

**The Role of Concepts in Kant's Account of Aesthetic  
Experience**

by

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## Declaration

I, Simon David Smith, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

## Abstract

The thesis begins by exploring Kant's account of cognition as it is presented within the *Critique of Pure Reason*, particularly with reference to the conceptualist/non-conceptualist debate as it has developed over recent years. I argue that there is an important non-conceptualist position within Kant's account that concerns the unity of space and time as non-conceptual intuitive wholes. This argument will be used in discussing and exploring Kant's account of both aesthetic receptivity and aesthetic creativity as presented within the *Critique of Judgement*. My exploration of this third *Critique* will begin by looking at Kant's account of the harmony of the faculties and how we should understand the sense in which our aesthetic response is a non-conceptually determined one. The same concern will apply to an analysis of Kant's account of the mathematical sublime, and in the later stages of this discussion we will find an interesting relation between Kant's account of the role of infinity (space and time as unified wholes), and our earlier argument concerning space and time as formal intuitive wholes. After this focus upon the conditions of aesthetic receptivity my focus shifts towards aesthetic creativity as presented in Kant's account of fine art and genius. The main focus here will be with Kant's remark that art, in order to be art, must seem like nature. I will argue that this statement must be understood in two interdependent ways, where the first element concerns the formal construction of a representation so that it looks like nature in the sense of being a unified and readable representation. I will argue that artistic creativity at this level is the precondition of the second sense in which art must seem like nature, which concerns the content of a representation, and that a non-conceptual intuitional base is essential to this end.

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## Introduction

In recent years a body of literature has developed surrounding Kant's account of the role of concepts, as contained within his first *Critique*, the *Critique of Pure Reason* (*CPR*). The issue concerns the extent to which concepts can be said to be operative in constructing the kind of objective and apperceptive experience that is peculiar to human beings. A non-conceptualist sees Kant as arguing that there is an element of experience that is not governed by the application of concepts to certain sensory data, so that there is an important element of experience that is not under the auspices of the understanding (what Kant calls the faculty of concepts). The conceptualist on the other hand, argues that for Kant there is no meaningful or important experience that is not at some stage under the guidance of concepts. This debate, between conceptualism and non-conceptualism in the first *Critique*, is a large debate on its own terms, and will be important to the direction of our overall thesis<sup>1</sup>. However, our concern with this debate and its prominence within the first *Critique*, is not predominantly for its own sake, but with how it relates to our overall concern, which, as the title indicates, is the role of concepts in Kant's account of aesthetic experience<sup>2</sup>.

The overall thesis of this paper is twofold, although these two theses are related and interdependent. The more general thesis, or argument, is that in order to adequately

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<sup>1</sup> For a good and recent overview of the subject and how Kantian conceptualism and non-conceptualism relates, and is relevant to, contemporary conceptualist/non-conceptualist debates in the Philosophy of Mind, see *Kant and Non-Conceptualism*, Ed. by Dietmar Hiedemann (2012).

<sup>2</sup> It is important to point out at this early stage that Kant has a broader sense of 'aesthetic' than is typically understood by the term, where in this broader sense an aesthetic response or occurrence is just one which involves the faculty of intuition (sensibility) and which thereby has the intuitions of space and time as its base (or possibility) (*CPR* B33-37). An aesthetic experience here is just a spatiotemporal perceptual experience. In the more specific sense an aesthetic experience is one concerned with a particular kind of response (a non-cognitive one) to both nature and art, and is therefore the sense as it typically occurs in common discourse. This latter kind of aesthetic experience is Kant's concern in his the first part of his third *Critique* the *Critique of the Aesthetic Power of Judgement*, and is the kind of experience we mean with when we say that we will be investigating the role of concepts in Kant's account of aesthetic experience. It is important to signal however that an important part of our task is to explore what Kant understands by aesthetic experience in the broader sense so that we can better understand what he means by an aesthetic experience in the more specific, common, sense.

understand Kant's account of aesthetic experience (and the role of concepts in determining this experience) we need to firstly understand the role of concepts in Kant's account of the role of cognition, and this is why we are concerned with the conceptualist/non-conceptualist debate. In the first part of the *Critique of Judgement (CJ)* Kant presents his account of how aesthetic experience (our experience of beauty) is determined or generated, and this is his account of the harmony of the faculties. Kant here argues that in order for us to have an aesthetic experience, the understanding (as the faculty of concepts) and the imagination (as the faculty of intuitions, sensory data) must stand in a relation of 'free play' towards each other, so that the understanding isn't concerned with determining the sensory element with regard to determinate, objective cognition (which would be an empirically determining experience), but rather with reflecting upon what Kant calls the purposivity of the intuition as such for the faculty of concepts as such. We will come to the details of this in our fourth chapter, but the essential point is that Kant calls his account of aesthetic experience a non-cognitive one, insofar as with an aesthetic judgement we are not concerned with objective cognition but just with reflecting upon the intuition with regard to its purposivity for judgement. Because of the emphasis on the non-cognitive element, there is clearly a sense in which aesthetic judgements are non-conceptual. However, although we may be able to defend a kind of non-conceptualism within Kant's account of aesthetic experience, this doesn't mean that a non-conceptualism can be predicated of Kant's account of cognition more generally. The complexity here concerns the way the intuitional (sensory) data that is a necessary condition of aesthetic experience is itself ordered, and whether concepts are in some sense already in operation before the intuition can even be presented to the understanding (as the faculty of concepts). Depending upon how one reads Kant's account of the emergence of cognition within the first *Critique* (which is the subject of our first two chapters), and how one reads his account of reflective judgement as it is presented within the third *Critique* (which is the subject of our third and fourth chapters), will determine how one understands Kant's account of the harmony of the faculties and the extent to which this account is a non-cognitive (or non-conceptual) one. Because our fifth chapter is concerned with the experience of the sublime (which for Kant is a species of aesthetic experience and within the third *Critique* comes after his discussion of beauty), our discussion of the role of concepts in Kant's account of cognition and how this stands in relation to our experience of beauty, will help us to interpret this element of Kant's account as well.

