx:228 with respect to Leibnizean perfections; cf. Kant's criticisms of Leibniz' views about positive and negative "realities" at A273/B329.

completeness of requisite properties to be a member of the kind. But in what sense are judgments of perfection judgments of objective *purposiveness*, according to Kant?

This purposiveness lies in the other component of perfection that I have so far left out of account: qualitative perfection. In judgments of perfection (as characterized so far), we judge that *x* is an adequate *F* because it instantiates “completeness of the many,” or quantitative perfection, i.e., that it has *all* the properties required to be an *F*. But perfection, according to Kant, has two aspects – multiplicity *and* unity – and *qualitative* perfection concerns the way in which the multiple properties of the object are represented as unified, according to the rule provided by the concept (v:227, quoted above). This unification is, Kant suggests, purposive: we take the manifold to “serve” the concept (of the kind); in judgments of perfection, “I always presuppose the concept of something *as a purpose*, to which I apply the ontological concept of the harmony of the manifold to [form] a unity.”⁶⁴

This purposive unification of the manifold may take two different forms: it may be guided, Kant writes alternately, by a concept “of a purpose” or a concept “as a purpose.” First, in judgments of technical, practical, or teleological perfection – e.g., This is a perfect car, virtue, or cat – we employ a concept of a purpose, respectively, a use, moral end, or organic kind.⁶⁵ (Kant’s examples of dependent beauty all involve judgments of perfection of this kind.) These judgments of perfection are thus also, straightforwardly, judgments of purposiveness: if the kind-concept is of a purpose, then properties that make an object an adequate member of that kind are also purposive, i.e., serviceable for the purpose that defines the kind. For example, the equally long, load-bearing legs of a table render it an adequate table, and, in doing so, also serve the table’s purpose by supporting its flat surface. Such purpose-kind-concepts *unify* the properties of the object (for the judging subject), moreover, because the purpose that defines them explains *why* objects of that kind have the combination of properties that they do, and/or why the subject should take certain properties to be relevant in judging that object. (Again, this “why” need not be glossed causally, as on D2, but simply to concern what makes such properties salient or meaningful in combination.) More

⁶⁴ FI, xx:228; my emphasis, Pluhar translation.

⁶⁵ This meaning for “qualitative perfection” is suggested by Kant’s definition of it in the *MM* – the “harmony of a thing’s properties with a *purpose* [*Zweck*]” (vi:386) – and may explain Kant’s confusing references to judgments of perfection as “teleological” judgments in the *CJ* (e.g., v:279).

specifically, these concepts unify the object's contingent, empirical properties as such: the properties that render an object useful for a particular purpose (or to fall under such a concept) are contingent, empirical properties, and only as such can they each serve as (different, collaborating) "means" to serve the purpose of the object. Such kind-concepts, then, ground "the lawfulness of an intrinsically contingent connection of the manifold in the object."⁶⁶ The length of a table's legs and the flatness of its surface are contingent properties (of an object as such), but precisely in their contingent, specific characters and in combination with one another are judged to be necessary, to belong rightly, for reasons, to the table, given the table's purpose.⁶⁷

Kant also defines qualitative perfection, however (and second), as the "harmony of the thing's manifold with the concept," in which we understand the "concept *as* a purpose" (FI, xx:228; my emphasis). This is Kant's conception of "formal" perfection or of *formal* objective purposiveness: "*The* perfection of a thing in the relation of its manifold to a concept of it is merely formal" (FI, xx:228). In judgments of formal perfection, we find that the properties in the object's manifold serve to determine the object *as* that kind of object, are harmonious with what it is "supposed to be."⁶⁸

⁶⁶ FI, xx:228, Pluhar translation.

⁶⁷ Because these are judgments that objects are suitable for purposes, they have the evaluative connotation suggested by the term "perfection," which is also attributed by the rationalists to their ontological concept of perfection (unsuccessfully, Kant objects; e.g., *GW* IV:443). I do not discuss this evaluative connotation, however, because Kant's concept of purposiveness (of which perfection is a type) is not primarily evaluative, but "structural." Correspondingly, Kant takes judgments of perfection to be cognitive judgments (of adequacy to a kind), which do not necessarily have evaluative import: positive evaluation of perfect objects requires that the subject not only recognize the object as perfect, but also endorse the object's purpose. (Thus judgments of moral perfection are the only such judgments that are, necessarily, also evaluative.) Here Kant concurs with the British empiricist criticisms of the evaluative concept of intrinsic perfection; see, e.g., Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, ed. Adam Phillips (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 83–99.

⁶⁸ Kant hesitates in denominating perfection as "formal" purposiveness, referring, e.g., to perfection as "supposedly formal but yet also objective purposiveness" (v:228), or as connected to "the material purposiveness (the purpose)" of the object (v:311). Kant has two reasons for doing so. First, *all* judgments of perfection involve a concept as the "matter" of the judgment (the manifold is referred to a concept, which is predicated of the object, thus serving as the "matter" of the judgment). Second, most judgments of perfection employ the concept "of" a purpose; such judgments therefore take the object to serve a "real" end (v:322). As I shall discuss, formal perfection is "material" purposiveness only in the first sense. Neither of

Kant appears to arrive at this abstract notion by considering perfection to be an intrinsic characteristic of an object, specifically its adequacy to its own internal purpose (as distinct from utility). Kant's reasoning seems to be that the only truly "internal purpose" of a thing is to be the kind of thing it is.⁶⁹ More technically, Kant claims that in order to judge an object perfect, we

require a concept of an internal end, which contains the ground of the internal possibility of the object. Now as a purpose in general is that the *concept* of which can be regarded as the ground of the possibility of the object itself, thus in order to represent an objective purposiveness in a thing the concept of *what sort of thing it is supposed to be* must come first; and the agreement of the manifold in the thing with this concept . . . is the *qualitative perfection* of a thing. (v:227)

Here Kant moves from the D1 and D2 conception of purposiveness as grounded upon concepts, viz., as causal (purposive means to be caused by a concept-having agent), to an epistemic, judgmental conception: the concept of the thing "comes first" not causally, but judgmentally, as articulating what the thing "is supposed to be." Thus Kant transforms the claim that all purposes must be conceptually articulated (in order to guide action to realize them) to the "internalized" claim that concepts themselves are purposes (for judging). In judgments of formal perfection the unification of the object – as conceptualized – is the purpose of judging. Here judging itself aims at conceptual "determination [that] is a purpose with regard to cognition" (v:242; translation modified).

This type of judgment of perfection seems to be a rather thin claim about an object (it is purposive insofar as we unify its properties in accord with an empirical concept?). And indeed, though formal perfection is supposed to be the intrinsic purposiveness of an object, it does not, on Kant's view, ultimately characterize objects. For the *unity* of properties herein judged – its qualitative perfection – is a property of the object only derivatively; it is more properly a property of the *concept* of the object.

these senses is, I note, to be identified with the "material" purposiveness of teleological causal relations among parts/functions of an organism, even in the case of a teleological judgment of perfection ("this is a perfect frog" [because it has all the frog-relevant characteristics] is not equivalent to the causal judgment concerning the frog's parts as reciprocally means and ends).

⁶⁹ As we shall see in a moment, however, such perfection is not entirely "intrinsic" to the object, separate from the judging subject, for the concept of the kind (its internal purpose, what it is) is constructed by the subject in accord with a norm of purposiveness for cognition.

(So Kant suggests at v:227 as well: judgment of the quantitative perfection of an *object* presupposes the unity established by the qualitative perfection of the *concept*.) Kant correspondingly argues in the *CPR* that the “transcendental” concepts, including perfection, have been “falsely interpreted” as “predicates of things.” Correctly understood, perfection is “nothing but a logical requirement and criterion of all cognition of things in general,” a “criterion of the possibility of a concept (not of its object).” This criterion demands, specifically, that the “multiplicity [of determinations] lead back to the unity of the concept, and agree completely with this and no other concept . . . so as to yield connection of the heterogeneous elements of cognition in one consciousness” as is “necessary for the production of the entire concept” (B114–15).⁷⁰ Perfection, Kant argues, is a concept that belongs not to transcendental philosophy, but to general logic; in its most fundamental sense, it does not characterize objects, but is a norm for ideal concepts or conceptual content. And, by turning to Kant’s account of conceptual content and its unification in the *JL*, we may understand why this norm is that of formal purposiveness, or purposiveness for cognition.

Perfection (or the unity of conceptual content) in the Logic

As discussed in Chapter One, Kant understands empirical conceptual content to comprise marks arranged in relations of coordination or subordination.⁷¹ Kant defines these relations as follows: “Marks are *coordinate* insofar as each of them is represented as an *immediate* mark of the thing and are *subordinate* insofar as one mark is represented in the thing only by means of another.”⁷² Coordination thus relates marks as joint conditions for an object to be judged as belonging to a kind. The

⁷⁰ I have modified this text (and translation) to refer more straightforwardly to perfection: in this passage, Kant treats all three “transcendental” predicates of the scholastic tradition (one, true, good), and reinterprets them as (respectively) the unity, multiplicity (of determinations or marks), and perfection (the multiplicity as unified) of a concept; thus perfection comprises the two first concepts in combination. My attention was drawn to this passage by Fricke, *Kants Theorie*, pp. 57f.

⁷¹ Kant also takes marks to be related disjunctively, but, because I am here concerned with the order of marks under one concept, I shall (mostly) leave these relations aside here.

⁷² *JL* 1x:59. Contra Makkreel (*Imagination and Interpretation*, p. 12) and Bäumler (*Irrationalitätsproblem*, pp. 267–9, 320–1), coordination is, then, not necessarily an “aesthetic” form of connection in a manifold, but can be a logical – though not deductive – connection among marks; I resist their corresponding suggestion that beautiful form is coordinative as well (it is, rather, purposive).

concept of gold on Locke's treatment exemplifies this ordering of conceptual content: malleability, yellowness, etc., are all equally, "immediately" properties that identify gold, and are understood (as Locke is at pains to argue) to be in no relation to one another except that of coordination.⁷³ Subordination, by contrast, is a deductive relation among the marks of a concept as a "series of grounds and consequences" or in species to genus relations.⁷⁴ For example, gold might have metal as one of its marks, which might include other (remote, higher, generic) marks, e.g., body or malleability; thus by means of the mark metal, we represent these other marks as part of the conceptual content of gold (*JL* ix:96–7).

Kant presents these definitions in a section of the *JL* appropriately entitled "Logical perfection of cognition as to quality": these relations are the functions that unify the manifold of marks under a concept, i.e., ground qualitative (formal) perfection. (Kant refers to these relations too in his discussion at FI, xx:228.) Subordinate relations among marks unify marks analytically or deductively: if gold is a metal, then gold is a body. Coordination is a less unificatory rule of combination: coordinated marks are unified in that each is a ground for the attribution of the (overarching) concept to an object, but unlike subordinated marks they have no further relation to one another; they are merely a list of marks. Thus, Kant argues, it is not obvious why they would belong together to identify a kind, or (that is) they form concepts that are mere "aggregates." One could in principle always add another mark to the coordination, and thus will never know if one has listed all the properties that could determine that kind, whereas in analyzing subordinated marks one comes to an end with unanalyzable marks like "something" (*JL* ix:59, *Vienna Logic* xxiv:834–5, 847).

Perfection, as noted above, is a norm of *ideal* conceptual content, viz., that the multiplicity of marks "leads together to the unity of the concept" (B114). One might, therefore, expect Kant to define perfect concepts as those that have only subordinated marks, as on a Leibnizean view. Kant suggests, however, that a perfect concept must involve *both* subordinated and coordinated marks (thus taking a position that mediates between Leibniz' and Locke's); it must have "intensive depth" or rich subordinated content, and "extension" or a number of coordinated marks (*JL* ix:63). A concept cannot in fact have only subordinated marks, for

⁷³ John Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. P. N. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon, 1975), iv. i–vi.

⁷⁴ *Vienna Logic*, xxiv:834–5.

the subordinate relations among marks are derived from the concept's/ marks' place in a classificatory system, which is partly constituted by coordinative relations. One can "deduce" that gold is malleable and a body by means of its mark, metal, that is, only if one has the concept of metal as a coordination of the marks body and malleability (and others perhaps). In order, moreover, to articulate distinct concepts, marks must be coordinated as well as subordinated: for gold to be a concept distinct from the concept of metal, it must coordinate metal with a differentiating mark (e.g., yellow).

Without coordination, then, there would be no subordination, but without subordination, marks are merely aggregated. Subordinate (genus–species) order not only itself unifies marks, but also determines the relevance of other possible coordinated marks or constrains which marks might be (coordinately) added to the concept. For example, Locke never mentions the piece of gold's size or shape; these properties are irrelevant to judging it as gold. Kant's (but not Locke's) analysis shows why: such properties are neither marks of the genus, nor do differentiating work if one is operating with a "stuff" generic concept. Other coordinated marks *would* do differentiating work (given the conceptual scheme we have); e.g., against the "background" of the generic mark metal, Locke's proposed mark, solubility in aqua regis, might serve as a differentiating mark of gold. Thus Locke's account of conceptual content presupposes, but fails to take into account, the guiding role of generic marks and the importance of subordination in conceptual content.

Via relations of *both* subordination and coordination, then, the marks of a concept comprise a unity – e.g., combined as generic (malleability) and specific or differentiating (yellow) – rather than constituting a mere aggregate. A logically perfect concept – one that unifies the greatest diversity – is one in which there is the greatest degree of such unification, the greatest subordination combined with the widest extension of coordinated marks; its conceptual content comprises, that is, a full systematization of marks, maximal subordination that incorporates differentiating, coordinated marks at each "level" of subordination.

Such perfection is, Kant claims, equivalent to the concept's purposiveness for cognition: a concept becomes more perfect by having greater "internal" and "external" usefulness (*JL* ix:60; *Vienna Logic* xxiv:836). Internally useful marks are those that ground the richness of the concept, because from them one can derive the largest number of consequences, i.e., are those with more subordinated content. Externally useful marks allow one to compare this kind of object to others, as similar

or different, thus including coordinated marks that serve as species- or differentiating marks. Perfection as the ideal of conceptual content (full systematization) is a unity of marks as intrinsically and extrinsically purposive (for cognition): the multiplicity of marks are unified precisely as serving the purposes concepts are supposed to serve, viz., to provide discursive knowledge of an object (cognize it via an abstract class) while differentiating it from other objects, or, more broadly, to unify as much “heterogeneous knowledge” (B114) about it as possible.

This norm (perfection, logical purposiveness) also governs the selection of marks to construct a concept. Perfect empirical concepts are, that is, purposive not only in the sense that they serve cognitive purposes, but also in accord with (an extended sense of) D2: they are the result of an intentional activity – the formation of concepts, the choice of marks; empirical concepts are, Kant holds, “made” (*JL* 1x:93). For example, given the choice whether to take metal or malleability as a mark of gold, one ought to choose metal, for it allows for more derivations of marks (it has more marks in its conceptual content, including malleability). Likewise, solubility in aqua regis might or might not be chosen as a (coordinate, species) mark of gold: it is not a perspicuous property of the object, and therefore would not serve easily to distinguish gold (it is not coincidental that Locke uses colors frequently as examples). But it might be chosen as a mark for gold given a sufficiently sophisticated set of disjunctive judgments about metals, e.g., if one discovered that gold was similar in many ways to other metals, but was the only one soluble in aqua regis.⁷⁵

Like the other forms of purposiveness discussed above, this logical purposiveness may be understood as a lawfulness of the contingent, or as grounding a unity of the diverse as such. The marks of empirical concepts must, that is, be heterogeneous and contingent (non-categorical) in order to serve to classify or differentiate these kinds of things. The marks must, further, be heterogeneous from one another; otherwise each would not be distinct, and would not serve as a differentia at whichever point in the classificatory schema it does.⁷⁶ Indeed, to anticipate the arguments of the

⁷⁵ Cf. A728/B756: “We make use of certain characteristics only so long as they are adequate for the purpose of making distinctions.”

⁷⁶ Kant’s ambiguity (noted above) between concepts *as*, and concepts *of*, purposes may in part be explained by the fact that concepts of purposes may also approximate formal perfection: because artifacts and organisms are complex objects with many heterogeneous properties that are salient because of the purposes they (or the objects) serve (use or organic functioning), these objects may more easily be differentiated into specific, determinate kinds. Pragmatic purposes may also

next section, like the relations among sensible properties in the representation of an object as beautiful, those among marks under a perfect concept may be understood not only to hold among heterogeneous items as such, but also as relations of contrast and complement. For, in order to serve as differentiae (at whichever stage of the classificatory system), marks must both complement or “agree with” a generic mark (red cannot be a differentia of number), and contrast with that generic mark (in order to specify the concept into a more determinate kind). Finally, the marks (as thus heterogeneous) are taken to be salient, and to belong to the concept’s content for a reason: each mark serves as a means to the purposes of cognition or to the articulation of the kind/concept (i.e., determination of the thing, distinction of it from others), and does so in concert with the other marks, by qualifying or determining their classificatory (generic, specific) roles.

In sum: formal, qualitative perfection of a concept is the unity of multiple heterogeneous marks, which are purposively unified as heterogeneous from one another, as together serving as means to constitute a determinate, rich, empirical concept, or as purposive for cognition. In judging an object to be (formally) perfect, we judge its manifold likewise to be unified as diverse, viz., as “serving” the (perfect) concept as its purpose, as making that object what it is (as one of that kind). Kant’s concept of formal perfection thus comprises an epistemological or logical reconception of the rationalist concept of ontological perfection: the perfect object does not *have* a greater degree of reality (or is a harmony of a larger number of positive determinations), but is *understood* by us according to a greater number of unified marks (a perfect concept), which thus best serves our cognitive aims (*JL* 1x:58f.).⁷⁷

5.7 Beauty as subjective formal purposiveness

This account of formal perfection will allow us, I suggest, to understand what Kant means in characterizing beauty as merely subjective (formal) purposiveness, the “mere form” of purposiveness, or purposiveness for

prompt the formation of formally perfect concepts, e.g., trade interests might well prompt us to develop a perfect concept of diamonds. On Kant’s view, however, we never attain fully perfect empirical concepts, for there are in principle always future possible characteristics to discover.

⁷⁷ On this transformation of the rationalist concept of perfection, see Paul Guyer, *Kant and the Experience of Freedom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 154–5, and Longuenesse, *Capacity to Judge*, Chapter Six.

cognition (or judgment), or for us.⁷⁸ We are, first, in a position to disambiguate these terms (which are often assimilated by scholars, and occasionally by Kant).⁷⁹ Judgments of formal perfection are, that is, *objective* judgments of *objective* formal purposiveness or purposiveness for cognition (thus purposiveness for us). Like other judgments of perfection, judgments of formal perfection are objective judgments that an object is an adequate exemplar of its kind, on the grounds that it has all the properties identified by the marks of the (perfect) concept of that kind, that serve to make it what it is. The perfect concept itself is, moreover, objectively purposive for cognition – or objectively formally purposive: such concepts and/or their unified marks do (objectively) serve the purposes of cognition (the determination and differentiation of the kind).⁸⁰ Thus, like judgments of utility, judgments of perfection are objective judgments, of purposiveness for us (here: for cognition).

In claiming that beautiful form is subjectively formally purposive, Kant is not, I submit then, simply claiming that the representation of beautiful form is purposive for the subject, or for cognition (though he does so claim). Rather, more specifically, beautiful form is *like* perfection – is formally purposive, or purposive for cognition – but is also distinct from perfection in that it is *merely* subjective formal purposiveness, which two claims I shall now take in turn.

In Kant's account of formal perfection we have, first, a model of non-causal, formal, purposiveness – indeed of purposiveness for “cognition in general”⁸¹ – that can elucidate the character of the purposiveness of beautiful form. As we have seen, in judgments of formal perfection we

⁷⁸ Kant uses such terms to describe beautiful form, e.g., at v:190, 221, 228; many of his discussions (e.g., v:189–92) suggest that beautiful objects (or the representation thereof) are purposive for cognition, or for the subject.

⁷⁹ Kant has (rightly) been accused of using such terms ambiguously (e.g., Guyer, *Claims of Taste*, pp. 194–5; Rogerson, *Kant's Aesthetic*, pp. 55–6), but as I attempt to show, these terms and distinctions may be reconstructed meaningfully; contra Guyer, Kant's characterizations of beautiful purposiveness as “formal” and as “subjective” may be understood not to be interchangeable.

⁸⁰ Cf. v:362–4: Kant argues that geometrical figures are objectively, but merely formally, purposive: they can serve many diverse (cognitive) purposes, and we can establish *objectively* (in accord with concepts) that they do so; such figures are not, however, ruled by purposive causal relations.

⁸¹ Kant uses this term, as is well known, to describe the cognitive, representational activity in aesthetic experience (e.g., v:218–19); as is less well known, but emphasized by Fricke (*Kants Theorie*), he also uses this term to characterize perfection at B113–16. Like Fricke, then, I understand judgments of perfection and aesthetic judgments to employ a principle of “qualitative unity” distinct from categorical unity; unlike Fricke, I identify this principle as the principle of purposiveness.

neither attribute a particular causal origin (intelligent agency) to an object (as on D1–3), nor take the object’s parts) to be unified by causal means–ends relations (as in teleological judgment of organisms).⁸² Instead, we judge the object’s manifold or the marks of the concept to be purposively unified cognitively, i.e., for judgment and for cognition. Each heterogeneous mark serves (is means) to determine/differentiate the object’s kind (the perfect concept); each property of the manifold accordingly serves to make the object what it is, as judged in accord with the perfect concept, as its internal purpose (to be of that kind), and the purpose of judging (determination of the object).

The interplay of empirical, heterogeneous properties that, I have argued, comprises the purposive form of objects experienced as beautiful may, I suggest, be understood as, thus, formally purposive. Just as a perfect concept (and by extension an object judged accordingly) is purposive for cognition, insofar as it orders, makes salient, and unifies the heterogeneous, empirical properties of the object (as generic/specific, as contrasting/complementary, as serving to determine the kind), so too (I have argued) do we find the properties of a beautiful object to be unified as diverse, to be lawful, meaningful, or right in their relations to one another, as serving to make the other properties of the object salient, to make the object the particular object that it is.⁸³ Specifically, the representation of beauty combines the two moments of purposiveness in judgments of (formal) perfection as analyzed above. In such representation, we find the (diverse) manifold to be unified as such, as “serving” to make the object what it is, i.e., we represent the object as purposive for judging. And we unify the manifold as a maximal, systematic unification of maximal diversity (as marks are unified in the conceptual content of a perfect concept), i.e., we represent the object as purposive for cognition.⁸⁴

⁸² Contra D1 and D2 (as discussed in Chapter Two), Kant here employs a conception of purposiveness that does not concern the causal origin of the object, but suitability to purposes. The unity of the object (as judged according to a perfect concept) is “caused” by the subject’s judgment of the object, and ultimately by an intelligent agent’s construction of concepts, but the unity of the marks of the concept (or properties of the object) derives from their suitability *to* cognitive purposes.

⁸³ Correspondingly, our representation of dependent beauty – the “incorporation” of the judgment of perfection into the representation of beauty – may now be seen as an expansion of the purposive unification of properties in formal perfection, to encompass all (or indeterminately many) of its properties, as, together, rendering the object not only a member of its kind, but the particular individual that it is.

⁸⁴ This connection between the representation of beautiful form and the (conceptual) representation of an object as perfect might, then, be reconciled with Ginsborg’s

Beautiful form is thus akin to perfection, as formally purposive. It is also distinct, however, as merely subjective formal purposiveness. Thus, Kant argues in §15 that beauty, or

[w]hat is formal in the representation of a thing, i.e., the harmony of its manifold to [form] a unity (where it is indeterminate what it is supposed to be) does not by itself provide any cognition of objective purposiveness . . . ; because here we abstract from what this unity is *as a purpose* (what the thing is supposed to be), so that nothing remains but subjective purposiveness of the representations in the mind of the beholder, which indicates a certain purposiveness of the representational state of the subject, and in this an ease in apprehending a given form in the imagination, but not the perfection of any object, which is here not conceived through any concept of a purpose. (v:227; translation modified)

This passage might seem to support a strongly subjectivist interpretation of the purposiveness of beautiful form (against my reading): beauty is, Kant suggests here, not a purposiveness of the object, but of the subject's representational state; beautiful form is purposive in that the subject apprehends it "with ease" (and thus, perhaps, pleasure). As I shall argue in the next two chapters, the representation of beautiful form is indeed inextricably connected both to the subject's purposive, representational state of mind and to pleasure. For now, however, I argue that this passage – and Kant's claims concerning the subjective purposiveness of beautiful form – should be read in a more fine-grained way (i.e., without leaping, immediately, to the view that beauty is subjectively purposive in that it occasions, or serves, a subjective state).⁸⁵

arguments that in aesthetic experience our imagination (in unifying the manifold) is functioning in an "exemplary" way, as it "ought" to function ("Lawfulness Without Law," 70–3), and that we therein find our cognitive activities to be in "conformity with a normative law," to be in accordance with how they – and the object – ought to be ("Aesthetic and Biological Purposiveness," 339f., particularly 350). Such exemplarity and conformity are here understood, however, more specifically as governed by the norm of perfection (and to characterize the object as so represented in a more substantive way) and thus, in Ginsborg's terms, to be only "derivatively" judged ("Lawfulness Without Law," 62–3) to be as they ought to be.

⁸⁵ My reading cannot indeed be reconciled with passages in which Kant asserts that aesthetic judgment *solely* concerns the judging subject; e.g., at v:189, 288. Subjectivist interpretations can account for these texts but, as noted above, they must dismiss those passages in which Kant suggests that aesthetic judging *does* concern the object (even if only subjectively), and render Kant's account deeply implausible. I argue, by contrast, that we may understand aesthetic experience both

I submit, first, that Kant confirms here my suggestion that beautiful form is akin to (formal) perfection: he articulates his conception of beautiful form, or “what is [merely] formal in the representation of the thing,” by subtracting the concept as a purpose from the representation of perfection. In representing an object as beautiful, that is, we *retain* the (mere) “form” of judging an object to be perfect – we represent heterogeneous properties as formally, purposively interrelated, unified in serving to make the object what it is.

Kant also indicates a specific, fine-grained way in which such representations are distinct: in representing an object as beautiful, we do not employ an overarching concept as the “material purpose” or “matter” of judging. Thus Kant’s claims (variously, and I suggest equivalently) that the beautiful object is (represented as) characterized by merely subjective formal purposiveness, the “mere form” of purposiveness, or purposiveness *without* a purpose – by contrast to perfection or objective formal purposiveness – mean, I suggest, that the object is found to be purposively unified for cognition in general (formally purposive), but without a concept that articulates the unity or end of the object, or a concept “as” a purpose of judging.⁸⁶ Rather, the object’s manifold is (judged to be) unified, as purposive for cognition, reciprocally: instead of serving as “means” to the determination of an object as one of a kind (in accord with a concept), the items of the manifold in aesthetic representation reciprocally contrast and complement one another, reciprocally render one another intelligible, are represented as making the object what it is as an individual whole.

Thus Kant’s claim that beautiful form is merely subjectively purposive need not, I argue, be read (as on the subjectivist interpretation) to mean that in aesthetic judging we are not attending to the object at all, but to our own subjective states. Indeed aesthetic representation is, I suggest, *more* immediately connected to the object, its sensible properties, and their actual temporal or spatial arrangement vis à vis one another, than are judgments of perfection. In the latter, we judge the heterogeneous properties of the object (the manifold) to be unified only as they may be conceptualized and arranged within a classificatory scheme, as generic or specific marks. In judging an object aesthetically, by contrast, we unify the

to concern objects, and to be subjective in a determinate Kantian sense (viz., not conceptually determined).

⁸⁶ At v:311–12 Kant glosses beauty as purposiveness without a purpose, and at v:366 he distinguishes subjective from objective formal purposiveness on the grounds that the latter is conceptually determined.

sensible properties as they are sensibly related (spatially or temporally distributed), in purposive relations of contrast and complement in the individual object, among themselves, rather than insofar as they allow us to distinguish the object from others. Just as the purposiveness without a purpose of organic functioning (that we reflectively attribute to organisms) unifies the parts of the organism internally, reciprocally, and thus more fully than externally imposed artifactual purposes, so, I suggest, does the purposiveness without a purpose of beautiful form unify the sensible properties of the object more fully, immediately, and inextricably than a conceptualized order among (some) properties as marks (that may be independently identified), which together – as logically, systematically ordered – constitute a perfect concept.

Kant's emphatic differentiation between aesthetic representation (as subjective) and the representation of perfection is, I argue moreover, meant to distinguish his position from, and to correct, that of the rationalist aestheticians. The rationalists employ their (ontological) concept of perfection in claiming that beauty is a kind of perfection, a harmony of multiplicity. They hold, however, that properly speaking we judge that an object is perfect intellectually and that perfection is a rationally grounded unity of the object. Aesthetic representation of the beautiful, they argue, is by contrast a "sensible" or "confused" representation of the "sensible" perfection of the object.⁸⁷ I have been arguing that Kant makes a similar move: beauty is akin to (formal) perfection (the unity of a diverse manifold, purposive for cognition), but is not conceptually represented as so unified. Like his reformulation of the concept of perfection, however, Kant's strong distinction between beauty and perfection – contra the rationalists – rests, I suggest, on his core epistemological doctrines concerning the distinct functions of the understanding and of sensibility, and the nature of objective judgment.

As we have seen, Kant defines judgments of perfection (contra the rationalists) as judgments that an object is an adequate member of its (conceptually defined) kind. Therefore, Kant argues that the rationalist concept of

sensible representation of perfection is an explicit contradiction, and if the harmony of a manifold to [form] a unity is to be *called* perfection, then

⁸⁷ See A. G. Baumgarten, *Theoretische Ästhetik*, tr. and ed. Hans Rudolph Schweizer (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1983), §14; Mendelssohn, "On Sentiments," in *Philosophical Writings*, pp. 7–95.

we must present it through a concept; otherwise we must not give it *the name* perfection. (FI, xx:226–7; translation modified and my emphasis)

or:

the thought of a formal *objective* purposiveness that nevertheless lacks a purpose, i.e., the mere form of a *perfection* (without any matter and *concept* of what the harmony is directed to, not even the mere idea of a lawfulness as such) is a veritable contradiction. (v:228; translation modified)

This argument is, apparently, definitional: Kant has defined perfection as concept-relative and therefore, by definition, representations of beauty – of a similar “form” without the “matter” or “concept of what the harmony is directed to” – cannot be representations of perfection.

More substantively, however, Kant’s objection to the rationalists here is reminiscent of his objections against rationalist epistemology: in claiming that beauty is sensible perfection, the rationalists fail to distinguish adequately between conceptual and sensible representation. (Kant indeed insists upon this distinction in the text surrounding both passages above.)⁸⁸ Our representation of an object as beautiful cannot be an objective judgment (of perfection), for the unity of such form is not grounded appropriately in concepts, but is sensed, or felt. In accord with Kant’s strict distinction between sensibility and understanding, such “felt” purposiveness must be understood as “different in kind” from a conceptual representation (judgment) of perfection.

Correspondingly, Kant denies that aesthetic judging of beautiful form comprises (confused) cognition:

An aesthetic judgment . . . affords absolutely no cognition (not even a confused one) of the object [*Objekt*], refers the representation, by which an object [*Objekt*] is given, solely to the subject; it brings to our notice no property of the object [*Gegenstand*], but only the purposive form in the determination of the cognitive powers, as they are engaged with the object.⁸⁹

Like the v:227 passage above, this passage would support a subjectivist reading, and Kant’s language of “solely” and “only” here are in tension with the view I here propose. Nonetheless, I suggest again that one ought to attend carefully to Kant’s claims: aesthetic judging, Kant writes here, *does* engage with an object, but it does not provide any “cognition” of it as

⁸⁸ He also emphasizes the role of pleasure in aesthetic judging, as I shall discuss in subsequent chapters.

⁸⁹ v:228; translation modified and emphases removed.

an object of knowledge (*Gegenstand*).⁹⁰ Or, as Kant writes, the judgment of taste is “certainly related to” an object, but does not “determine” it (FI, xx:223). Kant holds, I propose then, that aesthetic judging of beautiful form is concerned with the object, but is not objective judgment because (as argued above) beauty is not a discursive concept and thus cannot be a predicate in an objective judgment. Likewise, insofar as components of beautiful, purposive form are represented as intimately interconnected, each what it is only in the context of this object, they too are not conceptually identified/identifiable, cannot serve to classify objects, are neither grounded in, nor useful for, “comparison” of this object to other objects.⁹¹ (As argued above, if we were to understand our representation of the beautiful object as a conceptual representation, that concept would have to be a Leibnizean concept of an individual object.) Unlike the marks of a perfect empirical concept (and, derivatively, the properties of the object as one of its kind), then, the sensible “properties” or

⁹⁰ See Chapter One, note 55. Kant uses the distinction between *Objekt* and *Gegenstand* similarly at v:188–9: “Was an der Vorstellung eines Objekts bloß subjektiv ist, d.i. ihre Beziehung auf das Subjekt, nicht auf den Gegenstand ausmacht, ist die ästhetische Beschaffenheit derselben; was aber an ihr zur Bestimmung des Gegenstandes (zum Erkenntnis) dient, oder gebraucht werden kann, ist ihre logische Gültigkeit.” Kant does not, however, consistently employ this distinction; e.g., he refers to the “*Gegenstand*” of aesthetic judging, about which we make merely subjective claims (v:189f.; FI, xx:223–4), and claims that in such judging – in contrast to logical judging – we do *not* refer the representation to the concept of an “*Objekt*” (e.g., v:203, 287–8; see also FI, xx:208 for vacillation between the two). These vagaries might be explained by noting that the distinction between *Objekt* and *Gegenstand* is between an object of *thought* and an object of experience (presented in intuition). Since the object of aesthetic judging is (I argue) a “mere” intentional object of representation, not (properly) an object of cognition according to concepts, the term “*Objekt*” seems appropriate. But since this (mere) object is represented sensibly, it shares the character of a *Gegenstand*, as opposed to an *Objekt* understood as a mere object of *thought*. Kant perhaps needs a further term, weaker than “*Objekt*,” to characterize mere intentional objects of non-conceptual representations.

⁹¹ Though this contrast between subjective aesthetic *Beurteilung* of form and objective judgment turns on Kant’s restrictive understanding of concepts (as rules that include as their intentional content specifiable marks, which serve as conditions for their application) and by extension of objective judgment, this contrast may nonetheless also be meaningful for post-Wittgensteinian philosophers who reject such a conception. For even a looser doctrine concerning the nature of concepts will not (I suspect) include among concepts an understanding of aspects of an object as in principle intelligible only as belonging to *this* particular object, nor (likewise) would beauty – as the interrelation of contingent, empirical, sensible properties as reciprocally complementary and contrasting – seem promising for treatment as a concept, in virtue of its indeterminacy.

conceptually “indicated” aspects of the beautiful object (*Objekt*) cannot serve as, or “bring to our notice,” properties of an object of cognition (*Gegenstand*), i.e., properties that might be used in objective empirical judgments, or the formulation of empirical causal laws. Because the representation of the subjectively formally purposive form of an object cannot be conceptualized, subjective formal purposiveness cannot be objectively attributed to an object, nor is it, objectively, purposive for cognition. Somewhat paradoxically, perhaps, beautiful, purposive form is merely subjectively purposive, merely the form of purposiveness, because this representation of the object as an individualized, unified whole transcends discursive conceptual cognition.

Thus, I have argued, Kant’s aesthetic formalism comprises the claim that in appreciating an object as beautiful, we represent it as an individual, as a unity of diverse properties, reciprocally contrasting and complementary, or as formally purposive without a purpose. This representation is merely subjective(ly purposive) because it is not unified in accord with a concept, indeed cannot be characterized by discursive conceptualization; it cannot be or ground an objective judgment. In the passages quoted above, however, Kant argues that beautiful form is subjectively purposive not only because the representation of the object is *not* unified objectively (conceptually), but also because this representation *is* referred to the subject’s purposive state of mind or to pleasure. One need not interpret these claims, I have argued, to mean that the beautiful object is purposive only insofar as it occasions these states, but our representation of beautiful form may be understood, nonetheless, as inextricably related to them. As suggested at the opening of this chapter, aesthetic pleasure plays a significant role in Kant’s aesthetic formalism, for this doctrine is an attempt to characterize what about the object *is pleasing* in aesthetic experience; the purposively unified properties of the beautiful object are represented as unified, then, as pleasing. The representation of beautiful form is, moreover, plausibly understood as dependent upon a particular representational state of the subject: because the sensible properties of an object experienced as beautiful are not logically (conceptually) related, they seem so to relate, to be unified, only insofar as they are experienced as such by a subject in a particular, imaginative, representational state. This representational state is, I shall argue, the free harmony of the faculties, a purposive state of mind, in which we “apprehend a given form” with “ease.” And it is to these aspects of aesthetic experience I shall now turn.

AESTHETIC PLEASURE: THE FEELING OF SUBJECTIVE, PROJECTIVE TEMPORALITY

In the [previous chapter](#), I argued that Kant both adapts and criticizes the rationalist aesthetics of perfection, in claiming that the beautiful form of an object is purposive *without* a purpose: in aesthetic representation we unify heterogeneous properties as such, “as if” towards the purpose of identifying the object, yet we do not and cannot employ one overarching concept; thus we find our representation of the object merely subjectively formally purposive, or purposive without a purpose. As I suggested, such unity among properties is “what we find pleasing” in aesthetic experience, and in this chapter I turn to Kant’s understanding of that pleasure, and, correspondingly, to his critical adaptation of the core claim of empiricist aesthetics, that aesthetic experience essentially involves pleasure. Though Kant concurs with this empiricist claim, he provides a radically different account of such pleasure from that assumed by the empiricists: aesthetic pleasure is neither to be understood as a mere sensation, nor (therefore) as the subject matter of empirical psychological judgments or generalizations. Rather, aesthetic pleasure is constituted by an a priori principle, that of purposiveness without a purpose. Aesthetic pleasure is purposive, I shall argue, in that it is an intentional representation with a formal structure of future-directedness, and it is purposive *without* a purpose (or, equivalently, I shall argue, disinterested) in that it is not so future-directed by virtue of its relation to a conceptually articulated purpose. As we have seen, on Kant’s view such future-directedness is

incompatible with an objective time order; as I shall argue, it also renders aesthetic pleasure a uniquely subjective state, one that cannot (contra the empiricists) be the subject matter of empirical psychological judgments.

As constituted by the principle of purposiveness, aesthetic pleasure is, on Kant's view, revelatory of the nature of pleasure itself. For, prior to writing the *CJ*, Kant announced in a letter that he was embarking on a "critique of taste," because he "had discovered an a priori principle" – the principle of purposiveness (or teleology as he calls it there) – for the faculty of pleasure and displeasure.¹ I shall begin here, then, by discussing Kant's general definition of pleasure in the *CJ*, as characterized by this principle (6.1 and 6.2). In the following sections, I shall discuss Kant's distinctions among aesthetic pleasure, pleasure in the good, and pleasure in the agreeable. These distinctions are twofold: an intentional distinction concerning the type of representation in which we take pleasure, and an explanatory distinction among interested and disinterested pleasures, concerning the roles pleasures may take (or, in the case of aesthetic pleasure, not take) in willed activity (6.3–5). Among these pleasures, I shall argue, aesthetic, disinterested pleasure (in beautiful form) is the paradigmatic pleasure, purely characterized by purposiveness without a purpose (6.6–7).

6.1 Pleasure in general

Kant claims that pleasure is a subjective rather than objective representation because it cannot be interpreted as belonging to an (external) object, but only to the subject.² He reflects this fact about pleasure terminologically by claiming that pleasure is not a "sensation" (*Empfindung*), but a "feeling" (*Gefühl*) (e.g., v:189; cf. *MM* vi:211–12). Many commentators assume both that this claim explains why Kant deems pleasure subjective, and that it articulates the sole distinction between pleasure and sensations: pleasure is a sensation, but one that is not referred to objects.³

¹ December 28 and 31, 1787 letter to Reinhold, in Immanuel Kant, *Philosophical Correspondence 1759–99*, tr. Arnulf Zweig (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), pp. 127–8. Despite Kant's characterization of this faculty as one of pleasure and displeasure, I shall concentrate on pleasure alone.

² v:203–4. Cf. *Anth* vii:239–40.

³ This widely held view is articulated most explicitly by Guyer (e.g., *Experience of Freedom*, pp. 280–1, and *Claims of Taste*, pp. 104–5), who defends it on textual grounds (which I shall discuss below). McCloskey (*Kant's Aesthetic*), Nick Zangwill ("Kant on Pleasure in the Agreeable," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 53 [1995], 167–76), Ginsborg (*Role of Taste*, "Reflective Judgment and Taste"), and Allison

Kant's definition of pleasure, I argue, indicates to the contrary that his distinction between feeling and sensation, and his grounds for deeming pleasure subjective, run much deeper: pleasure is different *in kind* from sensations. Pleasure is, on Kant's definition, a representation with intentional content, which comprises other representations understood to be modifications of the subject (that is, are themselves not [solely] referred to objects). Thus pleasure cannot be referred to objects given its distinctive, doubly subjective status – as a representation “about” other subjective states as such. Unlike sensations, moreover, this intentional state has a formal structure, that of purposiveness without a purpose.

Kant defines the feeling of pleasure as follows: it is the “consciousness of a representation's causality directed at the subject's state so as to *keep* him in that state.”⁴ For example, pleasure in eating chocolate would be the feeling or “consciousness” of wanting to continue sensing (tasting) the chocolate, or, more precisely, the feeling that the representation of chocolate is “causing” one to stay in the state of having that representation (of the taste of chocolate). As is clear from this definition, Kant does not mean by “feeling” that pleasure is an indefinable, primitive mental state, as empiricists tend to assume.⁵ Instead, pleasure is apparently a mental state that is about another mental state, specifically about the continuation in time of that mental state.

Thus pleasure is an intentional or second-order mental state, about another representation. The intentional object of this state is, moreover, interpreted as subjective, or “referred to” the subject; pleasure is a “receptivity of a determination of the subject” (FI, xx:208). Pleasure is the consciousness of a representation *as* a state of the subject, and as having effects on the subject (i.e., that it tends to keep the subject in that state, of having the representation). The subject does not take pleasure in the representation of chocolate simpliciter, but in *having* that representation. Kant reflects the facts *both* that there is an intentional object of pleasure *and* that this object is not an “object” (or does not refer to an external object) when, in describing pleasure in the agreeable, he writes:

The green color of meadows belongs to *objective* sensation, as perception of an object [*Gegenstand*] of sense; but its agreeableness belongs to

(*Theory of Taste*, e.g., p. 54) are among the few exceptions to this trend. McCloskey's view is closest to mine, since she takes Kant to hold an intentional view of pleasure in general. None of these readers, however, interprets Kant's claim that purposiveness without a purpose is the principle of pleasure.

⁴ v:220; Pluhar translation.

⁵ As in, e.g., Locke's categorization of pleasure as a “simple idea” (*Essay*, II.xx.1).

subjective sensation,⁶ i.e., to feeling, **through which no object [Gegenstand] is represented, but through which the object [Gegenstand] is considered as an object [Objekt] of our satisfaction (which is not a cognition of it).** (v:206; bold my emphasis; translation modified)

Here Kant distinguishes between the *Gegenstand*, or full-blooded object of knowledge, and *Objekt*, a mere intentional object of a representational state: our states of pleasure have an (intentional) *Objekt*, Kant claims, but do not refer to or provide knowledge of a *Gegenstand*.⁷

On Kant's definition, pleasure is not only an intentional state, but also has a formal structure. It can have different "contents" (whatever representation we're having), and represents (is "consciousness of") a formal, relational characteristic of that content, indeed one concerning relations in time, the universal form of intuitions. For pleasure is the consciousness of a representation's tendency to persist (into the future) or its future-directedness. (So I read our "consciousness of . . . causality . . . so as to keep us in that state.")

This future-directedness, of which we are conscious in pleasure, renders pleasure (on Kant's definition) "intentional" in another sense as well,⁸ i.e., in the sense of being purposive. Indeed, Kant provides his definition of pleasure in the context of his discussion of purposiveness in §10. Pleasure appears, that is, to represent something like an intention,

⁶ Kant glosses pleasure as "sensation" here (contra my interpretation). As I shall discuss below, pleasures in the *agreeable* (specifically) can be understood either as pleasurable (other) sensations or as sensations themselves. This may explain his description of pleasure as sensation here, though, as Pluhar notes, Kant does not consistently abide by his terminological distinction between feeling and sensation.

⁷ See Jeanine Grenberg, "Feeling, Desire, and Interest in Kant's Theory of Action," *Kant-Studien* 92 (2001), 153–79, for a similar analysis, though one that makes stronger claims concerning the relationship between intentionality and knowledge of the object than I would endorse. Likewise, contra Ginsborg, I do not take the claim that pleasure is intentional to be equivalent to the claim that pleasure is judgmental, as she suggests in writing that aesthetic feeling is "intentional or judgmental" (notably in Hannah Ginsborg, "Aesthetic Judging and the Intentionality of Pleasure," *Inquiry* 46 [2003], 164–81; e.g., 174): pleasure, I am suggesting, has an intentional *object* (another representation) or is "in" such a representation, but does not make a *claim* or institute a law-governed connection between two or more representations. To provide another example: concepts are intentional representations (they are about other representations, viz., their extension, broadly speaking), but are not by themselves judgments.

⁸ John Searle argues that one ought to distinguish "Intentionality" or about-ness of mental states or representations from this sort of intentionality (as connected to action) (*Intentionality: An Essay in the Philosophy of Mind* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983], Chapter 3). I shall, indeed, treat these two senses of intentionality separately, referring to this second sense as "purposive."

purpose, or motivation: as consciousness of future-directedness – to continue to be in the same state, to maintain the same representation – it is like purposes, which articulate future objects, aims, intentions for action. Given D1, however, pleasure cannot be said to be purposive with a purpose – it is a feeling, not a concept. Even apart from that definition, because pleasure is a consciousness of future-directedness specifically to *maintain* the same state that one is in, pleasure is not purposive for or towards an external, separate purpose.

Kant's definition of pleasure as thus purposive is, I contend, the core of his definition of pleasure: it is an attempt to capture the motivational and the satisfying characters of pleasure, i.e., as it both prompts us to action, and constitutes an end for action.⁹ It grounds, too, the appropriateness of Kant's description of pleasure as a "feeling of life" (v:204). For, as argued above, life may be understood as the purposive functioning of an organism to maintain the dynamic state that it is in; pleasure, on Kant's definition, is the consciousness of just such a state, a state of dynamic self-preservation.¹⁰ (Kant makes this analogy – between pleasure and life – more specifically with respect to *aesthetic* pleasure; I shall return to his reasons for doing so below.)

According to Kant, then, pleasure is distinct in kind from sensations. Sensations may be referred to objects, but only via empirical judgment and/or concepts. Pleasure, by contrast, is an intentional state (a "consciousness of") that has, as its complex intentional object, the relation

⁹ Kant thus endorses (*mutatis mutandis*) what Barrie Falk has called the most "fundamental understanding" of pleasure: a pleasurable object is one that "*can arouse a desire for its own presence, which cancels other desires; or . . . it can arouse a desire which it simultaneously gratifies.*" ("Having What We Want," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 91 [1991], 171–86; 182, my emphasis.) Apart from Falk's emphasis on competition among desires, his account is similar to Kant's, especially since most pleasures are, on Kant's view, future-directed precisely in the sense that they are connected to desire (as I shall discuss below); Falk does not so claim, however, but emphasizes that his account of pleasure is to be distinguished from Kant's account of pleasure in the sublime. Here Falk in fact endorses, I suggest, Kant's own distinction between pleasure in the beautiful and pleasure in the sublime – the former (on both views, the paradigmatic pleasure) is properly pleasure *in* the object as represented, whereas the latter is merely occasioned by the object, and is "in" (concerns) a characteristic of the subject. Falk is inspired by Gilbert Ryle's article "Pleasure," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* suppl. vol. 28 (1954), 135–46, on which I have also drawn.

¹⁰ This connection of pleasure to life is a long-standing one for Kant – see, e.g., the *Metaphysik* L1 (mid 1770s), xxviii:247, *Metaphysik Mrongovius* (1782–3), xxix:882–3, *Pillau Anthropology* (1777–8), xxv.2:786, *GW* iv:395, 422, and *CPvR* v:gn (to which I shall return).

between present and future states of the subject. Thus, pleasure is subjective – because it is an intentional attitude about a subject’s mental state as such – and therefore is not, straightforwardly, a sensation (even a “subjective” one). Kant perhaps signals this special, intentional, formal, and particularly subjective status of pleasure in the *Anthropology*, in his claim that we are aware of pleasure not by inner sense, but by an “interior sense”¹¹ of our own states; this formulation suggests (as does my analysis of Kant’s definition) that pleasure is a second-order, reflexive state with respect both to other mental states and to the position of those states in time, the form of inner sense.

To be clear, like sensations, pleasure may have a felt, affective quality. Like sensations, too, pleasure is not a discursive representation and has a particularist reference: we take pleasure in (having) *this* representational state. But as a second-order state about another representation and with formal structure, pleasure is not equivalent to a sensation, or (that is) a first-order, “material” representation. This difference from material sensations helps to explain why Kant (now) argues that pleasure is characterized by its own a priori principle, that of purposiveness without a purpose. For if pleasure were a sensation – a temporally extended and located sensory state or material representation – it might well seem to be a paradigmatically empirical phenomenon, not amenable to transcendental analysis, subject only to causal, not a priori, conditions. And indeed, as I shall discuss in a moment, until Kant’s “discovery” of an a priori principle for pleasure, he appears to have believed just that. A formal, especially a temporal-formal, state is, however, more amenable to transcendental a priori analysis than a particular sort of sensation would be; as I have suggested, purposiveness without a purpose is its a priori principle, the formal structure that characterizes pleasure.

6.2 Two objections

This interpretation is faced, however, by objections on exegetical and philosophical grounds that Kant ought (to be read) to hold that pleasure is, indeed, a sensation. First, exegetically, it seems threatened by the textual evidence Guyer provides in support of his opposing interpretative claim that Kant holds all pleasures to be sensations, if merely subjective ones. Prior to the *CJ* Kant appears to hold that pleasures are sensations (see *CPrR* v:22). Guyer argues that Kant continues to hold this

¹¹ *Anth* VII:153.

view in the *CJ* because Kant provides similar definitions of pleasure in the *CPrR*, the *CJ*, and the *Anthropology*, a work that succeeds the *CJ*, in which, Guyer claims, Kant characterizes pleasure as “agreeable sensation.” Thus, Guyer argues, Kant holds the same view of pleasure – as (subjective) sensation – before, during, and after the *CJ*.¹²

Second, one might object – on broadly empiricist grounds – that Kant’s definition of pleasure is not immediately recognizable as a description of a familiar mental state. Pleasure, certainly, seems *itself* to be a state in which we are prompted to remain. Perhaps, in Kant’s defense, this tendency to remain in a pleasurable state can be characterized as feeling a tendency to remain in the *other* state in which we are taking pleasure (or being conscious of that representation as prompting us to remain in the state of having it). And pleasure does appear to be intentional, at least sometimes – we frequently believe that we are taking pleasure *in* something, not that we have a separate sensation of pleasure caused by that thing. Yet isn’t there such a thing as a *sensation* of pleasure? Some bodily pleasures, e.g., the pleasure in tasting sweet things and sexual pleasure (to take Burke’s explicit and implicit models for aesthetic pleasure), seem to be sensations. Aren’t such sensations – as the empiricists assume – the most straightforward cases of pleasure, and thus good models for understanding other pleasures?

To address both objections, I turn now to Kant’s sole argument in the *CJ* that pleasure should not be identified with sensation. This argument reads as follows:

if this [that all pleasure is “itself” sensation] were conceded, then impressions of the senses, which determine inclination, or principles of reason, which determine the will, or merely reflected forms of intuition, which determine the power of judgment, would all be one and the same insofar as far as the effect on the feeling of pleasure is concerned. For this [effect] would be the agreeableness in the sensation of one’s state. And since in the end all the effort of our faculties is directed to what is practical and must be united in it as their goal, one could not expect of them any other assessment of things and their value than that which

¹² Guyer, *Claims of Taste*, pp. 104–5. Guyer does not take this identification of pleasure and sensation to be a strength of Kant’s view: “the view that feelings of pleasure are a qualitatively uniform kind of sensation may strike us now as wildly archaic. To us, pleasures seem as much like attitudes as they seem like sensations, and appear to be, at least often, intrinsically intentional – bearing a relation to their object in their content and not solely in their causal history” (*Claims of Taste*, p. 105). On my view, Kant agrees.

consists in the gratification [*Vergnügen*] they promise. In the end, how they achieve this would not matter at all, and since the choice of means alone could make a difference here, people could . . . certainly blame one another for foolishness and incomprehension, but never for baseness and malice, for all of them . . . would be after one goal, . . . gratification. (v:206)¹³

Here Kant presents roughly the following argument: if all pleasures are sensations, then they are all the same; in that case, morality as distinct from prudence would be impossible, i.e., we could not blame people for baseness, but only for foolishness or imprudence (choosing faulty means to obtain pleasure). Thus, Kant implies, we must reject the claim that all pleasures are sensations.

I shall attempt to explicate this dense argument in a moment, but I suggest first that it provides a response to the exegetical objections to my interpretation. For this passage suggests that Kant has changed his mind concerning pleasure subsequent to the *CPrR*. There, after Kant asserts that pleasures are sensations, he argues that they *are* (therefore) “all the same” or “differ only as to degree” (v:23). Kant proceeds to argue that the morally good must not, therefore, be identified by pleasure but by the categorical imperative; otherwise, the good would be equivalent to the pleasant, and one would have to understand all actions as mere means to obtaining the sensation of pleasure (v:24–5, 58–9).

Kant seems, then, to have changed his mind about the key premise here (that all pleasures are sensations), for he transforms the same line of argument from *modus ponens* to *modus tollens* form. In the *CPrR*, Kant adheres to the premise that all pleasure is sensation, and therefore endorses the implications (that all pleasures are the same, and that one cannot use pleasure to distinguish moral from prudential actions). In the *CJ*, by contrast, Kant denies the premise – and appears to believe that one *can* differentiate among pleasures (viz., as pleasures in the agreeable, good, or beautiful).¹⁴ Such a change in Kant’s position is not implausible, since Kant obviously changed his mind between the *GW* and/or *CPrR* and

¹³ Translation modified.

¹⁴ These distinctions also reappear subsequently at *Anth* VII:230 and *MM* VI:212–13. Kant’s theoretical development on these matters is somewhat more complicated than I present it here: he presents his threefold distinction among pleasures early, e.g., *Metaphysik* L I XXVIII:250f., *Metaphysik* *Mrongovius* XXIX:893. Kant’s distinction in the *CJ* might, then, more properly be described as the (re)introduction of an empirical psychological distinction into his critical transcendental philosophy (after his development of the critical moral philosophy).

the *CJ* as to whether pleasure has an a priori principle, and, correspondingly, whether a subject's pleasure can be subjectively universal in status, rather than merely subjective.¹⁵

It is, further, much less clear than Guyer suggests that Kant's definitions of pleasure remain the same from the *CPrR* to the *CJ* to the *Anthropology*. Kant defines pleasure in the *CPrR* as "the idea of the agreement of an object or an action with the *subjective* conditions of life" (v:9n). This definition is rather difficult to understand, perhaps because, as he suggests, Kant is trying to avoid defining pleasure in any very determinate way in order to avoid begging questions (as I shall discuss in a moment). But this definition does not seem identical to that in the *CJ*. In both cases, Kant draws connections between pleasure and life, but on the *CPrR* definition pleasure does not share a similar structure to life; rather, it registers a fact about an object in relation to life (agreement). Correspondingly, this definition connotes satisfaction (as does the *CJ* definition), but not motivation or future-directedness (causality *towards* maintaining the state). Thus it is not an identical definition, nor is it implausible to believe that Kant has come to a different conception not only of pleasure, but also of life, in the *CJ*.

Guyer's *Anthropology* passage is more challenging, since this work postdates the *CJ* and ought to reflect any changes in Kant's views there. This text runs as follows:

Enjoyment [*Vergnügen*] is pleasure through the senses, and what delights the senses is called *agreeable* . . . We should not use the terms *what pleases* [*gefällt*] or *displeases* to express enjoyment and pain . . . : these terms are too *wide*, for they can also refer to intellectual pleasure and displeasure, in which case they would not coincide with enjoyment and pain. We can also describe these feelings in terms of the effect that the sensation of our state produces on our mind. What directly (by the senses) prompts me to *leave* my state (to go out of it) is disagreeable to me – it pains me. What directly prompts me to *maintain* my state (to remain in it) is agreeable to me – it delights me. (VII:230)

Kant employs (roughly) his *CJ* definition of pleasure ("what prompts me to maintain my state") here, and connects it to sensuous pleasure, as Guyer argues. I suggest, however, that one ought to read this passage quite differently than Guyer does. Kant begins by warning that one should not refer to sensory pleasures ("enjoyments") simply as "pleasures," for pleasure is a

¹⁵ See, e.g., *GW* IV:413, A801/B830n.

“wider” category. Thus it seems highly unlikely that, in introducing pleasure in the agreeable or pleasurable sensation as a particular kind of pleasure as he is doing in the rest of this passage, Kant intends to assimilate all pleasures to sensory pleasure, as Guyer suggests.

I propose, instead, that Kant is trying to redescribe pleasurable sensation (“enjoyment,” “gratification,” or “agreeable” sensation) as a subset of pleasure as he formally defines it. That is, as suggested above, pleasurable sensations seem to be counterexamples to Kant’s formal, intentional definition of pleasure. Here Kant is trying to show that his definition can accommodate sensory pleasures – one can “also describe” such pleasures in his formal terms, viz., as sensory stimuli to maintain oneself in the same state. These pleasures are, however, merely one kind of pleasure, one way in which we may be conscious of a representation’s causality so as to keep us in the same state, not paradigms of pleasures, much less the sole kind of pleasure. Indeed, with respect to *these* pleasures (agreeable sensations), Kant holds in the *CJ* – as he held for all pleasures in the *CPrR* – that they are all the same in kind, differing only in degree:

The *agreeable*, as an incentive for desires, is of the same kind throughout, no matter where it comes from and how specifically different the representation (of sense, and of sensation, objectively considered) may be. Hence in judging of its influence on the mind it is only a matter of the number of stimuli [*Reize*] (simultaneous and successive), and, as it were, only of the mass of agreeable sensation; and thus this cannot be made intelligible except by *quantity*. (v:266)¹⁶

In the *CJ* (and *Anthropology*) Kant has, then, broadened his view of pleasure beyond that in the *CPrR*: the pleasures to which he referred in the earlier work now constitute not all pleasure, but only the subclass, pleasurable sensation or pleasure in the agreeable.¹⁷

In sum: the textual evidence suggests that Kant changed his mind about the nature of pleasure from an identification of pleasure as sensation (in the *CPrR* and earlier) to the formal conception of pleasure in the *CAJ* (which latter may be applied to agreeable sensations, as a subclass of pleasures). Kant nonetheless retains his view that if (when) pleasures are sensations, they are “the same,” which claim returns us to the substance of Kant’s *CJ* argument against the identification of pleasure and

¹⁶ Translation modified.

¹⁷ Correspondingly, in the *GW* and the *CPrR*, Kant uses *Annehmlichkeit/angenehm* synonymously with *Lust* (pleasure), whereas in the *CJ* the former terms refer only to a subclass of pleasure.

sensation (and thus, indirectly, in defense of his formal definition against the empiricist objection), to which I shall now turn.

As he suggests in the *Anthropology* passage, Kant's formal definition of pleasure can be seen as an attempt to avoid begging the question as to the nature of pleasure, by unquestioningly taking one kind of pleasure as paradigmatic.¹⁸ This does seem to be a good methodological objection to the empiricist proposal to take sensory pleasure as the model for pleasure (why *should* all pleasure be understood as defined by these particular cases?). By defining pleasure formally, merely as to its purposiveness, its motivating/satisfying character, Kant isolates an aspect of pleasure "thin" enough to be shared by all sorts of pleasure, and "thin" enough not to beg the question by privileging some instances of pleasure over others.

Kant's explicit defense of his position in the *CJ*, however, is that it can *differentiate* among pleasures. By contrast, he argues, defining pleasure as sensation entails (i) that all pleasures are "the same" (in the first two sentences of the passage from v:206), and therefore (ii) that it would be impossible to distinguish between morality and prudence (in the rest of the passage).

Both of these implications are puzzling. First, any definition of pleasure would seem to entail that all pleasures are alike: if pleasure is defined as one sort of thing, then "by definition" all pleasures will be so (alike). Second, though it is certainly important for Kant that one be able to distinguish between moral and prudential behavior, it is not clear that one must have a particular understanding of pleasure to do so. Kant himself argues that moral actions are precisely those that are *not* engaged in for the sake of pleasure (e.g., *GW* 1v:413). Couldn't one say – shouldn't Kant himself argue – that moral actions are engaged in for the sake of something other than pleasure, *whatever* one happens to understand by "pleasure"? Or: if we do believe pleasure is a sensation, why should we then and only then judge actions merely insofar as they succeed or not in producing pleasure?

Concerning Kant's first claim (that if all pleasures are sensations, then they are the same), one may remark first that all theories of pleasure may not be equally incapable of distinguishing among pleasures. For on an intentional view of pleasure, pleasures have contents that differentiate

¹⁸ Cf. *CPrR* v:9n: Kant warns there against borrowing a definition of pleasure from psychology before a "complete analysis of concepts has been made," because that definition might implicitly beg the question as to whether all desires are determined by pleasure.

them internally; on Kant's *CJ* definition, part of the nature of a pleasure is, arguably, *which* (kind of) representation is causing the subject to remain in the state (of having that representation). Indeed – to anticipate – Kant does thus distinguish among pleasures: his threefold distinction among pleasures corresponds to a threefold distinction among types of representations (concept [or judgment], form, and sensation), in which we might take pleasure. By contrast, pleasures understood as sensations, i.e., as atomic, sensory, material states, do not lend themselves to such internal differentiation: each sensation of pleasure just is that, a sensory experience of pleasure.¹⁹

Nonetheless, it seems that one could differentiate among specifically sensory pleasures in three ways: quantitatively (i.e., as to their degree of intensity), phenomenologically (as to their different qualitative “feels”), and causally, i.e., by identifying their different causal histories. This last, indeed, is the method of differentiation Guyer attributes to Kant. Kant admits that we can differentiate sensations (even pleasurable sensations) both quantitatively (v:266) and qualitatively (v:277). Yet none of these methods, he claims, sufficiently differentiates pleasures from one another, as different in kind.

We have yet to see why such a transcendental distinction among pleasures is necessary, on Kant's view – i.e., why it is necessary in order to distinguish between moral and prudential action (according to v:206). But for the moment we may note that this claim seems right concerning both quantitative and qualitative distinctions among pleasures. Quantitative differences among pleasures obviously do not differentiate pleasures according to kinds. Specifically, quantitative differences among pleasures would not distinguish moral from non-moral pleasures, unless one were able to argue that moral pleasures were always identical as to their degree of intensity, and were consistently either more or less intense than all other pleasures. As for qualitative differentiation among pleasures, Kant quite plausibly takes these to be the results of empirical

¹⁹ Cf. McCloskey, *Kant's Aesthetic*, pp. 18–19. McCloskey's interpretation represents, however, the opposite extreme from Guyer's: though she registers that Kant classes pleasures into three main types, she concludes that “if pleasures are internal to their objects [sic] then we can have as many kinds of pleasure – qualitative kinds – as there are kinds of object” (pp. 21–2). This obscures the centrality of the three main types of pleasure on Kant's view. Moreover, as we have seen, Kant claims in the *CJ*, as in the *CPrR*, that, regardless of any qualitative differences, pleasures in the agreeable *are* “the same” in the most important respect (their influence on action, as I shall discuss below).

psychological investigation (as, e.g., Burke's aesthetics), and, therefore, not to be grounds for transcendental distinctions among pleasures (v:277; cf. FI, xx:238). Such phenomenological distinctions among pleasures also seem unpromising grounds on which to base a distinction between moral and non-moral pleasures.²⁰

The method of differentiating pleasures by different causes is, however, the method Kant rejects explicitly in the argument under discussion. Kant argues that the fact that pleasures (understood as sensations) are caused by different activities would not differentiate these pleasures from one another. Instead, he claims, the sameness of the pleasurable sensations would render the activities equivalent to one another from a practical point of view. That is, Kant is arguing that all causes that produce the same effect (here: a pleasurable sensation) are the same – at least for the purposes of practical judgment – not that the (same) effects could be differentiated by pointing to their different causes.²¹ Why, though, does Kant reject such causal-historical differentiation?

One might argue that Kant rejects this sort of distinction again because it would rely on empirical observation: that some object or action causes (me) pleasure is discoverable only from experience. Kant suggests as much elsewhere (v:221–2). Yet here Kant rejects causal histories as a means of differentiation entirely – not because they would provide merely a posteriori differentiation. I suggest that he does so because of the nature of causal relations themselves. Kant conceives of causal relations as external relations between separately identifiable events or states. The view of pleasure as a sensation would make pleasure amenable to such causal analysis: pleasures as atomic sensory states would be separately identifiable qualitatively, i.e., as distinct from other sensory states such as rough, red, etc., and various causes could then be correlated to the occurrences of this sensation. But such correlations would not differentiate the

²⁰ This is a standard criticism, for example, of Mill's attempt to distinguish between "higher" and "lower" pleasures.

²¹ Thus, I believe, Guyer misrepresents Kant's understanding and evaluation of the theoretical options concerning distinctions among pleasures. Guyer suggests that there are only two such options – pleasures are qualitatively (i.e., phenomenologically) to be differentiated, or by their causal histories – and that Kant rejects the former in favor of the latter. Contra Guyer, Kant does not cast doubt on the former outright, but claims that it is an empirical project. Kant does, however, explicitly reject differentiating pleasures via their causal histories. Further, as I argue here, Kant endorses a third theoretical option: that pleasures can be differentiated intentionally (and, as I shall argue below, structurally – as part of an account of motivation in action).

pleasures themselves from one another. To take another example of a sensation: a sensation of red may be caused by an object that reflects the appropriate range of light waves in white light, or it may be caused by light from a red light bulb reflected by a white object, or it may be caused by an object hitting the retina (to produce a red retinal afterimage), etc. These different causes do not, however, make the *sensations* of red different from one another; they are just different ways to produce a sensation of red. Correlatively, if one is interested in these causal processes only insofar as they produce the sensation of red, they are more or less the same as one another (though one might find one a better means to that end than another). Since Kant claims here that, from a practical point of view, we are only interested in actions as pleasing, actions that cause pleasure could all appear to be the same according to the model of causal judgments about sensations, or differentiated only as more or less successful means to the same end.²²

Thus Kant has some grounds for believing that pleasures understood as sensations are difficult to differentiate from one another, especially into kinds, while an intentional understanding of pleasure may serve better to differentiate pleasures. But now we must turn to the question why Kant believes that it is imperative thus to differentiate among pleasures.

One might, first, suggest that we do appear to distinguish among types of pleasures, and an account that allows one to do so is theoretically superior. Such an account could, moreover, explain cases in which we are conflicted concerning some object or action. As is well known, Kant uses examples of such conflicts to motivate his claim that morality has an entirely different determining ground than do other actions. But, as Kant notes, such conflicts do not only obtain between morality and some other mode of valuation: we can find a meal delicious but know that it is unhealthy (v:208). In eating such a dish, we may well have “mixed feelings,” which can be explained by saying that we feel pleasure of one kind alongside, or in conflict with, pain of a different kind (that corresponds to a different kind of pleasure). Or such distinctions might help us to explain another sort of mixed feelings that Kant mentions, i.e., complex feelings in which pleasures and/or pains are (one might say) “embedded”: to use one of Kant’s examples, a widow may feel pleasure concerning her

²² Here my account is in sympathy with Richard Aquila, “A New Look at Kant’s Aesthetic Judgments,” in Ted Cohen and Paul Guyer, eds., *Essays in Kant’s Aesthetics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 87–114; 94–5. I take Kant to be arguing, however, more broadly against all causal-historical differentiation among kinds of pleasure.

grief over her husband's death because it is appropriate to the significance of their relationship.²³

A theory of pleasure as sensation might have difficulty explaining such familiar situations, for, if pleasures are distinguished only quantitatively, then we ought in such cases to feel, say, indifferent (the pleasure and pain cancel each other out quantitatively). Or if pleasures and pains are distinguished phenomenologically, one might have two phenomenologically distinct sensations caused by this object. But it is difficult to say why or how they would be in *conflict* with or *about* one another, rather than merely two sensations the subject has at the same time. Similarly, on a causal account, the (representation of the) object would cause both the pleasure and the pain, so that again one would end with some sort of combined end-product, or two merely juxtaposed feelings. On an intentional account, however, one could explain why both feelings (the pain and the pleasure) are distinct, but also either about the same object and in conflict, or in an embedded relationship.

These kinds of conflictual or embedded feelings may explain why an intentional account of pleasure is superior to Kant's earlier view, on which he seems to lump all pleasures together, as an undifferentiated mass opposed to moral concerns. But in the argument under discussion, Kant argues that the "sameness" of pleasures would render it impossible to distinguish even between moral and prudential behavior. This claim, on the face of it, is shocking coming from Kant: Kant cannot be taken to be arguing that one must establish the objective moral good by reference to some sort of pleasure; this would be deeply inconsistent with the core of his moral philosophy. In the *CJ*, Kant continues to hold that the moral law is the objective foundation for morality.²⁴

Kant does, however, change his terminology in the *CJ* (and afterwards) in another way: he refers unproblematically to moral *pleasure*. I suggest that this terminological change indicates why Kant now suggests that his earlier distinction between moral and non-moral behavior is insufficient: he is concerned here not with the objective determination of the good, but with the "subjective determining grounds" of moral activity, i.e., with moral motivation.

²³ v:331; *Pillau Anthropology* xxv.2:793; *Menschenkunde Anthropology* xxv.2:109of.

²⁴ E.g., v:222, 237. Because Kant defends this claim in the *CPrR* in part by using the modus ponens version of the pleasure-is-sensation argument, however, his argument for this claim requires some reconstruction given his reversal of that argument in the *CJ*.

Kant's worries concerning the differentiability of moral and non-moral motivation arise because he holds two potentially irreconcilable views. On the one hand, Kant argues that, unlike the non-moral agent, the moral agent is motivated by the idea of the moral law, by duty alone, not by anticipation of any pleasure to be gained by the action. On the other hand, Kant believes that ideas or concepts alone do not motivate us; we are not "holy wills," but need a "subjective incentive" to act.²⁵ Thus "[e]very determination of choice [*Willkur*]," Kant writes, "proceeds *from* the representation of a possible action *to* the deed **through the feeling of pleasure or displeasure**, taking an interest in the action or its effect" (*MM* VI:399; bold my emphasis). Hence Kant asks how the moral law can motivate us, how we can take an "interest" in it, why it is not merely an "idle idea" or "mere cognition." Kant answers this question by positing a peculiar feeling, "respect," excited by the moral law.²⁶ Kant's motivational story then runs as follows: the moral agent is conscious of the moral law, feels respect for it, then acts, and then (one supposes) feels pleasure or "moral satisfaction" at having acted morally, thereby earning respect for herself (as an agent of the moral law).

Once Kant adds respect to his account of moral action, however, it might be difficult to see the difference, except question-beggingly, between the structures of moral and non-moral motivation (though not between the contents or purposes of the respective actions).²⁷ In both cases, the agent is motivated by approval of, or pleasure in, the intended action, and is pleased as a result of her (successful) action. Moreover, given the structure of causal relations on Kant's view, if one understands pleasures as sensations and therefore undifferentiable, isolated, material representations, moral and non-moral actions could be viewed, equivalently, as causally correlated to the same effect, viz., a sensation of pleasure.²⁸

²⁵ See L. W. Beck, *Commentary on Kant's "Critique of Practical Reason"* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), pp. 213–15, on the historical development of Kant's thought on this issue; and Grenberg, "Feeling, Desire," for an interesting defense of this claim.

²⁶ *GW* IV:402n, 449; *CPrR* v:73f.; *CJ* v:222.

²⁷ See *Metaphysik* LI XXVIII:258; *Metaphysik Mrongovius* XIx:898–900.

²⁸ It is not enough, in other words, to say that respect, or moral contentment, is "satisfaction," rather than pleasure; this is mere terminological subterfuge, unless Kant gives an account of "feeling" or "satisfaction" as intentional, rather than as mere sensation. So George Schrader argues as well, but stops short of recognizing that Kant develops such a view of pleasure in the *CJ*. ("The Status of Feeling in Kant's Philosophy," in Pierre Laberge, François Duchesneau, and Bryan E. Morrissey, eds., *Actes du Congrès d'Ottawa sur Kant dans les traditions anglo-américaines et continentales* /

Thus if one is unwilling (as Kant appears to be) to reject his underlying premise here – that ideas or concepts alone do not motivate – one must show that the pleasures involved in moral versus non-moral motivation are different from one another, i.e., explain why moral pleasure is a particular kind of pleasure. In other words, if one wants (as Kant does) to distinguish between the moral case in which one does something for its own sake and *therefore* is pleased by it, and a non-moral case in which one does something as means to pleasure, one must develop a theory of pleasure that does not see *all* pleasure as an external product or merely causally correlated effect of action. The view of pleasure as a sensation will not do so for, if pleasure is a sensation, it is *always* an external effect of the action, and would thus always be the ultimate end point (in both senses) of activity. An intentional theory of pleasure, however, can distinguish among pleasures based on their differing intentional objects; thus one could differentiate between pleasures that are in or about the action itself, and pleasures that are (or are in) the product of the action.²⁹ One can also account for a pleasure with the rich intentional content Kant seems to attribute to the feeling of respect, viz., the moral law, as a self-legislated norm, which is beyond our (sensible) ability to attain (v:257). On an intentional account of pleasure, Kant can hold that there is such a thing as moral pleasure, that morality – like all other purposes – is motivational inasmuch as it is pleasing, without rendering morality merely a case of prudence.

Proceedings of the Ottawa Congress on Kant in the Anglo-American and Continental Traditions, tenu du 10 au 14 octobre 1974 [Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1976], 143–64.)

One might argue that moral motivations may be differentiated (for Kant) by the fact that they involve pain, whereas non-moral actions are engaged in for the sake of pleasure. (This view is a something of a straw man in Kant interpretation, though it is part of Schiller's criticism of Kantian morality, and is also suggested by Hegel in his so-called "rigorism" objection [see, e.g., *Phenomenology of Spirit* §628]. Herman [*Moral Judgment*, p. 176] suggests that some contemporary objections to Kantian morality as "rigoristic" appear to be based on such a view.) This distinction seems inadequate, however, to distinguish moral from prudential action: prudential actions may involve pain (e.g., succeeding at one's job may require thwarting one's desire for the pleasures of leisure activity), as Kant notes at *GW* iv:399. And, though Kant characterizes respect for the moral law as an ambivalent feeling, combining pain and pleasure, we are not, I think, led to act morally because of the pain (at our sensible natures being humiliated), on Kant's view, but rather because of our approval of (pleasure in) the law (cf. Daniel Guevara, *Kant's Theory of Moral Motivation* [Boulder: Westview, 2000], Chapter 3).

²⁹ Pleasure is, Kant writes, always among the "means" in activity, but "what matters . . . is the representation underlying the power of choice" (*Metaphysik Dohna* [1792–3] xxvii:678).

In sum: in defense of his understanding of pleasure as a intentional state with formal (purposive) structure, Kant adduces a number of considerations. This definition is, first, broad (or “thin”) enough to contain under itself the range of different states or attitudes that we call pleasure, and it describes a functional aspect of them all – they are both satisfying end-states and future-directed or motivational in character. This definition of pleasure also, however, allows one to differentiate among kinds of pleasures by reference to their intentional objects, and thereby to account for mixed feelings, and to differentiate between moral and non-moral motivations. It is now time, however, to consider Kant’s distinctions among pleasures in more detail, and to identify the specific character of aesthetic pleasure.

6.3 Distinctions among pleasures

In accord with his definition, Kant’s most basic distinction among pleasures – among those in the agreeable, beautiful, and good – rests on a distinction among their intentional objects. This distinction corresponds, specifically, to a familiar Kantian tripartite distinction among representations – among concepts, form, and sensations. Thus, to plug in these types of representation to Kant’s general definition: pleasure in the agreeable is “consciousness” of a *sensation’s* “causality so as to maintain the subject” in the same state; pleasure in the beautiful is in a *form’s* causality so as to maintain the subject in the same state; pleasure in the good in *concepts’* causality, etc.³⁰ In broad terms, these three categories reflect the kinds of reasons for which we could take pleasure in (having a representation of) an object: because of the object’s sensuous or material nature or one of its sensible properties; because of its form or the relation among its sensible properties; because it falls under some concept, i.e., is one of a conceptually identified kind. This way of distinguishing pleasures appears to meet Kant’s standards for distinctions among pleasures: it is an a priori distinction based upon Kant’s a priori distinctions among types of representations,³¹ and it generates a distinction *in kind* among different pleasures – again as parasitic upon the difference in kind among the types of representation.

³⁰ One might suggest that the two kinds of good (useful and moral) correlate to two distinct kinds of pleasure: pleasure in concepts, and pleasure in (moral) ideas. Kant suggests so at *Anth* VII:230.

³¹ I shall not treat here, however, the large question concerning whether this basic Kantian distinction is in fact an a priori distinction.

As applied to aesthetic pleasure (our ultimate concern here), this claim is the mirror image of Kant's formalism: aesthetic pleasure is pleasure in form. Kant's second distinction among pleasures – that aesthetic pleasure is disinterested, while the other pleasures are interested – does, however, take us beyond the [previous chapter](#). Kant's characterization of aesthetic pleasure as disinterested appears to be phenomenologically accurate to (much) aesthetic experience, and has been quite influential as a result.³² Aesthetic pleasure does not seem to be the result of the satisfaction of a prior need; nor, more broadly, do we find beautiful objects (as beautiful) to be pleasing due to ulterior motives, but pleasing in themselves. Disinterestedness also, as Kant suggests, seems to be connected to the universal communicability of aesthetic pleasure in beauty: the subject values beauty in a way shareable with others, not because of her own private, selfish interests.³³

Kant's conception of interest, however, is more expansive than the concept of self-interest that underlies the intuitive appeal of his claim that aesthetic pleasure is disinterested. For, Kant claims, *all* pleasures in the agreeable and in the good are interested pleasures, including moral pleasure (though this is not, of course, self-interested on Kant's view). Kant's paradigm examples of pleasures in the agreeable – pleasures in a shade of green, or in a musical tone – are also not easily understood as cases in which one's pre-existing needs or desires are satisfied. Kant provides, correspondingly, a rather broad, and not immediately intuitive, definition of interest: "Interest is what we call the liking we connect with the representation of an object's existence" (v:204; Pluhar translation). In taking pleasure disinterestedly in beauty, correspondingly, "one must not be in the least biased in favor of the existence of the thing, but must be entirely indifferent to it in this respect" (v:205).

Many have objected to this formulation: surely beautiful objects must exist in order for us to take pleasure in them at least much of the time, and we care about their existence.³⁴ But, I suggest, Kant's claim that

³² Many of Kant's predecessors and contemporaries also held a similar view in some (less explicit) form; see Guyer, *Experience of Freedom*, Chapter 2.

³³ E.g., v:211. With Guyer, I take Kant's proposed inference from disinterest to universal validity to fail (it is possible that a pleasure be both private and disinterested) (*Claims of Taste*, pp. 116–17).

³⁴ Some commentators have suggested that, as disinterested, aesthetic pleasure concerns "mere representations" or mere phenomenal appearance, rather than (existing) objects; this would explain too why aesthetic judgment is merely subjective, viz., concerns our representations alone. (E.g., Paul Crowther, "The Claims of Perfection: A Reversionary Defense of Kant's Theory of Dependent

interested pleasures concern the object's existence, whereas aesthetic pleasure does not, has a more precise meaning: interested pleasures do, and aesthetic pleasure does not, prompt us to act to *produce* the existence of objects. Interested pleasures play a role in willed activity; aesthetic pleasure does not.

As on the intuitive conception of interest, that is, Kant connects interested pleasures intimately with desire – interested pleasure “always has . . . a relation to the faculty of desire” (v:204) – while aesthetic, disinterested pleasure “is not necessarily connected with desire” (*MM* vi:212). Kant does not, however, conceive of this relation to desire as a reference to a prior state of the subject (desire) that explains the pleasure (e.g., I was hungry, desired food, and thus am pleased by food), but rather to concern our subsequent action, or our *exercise* of desire. For desire is on Kant's view our faculty to “cause the actuality [existence; *Wirklichkeit*] of the object.”³⁵ The specifically human faculty of desire is the will, i.e., a *purposive* (conceptually guided) cause of the object's existence (v:220). In desire, we first represent the object conceptually as our purpose, as not yet, but possibly, existent; then, in accord with this concept, and with pleasure, we bring such an object into existence.³⁶

Beauty,” *International Philosophical Quarterly* 26 [1986], 61–74; 68–9.) Kant suggests as much occasionally, e.g., *Metaphysik Mrongovius* xxix:892–3; *Metaphysik L2* (1790–1?) xxviii:586. This gloss is not, however, persuasive about aesthetic experience, and does not represent Kant's own best insights: as I have suggested, pleasure on Kant's view is always, in some sense, in or about representations considered as subjective. However, as we shall see, pleasures in the agreeable concern the subject's own states more exclusively than do pleasures in the beautiful (and are interested).

³⁵ FI, xx:206. Kant often adds to this definition that desire is a causality “by means of” representations, thus including animals as “desiring” causes (they act in accord with representations, e.g., of something fearful, though not concepts). I shall return briefly to animal activity and pleasure below, but I shall largely identify the faculty of desire with will (governed by concepts).

³⁶ Guyer objects to Kant's definition of interest that, given his *CPR* argument that existence is not a predicate, Kant ought to hold that one cannot have a representation of an object *as* existent, as distinct from the representation of the object simpliciter (*Claims of Taste*, p. 171). Contra Guyer, however, Kant *must* hold that we can, and do, represent an object “as” existent (or not) or, more properly, judge an object to be presently existing or not and/or to be possibly existent in the future, as caused by us. For desire, as purposive causality, *presupposes* a significant difference between the representation of an object as not yet existent (an object as desired, needed, or to be produced), and that object judged to have been produced, or to be really existent (as the satisfaction of desire or fulfillment of intention or purpose). McCloskey puts forth a different objection that likewise neglects Kant's considered view concerning existential *judgments*. Because Kant believes that

Interested pleasures – or, as Kant also terms them, “practical” pleasures – are those that are thus motivational for action. Indeed Kant writes that “*to will something* and to have a liking for its existence, i.e., to take an interest in it, *are identical*” (v:209; translation modified, my emphasis). On Kant’s account, then, interested pleasure is not explained by prior desires, but rather prompts or is part of desire, understood as our faculty of producing objects. So too may we understand Kant’s claims that interest concerns (the representation of) the object’s existence: when we take interested pleasure in an object, we are willing that object, i.e., we aim to bring that object’s existence about. Kant’s conception of interest is, that is, well expressed in the phrase (as in the quotation above) “taking an interest,” i.e., committing oneself to something, engaging in action.³⁷ Disinterested pleasures, correspondingly, are those that do not have such a practical role or necessary connection to desire; in this sense, such pleasures are not connected to the (representation of the) existence of the object (*as produced by us*).

Kant suggests that his distinction between interested and disinterested pleasures ought so to be read in his more expansive “transcendental definition” of pleasure:

An explanation of this feeling [pleasure] considered in general *without regard to the distinction as to whether it accompanies sensation, reflection, or the determination of the will*, must be transcendental. It can go like this: *Pleasure is a state of the mind in which a representation is in agreement*

aesthetic pleasures are based upon sensing an object, McCloskey suggests, aesthetic judgment and pleasure always “essentially” refer to the existence of this particular object (*Kant’s Aesthetic*, p. 31). McCloskey here rightly points to Kant’s close theoretical connection between intuition, particularity, and existence, and to his view that aesthetic judgments are singular. As I have suggested, however, the “singularity” of the aesthetic object, and/or our intuitive access to such, can be explained by the conceptual indescribability or richness of the object represented as beautiful. And though Kant connects intuition to particulars and sensation to the “material” or “real” in objects, and takes both to be necessary for existence claims, he holds, rightly, that we may imaginatively (thus sensibly) represent particular, non-existent objects. Kant’s considered opinion concerning our representation of an object’s existence must involve judgment – not an immediate, self-verifying “reference” of sensations to existent particulars.

³⁷ This is a partly reconstructive claim: Kant sometimes glosses interestedness as the “dependence” of pleasure on the existence of objects (e.g., v:205), and some of Kant’s descriptions of interest seem to express something like the intuitive view; e.g., Kant suggests that interest “extorts approval” of an object, and “presupposes or produces a need” (v:210). I take the reading I propose, however, likewise to be supported textually, and to be better at distinguishing all other pleasures from aesthetic pleasure – in a way that can be understood as an a priori distinction.

with itself, as a ground, **either merely for preserving this state itself . . . or for producing its object**. If it is the former, then the judgment on the given object is an aesthetic judgment of reflection; however, if it is the latter, then it is an aesthetic-pathological judgment or an aesthetic-practical judgment. (FI, xx:230–2; bold my emphasis)

In this compressed passage, Kant refers first to his tripartite, intentional distinction among pleasures – as “accompanying” sensation (the agreeable), reflection (the beautiful), or the determination of the will (the good). Kant then turns to a bipartite distinction among pleasures: those (in the beautiful) that are the basis for “merely preserving this state itself” as opposed to those that are the ground “for *producing* the object of the representation,” i.e., pleasures in the agreeable and pleasures in the good. Thus Kant presents here a bipartite distinction among pleasures that seems to correspond to his distinction among pleasures as interested or disinterested. And indeed, on the interpretation of interest I have just given, interested pleasures are those that ground “producing the object of the representation,” i.e., bringing about its existence through desire, whereas aesthetic pleasure does not.

In sum: unlike the intuitive distinction between interested and disinterested pleasures, Kant’s distinction does not concern the origins of pleasures, but rather their effects (or not) on willed activity. Indeed, Kant writes that “pleasure or displeasure, since they are not kinds of cognition, cannot be explained by themselves at all, and are felt, not understood; hence they can be only inadequately explained through the *influence* that a representation has *on . . . activity . . .* by means of this feeling.”³⁸ Kant’s claim that aesthetic pleasure is “disinterested,” correspondingly, does not mean (implausibly) that we take such pleasure in non-existent objects or in merely phenomenal appearances, or that we do not care in any way about the existence of the beautiful object. Rather, Kant is claiming more narrowly that such pleasure does not “have influence on” our (subsequent) willed activity. This interpretation of interest can, then, render Kant’s claims concerning the disinterestedness of aesthetic pleasure more plausible. Moreover, because Kant’s distinction between interested and disinterested pleasure concerns the “effects” of pleasures, this distinction is in concert with his general definition of pleasure. For, as discussed above, Kant defines pleasure as motivational, viz., as the “consciousness” of a representation’s causality towards – “so as” to have – an effect.

³⁸ FI, xx:232, my emphasis; cf. *MM* VI:212.

But the distinction remains, perhaps, somewhat opaque: what does it mean, exactly, to say that pleasures in the good and in the agreeable are identified by their effects or influences on willed action? Can the intuitive cases of interestedness be accommodated within this distinction? Or, given that Kant claims that pleasures in the *good* “accompany” the determination of the will, (how) *are* pleasures in the agreeable also to be understood as having “effects” on willed action? Why, finally, should we take pleasures in the beautiful not to have such an effect? In order to answer these questions, I shall now discuss the three sorts of pleasures and their (dis)interested status in more detail.

6.4 Interested pleasures; continued

In his discussion of practical (interested) pleasures in the *MM*, Kant provides both a new definition of interest and a helpful distinction among kinds of interest. Kant there defines interest not in terms of the object’s existence, but as “a connection of pleasure with the faculty of desire that the understanding judges to hold as a general rule (though only for the subject)” (VI:212). Thus in characterizing pleasures as interested, Kant claims not only that such pleasures play a role in desirous activity (as I have argued), but also that they do so in a rule-governed manner. Interests are, Kant suggests, the subject matter of judgments, whether of the subject about himself, who may act in accord with this judgment, “taking” an interest, or of the philosopher concerning the nature of willed action, i.e., concerning the way in which pleasure plays a role in willed action.³⁹

Immediately following this definition of interest, Kant claims that interests may be of two kinds: interests “of inclination,” in which pleasure “precedes” desire, and interests of reason, in which desire “precedes”

³⁹ I take Kant’s language of the “understanding” in this passage to suggest that “interest” is a theoretical term (it is a judgment about agents) – contra Grenberg (“Feeling, Desire”), who takes interest to comprise the agent’s judgment that the object in which we take pleasure is good, a judgment of practical reason. In Grenberg’s defense, Kant often uses “understanding” and “reason” interchangeably in the moral philosophy. But Kant also suggests that we can have, and recognize ourselves to have, interests that are not good (or that we deem not to be good, e.g., morally); thus it seems more likely that the connection between desire and pleasure is a theoretical, not practically rational, connection. I concur with Grenberg more broadly (and contra the prevailing tendency in scholarship on the *CJ*), however, that on Kant’s view interest is, primarily, not an explanation for pleasures (a prior need), but an element (including pleasure) that explains action.

pleasure. These two sorts of interest, I suggest, are the interests involving pleasures in the agreeable and pleasures in the good respectively, and indicate that these pleasures are interested in somewhat different ways.

The good

In the FI, xx:230–2 passage, Kant writes that pleasures in the good “accompany” the determination of the will. This claim is, I suggest, a compressed statement of the accounts of willed action and of pleasure in the good given above. As discussed above, Kant understands action to work something like this: the subject has a concept of an object with certain characteristics, and judges it to be good (and that it does not yet exist, and could be brought about by the subject);⁴⁰ such concepts or judgments are, then, motivational – actually determine the will – insofar as they are pleasing (otherwise they would be “idle cognitions”). As also discussed above, pleasures in the good are pleasures in objects under conceptual descriptions or as judged (in an “aesthetico-practical judgment,” in Kant’s terms at xx:232). Thus, for example, I find a beneficent action pleasing because I have judged it to be moral, or I find a hammer pleasing because I have judged it to be a hammer, and useful for building. The pleasure that motivates willed action is, then, pleasure in the good (i.e., in a conceptually described object); correspondingly, if we are to identify pleasures in the good by their effects on the subject, these effects are the willed production of the object broadly understood (the beneficent action I perform, the use to which I put the hammer). Thus, Kant may claim that pleasures in the good “accompany” the determination of the will.

This type of interest might be described as an identity between pleasure (in the good) and desire, or to characterize pleasure as an aspect of desire, rather than – as on the *MM* definition – a “connection” between pleasure and desire as separate items. For here simply what it is to be pleased by a judgment of an object as good or to “take an interest” in an object *is* to desire it, i.e., to determine one’s will to bring about that object in accord with one’s representation of it. Given Kant’s definition of desire as the “causality of the representation with respect to its object,” pleasure, as “consciousness of a representation’s causality,” might well be taken to be

⁴⁰ This complex, conceptual/judgmental purpose that guides the will may comprise something like a maxim, but I cannot here consider the relationship between purposes, interests, and maxims in Kant’s theory of action.

a subjective awareness of such desire.⁴¹ This quasi-identity is, however, indeed a “connection” that holds as a rule, on Kant’s theoretical account of action: *all* willed action (or human activity of desire) goes “from” the concept of the object “through pleasure” to the production of the object (*MM* VI:399). Specific purposes or concepts (e.g., building) are, likewise, connected to pleasure as a rule, at least for “the subject himself.” For example, if the subject desires, i.e., has the purpose of, building, then the subject acts upon this purpose, and is pleased by its concept, as a rule; she not only uses this hammer, but also engages in other actions that serve that purpose (in each case, taking pleasure in the object).

In the *MM*, Kant suggests that pleasures in the good are components of “interests of reason,” in which desire “precedes” pleasure. Kant clearly has the moral good (and pleasure in it) in mind as the paradigm of such interest: we find the morally good pleasing *because* we judge it to be a worthy purpose for action (viz., good) and determine our will to this end, not vice versa. But this claim can apply (with some qualifications)⁴² to non-moral goods as well: just as a tasty meal may not be healthy, a healthy

⁴¹ Thus, as Patrick Frierson has suggested (private communication), Kant’s arguments that pleasure is a distinct, third faculty in the *Metaphysics* lectures are often unstable. And indeed “pleasure is desire,” Kant writes (*Metaphysik* *LI* XVIII:247); or: “with respect to the object,” our state is desire, but “with respect to the subject,” that (same) state is pleasure (*Metaphysik Mrongovius* XIX:894). Likewise, Kant states that “to define pleasure one must presuppose the faculty of desire” (*Metaphysik Mrongovius* XIX:890). Kant also notes, however, that *aesthetic* pleasure is “entirely different from desire” (*ibid.*, XIX:897). For this reason – and because Kant must distinguish between desires *for* pleasure (the agreeable or the interest of inclination) and pleasurable objects *of* desire (the good) – Kant’s distinction between the faculties of desire and of pleasure seems necessary to his account, even though in the case of pleasures in the *good*, in particular, pleasure may be said merely to be an aspect of desire.

⁴² In the moral case, our conceptual representation of the object (the morally good) “immediately” determines the will and also pleases; thus, as I shall discuss in the [next chapter](#), respect may be understood as the subjective counterpart of determining our wills to be moral (i.e., respect is the way it feels to determine the will morally). In the non-moral cases, this conceptual representation neither determines the will immediately, nor is immediately pleasing. Thus, as Fricke notes (*Kants Theorie*, pp. 18–19), Kant is rather quick in claiming that *all* judgments concerning the good are conceptually grounded and therefore universally valid. Strictly speaking, this claim is true concerning the *judgment* of the object as useful (non-morally good), but such judgments – unlike moral judgment – ground *pleasure* (or determine the will) only conditionally, depending on whether this object will provide gratification (the agreeable) to this subject, or will promote her happiness or ability to attain her other ends. Likewise judgments of perfection are not by themselves, Kant argues, always grounds for pleasure in the object (V:209, 271; *Metaphysik Mrongovius* XIX:891).

meal may not be agreeable (immediately pleasing). The subject takes pleasure in the meal, then, *because* – only after – she judges it good (healthy); she pursues it (finds it pleasing or motivational) because she is already committed to producing her own health. Pleasure in the good thus might be said to “succeed” desire (understood as the determination of our will to produce the object) in the sense that such pleasure is not only dependent on our prior judgment that an object is good (as is definitional of pleasure in the good), but also on our prior commitment to the purposes for which the object is good.⁴³

Though this motivational role for pleasure in the good is the primary role of pleasure in the interest of reason, there is a further sense in which Kant takes desire (understood as our *causality* to produce objects) to “precede” pleasure in the good. For once the subject has achieved her end and judges that she has done so, she again feels pleasure – satisfaction in having achieved her purpose, pleasure in the fact that the good object does, now, exist. Thus, Kant writes, “the attainment of every aim is combined with the feeling of pleasure” (v:187).⁴⁴ This second role for pleasure in willed activity is again a rule-governed connection between pleasure and desire in general, and concerning the particular agent: all accomplishment of aims (i.e., actual, successful exercise of desire) is accompanied by pleasure; likewise, all my accomplishments of my aims are accompanied by pleasure.