In our sixth and seventh chapters the focus of this paper shifts from Kant's account of the possibility of aesthetic receptivity (having an aesthetic experience) to the

possibility of aesthetic creativity and what it means to create a work of art. An important element of Kant's account of fine art generally is his statement that fine art is only art to the extent that it seems like nature. What Kant means here is uncertain insofar as there are conflicting elements to his argument. I will argue that this must be understood in two senses, where the first element concerns the formal construction of a representation, and looking like nature in the sense of being a unified and readable representation, and where the second sense concerns using symbols to communicate so that the art work speaks as nature itself speaks to us. Again, the details of this account will be dealt with within our sixth and seventh chapters, but what is important with reference to our thesis is that our understanding of the way in which the understanding as the faculty of concepts relates to the faculty of intuitions in aesthetic responsiveness will help us to understand these different components of aesthetic creativity. As far as the conceptualist/non-conceptualist debate goes, we will also find that there is a new kind of non-conceptualism within Kant's account of aesthetic creativity and the role of aesthetic ideas. An aesthetic idea is what might be called the *content* of an artistic representation insofar as it has something to communicate, and the non-conceptualism here is grounded in the fact that for Kant this content is conceptually, or discursively, transcendent; so that no concept, or linguistic expression is adequate to the representation itself. Insofar as the content is here nevertheless an intellectual one, this suggests that concepts themselves are not the bounds of our intellectual life and that an intuitional, symbolic content can serve to express deeper meaning than we are otherwise capable of (through concepts).

Our second and what we may call our more specific thesis, emerges from our initial analysis of the role of concepts in the first *Critique*. It turns out that Kant's development of the idea of an intuitional faculty, in contrast to the understanding as a conceptual faculty, provides room for developing an argument whereby space and time, as what Kant calls formal wholes, are non-conceptual constructs generated in intuition that make all subsequent cognition possible. How these spatiotemporal formal intuitions as non-conceptual entities are generated and make subsequent, higher level cognition possible, will be the subject of our second chapter. But our argument with reference to our thesis is that we are maintaining that there is a definite non-conceptualist position within Kant's account that is important in understanding his account of cognition. This is not only important for the conceptualist/non-conceptualist debate as it stands, but for our subsequent

arguments and chapters which are concerned with the possibility of aesthetic creativity. The importance of space and time as formal wholes which are in no way governed through the application of concepts is, I will argue, key to understanding how drawing, for instance, as an intuitive activity is possible. Of course as the precondition of any cognition whatsoever, space and time as formal wholes are the basis of all intuitive activity, not just particular ones. But as I will go on to argue, there are certain activities whose character expose a uniquely and predominantly spatiotemporal element of our cognitive make up. Drawing I will argue is one of these activities, and the importance of drawing for Kant is apparent when he states that,

All form of the objects of the senses (of the outer as well as, mediately, the inner) is either **shape** or **play**: in the latter case, either play of shapes (in space, mime and dance), or mere play of sensations (in time). The **charm** of colours or of the agreeable tones of instruments can be added, but **drawing** in the former and composition in the latter constitute the proper object of the pure judgement of taste. (CJ 5:225)

Our thesis regarding the non-conceptuality of space and time as formal wholes however is not only important for coming to understand how certain activities are possible, but will be key in helping us understand, in Chapter's 6 and 7, Kant's remark in the third *Critique* that art is only art when it seems like nature. This is because looking like nature is in one sense concerned with the formal constraints governing the representation, whereby the artistic production must be successfully ordered so that it looks like a product of nature in its purposivity for judgement. Because drawing is concerned with attaining a successful formal arrangement on a two-dimensional surface, then it is concerned with making art seem like nature in its purposivity for judgement. Consequently the aptitude for making art seem like nature is in part accounted for through our possessing the non-conceptual formal wholes of space and time.

In addition to the application of our more specific thesis to these arguments, there is also an interesting connection between the unity of space and time as formal wholes as presented in the deduction of the first *Critique* and the mathematical sublime as Kant discusses it in the third *Critique*. In Kant's account of the mathematical sublime he argues that integral to this experience of the sublime is a sense of the infinite as a whole, where through this sense we are transferred from the phenomenal frustration of failing to comprehend what is before us (insofar as it is vast and not capable of being taken up in a single view), to the pleasure of locating a noumenal substratum



that is infinity comprehended as a whole. The details of Kant's argument here are complex, and will be the subject of Chapter 5. But with reference to our thesis, insofar as space and time are grasped as infinite wholes (noumenal substrate), then, I will argue, there is a sense in which space and time as non-conceptual formal wholes are the basis of this experience.

Thus both of our theses work together in exploring the sense in which the faculty of intuition and the faculty of the understanding (concepts) are operative not only in aesthetic receptivity, but also in aesthetic creativity, and the sense in which there can be a meaningful non-conceptualism located within Kant's account of aesthetic experience.

## Chapter 1

### Synthesis and Representational Content

With this chapter we will begin our investigation of the role of concepts in Kant's account of cognition, as it is presented within the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Central to this investigation is exploring Kant's account of representational content and what it means for a representation to stand before us, and this is because representational content is itself importantly connected with the function of concepts in generating this content. This is further connected with what it means, for Kant, for a cognitive content to be *meaningful* in its putting us into an interactive relationship with an objective world of experience. As was mentioned in our introduction, a non-conceptualist is someone who reads the first *Critique* as maintaining the position that there is a level of representational content that is engaged with the world prior to the operation of any concepts upon this content, and we will examine to see if this is really a plausible position given the text of the *Critique* itself.