As should be clear by now, this second pleasure is not to be understood either as the subject’s ultimate aim in such activity, nor as a simple, separate sensation externally caused by one’s achievement. Rather, it is an intentionally rich pleasure, substantively dependent upon the subject’s judgment of the object; it should, indeed, be understood as the culmination of her (motivational-pleasurable) commitment to accomplish her ends. Pleasure in having eaten healthily or in having acted morally is, that is, a pleasure in the object judged conceptually both to be moral or

⁴³ I qualify this statement because I believe that the view suggested in the previous paragraph, and expressed in the *Metaphysics Lectures*, i.e., that pleasure in the good is a subjective aspect of desire, is a more consistent view for Kant to hold. For Kant’s “key premise” (that concepts alone do not motivate and that pleasure is what renders a representation “motivational”) militates against a complete precedence or independence of desire from pleasure, even in the moral case.

⁴⁴ This claim applies, as indeed at v:187, to cognitive purposes as well; thus, as I shall argue in the [next chapter](#), aesthetic pleasure is not to be explained as an accomplishment of our cognitive aims, for in that case aesthetic pleasure would be a pleasure in the good. Like Allison (*Theory of Taste*, p. 56), and contra Guyer, I take this claim at v:187 *not* to concern all pleasures, but only pleasures in the good.

healthy and to exist, i.e., to match up to the subject's initial, conceptually articulated purpose.⁴⁵ Kant's full account of pleasures in the good as interested or practical pleasures runs, then, as follows: the subject judges an object to be good; feels pleasure in the object so judged (pleasure 1); produces the object (desire); and then feels pleasure (2) in having done so.

The motivational (1) and satisfying (2) roles of pleasure on this account are most clearly demonstrated in cases of moral action or artisanal production, where the primary "effect" of pleasure (1) is the production of the object. But more strictly self-interested pleasures may also fit this account (*mutatis mutandis*). In such cases – e.g., Kant's Iroquois sachem (v:204) who is pleased by cooking houses and not by palaces, or my pleasure in my car because it gets good gas mileage – the subject is not determining her will to produce the object (the car or cooking house), nor satisfied by having done so. Still, in such cases, the subject does judge in light of a "concept of a purpose," and thus, as Kant writes, the judgment involves a "relation of reason to an (at least possible) willing, and hence a liking for the existence of an object or action" (v:207; translation modified). My pleasure in my car might indeed be understood as related to "a possible willing" both past and future: I may well be satisfied by my *ownership* of the car, which "object" exists and is pleasing because I have acted to make it so, in accord with my (prior) judgment that it would be

⁴⁵ Thus I concur with Andrews Reath that Kant is not, ultimately, a strict hedonist concerning non-moral action, viz., that Kant holds there may be actions aimed at a non-moral good, or ends that we desire, for reasons other than that they cause us pleasure; and in these cases, we feel pleasure *because* our desire is satisfied, or because we hold the object to be good (not vice versa). (Andrews Reath, "Hedonism, Heteronomy, and the Principle of Happiness," *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 70 [1989], 42–72.) As should be clear, however, I must disagree with Reath's argument that Kant's hedonist argument concerning non-moral actions in the *CPrR* (v:22f.) is not so to be read. As far as I can see, Reath's main arguments for this (implausible) interpretive claim are, first, that such a view is philosophically unappealing (in which case one might argue that Kant is wrong here), and second, that it is inconsistent with some of Kant's later views, an inconsistency I have accounted for, as reflecting a transformation in Kant's understanding of pleasure. More generally, Reath's account is problematic because it takes no cognizance of Kant's deep commitment to his premise that we are not holy wills, and therefore need an incentive (pleasure or pain) to render ideas "motivating" or "moving," as Iain Morisson argues in his critical response to Reath's essay ("Pleasure in Kant," *Journal of Philosophical Research*, forthcoming). Morisson distinguishes between cases in which we act in "anticipation of pleasure," and those in which we act because of an "anticipatory pleasure" (all cases of willed activity), which distinction corresponds (I believe) to the difference between the role of pleasures in the agreeable in (some) willed activity (which I shall discuss in a moment), and that of pleasures in the good on my account.

good (for me) to have that kind of car. Moreover, though this pleasure does not itself motivate me to further action, it comprises part of a more complex motivating (pleasing) purpose for (future, interested) action, i.e., to drive, but also to spend as little as possible. So too is the sachem's pleasure in the cooking houses part of his purpose (for future action), viz., to eat and thereby obtain pleasurable sensation.⁴⁶ The sachem's actions are, then, ultimately motivated by pleasures in the agreeable, to which I shall now turn.

The agreeable

As argued above, pleasures in the agreeable – “enjoyments” or “gratifications” – comprise, on Kant's view, the subclass of pleasures that are sensations, whether sensations *of* pleasure, or sensations that are pleasing (e.g., the sensation of green). These are, Kant claims, the pleasures we share with animals (v:210), which do not have complex, intentional attitudes towards objects, but do have sensations. These pleasures, as Kant suggests at xx:230–2, do not immediately determine the will and thus are not interested as directly as are pleasures in the good. Rather, such pleasures are components of “interests of inclination,” and, as I shall now argue, are interested in the sense that they *are* objects we aim to produce.

Pleasures in the agreeable are interested, Kant argues in the *CJ*, because they give rise to inclinations or (as he writes in the *MM*) to “desire in the narrow sense.” That is, Kant suggests plausibly that once we have found an object agreeable, we come to want other objects of the same kind (v:207). Kant here describes a recognizable type of (non-moral) action, and, correlatively, a recognizable role pleasure may play as motivational for action: we act in order to obtain such pleasures, in order to “have” the same representation, or to be (again) in that state.

This causal connection – of pleasure to desire in the narrow sense – is, indeed, a rule-governed connection between pleasure and desire, and one about which the understanding may judge; thus it may seem that this

⁴⁶ This account might, at a stretch, also account for Kant's other main example at v:204, the Rousseauian's disgust at the palace because it is a case of the exploitation of labor in order to feed the vanity of the rich. This judgment (and displeasure) might be glossed, that is, as comprising part of an (ongoing) moral commitment, to produce (say) social equality. It is striking, in any case, that Kant's examples of interest in this paragraph (§2) concern the reasons why the palace might *be brought into existence by human agents* (*mutatis mutandis* in the case of the sachem), not the existence of the object in any or all respects.

connection alone constitutes the interest of inclination. But thus far, this account holds for animal pleasures and behavior, as well as human behavior – animals have, and seek out, sense pleasures as well – whereas, Kant claims, “interest,” properly speaking, concerns the “dependence of the will” on “principles of reason,”⁴⁷ or, that is, characterizes specifically human, willed activity, in accord with “the *conception* of laws.”⁴⁸

Thus we must provide a more complex account of the *interest* of inclination proper, to explain how such pleasures can influence a will governed by principles, reasons, or judgments. Though Kant does not explicitly articulate this more complex account, he indicates how it might run in his description of the “precepts” that govern prudential action at FI, xx:196:

If precepts for the promotion of our happiness are given, and . . . the issue is only what one has to do in one’s own case in order to be susceptible to happiness, then all that is represented are the inner conditions of the possibility of such happiness – in contentment, in moderation of the inclinations so they will not become passions, etc. – *as belonging to the nature of the subject, and at the same time as an equilibrium that can be brought about through our very own causality*, hence all of this is represented as an immediate consequence from the *theory of the object in relation to the theory of our own nature (ourselves as cause)*[. H]ence the practical precept here differs from a theoretical one in its form, but not in its content, and hence [we] do not need a special kind of philosophy in order to gain insight into this connection between bases and their consequences.⁴⁹

Kant claims here that prudential propositions comprise at once a “theory of the object,” i.e., of human beings as objects (what causes us to be happy), and a theoretical description of “ourselves as causes.” They are, then, a combination of two causal judgments: concerning what makes us happy, and how we can bring this about. Since happiness is one of our ends, these causal judgments (concerning the means to that end) can, in turn, determine our wills. I suggest that the same, *mutatis mutandis*, may be said concerning the agreeable.

At xx:230–2, Kant claims that, in the case of the agreeable, we engage in “pathological aesthetic judgment” of the object. Such judgment is “based on pleasure,” or, indeed, is about pleasure; a judgment of the agreeable is, simply, a claim that “this object pleases me” or “I like this.”

⁴⁷ *GW* IV:413n; cf. *GW* IV:459–60n. ⁴⁸ *GW* IV:412; cf. *CPrR* v:79–80.

⁴⁹ My emphasis, and translation modified.

In order, however, for such a judgment or the pleasure it concerns to serve as a guide or motivation for *future* (willed) activity, it must not simply concern this object and my liking of it, but describe a reproducible state of affairs. It may do so in the form of a “theory of the object” or (that is) an empirical causal judgment concerning the subject. For, as discussed above, pleasures in the agreeable are separately identifiable sensations, which may be correlated to kinds of objects as their causes. Judgments of the agreeable may, then, be reformulated as cognitive judgments *about* the subject (or are the source or data for such judgments), thus: “I like x” into “x caused me pleasure.” In order to determine the will to a future act, or as a principle upon which we may act, this judgment may in turn be reformulated as the (proposed) general causal judgment: “objects of x’s type cause me (a sensation of, or a sensation in which I take) pleasure.”⁵⁰

In order, finally, for such sensations to be relevant to action or to desire understood as our *causality*, we must also formulate a further causal judgment concerning “ourselves as causes,” i.e., how we may act in order to bring an object into existence. This judgment distinguishes desire from “wish”: when we merely wish, Kant claims, we are conscious of a representation’s causality to move us to produce the object (are pleased), but also of our causal inadequacy to bring it about (v:177–8n).

The interest in the case of the agreeable, i.e., the rule-governed connection drawn between pleasure and desire by the understanding, is, then, not simply that these pleasures cause inclinations (“desires in the narrow sense”). Rather, the subject judges that certain objects cause her pleasure, and that she may produce such pleasure by certain means. For example, hot baths cause me sensible pleasure and I may cause such

⁵⁰ Zangwill argues, similarly, that Kant provides a “representational account” of pleasures in the agreeable and their connection to desire. Contra Zangwill (“Agreeable,” 168), however, Kant is not mistaken when he treats pleasures in the agreeable as sensations or, at least, as in sensations. Not only does Kant here recognize that there *are* pleasurable sensations (which seems true), but also, and more importantly, even if these pleasures are intentional (i.e., in other sensations), they are functionally equivalent to sensations: they play the same sort of causal role, or are components of causal judgments (about the subject) in a way parallel to the way that we understand sensations to operate. In other words, Kant here makes theoretical room both for claims that animals have and act on pleasures in the agreeable, as we do, and for claims that our rational action prompted by these pleasures is rather different from that of animals, because it is mediated by judgment. On Kant’s view, animals also act on representations (by desire) but not on judgments; rather, they act in accord with an association of ideas (of pleasure with some representation of an object).

pleasure by drawing, and taking, a hot bath. My pleasure “precedes” desire here not only because it causes inclinations, but more properly because I may *will* to act according to these (prior) judgments concerning my pleasures; I act on the understanding that my activity causes, and serves the end of (re)producing, such pleasure(able sensation) in myself.⁵¹ Sense pleasures serve, then, as motivational because they *are* ends (states in ourselves, “objects”) we aim to realize; they are interested because they lead us to bring their objects (our own sensory state) into existence.⁵² Thus, as discussed earlier, these pleasures are those that are all “the same” or, more precisely, “differ only as to degree” as incentives for actions – they are all, equally, a sensory end-state we aim to produce; these actions are, in turn, understood as valuable only insofar as they produce (cause) such pleasure.

Thus, I have suggested, interested pleasures are interested in that they are connected lawfully to the power of desire and thence causally to the existence of objects. This connection can take two forms: pleasures either constitute *what* we desire (the agreeable), or express *that* we desire (the good). They are, respectively, either the “determining ground or else . . . necessarily interconnected with [the] determining ground” of desire (v:204). The character of and distinction between the two kinds of

⁵¹ See *Metaphysik L2* xxviii:586; *Metaphysik Vigilantius* xix:1009. Because pleasures in the agreeable function thus in action (are considered to be the effects of certain kinds of objects), they may be said to be “dependent” on the existence of the object. On this view, moreover, one may respond to a common objection: that Kant implausibly treats pleasures in the agreeable as addictive pleasures, as if every agreeable sensation (if it is to be interested) must immediately cause the subject to desire or need more of such pleasures or objects. This objection rests, I suggest, on a needlessly deterministic interpretation of Kant’s claims. Kant does, indeed, take pleasure to be, in principle or definitionally, motivational, but, first, such pleasures are motivational for us as willing agents, thus as incentives incorporated into maxims (as Allison has argued). Moreover, the empirical causal judgments connecting types of objects with feelings of pleasure can be subject to the same circumstantial qualifications to which other causal laws are subject. (See J. L. Mackie, “Causes and Conditions,” in Ernest Sosa and Michael Tooley, eds., *Causation*, ([Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993], 33–55.) Thus Kant’s account may be read to suggest, plausibly, that only in the appropriate circumstances – e.g., when the weather is below 75 degrees Fahrenheit, when I am tense, when my back hurts, in the evenings, when I have not just had a shower or bath, etc. – would my causal generalization about my pleasures lead me to act accordingly (if I do not recognize countervailing reasons for acting, etc.).

⁵² Contra Fricke, *Kants Theorie*, pp. 21–5, pleasures in the agreeable are not interested (connected to existence) because they are in material, “real” sensations, but because they lead us to (re)produce them. The categories of reality and existence (actuality) are, in other words, not identical.

interest both reflect and emphasize the intentional and functional aspects of Kant's definition of pleasure (as applied in the two cases). In both cases, the character of the pleasure and its interest structure correspond to the role of its object-representation (sensation or concept) in willed activity. Pleasure characterizes, in other words, the motivational character of a representation: a concept or conceptual judgment as motivating (pleasure in the good) determines the will to produce an object (so described); a sensation as motivating (pleasure in the agreeable) is an object that we will to (re)produce.⁵³

6.5 Aesthetic, disinterested pleasure

Just as pleasures in the agreeable and the good may be said to be motivating sensations and motivating concepts (or judgments), respectively, pleasure in the beautiful is motivating representation of form, the "consciousness of a [form]'s causality so as to maintain one in that state," or to linger in the state of appreciating the beautiful. And just as the intentional objects of the pleasures in the good and in the agreeable determine the roles of such pleasures within willed activity, the character of the intentional object of aesthetic pleasure (form) renders such pleasure incapable of playing either of these (lawful, rule-governed) roles for pleasure within willed activity; i.e., aesthetic pleasure is disinterested.

As we have seen, aesthetic pleasure is pleasure in beautiful form, viz., the represented unity of sensible properties as reciprocally complementary and contrasting. Because we cannot unify all the properties that compose a beautiful object's form under one concept, we cannot understand our representation of that beautiful object as a purpose for activity (D1; v:221). Aesthetic pleasure in form cannot be understood, correspondingly, to play the motivational role in our own ("at least possible") volition that characterizes pleasure in the good. Indeed, Kant holds that the beautiful object cannot be understood to be created by (the causality of) a conceptually guided agent. Rather, it is "nature" that causes the existence of the beautiful object, even in the case of artistic beauty, which is created by genius, a mysterious, "natural," non-rule-governed ability (v:307). Aesthetic pleasure cannot, that is, be connected to desire in accord with the rule of an interest of reason.

Nor – and crucially contra the empiricists – can pleasure in the beautiful be characterized by the interest structure of pleasures in the

⁵³ See *Metaphysik* L1 XVIII:228–9; *Metaphysik* *Mrongovius* XIX:877, 896.

agreeable. These two sorts of pleasure are similar, on Kant's view, in being based upon sense, and in being "immediate" pleasures. Kant's identification of aesthetic pleasures as pleasures in (a non-conceptualizable, complex representation of) purposive form, however, renders them quite distinct from pleasures in the agreeable, and unable to be interested in the way pleasures in the agreeable are. For in the case of pleasures in the agreeable as well as in the good, the interestedness of a pleasure ultimately depends upon the conceptualizability of the intentional object of pleasure, i.e., on whether pleasure and/or its object may be conceptually described and thus direct the will to produce an object. In the case of the agreeable, as suggested above, such conceptualization comprises a causal judgment concerning the nature of the subject, a judgment in which pleasure is considered to be (in) a separately identifiable sensation, and correlated with a type of object as its cause. So too pleasures in beauty on the empiricist view.⁵⁴ On Kant's account, however, we cannot so isolate a single sensible property or a combination thereof that could be correlated with pleasure. Nor is such pleasure itself a simple sensation, simply an effect of an object, but rather an attitude with a complex intentional object (the form of the object); it is not causally, but intentionally, related to its object. Thus we cannot formulate empirical causal judgments to govern such pleasures; if we cannot specify *what* kind of object will cause us pleasure in the beautiful, nor claim, reliably, that such pleasure causally follows upon sensations (or the representation of a certain kind of object), then our will can hardly be subsequently determined by such a judgment.

For these reasons, Kant claims, aesthetic pleasure is not a "practical" pleasure, but a "contemplative" or "inactive" pleasure (v:209; *MM* vi:212). Such pleasure is disengaged from desire, disinterested, for it

⁵⁴ And on Kant's own view prior to the *CJ*, i.e., that pleasures in the beautiful differ from the agreeable only in that they are more universally shared, arise in accord with "universal laws of sensibility" (e.g., *Metaphysik* LI xxviii:248–9; *Metaphysik* *Mrongovius* xix:892–3; *Pillau Anthropologie* xxv.2:788; *Menschenkunde Anthropologie* xxv.2:1096–7; *Mrongovius Anthropologie* xxv.2:1326). In these lectures, Kant correspondingly claims – contrary to his view in the *CJ* – that we can judge something beautiful only a posteriori, i.e., on the basis of empirical confirmation that many find this object (or type of object) pleasing, and thus that aesthetic judgments have general, rather than strictly universal, validity. This is, broadly speaking, the empiricist position, according to which aesthetics comprises empirical generalizations concerning causal relations between objects and sensible states (pleasures) of human beings, grounded in laws that govern human sensible nature. See e.g., Burke, *Enquiry*, pp. 1–4, 11–14, 102, 117–18. In the *CJ*, Kant deems Burke's account to be an account of the agreeable ("gratifications"), not of aesthetic pleasure proper (v:277–8).

comprises neither the consciousness of the determination of the will, nor a state of the subject that the will aims to (re)produce. It neither moves us to produce its object, nor is itself an object or end for the will.

As thus stated, Kant's position is slightly too strong, however: pleasures in the beautiful can, it would seem, have *some* relation to action. We can engage in actions that are – as in the case of pleasures in the agreeable – in some sense aimed at the pleasurable experience of the beautiful, e.g., we go to museums in order to look at paintings, and (we hope) to find them beautiful. Kant himself holds that, though aesthetic pleasures are not themselves interested, they may be conjoined with two sorts of interest, intellectual and empirical (§41–2). On Kant's account of these two interests, more specifically, the beautiful object and pleasurable experience thereof seem to be understood as means to an end, whether (in the case of intellectual interest) to the realization of our moral vocations,⁵⁵ or (in empirical interest) to community with others. In accord with these interests, we engage in certain actions – primarily the preservation or possession of the beautiful object.

One may, however, distinguish such actions from those engaged in for the sake of pleasure in the agreeable or those that involve pleasures in the good by noting, first, the “indexical” character of such actions. Unlike pleasures in the agreeable, that is, aesthetic pleasures are not straightforwardly reproducible, beautiful objects not interchangeable: one chocolate may bring me pleasure (in the agreeable) just like another does (and has done), whereas I appreciate – and go to the museum to appreciate – *this* painting. By contrast to pleasures in the good (and to pleasures in the agreeable incorporated into interests), moreover, one first finds *this* object to be aesthetically pleasing, and then preserves or tries to possess *it* (acts on intellectual or empirical interest), rather than identifying an object-type (a moral action, a useful item, an object that causes pleasurable sensation) conceptually “ahead of time,” and then creating or finding one that (among potentially many others) fits those criteria. In the case of the empirical and intellectual interests, the subjects in question must first – and not for, or because of, those ends – find the object aesthetically pleasing and *then* and for that reason may find such objects useful for their ends.

In other words, my – and others' – appreciation of a beautiful landscape or painting is less predictable than either of the other sorts of pleasure; such pleasure is not governed by a rule, whether first-personal – a rule for

⁵⁵ See Allison, *Theory of Taste*, Chapter 10, for a good account of intellectual interest.

judgment or evaluation – or third-personal, a causal rule governing our sensible states. Aesthetic pleasure is not reliably, passively caused (in certain circumstances), unlike e.g., the “charm” of the color green, which is found empirically to be calming for most people. For the representation of beautiful form, and hence aesthetic pleasure in such form, requires more active engagement on the part of the subject, an appropriate cognitive attentiveness to the object (the harmony of the faculties). Nor can those objects to be found beautiful be reliably, conceptually identified as a means to or accomplishment of an end.

It is this final point – not a disengagement from any or all action simpliciter – that, crucially, renders aesthetic pleasure disinterested. Like pleasures in the agreeable, aesthetic pleasure must precede desire and action (if there is to be such) – but, unlike pleasures in the agreeable, aesthetic pleasure is (in a representation that is) not simply a passive result that may be reproduced by a subsequent action. Rather, aesthetic pleasure is in (is consciousness of) an active representational state of mind. But – unlike pleasures in the good – this active state is not a conceptually guided state of *willing*, directed to produce something. For, as we have seen, our aesthetic judging of beautiful objects does not and cannot result in accomplished, determinative judgments (and thence willed activity); rather, it attends to sensible properties as they are in the context of, or as related to, myriad other sensible properties of the object.

Despite Kant’s description of aesthetic pleasure as contemplative, moreover, it nonetheless retains the motivational character definitive of pleasure on Kant’s view. Our judging of the beautiful object motivates us simply to continue judging, to continue having the very same experience. Whether or not we subsequently act in relation to those objects (or representations) in which we take aesthetic pleasure, such pleasure is, itself, *already* the consciousness of a motivational, active state, a state of end-directedness, in which the end is, precisely, its own continuance. Aesthetic pleasure is the feeling of a state of pure self-propagation or a “determination of mind that sustains itself” (v:230–1). On Kant’s view, then, aesthetic pleasure is not directly “practical,” or determinative of the will. But, unlike Schopenhauer, Kant does not thereby understand aesthetic pleasure (or the representation[al state] in which we take such pleasure) as a passive *surrender* of will, a purely inactive state.⁵⁶ Nor, unlike wish (unfulfilled or unfulfillable desire and/or motivational, but not

⁵⁶ Here I agree, largely, with Michael McGhee, “A Fat Worm of Error?,” *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 31 (1991), 222–9.

fully effective, practical pleasure), is such pleasure incomplete, in contradiction with itself, a motivation that generates longing and dissatisfaction.⁵⁷ For the aesthetically pleasurable state is at once motivational and a state of fulfillment, a state in which our aim is simply and solely to maintain that state. Aesthetic pleasure is a feeling of life – a feeling of a state of dynamic self-propagation, neither aimed to produce an object beyond and different from itself, nor a passive state that might be (re) produced.⁵⁸ This, as Nietzsche among others emphasizes, is an accurate phenomenological description of aesthetic experience, as a state of intense, heightened awareness and self-awareness, the “life,” as Kant writes of “our faculties.”

6.6 Kant’s definition again: Pleasure as purposive without a purpose

As I have argued, Kant’s transcendental distinctions among pleasures refer, first, to the intentional objects of pleasures and, as a consequence, to the characteristic effects of such pleasures. That is, they identify three corresponding, different motivational structures: pleasure may be a sensory state that is the end of action, in which case we desire something because it is pleasing (the agreeable); pleasure may be in the action or object, which we desire because it is judged good (the good); or pleasure may be in a representational state, which has, of itself, no implications for (a separate) action, but aims at its own continuation. These distinctions are, as I have argued, based squarely upon Kant’s general definition of pleasure as an intentional state characterized by a formal structure of purposiveness (directedness towards the future, consciousness of a state with causality “so as” to have an effect). And they are, arguably, *a priori* distinctions based on an *a priori* distinction among types of representations,

⁵⁷ v:177–8n.

⁵⁸ In the metaphysics lectures, Kant suggests that the other pleasures are also connected to life: pleasures in the good – as satisfactions on the fulfillment of desires, in particular – are in “agreement with desire,” and thus are in agreement with “life,” understood as acting according to representations, a view of life that Kant is, as argued in Chapter Three, at least on the brink of revising in the *CJ*. In the *CJ*, Kant also takes pleasures in the agreeable to reflect the promotion of bodily life or health, inasmuch as it is the effect of change, motion in the body (v:331f.). Such change is, indeed, characteristic of life, but pleasures in the agreeable are only passive effects of such change, not a feeling of an active, self-propagating, self-moving state.

and analysis of the functional roles such (types of) representations may play in willed activity.⁵⁹

As is made clear in Kant's disjunctive "explanation" of pleasure at xx:230–2, however, aesthetic pleasure is the sole pleasure that *precisely* fits Kant's definition: it alone is the consciousness of a representation's causality to maintain us in the same state, while the interested pleasures, by contrast, appear to be (consciousness of) states that "cause" the subject not to maintain her state, but to *produce* their object. Thus aesthetic pleasure is the paradigmatic pleasure on Kant's account, the pleasure that "reveals" to "the philosopher . . . a property of our cognitive power which without this analysis would have remained unknown" (v:213), i.e., purposiveness without a purpose as the subjective, a priori principle of pleasure.⁶⁰

Kant's accounts of the interested pleasures require modification of his general definition of pleasure with respect to these pleasures in several respects. Pleasures in the agreeable are, as we have seen, not necessarily to be understood as intentional (they may simply be sensations). Correspondingly, given the account of interests of inclination, we may note that such pleasures are, most properly, described not as the "consciousness of a sensation's causality so as to keep the subject in that state," but rather as conscious, sensory representations that *do* "prompt" the subject, and not precisely to maintain them, but to act in order to *reproduce* them.

⁵⁹ That is, one might gloss Kant's distinction among pleasures in concepts, sensations, and form in practical contexts in a way similar to that endorsed by Strawson in his analytical reconstruction of Kant's transcendental psychology (*Bounds of Sense*, e.g., pp. 19–20, 47–57; cf. Allison's attempt to de-psychologize Kant's epistemology through the concept of "epistemic condition" [*Transcendental Idealism*, pp. 10–13]). Pleasures in the good and agreeable sensations are distinguished, that is, by their formally defined functions or roles as discovered in analysis of practical life – not as introspectively, qualitatively, or ontologically different kinds of mental states.

⁶⁰ One might also argue that aesthetic pleasure is, on Kant's view, most importantly distinctive – and connected to an a priori principle – insofar as it grounds universality and necessity claims (the mark of the a priori) in judgments of taste. I leave these concerns aside here, however, not only because such universality and necessity properly characterize the status of aesthetic judgment (not of aesthetic pleasure), but also because such universality and necessity claims may hint at the presence of an a priori principle, but they are not *justified* unless one can make a case that there is an a priori principle (justifiably employed) upon which they are based. Here one might again contrast Kant's views in the *CJ* to those he held earlier: aesthetic pleasures, he claimed in anthropology lectures as early as 1781, are "public," generally shared pleasures. Before his "discovery" of the a priori principle of purposiveness, Kant denied, however, that they justifiably laid claim to any universal necessity.

Pleasures in the good are, by contrast, to be understood as intentional: they are pleasures *in* conceptual representations (judgments) of objects. Such pleasures are, moreover, consciousness of such conceptual representations “as” motivating and/or satisfying. But these pleasures are in that representation not (solely) as a representation or state of the subject, but *as* about an object, the existence of which she shall bring about, or in which her purpose has been accomplished. The causality of this representation (of the object) is, that is, not a causality directed “so as to maintain the subject in that state,” but rather to produce that object.

On neither of these accounts of the interested pleasures, more generally, is the subject understood in fact to be in *one* pleasurable state, in which she is motivated to remain. For the two functional aspects of pleasure that Kant attempts to characterize in his general definition – its motivational and satisfying characters – are assigned separate “places” in these accounts of purposive action. In the case of the agreeable, we find a state satisfying (pleasing), and then try to reproduce it (are subsequently motivated), while, in the case of the good, we are motivated by a certain judgment concerning an object as good (our purpose), and then are satisfied by the realization of this purpose.

Finally, and crucially, in both cases pleasure is motivational in a way parasitic upon (conceptual) purposes for desirous activity. Pleasures in the good, as we have seen, are understood as motivational within willed (purpose-guided) activity, and are purposive (with a purpose) precisely on D2: they are consciousness of the causality of an agent who acts according to concepts or purposes, of how (in other words) such purposes “*become* a cause of activity.”⁶¹ Pleasures in the agreeable are not so directly purposive: their purposiveness is grounded upon the (prior) fact that they are pleasing (v:223). These pleasures are motivational, prompt future, purposive action, once they have been incorporated into causal judgments that then determine the will. Pleasures in the agreeable, like pleasures in the good, are, then, purposive with a purpose as well, the purpose here being (the representation and the reproduction of) one’s own agreeable state.

We may, nonetheless, “also describe” such pleasures broadly in terms of Kant’s general definition. As suggested above, pleasures in the agreeable may “also be described” in Kant’s general, formal terms (though they prompt us to reproduce our state, rather than, strictly speaking, to remain in that state). In the case of the good, we are caused

⁶¹ *Metaphysik Mrongovius* XIX:893–4.

(or cause ourselves) to maintain our own state, viz., the representation of the existence of the object: by willing and producing the existence of the object, we maintain, or produce for ourselves, precisely the representation of that object, as existing. Such pleasure is, too, a consciousness of this representation as belonging to the subject, and as exerting “causality” within the subject, for such pleasure explains why *this* subject acts upon her representation of the object, or reflects the fact that this conceptual representation is “influencing” *her* to cause an object (of this kind) to exist.⁶² Again, broadly speaking, the interested pleasures “may also” be described as both motivational and satisfying in that, in both accounts of activity, pleasure plays both roles (though not, as just noted, at once). Finally, such pleasures may “also be described” as purposive without a purpose insofar as they are the “felt” (non-conceptual) component of purposive activity.

Neither of these two pleasures *need* be described as purposive without a purpose, however, and neither would “reveal” this principle to be the principle of pleasure. Disinterested aesthetic pleasure, by contrast, is purposive even *without* a purpose.⁶³ As we have seen, aesthetic pleasure is in a representational state that is end-directed precisely towards its own continuance, purposive without a conceptual (or separate) purpose. Such purposiveness cannot, then, be understood as merely a component of purposive action proper, i.e., of desire. Aesthetic pleasure is thus the paradigm pleasure; it establishes that pleasure is a third faculty distinct from desire, with its own principle. (So Kant suggests in his terminological distinctions among pleasures: aesthetic pleasure is termed [simply] “*Lust*,” and to please aesthetically “*gefallen*,” the noun and verb forms of pleasure generally [v:210].) Thus we may see why, despite Kant’s argument against his earlier view of pleasure as sensation on moral grounds, it was a consideration of *aesthetic* pleasure that led Kant to reformulate his views concerning pleasure, to “discover” that the faculty of pleasure has its own a priori principle. On Kant’s view, this principle is, moreover, a distinctively *subjective* principle, and it is to its subjective status I now turn.

⁶² See *Metaphysik Mrongovius* XI:894; *Metaphysik Dohna* XVI:675.

⁶³ Kant suggests in §11 that these two descriptions of aesthetic pleasure (disinterested, purposive without a purpose) are equivalent and that this characteristic of aesthetic pleasure is related to the fact that it is pleasure in the (purposive) form of the object. Fricke argues persuasively, however, that Kant’s quick connections among these claims in §11 are insufficient (*Kants Theorie*, pp. 103–8). Though I cannot defend §11 itself against Fricke’s objections, my account here of the two interest structures, and the inassimilability of aesthetic pleasure to these structures *because* it is pleasure in subjectively purposive form, is meant as a reconstruction of this line of thought.

6.7 Purposiveness without a purpose as subjective principle of pleasure

As is often the case concerning Kant's characterization of representations or judgments as subjective, the source and nature of the subjectivity in question is somewhat opaque or, in this case, overdetermined. For, first, aesthetic pleasure – as well as pleasure in the agreeable – may be characterized as a subjective pleasure, because it is not based on conceptually articulated reasons.⁶⁴ As argued above, moreover, all pleasure is subjective or “referred to the subject,” on Kant's view, because its intentional objects (representations) are themselves states of the subject, and because it is a consciousness of such representations precisely as such (as affecting the subject, to “maintain” her state). Thus Kant tends, as noted above, to gloss his claim that pleasure is subjective by claiming that pleasure gives us “no cognition” of an object.

Kant adds to this gloss that pleasure does not provide cognition even of the subject; because pleasure is not a conceptual representation (much less a judgment), but merely a “felt” attitude, it may not itself “provide cognition” of the subject.⁶⁵ But, as I shall now suggest, this gloss is slightly misleading: the interested pleasures *can* be the subject matter of objective, cognitive judgments *about* the subject. Aesthetic pleasure, by contrast, is a distinctively, irreducibly subjective state; it cannot be the subject matter of such objective judgments, precisely because it is constituted by the principle of purposiveness without a purpose.

I have suggested that Kant's characterizations of pleasure as purposive, and of the interest relationships among pleasure and desire, are appropriately understood as theoretical descriptions of the functional roles of pleasure in human desirous activity, or (that is) as parts of a philosophical theory of action. Like the principles of the *CPR*, the principle of

⁶⁴ As noted above, contra Kant's suggestions, pleasures in non-moral goods may also be subjective in a related sense: even though such pleasures are based on objectively articulated reasons (or judgments), these judgments are only contingently reasons for *pleasure* or only contingently determine the will (by contrast to moral judgments).

⁶⁵ Much has been made, particularly by Bäumler and Ginsborg (in different ways), of Kant's suggestions that aesthetic pleasure is judgmental, or that we judge “by” pleasure in aesthetic judging. As I shall discuss in the following, on my view aesthetic pleasure is ineliminably involved in aesthetic judging and provides one sort of “basis” for aesthetic judgments. But I believe that Kant's considered view must be that pleasure itself (even aesthetic pleasure) is not a judgment, for, as a feeling, it does not itself establish, make claims to, or expressly have as its content any rule-governed connection among representations.

purposiveness characterizes a form of temporal relation, here of a present state to the future (“causality so as to maintain”). Unlike the *CPR* principles (and the principle of morality), however, this principle (as the principle of pleasure) cannot be understood as a principle that is employed by the subject in judgment (as a norm), or that governs the subject considered within the “space of reasons.”⁶⁶ Kant does differentiate pleasures (broadly) in accord with our reasons for being pleased, and in his account of interests he may be said to distinguish between pleasure as a reason for desire, and desire as a reason for pleasure. However, the principle of *purposiveness*, as definitional of pleasure, does not function as a norm or reason; instead, it articulates a temporal relation of the subject’s states, is a temporal characterization of the subject. Likewise, the interest structures concern the subject’s activity as a cause within time (viz., bringing the object into existence). For this reason, perhaps, Kant characterizes his definitions of pleasure and desire in the *CJ* as “transcendental definitions for concepts that are used as empirical principles” (v:177n): Kant’s definition of pleasure and his accounts of interest articulate a priori, formal structures of action and motivation. They do not serve as norms, but characterize the subject, indeed characterize the subject as temporally located, and as active within time, as part of the empirical world and the efficient causal nexus of appearances.

Because such purposive action and its component pleasures are thus temporally defined, they may be the subject matters of empirical psychology or anthropology (as Kant treats them in the metaphysics and anthropology lectures). Indeed, as we have seen, in Kant’s accounts of interest, pleasure is a subject matter of objective causal judgments about our own nature, whether as object (in the case of the agreeable) or as wills, causes that operate according to (motivational) concepts. As I shall now argue, the interested pleasures can, more specifically, be objectively judged to “belong” to the subject as empirical (psychological) “object”; the subject who is taken to feel, and to act in accord with such pleasures, may be understood as having states, or as functioning, in an irreversible, objective temporal order.⁶⁷ Precisely because it is purposive *without* a purpose, aesthetic pleasure, by contrast, is incompatible with such an objective time order. Thus such pleasure comprises, I argue, a purely

⁶⁶ It is a matter of debate whether Kant’s transcendental psychology in the first two *Critiques* can be so characterized; I mean here only to argue that even if they can be, Kant’s account of pleasures and interests cannot.

⁶⁷ On the connection between time-determination and cognition of the subject, see, e.g., B157–8, B277.

subjective state, which cannot be judged objectively to “belong to” the (empirical) subject as object of causal description.⁶⁸

As noted above, in Kant’s definition, he attempts to characterize the motivational character of pleasure by defining it as consciousness of the future-directedness of the subject’s present state. As argued in Chapter Four, such future-direction is, however, incompatible with an objective time order on Kant’s view – unless it is characterized in terms of conceptual purposes. So too does Kant argue concerning the future-directedness of pleasure.

Immediately after he has applied his definition to pleasure in the agreeable in the *Anthropology* (quoted above), Kant raises problems concerning pleasure defined as future-directed:

But we are carried along incessantly in the current of time and in the change of sensations connected with it. Although leaving one point in time and entering another is one and the same act (of change), there is still a temporal sequence in our thought and in the consciousness of this change, in conformity with the relation of cause and effect. – So the question arises, whether it is the consciousness of *leaving* our present state or the prospect of *entering* a future state that awakens in us the sensation of enjoyment? In the first case the enjoyment is simply removal of a pain – something negative; in the second it would be

⁶⁸ Guyer, who reconstructs Kant’s aesthetics as a modified empiricist causal theory (as his vocabulary of “underlying mechanisms” suggests [*Claims of Taste*, e.g., pp. 92–7]), rightly sees the need to explain why aesthetic judgments are subjective, rather than objective, cognitive, empirical judgments (i.e., judgments that an object causes a subjective state of harmony of the faculties, which causes pleasure). Guyer argues that they are not objective because one element of this causal series is unverifiable (that/whether the harmony of the faculties caused this pleasure) and therefore cannot be a determinative judgment, which requires “evidence” or a “criterion” of correctness (see, e.g., *Claims of Taste*, pp. 102, 241–2). This explanation, however, seems questionable, given, for example, Kant’s treatment of dynamical laws in the *MFNS*. Kant believes that we must posit forces as causes to explain various properties of matter, though we can never verify that there *are* such forces or that they operate in any particular case. He gives no indication, however, that he believes that this renders dynamics a set of merely subjective claims. And, though Kant has more doubts about the prospects of empirical psychology as a *bona fide* science than he does about dynamics, I do not see why he would take causal judgments about mental states to be *for this reason* (unverifiability or unobservability of causes) any different. Thus, like Aquila (“New Look”) and Henry Allison (“Pleasure and Harmony in Kant’s Theory of Taste: A Critique of the Causal Reading,” in Herman Parret, ed., *Kants Ästhetik/Kant’s Aesthetics/L’esthétique de Kant* [Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 1999], 466–83), I believe we must resist the temptation to interpret aesthetic judgment concerning aesthetic pleasure as any sort of causal judgment.

presentiment of something agreeable, and so an increase of the state of pleasure – something positive. But we can already guess beforehand that only the first will happen; for time drags us from the present to the future (not vice versa), and the cause of our agreeable feeling can be only that we are compelled to leave the present, though it is not specified into what other state we shall enter – except that it is another one. (VII:231)

So, Kant concludes, “pain always comes first” (ibid.).

As in the case of teleological judgment, Kant’s worries here are based on his views concerning time and, correlatively, causality. As he emphasizes here, Kant understands time to be uni-directional – the past precedes and determines the present – and separable (at least conceptually) into distinct moments. Pleasure defined as anticipation of the future simpliciter violates both of these Kantian premises about the nature of time: it would be a state that internally refers to another moment in time, and in the wrong order – determined by the future rather than by the past.⁶⁹

Kant raises this temporal problem in the context of describing pleasure in the agreeable, particularly the initial pleasures in the agreeable (i.e., those that have not been incorporated into interests of inclination). I shall return to these pleasures in a moment, but we must note first that this sort of temporal problem does *not* arise in the case of pleasures that are (already) interested. For Kant can “domesticate” the future-directedness of pleasure in the case of interested pleasures by the same means by which he domesticates the teleological causality of organisms: by redescribing such future-direction as characteristic of purposive or “ideal” causality, the will’s causality in accord with concepts. In the case of interested pleasures, that is, Kant reduces the future-directedness of pleasurable mental states to satisfaction in *conceptual* anticipations of the future.

As we have seen, the concepts and judgments involved in determining the will include judgments that the intended object is not presently

⁶⁹ Kant understands the identification of particular moments of time to result from a “limitation” of the intuition of time as a whole (e.g., A31–2/B47) and thus to be dependent on our intuition of time as a whole. Any distinct moment may, then, be further “limited” into smaller moments (they are not strictly discrete). Kant’s discussion in the Analogies, particularly the Second, suggests, however, that any moment (so identified) does not of itself, as we experience it, carry a temporal marker concerning its “place” in time as a whole, or a reference to other moments as preceding or succeeding it. Nor can different moments – here, it is suggested, the present moment and a future one – be simultaneous; this, on Kant’s view, is an a priori truth concerning time (A31/B46–7).

existing, and that the object is possibly existent in the future as caused by the subject. Thus the determination of the will involves conceptual foresight, conceptual judgments employing concepts of time and its moments (past, present, future); “desire,” as Kant writes, “is always directed towards a thing in the future.”⁷⁰ Such conceptual foresight is not, however, temporally problematic: concepts are universals, general rules, which may refer to a particular (non-existent) future state, but do not depend upon such a state, for they describe it under universal descriptions (*Anth* VII:187).

This account of action as employing conceptual foresight domesticates the future-directedness of pleasure in the good. As we have seen, pleasure plays two roles in Kant’s account of willed action: it is first in the concept of the good object (the purpose of action), then it registers satisfaction that the concept has been realized (pleasure in the conceptually described object’s actual existence). In neither case need we understand *pleasure* (the feeling) to “refer” to the future. The second satisfaction is, of course, in a present representation of an object (conceptually judged), and indeed so is the first. The anticipatory, motivational character of pleasure is, that is, here reduced to an effect of (satisfaction in) the *conceptually* anticipatory character of desire; motivational pleasure in the good is in my *present* conceptual representation of a future thing.

Pleasures in the agreeable can also be so understood (*mutatis mutandis*), once they are incorporated into interests or are purposive with a purpose: the empirical causal judgments concerning how to produce these pleasures allow us conceptually to anticipate these pleasures; the pleasures themselves are not future-directed but are satisfying states we (conceptually) aim to reproduce in future action. But initial pleasures in the agreeable may not be thus understood; hence Kant’s worries in the *Anthropology* with respect to these pleasures in particular. These pleasures, pure feelings, ought not to be understood as future-directed, for this would conflict with the order of time: unlike conceptual foresight, feelings of something can exist, and refer to their objects, only if they are caused by something else that itself exists. Thus, Kant writes, “[w]e can easily see that presentiment [*sensing* the future] is a chimera; for how can we sense what does not yet exist?” (*Anth* VII:187).

In the 231 passage above, Kant argues, therefore, that initial pleasures in the agreeable ought not to be understood as future-directed, but rather as relief from pain. For though Kant takes both pleasure and pain to be

⁷⁰ *Metaphysik Mrongovius* XIX:894; cf. *Anth* VII:251.

second-order states of interior sense, motivational in having effects on activity, pain, unlike pleasure, presupposes nothing about the future, but only refers to (rejects) the present *as* present (pain prompts us to “leave” this state). As a relief from pain, the initial pleasure in the agreeable is understood to reflect the difference between one’s past state and one’s present state – not, at all, to be anticipatory of the future.

Thus, to return to an earlier example: the initial pleasure I took from a hot bath is, according to Kant, a sigh of relief from pain, not actually an anticipation of the continuance of the representation (sensation) of warmth, or of the “agreeableness in my state.” With respect to this example, Kant’s claim may seem quite reasonable: hot baths are pleasurable when one is tense or cold (etc.), that is, by contrast to, and as a relief from, such pains. (And one may well not be pleased by a hot bath if one is in other, non-painful, states or in painful states, e.g., excessive heat, from which a hot bath would not be a relief.) But Kant’s claim holds not only for such cases (or more obvious cases like pleasures in eating when one is hungry), but even for cases like pleasure in the sensation of green or in the sound of a single tone. These cases are more difficult to assimilate to the temporally successive, causal account – pain → alleviation of pain → pleasure (in the agreeable) – that Kant proposes in the *Anthropology*, for it is somewhat difficult to see what pains are being alleviated. Kant suggests, however, that these pleasures are alleviations of the pain of boredom or pleasures in novelty and change simply as such.⁷¹

This account of fortuitous-seeming pleasures in the agreeable is not, perhaps, as *ad hoc* as it might sound. This analysis of pleasures in the agreeable could, for example, explain the fleetingness of such pleasures by contrast to those in the beautiful: a single tone or color can be pleasing – but not for very long, whereas we can and do linger considerably longer in pleasurable experience of the beautiful, as Kant suggests. Whether this account is plausible or not, however, Kant considers it to be necessary so to explain these pleasures in order to avoid attributing a non-objective temporal order to the subject’s mental life, in order to avoid saying that one’s present state is influenced not by the past (as it should be), but by the future. As in the case of the good, Kant here assimilates pleasure in the agreeable, as a mental state, to the order of efficient causality and the

⁷¹ v:328, 331f.; *Anth* vii:233; *Menschenkunde Anthropologie* xxv.2:1072–7. This dependence on pain, or change, can again explain why animals – which have no complex conceptual representations (“consciousness”) of the future as such – can, on Kant’s account, also feel pleasure in the agreeable.

order of successive time in inner sense. In both cases, the subject's pleasure "presupposes something that precedes it" (in the language of the Second Analogy), whether a pain, a need, or a concept, and does not presuppose something that will succeed it.

Aesthetic pleasure, as we have seen, does not seem to presuppose something that precedes it – there is no concept that determines what we are "looking for" in the object, nor can we identify a pain that is alleviated by the (unexpected) encounter with the beautiful object. Aesthetic pleasure is, then, not only the paradigmatic pleasure on Kant's definition, but also an undomesticated case of consciousness of one's state as future-directed, not parasitic on a determinate (conceptually describable) purpose.⁷² Hence, perhaps, Kant's description of our pleasure in beauty as "free" (e.g., v:210), for it is the consciousness of a state that not only does not presuppose what precedes it, but also is active and self-directing.

Aesthetic pleasure, as purposive without a purpose, is thus temporally odd in exactly the way that worried Kant in the *Anthropology*: it is consciousness of a present state grounded in the future, not caused by the past. As a result, aesthetic pleasure is the most subjective of pleasures, not only because it does not rest on conceptually articulable reasons, not only because it is not a property of the object the subject represents, but also because it cannot be characterized in terms of causal, objective judgments concerning the subject, neither as effect causally correlated to objects, nor as a component of our own purposive (willed) causality.

Such pleasure also thereby crosscuts Kant's standard ways of considering the subject: it has a temporal reference and thus does not characterize the noumenal subject; its principle is not a norm of judgment employed by or guiding the "logical" subject; nor may it be considered as belonging to the phenomenal subject governed by empirical causal laws, whether as cause or as object. Instead, the aesthetically pleased subject must be considered both as temporally located *and* as subject, in the "first person perspective," as *speaking* with a "universal voice" (v:216). The aesthetically pleased subject is an individual subject, not the logical subject of experience or of judgment, not the noumenal, unknown metaphysical subject, but *this* temporal, feeling subject. Likewise, Kant's strictures that aesthetic judgments must be

⁷² See Ermanno Bencivenga, "Economy of Expression and Aesthetic Pleasure," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 47 (1987), 615–30, for an interesting phenomenological exploration of aesthetic pleasure in incomplete art objects as futurally projective (rather than as a release from pain, as on Kant's account of the agreeable, or the Freudian model to which Bencivenga opposes his account).

autonomous are, unlike similar Kantian strictures in epistemology and morality, connected to the personal, individual subjectivity or “mineness” of aesthetic experience: one must make aesthetic judgments *oneself*, out of one’s own experience, from one’s own standpoint.⁷³ So we implicitly recognize too in ordinary aesthetic practice, in accusing people of inauthenticity or hypocrisy if they cede to others’ taste or aesthetic judgments, rather than objecting that their judgments are false or mistaken. This authenticity or mineness of aesthetic judging is determined by the actual pleasure felt by the temporally located, particular subject.