#### *Synthesis*

Fundamental to Kant's account of representations is his account of synthesis, as that act which enables a representation to stand before us in the first place, as unified data. Kant's initial definition of this function states that 'By synthesis in the most general sense[...] I understand the action of putting different representations together with each other and comprehending their manifoldness in one cognition' (A77/B103). It becomes subsequently clear that Kant's account of synthesis is intimately bound up with his account of the imagination, and further on in the first *Critique* Kant is explicit in assigning the synthesising function to the imagination;

since every appearance contains a manifold, thus different perceptions by themselves are encountered dispersed and separate in the mind, a combination of them, which they cannot have in sense itself, is therefore necessary. There is thus an active faculty of the synthesis of this manifold in us, which we call imagination, and whose action exercised immediately upon perceptions I call apprehension. (CPR A120)

This is the role of synthesis in relation to the imagination as it stands in the A-deduction of the first *Critique*, where it appears that the functioning of the imagination is clearly apart from the operations of the understanding (as the faculty of unifying through concepts). By the time of the B-deduction however, it appears that Kant's thoughts on the issue of synthesis had changed, with the role of the imagination being assigned a less prominent role, and where the role of the understanding in generating all synthesis had come to the fore. This indeed appears to be the case at the opening of the B-deduction, where Kant writes;

All combination, whether we are conscious of it or not, whether it is a combination of the manifold of intuition or of several concepts, and in the first case of sensible or non-sensible intuition, is an action of the understanding, which we would designate with the general title **synthesis** in order at the same time to draw attention to the fact that we can represent nothing as combined in the object without having previously combined it ourselves. (CPR B130)

This statement certainly suggests that from the outset there is no room for any meaningful intuitional content that is not under the auspices of the understanding, insofar as the understanding is defined as a faculty of concepts, or a faculty of judgement (A126). This change as to how synthesis is generated is also tellingly revealed in the oft-cited passage of A78/B102, where, as the passage stands in both editions, Kant writes,

Synthesis in general is, as we shall subsequently see, the mere effect of the imagination, of a blind though indispensable function of the soul, without which we would have no cognition at all, but of which we are seldom even conscious. Yet to bring this synthesis **to concepts** is a function that pertains to understanding, and by means of which it first provides cognition in the proper sense. (CPR A78/B102)

Because this is how the passage stands in the B-deduction it may well be thought to resuscitate the autonomy of the imagination in relation to synthesis apart from the understanding, especially since the synthesis delivered by the imagination needs to be *brought* to concepts, where this is a further action of the understanding. However, in Kant's copy of his first edition, the clause which states that the synthesising function is the operation 'of a blind though indispensable function of the soul' is

replaced with 'of a function of the understanding', thus testifying to the idea of a monopoly of the understanding in delivering synthesis.<sup>3</sup>

However, the role of the understanding in its synthesising function at the earliest representational level is arguably always a feature of the initial argument of the *Critique*, and it may be thought that although Kant equivocated between a synthesising function independent of the understanding, this was never really on the cards, as it were, and that writers such as Heidegger were really just mistaken in seeing the A-deduction as supporting a more important role for the imagination in its independence from the understanding<sup>4</sup>. Thus at (A79/B104-5) Kant writes that,

The same function that gives unity to the different representations **in a judgement** also gives unity to the mere synthesis of different representations **in an intuition**, which expressed generally is called the pure concept of understanding. The same understanding, therefore, and indeed by means of the very same actions through which it brings the logical form of a judgement into concepts by means of the analytical unity, also brings a transcendental content into its representations by means of the synthetic unity of the manifold in intuition in general, on account of which they are called the pure concepts of the understanding that pertain to objects *a priori*.  
(CPR A79/B104-5)

What Kant is here telling us is that although it is the function of the logical form of judgement to be operative in the formation of determinate concepts for their use in judgement, they also have a prior function whereby they are responsible for unifying (synthesising) representations through their particular forms. Although certain writers who support Kantian non-conceptualism point to passages whereby the possibility of non-conceptualism seems to be closed down, notably the passage at (A50-51/B74-75) which stipulates the empty thoughts/blind intuitions constraint, only to argue that this closing down is merely apparent, the above passage seems to me to be a greater challenge to the non-conceptualist argument. For Kant is here stating that intuitions are only formed in the first place because of an act of the understanding, where representational data is synthesised at what might be called a

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<sup>3</sup> Although it may be thought that Kant wasn't committed to this change, whereby the imagination operates under the understanding as opposed to being a blind 'function of the soul', as this emendation didn't make its way into the second edition, Rudolf Makkreel points out that '[s]ince this statement occurs in a preliminary section of the *Analytic* that Kant did not revise, its retention in the second edition cannot be explained as an oversight on Kant's part.' (Makkreel (1990): 28-9).

<sup>4</sup> Heidegger considered Kant, in the B-deduction, to have privileged pure reason over transcendental imagination, thereby 'intellectualising' the transcendental deduction, so that the supremacy of reason in its practical use is affirmed. (Heidegger (1990): §31)

sortal level. Kant later calls such pure concepts of the understanding the *ancestral registry of the understanding* (or *primitive* or *ancestral concepts*) in contrast to universal representations, where the latter are only generated because of the particular organisational capacity operative at the primitive or basic level (A81/B107). Consequently, defenders of Kantian non-conceptualism must be conscious of this primary function of the categories in generating the data of sense.

A satisfactory non-conceptualist account then, in terms of finding a important place within the genesis of cognition, if it is to stand any chance of success, must find an argument to the effect that although the synthesis that brings unity to the intuition (as Kant accounts for it in the above quoted passage) is performed through what we have called sortal concepts, this isn't all that is to be said, and that we can trace this genesis further back in locating an important role for a non-conceptual content. In Chapter 2 I will, following the arguments of Wayne Waxman and Béatrice Longuenesse, argue that Kant himself is explicitly arguing for a synthesis that takes place through the imagination and that yet precedes the category. This synthesis is the synthesis of space and time (which are our pure forms of intuition) as *formal intuitions*; a synthesis which subsequently enables all the manifold of sense to be ordered as spatiotemporal. Although not synthesised through the category this synthesis is a synthesis which belongs to the understanding, as it is a synthesis generated through the unity of apperception, which is what Kant calls the first action of the understanding<sup>5</sup>. The details of this account will be dealt with in the second chapter, but in this chapter I will argue that although our argument of the second chapter is of key importance in both being able to fully appreciate Kant's account of the genesis of cognition and in providing room for an important non-conceptualist position, this isn't all the non-conceptualist has to go on, and that there is an important earlier synthesis that must take place even before the unity of apperception acts upon the spatial and temporal in sense generating the formal intuition. Already the paradoxical nature of this claim stands out however, as we have already seen that Kant states that all synthesis is an act of the understanding. Nevertheless I believe that there is an important argument, albeit a highly underdeveloped one, for *a kind of synthetic unity* (and as we will see later in this chapter there is a better reason for calling the representational content delivered at this earliest stage a *synthesis of representations*), where this is a pre-conceptual unity that is delivered with our *forms of intuition*, where what this content contains isn't