This grounding of aesthetic judgment in the judging subject’s actual experience, as a necessary, justificatory criterion for aesthetic judgment, is, I have suggested, Kant’s inheritance from his empiricist predecessors. But Kant transforms this inheritance, for the subjectivity or mineness of aesthetic experience reflects, in Kant’s account, the irreconcilability of aesthetic pleasure with that form of explanation most favored by empiricists: efficient causal explanation. Aesthetic judgments are not (subjectively formulated) causal, empirical psychological judgments concerning the subject’s states. Rather, through their connection to aesthetic pleasure, such judgments express an irreducibly subjective “point of view” and thus can have only subjective validity.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that aesthetic pleasure is constituted by the principle of purposiveness and, as such, is irreducibly subjective, and can provide no cognition whether of the object or the subject. This chapter and the [previous chapter](#), then, establish that purposiveness without a purpose is the principle of aesthetic pleasure and of aesthetic objects, but is also a merely subjective principle.

Aesthetic pleasure and the representation of beautiful objects instantiate, then, the two components of purposiveness on my account: future-directedness, and the unity of the diverse as such, respectively. I have suggested that they are connected: aesthetic pleasure is in the representation of an object’s purposive form. But we must ask how these two components of purposiveness are, precisely, to fit together in Kant’s account of aesthetic experience, or, more simply, why or how we take

⁷³ §§32–3. In *Must We Mean What We Say?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), Stanley Cavell has emphasized this call to intersubjectivity expressed in aesthetic judgment on Kant’s account.

pleasure in representing beautiful objects. To respond to these questions, I shall turn now to consider purposiveness as the principle of the activity of aesthetic judging. This cognitive activity and the role of the principle of purposiveness as its structure unite the two components of purposiveness, I shall argue, for such purposive judging makes both the representation of the beautiful and aesthetic pleasure possible. And, as I shall argue in Chapter [Eight](#), it also grounds Kant's justification of the subjectively universal validity of judgments of taste, our claim not only to speak, as individual, temporally located subjects, in aesthetic judgments, but to speak with a "*universal* voice."

THE FREE HARMONY OF THE FACULTIES:
PURPOSIVENESS AS THE PRINCIPLE
OF AESTHETIC *BEURTEILUNG*

In the previous two chapters, we have seen the ways in which purposiveness without a purpose is, according to Kant, the principle of beautiful objects and of aesthetic pleasure. In this chapter, I complete my interpretation of the ways in which this principle is constitutive of aesthetic experience on Kant's account. For here I turn to the way in which purposiveness is the principle of aesthetic judging (*Beurteilung*), or (that is) to Kant's account of aesthetic judging as the free harmony of the imagination and understanding in "free play," as a "purposive state of mind" (v:296). I shall argue that purposiveness without a purpose characterizes the judging subject as the formal temporal structure of the *activity* of judging aesthetically: in aesthetic judging, we projectively, i.e., purposively without a purpose, synthesize heterogeneous sensible properties.

Aesthetic judging thus reunites the two components of purposiveness without a purpose that characterize beautiful objects and aesthetic pleasure, respectively – the unity of the diverse, and future-directedness. Indeed, aesthetic, purposive *Beurteilung* is, I shall argue, a necessary condition for the possibility both of representing objects as beautiful, and of aesthetic pleasure. Only if we can *judge* purposively without a purpose can we represent an object as beautiful, viz., as a unity of diversity formally purposive without a purpose (or without conceptual determination) (7.2–5). And only if we so judge can we take purely projective pleasure in

such a representation. Moreover, when we judge aesthetically, we *are* in a future-directed, self-propagating state, and thus are *ipso facto* pleased; for aesthetic pleasure is, on Kant's view, a consciousness precisely of such future-directedness (7.6–8). Thus the principle of purposiveness without a purpose as a principle of judging unifies Kant's account of aesthetic experience, and explains how our representation of an object as beautiful is related to our pleasure in that representation.

7.1 The interpretive task: Kant's presentation, and some questions

As is well known, Kant describes the cognitive activity in aesthetic experience as the free play of the understanding and the imagination, in which these faculties are in “harmony” (*Zusammenstimmung*) or “concord” (*Einstimmung*) (e.g., v:190, 219). By such locutions, and by his description of this cognitive activity as a *Beurteilung*, Kant signals both the similarity and difference between this cognitive activity and our ordinary activities of cognitive judging or synthesis, whether in empirical or a priori cognition. For these two cognitive faculties (of imagination and understanding) are those whereby we engage in cognitive judgmental synthesis,¹ and must be therein harmonized: the imagination synthesizes sensible representations to form a complex unity (representation of an object), and must do so, Kant argues, in accord with concepts or rules of synthesis given by the understanding (both empirical and a priori).²

Kant's descriptions of the aesthetic harmony as free and as arising within a state of free play between these two faculties mark, however, the key difference between this state of judging and cognitive judgmental synthesis. Cognitive judgmental synthesis is not free, but “lawful” or determinative, viz., guided by the conceptual rules of the understanding, which determine (for the imagination) which representations to synthesize, and how it ought to synthesize them (v:295–6). In aesthetic judging,

¹ In the *CPR*, Kant identifies four main cognitive faculties: reason, understanding, imagination, and sensibility, of which the *three* last are involved centrally in the judgmental synthesis that makes experience possible. In the *CAJ*, however, Kant assimilates sensibility to the imagination as the faculty of sensibility in general (e.g., v:287). On the changes in Kant's treatment of the imagination, see Makkreel, *Imagination and Interpretation*, Chapters 3 and 4.

² This, broadly speaking, is the purport of Kant's transcendental deduction arguments in the *CPR*.

instead of synthesizing according to rules, we imaginatively play with the manifold of sensible representations. When, in such play, the imagination harmonizes with the (demands of the) understanding, in representing a unified manifold, this accord is, likewise, free. For whereas in determinative cognitive judgmental synthesis such harmony is determined from the first by the nature of the imagination's activity (it proceeds as directed by the concepts of the understanding), the imagination's harmony with the understanding in free play is not determined beforehand, but contingent; as Kant puts it, paradoxically, this harmony is a "lawfulness without law" (v:241).

Kant glosses such lawfulness without law, moreover, as purposiveness without a purpose (*ibid.*). When the imagination freely accords with the demands of the understanding, it serves the purposes of the understanding *and* proceeds "as if" it is directed by a concept in so doing – is purposive – but without being determined to be so *by* a purpose (*viz.*, a concept). (This characterization relies, I suggest then, both on D2, D3 *and* the alternative versions thereof discussed in Chapter Two.) Here we see again Kant's inversion of his identification of purposes as concepts, or his "internalization" of his conception of purposive (intentional, conceptually guided) activity into his doctrine of judgmental activity itself. In determinative judgmental synthesis, the concept that determines the unity of the representation *is* the purpose of judging, and the imaginative, synthetic unification of the object in accord with this concept is, therefore, purposive (activity) with a purpose, as is the representation so produced (D2). By contrast, in aesthetic judging, the imagination performs this purposive activity of unification without a purpose. As Kant also suggests, this purposiveness explains why such judging is pleasurable (e.g., v:190).

Many of these descriptions of our cognitive activities in aesthetic experience – particularly the metaphorical expressions "play," "harmony" – resonate phenomenologically with aesthetic experience, and as a result were and continue to be influential conceptions of aesthetic experience. But they also raise interpretive questions: these descriptions are abstract, not directly informative concerning what we do in aesthetic experiencing. This discussion seems, moreover, subject to frequently expressed criticisms of Kant's transcendental psychology, *viz.*, that he posits hypostasized sub-agents (the various faculties) within the subject, and/or thereby suggests that his philosophical doctrines might, in fact, be based upon (empirical) psychological claims. The free harmony of the faculties appears not only to be a particular, empirical psychological

state,³ but also, insofar as Kant describes it as an autonomous, indeed “heautonomous” (self-legislating and self-referential), functioning of the faculties apparently unmoored from engagement with objects, to be a paradigm hypostasization of the cognitive faculties.⁴

Within the terms of Kant’s transcendental psychology, moreover, one might wonder what it could mean, on Kant’s view, for an imaginative activity to be in harmony with the understanding, but without conceptual unification, for the understanding simply *is* the faculty of concepts. More broadly, Kant’s characterization of this free harmony as a cognitive activity of the *same* faculties required for the possibility of experience as in cognitive synthesis, and yet as quite distinct from such ordinary synthesis – in, e.g., a different “proportion” to one another (v:238) – seems deeply puzzling.⁵ Worse, Kant’s claim that in aesthetic experience we find a representation to be unified without being guided by a concept seems to conflict with his basic doctrines concerning the nature of human discursive cognition and experience: in the *CPR* Kant famously argues that intuitions without concepts are “blind”; and without conceptual unification, our experience would be “less than a dream” (A112). (Such worries are made more acute by Kant’s argument in the deduction of aesthetic judgment – to be discussed in the [next chapter](#) – that in aesthetic judging we employ the subjective conditions required for experience in general.)

Kant’s claims concerning the relationship between aesthetic judging and pleasure, on grounds of purposiveness, also raise questions. Aesthetic judging does not, in fact, fulfill the purposes of cognition (i.e., determinate cognition of an object, using concepts), and therefore its serviceability for cognitive purposes cannot explain how or why it is (aesthetically) pleasing, or how such pleasure is “based” (or “consequent”) upon the purposiveness of aesthetic judging. This precedence must, however, be established, for it is, Kant argues in §9, the “key” to the critique of taste: only if judging precedes pleasure can we justifiably require others to share our pleasure.

In sum: interpreting Kant’s description of aesthetic judging as a free harmony of the faculties in free play requires that one articulate what

³ Guyer’s reconstructive interpretation, as he recognizes, emphasizes this psychological character of the CAJ account. (See *Claims of Taste*, pp. 86–7, 95, 126, 183, 209, 228, 248.)

⁴ Allison’s reading in *Theory of Taste*, which stresses the “heautonomy” of reflective judgment, is perhaps a paradigmatic expression of this aspect of Kant’s account.

⁵ For clear statements of these difficulties, see Ginsborg, *Role of Taste*, pp. 45–51, 55–7, and “Lawfulness Without Law”; Fred Rush, “The Harmony of the Faculties,” *Kant-Studien* 92 (2001), 38–61.

Kant might mean by these descriptions, how they may be understood within his systematic philosophy, and how they may be part of a coherent account of aesthetic experience. More specifically, one must make sense of Kant's claims that this activity is (a) judgmental (though without a determining concept), or an exercise of the same faculties requisite for cognition in general, or experience, but in a different "proportion" to one another; and (b) intimately connected to pleasure, specifically as its basis. Moreover, though discussion of the relationship between aesthetic *Beurteilung* and the aesthetic judgment (*Urteil*) proper and of Kant's deduction will occupy the [next chapter](#), in anticipation one must articulate a conception of aesthetic *Beurteilung* that is (c) a potential ground for the universal normative claims on others' agreement in the aesthetic *Urteil*.

7.2 Aesthetic *Beurteilung*: The free play and harmony of the faculties as necessary condition for aesthetic experience of beautiful objects

In interpreting Kant's claims concerning aesthetic judging or the free harmony of the faculties in free play, I propose to follow the most promising interpretive method in approaching Kant's transcendental psychological language generally, viz., to take it to describe types of cognitive activity necessary for producing a particular type of representation or experience; the faculties are therefore understood as having an "objective correlative" and as comprising (transcendentally) the conditions for the possibility of representing such an object. In this case, aesthetic judging is to be understood, I suggest, as the cognitive activity necessary for representing an object as beautiful. Aesthetic judging may, then, be understood not as a "black box" in Kant's account, nor as a free-floating, hypostasized, or self-referential mental state. Rather, it is a representational state, wherein we are engaged with an object as having formally purposive form. In aesthetic experience, the imagination and the understanding are, Kant writes, "reciprocally attuned . . . in the represented form of the object" (v:291; my emphasis). More specifically, I shall proceed here by considering why we must engage the imagination and understanding in harmony and free play in their *empirical* functions to represent an object as beautiful, before turning to the a priori conditions for such representation in sections 7.3–5.⁶

⁶ My approach is, then, roughly in concert with a commonly held view concerning Kant's CPR deductions, particularly the A Deduction: that Kant argues both that

As argued in Chapter [Five](#), when we find an object beautiful we find its heterogeneous, contingent, sensible properties reciprocally to contrast and complement one another, each just as it should be in relation to the others. This systematic interrelation of the sensible properties of an object experienced as beautiful is, I argued, describable as a purposive unity without a purpose, the interrelatedness itself as purposive form, characterized, more specifically, by merely subjective formal purposiveness.

It may well be a necessary condition for the possibility of such representation that the object so represented *does* display a variety of heterogeneous sensible properties in a perspicuous order. (As Kant writes at v:238, the disposition of our cognitive powers can vary “depending on the difference of the objects that are given”; and, on my interpretation, it is quite possible that only some objects can be found beautiful.) But order of properties in the object does not suffice to explain our *grasp* of this arrangement of properties *as* at once heterogeneous and unified. For on Kant’s view, our representation of order, our grasp of unity, cannot be understood as an immediate result of a given order, as Hutcheson or Shaftsbury might suggest; rather, we must engage in cognitive activity in order so to represent an object (see, e.g., A77/B102). Specifically, on a Kantian view, such representation requires activity of the imagination, our faculty of synthesis of intuitions, not merely receptive intuition. For intuition provides representations as “absolute unities,” undifferentiated single items; thus, as is well known, Kant argues that in order to have experience, we must not only receive intuitions, but also engage in synthetic activity of the imagination, collect (a number of) given intuitions into one representation. Only through such synthesis can we “apprehend” a sensible manifold as such, viz., as comprising distinct elements or parts (A99). The beautiful object is, indeed, represented as a manifold – as comprising an array of heterogeneous properties, taken to be heterogeneous from one another; this representation requires imaginative synthesis.⁷

This imaginative synthesis must, moreover, be free (viz., not guided by a determinate concept) in *principle*, for it involves attention to and

empirical judging (and coherent experience) requires empirical concepts, and that such judging also presupposes a priori conditions (and synthesis). See, e.g., Longuenesse, *Capacity to Judge*.

⁷ Makkreel notes that Kant does not use the terminology of synthesis in the *CJ* (*Imagination and Interpretation*, pp. 47–57). I shall suggest a reason for this terminological choice below.

synthesis of the manifold as richer and more unified than is possible under discursive conceptual description (as argued in Chapter Five). So Kant suggests, in glossing such imaginative freedom as freedom from “restriction,” “constraint,” or “limitation” by a concept (e.g., v:217, 316–17).

Such synthesis also appears to involve a *play* of the imagination. Kant most explicitly characterizes “play” in discussing the “play of sensations” in gambling, music, and laughter (as occasioned by jokes):⁸ play comprises “changing” sensations, which – merely through such change – “animate” the mind (and the body)⁹ and thereby “gratify” the subject. On Kant’s conception, play is therefore not only an activity (or series of states) pleasing in itself, but also is so because of change.¹⁰ This change must, moreover, be *noticeable*, and therefore comprise an alternation among representations or states heterogeneous to one another. “Play” is, then, an apt description of the cognitive activity required to represent beautiful form: in experiencing heterogeneous, contingent properties of the object as purposively unified, we must turn our attention from one to another of such properties, seeing them as heterogeneous from one another, indeed as they “reverberate” with one another in reciprocal contrast and complement.

Aesthetic imaginative play is also different from the “mere” play of sensations – just as the representation of an object as beautiful seems rather different from the hypnotic fascination one can feel in looking at firelight, where one allows oneself simply to follow the ever-changing colors and flickering movements of the flames.¹¹ In the latter case, the subject is passive, *moved* or *animated*, not itself actively playing, but stimulated *by* alternation among sensations; correspondingly, the subject need not (be understood to) experience such alternating sensations *as* unified or (even) *as* a manifold, but may, simply, *have* successive,

⁸ v:331f.

⁹ In the cases of music and laughter, Kant suggests that there is a causal interaction between mind and body (e.g., v:332). These comments may reflect Kant’s inheritance from Mendelssohn, who argues similarly concerning gratification; they are also suggestive concerning Kant’s conception of embodiment. For a provocative discussion of Kant’s views on embodiment, see Susan Shell, *The Embodiment of Reason* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

¹⁰ See v:312 for Kant’s association of “play” (*Spiel*) and “motion” (*Schwung*, with its etymological connotations of oscillation, swing) of the cognitive powers; and v:317, where Kant describes imaginative play as *schnell vorübergehend* (rapidly passing).

¹¹ Kant himself uses firelight as an example of a slightly different form of not-quite-aesthetic experience, viz., in which we engage in something like free association, where our “mind entertains itself” by “fantasies” in part prompted by (here) the varying shapes of the flames.

different, changing states as determined by the given, oscillating sensations. (It is no coincidence that Kant's examples of mere play are experiences of actual temporal variation of sensations.) The play in aesthetic experience is, by contrast, a play of imagination, actively synthesizing and alternating between given sensations, in order to represent a manifold as such, and (as I shall discuss below) grounds specifically aesthetic pleasure, rather than gratification (pleasure in the agreeable).

This play is, Kant suggests moreover, a play of the imagination *with* the understanding. Despite the imagination's freedom from conceptual determination, we can, on the basis of the account given in Chapter [Five](#), take the understanding to have two somewhat different roles in this imaginative synthesis that correspond (more or less) to the roles of concepts as marks and as overarching concepts in empirical judging.

First, Kant suggests that in aesthetic experience the understanding "serves" the imagination "rather than vice versa" (v:242). In ordinary judgmental synthesis, the imagination synthesizes a manifold in accord with a rule of the understanding. In cases of empirical classification, in particular, the imagination identifies and combines those properties of the object articulated by the marks of the concept. Thus the imagination "serves" the understanding, which (on the basis of such properties, identified by the marks) conceptually determines the object as a unity, as one of its kind. In aesthetic experience of purposive form, by contrast, the understanding has a subordinate role: in aesthetic experience, we identify or "indicate" conceptually the sensible properties of an object as they contribute to (the representation of) the individual beautiful object as a whole,¹² which whole is not grasped conceptually, but by the imagination. And because this representation is a rich unity, comprising more properties than can be conceptually determined, we may well be prompted in this experience to articulate more of these properties, in order to point to more precise or nuanced ways to see contrasts and complements among properties.¹³ Such articulation might, likewise, prompt further

¹² Kant's description of the understanding as functioning "without concepts" (v:296) is, I suggest, an overstatement: we are (or at least may be) employing concepts *but* in an "indicating" way; thus such concepts are not here employed *to* determine (classify) the object, or as predicates to class this object with others, i.e., do not function "as" concepts. See again Reflection 624 (xv:270): the representation in taste is "synthetic [but] not through reason, . . . intuitive . . . , concerning the proportions of sensations directly . . . and not a bare sensation but that from which comparings of sensations arise."

¹³ This understanding of the harmony of the faculties is also supported by Kant's description thereof at *Metaphysik Vigilantius* XXIX:1012. Here again I am in

imaginative, alternating play among the properties of the whole. Thus in aesthetic experience we engage in a playful use both of imagination and understanding.

Second, especially in his descriptions of aesthetic *Beurteilung* as a free *harmony* of the faculties, Kant suggests that the understanding fills a role somewhat more like its role in ordinary judgmental synthesis. As noted above, Kant describes the imagination in aesthetic experience as satisfying the demands, or accomplishing the purpose, of the understanding. Such accord with the understanding may be understood as a unification of the manifold, for this unification is the aim or demand of the understanding. On the account given above of beautiful objects, we do represent them as unified, each of their properties as “belonging” together with the others. Specifically, insofar as we apprehend the beautiful object as formally purposive, this imaginative representation fits the logical demands of the understanding for ideal (empirical) conceptual content, i.e., fits the requirements of “cognition in general” for perfection, the greatest unification of the largest possible multiplicity of heterogeneous properties.¹⁴ As opposed to the subordinate role of understanding in aesthetic judging just discussed, here the understanding may be said to set a norm for the imagination, though it does so only indeterminately because we are not guided by a determinate rule of the understanding that would ground such overarching unity.¹⁵

sympathy with Fricke’s account in *Kants Theorie*. As Fricke does not, however, I wish to emphasize that this suggestion is to be distinguished from the view, prevalent in the scholarship, that the role of the understanding in aesthetic experience is that we keep trying, and failing, to find a concept that could determine the beautiful object. This view is, first, markedly implausible as a description of aesthetic experience – we are quite capable of identifying (conceptually determining) a beautiful rose as a rose, or applying the concept of sunset to an experience of a beautiful sunset, etc. (as Kant indicates in providing examples like “This rose is beautiful”). It is also explanatorily implausible, for it is unclear why such an experience – of cognitive failure – would be pleasing. Such *prima facie* implausibility, indeed, prompts Kant’s explanatory task in his account of the sublime. And, thus, third: such a view can make little sense of the distinction between the beautiful and the sublime, for, in the first case, the imagination is purportedly harmonious with the understanding, not harmonious paradoxically in virtue of its disharmony, as it is with reason in the experience of the sublime. In aesthetic judging of the beautiful, the role of the understanding is *not* (unsuccessfully) to attempt to apply an overarching concept that would determine the object, but rather to articulate the parts, reasons, or marks subordinate to the unity we imaginatively (successfully) experience.

¹⁴ See B113–15, and v:217f. for Kant’s reference to “cognition in general,” and Chapter Five.

¹⁵ Thus we might understand Kant’s odd claims in the Dialectic of Taste that in judgments of taste we employ an “indeterminate” concept: we aim to grasp the

Finally, this indeterminate norm-setting role of the understanding in aesthetic experience, and the corresponding imaginative activity in taking the heterogeneous properties of the object to be unified with one another (to “belong” together), can help us understand why Kant characterizes this cognitive activity as *judgmental* (*Beurteilung*), rather than simply as imaginative synthesis. We may see why this is so by contrasting the experience of the beautiful to the type of representations produced by two other synthetic, but non-judgmental, activities of the imagination that Kant discusses in the *CPR*: apprehension and association. By apprehension, Kant means our ability to combine separately presented, singular intuitions into a representation of a (sensible) manifold (e.g., B160). Association is the following (familiar, Humean) mental activity: once we have seen As and Bs combined with one another frequently enough, we imaginatively associate As and Bs; when we perceive an A, we expect a B to follow. Thus here again (though in another way), we imaginatively synthesize A and B into a manifold.

These two imaginative activities resemble our imaginative activity in experiencing the beautiful, for both are syntheses of a manifold of empirically given sensations without overarching conceptual determination.¹⁶ Neither of these activities, however, could produce a representation of an object as beautiful (as formally purposive), because they are non-judgmental in character. For in apprehension we collect (at least potentially) any or all intuitions we currently are receiving, or have just received. This imaginative synthesis thus produces a representation of an aggregated manifold – e.g., in our daffodil case, yellow, frilly curve, fresh, white, dark green, smooth, long curve, light green, brown. Such apprehension of an aggregate is, Kant argues in the A Deduction, necessary for the possibility of experience (and also for the possibility of aesthetic experience), but it

object as unified, though not in accord with any determinate concept (in fact we grasp the object as more fully unified than can be captured by a determinate concept).

¹⁶ Both of these activities might also involve some subordinate use of concepts. Kant argues, as is well known, that apprehension presupposes reproduction – in order to represent a manifold, we must reproduce previously given intuitions, as elements in the manifold – which in turn requires that we have some concepts in order to recognize and reproduce the same (previously given) intuitions (A101–2). More broadly, in both apprehension and association, we may well (be able to) conceptually describe the items of the manifold (as “A” or “B”). But in these cases, as in representation of the beautiful, the manifold is not represented as unified *by* an overarching conceptual rule (the second function of concepts, in recognition). Rather, it is simply aggregated (apprehension) or correlated (association).

must also (then) be judged according to a priori and empirical overarching, unifying concepts to render it a unified representation, to determine whether these intuitions belong together as intuitions of one object. We must “recognize” the object by employing a concept (A103f.).¹⁷ In such judgment, we may conclude that the elements of the manifold do not (all) belong together, e.g., that fresh is not the smell of the daffodil, but of the air, while it is the soil, not the daffodil, that is brown. Indiscriminate, aggregative, non-judgmental apprehension itself is not sufficient, then, to produce a representation of a beautiful object as such in which we do take properties to “belong” together.

Association is in some ways closer to representation of the beautiful, for it is more discriminating, sensitive to the empirical, particular character of given sensations, and produces a representation of a certain connection among those sensed particulars, a constraint on *which* sensations we will connect to one another. In association, we do not merely collect whichever intuitions we have received: *As* (and not *Cs* or *Ds*) are associated with *Bs*, lead us to expect *Bs*; our expectation is satisfied only when we receive a *B* intuition (not an *E* or *F*).

Despite these similarities, Kant explicitly opposes these two imaginative activities: in aesthetic experience, he writes, we are not only free from

¹⁷ In the A Deduction, Kant seems to hold that the imagination (in apprehension) does preliminary synthetic “work” for the understanding, which then performs a retrospective unification of the data thus collected, to render it objective knowledge or experience. Kant recapitulates this threefold account of determinative unification of a manifold in somewhat different terms in the *CJ* as apprehension, comprehension (“synthetic unity of a manifold”), and exhibition (taking the manifold as an object “corresponding to this concept,” i.e., the one used to comprehend it as unified) at FI, xx:220. In accord with the A Deduction account, Guyer argues that we can understand aesthetic imaginative activity as comprising the “first steps” towards knowledge – apprehension (and the reproduction it presupposes), but before or without the final, conceptual stage of recognition to form objective synthesis (*Claims of Taste*, pp. 74–88); a similar interpretation is proposed by Sarah Gibbons, *Kant’s Theory of Imagination* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), pp. 16–32. This interpretation gives some sense (of a systematic sort) to Kant’s claims that the cognitive activity in aesthetic experience is not cognitive judging, but is nonetheless purposive (useful) for such judging. As I argue in the text, apprehension cannot, however, be the sole mode of our cognitive activity in aesthetic experience, for we cannot thereby represent the object *as* unified. Moreover, as has been frequently objected, this view seems to entail that all experience would be aesthetic experience: if engaging (successfully) in apprehension is all that it takes to render aesthetic experience (or the object as represented therein) purposive for cognition (pleasing or beautiful), then all objects ought to be found beautiful, for we must apprehend any or all in order to have any experience. See, e.g., Rush, “Harmony of the Faculties,” 49–50, and Fricke, *Kants Theorie*, pp. 51–7.

conceptual determination, but also “we feel our freedom from the law of association” (v:314).¹⁸ This claim seems right: aesthetic experience has often been conjoined with novelty in aesthetic theory of Kant’s time and after (though Kant himself does not do so), and indeed seems distant from association, custom, or habit. We represent the heterogeneous properties of a beautiful object not as belonging together because they are commonly combined, but rather independently of comparison to experience of other objects (v:279). Moreover, though such associative combination is not mere juxtaposition (as in apprehension), it does not represent a manifold as unified; rather, the sensible items are merely correlated, represented as separately identifiable phenomena then conjoined. Hence Hume’s famous skepticism about causal connections, and Kant’s argument that we must make a causal *judgment* in order to represent associated items as belonging with one another, not simply (as it were) popping into our minds together (see, e.g., B168). Thus, Kant argues, in order for us to grasp associated items as belonging together, we must judge; non-judgmental, imaginative association cannot generate a representation of properties as belonging to a whole.

By contrast to these two imaginative syntheses, aesthetic imaginative activity must be judgmental in character, for we grasp each of the heterogeneous properties as related to the others, as part of a unified whole, formed by internal, reciprocal relations of contrast and complement. In this representation we hold the manifold to be unified, that is, by a lawfulness of the contingent. Any representation of lawfulness is the result, on Kant’s view, of judgmental unification. In the *CPR*, Kant argues that “we find that our thought of the relation of all knowledge to its object carries with it an element of necessity; the object is viewed as that which prevents our modes of knowledge from being haphazard or arbitrary” (A104; Kemp Smith translation). Our ability to recognize or represent this non-arbitrary, lawful character of the object as such, Kant argues, rests on the judgmental determination of the object according to categorical rules: we represent an object not by juxtaposing or associating elements to form a manifold, but by *judging* elements in this manifold to be connected in a rule-governed manner, most centrally by subject–predicate

¹⁸ In “Subjektivität, Allgemeingültigkeit und Apriorität des Geschmacksurteils bei Kant,” *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie* 39 (1991), 272–83, Manfred Baum likewise stresses this claim; I am trying to explain *why* we must distinguish association from aesthetic, imaginative freedom, and (below) to give a more specific, positive characterization of such freedom than Baum does.

relations.¹⁹ *Mutatis mutandis*, this too could be said of our representation of an object as beautiful: we represent the properties not as arbitrarily arranged, or as subject to possible re-combination, but as reciprocally unified, each as it ought to be in the context of the others.

Likewise, to anticipate the concerns of the [next chapter](#), it is the judgmental character of aesthetic cognitive activity (as the basis of aesthetic pleasure) that justifies our normative claims on others in aesthetic judgment.²⁰ Again, the non-judgmental – and therefore non-normative – character of apprehension and association may elucidate this point by contrast. On Kant's view, every subject must be able to engage in apprehension in order to have experience, or judge, at all. Thus we may, a priori, attribute the requisite apprehensive abilities to other subjects. But with respect to a particular representation, mere apprehension cannot ground any normative claim on others. For if an apprehended collection of intuitions is ordered, it is so only as (possibly) reflecting the temporal order in which intuitions were received by the subject. These intuitions are collected, then, as mere events that happened to, or representations had by, the subject, of which the subject is (now) conscious as a collection. Why, however, ought other subjects to reproduce my collection of representations in any particular instance (or take pleasure in them)? Associative connections, similarly, are dependent on the particular subject's previous experience: only if one has had experience of As conjoined with Bs will one associate As and Bs. They are, therefore, not normatively binding on others: they reflect contingent facts about this particular, empirical subject (even though, for him, they have felt, subjective necessity). Because aesthetic imagination is, by contrast, judgmental, unifies the represented manifold lawfully, it may ground claims on others (including concerning its consequent pleasure).

In sum: the cognitive activity in representing an object as beautiful comprises an activity of the imagination, which is, more specifically, (1) an alternation of attention among heterogeneous (particular, empirical)

¹⁹ See Henrich, "Objectivity and Identity," in *The Unity of Reason*, especially pp. 130–52, for analysis of this Kantian claim.

²⁰ Hence the other frequently expressed criticism of Guyer's position: precisely because he interprets the harmony of the faculties (and its consequent pleasure) as a passive, caused "aesthetic response," the occurrence of this mental state could not ground the normative claim in aesthetic judgment on others' agreement. Instead, as Guyer recognizes, Kant would (at best) establish that we are justified in claiming that others *will* (be caused to) feel pleasure in this object (on a justified assumption that they have similar natures to my own), not that they *ought* to do so.

properties of the object, or “play.” Such play is (2) free or unrestricted by an overarching determinate concept, attending rather to indeterminately many of the heterogeneous properties of the object. But it is play (3) *with* the understanding, insofar as we indicate conceptually the various aspects of the whole or their interrelations, and is (4) in (free) harmony with the understanding because the manifold is nonetheless taken to belong together, to be unified, indeed in a way that corresponds to the logical norms of the understanding for ideal empirical conceptual content (perfection). Because this manifold is represented as non-arbitrarily combined, or lawfully unified, finally, aesthetic imaginative activity is (5) judgmental in character.

The free play and free harmony of the faculties may then be understood as a cognitive activity involving the same faculties (the same representational abilities) as those required for empirical judgment, and to be judgmental in character. Indeed, just as Kant holds that such harmony between the imagination and the understanding is necessary for empirical judging – the imaginative synthesis of particular, empirical, contingent properties as guided by empirical concepts – so too does the representation of an object as beautiful, as approximating the ideal of perfection or the norm of “cognition in general” for ideal empirical conceptual content, require a *free* harmony of these two faculties. But the judgmental character of such synthesis raises transcendental questions concerning how such aesthetic unification of a manifold is possible, concerning which a priori principle(s) can ground such unification. For in the transcendental deduction of the categories – from which I quoted above – Kant argues that the judgmental synthesis employing the a priori categories is a transcendental condition for the possibility of experience, specifically for the coherence of empirical judging, because we *cannot* lawfully unify the sensible manifold otherwise.²¹ (As we have seen, both apprehension and association fail to provide unified representations unless they are supplemented by empirical judgmental synthesis, itself governed by and grounded in categorial judgmental synthesis.) In other words, I have so far argued that in order for us to grasp a *unity* of heterogeneous intuitions as heterogeneous (to represent the object as beautiful), we must be engaging in imaginative judgmental synthesis. For we must be able to represent such intuitions as distinct (indeed

²¹ I will return below to the other “half” of Kant’s argument in the *CPR* transcendental deduction, viz., that only by such categorial synthesis may representations be part of the experience of a unified, apperceptive subject.

heterogeneous) from one another and also as unified with one another. The unity we represent in aesthetic judging is then a synthetic unity, precisely that which, on Kant's transcendental deduction arguments, can be represented only by employing the categories.

Thus, we must ask: How is it possible that we represent the beautiful object as judgmentally *unified*, but without empirical conceptual determination? Is this possibility grounded in categorial judgmental synthesis? And, if not (as I shall argue), on what alternative a priori principle is such unification grounded?

7.3 Transcendental conditions I: (Not) the categories

The textual evidence suggests that, on Kant's view, aesthetic judging does not employ the categories. As we have seen, Kant denies repeatedly that we employ concepts in aesthetic judging and almost never adds a proviso that he does *not* mean that aesthetic judging is independent of the categories. Indeed Kant explicitly denies that in aesthetic judging we "refer" the manifold to the categorial "concept of the object in general" (v:287–8). And, as I shall now argue, we do not use categorial rules to determine the purposive unity of heterogeneous properties in representing beautiful form.

Kant does claim that beautiful objects are characterizable in terms of "quantum" (i.e., describable by the category of quantity) because they are presented in intuition (thus in space and time; v:249–50). Though Kant does not explicitly state that this is so, we may also assume that beautiful purposive form is also represented with attention to the intensity of its component sensible properties, viz., under the category of "quality" or degree of reality. Because we intuit sensible properties in space and time, and these two categories characterize all sensations insofar as they are presented in space and time, these categories seem inescapably relevant to, and descriptive of, (aspects of) objects represented as beautiful, for beautiful form is a combination precisely of sensibly intuited properties.²²

These categories do not, however, function as rules for *unifying* the sensible intuitions they characterize, whether as objects of knowledge, or as part of purposive form. For they apply in principle to each separate

²² As I shall discuss in the [next chapter](#), the category of necessity might also play a role in aesthetic judging. This category, however, like the categories I discuss here, does not serve as a rule whereby we unify objects. Rather, it is a second-order characterization of the relation between the object (as judged) and the subject.

sensible intuition presented in time and space. These categories furnish, then, the “raw material” for comparisons among intuitions or objects – as more or less intense, larger or smaller – but do not themselves determine any relation among intuitions. Nor, more specifically, can such categorial determination explain how we can attend to/compare/contrast intuitions as qualitatively heterogeneous from one another, or unify them as such (as we do in representing an object as beautiful). For these categories ground comparison among properties only as varying on a quantitative scale. Nor can they guide us in discriminating those sensible intuitions that we take to be related to one another in purposive form from other (also quantitatively and qualitatively determined) sensible intuitions perceived by the subject contemporaneously, but which are not taken to be part of the purposive form of a beautiful object (e.g., traffic noise while one is listening to a piece of music, the color of the wall next to a painting).

According to Kant, the other categories, primarily those of relation, do function to ground relations among intuitions in the manifold, and allow us to discriminate between those that belong to an object (either as attributes, or causally explicable changes or modifications) and others that do not. But these latter categories do not, I argue, ground the unity we represent in beautiful form. As suggested in Chapter [Five](#), the categories are in any case not *sufficient* to explain how we can represent an object as beautiful, since, as necessary, universal concepts, they do not provide us with any means of recognizing and distinguishing among sensible properties in their contingent, particular, heterogeneous character. This, however, may be said of any case of empirical judging. And empirical judging, specifically empirical classificatory recognition of an object (e.g., to produce judgments of perfection), does and must employ the categories. For the categories constitute the concept of an object as such, and empirical concepts are “particular, determinations” (A126) of that concept: they identify a *kind* of object or event, specified by empirical, particular attributes and/or causal behaviors. Thus, to return to an earlier example, the property of solubility in aqua regis that might be taken as a mark for gold implicitly includes (is a “specification” of) the schematized relational category of cause. More broadly, the (unschematized) categories articulate the form of connections among marks in empirical conceptual content or among concepts in empirical predication: metal, for example, is a body (subject/substance) that is malleable (predicate/attribute); the sun causes warmth.

As we have seen, however, beauty is not an empirical concept and thus is not a specification of the categorial concept of the object, nor can it be

based upon (inferred from) empirical concepts that are such specifications. Thus, aesthetic judging, unlike empirical judging, does not – via the concepts it uses – implicitly employ the categories as components of such concepts.²³ Indeed, to return to the discussion in Chapter [Five](#), we might say that in aesthetic judging we represent an object as unified in accord with the norms of general logic – those of perfection or qualitative unity, the maximal, coherent specification in our representation of an object (as at B113–15) – precisely independently of the categorial (transcendental logical) components with which such norms of perfection are, in empirical conceptual representation and judging, combined. In aesthetic judging, we represent aspects of the object as, reciprocally, in meaningful relation to all the other aspects of the object (thus approaching the norm of perfection), but not by attending to specifications of the categorial concept of an object (such as solubility or malleability). Instead, we take such unity to hold among manifest properties not so interpreted (but as contrasting with and complementing one another). Nor, in aesthetic judging, do we unify such sensible properties even in accord with the substance–attribute relation, for each of these “properties” is taken to be reciprocally related to all the others; thus no property is “singled out” as substantial, and none treated as a mere (accidental) attribute – or, since each “property” is what it is only in the context of the whole, they are all, conjointly, subject or predicate. The subject–predicate relation is also inaccurate to the way in which we take such properties to be unified, because none of these properties is taken as universal, i.e., as applicable to a class of objects, but rather as to be what it is only in this context that we are experiencing now.²⁴

²³ In the case of dependent beauty, as discussed above, aesthetic judging “incorporates” empirical classificatory judgment (and thus categorial judgment). But these concepts (and thus their implicit categorial content) – like those we might use to articulate the “aspects” of beautiful objects – are not taken as determinative of beauty or responsible for the unification of the manifold as beautiful. Thus even here the categories cannot explain how the judgmental unification in aesthetic experience is possible. For expository ease, however, I concentrate on free beauty in the text.

²⁴ Thus I ought to use scare quotation marks in my talk of beautiful “objects” and “properties”; I mean merely the (intentional) object of our judging and pleasure, not the substantive concept of an object of thought or of knowledge; likewise, in the aesthetic context, sensible “properties” are experienced neither as universals, nor as dependent upon a substance. As a side note, I believe that Kant might (anachronistically speaking) use the absence of the categories in aesthetic judging – i.e., the absence of our basic ontological concepts that define objecthood – to explain the ontological puzzles about objects of aesthetic appreciation that have occupied much of twentieth-century aesthetics. (See, e.g., Joseph Margolis, “The

Consideration of the phenomenology of aesthetic experience can also lend support to Kant's suggestion that we do not presuppose the categorical concept of an object in order to represent aesthetic unity. We may, for example, appreciate landscapes or sunsets as beautiful by virtue of the interplay of their sensible properties as we perceive them without believing (cognitively judging) that such sensible properties *belong to* one and the same object (or to a group of objects judged to coexist with one another according to dynamic laws of action and reaction). We may know or be able cognitively to judge that the sensible properties in these cases "actually" belong to a number of different objects – and yet, aesthetically, they belong together as one "object" of aesthetic judging. Similarly, the tones in a melody do not need to have or be understood to have a common causal origin (they may be produced by different instruments and players, for example), nor need be causally described at all, in order to be (aesthetically) "understood" as following upon one another in a certain order.

I am not, to be clear, arguing that aesthetic experience is strictly phenomenal, or "in the head," ontologically composed of private sensations, disengaged from the external world or external objects. Rather, the epistemic distinctions for the establishment of which Kant believes that the categories are necessary, e.g., between the subjective order of perception and the objective order of events, either are irrelevant to the aesthetic appreciation of beautiful form, or (insofar as such distinctions *are* made in aesthetic experience) are established in the experience itself. If I hear a melody in a certain order and, as such, find it aesthetically meaningful (beautiful), it does not matter (aesthetically) whether the tones "really did" occur in that order. Alternatively, if the tones seem to be in the "right" order aesthetically (say, they build and satisfy harmonic expectations), they are in the right order – I do not raise the question whether that *is* the right order. Similarly, if I take in a landscape from one point of view or in one order (as in Kant's house example [A90–1/B235–6]) as aesthetically pleasing, I do not need to *ask* whether the landscape comprises items that coexist; for me the various properties I perceive, represented as a beautiful object, are coexistent or interrelated.

The suggestion that aesthetic experience does not itself involve the categories need not, moreover, undermine Kant's argument that the

categories (or categorially guided synthesis) are necessary in order for experience to be possible. For even though the imaginative activity in aesthetic experience does not follow rules prescribed by the categories, this activity – and its success in representing an object as beautiful – may well have to occur within the broader context of objective experience governed by the categorial rules. That is, Kant allows that we can have purely subjective experiences, experiences (even *judgments* – of perception) in which we do not apply the schematized categories.²⁵ Both mere apprehension and Humean association are possible – indeed actual (if, in the first case, rarely so) – examples of such subjective experience: the taste of the madeleine brings Proust’s memories of his childhood to mind, even though he makes no causal judgments concerning the connections between the two. And on being woken in the middle of the night, one might apprehend, for example, crash-dark-ping-clatter-patter, patter, patter-huhhmm (later to be judged, and thus made intelligible, as: it’s the middle of the night, the cats knocked over something in the kitchen, which woke me up, and scared them so that they ran off). As already noted, Kant argues that we must apply concepts, specifically the categories, in order to render such representations into unified representations of unified objects. But Kant also argues that association is impossible without a backdrop of a unified, regular experience, an objective, uniformly ordered, spatio-temporal continuity, pre-established by categorial judgment and figurative, productive, imaginative synthesis guided by such categories (e.g., A100–2). Such arguments might well apply, too, to non-unified apprehension, and to aesthetic *Beurteilung*: only within a categorially determined, universally law-governed nature may we be able to engage in free unification of contingent aspects of objects, to eschew conceptual unification of a particular object (or set thereof) without being overwhelmed by the chaos of the given.

Still, as a cognitive activity that unifies a manifold without categorial determination, aesthetic judging poses a pressing question for Kant. If the schematized categories and specific empirical concepts do not ground the unity we experience aesthetically, how *do* we represent the aesthetic manifold as unified? How and why can this manifold (be taken to) be characterized by the lawfulness of the contingent, instead of being “merely a blind play of representations, less even than a dream”? Or,

²⁵ See Rush, “Harmony of the Faculties,” for discussion of (and survey of scholarly positions concerning) the interpretive difficulties occasioned by this claim.

briefly: how *is* aesthetic experience possible?²⁶ The answer to these questions, I shall now argue, is the a priori principle of purposiveness as the structure of the subject's judging activity itself.

7.4 Transcendental conditions II: The principle of purposiveness as the subjective principle of aesthetic judging

One might object to my preceding argument that purposiveness itself presupposes (or involves) the categories, for Kant (in D1 and D2) defines purposiveness by reference to the category of cause, i.e., as the product or characteristic activity of a particular (conceptually guided) type of cause; in representing an object as purposive in form, then, we would employ (at least) this category. These definitions are, however, misleading concerning the formal purposiveness of the beautiful: we do not judge the beautiful object to be “really” or “materially” purposive, neither that it functions as if it *had* purposes, nor that it was created by a purposive, concept-having agent. Rather, we experience the object as having the mere form of, or merely subjective, formal purposiveness;²⁷ we take its

²⁶ The elision of this central and (on a Kantian view) deeply puzzling aspect of aesthetic experience marks the difference between my interpretation and Fleischacker's, with which I am otherwise in considerable agreement (Samuel Fleischacker, *A Third Concept of Liberty: Judgment and Freedom in Kant and Adam Smith* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999], pp. 23–4). Similarly, accounts like Makkreel's (*Imagination and Interpretation*, Chapter 3) – according to which the imagination simply “apprehends” such unity (without categorial determination) – eschew responding to this crucial question. (Makkreel himself holds that the schematized categories are [somehow] “compared” to the aesthetic representation of unity, but this does not explain how this representation is unified.)

²⁷ Kant distinguishes between the purposiveness of beautiful objects and the claim that they were *caused* to exist by purposive causality at v:236n, 291. This difference is also significant in Kant's account of intellectual interest in natural beauty, where we not only judge a natural object as beautiful, but also judge *that* nature *caused* the existence of this beautiful thing (purposively), and therefore take a second, morally interested, pleasure. Compare, too, Kant's treatment of geometrical (formal) purposiveness: geometrical rules are purposive, Kant claims, in that they produce many figures that “are serviceabl[e] for the solution of many problems” (v:362), which serviceability comprises “the unity of many rules” (v:364). Geometrical purposiveness thus is – like beauty – a unity of heterogeneity (of rules, applications, or uses) of some sort, and is formal (a cognitive, not causal, unity), but – unlike beauty – is judged to be so for *determinate*, conceptually articulable, cognitive ends, i.e., for solving many problems. As Kant suggests, moreover, such unity is explained by the fact that geometrical figures are constructed in accord with rules (or a concept) in the first place. Thus geometrical purposiveness – unlike aesthetic purposiveness – is a case both of technical purposiveness (we construct such figures in accord with rules) and of the good (we approve of it for conceptually articulated reasons).

properties to be reciprocally unified not as causally interacting, but as complementing or contrasting with one another, to make the object what it is (for judgment). Representing an object as formally purposive does not, then, implicitly employ the concept of cause. But this objection can lead us to understand how the principle of purposiveness as a principle of the subject's judging activity does ground the representation of the unity of the diverse in the beautiful manifold.

As noted above, Kant invokes purposive causality (or "as if" purposive causality) in order to explain the existence of objects characterized by the unity of the diverse, or by means–ends purposive relations. We can identify a similar explanatory, though not causal, role played by concepts in *objective* formal purposiveness (perfection) to that played by the conceptually articulated intention in technical activity. For, as argued in Chapter [Five](#), the unity of contingent, heterogeneous marks in the conceptual content of a perfect concept is "produced" by intentional cognitive activity, guided by concepts – viz., by the categorial forms and categorial concept of the object, and by the norms of general logic (specification, and unification of the diverse). Moreover, as argued in Chapter [Two](#), empirical classificatory judgments of particular objects (e.g., as perfect or not) can be understood as the products of purposive activities of judging with a purpose: in so judging, we synthesize sensible properties with one another to form the representation of a unified, empirically determinate object and do so, again, as directed by – and towards – the empirical concept *as* the purpose of such judging (and thereby as the purpose of the object – this concept identifies what it is "supposed to be"). Thus such purposive activity (in the D2 sense) produces a unified whole of parts as heterogeneous, as guided by a concept; it does not cause the existence of such an object (as technical activity produces artifacts), but produces the representation of an object as unified. Purposiveness here characterizes what we *do* in judging.

As noted above, on this (D2) conception of purposiveness, aesthetic judging is purposive without a purpose: in such cognitive activity, we perform an activity similar to that in empirical classificatory judgmental synthesis – we unify contingent properties as belonging together, to make the object what it is – but without a purpose, not (that is) as guided by or aiming towards a determinate, specified empirical concept. In aesthetic judging, the imagination unifies "by means of the *procedure* of the power of judgment" (v:292, my emphasis); the imagination is in a "purposive disposition [*Stimmung*] . . . towards [*zur*] its correspondence with the faculty of concepts in general" (v:344). It is, moreover, precisely because the

imagination is – and “must yet be”²⁸ – purposive, viz., *aims* at or strives for unification of the manifold, that we are able to grasp the beautiful object as unified.²⁹ The principle of purposiveness (without a purpose) is, then, the principle of aesthetic judging as the structure of such activity.