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<sup>5</sup> In the deduction Kant writes that 'the synthetic unity of apperception is the highest point to which one must affix all use of the understanding, even the whole of logic and, after it, transcendental philosophy; indeed this faculty is the understanding itself.' (B133-4n)

yet the *formal intuition* of the deduction. I believe that we need to locate this initial synthesis if we are to make sense of the idea that the synthetic unity of apperception acts upon some material, material which of itself cannot be unified through the understanding, and a passage in the A-deduction, which clearly indicates that it would be a mistake to see the A-deduction as not having an important account of the autonomy of sensibility, already supports this argument (of a gap between the unity of apperception as activity and what this activity acts upon), for Kant writes here that,

The productive synthesis of the imagination can take place *a priori*; for the reproductive synthesis rests on conditions of experience. The principle of the necessary unity of the pure (productive) synthesis of the imagination *prior to apperception* [emphasis] is thus the ground of the possibility of all cognition, especially that of experience. (CPR A118)

Although Kant slightly prior to this had remarked that ‘the unity of the manifold in a subject is synthetic; pure apperception therefore yields a principle of the synthetic unity of the manifold *in all possible intuition* [emphasis]’ (A116), we will be arguing that the unity of apperception (which is that unity that must be in place in order for something to count as a representation to me, to be anything for me, and constitutes the consciousness of an ‘I’ through its relation to the data of sense) cannot in fact be the first stage of representational content. In addition I believe we also need to locate this initial stage of apprehension in order to make sense of Kant’s account of animal representation, as underdeveloped as it may be. Animals do not unify data through the unity of apperception and hence don’t possess self-consciousness, but they do, for Kant, possess a consciousness, and they are engaged in interacting with the world. In order for this to be possible certain apprehensional abilities are required, and if the understanding were to monopolise upon all data capable of being apprehended, then we could not make sense of animal activity. Likewise if the understanding ran a monopoly in our cognitive sphere then I believe Kant would have no account of an emergence of cognition from a non-cognitive ground.

### *Threefold Synthesis*

The remark just considered, at (A118), is explicit in assigning the synthesis generated prior to apperception to the activity of the (productive) imagination, and the contention that Kant may be assigning a unifying role to imagination prior to apperception is reflected especially in Kant’s account in the A-edition of what is

called the threefold synthesis. Here it is sometimes thought, especially amongst those writers who read Kant as upholding a non-conceptualist position, that this stage of the A-deduction offers important material in support of this position<sup>6</sup>. At this stage of the A-deduction Kant distinguishes between ‘three original sources (capacities or faculties of the soul), which contain the conditions of the possibility of all experience’, which, as Lucy Allais points out, ‘only the third [of which], the synthesis of recognition in a concept, explicitly involves concepts’ and where the first two, the syntheses of apprehension and reproduction ‘are attributed to imagination’ (Allais (2009): 396). So initially, as with the remark at A118, it may appear that Kant is concerned with a non-conceptual synthesis. However in the two sections immediately prior to the ‘The Deduction of the Pure Concepts of the Understanding’ (the threefold synthesis) Kant appears to present a difficult obstacle to any non-conceptualist reading of Kant, which is largely a problem to do with the *meaningfulness* of a representation, or of representational content. The trouble for a non-conceptualist is that even if a role for representational content is located at the pre-unity of apperception level, it is apparent by Kant’s remarks at various stages in the first *Critique*, that any pre-categorical unity is, as Kant refers to it, nothing to us.

In the two sections prior to the threefold synthesis Kant is concerned with asking how it is possible for there to be a transcendental deduction of the categories, given that unlike space and time, they ‘do not represent the conditions under which objects are given in intuition at all, hence objects can indeed appear to us without necessarily having to be related to functions of the understanding’ (A89/B122). Objects couldn’t appear to us were it not that our sensibility contained the pure intuitions of space and time, whereas objects can appear to us without necessarily being conditioned by the categories. Again, this may initially appear to provide an argument in support of a non-conceptualist reading of Kant, since it is clear that the categories aren’t so despotic, as it were, as to be the conditions upon which any experience whatsoever is possible, and that therefore there may be a kind of synthesis of experience which is possible prior to or independent of conceptualization. However, Kant’s account of what this experience would be appears to preclude the possibility that it could be any meaningful, contentful experience, for he goes on to write that,

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<sup>6</sup> Lucy Allais for instance, a defender of Kantian non-conceptualism (“Kant, Non-Conceptual Content and the Representation of Space”), sees the threefold synthesis as in some capacity making room for a non-conceptualist position (Allais (2009):396,396n). Sarah Gibbons, In *Kant’s Theory of Imagination* (1994), also reads Kant’s account of the threefold synthesis as making room for a pre-conceptual synthesis, although she states that the threefold synthesis is misleadingly presented in appearing to argue that all synthesis is ultimately conceptual. (Gibbons (1994): 32-6).

Appearances could after all be so constituted that the understanding would not find them in accord with the conditions of its unity, and everything would then lie in such confusion that, e.g., in the succession of appearances nothing would offer itself that would furnish a rule of synthesis and thus correspond to the concept of cause and effect, so that this concept would therefore be entirely empty, nugatory, and without significance. Appearances would nonetheless offer objects for our intuition, for intuition by no means requires the functions of thinking. (CPR A90/B123)

So apart from the synthesising function of the *understanding*, even though appearances would still offer objects for us at the intuitional level, these intuitions would not be anything to us ('without significance'). Kant's overall point in these sections leading up to the second section of the transcendental deduction is that if we are going to be able to ground the categories as subjective conditions of thinking on objective *a priori*, not inductive or empirically based grounds, then this is not because an object is only possible as appearance because of them, but because 'they must be recognized as *a priori* conditions of the possibility of experience (whether of the intuition that is encountered in them, or of the thinking), and that '[c]oncepts that supply the objective ground of the possibility of experience are necessary just for that reason' (A94/B126). So although the possibility of experience at all levels isn't conditional upon the application of the categories to intuition, for 'intuition by no means requires the functions of thinking', it is nevertheless clear that Kant is operating with a strong notion of cognitive significance, which means a contentful, unified experience, rather than a 'confused' one. What is important however is that Kant maintains that what we are presented with before the activity of the understanding finds operation, are intuitions, and that although Kant equivocates throughout the *Critique* as to whether the intuition is only possible as a representational content as delivered by the understanding, there are times when it doesn't have this stronger sense.