As suggested above, in aesthetic *Beurteilung* we unify a manifold by using the imagination and understanding – as we do in standard empirical judgmental synthesis – but we invert their usual functions; it is the imagination, rather than the understanding, that accomplishes the unification of the object. Now, I argue, we should understand this empirical cognitive activity to be grounded in a judgmental transcendental activity of the imagination in which the imagination again performs something like the understanding’s role, but here a priori, viz., with respect to *temporal order*. In aesthetic judging, it is not the categorial rules, but imaginative purposive projection of the future, that grounds the possibility of uniting the manifold of given intuitions.

As is well known, Kant argues that the categories are necessary for the possibility of experience not simply because they articulate the concept of an object of thought or function as rules for the unification of a manifold, but because they function as rules, a priori, for the synthesis of a *temporal* manifold to form a unified, objective temporal order. The categories are necessary for experience as such rules of a priori temporal unification, because intuitions are, a priori, (given and taken as) distinct from one another in the form of time: each is given at a separate moment, as an “absolute unity” (Agg) in that single moment; time is the a priori condition for (sensible) manifoldness, or distinctiveness, as such. Though all intuitions are represented in time, this common form does not, then, unite the manifold of such intuitions. Kant argues that we cannot simply intuit such moments as parts of one unified time order; there is no obvious, intuitively graspable interconnection among our given intuitions, no marker of uni-directional order, simply in temporally apprehended intuitions or moments of time (e.g., A181–2/B1224–5).

We require, then, rules for the unification of a single objective time order; and such rules are provided a priori by the categories. Moreover,

²⁸ v:306.

²⁹ It may seem strange to characterize the imagination in aesthetic experience as “striving” or projective but yet also (or thereby) as free. The freedom of such striving may, however, be understood as a version of Kant’s central conception of freedom, as positive freedom or self-direction: the imagination is (negatively) free of conceptual limitation, but is also, and indeed more importantly, positively free as self-directing (e.g., v:292).

just as, in empirical judging, the imagination mediates between concepts and intuitions (by synthesizing particular intuitions according to the marks of the empirical concept), so too does the transcendental productive imagination mediate a priori between the categories and the temporal manifold, for it synthesizes this manifold in accord with categorical rules. Kant argues, that is, that in order to have coherent experience we must imaginatively schematize the categories, render such concepts as rules for sensible synthesis, and thereby figuratively construct an objective, unified time order, as guided by the categorical rules.³⁰

Kant holds, in general, that the imagination can perform its function, viz., combine intuitions into a manifold, because it can produce representations of what is “not present,” either the past or, in the case of the productive imagination, the categorially determined future structure of experience (e.g., B151). Thus, just as intuitions are rendered distinct a priori because they are (considered as) presented at distinct temporal moments, the imagination can bring intuitions together into a manifold by bringing together (re-presenting) temporal moments. Specifically, in apprehension, the imagination connects the past as heterogeneous from the present, to the present intuition.³¹ And (less obviously) in association, we connect the present intuition with the future as heterogeneous from, expected in, the present. For, though Kant refers to association as “reproductive” imagination (to contrast with the a priori productive imagination [B152]), such imaginative activity appears to be (more) forward-looking than the retrospective (reproductive, and collecting) activities in apprehension: in association, we engage in a “predictive” synthesis – when we see an A, we *expect* a B to follow. The productive imagination following categorical rules of synthesis, similarly, produces a priori *expectations* (one might say) of lawful, objective, unified experience, through its figurative construction of objective temporal order.

³⁰ This line of argument is clearer in the B Deduction than in the A Deduction (see, e.g., B151 and 168), and is carried out in more detail in the Schematism and Principles chapters. Guyer, *Claims of Knowledge*, has the most sustained argument that Kant’s project in the *CPR* is to justify the categories as forms of time-determination.

³¹ See *Anth* VII:182, *Metaphysik* LI XVII:235–7, *Metaphysik Mrongovius* XIX:881–4, *Metaphysik Dohna* XVIII:673f.; and Makkreel, *Imagination and Interpretation*, Part I, on Kant’s identification of different imaginative activities with different forms of time consciousness; e.g., Kant’s distinctions between imaginative “illustration” (representing something as present) and reproductive imagination (representing a past item). The aesthetic imagination (on my view) significantly resembles the “fictive” function of the imagination (discussed in Kant’s lectures), an “anticipatory” activity of fitting items into a whole.

As we have seen, mere apprehension and association fail to represent an empirical manifold as unified, and so too Kant holds that they fail to constitute unified time order. But these non-conceptually guided imaginative activities (considered a priori as activities of forming temporal manifolds) can indicate, I suggest, how the non-conceptually and non-categorially guided unification of the manifold in aesthetic experience is possible, how we can constitute internal relations among heterogeneous sensible intuitions, at once recognizing the heterogeneity of the moments/sensible properties of its experience and yet taking those moments to be internally unified with, or related to, one another.

In order to represent an object as beautiful, we must (as I have been arguing) represent heterogeneous sensible properties as internally related to one another, as reciprocally unified, as always already part of a whole, as always already means towards that end (or as reciprocally ends and means). And, I now suggest, we can do so – imaginatively, without conceptual guidance – by representing these properties as at once presented at different moments, *and* as part of an anticipated future whole; in aesthetic experiencing, we must imaginatively anticipate the future as an end, engage in projective imaginative activity, structured by the principle of purposiveness as a form of time relation.³²

As discussed above, Kant articulates the structure of organic purposiveness without a purpose as a causal series that is conditioned both

³² I am inspired here by Heidegger's thesis in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* that the imagination is constituted by "original time." Unlike Heidegger, however, I do not claim that this projective conception of the subject's imaginative activity is necessary to explain the possibility of experience in general, but only that of the representation of the unity of the diverse in aesthetic judging (and, as I shall argue in the [next chapter](#), in reflective judging more broadly). Wohlfart, "Transzendental-Ästhetik," proposes a similar view to mine, drawing on Kant's pre-critical *Reflexionen* and the CAJ account of the sublime. I would, however, draw a firmer distinction between the purposive activities of the imagination in the cases of the sublime and of the beautiful than Wohlfart does: in the (mathematical) sublime, the imagination aims, indeed, at unification of the object, but not at a systematic interconnection of heterogeneous parts (unity of the diverse as such), but rather at a totality of homogeneous units, viz., a unity in accord with the idea of infinity. Thus, on parallel to my arguments in Chapter [Three](#) concerning the difference between the indefiniteness of physical, material "unity" (or aggregation), or the indefinite unity of a homogeneous series (of things or events in time or space), and the purposive unity in organisms, I would argue that the imaginative unificatory activity in the mathematical sublime must fail, producing only a representation of the object as limitless, by contrast to the always already anticipated, and successful, *systematic* unification of heterogeneous parts accomplished by the imagination in representing the beautiful.

forwards and backwards in time. I suggest that we may leave aside the specifically causal (“material”) character of such relations, and take purposiveness without a purpose to be a temporal structure in which we take the present as defined or determined by the future (and vice versa), a state of purposiveness without a purpose to be a pure aiming at the future, or future-directedness. As a structure of imaginative synthesis of temporally presented moments, this anticipation of the future characterizes, I argue, what (we must understand) the imagination to do in aesthetic representation. For here the sensible intuitions that “are to be” intuited must constrain how we take the currently perceived sensible properties; we attend to each sensed particular in the context of the whole in which it will be part, for which it serves as a means. In projectively unifying sensible properties, we take the present both as eliciting the expectation of a future representation, and also as being what it is as the past of that future whole. In such anticipation, that is, not only does our experience of an A lead us to expect something like a B (as in association), but also, in light of the B – or more properly, the A and B combination – we are “going to” experience, we see our current intuition of A *as* preliminary to, a means to experiencing, B. The anticipatory structure of purposiveness can explain, then, the way in which we experience (some) sensible properties *as* at once distinct from one another and combined, reciprocally *as* constraints on how to experience one other and to exclude other intuitions that do not fit into the whole – or as governed by the lawfulness of the contingent.

Despite Kant’s own low estimation of music among the arts, aesthetic experience of a melody or harmonic chord progression is a good example of such purposive judging. In hearing each tone of a melody, we “expect” certain tones to follow, such as would fit into the overall melody line, just as we expect disharmonies to be resolved in chord progressions. We also, however, retrospectively appreciate our experience of the earlier tones or chords in light of our experience of later tones that show us the role of those earlier tones and/or chords in the whole. In the latter case, one might say something like “now I know what I heard” (not: now I have a new interpretation for the isolated, separately identified tone I heard). We are always hearing each tone of a melody in, as it were, the attitude that we “will have heard” its place in a (differentiated, complex) whole.³³ Only thus, I suggest, may we achieve the experience of

³³ This character of the “parts” of an aesthetically apprehended object – that they are represented as always already part of the whole – may explain why Kant eschews the

music Kant describes, viz., a representation “of that proportion of the impressions, in their combination as well as in their alternation, by means of which it becomes possible to grasp them together and to prevent them from destroying one another, so that they . . . agree in a continuous movement and animation of the mind” (v:329). Even in appreciating visually beautiful objects, the properties of which are not temporally successive, continuing attention to the object (or criticism at its best) allows us to see how the individual properties of the object are “just right” (as we have “already” experienced them to be) because of their relations to properties or aspects of the object we had not explicitly recognized before.

This anticipatory character of aesthetic imagination accounts, too, for the playful dynamism in a subject’s aesthetic engagement with an object: in purposive aesthetic judging, each presently intuited sensible property is appreciated as means to the future anticipated whole of which it is part, and thus that future whole (the combination of indeterminately many properties of the object) is thereby already suggested within, or alluded to, in the present. The subject is then, as it were, beckoned on to consideration of those other properties as they serve as means to (representation of) one another, within the projected, anticipatorily grasped whole, which properties in turn point the subject (back) towards the other properties that constitute the object; our appreciation constitutes at once a grasp of the properties as a whole and an “alternation” among the (heterogeneous) properties.³⁴

This purposive imaginative anticipation of the future is, I suggest, what Kant means when he characterizes the aesthetic imagination as “schematiz[ing] without a concept” (v:287) or as “productive and self-active” (v:240). As an activity of combining the empirically determined, sensible characteristics of objects, the purposive imaginative activity in aesthetic experience may be said to be “schematizing without a concept”

language of “synthesis” in characterizing aesthetic representing: here we should not be understood to intuit separate, given items, only then to be connected, whether associated or in accord with rules.

³⁴ Thus, though I must differ from Rush (“Harmony of the Faculties”) concerning his suggestion that the free harmony of the faculties comprises an open-ended succession of imaginative syntheses of (many, various) “forms” or ways in which the manifold might be synthesized (for such a succession would not, as I have argued, be a representation of the manifold as purposively unified, or as harmonious with the lawfulness of the understanding, or its demands for unification of the manifold), Rush’s description of such imaginative unification as “proleptic” unification is quite appropriate on my view.

in an empirical sense: here, as I have suggested, we synthesize empirical properties purposively, thus engaging in an activity similar to the imaginative activity of (empirical) schematization (the application of empirical concepts to the sensible manifold). But we can also, I now suggest, read these claims to suggest a connection between aesthetic, purposive imagination, and the a priori schematizing activity of the imagination (the figurative/productive synthesis) in which we construct a coherent spatio-temporal order according to categorial rules, extending (lawfully) into the future. For in aesthetic purposive projection the imagination likewise anticipates the future and thereby unifies the temporal moments of its experience, or “spontaneously produces” a temporal order among intuitions. Indeed, purposiveness constitutes a time order as internally directional (towards the future) and as composed of heterogeneous “parts,” i.e., past, present, and future, that are heterogeneous from one another, and yet defined in terms of one another; as constituted by the principle of purposiveness, time itself is thus structured as a unity of heterogeneity.³⁵ Such imaginative projection unifies temporally presented intuitions, unifies given moments of time – but it does so without the guidance of the categories. It schematizes, as it were, without a concept.

7.5 A subjective principle

Purposiveness without a purpose is, thus, an a priori principle of judging, a structure of time relations that characterizes the very activity of aesthetic judging. But, as in the case of pleasure, this principle is a distinctively *subjective* principle of the subject’s activity: it characterizes the subject as “heautonomous,” legislating not for objects, but for itself alone.³⁶ As I have argued, representation of an object as beautiful is possible only as the object of this purposive cognitive activity. The dependence of such representation on the subject’s judgmental activity does not, however, itself render this principle distinctively subjective. For, according to Kant, intuitions themselves do not relate to or “contain” one another; any lawful, unifying relation among intuitions – e.g., that they are all properties of one object – is instituted by and in judging (e.g., B129–30). But

³⁵ This conception of time resembles John McTaggart’s concept of time as an A series (“Time,” in Richard Gale, ed., *The Philosophy of Time* [Garden City, NY: Doubleday Anchor, 1967], 86–79).

³⁶ E.g., v:185–6; cf. v:288.

the purposive relations among sensible properties in an object experienced as beautiful – each is just as it should be, in relation to all the other properties of the object – are so related only as *actually* experienced to be so by a subject, who plays cognitively with such properties, attends alternately to their contrast and complement, judgmentally holds them (thus) to belong together, and does so by projecting a future whole. Moreover, the subject does not hereby legislate that any specifiable relations (substance–accident, cause–effect, generic–specific) hold among the properties of an object experienced as beautiful. And the subject certainly does not legislate that the object is itself characterized by purposive temporality. Rather, the aesthetically judging subject legislates *to itself* that it anticipate the whole, that it be “open to” whichever qualitatively nuanced properties there are in the object, and to the qualitatively nuanced ways in which such properties may reciprocally contrast with and complement one another. The subject allows the character of each intuition or property to constrain the character of others, and/or to serve reciprocally as means to the experience of the others, or of the whole. The subject does not – and cannot – legislate, therefore, that it will be able to judge an object so, that the properties will, approached thus judgmentally, appear unified with one another, contrast with and complement one another.³⁷

As suggested in Chapter Six concerning pleasure, moreover, purposiveness is a subjective principle of judging not merely because it does not

³⁷ Thus, I suggest, Kant’s account leaves room for the possibility of aesthetically experiencing objects as ugly or non-beautiful. I believe that most judgments of ugliness are judgments of the disagreeable or of an object’s lack of dependent beauty (because it fails to be an adequate member of its kind). Still, there can be a pure judging of the ugly: in aesthetic judging, we might find an object’s aspects not amenable to (representation in terms of) reciprocal means–ends relations, to “clash,” to be chaotic, non-unifiable, not to beckon us on to playful attention to further properties, each as parts of a whole, but rather to turn our attention away from the object, from this combination of properties, altogether. By contrast to many current readers of the *CJ* (e.g., Fricke, *Kants Theorie*, pp. 48–50; Allison, *Theory of Taste*, p. 116) who also wish to allow for the possibility of a Kantian judgment of ugliness, however, I suggest that aesthetic judging of the ugly involves neither free harmony of the imagination and the understanding (we fail to represent the object as unified), *nor* the free play of the imagination with the understanding. (Though it *would* involve the “attempt” at aesthetic representation, i.e., the initial purposive self-legislation of the imagination, its openness to a holistic representation of the object.) For free *play* (as an ongoing, active state of mind) *both* requires the overarching imaginative, anticipatory representation of the object as a whole (the free harmony), as a context and inducement (as it were) to its alternation of attention from one property to the next, *and* – through such playful alternation – partially constitutes that very anticipatory grasp of the whole.

legislate to the object, but also because it does characterize the subject, as a temporally placed subject. As judging in accord with this principle, the subject must *be* anticipatory in order to find an object beautiful. Unlike the cognitive activities Kant describes in the other *Critiques*, Kant's account of aesthetic judging may not, that is, be reinterpreted as simply a psychologized description of the structure of types of knowledge, judgments, or propositional claims, or an analysis of the requisite components of such experience.³⁸ As Kant writes, aesthetic judging is a "purposive *state of mind*" (v:296; my emphasis).

Hence the apparent kinship between Kant's account of the harmony of the faculties and empirical psychology. But again as in the case of pleasure, this purposive state of mind is nonetheless to be understood as strongly subjective, for it cannot be understood simply as an occurrence in inner sense, as part of an objectively determined temporal order, as (that is) a merely empirical, psychological, mechanistic process. By contrast, the pre-conceptual activities (as well as contents) of apprehensive and associative imagination *can* be described mechanistically, as occurring in objective time. In apprehensive synthesis, we re-present the past (intuition) merely alongside the present (intuition) or within a present moment; such synthesis is, in Heideggerean terms, merely an addition of "nows," juxtaposed within one currently experienced "now." In association, we experience first one intuition and then another (expected) intuition; we do not experience such intuitions as internally connected, but merely as occupying successive, in principle distinct, moments or "nows." Such forms of imaginative activity not only juxtapose intuitions in, but also can themselves be understood as occurring in, an objective, purely successively conceived, temporal order. The unifying, reciprocally constraining interconnections in the aesthetically represented manifold cannot, by contrast, be explained as mechanistically caused events in the subject's inner sense, ruled by laws of association (or, third-personally, by empirical causal laws formulated in empirical psychology). Nor can such anticipation be "domesticated" or placed in an irreversible, objective temporal order according to our now familiar concept-action-end model of rational purposive activity. In ordinary cognitive judgmental synthesis, the concept determines the imagination in its synthesis, and thus again the temporal order of this judgmental activity is: concepts – the imagination's synthesis of the manifold accordingly – representation of a unified object (as product of judgmental synthesis). In aesthetic judging, the

³⁸ As Strawson attempts in *Bounds of Sense*, for example.

act of unification is not guided by a concept, by a preceding principle of unity; rather, the imagination's activity in aesthetic judging refers to a unity at which it *aims*, is unified (or unifying) precisely and irreducibly in such open-ended aiming. The subject must, then, be understood as able to experience each moment as internally or intrinsically directed towards the future as end, must be spontaneous or legislate to itself.³⁹ In aesthetic judging we anticipate the future without concepts – we are purposive without a purpose – and therefore engage in a purely projective activity, one that cannot be described as “caused” by a previous moment, one that is purely, irreducibly subjective.

7.6 Aesthetic judging as the basis of aesthetic pleasure

Purposiveness as a projective temporal structure of the subject's act of judging is, thus, a necessary condition for the representation of objects as beautiful: it explains how we, as subjects, can consciously experience sensible intuitions *as* internally related in reciprocal, formal, means–ends relations. As I have noted, aesthetic judging therefore shares the temporal structure of aesthetic pleasure, and, as I shall now argue, this structural similarity can elucidate the relation between judging and pleasure in Kant's account of aesthetic experience.

As noted above, Kant argues in §9 that the “key” to the investigation of taste is the claim that aesthetic judging “precedes” pleasure (v:218), for only thus may the universal claims we make on others in aesthetic judgment be justified. This claim has been read by commentators as a claim concerning either temporal precedence, or logical precedence.⁴⁰ Indeed,

³⁹ I mean here to resist the following sort of objection: Kant claims that the principle of purposiveness is a principle by which we “ought” to judge, and therefore cannot be merely an empirical psychological description of how we *do* judge (e.g., v:182). On my view, the principle of purposiveness *does* describe how we ought to judge in order to have aesthetic experience (it is not merely an empirical description), but this prescription concerns how the activity ought, temporally, to be structured.

⁴⁰ The most common reading of this relationship – again most explicitly defended by Guyer – is as a causal relationship, thus of temporal precedence. Some of Kant's language supports this reading: e.g., his claims that pleasure is “aroused” or “produced” by the accord of the faculties (v:190). Kant explicitly denies, however, that the relationship between aesthetic judging and pleasure is causal (v:221–2). For criticisms of Guyer's position or a causal interpretation more generally, see Ginsborg, *Role of Taste*, pp. 52–4; Aquila, “New Look”; Allison, “Pleasure and Harmony”; Schaper, *Studies*, pp. 20–5; Baum, “Subjektivität,” 277–80. Many of these commentators (Schaper most explicitly) read Kant's precedence claim to be a logical one. As I suggest here, I do not believe that this precedence can be (solely) so understood.

both logical (justificatory) *and* temporal orders are significant for Kant's account of the beautiful, as distinct from the good and from the agreeable. Our claims on others to share our pleasures are justified if those pleasures are based on judging and not (as in the case of the agreeable) if our pleasure logically precedes our judgment. And, as we have seen, Kant's claims concerning the (dis)interestedness of the pleasures involved in each case rests on consideration of the temporal, causal place (or lack thereof) for such pleasure in theoretical accounts of willed action. More expansively: in the case of the good, the judgment both temporally precedes and logically justifies pleasure, and does so as quite distinct from the pleasure: first, we judge the object, i.e., note that it has the properties that render the object good according to criteria specified by a conceptually defined purpose. *Therefore* (and thereafter), we take pleasure in that object as so judged (v:207). Pleasure in the agreeable, by contrast, is first caused by the object; *then*, and therefore, we judge about that pleasure, i.e., about ourselves as passively affected by objects and about objects as causes of such pleasure.

In the cases of the agreeable and the good, then, precedence questions (whether logical or temporal) are easily decidable. Kant's question concerning precedence in the case of aesthetic judging *arises*, however, precisely because Kant's distinctions of the beautiful from the good and the agreeable entail that aesthetic judging and pleasure are not separable in either of these two ways, and thereby seem not to stand in a determinate order of precedence, either logical or temporal. Unlike judgments of the good, in aesthetic experience there is no finished determinative judgment of the object that gives us conceptually articulated reasons for taking pleasure in the object; thus aesthetic pleasure is not justified by conceptual judgment, or objective reasons. It is not logically preceded by or based upon judging. On the other hand, in aesthetic experience we find properties pleasing only in combination with one another; thus we need to attend actively to the object (engage in aesthetic judging) in order to experience aesthetic pleasure, and cannot understand ourselves to be pleased (as in the case of the agreeable) because we are passively affected by the object (and then and therefore judge the object to be pleasing). In general, *as* disinterested, aesthetic pleasure cannot temporally precede

Moreover, as I shall argue in the [next chapter](#), this interpretation does not (as many of its proponents seem to think) eliminate another precedence problem in Kant's account, i.e., the apparent conflict between Kant's claims that aesthetic judging precedes pleasure, and that pleasure is the "basis" for aesthetic judgment, which holds if one takes such relations to be logical as well.

or succeed the activity of aesthetic judging: it is the consciousness of an impetus to remain in the very same state that we are currently in, viz., representing the object as having purposive form. Thus such pleasure must be held to “occur” contemporaneously with aesthetic *Beurteilung*.

How, then, should we understand this precedence relationship between aesthetic judging and pleasure? In §12, Kant suggests that we may understand aesthetic pleasure to be connected to aesthetic judging similarly to the way in which respect (or moral pleasure) is connected to the “idea of the moral.” By developing this parallel between respect and aesthetic pleasure, I shall argue that we may read Kant’s precedence claim as a claim that aesthetic judging is *transcendentally* prior to aesthetic pleasure; it is, that is, the necessary condition for the possibility of such pleasure.

Kant claims that the feeling of respect is not derived

from the idea of the moral as a cause, rather it was merely the determination of the will that was derived from the latter. The state of mind of a will determined by something, however, is *in itself already a feeling of pleasure and is identical with it*, thus it does not follow from it as an effect. (v:222; my emphasis)⁴¹

So too, Kant continues, should we understand the relationship between aesthetic judging and aesthetic pleasure: “The consciousness of a merely formal purposiveness in the play of the cognitive powers of the subject in the case of a representation through which an object is given, is the pleasure itself” (v:222, my emphasis).⁴²

On the account of pleasure in Chapter Six, we may understand Kant’s characterization of respect as based upon, but not caused by, the representation of the moral law (or the “idea of the moral”), and yet as “identical” with the determination of the will in accord with this idea. Respect is based upon and must be preceded by our self-legislation of the moral law, because it is pleasure *in* the moral law, *in* the moral good as our vocation or highest purpose, the representations of which we must therefore “have” (first) in order to take such pleasure. More crucially, as Kant emphasizes here, respect or moral pleasure is identical to the state of mind of determination of the will because pleasure *is* the consciousness of a state of future-directedness. Thus the consciousness of the determination

⁴¹ Here Kant departs from his apparently causal account of the relationship between the representation of the moral law and respect at *CPvR* v:71f.

⁴² Cf. Fricke, *Kants Theorie*, pp. v, 2–3, 26.

of the will, i.e., a state of being-directed-and-motivated-towards acting to accomplish certain ends or according to certain laws, would, indeed, *be* one kind of pleasure.

These two claims hold, *mutatis mutandis*, for aesthetic pleasure as well. For, I have argued, aesthetic pleasure is, according to Kant, pleasure in purposive form. In order, however, for us to take pleasure in such form, we must be able so to represent sensible properties, i.e., engage in aesthetic judging. Moreover, though aesthetic judging is not directly practical (unlike the moral determination of the will), it shares the end- or future-directedness of practical orientation. Such judging, as Kant writes, is a “mental attunement that sustains itself,”⁴³ a state in which we “linger” because it “strengthens and reproduces itself” (v:222). As I have proposed, aesthetic judging sustains itself as an ongoing, playful, alternating attentiveness to the allusive interconnections of properties in a rich whole; it is a “self-strengthening,” not frustrating, activity, for the subject is always anticipatorily representing a whole, not failing to do so. Thus we might well be conscious of this activity as pleasurable, as a state that is – at once – motivating and satisfying.⁴⁴

⁴³ v:230–1; Pluhar translation.

⁴⁴ At v:222, however, Kant suggests a somewhat different connection between aesthetic pleasure as purposive and lingering in aesthetic judging: he attributes “internal causality” not to the state of judging, but to aesthetic pleasure. Kant writes: “The consciousness [*Bewußtsein*] of the merely formal purposiveness in the play of the cognitive powers of the subject . . . is the pleasure itself, because it [*es*; viz., *Bewußtsein*] contains a determining ground of the activity of the subject with regard to the animation of its cognitive powers, thus an internal causality (which is purposive) with regard to cognition in general, but without being restricted to a particular cognition, hence it contains a mere form of the subjective purposiveness of a representation in an aesthetic judgment. This pleasure is also in no way practical . . . yet it has a causality in itself, namely that of *maintaining* the state of the representation of the mind and the occupation of the cognitive powers without a further aim.” Kant thus suggests that aesthetic pleasure has “causality” or that we linger in judging the beautiful *because* it is pleasurable. On my reading, this claim must be understood as a slip: pleasure is preceded by judging on his view, and is a consciousness of the inner causality of that judging. Particularly in the first sentence here, one might suspect that Kant’s referents are somewhat unstable: is it pleasure, or is it the play of the cognitive powers, that should be seen as purposive “with regard to cognition in general”? Perhaps, however, this passage might be read to describe an ongoing, reciprocal relationship between (preceding) judging and (consequent) pleasure: we feel pleasure as consciousness of our purposive judging, but such pleasure may also (then) lead us to continue to engage in (more) purposive judging, which (again) is pleasing (grounds or precedes pleasure). This suggestion seems accurate to actual aesthetic experience: we find a beautiful object pleasing because of the play of its properties, because of our ongoing, playful attentiveness to

Indeed, aesthetic judging – as that state the consciousness of which is aesthetic pleasure – explains how aesthetic pleasure is possible. As argued in Chapter Six, aesthetic pleasure is neither the effect of the relief of pain, nor caused by conceptual judgments or intentions, but is, instead, the paradigmatic case of pleasure as the consciousness of our impetus towards continuation of the same state, a purely anticipatory consciousness. Now one might ask how such “pure” anticipation of the future, especially in the form of a “feeling,” is possible. For, as we have seen, in the case of the good we can understand such future-directedness easily: the pleasure is pleasure in a present state that anticipates the future because it is a conceptually articulated intention. Likewise, such pleasure is easily understood as that which “motivates” us (or as the consciousness of our motivation) to produce that future state: it prompts us to act. As we have also seen, Kant denies that pleasure in the agreeable (as mere feeling) can be understood as, thus, anticipatory of the future on its own. In the case of aesthetic pleasure, however, we are conscious of ourselves in feeling (not conceptually) as at once anticipatory of the future *and* inclined to remain in the very same (present) state, not to be aiming at a separable, conceptually envisioned state. How can we, thus, take pleasure in the present “as” the future, take pleasure in the future “as” the same as the present? Or, in more phenomenologically recognizable terms, how can we remain in the same state without suffering the boredom we experience (according to Kant) in the case of sensory pleasure and even in the case of pleasure in the good?⁴⁵

Such pleasure is possible, I suggest, because our state of aesthetic judging is a state itself governed by the principle of purposiveness, is itself a projective state of mind. In phenomenological terms: in imaginative, aesthetic, playful anticipating, we attend in turn to various properties as presently perceived, but as also always already interrelated, in multiple, indeterminate ways. Thus, as suggested above, we are “beckoned on” to attend to the various heterogeneous aspects of the object, the indefinitely many nuanced relations among the properties of the object; we are remaining in the same – but not boringly static – state of mind. In more technical terms: aesthetic judging is isomorphic to aesthetic pleasure as

the object; but then/also, because of such pleasure, we continue engaging in such (pleasurable) play.

⁴⁵ On the connection between pleasure in the agreeable and boredom, see Chapter Six. For suggestions concerning boredom and pleasures in the good, see v:242–3 and v:187 (our pleasure on accomplishing a cognitive goal, i.e., finding a higher empirical law, fades).

pure future-directedness or pure anticipation. Both are structured by purposiveness without a purpose, characterized by the purposive temporal structure of anticipating the future within the present. Thus Kant can argue that the consciousness *of* such a purposive, self-sustaining state just “is” aesthetic pleasure, that is, a consciousness of a present state as anticipatory of the future, as extending itself into the future, of a representation’s “causality” on the subject to remain in the same state.⁴⁶

This suggestion – that aesthetic pleasure is, simply, the consciousness of the state of aesthetic judging – is confirmed by Kant’s subsequent discussion in §9. After Kant has argued that aesthetic judgment precedes aesthetic pleasure, he poses a further question – how we can “become conscious” of the harmony among our cognitive powers (v:218) – and answers that we become conscious of our judging activity through “sensation” (v:219).⁴⁷ Kant’s argument for this claim is disjunctive: we cannot become conscious of aesthetic judgment by means of concepts, so it must be by means of sensation (since concepts and sensations are the only two sources of knowledge). We may accept the first part of this argument: because aesthetic judging is neither guided by, nor ensues in, a determinate concept of the object, we cannot become conscious that we are engaging in such an activity (or have engaged in such an activity) by producing a conceptual judgment. Kant gives no positive reasons as to why we *should* become conscious of our activity of aesthetic judging

⁴⁶ Like Ginsborg (*Role of Taste*, pp. 24ff.; “Reflective Judgment and Taste,” e.g., 74), then, I take aesthetic judging on Kant’s account *to be* pleasurable (not to cause pleasure, as a separate sensory phenomenon). As indicated above, however, on my view aesthetic pleasure and judging have an intentional content beyond the demand for their own perpetuation in me (or concerning their own universal communicability with others); thus they are not merely self-referential. Moreover, because this intentional object must be produced by judging (synthesizing lawfully), one may identify such judging as prior to the pleasure (which is somewhat difficult to do on Ginsborg’s more thorough identification of pleasure as equivalent to judging).

⁴⁷ Kant does not identify this sensation as pleasure, but it seems likely (given everything else Kant writes) that it is. This identification of pleasure as a sensation is, of course, troubling for my claims in Chapter Six, but – apart from Kant’s vagaries concerning his terminological distinctions, noted above – this identification may be explained as intended to suggest only that we feel (rather than think, or know discursively) that we are engaging in aesthetic judging. As I shall argue in the next chapter, however, this claim does *not* mean (as it has often been read, e.g., Allison, *Theory of Taste*, pp. 54, 69) that in such pleasure the subject is aware *that* she is engaging in a harmony of the faculties. Rather, the subject takes pleasure in the representation of the beautiful object, which means that she is aware of a tendency to remain in that state (of representing the object as beautiful, viz., as it turns out, a state of the free harmony, and self-propagating free play, of the faculties).

through a “sensation” of pleasure, but on my interpretation one can – as I have been suggesting – tightly connect the consciousness of aesthetic judging and aesthetic pleasure; aesthetic pleasure is, simply, the “feeling of” a purposive state of mind.

Thus, to borrow another of Kant’s doctrines from his moral philosophy, I suggest that aesthetic judging and pleasure should be understood as related to one another as *ratio essendi* and *ratio cognoscendi*,⁴⁸ respectively. Aesthetic judging is the *ratio essendi* of aesthetic pleasure; it makes such pleasure possible (as consciousness of the purposive state of aesthetic judging). Aesthetic pleasure is, however, the *ratio cognoscendi* of aesthetic judging, the way in which we can become (self-)conscious in representing an object as beautiful.

This second relationship between aesthetic pleasure and aesthetic judging marks, however, a significant disanalogy between the cases of respect and aesthetic pleasure, one that renders Kant’s second question in §9 more crucial to Kant’s account than his characterization of it as a “lesser” question suggests. As Kant notes in §12 and again at v:289, we can (and must) identify the morally good conceptually; respect is not the only, or even the primary, way in which we can become conscious of the moral law as obligatory on us, whereas we cannot be aware of representing the beautiful object as subjectively formally purposive by conceptual means, but *only* by pleasure.

7.7 An objection

It may seem that I have ignored the most obvious way in which Kant uses purposiveness to connect aesthetic pleasure and aesthetic judgment: Kant suggests that the activity of aesthetic judging is purposive (useful) for cognition because it represents contingent, empirical unity in nature, a unity we are not guaranteed to find, but which we seek – and *therefore* we find such judging pleasing.⁴⁹ Thus aesthetic judging would precede

⁴⁸ This is Kant’s description of the relationship between the moral law and freedom at *CPvR* v:5n.

⁴⁹ As suggested at v:190; something like this view is widely attributed to Kant; see, e.g., Stephen Barker, “Beauty and Induction in Kant’s Third *Critique*,” in Ralf Meerbote and Hud Hudson, eds., *Kant’s Aesthetics*, vol. 1 (Atascadero, CA: Ridgeview, 1991), 49–61; 57. Other commentators take Kant to be claiming, more abstractly, that the free harmony is a state of unifying, finding the object to be “as if” designed for us, and thus both this state and the object therein represented are “suitable” for cognition more broadly; e.g., Crawford, *Kant’s Aesthetic Theory*, pp. 76–8, 89–91.

aesthetic pleasure – both temporally and logically – and its purposiveness would explain such pleasure.

I do not intend to reject all aspects of this interpretation; I shall argue in the [next chapter](#) that purposive judging (as instantiated essentially in aesthetic judging) is indeed in a broad sense useful (purposive) or, more strongly, a necessary subjective condition for empirical cognition. It is, however, insufficient to explain the relationship between aesthetic pleasure and aesthetic judging. First, *all* cases of (successful) cognitive judging are purposive for cognition in this sense, but they are not all (aesthetically or otherwise) pleasing, as Kant notes (v:187–8). Further, as noted above, aesthetic judging is much *less* clearly purposive (in this sense) for cognition than normal empirical judging, for it does not produce any cognitive “results” (on Kant’s view).⁵⁰ Nor, finally, does such an explanation seem accurate to the phenomenology of aesthetic experience: when we find something beautiful, we find the experience of it pleasing in itself, not because it is convenient for other (cognitive) purposes.⁵¹

This interpretation cannot explain the relationship between aesthetic judging and aesthetic pleasure because it relies on the “thin utility” conception of purposiveness – as utility (for anything) – and takes pleasure as our response to such utility, which cannot identify the specific character of aesthetic experience. It may seem, however, that my more substantive reading of purposiveness and the connection it makes between aesthetic pleasure and judgment simply eschews the task (that Kant appears to propose) of explaining *why* such judging is pleasing. Aesthetic judging, I have argued, has the same formal structure (and representational content or intentional object) as aesthetic pleasure, and, thus, *is* pleasing. But (it seems) there is no further explanation for *why* such judging, with such a temporally projective, purposive structure, should be pleasing.

I am indeed tempted to stop there, for it seems to me that aesthetic pleasure is simply pleasure in what we are experiencing and how we are experiencing it. Once we can see how it is possible to experience such

⁵⁰ v:190, 209, and as contrasted again to geometrical purposiveness (v:362–4).

⁵¹ This interpretation may rely on an assumption that intellectual or cognitively grounded pleasures are outside the realm of desire and practical activity. But our practices of cognition, e.g., scientific investigation, are themselves purpose-driven, willed *activities*, and the classificatory judgments (e.g.) with which Kant is so concerned in the *CJ* as a whole are the products or “effects” of such activities. Viewed *as* activities or products thereof, cognitive judgments are, then, to be assimilated to the account of interested pleasures (in the good) given above.

pleasure, the search for further explanations seems superfluous. But my reading does suggest an explanation why we find aesthetic judging pleasing, one which (I suggest) Kant has adapted from rationalist explanations of aesthetic pleasure.

On a rationalist view, in perceiving a perfect object, *we* (our minds) become more perfect (full, ordered, or complete) and we find our own increased perfection pleasurable.⁵² As discussed above, Kant is critical of the rationalist concept of perfection both as describing (our appreciation of) the beautiful and in general because it is too indeterminate to be of much theoretical use. Nor does Kant believe that we, as discursive intellects, can become perfect or complete, merely quantitatively different from God's intuitive intellect. Yet on Kant's view, I suggest, we take pleasure in aesthetic judging for similar reasons.

On Kant's account, the activity of aesthetic judging involves (as we have seen) both the understanding and the imagination, the faculties required for cognitive judging. In aesthetic judging, moreover, we approximate – albeit merely subjectively, aesthetically – to an ideal state of empirical cognizing, a state in which we are aware (anticipatorily) of all the sensible properties of an object as they are related to one another or parts of a whole. Indeed, as argued above, the imagination's purposive anticipation allows us to unify more (indefinitely many) sensible properties than could be included in the intension of any discursive concept. Thus, as Kant suggests at v:232, in aesthetic judging the imagination “exhibits” or “strives to produce” an exhibition of “reason's indeterminate idea of a maximum.”⁵³

Because we cannot conceptualize the content of this judging, it does not directly serve our cognitive purposes (provide empirical knowledge of objects), nor directly improve our powers of discursive cognition (make us more perfect), as the rationalists would have it. But for exactly the same reasons, such judging is a continuing activity, prolonged over time, a full exercise of our cognitive capabilities, beyond their normal reach. Kant

⁵² See, e.g., Mendelssohn, “On Sentiments,” in *Philosophical Writings*, pp. 23–4, 46, 48–51.

⁵³ In this passage, Kant is introducing his “ideal of beauty,” a complicated notion that I cannot discuss here. This context need not, however, contradict the interpretation I offer here (that *all* aesthetic judging exhibits the indeterminate idea of a maximum), for Kant explicitly states that the ideal is a “fixed” exhibition of this indeterminate idea; therefore aesthetic judging in general may be an “unfixed” exhibition of (striving towards) such a maximum. See Gibbons (*Theory of Imagination*, esp. pp. 95, 99–100, 179–80) and Fricke (*Kants Theorie*, pp. 124–34) for similar suggestions.

suggests indeed that in such purposive activity without a purpose, the imagination indirectly serves cognitive purposes, broadly understood, not by providing knowledge, but by “animating” or “enlivening” our powers (e.g., v:219). Such animation of our powers is pleasing or gives us a “feeling of the promotion of the faculty of cognition in its free play” (v:287).⁵⁴ As such, on an Aristotelian or rationalist conception of activity and its relation to pleasure (as opposed to a utilitarian one), such judging would be pleasurable because it engages us (cognitively) fully, actively, as Kant’s description of aesthetic pleasure as the “feeling of life” suggests. Thus, for Kant, aesthetic judging is pleasing because it is purposive (i.e., active, projective), not because it actually fulfills – or we judge that it fulfills – any of our cognitive purposes (as it does not); it is, rather, an expansion of our cognitive powers.

7.8 Aesthetic pleasure as the “mark” of aesthetic judging

As noted above, as the sole *ratio cognoscendi* in aesthetic judging, aesthetic pleasure is more crucial to our judgmental representation of an object as beautiful than is the feeling of respect to moral judgment. Pleasure is, Kant writes, the “mark” (*Merkmal*) of aesthetic judgment (FI, xx:226). This claim, I suggest, means not only that such pleasure is a consciousness of engaging in aesthetic judging, but – as Kant’s logical terminology “mark” might suggest – also plays a role within aesthetic experience *in part* parallel to that played by empirical concepts or the categories in cognitive judgmental synthesis.

As discussed above, in empirical judging (particularly classificatory judging) we employ an overarching concept of the empirical kind that – in one single representation – articulates how the properties of the object should be understood to “belong” together, to make the object what it is. In aesthetic judging, aesthetic pleasure does *not* play the role of a rule for the unification of the manifold, to replace the absent overarching empirical concept: we take aesthetic pleasure in the judgmentally produced representation of the object as beautiful; such pleasure is preceded by, and does not guide, the judging. But aesthetic pleasure *can* perform

⁵⁴ Correspondingly, Kant describes aesthetic ideas in poetry as providing “nourishment to the understanding” by giving “life to its concepts through the imagination” (v:321). The parallels between Kant’s descriptions of the free harmony of the faculties in appreciation of pure beauty and of aesthetic ideas lend support to my suggestion in Chapter Five concerning the structural similarity between the experiences of beautiful form and of aesthetic ideas on Kant’s view.

the other role Kant identifies for overarching concepts:⁵⁵ in our experience of the object as beautiful, such pleasure can “stand for” the fact that our representation of the manifold is unified. For aesthetic pleasure is a single representation, and – because it is the consciousness of engaging in aesthetic judging – this single representation pervades our judging of the manifold (as beautiful), “accompanies” each element of that manifold as we turn from one to another in play. If we are pressed to identify how or why the properties of the object “go together,” are reciprocally unified, we can say only that we experience them (as thus unified) “as pleasing.” Aesthetic pleasure serves as the overarching, unitary mark that we are finding an object beautiful, representing it as a purposive unity without a purpose, and thus it is the “unity of consciousness,” by which we “recognize,” Kant writes, the “correspondence” of a representation with a subjective principle of judgment (purposiveness) (FI, xx:226).

This identification of the unifying, significative role for aesthetic pleasure can, moreover, complete Kant’s transcendental explanation (begun in the preceding sections) of how we can have a non-conceptually determined, yet unified, representation of an object – apparently contra Kant’s arguments in the *CPR* deductions. For there Kant argues that categorial determination is necessary for us not only to have a unified representation of an object, but also to recognize ourselves as unified subjects of experience. All representations must be able to be connected to the “I think,” in order to be the experiences of a (single) subject; for this reason too, Kant argues, the subject must employ categorial rules of unification, to recognize itself as a unified subject of the temporal flow of representations.⁵⁶

As argued above, our imaginative purposive projection can explain how we can, without conceptual determination, represent the beautiful object as unified. Now, I suggest, aesthetic pleasure – as the (unified, single) consciousness of our state of aesthetic judging – can address the second of these unificatory desiderata, for it explains the possibility – indeed the actuality – of a unified self-consciousness in aesthetic experiencing. For aesthetic pleasure, like concepts, indeed like the transcendental unity of apperception, functions as the “analytic unity” in and of aesthetic experience.

Once again, Kant’s view should be held to allow that there can be (some, transitory) experience that is not, as such, self-conscious: the

⁵⁵ E.g., A109–10.

⁵⁶ See, e.g., A111, B138f. I am indebted to Cristel Fricke for her clear formulation of this problem (*Kants Theorie*, pp. 64f.).

example above of a purely apprehensive experience seems to me a likely candidate. For – quite in concert with Kant’s arguments in the transcendental deduction – only once such an aggregated, merely apprehended manifold has been judged can I be self-conscious, as a judging, experiencing subject separate from, as the experiencer of, that flurry of representations. But aesthetic experience is not of this kind: though we may (as I have been suggesting) engage deeply with a particular object in its very particular character in such experience, we not only experience *it* as unified, but also so experience it *as* (ourselves) coherent subjects who are having such experience.

The aesthetically experiencing subject can thus experience the beautiful manifold as her own unified experience, I suggest, even without employing the categories, because she experiences it as aesthetically pleasing. For, as we have seen, aesthetic pleasure (indeed all pleasure) is a consciousness of *oneself*. Because such pleasure accompanies all aspects of this continuing representation of the object, such pleasure not only makes it *possible* to connect the “I” (though not the “I think”) to any aspect of this experience, but in fact *actually* connects the subject’s self-consciousness to the representations in this manifold. Aesthetic pleasure is, moreover, a consciousness of oneself as temporally continuous: as anticipatory, aesthetic pleasure connects the subject’s present state to a future state of *the subject*. Aesthetic pleasure serves, then, as a mark not only for the (non-conceptualizable) unity in such experience, but also for the *subject*, as the coherent, continuing, identical subject of such experience. Thus Kant claims that the “feeling [pleasure] . . . *allows* the object to be judged in accordance with the purposiveness of the representation (by means of which the object is given) for the promotion of the faculty of cognition in its free play” (v:287; my emphasis).

Conclusion

I have argued that the principle of purposiveness without a purpose is the subjective principle of aesthetic judging, as the structure of our judgmental activity itself, a structure necessary to explain the possibility of representing an object as beautiful. Only if we so judge, i.e., legislate to ourselves an open, anticipatory grasp of the object’s heterogeneous properties as they might constrain and reciprocally contrast with and complement one another in a whole, can we represent an object as beautiful, as a unity of the diverse, formally purposive without a purpose. And only if we so judge can we take aesthetic pleasure in such a representation, can we have the feeling,

the unconceptualized consciousness, of the pure future-directedness of our present state. Aesthetic judging is, thus, the *ratio essendi* of aesthetic pleasure, while aesthetic pleasure is the *ratio cognoscendi* of aesthetic judging, a mark not only of the representation of the object as beautiful, as so judged, but also of the subject as “experiencer” of this representation. In aesthetic imaginative projection, we take in nature “with favor,” and are also aware, in pleasure, of “the inner purposiveness in the relationship of our mental powers in the judging of certain [objects]” (v:350). And, as I shall now argue, the principle of purposiveness, as the a priori principle and structure of the subject’s judging activity, also grounds Kant’s deduction of the claims of taste.

THE JUSTIFICATION OF AESTHETIC JUDGMENT: PURPOSIVENESS AS THE PRINCIPLE OF REFLECTIVE JUDGING

We may now turn to Kant's central question in the CAJ: how to justify the claims to universal subjective validity in aesthetic judgments or how we may justifiably require all others to share our pleasure in representing an object. Despite the fact that such judgments do not make objective claims, Kant argues, they make justifiable claims on others because they are grounded in the subjective conditions for the possibility of experience. As suggested above, I shall reconstruct Kant's justificatory argument on the model (*mutatis mutandis*) of the CPR deduction of the categories (as it informs his treatment of judgments of experience, as we shall see): our claims in aesthetic judgments are justified because the principle of such judgments, purposiveness without a purpose, is an a priori principle that makes aesthetic experience possible – is, indeed, constitutive of such experience, of both the representation of objects as beautiful, and the feeling of aesthetic pleasure.

In this chapter, I shall, first, draw out the implication of the arguments to this effect in the preceding chapters, beginning by treating the relationship between Kant's account of aesthetic experience, particularly the activity of aesthetic *Beurteilung*, and the aesthetic judgment proper (*Urteil*) (8.1–2), before turning to the way in which the principle of purposiveness justifies aesthetic judgments. I shall argue that aesthetic judgments are justified because judging in accord with the principle of purposiveness is a condition not only for the possibility of aesthetic experience (8.4), but

for the possibility of experience simpliciter (8.5f.). For, I shall argue, purposiveness is the principle of reflective judging, which is necessary for the possibility of empirical cognition and experience. Therefore, all subjects must be able to, and ought to, judge in accord with this principle.

8.1 *Beurteilung* and *Urteil*: The problem

A judgment of taste or aesthetic judgment of the beautiful (*ästhetische Urteil*), according to Kant, comprises a claim of the type: “This [object] is beautiful.” Though such judgments appear to be assertoric predications (of beauty), Kant denies, as we have seen, that beauty is a concept (a straightforward predicate). He analyzes these claims, instead, as claims (1) that this object is pleasing (or we “connect” pleasure to our representation of the object); (2) that such pleasure is “necessarily” connected to the object or we (as it were) attribute our pleasure to the object “as necessary” (v:218, 288–9); and (3) that all others ought to share this pleasure. (These claims are presented in the first, fourth, and second moments, respectively.) This judgment is “synthetic,” for it goes “beyond the concept and even the intuition of the object, and add[s] to that as a predicate something that is not even cognition at all, namely the feeling of pleasure” (v:288). Because aesthetic judgments make necessary and universal claims, moreover, they must involve an a priori principle. Thus judgments of taste are synthetic a priori judgments,¹ and as such require a transcendental deduction, viz., an argument to establish that the universal, necessary claims in such judgments are based on an a priori principle that is justifiably employed.

As we have seen, Kant claims that the “key” to the critique of taste, the crucial ground for the justification of such claims, is to establish that aesthetic pleasure is preceded by or based upon aesthetic judging. Aesthetic pleasure is indeed, as we have seen, based upon the activity of aesthetic judging, as the consciousness of such judging. Before turning to reconstruct Kant’s justificatory arguments based on this claim, however, we must explain how aesthetic judging – as the basis for aesthetic pleasure – is related to the aesthetic judgment proper. For the aesthetic judgment is, Kant claims, made “in relation to pleasure and displeasure [for] the judgment of taste . . . determines the object independently of concepts, *with regard to* satisfaction and the predicate of beauty” (v:218–19; my

¹ Kant wavers concerning whether aesthetic judgments are a priori, for reasons I shall discuss below.

emphasis). Likewise, Kant writes that aesthetic judgment rests not on a “determining ground of [conceptual] proofs, but only from reflection of the subject on his own state (of pleasure or displeasure)” (v:285–6). Thus, the aesthetic judgment both (implicitly) “contains” pleasure “as if” it were a predicate of the object, and apparently comprises claims based on, or concerning, that pleasure (i.e., 2 and 3 above).

Kant appears, then, to claim – puzzlingly – both that aesthetic pleasure is based upon judging, and that we judge based upon pleasure. As a result, Guyer has argued, in order to save Kant’s account from incoherence we ought to reconstruct it as comprising two activities of judging: we engage in the free harmony of the faculties (a first activity of judging), which is the basis of aesthetic pleasure, and then we judge (a second judgmental activity) concerning such pleasure, or on the basis of it, that others ought to share it in response to this object, on the grounds that such pleasure arises from an activity of our common cognitive faculties.² Though Kant does not explicitly so claim, Guyer argues that he suggests this view in passages like the following:

Thus the faculty of aesthetic reflection judges only about the subjective purposiveness (not about the perfection) of the object; and the question arises whether it judges only *by means of* the pleasure or displeasure which is felt therein, or whether it rather judges *about* these, so that the judgment at the same time [*zugleich*] determines that the representation of the object *must* be combined with pleasure or displeasure.

. . . . [If] this sort of judgment carries with it a universality and necessity that qualifies it for derivation from a determining ground a priori . . . the judgment would certainly determine something a priori by means of . . . pleasure, but it would also at the same time [*zugleich*] determine something a priori, through the faculty of cognition (namely, the power of judgment), about the universality of the rule for combining it [pleasure] with a given representation. If, on the contrary, the judgment contained nothing but the relation of the representation to the feeling [of pleasure] (without the mediation of a cognitive principle), as

² Guyer, *Claims of Taste*, p. 99; cf. Ginsborg, *Role of Taste*, pp. 3–4. Guyer frames this problem as one concerning temporal order (it is “absurd” that pleasure should both precede and succeed judging, temporally), and his account is, correspondingly, a causal, thus temporally successive, account. As noted above, Guyer’s view has been criticized for its empirical psychological (causal) character, and I concur with Guyer’s critics here. As is less frequently recognized, however, Guyer’s problem remains even if these precedence relations are understood logically: Kant cannot claim that we take pleasure in an object only because – on grounds – of judging it *and* that we judge the object beautiful (purposive) because – on grounds – of our pleasure in that object.

is the case with aesthetic judgments of sense . . . , then all aesthetic judgments would belong merely to the empirical realm. (FI, xx:229)³

Kant seems to imply here that we make two distinct judgments in aesthetic experience – first, of the object “by means of” pleasure, and second or “also,” *about* that pleasure, in which we claim universality and necessity.

One might suggest, moreover, that Kant fails to recognize that he is committed to such a twofold account of aesthetic judging because of ambiguities in his conception of “reflection” or “reflective judging.” Aesthetic *Beurteilung* of an object is a case of reflective judging, in the sense that it is a judgmental unification of a manifold, but without conceptual determination. Claims about such judging or pleasure might, on the other hand, be judgments of reflection in another sense, viz., that of the *CPR* Amphiboly:⁴ these judgments are judgments *about* our representations that “assign” them to the faculties to which they belong, or from which they arise (here, our faculty of reflective judging in the first sense).⁵

Though this interpretation (identifying two judgmental activities) addresses the potential incoherence in Kant’s account, it also renders it quite revisionary, inapplicable to the large majority of aesthetic judgments. On this interpretation, the aesthetic judgment proper (the second judgment) must be read as unconcerned with the character of the object, but to concern our (and/or others’) mental states and faculties alone. Though Kant does suggest such a view, such extremely subjectivist doctrines are problematic, I have argued, as descriptions of aesthetic experience, and so too are they concerning aesthetic judgments proper. Kant himself claims that in such judgments we connect our pleasure to *this representation* (of the object), and identifies the connection to the object as that which generates the necessity of a deduction (v:279). Moreover, on this reading, we are to be understood as engaged in quite high-level (and

³ Translation altered.

⁴ A260–1/B316–17. As noted in Chapter Two, Kant links these two activities of reflection in part by claiming that each is a form of comparison (whether of representations or of representations “with” our cognitive faculties). As argued above, I do not believe that the two activities should be identified (though both comprise conditions for the possibility of comparison, or empirical concept formation) in the case of reflective judging proper, but are more plausibly taken both to be involved in aesthetic judging, as I discuss here.

⁵ As suggested at v:189–90: the object is found suitable to the “cognitive faculties . . . in play in the reflecting power of judgment,” and the “reflective power of judgment” *also* “compares the forms represented by the imagination to its faculty for relating intuitions to concepts”; cf. FI, xx:225.

technically Kantian) philosophical reflection in making aesthetic judgments: we must be recognizing – and at least implicitly claiming – *that* our pleasure stems from the harmony of the faculties or our faculty of reflective judging (in the first sense). Such judgments are likely to be few and far between: ordinary people might *have* aesthetic experience and aesthetic pleasure (which as a matter of fact is universally shareable), but only those with philosophical inclinations would (be in a position to) make aesthetic judgments, viz., second-order claims concerning such experience to this effect.

This interpretation thus renders Kant's account implausible, and also evacuates it of three potentially powerful and persuasive aspects. First, by identifying two activities of judging, this interpretation eliminates Kant's apparent, persuasive claim that aesthetic experience is itself verdictive, intrinsically, evaluatively judgmental. Second, this reading renders Kant's "key" to the critique of taste, and/or his deduction, considerably less powerful. On this view, aesthetic judgments do not themselves employ, nor are they grounded upon, an a priori principle or subjective condition necessary for the possibility of experience. Rather, they are second-order judgments *about* such subjective conditions (as the basis for our pleasure, as grounds for inferences concerning others). Such second-order reflection, Kant suggests in the Amphiboly, is not necessary for the possibility of experience, but only for critique, i.e., the identification of the character and sources of human knowledge, in order to prevent illegitimate metaphysical claims concerning noumena.⁶ Thus, though such judgments might make a justified claim, i.e., a philosophical claim concerning the universally shared conditions of human knowledge, it is not clear that anyone – apart, again, from philosophers interested in aesthetics – would be required to make such second-order judgments themselves. Finally, such judgments might not comprise a claim *on* others that they ought to experience such pleasure, but only a claim that they ought to recognize *that* all subjects will experience such pleasure if they engage in the reflective judging (in the first sense) responsible for such

⁶ A280/B336f. The parallel amphibolous error in aesthetics is, I suggest, the rationalist assertion that in aesthetic judgments we employ concepts (specifically that of perfection), i.e., the "assignment" of taste to the faculty of the understanding, which faculty is, in turn, wrongly taken to be an intuitive, rather than discursive, understanding (as argued in Chapter Five). This amphibolous error is to be corrected by transcendental reflection, viz., correct, philosophical self-understanding (e.g., the CAJ itself) concerning human cognitive faculties, in which reflection we do not, however, engage in making aesthetic judgments themselves.

pleasure – a view of aesthetic claims that renders them again rather distant from those we take ourselves to make.

As I suggested by emphasizing the German *zugleich* in the quotation above, Kant does not explicitly state at xx:229 (or elsewhere) that there are two activities of judgment involved in aesthetic experience.⁷ And, as I shall now argue, we may understand the aesthetic *Urteil* not as a second-order, philosophical judgment, but, more plausibly, as intimately connected to our activity of aesthetic *Beurteilung*, and thereby justifiable by reference to the principle of that activity. The *Urteil*, I shall suggest, is the self-conscious, propositional expression of the connections among representations – between the representation of an object as beautiful, and pleasure – made in that judgmental activity.⁸

8.2 The aesthetic *Urteil* as the expression of aesthetic *Beurteilung*

We may, I suggest, both resist the two-stage interpretation of Kant's account, and clarify my claim, to the contrary, that the aesthetic judgment is an expression of aesthetic judging, by reinterpreting the xx:229 passage quoted above. I submit that Kant is not presenting, there, two stages of aesthetic judging. Rather, as suggested at the end of the passage, he is distinguishing between two *types* of judgment, aesthetic judgments (judgments of taste) and judgments of the agreeable (or aesthetic judgments “of sense,” as Kant calls them here). That is, Kant is presenting a distinction similar to that in the *Prolegomena* between judgments of perception and judgments of experience, and in similar terms. In presenting the latter distinction, Kant writes:

All of our judgments are *first* mere judgments of perception; they hold only for us, i.e., for our subject, and *only afterwards* do we give them a new relation, namely to an object, and intend that the judgment should be valid at all times for us and for everyone else. (iv:298; my emphasis)

These judgments “afterwards” are judgments of experience, which – like aesthetic judgments – make claims to universality and necessity (make claims that are “valid at all times and for everyone else”), by contrast to merely subjective judgments of perception. Pursuing this parallel between Kant's distinction in the *Prolegomena* and that of xx:229 will help,

⁷ See Ginsborg (*Role of Taste*, pp. 13–16, 20–3, and “Aesthetic Judging and the Intentionality of Pleasure,” 169–70, 174) for trenchant arguments (respectively) against Guyer's and Allison's versions of a two-stage interpretation.

⁸ See Fricke, *Kants Theorie*, pp. 44–5, 138–9, for a similar suggestion.

I suggest, in understanding the relationship between the aesthetic judgment and aesthetic judging.

The nature and possibility of judgments of perception are controversial questions in the scholarly literature,⁹ but such questions need not, I note first, concern us here. For if Kant is presenting parallel contrasts between types of judgments in the two cases (as I suggest), judgments of perception correspond *mutatis mutandis* to judgments of the agreeable, not to aesthetic judgments.¹⁰ Kant's descriptions of judgments of perception and of judgments of the agreeable are, indeed, quite similar. Judgments of perception "express only a relation of two sensations to the same subject," and "only in [his] present state of perception" (*Prol* IV:299). Judgments of the agreeable likewise concern "nothing but the relation between the representation and the feeling (without mediation by a cognitive principle)" (FI, XX:229). This relation is, moreover, a relation of representations to the subject specifically "in his present state of perception": feeling (pleasure) always "refers" to the subject, on Kant's view, and in the case of the agreeable we feel pleasure in a sensation as relief from (previous) pain or boredom, thus as grounded in the contingent circumstances of the particular, empirically considered subject.¹¹ Judgments of perception and judgments of the agreeable alike, therefore, make claims only to private validity: the subject makes no claims of necessity about the object, nor on others to agree, but merely states that "for me" or in "my experience," the sun shines and the stone is warm, the chocolate is pleasing.

More important is Kant's characterization of judgments of experience and the ways in which such judgments are distinguished from their solely subjective counterparts, just as (I suggest) Kant means to oppose aesthetic judgments and judgments of the agreeable. There are three salient points to be recognized here. First, just as Kant suggests at XX:229 that judgments of taste "also" are "about" pleasure and "carry universality and necessity with them," judgments of experience involve, Kant suggests, relations of perceptions "and also" something else, which endows such judgments with claims to universality and necessity. It appears, moreover, that Kant presents a two-stage account of judgments of experience ("first"

⁹ For the canonical treatment, see Gerold Prauss, *Erscheinung bei Kant* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1971).

¹⁰ Contra a tendency in scholarship on the *CJ* to connect aesthetic judgments to judgments of perception because neither employs the categories; e.g., Schaper, *Studies*, pp. 18–52.

¹¹ See Chapter Six.

we make judgments of perception and then “afterwards” judgments of experience). But they need not be so understood. In them, according to Kant, we do not *merely* “logically” or “in ourselves” connect intuitions (as we do in judgments of perception); *instead* we connect such intuitions according to categorial rules (i.e., “relate” them to an object “as such”). Thus judgments of experience involve some of the same *components* as judgments of perception, i.e., our perceptions and general logic (described as a “first step”), and “then” a further element (a priori principles), but they are not, it would seem, produced by a second judgmental process. Rather, they are a more complex, substantively different type (singular) of judgment.

Second, Kant does not firmly distinguish the propositional judgment “The sun warms the stone,” from our categorially guided synthesis or objective experience *of* the sun as causing the stone to be warm. The propositional judgment expresses the claims implicitly made, the lawful, rule-bound connections drawn, within (judgmentally synthesized) experience of objects as such – a view expressed, more broadly, in the famous Kantian mantra that “all experience is judgmental.”

Finally, in judgments of experience one does not, on Kant’s view, make a further claim *that* others ought to agree. Rather, Kant claims,

if a judgment agrees with an object, then all judgments of the same object must also agree with one another, and hence the objective validity of a judgment of experience signifies nothing other than its necessary universal validity [F]or there would be no reason why other judgments necessarily would have to agree with mine, if there were not the unity of the object – an object to which they all refer, with which they all agree, and, for that reason, also must all harmonize among themselves. (*Prolegomena* IV:298)

The claim to objective validity in a judgment of experience thus entails a claim on others’ agreement – if we claim that an object is this way, we thereby also claim (imply) that all others ought to find it so. (Kant asserts here that each claim means “nothing other than” the other; this assertion does not quite hold for aesthetic judging, as I shall discuss shortly.)

Let us return to xx:229 and aesthetic judgment. As I have suggested, the (putative) first “step” of judging described there (relating a representation to one’s feeling of pleasure) may be understood to describe *components* of an aesthetic judgment, which alone would be merely a judgment of the agreeable (“this is pleasing” [to me]). Likewise, I suggest that Kant is claiming not that aesthetic judgments comprise a further

judgment (as it were “about” a judgment of the agreeable), but rather that in aesthetic judging we relate such components to one another in a different way, one that “carries with it” universality and necessity, and which can be expressed in a (propositional) judgment that makes claims on others’ agreement.

To expand upon these claims: in the *Prolegomena* and at xx:229, Kant suggests that judgments “carry with them” claims to universality and necessity when they relate representations to one another by “mediation of” an a priori cognitive principle. In judgments of experience, we relate representations by mediation of the categorial principles, in accord with the concept of an object as such. Likewise, in aesthetic judging on the account I have given, we relate the representation of the object (as beautiful or subjectively formally purposive) to pleasure, by mediation of the a priori principle of purposiveness without a purpose. This principle mediates this connection, indeed, in a different way than do the categorial principles in empirical judgments: aesthetic pleasure is connected to the representation of the object not as a content of the judging or synthesized component of an object(ive experience) in accord with this principle, but rather as our self-consciousness when engaging in a judgmental synthesis (that produces the representation of the object as beautiful) itself structured by this principle.

As we also have seen, aesthetic pleasure is not only so connected to aesthetic purposive judging, and thus to our representation of an object as beautiful, but is the *sole* mark that can stand for the unity of that representation. Though purposive aesthetic judging allows us to represent the beautiful object as a reciprocally unified manifold, it does not institute rule-governed, conceptually articulable relations therein. Correspondingly, aesthetic judging does not and cannot ground or implicitly include *that* sort of propositional, predicative claim concerning this manifold (i.e., that its components are connected in accord with conceptual rules). If we *are*, then, to identify a “predication” or connective claim made between two identifiable representations in aesthetic judging, it is the connection of the (unified, individual) manifold to pleasure, as the mark of our judgmental unification; as Kant writes, in aesthetic judging it is “as if” we predicate pleasure of the object.¹² Thus, just as

¹² E.g., v:191. Such (“as if”) predication is “of” the single, unified representation – “this” – of the beautiful object. Kant’s locutions, e.g., “this *rose* is beautiful,” do not mean that we unify the object qua beautiful under this conceptual description (rose), but is a way to refer to “this” discursively.

propositional judgments of experience are expressions of the judgmental “claims” we make (implicitly) in the judgmental synthesis of objects, the aesthetic *Urteil* – this (representation/object) is beautiful (pleasing) – may be understood as a propositional expression of the implicit claim made, the connection judgmentally drawn, in our synthesis (*Beurteilung*) of an object as beautiful.¹³

One can, moreover, hereby make sense of Kant’s claims (as at xx:229) that the aesthetic judgment is based on, made by means of, or about, pleasure. These expressions must, in part, be understood as mischaracterizations of the structure of aesthetic judging (as expressed in the aesthetic judgment): aesthetic pleasure is not a criterion for holding an object to be beautiful, but the necessary concomitant to representing an object as beautiful.¹⁴ (I would argue, consonantly, that Kant corrects himself at FI, xx:224–5: he first states that pleasure is the “determining ground” of the judgment, but then that the determining ground is the subjective condition of judgment, which “can only *be given* in the feeling of pleasure” [my emphasis].) Nonetheless, these claims may be rendered as (largely) consistent with the reading I have proposed, if the aesthetic *Urteil* is understood, emphatically, as the only possible *self-conscious* expression of the connection (or claim implicitly) made in aesthetic judging. For as the sole mark of aesthetic experience, aesthetic pleasure is – as Aristotle might say – first in the order of knowledge, if not first absolutely (transcendentally). Thus the *Urteil* would “begin” with such pleasure, for it is an explicit, self-conscious expression of our experience of an object as beautiful – which we thus recognize “by means of” pleasure.

This aesthetic judgment is not, I emphasize, to be understood as a second-order judgment of reflection (in the second sense) *about* our cognitive faculties or states. Rather, as argued in Chapter [Seven](#), aesthetic judging

¹³ Though it may seem odd to characterize a “predication” of pleasure (rather than a concept) as a “propositional” judgment, such a predication does fall under Kant’s definition of judgment at *JL* 1x:101 as a “representation of the unity of the consciousness of various representations” *or* of such representations “insofar as they constitute a concept.” Here, we represent such a unity, but not insofar as it “constitutes a concept.”

¹⁴ Any interpretation of Kant’s account as involving one activity of judging that precedes aesthetic pleasure and thereby justifies our claims of taste must reconstruct such claims in some manner. For example, on Ginsborg’s interpretation, the identity of aesthetic pleasure and judging entails that any claims concerning their relationship (e.g., “by means of”) that suggest that they are distinct from one another must be reconstructively interpreted.

itself must have a self-conscious (reflective) character: because of the absence of an overarching, unifying, conceptual predicate, in aesthetic judging we must refer the manifold to pleasure not as a determining ground, but as the mark of our unified self-consciousness in representing this (unified) manifold. The *Urteil* may thus be understood, as it were, as a “reversal” of the connective, judgmental act of *Beurteilung*: in and through the act of aesthetic judging, the representation of the object is formed and thereby connected to pleasure; in the *Urteil*, we assert – in “reverse” – that pleasure is connected to this representation.

Finally, the aesthetic *Urteil* may be read, I suggest, as making claims on others in the way that judgments of experience do. The claim on others is not (that is) to be conceived as a judgment *that* others ought to share our pleasure. Rather, the claim on others is *implied* in judging the object, and describes the *status* of the (expressive) judgment: by making a certain claim about an object, by making a certain connection among representations, one *ipso facto* makes claims on others. So Kant suggests, using an explicit parallel to judgments of experience:

The perception of an object can be *immediately* combined with the concept of an object in general . . . and a judgment of experience can thereby be produced . . . However a perception can also be *immediately* combined with a feeling of pleasure . . . that accompanies the representation of the object and serves it instead of a predicate, and an aesthetic judgment can thus arise. (v:287–8)

Kant here identifies the connection of pleasure to the representation of the object as the primary connection made in aesthetic judging, and asserted in the aesthetic judgment. And, as in the case of judgments of experience, our claims on others in aesthetic judgments are consequent upon (implied by) that prior, judgmental, synthetic claim:

that object the form of which (not the material aspect of its representation, as sensation) in mere reflection upon it (without any intention of acquiring a concept from it) is judged as the ground of a pleasure in the representation of such an object – with its representation this pleasure is also *judged to be necessarily combined, consequently* not merely for the subject who apprehends this form but for everyone who judges at all. The object is then called beautiful . . . (v:190; my emphasis)¹⁵

¹⁵ Kulenkampf (*Kants Logik*, Chapter 1) cites this passage to support his contention that the “moments” of universality and necessity are identical; Kant indicates here, however, that the claim to necessity is primary.

Our claims on others derive, Kant suggests, from the way in which the “judgment of taste *determines its object with regard to satisfaction* (as beauty) . . . as if it were objective” (v:281) or a property of the object (v:282).¹⁶

Kant does not, of course, hold that beauty is a predicate (subjective purposiveness cannot be conceptualized), nor that pleasure (used “in place of” a predicate) is a property of the object. But, Kant suggests, our connection of a representation to pleasure in aesthetic judging is like the categorially governed predication in judgments of experience: just as judgments of experience make claims to universal validity, because they concern perceptions “immediately” connected to the categorial concept of an object or connected “as necessary,”¹⁷ the “immediate” connection among representations (of the object, and pleasure) in aesthetic judgments is required of others “as necessary” or insofar as it “lays claim to necessity.”¹⁸ (I shall return to this necessity claim in 8.4.)

In sum: just as judgments of experience express the connections made in objective (judgmentally synthesized) experience, and imply claims to universal subjectivity validity, the aesthetic judgment – this object, these properties in combination, *are* pleasing “necessarily” – both expresses the connection made in aesthetic judging, and implies a claim on others to find it so.¹⁹ This understanding of the aesthetic judgment reflects what *is* connected in the activity of aesthetic judging on Kant’s account (the representation of the object and pleasure), and thus connects his claims concerning such judgments to his account of aesthetic experience, indeed

¹⁶ George Santayana later endorses a similar view as well: when we call an object beautiful, we treat pleasure as a property of that object (*The Sense of Beauty* [New York: Dover, 1955], pp. 49–52).

¹⁷ See A104; *Prol* IV:301, 304. I will return to Kant’s claim concerning the “immediacy” of this connection and its apparent conflict with his claim that these judgments are “mediated” by *a priori* principles in 8.4.

¹⁸ v:288. Kant’s language here is ambiguous: in aesthetic judgment, he writes, we require “this satisfaction of everyone as necessary,” thus suggesting that the necessity claim in aesthetic judgment is a normative claim (i.e., that others *ought* so to judge; see indeed FI, xx:239), not one concerning the relation between representations (of the object and pleasure). At v:190 Kant asserts, however, that the necessity claim concerns that connection, and so shall I read it. The normative claim on others may be understood, I suggest by contrast, not to characterize the *content* of aesthetic judgment, but its status.

¹⁹ Thus, contra Guyer (*Claims of Taste*, e.g., p. 107), disinterested pleasure and the form of purposiveness (of the object represented as beautiful) *are* the content of a judgment of taste (not “criteria” for so judging) – i.e., “this is pleasing”; necessity characterizes the manner of connecting these two “components,” and the moment of universality (and/or normative necessity) is not the content of this judgment, but characterizes its status.

explains why the character of the latter may ground the former's claims. It is also, I argue, a phenomenologically plausible characterization of aesthetic judgment: we assert that (our experience of) this object is, of itself, simply because of what it is like, and for no further, subjectively arbitrary or conditional reason, pleasing.²⁰ Correspondingly, aesthetic experience is here itself understood as positively, evaluatively judgmental, or verdictive (i.e., implicitly makes the claim of aesthetic judgment). This claim seems, too, to imply a claim to subjectively universal status: if this representation is necessarily pleasing, then it should be so for others.

Because "what is to be connected with the representation of the object is not an empirical concept but a feeling of pleasure,"²¹ aesthetic judging (and judgments) do involve the judging subject more noticeably *as* the particular subject that she is than do judgments of experience, in which the subject (Kant claims) judges as a "consciousness in general" (*Prolegomena* IV:300). Indeed, as I have argued, aesthetic judging must be accompanied by such individual self-consciousness (viz., pleasure). As a result, it may be clearer in aesthetic judging that one *is* making a judgment that

²⁰ This sense of the necessary connection between the beautiful and pleasure is not new to Kant in the history of aesthetics; it is expressed, e.g., in Plato's suggestion in the *Symposium* that the beautiful *is* as such (necessarily) loved by us (if we perceive that it is beautiful). Unlike Plato, however, Kant does not take this necessity to be grounded in (the recognition of) an ontological fact, but rather in our manner of representing the beautiful.

A further note: because the aesthetic judgment asserts a *necessary* connection between representations, one might be employing one of the categories – necessity – in the activity of aesthetic judging. This seems plausible given Kant's claims concerning the categories of modality in general: they "do not augment the concept of [the object to] which they are ascribed in the least, but rather express only the relation to the faculty of cognition" (A219/B266). Specifically, "that whose connection with the actual is determined in accordance with general conditions of experience is (exists) *necessarily*" (A217/B266). With emendations, this definition applies to the claims made (or the synthesis performed) in aesthetic judging: as opposed to cognitive claims employing this category, we do not make existence claims concerning the representation of the beautiful (or pleasure), but we do assert a "connection [of pleasure] with the actual [representation of "this" given object as beautiful]," which connection is "in accordance with general conditions of experience," for – as I shall argue – purposive judging is a "general condition" for experience. This potential involvement of a modal category does not, however, vitiate Kant's denial (discussed in the [previous chapter](#)) that the representation of the unity of the beautiful object is grounded in categorial rules, for this necessity claim is not a rule for synthesis of the object, but rather concerns the relation of the representation to the subject.²¹ V:191; Pluhar translation.

purports to have universal subjective validity.²² Such claims are not, moreover, a consequence of claims to *objective* validity. (Kant has changed his mind about the biconditionality between objective validity and universal subjective validity in the CAJ; see v:215.) This complication does not, as I have suggested, mean that the aesthetically judging subject is making separate claims *about* others' agreement any more than the subject who makes an empirical judgment does; in both cases, such universal validity is better understood as characterizing the *status* of the judgment (itself expressive of judgmentally synthesized experience), or as a claim *on* others (not about others). Rather, it raises philosophical questions concerning how to justify such judgment (and status), without reference to objective validity or to the character of the object independently of the individual's attitudes and states in representing that object, to which I now turn.

8.3 Kant's deduction of the claims of taste: Introductory

Kant suggests that this deduction is relatively "easy," and can be accomplished by showing that (1) aesthetic pleasure is preceded by aesthetic judging (§9); (2) aesthetic judging involves an a priori principle (xx:229); and/or (3) aesthetic judging, as the harmony of the cognitive faculties, is a subjective condition for the possibility of experience (v:290). So far, I have interpreted these claims to mean that aesthetic pleasure is made possible by an activity of judging structured by the a priori principle of purposiveness, which is an activity of those cognitive faculties required for experience, viz., of imagination in harmony with the understanding.

These claims do render the subjectively universal status of aesthetic judgments at least potentially justifiable, in ways Kant identifies. In §9, Kant argues that we may be able justifiably to require others to share our pleasure in beautiful objects because such pleasure is preceded by judging, and therefore does not "directly depend on the representation by which the object is given" (unlike the agreeable), but rather on a "universally communicable" mental state (the harmony of the faculties; v:216–18; FI, xx:224–5). Because aesthetic pleasure arises from (is the consciousness of) the subject's cognitive activity, such pleasure is, indeed,

²² Thus one might read the four "moments" as progressing from what is most obvious, subjectively, in the experience of beauty – pleasure, and then its status as universally valid – to the transcendental explanation for this status, and content of this pleasure – purposiveness (of form and judging) and the necessary connection it establishes (between representation and pleasure) in aesthetic experience.

not “directly dependent” on a given representation, not passively caused. Thus such pleasure is not disqualified from universal validity – as it would be as a passive, contingent reaction of the individual subject’s sensibility to some object (as in the agreeable). Or, put positively, because aesthetic pleasure rests upon a self-legislated activity of the subject, it could be shared by others: this cognitive activity is an active attitude one can take (and thus be required to take) towards objects. This activity is also universally communicable because it is judgmental: it engages with an object as a complex unity of diversity, as having purposive form, about which we can communicate with others.²³ Thus this activity and its consequent pleasure are such that we could require them – without obvious self-contradiction – of others.

Such universal communicability establishes only, however, that all other subjects *could* share our pleasure in the beautiful object, not that aesthetic judgments have universally valid status, i.e., that all other subjects *must* be able so to judge, or that they *ought* to do so. To support this stronger claim, Kant invokes his third claim, above: all subjects must be able, and ought, so to judge because this cognitive activity is a necessary subjective condition for the possibility of experience.

As many commentators have noted, this argument is problematic, faced by a dilemma between two unsatisfactory options.²⁴ If it is read, first, as a claim that the activity of aesthetic judging is itself a subjective condition for the possibility of any experience, it seems to commit Kant to the implausible view (which he does not appear to hold) that we *in fact* find *all* objects (that we experience) beautiful, for it would seem that we must employ the subjective conditions for experience in all experience, of all objects.²⁵ If, on the other hand, the harmony of the faculties involved in aesthetic experience is *not* the same as that required for any experience, then the deduction argument appears to fail. Specifically, though all subjects must be able to perform the rule-determined cognitive activities

²³ See Chapters Five and Seven.

²⁴ This problem is posed sharply by Ralf Meerbote, “Reflections on Beauty,” in Ted Cohen and Paul Guyer, eds., *Essays in Kant’s Aesthetics*, 81.

²⁵ This option is often read more weakly as entailing that we *could* find all objects in experience beautiful. But Kant’s argument (on this first prong of the dilemma) might well entail the stronger claim: in the experience of every object, we must successfully employ the subjective conditions that make experience possible and thus would seem to be *having* aesthetic experience. Among those who choose this prong, only Dorit Barchana Lorand (to my knowledge) attempts to address this implication. (D. B. Lorand, “The Kantian Beautiful or the Utterly Useless Prolegomena to Any Future Aesthetics,” *Kant-Studien* 93 [2002], 309–23.)

of imagination and understanding in harmony in order to have experience, it does not follow – as Kant apparently needs to claim in the deduction – that all subjects must (be able to) engage in the aesthetic *free* harmony between these faculties, a different judgmental activity (even if it involves similar “skills”). Versions of this dilemma plague, too, Kant’s arguments that aesthetic judgments are justified on the grounds that they employ (an idea or feeling of) “common sense,” a feeling of the harmony between the faculties and/or of the shareability of that state, which harmony (or feeling) is purportedly necessary for the possibility of experience.²⁶

²⁶ See §§20–2, 39–40. Kant’s conception of common sense is ambiguous, but on either meaning it seems to have, this route to a deduction of taste is, at least, insufficient. Kant’s main strategy concerning common sense is to argue that it is a feeling that is shared by all subjects because each subject must be able to feel (and to communicate) the harmony between her faculties that produces cognition (v:238). Ameriks, “Deduction of Taste,” is right that this argument *might* justify aesthetic judgments in a way that escapes the above dilemma – with some supplementation. Kant could be taken to argue, that is, that we each must have some feeling of the harmony of our faculties, that such feeling can vary depending on the differing “proportions” of such harmony (aesthetic experience constituting the “most” harmony), and that such feeling (aesthetic pleasure in the case of the best harmony) is therefore universally communicable. Fricke, *Kants Theorie*, pp. 166f., provides the best account of which I am aware in support of the first of these claims and, as suggested in the [previous chapter](#), aesthetic judging comprises a particularly active, rich, quasi-cognitive state and thus might be (felt to be) especially harmonious. Still, contra Ameriks, Kant’s argument would seem to fall to the second prong of the dilemma: our universally communicable feeling of *cognitive* harmony of the faculties does not, alone, establish anything about aesthetic experience. One must make an independent argument that we must all engage in, feel, and communicate the *aesthetic* “proportion” of the faculties (as, in effect, I attempt to do, here and in the preceding chapter). Otherwise, this harmony might be taken as a special skill not shared by all (as Fricke notes; cf. Guyer, *Claims of Taste*, pp. 263–4, 284).

A second argumentative strategy concerning common sense is identified by Ginsborg: she takes Kant to argue that common sense is judging by feeling, and emphasizes his claim that it is a form of judging in which we hold our “judgment up . . . to . . . the merely possible judgments of others, and [put ourselves] into the position of everyone else . . .” (v:294). Thus, she argues, such judgmental feeling takes others’ points of view into account, is indeed a feeling of its own universal communicability, and therefore counts for everyone from the beginning. I concur with Ameriks’ puzzlement concerning a feeling that makes claims to (or is a feeling of) its own universal communicability, and with his claim, by contrast, that common sense (or aesthetic pleasure) is better understood not as identical to judging, but as a result of reflective judging (Ameriks, *Interpreting*, pp. 311–12). Moreover, though Kant is tempted occasionally by this line of argument, and though Kant’s principles for ordinary common sense (at v:294–5) are sensible heuristic principles, this sort of self-verifying claim to universal validity seems question-begging and inconsistent

As should be clear, I shall take on the second prong of this dilemma: on my interpretation, the activity of aesthetic judging is not to be identified with the cognitive synthetic activity (or harmony of the faculties) required for any experience: aesthetic judging is, I have argued, a particular activity (projective imaginative unification of a manifold), distinctively governed by the principle of purposiveness without a purpose. I shall argue, however, that the claim to universal validity in aesthetic judgments can be grounded by reference to this a priori principle as a necessary subjective principle, judging in accord with it as a necessary subjective condition, both for aesthetic experience and for experience simpliciter.

More specifically, I shall reconstruct Kant's deduction as comprising two stages, which correspond to Kant's claims (2) and (3), above. First, particular aesthetic judgments, in which the subject connects *this* representation to pleasure "as necessary," are justified because they involve the a priori principle (purposiveness) constitutive of aesthetic experience (8.4). Second, judging in accord with this principle is a subjective condition for the possibility of experience because we must so judge not only in aesthetic judging, but also in *reflective* judging (empirical concept formation), which is a necessary subjective condition for the possibility of experience (though it too is not employed in all experience; 8.5–6).²⁷ Thus, I argue, we may reconstruct Kant's deduction of taste, without committing Kant to the claim that all objects are experienced as beautiful.

This two-stage reconstruction draws upon the parallel I have suggested between aesthetic judgments and judgments of experience: particular aesthetic judgments are justified, I shall argue, as are judgments of experience, because they are applications of (an) a priori principle(s) of judgment, constitutive of (aesthetic) experience. But just as judgments of experience are justified, ultimately, on the basis of Kant's deduction of the categorial principles in the *CPR* – his argument that we must so

with Kant's general methodological approach (as I argue further below). I shall suggest in the Conclusion that aesthetic judging (and its validity) is better understood as *grounding* a new conception of intersubjectivity – universal subjective validity, common sense – than as justified by such a conception.

²⁷ Kant's arguments concern this second argument almost entirely, and this has also been the focus of scholarly commentary. But because aesthetic judgments always concern particular, given objects, and make claims to subjective universal validity concerning experience of those objects, Kant must provide a justification of the first sort as well. My approach is, roughly, parallel to Allison's distinction (*Theory of Taste*, pp. 172–4) between the justification of "first-order" judgments of taste and the deduction of the principle of taste.

constitute objects, in order to have coherent experience – this justification of aesthetic judgments depends upon the second, crucial, argument.

8.4 Deduction of taste I: Particular judgments

Kant suggests that aesthetic judgments are similar to judgments of experience: both are singular in form (or at least only relatively, not strictly, universal over objects) and concern empirical, contingent characteristics of objects; both concern objects judged by means of perceptions (v:191). Aesthetic judgments, specifically, not only involve particular (empirical) representations of pleasure, but also concern a given, empirical representation of a certain object (ibid.; v:281, 288–9). Neither type of judgment, then, has strict “objective necessity,” for neither solely articulates a priori conditions for the possibility of experience in general. In both cases, however, we make universality and necessity claims, thus indicating that we are employing a priori principles (v:191). Correspondingly, Kant identifies aesthetic judgments as synthetic, but wavers in identifying such judgments as synthetic a priori, as he would waver, surely, with respect to judgments of experience. Rather, as we have seen, in both cases a judgmental connection is made among *empirical* representations (or asserted in the judgment), *by mediation of* an a priori principle.

Because such judgments employ an a priori principle, Kant claims, they not only make claims to universal subjective validity (as argued in 8.2), but do so *justifiably*. As Kant writes, in judgments of experience we justifiably lay claim to universal validity

because the judgment was made in accordance with the universal conditions of the determinative power of judgment under the laws of a possible experience in general [i.e., the categorial principles]. *In just the same way*, someone who feels pleasure in the mere reflection on the form of an object, without regard to a concept, rightly makes claim to everyone’s assent, even though this judgment is empirical and a singular judgment. (v:191; my emphasis, translation modified)

In order to understand Kant’s justification of particular aesthetic judgments, then, let us again pursue the parallel Kant draws between them and judgments of experience.

In the above passage, and in the *Prolegomena*, Kant argues that, though judgments of experience concern contingent properties of objects or events and are based on perceptions, they make justifiable claims on

others' agreement. These judgments are thus justified not simply because they state facts about objects, but because they employ a priori principles, which are constitutive of objects, and necessary for any subject's experience (of any object).²⁸ By using the categorial principles, the subject refers her representations to the "unity of the object" (*Prol* 1v:298), and thus makes objectively valid claims (and thereby justifiably makes claims on others).

Kant suggests two ways in which categorial rules for judging – as a priori principles that carry "necessity" with them – constitute the unity of the object: by claiming that the object's properties are necessarily connected, and (second) by serving as rules concerning how one ought to judge representations (as an object). That is, on the one hand, in judgments of experience we claim, e.g., that the sun's heat is necessarily connected to the stone's warmth, air is necessarily elastic, and so on. The subject makes necessity claims or synthesizes its representations *as* necessarily connected by subsuming these representations to the categories, specifically that of cause (*Prol* 1v:300–1). Such necessary unity constitutes the object as independent of the subject's arbitrary construals or whims, as governed by its own laws (A104).

Second and less strictly concerning the category "cause," the categorial principles ground the objectivity of such judgments by functioning as normative rules according to which the subject unifies her representations: the categories "determine for an intuition the mode in general in which it can serve for judging" (*Prol* 1v:300). The categories establish how a representation is related to, belongs together with, others – as part of the spatial extension of the object, as an accident, as the cause or effect of

²⁸ Contra Anthony Savile, *Kantian Aesthetics Pursued* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993), Chapters 1 and 2. As I do, Savile takes judgments of experience (not judgments of perception) to be the cognitive correlate of aesthetic judgments, but claims that they are similar (ly justified) because both articulate true facts about objects (though such facts are subject-related properties in the case of aesthetic judgments). This claim is in tension, I believe, with Savile's emphasis (like mine) on the necessity claims in aesthetic judgments, which claims are always, on Kant's view, to be grounded in a priori principles, not in empirical facts. (As argued in Chapter One, judgments of experience require a further justification beyond the employment of the a priori categorial principles: that our formation of empirical concepts is not arbitrary, which grounds, and cannot be grounded by, a claim to reflect empirical facts of the matter; I shall return to this justificatory issue below.) Like Ameriks, moreover, Savile goes too far, I think, in denying the subjectivity of aesthetic judgments, the distinctive character of which (I have argued) not only derives from the involvement of pleasure in such judgments, but also from the distinctively subjective character of the principle of purposiveness.

other forces, etc. – i.e., how the subject ought to connect representations to form a unity, a complex, non-arbitrary combination of aspects or (that is) a representation of an object. To use Kant's example from v:191, when a subject judges that a rock crystal contains a mobile drop of water, she uses the categories of substance and accident, quantity, and coexistence, to interpret her various perceptions *as* forming a unity (here, of two coexisting, different sorts of substance with different characteristic accidents), i.e., as they ought to be combined, not merely as arbitrarily associated. The application of the categorial principles in judgmentally synthesized experience is, in brief, constitutive of the experience of objects as such – as non-arbitrary unities of aspects, governed by their own laws.

Thus, in judgments of experience the subject makes rightful claims concerning objects as distinct from her own contingent perceptions, attitudes, or whims, and thereby also on others to agree with those judgments – precisely because these judgments employ the categorial principles, which are both constitutive of objects as such, and necessary for any subject's possible experience (as established in the *CPR*).²⁹ In such

²⁹ The arguments of the *CPR* must establish not only that (the representation of) any object is constituted by these principles, but also that all subjects *must* make objective claims or identify objects of experience, in order to have coherent experience; the details of these arguments are, however, not necessary for my purposes here. In Chapter 3 of *The Role of Taste*, "Reflective Judgment and Taste," and in "Aesthetic Judging and the Intentionality of Pleasure," Ginsborg argues that claims on others' agreement are not only explicitly part of the content of empirical judgments (and of aesthetic judgments), but are also part of Kant's justification for these claims and for our use of the categories in general. As Ginsborg recognizes, such a reading of the *Prolegomena* and (especially) of the *CPR* is implausible, since it involves reading Kant's claims about the unity *of the object* – of a plate as both tin and oval-shaped, for example – as equivalent to apparently quite different claims concerning the "unity," i.e., agreement, among different subjects' judgments (though this demand follows, on Kant's view, from the first claim). It seems more plausible to read Kant as assuming in the *CPR* that we agree with one another in employing the categories, but the question is whether we are *justified* in so doing. In the cases of empirical and aesthetic judgments, our claims on others are more strongly at issue than in the case of the categories, for here we do not all agree. But invoking our claims on others as justification for such claims seems question-begging and inaccurate to Kant. Compare, that is, Ginsborg's claim that, on her reading, "Kant does not believe that there can be any explanation how we are able legitimately to claim that our representations are universally valid," to Kant's claim that "the *obligation* to provide a deduction, i.e., a *guarantee* of the *legitimacy* of a kind of judgment, arises only if the judgment makes claim to necessity, which is the case even if it demands subjective universality, i.e., the assent of all" (v:280; my emphasis). Correspondingly, Ginsborg's suggestion that aesthetic judgment/pleasure is universally valid (justifiably requires others' agreement) because it is a feeling *of* universal

judgments, the subject may not apply the categories correctly, may (e.g.) misidentify the sun and air *as* causes (of particular effects), and thus her judgments may be false, but such judgments make rightful claims because they are categorial, i.e., objective, judgments.

As in the case of judgments of experience, I argue, the claims to universal validity in particular aesthetic judgments are justified because these judgments comprise the “application” of an a priori cognitive principle, viz., purposiveness, which is constitutive of (aesthetic) experience. This principle functions in aesthetic experience, and hence judgment, in two similar ways. That is, first (in reverse order): as I have argued, purposiveness without a purpose is an a priori principle of judging, and is a form of relations among representations or, more properly, a form of judgmental self-legislation about how one ought to try to find relations among a manifold of representations. Judging in accord with this principle (in any particular case) comprises synthesizing this (empirical) manifold to form the representation of the object (as beautiful) by taking the representations of the manifold to belong together non-arbitrarily, as parts of a whole, as reciprocally, purposively unified.

Second, and significantly, though we do not institute conceptually describable, much less necessary, relations among properties of an object in aesthetic judging, we *do* institute a necessary connection among representations – between representing this object (as beautiful) and pleasure. That is, we not only claim in aesthetic judgment that pleasure is connected “as necessary” to this representation, but we do so rightly – precisely because aesthetic experience is made possible by the principle of purposiveness without a purpose. For, as I have argued in the preceding chapters, the representation of an object as beautiful – as having purposive form – is made possible by judging (synthesizing) in accord with the principle of purposiveness, which judging in turn makes aesthetic pleasure possible; aesthetic pleasure is constituted by that principle and is the consciousness of such judging. Therefore, in the terms of v:287–8 (quoted above), aesthetic pleasure is “immediately” connected to the representation of a beautiful object as such.³⁰ Or, in the terms of

communicability seems to commit Kant to taking the universality claims of aesthetic judgments as self-justifying, which seems at odds with the tenor of Kant’s project.

³⁰ Kant’s gloss of the necessary connection among representations as “immediate” in aesthetic judging and in judgments of experience is odd, since Kant also claims that the connections are mediated by an a priori principle. But we may read this to mean, with respect to judgments of experience, that perception is itself formed by the categorial principles and with respect to aesthetic judging, that such judging is

v:190 (quoted above), such pleasure is not connected to the object in virtue of its material characteristics (or those of the subject), but rather because of the object's form as judged; thus, as Kant emphasizes in §9, aesthetic pleasure is based on judging. On Kant's account, in sum, to represent an object as beautiful (i.e., to be engaged in aesthetic judging, successfully) *is*, necessarily, to find that representation pleasurable (i.e., to be conscious of such representing).

Thus, as in the case of judgments of experience, aesthetic judgments connect particular empirical representations, but do so not simply because of contingent, empirical characteristics of the object, or contingent states of the judging subject, but in virtue of an a priori principle, which connects these representations as necessary. Though this principle, unlike the categorial principles, does not constitute objects or objectivity, moreover, its role in particular aesthetic judgments may justify their claims to universal validity in a (somewhat) similar way: because it serves as a normative rule of unification, and because it connects representations as necessary, this principle renders aesthetic judgments independent of the individual subject's contingent states, attitudes, and whims; such judgments reflect, rather, the way in which a given representation may be judged in accord with a priori constraints.

More strongly, any particular aesthetic judgment – more or less like any judgment of experience – comprises the “application” of an a priori principle, necessary for any subject's experience, to a particular representation – or, as Kant also glosses this claim, it comprises the “subsumption” of a representation to such a principle.³¹ For, as I have

of itself pleasurable. Such “immediacy” in the latter case contrasts most pertinently with the mediacy – and hence conditionality – of judgmentally based pleasures in the non-moral good. As argued in Chapter Six, such pleasures do not rest solely upon the judgment of the object (except in the moral case); we may recognize that an object is good for a purpose but not care (or may require of others that they like this object only if they are committed to the purpose that it serves). Thus such pleasures are only mediately grounded upon judging the object, conditionally upon the subject's prior endorsement of the purpose the object is to serve. At v:288, Kant characterizes judgments of the agreeable, also, as comprising “immediate” connections between the object and pleasure; these connections are not, however, asserted “as necessary,” for, as also argued in Chapter Six, they are causally conditioned and merely correlated to objects and/or sensations. Such sensations are, in other words, not always, necessarily, “immediately” connected with pleasure, for they can be represented independently of the subject's pleasure, whereas the very principle in accord with which one generates the representation of an object as beautiful is immediately connected to pleasure.

³¹ Kant's conception of judgment (in general) as the subsumption of *objects* to concepts is not a standard one, but it cannot be defended here; I mean only to suggest that

argued, the principle of purposiveness (the ability to judge purposively) is a necessary condition for the possibility of aesthetic experience, and for (representing) the objects of such experience. Thus, if subjects can have aesthetic experience, they *must* (be able to) judge in accord with this principle. In particular aesthetic judgments, then, we make justifiable demands on all other “aesthetic subjects” (those who can have aesthetic experience) to share our pleasure in (experiencing, judging) *this* object, as an instance of (experience governed by) the principle of purposiveness.