### *Stages of Synthesis*

It is a contentious issue however, as to whether the threefold synthesis actually allows for even an intuitional togetherness which isn't dependent for this togetherness upon the understanding. The first stage of this synthesis is called 'On the synthesis of apprehension in the intuition', where Kant had earlier told us that this stage of synthesis is concerned with 'the **synopsis** of the manifold *a priori* through sense':



Every intuition contains a manifold in itself, which however would not be represented as such if the mind did not distinguish the time in the succession of impressions on one another; for **as contained in one** moment no representation can ever be anything other than absolute unity. Now in order for **unity** of intuition to come from this manifold (as, say, in the representation of space), it is necessary first to run through and then take together this manifoldness, which action I call the **synthesis of apprehension**, since it is aimed directly at the intuition, which to be sure provides a manifold but can never effect this as such, and indeed contained **in one representation**, without the occurrence of such a synthesis. (*CPR* A99)

It is apparent that a synthesis in apprehension must be the first stage in the generation of any representation, as it is this synthesis that unifies data as being 'contained in one moment', and it is reasonable to suppose that this is true of both human and animal psychology. The manifold of sense, as what Kant in the following paragraph calls 'original receptivity', by itself cannot contain a unity, and this first unifying act, by 'distinguishing the time in the succession of impressions' enables representational points in time to be apprehended as separate and contained. Because there is no reference to the concept or understanding as providing this unity, it is perhaps reasonable to suppose that this synthesis is a specific pre-conceptual unifying activity that belongs to sense itself, as the first act in the genesis of cognition. The problem with this account however and with the threefold synthesis in general is that although Kant may initially leave room for a pre-conceptual synthesis, the possibility of this synthesis in the subsequent stages of his argument appears to be closed down.

The second stage synthesis is 'the synthesis of reproduction in the imagination', and this synthesis states that without collecting the moments generated in apprehension into a further unity there would be no representational content at all. Thus, to use Kant's examples, in drawing a line in thought, or thinking of the progression of one point in time to the next I have a series of temporally unique apprehended moments. But if I failed to connect these progressive apprehensions, so that the previous moment was lost as soon as I apprehended the next, there would be no unity in the temporal series, so that 'no whole representation... not even the purest and most fundamental representations of space and time, could ever arise' (A102). It is thereby apparent that the synthesis of apprehension can go nowhere in terms of synthesis over time without the synthesis of reproduction, and with reference to this Kant writes that,

The synthesis of apprehension is therefore inseparably combined with the synthesis of reproduction. And since the former constitutes the transcendental ground of the possibility of all cognition in general (not only of empirical cognition, but also of pure *a priori* cognition), the reproductive synthesis of the imagination belongs among the transcendental actions of the mind, and with respect to this we will also call this faculty the transcendental faculty of the imagination. (CPR A102)

Again, as with the first stage of synthesis, no reference is made to the fact that this unifying activity must be performed through either the concept or the activity of the understanding. The third stage of synthesis however is the 'the synthesis of the recognition in the concept', and the role of the concept in unifying apprehensional data comes to the fore in a way which shows that this is Kant's primary concern in showing the possibility of cognition.

The trouble with this section however, is that it appears to indicate that the first two syntheses, especially the synthesis of reproduction, are only possible through this third stage synthesis, and Kant states that,

If, in counting, I forget that the units that now hover before my senses were successively added to each other by me, then I would not cognize the generation of the multitude through this successive addition of one to the other, and consequently I would not cognize the number; for this concept consists solely in the consciousness of this unity of the synthesis. (CPR A103)

Here, the synthesis of reproduction is apparent, in that there is a synthesis of temporally distinct units which follow upon each other in time. But this remark goes beyond the second stage synthesis in stating that this synthesis is a synthesis through the concept, which Kant subsequently refers to as the *unity of a rule*. So it appears that the second stage synthesis isn't part of a process whereby it has its own function and then is brought to a subsequent synthesis through the concept, but that this synthesis is already part of the synthesis through the concept insofar as it reproduces in accordance with a rule. This reading is supported by what Rudolf Makkreel calls a *presuppositional* reading of the threefold synthesis, which contrasts with what he again calls a *cumulative* reading. The latter would see the threefold synthesis as a linear account where the synthesis of apprehension would be regarded as a 'gathering synthesis, the synthesis of imaginative reproduction as an associative synthesis, and the synthesis of recognition as a connecting or unifying synthesis' and where '[e]ach synthesis then would be slightly more specific than its predecessor' (Makkreel (1990): 27). The presuppositional reading however, which is a reading Makkreel supports, sees each synthesis as reciprocally determinable and

not necessarily operating in a linear fashion. This reading has as its strength in what we have already noted: that Kant appears to be explicit in collapsing the synthesis of reproduction into the synthesis of recognition. Since the synthesis of apprehension is 'inseparably combined' with this second synthesis there is also reason to suppose that it too collapses into the third synthesis. Makkreel also sees Kant as running two sequences in specifying which synthesis is the basis for the other. Makkreel's idea seems to be that whereas on the one hand, at (A119), Kant states that the synthesis of apprehension is the basis the synthesis of reproduction in the imagination, which is in turn the basis of the recognition in the concept, on the other hand, at (A125), Kant reverses this order, so that there are in effect two sequences, which '[t]aken together indicate a circular process', so that '[t]he sequence beginning with apprehension provides the necessary content of experience, whereas the other, beginning with recognition provides its formal unity' (Makkreel (1990): 28). Because of Kant's subsequent emphasis upon the categories as the grounds of all synthesis Makkreel concludes that,

When apprehension, imaginative reproduction, and recognition within the overall view of synthesis developed in the *Critique of Pure Reason* are discussed, the sequence must begin with the synthesis of recognition. Ultimately all synthesis is a function of the understanding and its categories. This is the conclusion that Kant arrives at in the Objective [B-] Deduction. (Makkreel (1990): 28)