Two caveats concerning this comparison to judgments of experience are, however, in order. First, the necessity claim in aesthetic judgment (and the necessary connection established in aesthetic experience) is one of (mere) exemplary necessity (v:237). In judgments of experience, the necessity claims are implicitly equivalent to claims concerning universal laws governing objects. For example, when we claim that the sun’s rays heat this stone, we are implying (or can infer) that the sun’s rays (will) heat other similar things. Even the more specific claim about the rock crystal relies on and implies (relatively) universal claims, e.g., about the nature of water as distinct from that of crystal. In aesthetic judging, by contrast, we employ no (overarching) empirical concept and therefore do not make or imply any universal claims about objects, do not use concepts as general rules from which we can *infer* which (other) objects we will/do/ought to find beautiful (v:285). Thus the necessity claims in aesthetic judgments do not fit Kant’s standard understanding of necessity as equivalent to universal lawfulness, or, as Kant writes, such claims can only be understood as “examples” of a law we cannot state.³²

Correspondingly, Kant suggests (somewhat oddly) that in aesthetic judging we do not “subsume” the object to a concept (or potentially

aesthetic judging is, in this sense, similar to judgments of experience. On this conception of judgment, see Longuenesse, *Capacity to Judge*, Chapter 4.

³² Kant glosses the contrast between aesthetic “exemplary necessity” and theoretical necessity by remarking that in aesthetic judgment we are not claiming that all others *will* (necessarily) agree with us but only that they ought to do so (v:236–7). This gloss provides added evidence that Kant does not understand the relationship between the representation of the object and pleasure as a causal relationship (and, thus, in that way “necessary”). But it is also misleading concerning the normative demands on others of theoretical claims: in judging that the sun warms the stone, the subject does not imply that all will so judge, but that they ought to do so. The distinguishing factor between theoretical and aesthetic necessity is, rather, that in aesthetic judging the determining ground is not a concept, and thus not discursively articulable as a universal law, whether about others’ pleasurable reactions, or concerning objects.

universal rule or law), but to our faculty of judgment. Thus, Kant writes, for example:

since the ground of the pleasure [in the beautiful] is placed merely in the form of the object for reflection in general, hence not in any sensation of the object and also without relation to a concept that contains any intention, it is *only the lawfulness in the empirical use of the power of judgment in general (unity of imagination with the understanding) in the subject* with which the representation of the object in reflection, whose a priori conditions are universally valid, agrees . . . (v:190; my emphasis)³³

As we have seen, the principle of purposiveness is not a concept to be applied *by* judgment, but a structure *of* judging. Thus this principle – and its successful, rightful “application” to an object – is instantiated in the act of judging itself.³⁴ The object is “subsumed” only to this act of judging itself, and shows itself as thus subsumable, rightly, in and by the very act of thus judging it.³⁵

³³ I take Kant’s claims that in aesthetic judgment we find objects “commensurate” to judgment, or “compare” the representation to our power of judgment, to express similar claims.

³⁴ That is, contra Nicholas Wolterstorff, “An Engagement with Kant’s Theory of Beauty,” in Ralf Meerbote and Hud Hudson, eds., *Kant’s Aesthetics*, 105–27, one should not interpret Kant to be claiming that the aesthetically judging subject applies the concept of subjective formal purposiveness to her representation of the object. For one ought to distinguish aesthetic experience and (the content of) the aesthetic judgment from critique, i.e., Kant’s philosophical claims concerning them. (See FI, xx:239.) Kant provides a concept of subjective formal purposiveness (of the representation of an object for cognition), but he does not, and *need not*, also claim that the aesthetically judging subject employs this concept. Rather, the subject – her state of judging, and the representation of the object she thereby has – *instantiates* this principle of judging. Likewise, Kant may be held to claim that aesthetic judging is reflective judging – in the sense that it is judging not guided by a(n empirical) concept – but is not a case of transcendental reflection (in which we would judge *that* we are not employing a concept). The latter type of judgement is the concern of critique, not a claim of taste proper.

³⁵ Cf. Bäuml, *Irrationalitätsproblem*, e.g., p. 291. This characteristic of aesthetic judging might provide a further explanation for Kant’s wavering as to whether aesthetic judgments are synthetic a priori. As I have argued, aesthetic judgments concern the empirical, contingent characteristics of the object judged and involve pleasure, a specific, temporally located, subjective state; they are, thus, empirical judgments. But they also involve an a priori principle, *and* they do not admit of the potential for misapplication of that principle as do empirical judgments. Thus they are not liable to the contingency (or dependence on further, [dis]confirmatory, evidence) that differentiates empirical from a priori judgments. As Kant writes concerning the purposiveness of nature for reflective judgment, and the purposiveness of the will, even though such principles concern objects given empirically (objects of nature, the will), they “are . . . not empirical but a priori

Paradoxically, perhaps, the necessary connection (between the given representation and pleasure) established by aesthetic judging according to the principle of purposiveness is, thereby, stronger than in the case of empirical judgment. For we cannot mistakenly “apply” the principle of purposiveness to the wrong objects (as we can make false, though objectively valid, empirical judgments).³⁶ If we are aesthetically judging a particular object as beautiful (or are aesthetically pleased by it), that object “shows itself” to be purposive for the cognitive faculties (v:279), i.e., *does* “agree” with the principle of aesthetic judging, *is* representable as a unity of contingent, heterogeneous properties as such, is judgeable purposively without a purpose. Otherwise we could not engage in such ongoing, projective unification of this object. And if other subjects can judge aesthetically (or are committed to judging purposively without a purpose), they too ought to find *this* object pleasing (or so judgeable) because – as our own experience of it attests – it *is* so judgeable, and (thus, necessarily) pleasing.³⁷

because the combination of the predicate with the empirical concept of the subject of their judgments *requires no further experience*, but can be understood *a priori*” (v:182; my emphasis).

³⁶ Kant suggests briefly at v:237 that the necessity claims in judgments of taste are, like the claims of empirical judgments, “conditional” because we cannot “always be sure that the instance had been subsumed correctly under that basis, which is the rule for approval.” Like Ted Cohen (“Why Beauty Is a Symbol of Morality,” in Ted Cohen and Paul Guyer, eds., *Essays in Kant’s Aesthetics* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982], 221–36), though for different reasons, I think the “conditionality” of claims of taste is better understood as reflecting the fact either that we confuse judgments of dependent and free beauty, or that we fail to judge aesthetically at all, i.e., take pleasure in objects for other reasons and then make other sorts of judgments that purport, wrongly, to be aesthetic judgments.

³⁷ Guyer argues (*Claims of Taste*, e.g., pp. 287–8) that Kant needs to, but cannot, show why all ought to find the *same* objects aesthetically pleasing. I concur with Guyer that Kant must establish this claim because any aesthetic judgment is a singular one, though Kant need not show that all subjects *will* (under ideal conditions) so experience the object, but only that they should. Guyer’s objection is (plausibly) motivated, in part, by empirically attested preferential differences (e.g., I prefer classical simplicity, my friend Romantic profusion), and – more generally – by differences in taste that (we tend to think) arise from cultivation or practice. These cases lend weight to Guyer’s worries, but neither, I think, need be problematic for Kant. Such differences might be understood to derive from differences in judgments of dependent beauty because of the employment of differing empirical concepts (see Chapter Five), or not in fact to show that people find different things beautiful – I can find Romantic profusion beautiful, even if I do not find it the most beautiful. Second, and more broadly, as I shall argue, the ultimate reason why we ought to judge purposively is to challenge, refresh, complicate, etc. our conceptual schemes. Thus not only ought less practiced aesthetic experiencers find more

Second, this justification of particular aesthetic judgments is insufficient because, unlike judgments of experience, it rests on an a priori principle that has not been shown to be necessary for the possibility of all experience. That is, it has been established (so far) only that purposiveness is an a priori principle necessary for the possibility of *aesthetic* experience, but not that all subjects *do* have, must be such as to have, aesthetic experience. Nor has it been established that all subjects, even if they can have aesthetic experience, *ought* to judge according to the principle of purposiveness, and therefore ought to “apply” it when appropriate. It may be that all subjects must be able to judge purposively in order to find an object beautiful, and that when they do so (with respect to a given object), they necessarily feel pleasure or connect pleasure “as necessary” to the representation. However, in order for us to *require*, justifiably, that *all* other subjects do so (in a particular case, or in general), it must be shown not only that all subjects can judge in accord with this principle, but also that there is some reason why one *ought* so to judge.³⁸ To address these concerns, we must turn to the second stage of Kant’s argument.

complex objects beautiful (be sensitive to more order or nuance), but also (more challengingly to our aesthetic prejudices) more practiced aesthetic judges ought to find less complex objects beautiful: such judges ought to try to shed their sophistication, or resist their boredom with objects they “used to” appreciate, in order to see such objects afresh, to challenge their settled conceptual categories.

³⁸ Cf. Allison, *Theory of Taste*, pp. 165–8. Some readers are led by something like this concern to argue that on Kant’s view the claims of aesthetic judgments are ultimately justified because (our appreciation of) the beautiful is “analogically” connected to morality (as Kant perhaps suggests, e.g., at v:353), which connection licenses the demand that one *ought* so to judge. See, e.g., Crawford, *Kant’s Aesthetic Theory*, and R. K. Elliott, “The Unity of Kant’s *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement*,” *British Journal of Aesthetics* 8 (1968), 244–59. Like Guyer (among others), however, I believe that one ought to discount the relatively infrequent passages that suggest this line of argument, and to read Kant’s deduction to concern conditions for cognition (not morality). This approach seems justified because of the preponderance of passages to this effect, including the paragraph designated as the deduction. Further, the passages in which Kant suggests that taste is connected to morality are often most plausibly read as *deriving* such connections from an independent justification of taste from morality (notably in §59). When Kant (rarely) suggests that moral ideas *might* ground claims of taste, he suggests more specifically that they would provide a “fixed” rule for taste (as, e.g., in §17). Kant’s interest in aesthetic judgment, however, derives largely from his view (or puzzlement) that aesthetic judgments make claims to universal validity *without* such a fixed rule. I attempt to show in the text that Kant can justify these claims on cognitive grounds, without appeal to morality; as I shall suggest in the Conclusion, this justification does, however, have provocative consequences for the place of Kantian morality within the sphere of subjective, evaluative experience.

8.5 Kant's deduction of taste II: Subjective conditions for the possibility of empirical cognition

As we have seen, Kant argues that in aesthetic judgment we justifiably lay claim to others' agreement because "we are justified in presupposing universally in all people the same subjective conditions of the power of judgment that we find in ourselves" (v:290). I propose to read this claim, and Kant's related claim that purposiveness without a purpose is *the* a priori principle of judgment, as more limited, indirect claims than they are usually understood to be: I shall argue that purposiveness is the principle – solely – of *reflective* judging, not of the cognitive judgmental activities required for and employed in each and every act of judging (or in all experience).

Though I depart here from some of Kant's explicit statements (or from the most straightforward reading thereof), I take this interpretive strategy to be textually justifiable, for Kant claims that purposiveness is the a priori principle of *reflective* judgment,³⁹ and (sometimes) that aesthetic judging manifests the subjective conditions not for all cognition, but for *empirical* cognition (e.g., v:190–1). Similarly, as suggested in Chapter Five, Kant's claims that the activity of aesthetic judging is that required for "cognition in general" (e.g., v:238) refer to our activities of judging in accord not with categorial norms, but with our logical norms of perfection for ideal (empirical) conceptual content. Such norms, again, do not straightforwardly govern schematizing or empirical determinative judgment (where we apply concepts we already have), but govern reflective judging, in which we aim to form (ideal) empirical concepts.

This more limited claim is, moreover, sufficient to ground Kant's deduction. For, as argued in Chapter One, without reflective judging we would be incapable of making sense of nature in its diverse, empirical character (because the categorial principles underdetermine such diversity), and thus would be overwhelmed, incapable of any coherent experience. And without reflective judging to form and correct empirical concepts and the application thereof, we would be unable not only to engage in determinate empirical judgment, but also non-arbitrarily to specify the categorial principles in one way rather than another, and thus would be incapable of experience on a "thicker" conception (as cognition). That is, in order to judge justifiably that the sun's rays cause the stone to be warm (that the rays are necessarily connected to heat, that this

³⁹ v:184; FI, xx:213–14, 225.

relation among these particulars is an instantiation of the concept of cause), we must not only apply the categorial principles, but must also have correctly identified and classified the sun's rays, heat, and stone empirically – the correctness of which cannot be determined by the categorial principles alone. Nor can empirical determinative judgment – the application of concepts to given objects – determine that another empirical concept might be more appropriate. It is, rather, reflective judging that forms and corrects empirical concepts, searches for more appropriate empirical classifications and concepts, challenges our empirical conceptualization of objects.

Finally, because reflective judging is, on Kant's view, the paradigmatic activity of judging – the discrimination among contingent particulars as such, to render them subsumable to concepts – if purposiveness is the principle of such judging, it may lay claim to being the “principle of the power of judgment in general” (title, §35). So, I shall now argue, it is: the activity of reflective judging must be understood to be structured by the principle of purposiveness without a purpose in order precisely to accomplish its double task (identified in Chapter [One](#)): to be responsive to nature as empirically, sensibly given (as heterogeneous and contingent) – i.e., address the threat of diversity – and to be responsible to the categorial principles of “nature as such,” viz., to generate concepts that might be natural kinds or laws that are specifications of the categorial principles – i.e., address the threat of contingency.

I shall begin by presenting the negative case: like aesthetic judging, reflective judging cannot be understood as a “mechanical,” non-judgmental activity of the imagination, as on a (broadly) empiricist conception of empirical concept formation. Indeed, such a mechanical conception may be understood itself to generate the two threats (of diversity and contingency) to the possibility of empirical cognition and experience. I shall then argue, positively, that reflective judging must, rather, be governed by purposiveness without a purpose, both as the normative form of (a system of) concepts and conceptual content, and as the structure of the activity of reflective judging itself.

On an empiricist (associative) account of empirical concept formation, we generate concepts of kinds by associating “simple” ideas with one another on the basis of experience of their “constant conjunction,” perhaps, to form (Lockean) nominal essences. This conception of empirical concept formation can be characterized as mechanical in two respects. First, on this view the complex concept of a kind is composed of parts (properties, ideas) that are given and intelligible separately from one

another, and then correlated. Correspondingly, the whole (concept/conceptual content) is simply the sum of the parts, an aggregate. Second, the subject who thus forms concepts may be understood as engaged in a mechanical act: the subject notes separate aspects of an object serially, and then simply juxtaposes them (e.g., reproduces them in one representation by reproductive/associative imagination).

Such an account of empirical concept formation can neither explain the possibility, nor ground the justifiability, of empirical concepts on Kant's view. As we have seen, Kant argues that the imaginative activities of association or apprehension presuppose that we already have concepts (both a priori and empirical). In the case of empirical concept formation, we do not a fortiori "have" (overarching) empirical concepts to guide our imaginative reproduction, apprehension, or association. The empiricists therefore posit that we get simple ideas of sensible qualities directly from experience, that we have some primitive, automatic understanding of some particulars. These form the basic components of conceptual content, and are also the basis on which we can judge that (these, or more complex) particulars are similar or different.⁴⁰ This answer is, however, unavailable to Kant, given his doctrines both that "intuitions without concepts are blind" and, more generally, that intuitions are distinct from concepts: a sensation of red does not a concept of red make. Such mechanical association would, on Kant's view, produce only representations in which particulars are juxtaposed into collections of uninterpreted data, each element of which is presented "along with" others; we would produce, that is, not concepts, but representations "less than a dream."⁴¹ Even if such a manifold were connected in terms of categorical principles, its uninterpreted empirical data might as well be a potentially infinite diversity, unintelligible to us. It would certainly not comprise an empirical concept.

Even if we were able thus to form concepts, moreover, they would be unjustifiable as candidate concepts of natural kinds, according to Kant. For if the subject forms empirical concepts mechanically, such concepts are (first) directly dependent on that subject's experience. They are,

⁴⁰ See Locke, *Essay* II.i and ii, for the classic presentation of this view (including the claim that our understanding of simple ideas is the basis for the principle of non-contradiction); see David Hume, *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1977), section III, on the recognition of similarity as a "natural" (primitive, mechanical) act of imagination connecting given ideas.

⁴¹ See the [previous chapter](#) for a more extensive discussion of these pre-conceptual imaginative activities and corresponding characteristic representations.

therefore, unjustifiable as grounds for claims either concerning the character of objects, or on other subjects (as to how they ought to understand objects). Such concepts could, in other words, perhaps be “corrected” by the subject if he were to seek out more or broader experience (as the empiricists tend to recommend), but they will nonetheless remain void of normative status, expressing mere facts about the subject’s experience and what the subject (in fact, psychologically) has made of it. (More experience might lead us to associate more properties with one another, but will not lead us to see any reasons behind such associations or justification for such classifications.) Such mechanical representation cannot, in principle, generate concepts of natural kinds, in which the marks that identify the kind “belong” together; it cannot provide grounds to determine which among the properties associated with a kind of object are more important (necessary or essential) to define that kind, or why one association of marks might be better than others. Thus, though such ideas would derive from our experience of nature, we would have no grounds for believing that our categorizations match “real” connections among properties of objects (one reason for Locke’s denial that we can know real essences). Such associations are not lawful, but reflect only experienced conjunction; they cannot, then, generate or ground necessary laws (one reason for Hume’s skepticism about causal judgments).

Kant of course rejects this model of empirical concept formation in that he argues that we require an a priori concept of an object (or categorical principles) in order to judge or classify objects. But the employment of the categories, even in empirical concept formation, does not entirely address the questions here raised concerning the possibility or justifiability of empirical concepts: *which* contingent, empirical properties we will take to belong together, to be combinable according to categorical rules, is not thereby determined. Moreover, like the empiricists, and contra Leibniz, Kant believes that we cannot know the *real* essences of natural objects because we construct our concepts thereof on the basis of experience. Therefore, the relations among marks in empirical conceptual content are not deductively grounded in the concept of the object. Nor can we know that these properties and their relations metaphysically derive from the nature of the object.⁴² We ought not to, Kant writes,

⁴² In articulating such concerns, Kant even echoes Locke’s specific gloss of the contrast between nominal and real essence as a contrast between classifications in terms of “external” properties and “internal constitution” (FI, xx:216n). See Longuenesse,

“analyze” empirical concepts, but rather “become acquainted, through experience, with what belongs *to them*” (*JL* IX:141).

Kant’s concerns about diversity and contingency may, then, be said to arise not only because of categorial underdetermination and categorial demands for rightful empirical classification (as discussed in Chapter One), but also because a mechanical conception of empirical concept formation will engender skepticism about empirical knowledge (of kinds or laws), as discerned by Locke and Hume. The principle of purposiveness – specifically the principle of purposiveness without a purpose –, as a form of the subject’s judging activity, is Kant’s response to these concerns.

8.6 Reflective judging as purposive: The norm of perfection and purposive judging without a purpose

As we have seen, on Kant’s account empirical concepts are both formed and arranged systematically. Kant therefore denies that empirical concepts have only nominal essences, i.e., comprise mere associations among marks; rather, they have “logical essences” (*JL* IX:61; *Vienna Logic* xxiv:839).⁴³ This language of “logical essence” is not meant to suggest a Leibnizean view concerning the putatively deductive relations among (all) marks in conceptual content. Rather, as suggested in Chapter Five, a logical essence is a unity of marks, as both subordinated (deductively

Capacity to Judge, Chapter 6, especially p. 135. I would suggest – as a sympathetic addition to Longuenesse’s argument – that Kant’s disagreement with Leibniz here turns centrally on the paired concepts of inner/outer: because we form empirical concepts through acquaintance with objects, the properties we combine (or find to be in agreement, identical, or different) in defining the concept will always be so connected as (ultimately) “outer” determinations. This is not only because (as Kant argues in the Amphiboly) all objects we experience are individuated spatially, and thus in “outer” relations to one another, nor only because (as Longuenesse suggests) such properties might be determined by causal relations with other kinds of objects. But also (to anticipate), empirical conceptualization always involves *logically* “outer” relations: their marks (or the so-designated properties) are (1) taken to be combined in a way based ultimately on coordination (i.e., an [outer] “addition” of a differentia to a generic concept, not an “internal” elaboration or derivation from that generic concept) and (2) chosen because they allow us to identify (class) or differentiate (specify) the object in relation to other kinds of objects, thus not purely because they are true of the object itself (internally), but because they are significant within a classificatory system.

⁴³ On “logical essence,” see Longuenesse, *Capacity to Judge*, e.g., pp. 120n42, 153. As discussed in Chapter Five, and like Longuenesse (and Allison, *Theory of Taste*, pp. 28–9), I take Kant’s position here to be intermediate between those of Locke and Leibniz (between conceiving of conceptual content as comprising solely coordinative or subordinative relations among marks, respectively).

related) *and* coordinated (non-deductively related), in a concept's conceptual content. Both the order among these marks and their unity are instituted by the place of this concept within the systematic order of concepts: the marks are related to one another as generic (subordinated) and specific (coordinated), and the particular marks that are chosen to define the kind, or taken to belong to that concept as essential or necessary, are so taken for (systematic) reasons, viz., to identify this kind as similar and distinct from others. Thus, these marks – or the so-designated properties – are not arbitrarily associated, but “belong” together or define the kind of object for reasons, as determined by their place in our conceptual scheme.

Empirical conceptual content – within systematic ordering – is, then, (ideally) purposively ordered (with a purpose), in two related senses. First, the marks of a particular concept “serve” to specify that concept (or the properties thus identified “serve” to make an object one of that kind) as their purpose. (As argued in Chapter [Five](#), they do so, specifically, as contingent [by contrast to the necessary properties of objects as such], and as heterogeneous from one another; thus this purposive unity is a lawfulness of the contingent.) This purposive unity of marks is, second, ultimately grounded in a broader purposiveness governing the system of concepts as a whole: these marks are chosen and unified with one another *because* they allow us to identify and differentiate objects in comparison to one another (i.e., serve as generic or specific/differentiating marks), or, that is, are unified “relative” to our cognitive “purposes” (*JL* ix:65).

Our activity in forming concepts within such a system is, correspondingly, not to be understood as mechanical, but as purposive (with a purpose) or technical. For reflective judging is an activity of *choosing* which (contingent, heterogeneous) properties to coordinate, in order to construct concepts. Such construction is guided by its own norms, specifically perfection, the norm of general logic concerning “cognition in general”: we aim at greater specification and unification, or at perfection, the greatest unity of the most diverse manifold possible.

This view of empirical concepts as having logical essences, of (ideal) conceptual content as a (purposive) unity of diverse marks as such, determined in accord with a system of empirical concepts, re-raises, however, Kant's *transcendental* questions concerning the possibility and justifiability of such systematic ordering. For, first, this view presupposes that we are, already, “stocked” with empirical concepts that may be chosen as marks to define a kind. But part of Kant's concern in the *CJ* is to understand how we can come to conceptualize the (basic) genera and

differentia we use in forming concepts, or in constructing a system thereof in the first place. As Kant writes,

for those concepts which must first of all be found for given empirical intuitions, . . . in accordance with which alone *particular* experience is possible, . . . one cannot refer . . . in turn to already known empirical concepts and transform reflection into a mere comparison with empirical forms for which one already has concepts. (FI, xx:213)

Second, on this view our construction of empirical concepts may not be arbitrary – for we have reason to combine the marks that we do – nor aggregative – for we take the marks as belonging together (as generic/specific), not merely as associated. Still, the content and unity of such concepts is determined “relative to our purposes,” which does not seem to guarantee their legitimacy as proposed natural kinds. To address these concerns, the power of judgment must be understood not only to be employed “technically” (purposively with a purpose), but also to “require a special and at the same time transcendental principle for its reflection”⁴⁴ – that of purposiveness *without* a purpose.

As argued in Chapter One, in order to explain how the subject can engage in reflective judging, can form (any initial) empirical concepts, we must explain how the subject can orient herself amid the (unconceptualized) diversity of the empirically, sensibly given, how she may transform utterly particular, blind, in principle utterly heterogeneous (unconceptualized) items in the sensory manifold into concepts. More specifically, on Kant’s account of empirical concept formation in the *JL* (ix:94–5), reflective judging is an activity of proto-disjunctive judging, in which heterogeneous (properties of) objects are taken as potential components (species) of the sphere of a(n undetermined) concept/genus.⁴⁵ This proto-disjunctive form allows us to understand empirical representations as (possibly) not brutally given and utterly, chaotically heterogeneous, but as meaningfully different, diverse for “reasons,” i.e., as species. As also argued in Chapter One, however, Kant must explain how such proto-disjunctive judging is possible *as* an engagement with a sensible, blind manifold, for empirical concepts are formed from experience of (a fortiori conceptually underdetermined) sensibly given particulars. As such an engagement, reflective judging bears considerable similarity to aesthetic judging. It seems appropriately described as an activity of the

⁴⁴ This is the second ellipsis from the xx:213 passage quoted above.

⁴⁵ See FI, xx:213.

imagination aiming to be in harmony with the understanding, but, at least to some degree, freely so harmonious: the subject is aiming to unify sensibly given, particular representations, without direction from (prior, overarching) empirical concepts – in trying to form an empirical concept, the subject is (clearly) not guided by that concept. Moreover, here too such imaginative activity cannot be merely apprehensive or associative, for then it would merely juxtapose these empirical items, which could not, as argued above, render them comparable or conceptualizable. Thus reflective judging, like aesthetic judging, must comprise a *judgmental* synthesis of a complex sensible manifold, and one (moreover) that unifies that manifold as diverse. The subject here too must hold herself to taking the heterogeneous elements of the manifold not simply to be associated in her own, contingent, experience, but to belong together non-arbitrarily, indeed to belong together *as* diverse (as potential species).⁴⁶

As in the case of aesthetic judging, I argue, such reflective judging must therefore be understood as judging (synthesizing) purposively without a purpose. For in taking intuitions as species to a(n undetermined) genus, we imaginatively synthesize them *as* “means” to (reciprocal) comparison or distinction, as they might (reciprocally) complement or contrast with one another, as they might be in affinity or comprise a sphere, in which they both agree and differ, in which they constrain or limit one another. In such judgmental synthesis, we must – as in aesthetic judging – synthesize these particulars as parts of an indeterminate, *anticipated* whole (here the sphere of the not yet conceptualized genus), or (that is) judge purposively without a purpose, projectively taking each diverse intuition not separately, but as (potentially) reciprocally related to, and constraining the represented character of, one another.⁴⁷ Like aesthetic judging, reflective judging must be understood to be a projective, synthetic activity, anticipatory of (future, undetermined) unity. “To reflect,” Kant writes, “is to compare and . . . hold together given representations . . . *in relation to a concept thereby made possible*” (FI, XX:211; my emphasis).⁴⁸

⁴⁶ As argued in Chapter [Seven](#), the “judgmental” character of aesthetic (and now, I suggest, reflective) judging does not comprise its use of concepts, but its character as a unificatory activity that seeks to institute lawful, non-arbitrary relations among representations. See *JL* IX:101, and note 14 above.

⁴⁷ See Chapter [Seven](#) for more extensive argument that such anticipation is necessary for the representation of a reciprocally purposive whole.

⁴⁸ Rush argues (rightly) that though Kant’s conception of reflective judging as non-conceptually guided judging is strange, it is nonetheless logically required by Kant’s epistemological doctrines. (Rush, “Harmony of the Faculties,” 59; cf. Allison, *Theory of Taste*, pp. 26–8, following Longuenesse, *Capacity to Judge*.) As I argue here,

Only such projective anticipation of the (disjunctive) whole, I argue, can explain how the subject might come to render salient previously unconceptualized aspects of particulars, how the subject may “compare” representations without a (prior) concept that identifies in what respect they should be compared. Another example simpler than Kant’s own in the *JL* (the trees) might help to explain this claim: one comes to find colors salient and meaningful (among the potentially infinite diversity of the empirically given) not by first having the concept of color (in general), but rather through recognizing various colors’ affinity to and difference from one another.⁴⁹ Red is, that is, made salient and identified as such not by comparing it with any other sensible property (e.g., rough, large, curved), but by being taken as part of a sphere including blue, yellow,

however, Kant must provide an account of how such non-conceptually guided judging may discern unity in a (blind) manifold. That is, like Ginsborg (in “Lawfulness Without Law”), I take it that Kant must invoke *another form* of synthesis in order to explain how new concepts might be formed. Unlike Ginsborg (and Longuenesse), however, I take this pre-conceptual synthesis to be a synthesis not of a particular object as one of a kind, but rather of representations as (potentially) belonging to different kinds. This avoids the threat, perhaps entailed by Longuenesse’s account (according to which we discern a unifying “pattern” in the individual object that accords with the concept we will form), of begging the question in understanding such a synthesis to be one in which we already implicitly “have” the concept according to which we synthesize an object as unified (as one of its kind), or that entailed by Ginsborg’s account, according to which we imaginatively synthesize an object in a way we are “entitled” to take as “exemplary” (ibid., 69–70), so that any such synthesis is not only possible without any rules, but will count as right, which both seem un-Kantian claims.

⁴⁹ Despite Kant’s language of “intuitions,” e.g., at xx:213, it is significant, I suspect, that Kant’s example in the *JL* is not a simple idea, but is a substantial kind (tree), of which our “intuitions” are complex: such complexity might render the separate “items” (e.g., the lines of branches, shapes of leaves) more susceptible to comprehension as different from one another. As noted above, moreover, Kant explicitly discusses the concept of “red” in the *JL* (immediately following the passage concerning empirical concept formation) as a quite “abstracted” concept, derived from a prior, more complex understanding of a cloth (with many other properties, e.g., texture, from which we “abstract”). Against the empiricists, then, Kant suggests that such “simple” ideas as colors are derivative from more complex (and thus discursively intelligible) representations of things. The complexity of the items to be compared on the Kantian model, finally, suggests that both of the types of cognitive purposiveness I identified above – that properties serve to make a thing what it is, as well as the purposiveness of the system of concepts as a whole (to identify and differentiate kinds) – guide the activity of reflective judging. Since, as suggested above, I take the latter to ground our (ideal) conceptualizations of things as having properties that “serve” to make them what they are (except in the case of aesthetic judging), however, I concentrate here on the systematic, comparative purposiveness.

green, each limiting the others, each serving, reciprocally, as means to identify the others – precisely because of their heterogeneity. On the basis of representing this sphere, we may form concepts of these colors, as well as of color in general. In order, however, to institute such reciprocal means–ends relations among sensible particulars, to recognize such reciprocal limitation, we must not only synthesize in accord with disjunctive logical form, but must do so in light of an anticipated whole, viz., the unconceptualized sphere (of colors).⁵⁰

To be clear: projective imaginative synthesis is not our *sole* manner of unifying the manifold in reflective judging, as it is in (pure) aesthetic judging: reflective judging is more directly governed by the understanding than aesthetic judging. In reflective judging, we not only aim to represent a reciprocally determining unity of a manifold, but to form a *concept*, and we take the objects or properties as related to one another in logical form (as proto-disjuncts). Moreover, we may compare these items using the (schematized) categories, identifying them as spatio-temporally located, as substance–accident complexes, in causal and spatial community. (Indeed, because Kant understands the task of reflective judging to include not only the search for empirical concepts, but also the specification of nature’s universal laws, the categorial principles, in [some] reflective judging we must presuppose the categories, at least in a regulative sense, as that which is to be specified.) Correspondingly, the representation of an object as beautiful is unified solely by the reciprocal (cognitive) means–ends relations (of contrast and complement) among the components of its sensible manifold, and thus (as argued in Chapter Five) as an individual. By contrast, the (proto-)disjunctive sphere is represented as unified not only in virtue of reciprocal (cognitive) means–ends relations among its heterogeneous components, but also by the logical form of disjunction and, perhaps, by categorial relations.

⁵⁰ As argued in Chapter One, the subject may attempt to represent many such anticipated wholes, before lighting upon one that is/can be conceptualized; the subject may also anticipate (or conceptualize) a less than complete whole (not, e.g., the whole color wheel). A full account concerning how empirical, diverse properties of objects become salient, and for what reasons, would probably include a discussion of the role of language and, originally, a more concrete sense of “purposive” activity and salience: that (e.g.) the distinction between solid and fluid objects becomes salient because these properties make objects useful or dangerous to us, in our purpose-driven (or need-driven) activities in the world. The account of purposive judging without a purpose I sketch here is, then, already a transition from such strictly practical engagement with the world to an attempt to classify objects cognitively.

For such reasons, I suggest, Kant identifies aesthetic judging as that sort of reflective judging that is governed by the principle of purposiveness entirely (v:193), whereas reflective judging proper is not exclusively so governed.⁵¹ Reflective judging must, however, be governed by the principle of purposiveness without a purpose as well as by logical forms and the categories, for it must accomplish a judgmental unification beyond schematic-categorical or logical unification, to conceptualize that which the categories do not determine, to discriminate *how* specifically these items form *which* specific disjunction, differ (or are similar) in which specific respect.⁵² The principle of purposiveness without a purpose does not address this problem by indicating determinately how sensations are to be compared or differentiated. Rather, our state of mind in purposive judging, the imaginative, anticipatory, unification of manifolds (as diverse), enables us to represent empirically given, heterogeneous particulars as *reciprocally* rendering each other intelligible, by complement and contrast.

The (primary, definitive) imaginative activity in reflective judging, in which we engage with sensibly given objects or manifolds *as* contingently, empirically heterogeneous, must, then, be understood as a purposive activity, without a (determinate, guiding) purpose. Thus we may begin both to answer Kant's questions concerning the transcendental grounds for empirical cognition, and to complete Kant's deduction of aesthetic judgments: purposive judging without a purpose is a necessary subjective condition for experience, required for the possibility of forming empirical concepts, for the subject to orient herself amid empirical diversity. Though this activity is a "special" activity of the imagination in concert with the understanding, not employed in all experience, it is nonetheless one in which all subjects must engage, for it is the "intuitive"

⁵¹ See Luigi Caranti, "Logical Purposiveness and the Principle of Taste," *Kant-Studien* 96 (2005), 364–74, for a detailed treatment of texts from the *CJ* introductions, to support a similar claim that reflective judging employs a specified version (i.e., as applied to logical systematization) of the principle of aesthetic judging, which latter is the fundamental principle of judging.

⁵² Such judging is also, as Longuenesse has argued (*Capacity to Judge*, Chapters 5 and 6), governed by the "concepts of comparison" (identity and difference, inner/outer, matter/form). Though my account is sympathetic to Longuenesse's, I argue that Kant requires the principle of purposiveness (as a subjective principle of judging), beyond the concepts of comparison, in order to explain specifically *empirical* concept formation, as engaged with qualitatively heterogeneous, sensible, "blind" manifolds of intuition such that they may be understood as identical or different (etc.) in specific ways.

and “synthetic” form of representing “from which comparings of sensations arise”⁵³ or the subjective “conditions of universality” (v:219), viz., of concept formation. Thus we may justifiably assume that all subjects *must* be able to engage in purposive judging without a purpose, or (that is) in the cognitive activity required for aesthetic experience.

8.7 A qualification

Aesthetic and reflective judging should both, I have argued, be understood to be activities of purposive judging without a purpose, but they are also somewhat different. As just noted, reflective judging is not only governed by purposiveness, but also guided (if underdetermined) by the logical form of disjunction and (possibly) by categorial principles. Likewise, though in both cases we hold diverse items in a manifold to be unified as diverse, in reflective judging we take such items as (proto-) disjuncts, while in aesthetic judging we represent a manifold as completely, reciprocally, systematically interrelated, to represent an individual. As argued above in Chapter [Five](#), then, strictly aesthetic representation does not and cannot ensue in the articulation of discursive concepts. In reflective judging, by contrast, we precisely do “relate objects to one another” (v:279), judge comparatively over a range of objects, and do so in order to abstract marks of commonality among (different) objects, in order (ultimately) to unify the manifold conceptually. In reflective judging we aim to render an empirically diverse manifold intelligible within larger systematic relations among objects (diversity is comprehensible, as such, as specific difference), not as a systematic unity itself.

These differences reflect, I suggest, the fact that we are incapable of appreciating most objects aesthetically most of the time, cannot (that is) usually represent objects as individually intelligible in their empirical diversity.⁵⁴ Rather, usually we must be able to focus on some aspects of

⁵³ R276. Here my view is similar to Allison’s (*Theory of Taste*, pp. 169–84). I provide a more extensive account, however, of what the subjective principle of judging amounts to, and why it is related to the possibility of forming empirical concepts (and hence of subsumption, or determinative [empirical] judgment), both of which remain somewhat obscure on Allison’s account. Moreover, since purposive judging comprises the condition for the possibility both of aesthetic experience, and for reflective comparison, I do not see why one should deny, as Allison does, that purposiveness is the principle both of aesthetic and reflective judgment.

⁵⁴ The comparative rarity of aesthetic experience is an empirical fact, and is of course also reflected in Kant’s characterization of (positive) aesthetic experience as a

objects rather than others, by which to identify and differentiate those objects, in order not to be overwhelmed by the diversity in the empirical manifold.

Hence the necessity of reflective judging as a condition for the possibility of experience, and hence also, I suggest, the distinctive character of reflective judgmental synthesis of a manifold, by contrast to aesthetic judging. Reflective purposive judging comprises, I submit, the sort of imaginative continuing reformulation or alternation among possible “patterns” of the manifold that many commentators propose characterizes *aesthetic* judging on Kant’s view.⁵⁵ In order to formulate such proposed patterns (specifically, here, interpretations of the manifold as a reciprocally limiting sphere of a possible new genus concept), we must judge purposively without a purpose (as I have argued), but unificatory success in such judging will comprise “settling” for one of these patterns, which renders some empirical characteristics of objects conceptualizable. Such success involves abstracting from (leaving out of one’s regard) those elements of the manifold that do not lend themselves to (this) lawful, discursive representation (*JL* ix:94–5). Once we come to a conceptualization of that genus, we are not “led on” (as we are in aesthetic judging) to see all the properties of the objects as systematically inter-related; we may simply class the objects as members of a defined, determinate kind.

Reflective judging is, then, a less complete, less self-sustaining act of purposive judging. It is not, therefore, an intrinsically pleasurable experience, a judgmental activity of which we are conscious by pleasure or express in claims concerning pleasure.⁵⁶ We do feel pleasure, Kant claims, when we succeed in reflective judging, but, as he suggests, such pleasure is short-lived: once we have established such laws, found such

“contingent” occurrence. It is also, however, implied by Kant’s basic doctrines concerning human cognition: if we were able to experience all objects aesthetically, all of the time, we would not require discursive concepts, as relatively universal rules, to comprehend and render coherent intuitively given experience.

⁵⁵ E.g., Rush, “Harmony of the Faculties”; Wicks, “Teleological Style.” This is perhaps also Allison’s view (see *Theory of Taste*, pp. 48–51).

⁵⁶ I do not mean to suggest that it is easier to be successful at aesthetic judging than reflective judging or vice versa: just as we may not be able to judge an object aesthetically, we may not be able to find a genus for the objects/properties we (try to) take, projectively, as disjuncts; in neither case will we take pleasure in our judging activity, or be able to sustain that projective synthesizing activity. I mean to suggest, rather, that, unlike successful aesthetic judging, *successful* reflective judging is not a self-sustaining projective activity, and thus is less completely or purely a purposive activity of judging.

order, we simply take it for granted; the laws or concepts we have found become part of our conceptual framework (v:187). Such pleasure is not, that is, the necessary concomitant to an ongoing, self-sustaining judging, but reflects our recognition that we have accomplished a cognitive purpose or are, as Kant writes, “released of a [cognitive] need” (v:184).⁵⁷ Likewise, we need not be conscious of (successful) reflective judging by such pleasure, for we may be conscious of our unification of the manifold precisely by referring to the concept we have formed, the single representation that unifies this manifold (as its sphere).

These differences between reflective and aesthetic judging do not render reflective judging less an activity of judging governed (structured) by purposiveness without a purpose: success in reflective judging presupposes purposive judging without a purpose (as the only “approach” to a manifold that can allow us to discern and conceptualize non-conceptualized differences and similarities), even if it ends that purposive engagement with the manifold. But they raise, again, our question concerning the full justification of the claims of taste. For, as suggested above, in order to justify the claims of aesthetic judgments, we must be able not only to assume that all others are *able* to judge purposively, but also legitimately to claim that they ought – with respect to this representation, and in general – so to judge. The preceding argument – that we must be able to judge purposively in order to conceptualize the unconceptualized empirical diversity in nature – grounds the first of these claims. But it does not seem to ground the second claim, for once we *have* formed an array of empirical concepts, it seems that there is little reason why we would, much less why we ought to, (continue to) judge purposively. As I shall now argue, however, the abstracting, or self-“ending,” character of reflective judging raises justificatory questions concerning our empirical concepts, and thus obliges us not to “rest” with determinative empirical judgment, but to continue to judge purposively without a purpose.

⁵⁷ It is, in other words, a version of pleasure in the good: we have here accomplished one of our aims, and are pleased to have done so. It is, however, a somewhat odd version, not only because it turns on Kant’s internalized identification of concepts as purposes (i.e., here the purpose is conceptualization), but also because there is no original, determinate purpose (concept) guiding such judging, but only the non-determinative aim of finding a concept. The purposive unification of the manifold (with a purpose, and the “goodness” of such unification that grounds our pleasure) is, then, *ex post facto* conceptually specified, i.e., by the very empirical concept we have formed.

8.8 Purposiveness without a purpose as a normative principle for reflective judging

As discussed in Chapter One, Kant's normative worries concerning empirical classification and systematization, which are to be addressed by the principle of reflective judging, are twofold: in such judging, we ought to aim to characterize the empirical character of nature as it is given to us, and, in so doing, we ought also to aim to formulate empirical laws – i.e., to be both responsive to the empirically given, and responsible to the constraints set by the categorial principles. The second of these demands is the “threat of contingency,” i.e., the rational requirement that empirical concepts, candidates for empirical laws, etc., ought not only to constitute marks that belong together for our cognitive purposes, or identify only a logical essence, dependent on those categorizations that happen to have been most apparent to, or convenient for, us. Rather, these concepts ought to be specifications of the concept of an object of nature *as* governed by the categorial principles, i.e., be at least justifiable “candidates” for natural kinds, for empirical laws, or for justifiable inductive inferences.

Both of these normative demands are, I suggest, to be met by ongoing, continuing, reflective, purposive judging without a (determinate) purpose. First, because reflective judging (as just suggested) is abstracting, it always leaves some of the given characteristics of the manifold unconceptualized, irrelevant to the currently proposed concept or classificatory scheme. Thus such reflective judging, as well as the ensuing determinative judgments employing such concepts, always fails to be fully responsive to natural, sensible diversity. In order to be thus responsive, we ought, then, to continue to approach nature reflectively, to continue to judge purposively without a purpose, in order to continue the task of specifying our concepts.

Our obligation of responsiveness to natural empirical diversity is not only thus additive, but is also necessary as a corrective to our very classificatory schemes, to our cognitive reliance on the empirical concepts we have. Our empirical concepts, that is, might mistakenly divide nature, or misidentify kinds – and strictly determinative judgments (applying such concepts to objects) cannot, of course, correct such misidentification. In order to avoid being misled by these concepts, to render salient possible countervailing evidence in the sensibly given, then, we are obliged to judge nature purposively without a purpose, that is, to “suspend” our determinate empirical conceptual classification, to attempt to reformulate

our classifications, to “check” whether we might not be able better to reflect the diverse characteristics of the empirically given by substantively different concepts, defined by different essential (generic or specific) marks.⁵⁸

These additive and corrective functions of reflective judging provide, moreover, a way to address the second normative cognitive demand, viz., that we should formulate empirical laws that may be justifiably held to be laws, or natural kinds that may be taken as specifications of the categorical concept of the object. In order to meet these demands, we can test our proposed empirical concepts or laws, registering empirical confirmation or disconfirmation of our hypotheses, and thus can employ the (for Kant very strict) requirements of lawfulness (universality and necessity) as norms governing our selection among various hypothesized concepts or laws. But such (dis)confirmations are insufficient to explain how we form our empirical classifications, or to justify them.

Such testing does not, first, explain how we can formulate (or reformulate) the hypothesized concepts or laws, for which task we must, rather, engage in purposive judging without a purpose. Such (re)formulating reflective judging, I note, could well concern (or synthesize) concepts or conceptualized intuitions as subordinate items in its manifold. As argued above concerning aesthetic judging, however, the *overarching* principle of unification in such judgmental synthesis would remain the principle of purposiveness without a purpose (structuring the judging activity itself), for here too the subject aims to unify (or reformulate) previously conceptualized (or intuited) particulars under an unknown, new, concept.

Second, such concepts or laws would remain solely empirically justified and thus (on Kant’s view) have no justifiable status as laws, as (truly) universal or necessary. As suggested in Chapter [One](#), Kant’s insistence that we ought to attempt to “fill out” our systematic conceptual scheme, specifically to find higher empirical laws, seems intended to respond to this problem. On Kant’s view, a completed system, including ever higher, more general laws, would render such laws – and their systematically subordinated laws – “deducible” from or “subsumed to” the categorical

⁵⁸ Kant himself does not emphasize this requirement to be able to judge things differently than we are accustomed to do, except, briefly, in praising “caprice in the good sense” as a “talent of being able to transpose oneself at will into a certain mental disposition in which everything is judged quite differently from what is usual” (v:335). Here again I concur with Rush, “Harmony of the Faculties,” though I take aesthetic judging itself to be less directly useful for empirical classification.

principles, and thus (justifiably) taken to have a necessary status (as following from necessary laws) (FI, xx:203).

The search for higher laws requires, again, that we judge purposively without a purpose, taking (relatively) particular laws or concepts proto-disjunctively, as (possible) species to an undetermined genus. But this suggestion also introduces a new function of the principle of purposiveness as a normative principle or (more properly) as grounding a normative ideal for empirical cognition, viz., that of a completed system of maximal coherence and extension.

As we have seen, the *logical* norm governing the construction of empirical concepts – perfection – itself enjoins the subject to engage in systematic ordering of empirical concepts: the greatest unification of the largest diversity of marks (perfection) is accomplished by the systematic ordering of marks (as relatively generic/specific) under a concept, and thus also by the systematic ordering of empirical concepts generally.⁵⁹ These logical norms go some way towards addressing Kant's normative concerns: as argued above, only concepts *within* a logical system have the form – i.e., logical essence – requisite for concepts of natural kinds. A logical essence does not, as noted above, comprise a “real” essence, in which the kinds' properties (are understood to) belong together intrinsically (deductively). But any candidate as a concept of a natural kind must comprise such a logical essence. For the only other alternative available to human discursive intelligences is an aggregative concept, which *cannot* constitute a concept of a natural kind, since it is a mere conjunction of properties associated for no reason, and thus cannot be a specification of the categorial concept of an object as a *lawful* combination of attributes and powers.

Such systematic ordering does not seem to legitimate empirical concepts (or laws) thereby formed, as noted above, for it is made “relative to our [cognitive] purposes,” i.e., insofar as it aids us to identify or distinguish objects (and thus not necessarily as reflecting natural kinds). Moreover, this logical demand for systematization does not, itself, comprise a demand for a *single* system of empirical concepts or laws. For one might develop several non-integrated systems that serve (various)

⁵⁹ Kant makes it clear that this is a normative demand, not simply a description of how we go about things in empirical investigation (or logically), at A67/B92: “the concepts that are discovered only as the opportunity arises will not reveal any order and systematic unity, but will rather be ordered in pairs only according to similarities and placed in series only in accord with the magnitude of their content, from the simple to the more composite, which series are by no means systematic.”

cognitive purposes well, and that might allow us to construct (relatively) perfect concepts.⁶⁰ For example, we employ two overlapping, but not integrated, systems in classifying fruits and vegetables: botanical and culinary. Both systems are useful in identifying (say) tomatoes, and might generate complex, unified concepts thereof (e.g., as a type of fruit-bearing plant; as a vegetable with certain nutrients). The norm of perfection – and its demand for systematization – does not determine whether either of these systems or concepts is superior (both are unities of diverse, truthful information), nor does it require (necessarily) that the two different systems or concepts, both useful for cognitive purposes, be unified.

The categorial principles – or “nature as such” as thereby constituted – require, however, that there be a single, coherent set of empirical kinds or laws, a single, “right” classificatory system. The form of such a system – the principle of its unification of the diverse as such – is, I submit, not perfection (purposiveness with a purpose), not the construction of concepts relative to our purposes, but purposiveness without a purpose, viz., the *reciprocal* determination of (cognitive) means to ends. Systematic order in accord with this principle would be fully self-determining: each (contingent, heterogeneous) property, kind, or law would have its own “place,” determined by and determining its relation to all others; the (single) logical essence of each kind would be fixed, each empirical law “deductively” held to follow from a highest, universal law of nature, through the “steps” of continuous, systematic specification.

As discussed in Chapter [One](#), Kant holds systematic unity to be a regulative principle in the *CPR* Appendix, and so too this (reformulated) ideal of systematicity as structured by purposiveness without a purpose. As finite, discursive intelligences, human beings cannot attain to the comprehensive understanding of empirically diverse items as reciprocally intelligible, completely self-determining. Rather, this ideal of a completely internally determined whole prompts us to transcend the mere arrangement of concepts “relative to our purposes.” It prompts us to engage in an ever ongoing project of scientific investigation in order to complete and unify a system of empirical knowledge, or (that is) in large-scale purposive judging without a purpose, in light of an anticipated, conceptually indeterminate idea of the whole of nature as a reciprocal, (cognitively) purposive, systematic unity.

⁶⁰ Strictly speaking, it is only the concepts of the infima (last) species that will be thus perfect, for these incorporate the marks or laws governing their (many) generic concepts, as well as the greatest specification (diversity).

The thus-demanded reorganization, further articulation – even the impossible, ideal completion – of our empirical classificatory system does not, indeed, guarantee that the concepts so formed are absolutely true or that they register truly necessary laws of nature. We will *never*, Kant claims, gain “insight” into the actual, ultimate principle of unity of empirical nature (v:183). Such knowledge is, Kant argues, impossible for human understanding. (Re)classification in light of the ideal of complete systematic unity of our concepts/laws is, however, the best, indeed only, guarantee (for us) that our empirical concepts *might* reflect genuine natural laws – a way in which we may justify our claims on the grounds of experience, but also as constrained by norms, and thus without rendering such claims dependent on individual, subjective experiences.⁶¹ The maximal coherence and extension of a completed system, that is, weighs in the favor of its empirical classifications as at once comprehensively responsive to nature as given, as empirically diverse, and as in concert with the unified character of nature as determined by universal, categorial laws. A single, systematic classification – governed by the norm of purposiveness without a purpose, secured and corrected by ongoing purposive judging without a purpose – is the human, limited way to render our claims concerning the connection – in concepts, or in laws – among empirical properties lawful in their contingency. In the terms of Kant’s contrast between human and divine intellects in §76–7, the principle of purposiveness both serves to address our cognitive need for a lawfulness of the contingent, and preserves the crucial distinction, for human beings, between the possible/universal and the actual/particular (sensibly given items), to which latter, in purposive judging without a purpose, we attend and which we allow (potentially) to correct our conceptual schemes.

In sum: because the (limited) success of reflective judging is always abstraction, we are obliged to continue to try to judge natural objects purposively without a purpose, in order to glimpse sensibly given objects as more fully determined than our conceptual apparatus allows us to see, and in order to complete, unify, and correct our empirical classificatory scheme. Reflective judging structured by the principle of purposiveness

⁶¹ In “Projecting the Order of Nature,” in Patricia Kitcher, ed., *Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason: Critical Essays* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998), 219–38, Philip Kitcher elegantly argues for a similar, cautious justification of empirical laws through the ideal of systematicity; he does not, however, attend to the differences between the *CPR* Appendix to the Dialectic and the *CJ*, including (notably) Kant’s addition of the principle of purposiveness to the latter account.

without a purpose is, thus, not only a necessary condition for finding any order in nature as it is empirically given, for forming empirical concepts, but also for correcting such concepts. Reflective judging is our way of “striv[ing] to rise from intuitions to concepts in general” (FI, xx:249), whether by forming empirical concepts from particular intuitions, or (more indirectly) by “rising” from empirical concepts or laws to the categorial principles, or the concept of an object of nature in general.

Judging in accord with the principle of purposiveness without a purpose is, however, a merely *subjective* condition for the possibility of experience. This principle is subjective, as I have argued, in that it is a principle that structures the very activity of judging itself – indeed as an irreducibly subjective activity. As the principle of reflective judging, this principle does not, moreover, legislate to objects: it does not constitute any particular object as one of its empirical kind, but is a form of relating objects to one another (comparison, systematization). At most, this principle suggests an idea of a completely articulated, unified system or form of the world as a whole in its empirical diversity, which idea does not, again, determine anything substantive concerning the character of particular objects or laws. What Kant writes concerning the “concepts of comparison” in the Amphiboly thus applies to purposiveness as well: they “are distinguished from the categories by the fact that what is exhibited through them is *not* the object in accordance with what constitutes its concept (magnitude, reality), *but rather only* the comparison of representations, in all their manifoldness, which *precedes* the concepts of things” (A269/B325; my emphasis). As a form of projective anticipation, indeed, the principle of purposiveness without a purpose governs the subject’s “openness” to that which we do not legislate, to the diversity in nature in all its manifoldness, to the non-arbitrary relations of similarity, difference, agreement, and opposition that (for us) contingently hold among qualitatively heterogeneous, empirically given objects. The principle of purposiveness enjoins the subject to let order among empirical diversity show itself; it does not determine objects, but rather “represents the unique *way in which we must proceed* in reflection on the objects of nature with the aim of a thoroughly interconnected experience” (v:184; my emphasis).

Thus, I argue, we can complete Kant’s justification of aesthetic judgments: not only must all subjects be able to judge nature purposively without a purpose, but all subjects ought to do so. Aesthetic judging – and its expression in aesthetic judgment – is the “application” of an a priori principle, a form of judging, that is subjectively necessary for the

possibility of experience. Aesthetic representation of an object as beautiful, as a fully individualized whole, comprising properties reciprocally contrasting and complementing one another, each what it is only in the context of all the others, is a microcosmic, sensible, unconceptualized image of the unity among the contingent, heterogeneous aspects of nature to which we aspire in empirical cognition (whether of a system of empirical concepts or in the conceptual content of a “perfect” concept formed within that system). Thus our experience of the beautiful not only – as Kant suggests – gives us confidence that our self-imposed cognitive demands might be realized, but also gives us an image of what the realization of such demands – the fully specified lawfulness of the contingent – might be.

CONCLUSION

I have argued that Kant's new a priori principle of judgment in the *CJ*, the principle of purposiveness without a purpose, is an a priori formal structure of the subject's judging activity that explains how the subject may represent a unity of the diverse as such. This reading allows us, I have suggested, to understand how purposiveness is exhibited both in the causal interrelations we attribute to the parts of natural organisms in teleological judgment, and in the subject's aesthetic experience of objects as beautiful. As we have seen, Kant denies that purposiveness may be attributed objectively either as a material, causal form of relations to organisms, or as a formal, cognitive structure of relations among properties to objects considered as beautiful. Nonetheless, judgments "applying" the principle of purposiveness, i.e., reflective teleological judgments and aesthetic judgments, are justified – albeit as only subjectively valid – because judging according to, and structured by, the principle of purposiveness is a necessary, though subjective, condition for empirical cognition. Thus, the *CJ* may be read to comprise a unified project in defense of the subjectively necessary principle of purposiveness, a project necessary to supplement Kant's account of the a priori conditions for the possibility of judgment, knowledge, and experience in the *CPR*.

This interpretation of the *CJ* project explains, too, Kant's often circuitous locutions in this text, particularly concerning the principle of

purposiveness and its role as a principle of judgment. For, as I have suggested, purposiveness is a strikingly different sort of principle from Kant's other principles of judgment, a principle ultimately applicable to the judging subject alone, and so applicable as a structure of its activity. Kant must endorse such a subjective reading of the principle of purposiveness, I have argued, given his conception of objective time and his doctrine concerning the discursivity of our intellects: purposive causal relations without a purpose (as claimed in teleological judgment) violate the objective temporal order, and a representation of an object as an individual, its properties as reciprocally determining the intelligibility of one another (in aesthetic experience of the beautiful), may not be considered as an objective, cognitive representation of an object. But Kant must nonetheless deem this principle to be necessary *as* a structure of the subject's judging activity, given his strict distinction between an order we may impose upon nature – the a priori universal laws or categorial principles – and that which we must learn from the given, the in principle strictly heterogeneous, undifferentiated material for cognition. For only by purposive judging without a purpose can a subject both be open to the diversity of the empirically given manifold, and come to recognize such diversity as lawfully unified.

In conclusion, I wish to consider, briefly and somewhat speculatively, the implications of this central epistemological argument of the *CJ*, both as drawn by Kant himself concerning the connections of biological and aesthetic purposiveness to morality, and as suggestive for the expansion and overturning of Kantian critical, formal idealism by Kant's successors in the German tradition. As I have suggested, Kant's restriction of the principle of purposiveness to subjective status does not eliminate the transformative, radical character of this principle. As a principle that structures the subject's own judgmental activity, the principle of purposiveness introduces a new conception of subjectivity as self-determining, yet temporally located and individualized through its own feeling of its own states (*viz.*, the pleasure in aesthetic experiencing) and its engagement with the contingent particularities of certain given objects. This conception of subjectivity is, I suggest, the most provocative aspect of the way in which purposiveness is supposed, on Kant's view, to connect the concepts of freedom and nature, and its provocations are exploited by Kant's successors, in their continuations and transformations of Kant's idealism.

C.1 The transition between freedom and nature

In the *CJ* introductions, Kant claims that his new a priori principle of pleasure and of judgment can unite theoretical and practical reason, and thus complete the system of critical philosophy, by serving as a “transition” between freedom and nature (v:196–7; FI, xx:246). As is well known, Kant holds that his doctrine of transcendental idealism can establish the rational consistency of these two central concepts – universally, causally determined nature, and human moral freedom – of the theoretical and moral philosophies, respectively. Universal causal determinism in nature and human freedom are compatible, Kant argues, because it is only as phenomenal selves or in our “empirical character” that we must conceive of ourselves as causally determined; as supersensible or in our “intelligible character,” however, we may be free.¹ In the *CJ* Kant continues to espouse this transcendental idealistic resolution to the problem of free will, but suggests that it requires supplementation: nature and freedom must be conceived not only as compatible, but as connected via some transition between them. This supplemental transition is required, Kant suggests, by the demands of morality, specifically by its conception of moral agency: the moral, free human being cannot be conceived only as a transcendental or as a noumenal subject, but *must* also be conceived as a part of the sensible, phenomenal world. As an agent acting under moral imperatives, aiming to realize the final end of morality, the highest good, the moral subject must be understood to have (specific) effects on and within the sensible, natural world (v:195–6).

This need for a transition between freedom and nature may be understood in two ways. First, Kant suggests that there might be a theoretical problem concerning the conceivability of free human agents acting to realize ends (paradigmatically, the highest good) within a mechanically, causally, determined nature.² But the need for a transition

¹ This position, for which Kant argues in the *CPR* Third Antinomy, in *Groundwork* 111, and in the *CPrR* (e.g., v:94–8), is summed up at v:195. This resolution to the problem of free will, and Kant’s distinction between phenomena and noumena more generally, have of course occasioned much interpretive debate and criticism, but I cannot discuss these issues here.

² E.g., v:450. Indeed, Kant claims, strongly, that “a final end within [human beings] and a nature outside them that has no final end but in which that end is nevertheless to become real is a contradiction” (v:458). This passage suggests, perhaps, the instability of Kant’s views, for on his transcendental idealist position it would seem that no conception of nature can “contradict” moral, practical demands. See Allison, *Theory of Taste*, Chapter 9, for a more detailed consideration of the possible readings

is also – and more strongly, for Kant – a practical, moral need, for the “gap” between freedom and nature might constitute a source of moral alienation and/or despair. A moral agent who confronts a blindly, mechanistically, causally determined world may believe that there is little reason to hope for the realization of moral ends within such a world, one that is morally meaningless, utterly alien to our highest aims. Moral despair and alienation might also arise from Kant’s sharp distinction between the morally free, purely rational subject and the subject as a particular, empirically conditioned being. Because the demands of morality are distinct from one’s character and desires as a particular self, the moral agent might despair of being able to live up to such demands – and indeed Kant expresses deep skepticism concerning our abilities fully to do so. The morally sincere agent might find moral demands alienating as well, whether because as universal and a priori they are divorced from the substantial and particular values, relationships, and activities that one (as the particular self one is) takes to make life worth living, or because such demands lead the subject to consider those particular activities as meaningless and arbitrary, merely the result of contingent, empirical, causal influences.³ Most generally, it is difficult (theoretically) to conceive of the moral agent, or (morally) to conceive of oneself as an active moral agent, *as* an atemporal, noumenal subject, quite distinct both from the temporal, natural, causally determined world, and one’s own contingent, again temporally determined, empirical character.⁴

Though Kant makes a number of suggestions concerning the moral import of the arguments of the *CJ*, these suggestions take two general forms: that purposiveness might provide a transition between freedom and nature by providing a reconception of the world of non-human nature, or that it might do so by providing a reconception of the human subject. Neither of these transitional strategies comprises, it must be

of the “transition” and its coherence with Kant’s earlier claims. In concert with his emphasis on the CAJ, however, Allison does not much discuss Kant’s interest in the CTJ in reconceiving nature as purposive.

³ These lines of objection against Kantian morality are pressed by Hegel, and more recently by Bernard Williams.

⁴ Recent commentators (e.g., Allison, *Theory of Freedom*) have tended to downplay the pivotal role that time plays in Kant’s resolution of the Third Antinomy, and to gloss Kant’s claims concerning the atemporality of the moral, free subject as claims that we may consider action from a different point of view, viz., within the “space of reasons,” or concerning the reasons (not causes) why an agent acts. Though I cannot argue for this claim here, this approach does not seem to me to do justice to Kant’s view that moral reasons must actually ground the moral agent’s actions.

emphasized, a rejection or even radical revision of either of the two apparently theoretically opposed or morally alienating poles in Kant's position. The power of judgment and its principle, Kant writes, "serve only for connecting" the two parts of (Kantian) philosophical doctrine, and "cannot provide any cognition of its own nor make any contribution to doctrine," much less a change in such doctrine (FI, xx:246; cf. xx:242). Rather, as suggested by his language of "connection" and "transition," Kant proposes that purposiveness may serve as a third, mediating, term, lying "between" mechanistic causation (or empirical particularity) and moral, self-legislated, ends (or universality).

The reconception of nature

In the concluding sections of the CTJ, and in CAJ §42, Kant suggests that organic teleology and natural beauty give us some reason to reconceive the nature of non-human nature as teleologically ordered, and indeed teleologically ordered *for* human purposes, including morality. In §42, Kant argues that though our pleasure in beauty is disinterested, we may take a consequent, moral interest in natural beauty (v:298–9). If we judge that beautiful objects are caused to exist and to be beautiful by nature,⁵ this can lead us, Kant suggests, to reconceive nature itself. "[I]n its beautiful products," Kant writes, nature seems to show "itself as art, not merely . . . chance, . . . as it were intentionally [acting] in accordance with a lawful arrangement" (v:301). This reconception of nature is morally pleasing, Kant argues, because we welcome any "trace" or "sign" that nature may be amenable to the realization of our moral ideas; the "lawful correspondence of [nature's] products with our satisfaction that is independent of interest" in our experience of natural beauty suggests, analogically, that nature might correspond also with our moral aims (v:300). Thus our experience of natural beauty might address the dangers of moral despair and alienation, for it gives us hope that we are not confronted by a merely mechanical, morally meaningless world, but by a nature that corresponds to our highest aims.

⁵ As argued in Chapter Six, this is a further judgment beyond the judgmental representation of the object as beautiful, and its corresponding pleasure a further pleasure as well. In concert with the account above, this second pleasure ought to be understood not only as pleasure in the judgment that the existence of the beautiful object is caused by nature, but also as "motivational" for future activity, here the active attempt to preserve natural beauty, and also our future, encouraged engagement in our moral projects generally. See Allison, *Theory of Taste*, pp. 221–3.

In the CTJ Method, Kant provides a more extensive account of the reflective reconception of nature as a teleological system, and of the ways in which this reconception might reassure us that our moral aims are realizable within nature. Nature may, Kant argues, be reflectively considered as a system of relations of relative purposiveness, a whole intentionally designed by God for the final purpose of morality.

This conception of nature as a system of relative purposiveness is anchored both by Kant's arguments in the CTJ Analytic that one must judge individual organisms teleologically,⁶ and by his dialectical resolution to the antinomial conflict between the mechanistic and teleological principles of reflective judging through an "idea" of natural teleology as the intentional arrangement of mechanical causes, in accord with purposes, by an intelligent, supersensible cause (v:416, 422). First, if one justifiably (albeit reflectively) judges an individual organism teleologically, one can then expand such judging to concern the external means such an organism employs to serve its ends: because fir trees are judged to function teleologically, one may (then and derivatively) judge that sand is a means to that functioning. Indeed, once we judge an organism teleologically, Kant argues, we are led to ask in turn what purpose the organism's existence serves (v:425–6). This purpose must, Kant argues, either be the organism's existence as an end in itself (for nature), or the existence of another organism that it serves. But we do not, Kant argues, find that any organism's existence is identifiable as an end in itself; thus we are prompted to judge that such organisms are means, rather, to the existence of others. We are drawn, then, to judge such organisms, and thereby the rest of nature

⁶ E.g., v:425. Kant's argument here therefore improves upon his similar arguments in the *CPR* Canon: because Kant has developed his conception of "intrinsic purposiveness" in the CTJ and made stronger claims concerning the necessity of judging organisms teleologically, he does not begin with the moral demands that drive his argument in the *CPR* (he writes, for example, that our conception of a moral system of ends must "lead us inexorably" to consider nature as a "purposive unity" as well [A815/B843]). He begins here, instead, with a theoretical warrant, or from the "bottom up," viz., with the (subjectively necessary, reflective description of) teleological order in the organic world, just as, in the case of the intellectual interest, he begins with some independent "evidence" that the world might be teleologically ordered (natural beauty).

As noted above, Guyer's suggestion in his recent essays on the CTJ that this argumentative order should be reversed is not accurate, I think, to Kant's text. Here I would add that Guyer's own arguments against interpretations of the CAJ that render Kant's account of aesthetic judgment dependent upon the moral import of taste apply equally well to Kant's account of teleological judgment: as *a transition* to morality, teleological judgment of nature cannot itself be justified by reference to moral needs.

(which is instrumental to various organic ends), as a system of relations of extrinsic purposiveness (v:427–8).

Kant argues, moreover, that if we are to conceive of nature as a single, purposively organized system, we must conceive of this system of means–ends relations as serving a final purpose. Such a final purpose must be unconditioned (in order not to re-raise questions concerning the purpose to which it might in turn serve as means). Because everything in nature as such is conditioned, nothing merely natural can constitute this final, unconditioned purpose; thus, Kant argues, the human moral vocation is the only possible, identifiable final purpose for nature as a purposive system (v:435).⁷

In concert with Kant's dialectical solution, moreover, this reflective conception of nature is consistent with natural, physical mechanism, and involves a reflective claim that such purposive relations are instituted by an intelligent, supersensible agent.⁸ As we have seen, Kant argues that our judgment of nature as teleologically ordered cannot prove God's existence, but only licenses us to claim that we can conceive of such organization only as (if) designed by an intelligent cause (v:437). This "as if" conclusion is not a proof, nor does it constitute a conclusion about God proper, as a single, supersensible, beneficent, and holy being. Natural teleological judgment suggests only that nature might be conceived as organized by some (number of) supersensible, intelligent, and not necessarily beneficent cause(s), whereas the concept of God proper can be garnered only from strictly moral concepts (v:438–9, 444, 461f.; cf. A814–15/B842–3). But the natural teleological interpretation of nature rationally prompts us to seek for a unified, rational, systematic account; it suggests to us the "idea of a final purpose . . . and makes palpable the need for a theology that can adequately determine the concept of God" (v:484). Natural teleology provides, then, a transition to moral theology.

⁷ For reasons of space, I eschew discussion here of the various problems and complexities in Kant's arguments in the Method – e.g., how to justify this claim that a unified system of relative purposiveness must be directed towards *one*, separate, purpose, and cannot be a system of things reciprocally purposive for one another. See Guyer, "From Nature to Morality," and "Purpose in Nature," 364–8, for helpful discussion.

⁸ Kant suggests that the latter part of this solution also grounds his claim (above) that we must search for ever further purposes for organic functioning: since we conceive of the organism as intentionally caused (reflectively, in accord with the CTJ dialectical resolution), we are led to ask why the purported intelligence produced the object – because intelligent agents have reasons for their actions (v:426).

This reconception of non-human nature is meant to address the theoretical and practical worries articulated above, for it allows us to conceive of nature as coherent with and conducive to our own moral teleology. This teleological world view allows us to see nature as a whole as having a lawfulness (purposiveness) akin in its form to that governing human moral action (the law that sets our highest purpose).⁹ Thus we may see our moral purposive action as less alien to and alienated from the character of nature as a whole; the human will can more easily, perhaps, be seen as one (among many) natural causes, as Kant characterizes it.¹⁰ Moreover, though the teleological conception of nature does not prove God's existence, it – unlike a strictly mechanical conception – is a conception of nature as the product of an intelligent cause, and it may, consistently, be considered as the product of that very God in whom morality enjoins us to believe as the guarantor of the possibility of the highest good. This teleological reconception of nature provides, in sum, a coherent, unified conception of the world, one that combines (universal, physical) mechanism and moral teleology and theology; thus it is, correspondingly, a theoretical frame or a (meta)theoretical linking element for a systematically unified philosophy, a “manner of thinking” that can mediate between the “*concept* of nature [as mechanical]” and the “*concept* of freedom,” as Kant writes.¹¹

Because we reconceive nature as teleologically ordered by a beneficent God *towards* the ultimate purpose of human morality, this conception of nature may also allay moral despair (v:453–4). Our experiences of natural beauty and biology prove neither that nature was designed intelligently, nor that such intelligent design is one directed towards human beings' highest purposes. But inferences to such intelligent design are not completely *unjustified* either: they are coherent, and cannot be proven false. So long as no strong claims to objective validity are made, those who find consolation in such conceptions of nature are not to be chastised for stupidity, self-deception, or naïveté. Rather, the “incidental confirmation”¹² offered by natural beauty and biology may “assist” or “strengthen” the moral agent's belief in a just God as creator of nature, which therefore would not present insuperable obstacles to morality (v:458–9). Without such a belief, Kant suggests by contrast, the moral agent might “give up as impossible” the dictates of the moral law, and fall into moral alienation and despair when presented by the grim facts of the world, viz., that human beings are “subject by nature . . . to all the evils of

⁹ v:196. ¹⁰ E.g., v:195–6n. ¹¹ v:176 and 197; my emphases. ¹² v:445.

poverty, illnesses, and untimely death, just like all the other animals on earth, and will always remain thus until one wide grave engulfs them all together . . . and flings them . . . back into the abyss of the purposeless chaos of matter from which they were drawn" (v:452).

Like Kant's claims that his arguments in the *CPR* "make room for faith," this transitional reconception of nature establishes the rational permissibility of certain common beliefs and consolations. But this transitional strategy is ultimately rather weak, both theoretically and morally, primarily because of the emphatic, *merely* reflective status of the teleological conception of nature on Kant's view. The despairing moral agent might recognize, that is, that it would help her to take beauty and biology as a sign of God's beneficent creation, but this recognition can only justify her prior faith, or (at most) lead her to *will* herself to believe. To a Kantian moral agent, more strongly, this belief might appear to be a "just so" story that she would like to believe, but cannot really bring herself to believe because of her cognitive conviction that purposiveness cannot be objectively attributed to nature.

Even leaving aside the merely reflective character of this reconception of nature, it does not, it would seem, address the most pressing causes of moral despair. For the despairing moral agent might find natural beauty or the complexity of organisms a cruel taunt, deceptive promise, or depressing contrast, in the face of the failures, ugliness, and disorder of the human moral world,¹³ instead of gleaning moral hope from such phenomena. Why or how, she might ask, could a God, who could make such beauty and order, create human beings as they are? How could I expect and hope, on this slim and tangentially related evidence (biology and beauty), that human beings might live up to my ideals, that we could realize the kingdom of ends? Moral despair seems, that is, more strongly to concern the possibilities (or not) for the realization of morality within *human* nature, not nature as a whole.

Kant's second transitional strategy concerns, precisely, such questions, i.e., the way in which purposiveness may constitute a transition between moral freedom and sensible nature within human beings. This strategy is more promising, too, because here Kant is not basing his claims on a merely reflective or only-as-we-might-think-is-so purposiveness in nature, but on his identification of an actual characteristic of human beings: we

¹³ The central importance of human (not natural) obstacles to morality on Kant's view is also emphasized by Allison, *Theory of Taste*, pp. 205–7, 229f.

do have aesthetic experience; we do and must engage in reflective purposive judging without a purpose.

A reconception of the subject

Kant's central claim concerning the relationship between beauty and morality is his well-known claim that beauty is the "symbol of morality": the freedom, universality, and disinterestedness that characterize aesthetic experience render it analogous to morality, and thus a sensible intimation (symbol) of our moral vocation.¹⁴ Because aesthetic experience shares characteristics both of sensibility and of rationality, Kant argues, it can provide a transition *within* the human subject, between human sensible nature and the pure rational, moral vocation, between mere sense "gratification" and the valuation of universal morality (v:197, 354). As disinterested, aesthetic pleasure in beauty "prepares us to love something . . . without interest" (v:267), and thus may be beneficial to morality as educative (to adopt Schiller's term from his elaboration of this claim). Taste may free us from our thirst for mere sense pleasure, and awaken our sense of ourselves as free. For our pleasure in beauty is not a merely passive effect of the impingements of external objects upon our sensibility, nor a result of contingent, past pains, needs, or desires; nor does such pleasure enchain us in dependence upon similar objects to regain such pleasures in the future. Rather, in aesthetic experience we actively engage with objects, experience the "liberality" in our way of thinking (v:268), a freedom from the push and pull of instinct, need, and desire, and a positively free, expansive activity of our own faculties. We feel our "elevation" and "ennoblement" above mere sense pleasure, which pleasurable freedom can make us receptive to moral ideas, to the value of self-determination by the a priori moral law (v:353).

As in the case of Kant's first strategy, this transitional strategy does not guarantee that our moral purposes will be realized, that human nature is always in concert with morality, or, thereby, provide immunity against moral despair. Aesthetic value is, Kant holds, independent of moral value and thus does not necessarily promote the moral good. But aesthetic experience

¹⁴ I take it to be uncontroversial to identify this claim as the most important among Kant's considerations of the moral import of his aesthetics, but these considerations are broader-ranging and richer than I can address here. See Allison, *Theory of Taste*, Chapters 9–13, and Guyer, *Experience of Freedom*, Introduction and Chapters 1, 3, 6, and 7, for more extensive discussions.

offers hope that human sensible nature is not opposed to, but may be educable to accord with, morality. Kant's account of aesthetic experience likewise offers a conception of our sensible natures as, themselves, capable of transcending mere particularity, brute sensibility, and needs.

Though Kant himself does not explicitly so argue, moreover, his analyses of aesthetic judging and of pleasure as purposive also suggest that morality may be given a non-alienated "place" within individual, empirical, lived human life. As argued in Chapter Six, Kant's discovery of the principle of purposiveness led him to reformulate his conception of pleasure in general, to include not only agreeable sensations, but also pleasures that have complex intentional content. This view of pleasure allows Kant to solve a long-standing difficulty in his account of moral motivation, i.e., to accommodate his convictions both that all willing involves pleasure, and that in the case of moral willing we do not engage in action in order to obtain a separate sensation of pleasure. For, as argued above, on an intentional account of pleasure, Kant may distinguish between actions motivated for the sake of pleasure(able sensation) and those for the sake of an object (e.g., the moral good) in which we take pleasure because it is good. We may now add that this reconception of pleasure also allows Kant to "place" morality within the affective life and actual activity of the subject. Though the content of morality (the moral law) remains completely distinct from sensibly given ends, morality may be understood as an end held by actual agents, who take pleasure in it, and act upon this pleasurable representation of an end. Correspondingly, at least some of our non-moral, sensibly influenced values and pleasures may, on this conception, be understood not as simple moments of agreeable sensation, but as complex, intentional states that are purposive at least in form, and thus not entirely different from moral intentional states.

Kant's analysis of aesthetic purposive judging likewise broadens and transforms Kant's conception of human subjectivity and agency, as a domain in which free moral agency may have a preeminent, but non-alienated, "place." In his characterization of beauty as a symbol of morality, Kant claims that the freedom of the imagination in aesthetic experience is analogous to our freedom in our moral self-legislation. As we have seen, the activity of aesthetic purposive *Beurteilung* is free both negatively and positively: though such judging engages with a sensibly given manifold, it is both not determined empirically (this would constitute mere chaotic apprehension, or mechanical association) and self-directing in its purposive, anticipatory representation of a whole. Thus, in the terms

of Kant's account of symbolization (v:351–2), aesthetic judging is symbolic of moral self-legislation because the “rule” – structure, procedure – of the subject's judging is similar in the two cases (viz., purposiveness without a purpose and purposiveness *with* a self-given purpose, or the subject's rationally governed orientation towards her own ends). Like Kant's new account of pleasure, this new conception of subjective agency can also place morality within the (particular) subject's lived experience, for it may be seen as consonant with the nature of the subject as both intelligent and empirical being, as an end-setting being within time. Morality may be conceived – as Kant more frequently terms it in the *CJ* than in his earlier moral works – not only as a binding law upon us, but as our “vocation” (*Bestimmung*), our “destination” in (future) time.¹⁵

Thus Kant's reconception of the subject in the *CJ* may ground an account of a lived, experiential, non-alienated context for moral rationality and moral end-setting, for it is a conception of the subject within time not merely as empirically determined object (of empirical psychology), but *as* subject, active in accord with its own form of lawfulness, yet also “as a being of sense, namely, as a human being” (v:196). Kant's analysis of aesthetic experience might also provide grounds thereby to address the other prong of moral alienation: that our sensible desires, empirical characteristics, and contingent particularities are meaningless, surd particulars. For Kant's account of aesthetic experience – a pleasurable experience specifically human, shared neither with animals

¹⁵ v:353–4. Kant describes the free harmony as reflecting the supersensible character of the subject here and in the resolution to the Antinomy of Taste (cf. v:341); this language is also a link between his two transitional strategies, which, Kant claims, render the supersensible “determinable,” and do so on the grounds of purposiveness judged reflectively to be manifest within the sensible world. Thus this transition comprises a link between sensibility (theoretically described) and the supersensible substrate of morality, whether God as the guarantor of the realizability of the highest good, or the free moral subject. (See v:176, and Allison, *Theory of Taste*, pp. 208–9.)

This description also suggests, I believe, the radically transformative character of Kant's account of the aesthetic subject. Kant's language of “supersensibility” indicates that aesthetic experience reveals something (somewhat mysterious) concerning the subject's metaphysical character, that the subject must be understood to have capacities that are purposive without a purpose and thus irreducibly subjective, irreducible to empirical psychological description. Kant's language of supersensibility is, in other ways, misleading, however: aesthetic judging is of signal importance not because it generates a conception of the subject as intelligible, transcending experience, but because here the subject's a priori capacities are not mere logical or moral norms of judgment, but are manifest only and precisely within felt, particularized, localized experiences.

nor with purely rational beings – suggests that there might be a realm of the human, of subjective or intersubjective meaning and value, that lies between mere “animality” and brute contingency and the pure strictures of moral reasoning – the realm of history and culture.

For the purposive subject without a purpose is best described not by empirical causal chronology (of isolable, causally linked, successive events), but by narrative and history, by descriptions of action in accord with meanings and values, open to anticipated ends that are both expressed and potentially transformed by their progressive realization in action and history. Kant’s conception of the aesthetically judging subject, then, suggests that the subject might be conceived, *a priori*, as a historical being, not merely as formed by the empirical contingencies and causes of historical change, but as the *agent* of history, the protagonist of narrative, a historical narrative that might (hopefully) be construed as comprising a progressive, approximating realization of our highest moral ends.¹⁶

Kant’s new conception of the subject as purposive without a purpose may also ground a conception of the subject as a social, communicative being. As suggested in Chapter [Eight](#), Kant’s concept of “common sense” (*sensus communis*) should not (contra Kant’s claims) be understood to ground his deduction of the claims of taste. This presumed “idea” – that human beings have a shared capacity for the appreciation of beauty, and an ability to take up others’ “points of view” – may be understood, however, as a justifiable idea in consequence of that deduction. Because we are each justified in claiming that others ought to judge beautiful objects as we do, we may presuppose that all human beings can have a common sense. This shared sensibility is, of course, not actual – taste is, in fact, the subject of disagreement – but it is, nonetheless, a defensible aspiration.¹⁷

Kant’s analysis of aesthetic experience suggests, that is, the possibility of community with others that is neither purely contingent, particular, and empirical, nor grounded upon conceptual proofs or rational moral

¹⁶ Kant’s historical essays and his consideration of human history in CTJ §83 are grounded on this conception of human action, though they also tend more narrowly to comprise a providential interpretation of the antisocial tendencies in human nature as ultimately useful for morality. The historical conception of human subjectivity suggested in the *CJ* need not, however, be limited to this theodical enterprise.

¹⁷ Here I agree with Guyer (*Experience of Freedom*, pp. 288–90), but contra Guyer wish to suggest that this aspiration to common sense is valuable not merely because it promotes a social interest in cohesiveness, but also because it may be in itself a sphere of non-moral, shareable, human meaning.

lawfulness, but rather consists in shared sensibility, produced by ongoing, open communication. As argued in Chapter [Five](#), because our appreciation of a beautiful object is one of complexity and interplay among sensible properties, we may communicate this experience to others; by suggestion and evocation, we may bring others to perceive the object as we do, to share our affective responses. Thus aesthetic communication might constitute a realm of dialogical community, of shared experience, meaning, and affect, a form of community of “voice” addressed not to any judging person through conceptual argument, but by and to concrete, feeling persons, and concerning the rich particularity and meaningfulness of *this* experience.¹⁸ The possibility of such community is, moreover, plausibly grounded upon the capacities of the subject to judge purposively without a purpose, for the anticipatory openness necessary for the experience of the beautiful might well also allow the subject to be open to the point of view of specific, particular others.

Kant himself is somewhat dismissive concerning the implications of aesthetic appreciation of beauty for community: he characterizes the social import of the universal validity of taste as a merely “empirical interest” we may take in beauty, ensuing in self-decoration or home decoration in order to be pleasing to others (to make friends and influence people, as it were).¹⁹ But Kant also mentions that beautiful art “promotes the cultivation of the mental powers for sociable communication” (v:306) and suggests that taste may play a transitional role from mere sensibility to morality not only for the individual, but also for society. Taste may transform social relations from war-like competition among individuals into relations of sociability, directed towards shared pleasure and to the “development of humanity,”²⁰ or the “feeling

¹⁸ The social, dialogic connotation of Kant’s aesthetics has been emphasized by Stanley Cavell in *Must We Mean What We Say?*

¹⁹ §41. See Paul Guyer, “Pleasure and Society in Kant’s Theory of Taste,” in Ted Cohen and Paul Guyer, eds. *Essays in Kant’s Aesthetics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 21–54; 40f., on the history of Kant’s treatment of the connection between taste and sociality: because of his discovery of the principle of purposiveness, Kant transforms his view, Guyer argues, from holding that beauty is valuable because it contributes to sociability (see, e.g., *Menschenkunde Anthropologie* xxv.2:1105f.), to holding (in the *CJ*) that this is a merely empirical matter. This account seems accurate concerning Kant’s historical-theoretical trajectory, but I suggest that Kant’s discovery of the principle of purposiveness might not merely replace his prior (empiricist) emphasis on the import of taste for sociability, but might also ground a conception of sociability that is not “merely empirical.”

²⁰ v:433.

of participation” and a valuation of one’s “capacity for being able to communicate one’s inmost self universally” (v:355).²¹ Such sociability may, then, prepare the way for properly moral respect for others as human persons not only by ameliorating evil-doing tendencies, but by encouraging some sort of regard for others as subjects.²² For inasmuch as aesthetic judgment involves claiming that others ought to share one’s pleasure, or take up one’s attitude towards the object, the aesthetically judging subject cares about what others think and feel, whether they share her taste; she thus “esteems the value of others in accordance with a similar maxim of judgment” (v:353).

As Kant suggests here, the conception of non-conceptually governed community, of intersubjectively communicable, yet sensibly localized, experience that follows from his analysis of taste, can give us hope that human beings in community, like individual aesthetic subjects, are educable to uphold the stricter, rational, moral-political laws governing rightful political community.²³ The possibilities of social communication proffered by aesthetic experience, moreover, identify a sphere of shared meaning – i.e., culture (in the non-Kantian meaning of the word) – in which the particularities of objects, experiences, and other experiencing subjects may be expressed and valued, redeemed through aesthetic communication from mere empirical contingency and surd meaninglessness. Culture may constitute a human world, in which subjects, both as rational and as sensible beings, may find themselves at home.

²¹ Cf. *Mrongovius Anthropologie* xxv.2:1327–8; *Busolt Anthropologie* xxv.2:1511–12 (both lecture courses postdating Kant’s critical moral philosophy). At v:355, by contrast to v:433, Kant suggests that “humanity” is a precondition for producing beautiful art.

²² Though I cannot argue here for this claim, I would therefore suggest that the criticisms of Kantian aesthetics put forth, e.g., by Guatri Spivak and Pierre Bourdieu – as, respectively, implicated in the “civilizing” colonial project, and as expressing bourgeois assertion of “cultural capital” – are based on a misunderstanding of Kant’s considered view concerning the social import of aesthetics, though Kant does briefly express an apparently classist conception of the role of taste in society at v:355–6.

²³ Allison suggests, correspondingly, that Kant’s cryptic proposal that there might be a higher law requiring that we aspire to common sense ought to be read to mean that the moral law does so require (*Theory of Taste*, pp. 219–20). This is a stronger claim, however, than Kant’s theory would support: sociability can promote morality, but (on Kant’s view) cannot be considered a necessary condition for morality, nor as always useful for morality (e.g., it may promote luxury).

C.2 Historical implications: Beyond critical idealism²⁴

Like Kant's concerns with the justification and structure of empirical concepts and his identification of purposiveness as the highest form of unity, Kant's transition strategies comprise a reincorporation of Leibnizian/Wolffian rationalist doctrines that Kant had earlier rejected into the critical philosophy in a modified, critical form. As discussed in Chapters [Five](#) and [Seven](#), Kant retains his sharp anti-rationalist distinction between sensibility and understanding, though he also articulates a conception of judgmental synthesis (whether in aesthetic judging or reflective concept formation) that mediates between sensibility and understanding, thus propounding, as it were, a theory of "intellectualized sensibility" in the form of the purposive, free imagination. Likewise, in these transition strategies, Kant retains his sharp anti-rationalist distinctions, whether between the nature of the moral will or moral satisfaction, and all other types of willing and sources of pleasure, or between the human realm of ends and the nature of nature. Still Kant here reflectively recuperates the rationalists' claims that the soul's sensible perfection (in appreciating beauty) is consonant with and preparatory for its moral perfection, and, more strongly, the rationalist conception of the natural world as intentionally, teleologically ordered by a beneficent God. Thus, despite Kant's continuing differences from the rationalists and his qualifications of these claims (as merely reflective, subjective, or symbolic), Kant's transition arguments may be read as partial vindications of Leibnizian rationalism as the most coherent, rational, and morally approvable systematic world view.

The *CJ* has more broad-reaching historical importance, however, for understanding the relationship of Kantian philosophy not to that of his rationalist predecessors, but to that of his successors. Kant's successors embrace the suggestions in the *CJ* of a distinctively human social, historical, intersubjective realm that is not merely empirical or meaninglessly particular, but of deep, perhaps even foundational, philosophical significance. The post-Kantian German tradition abounds in amplifications of these suggestions, whether (e.g.) in the form of Schelling's accounts of mythology, Hegel's philosophy of history and of

²⁴ There are, of course, many ways to see the post-Kantian tradition as developing out of and beyond Kant, even out of the *CJ* (e.g., in *Imagination and Interpretation*, Makkreel indicates the import of the *CJ* for the later hermeneutical turn). Here I suggest a number of ways, however, in which later developments are prefigured in the conception of purposiveness without a purpose, and may be prompted by tensions thereby produced within Kant's own philosophical system.

sociality, Kierkegaard's investigations of the complexities of temporal experience, or Heidegger's analysis of equimentality as the a priori form of practical non-moral life. In concert with Kant's approach in the *CJ*, moreover, these philosophical articulations of the distinctively human realm characterize this realm not only in terms of purposiveness (teleology), but also as exemplified most saliently in aesthetic experience and artistic activity, as paradigmatic expressions of human being as formed by and formative of historical and communal meaningfulness.

But it is not merely these moral, social, historical implications of Kant's project in the *CJ* that are exploited in such later developments. For even the central problematic of the *CJ*, Kant's central arguments for the subjective necessity of the principle of purposiveness, dictated by problems posed by Kant's formal idealism, contain the seeds not only of expansions of such idealism, but also of its overturning, its transformation into the later, various, more full-fledged idealisms.²⁵

First, methodologically: Kant's approach in the *CJ* – investigating the transcendental conditions for particular types of empirical phenomena (aesthetic experience and [our judgment of] organisms) – suggests that transcendental philosophy might be extended beyond the investigation of formal conditions for experience in general, to include investigation of other putatively merely empirical, particular, or subjective phenomena. Moreover, Kant's argumentation in the *CJ* suggests that transcendental arguments might be used to ground claims concerning conditions for experience other than merely formal conditions. For if (as I have argued) Kant implies in the *CJ* that the subject's mode of being as purposive is the transcendental condition for empirical knowledge, then – as Schelling, in particular, argues – transcendental argumentation cannot, and ought not, rest with the identification of formal conditions or categories, but must seek the metaphysical capacities that render these (or their application) possible. If such ultimate transcendental, metaphysical grounds are to be understood, more specifically, as a teleological capacity of the subject, one might argue that Kant's epistemological constraints upon teleological

²⁵ Schelling and Hegel both identify the *Critique of Judgment* as a "way out" of Kant's strictly formal, transcendental idealism. Heidegger presents his "way out" from Kant as a violent interpretation of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Nonetheless, because Heidegger's approach to Kant is to understand the imagination as originary or free, prior to the unification of experience according to the categories, I believe that the proper origin of Heidegger's "way out" of the critical philosophy may be found in the *CJ* account of the aesthetic imagination, rather than in a speculative reading of the *CPR*.

judgment of nature, of organisms, are ill taken: if purposiveness is irreducibly true of the subject, a thinker of Schellingean persuasion might ask, why may it not be justifiably claimed concerning organisms more broadly? So too might Kant's hopes for a systematic philosophy, a reconciliation of freedom and nature, indeed an explanation for the possibility of freedom and the realizability of morality within nature both human and non-human, be accomplished not merely reflectively, but really, by conceiving of human free agency as embodied in human organic being, itself embedded within a teleologically ordered, organically unified nature.²⁶

Or, in epistemological terms: once Kant recognizes (as he does in the *CJ*) that the empirically given, is comprehensible only as interpreted and systematized by us, according indeed to an a priori (albeit subjective) principle of systematicity, then Kant's distinction between the a priori conditions that we prescribe to objects, and empirical facts about objects that we can only learn from experience, may become blurred. Thus (in *Faith and Knowledge*) Hegel claims that Kant's account of aesthetic judging overcomes the distinction between our discursive intellects and God's putative intuitive intellect. Hegel exaggerates here, since (according to Kant) aesthetic judging does not generate any cognitive conclusions about objects. But Hegel's claim illuminates the radical nature of Kant's account of aesthetic judging, and of purposiveness as the principle of reflective judging more generally: aesthetic judging indeed represents the whole of the object independently of our comprehension of its (conceptual, logical) parts discursively; in reflective judging we attempt to understand objects in light of a(n anticipated) teleologically unified system that precedes the meaningfulness or significance or comprehensibility of the "parts," or the specific, empirical character of any particular object.

If the categorial principles are, moreover, not determinatively applicable to empirically given particulars without the mediation of such a system, as Kant suggests in the *CJ*, then the way is paved for Hegelian or Heideggerean expansions and transformations of Kantian epistemology. On the one hand, Kant's defense of purposiveness as a principle of systematic ordering, as necessary too for our comprehensive knowledge, provides grounds for Hegel's claim that we ought to take our systematic

²⁶ *Mutatis mutandis*, this version of the transformation and overturning of Kantian idealism might also characterize Nietzsche, who endorses the primacy of life (which, as self-overcoming, might be characterized as purposive without a [determinate, prior] purpose) as a characteristic both of nature and of human beings, over logical or moral norms or a conception of the subject as rational more broadly.

ordering of empirical experience as the precondition for the formal, mechanical, narrowly objective knowledge of nature provided by categorical judgment. As Hegel suggests as well, Kant's account of reflective judging in the *CJ* indicates that our project of systematization need not be understood, as Kant officially does, to be an imperfect approximation to God's (alien) intellect, but as that form of knowing most proper to human beings, as knowers engaged in communal, historical projects of investigation, clarification, and self-correction of our system of concepts. On the other hand, Kant's proposal that the categorical principles be supplemented by the subject's purposive openness to the (reciprocally determining) character of empirical diversity might be construed, as on a Heideggerean view, to establish that a priori knowledge, necessary and universal claims, are to be understood as dependent upon the subject's (*Dasein*'s) prior openness to a world, an ability to "let things be."

Finally, and most broadly, I have suggested that in the *CJ* Kant broaches a new view of the subject as individual, temporal, yet self-determining. As I have suggested, the a priori purposiveness of the reflecting subject in the *CJ* thus appears to complicate Kant's views concerning the subject's relation to time in the *CPR*, and provides a conception of subjectivity that might constitute a non-alienating human world or context for morality. This conception of subjectivity also opens, more generally, a rich new philosophical field for the investigation of the distinctively human realms of culture and history. But it might also lead one out of Kant's transcendental idealism, in a quite literal sense. For in his "Refutation of Idealism," Kant argues that one cannot be an idealist, cannot (that is) deny the empirical reality of persisting objects outside us, because without such objects the subject cannot generate a single, comprehensible temporal order in its inner experience. And yet if the subject can, out of its own purposiveness, spontaneously structure time as directional, envision the future as the aimed-at or the not-yet-attained (that is, as purpose or intention) and thus as explicitly different from the present (or past), then the subject can, indeed, have subjective experience in a temporal order (perhaps *the* ultimate, unifying temporal order) without reliance on external objects.

This threat to the Refutation of Idealism was not interpreted by Kant's successors as grounds for a despairing return to Berkeleyan idealism, but rather for more ambitious philosophical claims beyond the constraints Kant imposes in that argument and elsewhere. One of Kant's great achievements in the history of philosophy is his transformation of time, traditionally understood as a source of human cognitive finitude,

into, itself, a ground for justifiable a priori knowledge. Traditionally, our temporal nature and the temporal nature of the things we experience were considered as a limitation upon our cognitive abilities, a source of human cognitive finitude and error: we, as changeable and as perceivers of the changeable, might not have access to unchangeable, permanent truth. In propounding his account of human discursive intellect, Kant overturns this traditional problem by transforming time into a ground for knowledge itself: for us, Kant argues, time is necessary as a principle of distinction among particulars (intuitions), and time is necessary too in order to render the ultimate universals (the categories) meaningful and the source of true, justified knowledge claims. These universals are not understood to be transcendent, eternal truths beyond our temporal experience, but to constitute necessary and universal claims precisely *as* structures of time. Kant's subjective principle of purposiveness without a purpose as a temporal structure of the subject's activity, correspondingly, may and did give rise to more ambitious idealisms grounded on this structure of subjective temporality, interpreted, variously, as a metaphysics of organic functioning, the form of rational, dialectical history, or the openness of *Dasein* to Being.

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