However, although Makkreel's reading has conviction, I believe it is mistaken to see all synthesis as a function of the understanding and its categories. For one thing, as will be discussed in the second Chapter, Kant is explicit in locating a pre-categorical synthesis within the B-deduction which is the synthesis generated in the formal intuition. Although this is a synthesis delivered by the understanding in an original act of synthetic unity, it is not arrived at through the function of the categories. Another point is that although Kant may at various stages reverse the order of his account so that the reciprocity and dependence of the syntheses is emphasised, this doesn't necessarily indicate that there cannot be apprehensional content of any kind apart from the concept of the understanding, but just that *cognition* of the object is only possible through the application of the third stage synthesis to all the manifold<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> This is the sense in which Allais sees the threefold synthesis as making room for a pre-conceptual synthesis, writing, 'notice that Kant does not say that the synthesis of apprehension and reproduction would be *impossible*, or would fail to result in representational content, but that they would be *in vain* (*vergeblich*), and I take it that we can read this as saying that they would be in vain with respect to *objectively valid cognition* or empirical knowledge of objects.' (Allais (2009): 396n)

This focus on cognition is clearly Kant's overarching concern where it is taken to indicate what is characteristic of human cognition in experiencing a world with objective content. Thus at (A105) Kant states that,

Hence we say that we cognise the object if we have effected synthetic unity in the manifold of intuition. But this is impossible if the intuition could not have been produced through a function of synthesis in accordance with a rule that makes the reproduction of the manifold necessary *a priori* and a concept in which this manifold is united possible. (CPR A105)

So cognition is not possible without the unification through the concept, where this cognition is taken in a stronger sense than just anything that consists in representational content, which even animals possess, and so in this sense cannot be said to cognize (as we will subsequently discuss). Béatrice Longuenesse also argues that it is a mistake to read the first two stages of the threefold synthesis as having only application insofar as they are seen as part of the broader synthesising function of the understanding (through the concept), writing that,

it is plausible to think that a great number of *our* representations involve acts of mere apprehension and reproductive associations of the same type as[...] animals are capable of, [and that] among our conscious representations there are some we just apprehend without reproducing them, or reproduce without subjecting them to the rules of synthesis that allow them to be reflected under concepts – that is, to be thought. And indeed, all the opening sentence of section 16 states is that it must *be possible* for the 'I think' to accompany all my representations, not that it must actually accompany them. In other words, all of my representations must be such that that it is *possible* to combine them[...] within the framework of the "unity of synthesis" of the manifold of my intuition, and to become conscious of such a combination. (Longuenesse (1998): 66)

For Longuenesse then, apprehension and reproduction can occur without necessarily being brought under recognition in a concept, and she points out that for Kant there are even non-conscious states which do not even reach the stage of apprehension (such as 'the individual notes of a chord struck in the course of musical improvisation' (Longuenesse (1998) (65))<sup>8</sup>. Longuenesse sees the recognition in a concept as only needing to be present in objective cognition, writing that,

I think that what Kant wants to say is that acts of apprehension/reproduction/recognition lead to empirical concepts and thus

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<sup>8</sup> Longuenesse's argument for this comes from Kant's examples in his *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* (§5).

to knowledge of objects – are acts of relating *appearances* to *phenomena* – *only if* one and the same act, unifying our representations, is at work throughout this process. (Longuenesse (1998): 51-2)

In addition, it is apparent within Kant's account of the synthesis of recognition in the concept that there must be an important gap between what the concept operates on and this operation itself, and this is already apparent at the beginning of Kant's account of this synthesis where he states regarding the word 'concept' that 'it is this **one** consciousness that unifies the manifold that has been successively intuited, and then also reproduced, into one representation' (A103). Thus the manifold is already apprehended and reproduced before being unified through the concept, and this supports a cumulative rather than presuppositional reading. More indicative however is the fact that Kant at various stages in the A-deduction states that the unity of apperception is possible only on the pre-supposition of some already existing data in which it is in relation to in generating cognition. This is to reaffirm our argument based on Kant's passage at A118 that Kant appears to allow for a synthesising function through the imagination, and Kant states at A119 that '**The unity of apperception in relation to the synthesis of the imagination is the understanding**'. The gap between apperception as an activity and what this activity is in application to is apparent further on where Kant writes,

Apperception... must be added to the pure imagination in order to make its function intellectual. For in itself the synthesis of the imagination, although exercised *a priori*, is nevertheless always sensible, for it combines the manifold only as it **appears** in intuition, e.g., the shape of a triangle. (CPR A124)

It is apparent from this remark that there is a synthesis which precedes that synthesis arrived at through apperception, where this synthesis is a spatiotemporal one, where in this case *shape* is made representable. We know that for any representation to stand before us it must be contained in a moment, and therefore taken up through the synthesis of apprehension. It is certain however that this representation (the shape of a triangle), at this earliest stage of cognition isn't a representation of a triangle as a triangle, and is as it were just spatial data. It is only through the unity of the rule that the triangle can become a triangle *for us*, and Kant was again clear about this earlier at (A105), where he states that 'we think of a triangle as an object by being conscious of the composition of three straight lines in accordance with a rule according to which such an intuition can always be exhibited'. It is the role of the imagination to bring the 'manifold as it appears' to the unity of apperception, and this is again indicates that there is purely sensible data

which, although not anything to us, is nevertheless a content, and Kant states that without this function of the imagination sensibility, 'would to be sure yield appearances but no objects of an empirical cognition, hence there would be no experience' (A124). Apart from the unifying function of apperception our representations cannot be ones of cognition, in that they cannot be representations that belong to the unity of consciousness through which they would thereby become representations to me. In this sense this earliest synthesis cannot be said to be an *actual experience*, for as Kant accounts for it,

Actual experience, which consists in the apprehension, the association (the reproduction), and finally the recognition of the appearances, contains in the last and highest (of the merely empirical elements of experience) concepts that make possible the formal unity of experience and with it all objective validity (truth) of empirical cognition. (CPR A124-5)

And in a *Reflexion* from the *Metaphysic Nachlaß* Kant writes that,

We cognise an object only through predicates we express or think of it. Prior to this those representations we find in us can be counted only as materials, not as cognition. (*Refl.* 4634, Ak. XVII. 616.)<sup>9</sup>

Thus in order to appreciate Kant's account of apperception and the unifying function it generates through the category, it is important to make room for a pre-apperceptive unity, which as we have seen, must itself be a unity of a kind, which is that unity generated through the initial synthesis of apprehension<sup>10</sup>. Contrary to Makkreel, and in agreement with Allais and Longuenesse, we have also seen that this makes room for a cumulative reading of the threefold synthesis, or at least a reading of it that doesn't see the synthesis of apprehension and the synthesis of reproduction as redundant or meaningless without the subsequent synthesis through the concept. Without a data which the unity of apperception is in application to, it is difficult to understand Kant's account of the genesis of cognition. For the unity of apperception, as a function of the understanding, would have to act upon raw sense data, and Kant's distinction between the data of sense, sensibility and the understanding would become redundant, for sensibility would just be

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<sup>9</sup> All translated *Akademie* references such as this are taken from Longuenesse's *Kant and the Capacity to Judge* (See bibliography for details).

<sup>10</sup> Further support for this idea can be found in Kant's *Inaugural Dissertation* where he writes, 'in the case of sensible things and phenomena, that which precedes the logical use of the understanding is called appearance, while the reflective cognition, which arises when several appearances are compared by the understanding, is called *experience*'. (*Dissertation* 2:394). I take the *experience* of the *Inaugural Dissertation* to be the *actual experience* of the *Critique*.

collapsed into sense data, which doesn't have any representational unity. Such unity would then first be generated through apperception, and it would be mysterious to find that data was generated in such a way. The question that remains is whether this pre-apperceptive content that can account for the representation of space (as shape), and which we have good reason to suspect animals operate with, not possessing higher functions of the understanding, is to be allocated to the function of the *imagination* for its genesis. The solution to this however is difficult, for on the one hand Kant - such as in the passage at A118 where he states that 'the principle of the necessary unity of the pure (productive) synthesis of the imagination *prior to apperception* [emphasis] is thus the ground of the possibility of all cognition, especially that of experience' - appears to assign the imagination the role of generating the unity of apprehension, which also seems to be borne out in the threefold synthesis itself. On the other hand, as we have just seen, Kant allocates to imagination the role of mediating between sensibility and the unity of apperception (the understanding), whilst at the same time stating that the imagination itself is a faculty belonging to the understanding. This later role appears to be the role of the imagination as it is presented in the B-deduction where it is presented as,

an exercise of spontaneity, which is determining and not, like sense, merely determinable, and can thus determine the form of sense *a priori* in accordance with the unity of apperception [and that therefore] the imagination is to this extent a faculty for determining the sensibility *a priori*, and its synthesis of intuitions, **in accordance with the categories**, must be the transcendental synthesis of the **imagination**, which is an effect of the understanding on sensibility and its first application (and at the same time the ground of all others) to objects of the intuition that is possible for us. (CPR B151-2)

Unlike sense, Kant is telling us, Imagination is active and determines the manifold through the unity of apperception in accordance with categories. There is no argument to the effect that the imagination provides an initial sensible unity which is then to be determined. Nevertheless, insofar as a unity prior to apperception must be one of apprehension, insofar as it contains a representational unity (of moments), it is also an imaginative unity, for Kant in the A-deduction states that 'There is thus an active faculty of the synthesis of [the] manifold in us, which we call imagination, and whose action exercised immediately upon perceptions I call apprehension' (A120). Longuenesse also sees Kant as giving a pre-conceptual role to the imagination such as that argued for here, but in which he is only 'marginally interested', writing that,

To speak of an "appropriation" of imagination by understanding means that there is also an activity of imagination that is *not* appropriated by

understanding, or even that many different degrees of “appropriation” or interaction between the laws of imagination and the laws of understanding may occur.[... Imagination] belongs to *sensibility* or receptivity, and as such obeys rules of passive association. These rules govern a great deal of our representational combinations and hence a great deal of our behaviour as living beings. But Kant is only marginally interested in this merely sensible/associative/fictional ability of imagination. More important to him is the manner in which it is appropriated by the requirements of understanding. This appropriation is the source of all objective representation. (Longuenesse (1998): 207-08)

Consequently, although ambiguities remain within Kant's account, the pre-apperceptive unity that we have set out to demonstrate is operative in order to understand how something can be presented to, or ‘appropriated’ by the understanding, may, with a reasonable degree of textual plausibility, be allocated to a function of the imagination.

#### *Levels of Representation in the Jäsche Logic*

The emptiness, for Kant, of a representation that is not generated through an act of the understanding upon the data of sense, is very visibly apparent in his remark at the closing stages of the B-deduction, where he states that,

all synthesis, through which even perception itself, becomes possible, stands under the categories, and since experience is cognition through connected perceptions, the categories are conditions of the possibility of experience, and are thus also valid *a priori* of all objects of experience. (CPR B161)

Such a statement, again, appears to foreclose the possibility of generating any meaningful representational content at a pre-conceptual level. This is true in a very strong sense since what is discounted from being possible without a synthesis through the category of the understanding is nothing less than perception itself, which is typically understood as a basic acquaintance with the world at a sensory level. It may be wondered, given his remarks at various other stages of the deduction, such as the remark that ‘appearances can be given without the function of the understanding’, whether Kant really meant to put forward such a strong conceptualist position. However, as Hanna Ginsborg has pointed out in “Was Kant a Nonconceptualist” (2008), Kant’s aim in the deduction is to show that the pure concepts of the understanding have application to the objects given to us through experience, and that ‘the idea that understanding is required for perceptual synthesis



seems to be an essential part of achieving this aim' (Ginsborg (2008): 69). Ginsborg supports her claim with various passages of the deduction such as Kant's remark at §21 that he will show 'from the way in which empirical intuition is given in sensibility that its unity is none other than that which the category prescribes to the manifold of a given intuition in general', and that only by explaining 'the *a priori* validity of the category in regard to all objects of our senses' will 'the aim of the deduction be fully attained'. I believe it is correct to see Kant as thereby showing the necessity of a perceptual synthesis as taking place through the category in order to generate an intuitive content that acquaints us with a world, so that on the face of things there appears to be little room for a non-conceptualist position which would aim establish a place for a meaningful synthesis, in the sense of acquainting us with a world, prior to the operation of the understanding. Ginsborg argues further that a successful non-conceptualist account needs to see this non-conceptual content as a delivery of the imagination, and that this is precisely what the non-conceptualist cannot do, for Ginsborg maintains that the function of the imagination is unable to operate without the understanding, as what in effect provides the rule of its synthesis (Ginsborg (2008) 69-70). This account appears to agree with the threefold synthesis insofar as it seemed that any synthesis arrived at through apprehension could not be generated without the function of a rule, which was the third stage synthesis through the concept.

We can see however that we are in disagreement with Ginsborg on this latter issue in that we have argued that there is a content delivered through sense, which we have, albeit somewhat tentatively, ascribed to the imagination. The full account of this disagreement with Ginsborg will be fully borne out in Chapter 2, where I argue in agreement with certain other writers, that there is a pre-conceptual synthesis that generates the formal intuitions of space and time and that is arrived at through the imagination apart from the concept of the understanding. For the present purposes and for the relevance of this chapter however, it is sufficient to point out what has already been stated; that Kant states that there must be a kind of synthetic unity *a priori* to apperception which makes this subsequent operation possible. The function of apperception must act upon some data and this is the data of an initial receptivity which even animals can be said to be acquainted with. We have also ascribed this synthesis to a function of the imagination, and further support for this position can be found in the schematism chapter where Kant states that 'The synthesis of representations rests on the imagination, but their synthetic unity (which is requisite for judgement), on the unity of apperception' (A155/B194). Here Kant is explicit in assigning a *synthesis of representations* to a function of the imagination where this isn't

yet the synthetic unity delivered through apperception. This role of imagination is further evident in an interesting remark in the B-deduction where immediately prior to stating that all perception as synthesised data depends upon the categories Kant writes that,

Now that which connects the manifold of sensible intuition is imagination, which depends on understanding for the unity of its intellectual synthesis and on sensibility for the manifoldness of apprehension (*CPR* B165)

Although imagination delivers a certain kind of unity (as intellectual) through the understanding, there is nevertheless a 'manifoldness of apprehension' generated through the function of the imagination that appears to correspond to the synthesis of representations just noted.

Contra Ginsborg then, it does appear that Kant makes room for a kind of synthesis at a sensible level where this is delivered through the imagination. My primary concern with Ginsborg's argument however, which is crucial to her overall refutation of a non-conceptualist reading of Kant<sup>11</sup>, is her argument that perceptual synthesis is only possible through the understanding and that consequently there is no real possibility of a meaningful non-conceptualist position in Kant. I do agree with Ginsborg that without the function of the category in generating intuitional content, there is little or nothing that is characteristic of human perceptual content present in a representation, but I believe her account of the nature of perception as Kant construes it is one-sided. The reason we maintain this is that the first *Critique* isn't the only place where perception, or the nature of perception is discussed, and in the *Jäsche Logic* Kant presents an account of the levels of mental representational content, where perception isn't allocated a unification through the understanding. These levels of mental representation are as follows;

The *first* degree of cognition is: to represent something;

The *second*: to represent something with consciousness, or to *perceive*;

The *third*: to be acquainted with something , or to represent something in comparison with other things, both as to *sameness* and as to *difference*

The *fourth*: to be acquainted with something *with consciousness*, i.e. to *cognize* it. Animals are acquainted with objects too, but they do not *cognize* them.

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<sup>11</sup> Ginsborg however, although refuting the kind of non-conceptualism we are here discussing, does want to make room within her conceptualist account for certain non-conceptualist considerations, by arguing that the understanding can normatively guide representational content without this being a function of the categories. See section II of her 'Was Kant a Nonconceptualist?' (2008).

The *fifth*: to understand something, i.e., to cognize something through the understanding by means of concepts, or to conceive...

The *sixth*: to cognize something through reason, or to have insight into it. With few things do we get this far. (JL 64-5)

Here we can see that what is characteristic of human mental representation doesn't come about until the fourth stage and that there is nevertheless a representational content prior to this stage. This representational content is also capable of being *perceived* (second stage), where this is a representational content accompanied with consciousness. *Acquaintance* (third stage) is representational content that is able to stand in comparison with other things both as to sameness and difference, and this acquaintance must thereby be subject to something like the apprehension and reproduction of the threefold synthesis. So although Ginsborg is right in arguing that perception as it is outlined in the first *Critique* must be subject to a function of the understanding in order to guarantee the aim of the deduction, which is to show that pure concepts have application to the data of sense, this isn't all that is to be said for Kant's account of perception, as we must see Kant in the first *Critique* as having a certain *kind* of perception in mind. This kind of perception is a perception of objects as objects (or things as things), where we have contentful, object directed, intentional representations. This perception would come closer to what Kant in his levels of mental representations calls *cognition* (level 4), or *actual experience* as we accounted for it earlier. In the schematism Kant makes it apparent that when referring to perception he is using the term in a cognitively rich sense, writing,

Experience is an empirical cognition, i.e., a cognition that determines an object through perceptions. It is therefore a synthesis of perceptions, which is not itself contained in perception but contains the synthetic unity of the manifold of perception in one consciousness, which constitutes what is essential in a cognition of **objects** of the senses, i.e., of experience (*not merely of the intuition of sensation of the senses* (emphasis)). (CPR A176/B218)

In the *Jäsche Logic* however, the kind of perception (level 2) Kant seems to have in mind would be a basic perceptual acquaintance with the world, which animals and infants can be said to possess and which determines a basic cognitive orientation at a spatial level. Although intuitions without concepts are blind in the sense that they wouldn't provide us with actual experience, they are not blind in that a certain intuitive content is possible, and animals are not blind when navigating their environment. These two accounts of perception then, map on, as it were, to the different roles or functions that Kant assigns to the imagination. On the one hand

there is a synthesis of representations which aren't yet representations of a dog or triangle but just 'third level' acquaintances with things where we compare representations both as to sameness and as to difference, and which even animals possess. As imagistic it, as belonging to sensibility, is what is capable of being brought to apperception. On the other hand there is the function of the imagination as Kant accounts for it in the schematism, where the concept is required in order to determine sensible content through the imagination, and regarding this function Kant writes,

The schema of the triangle can never exist anywhere except in thought, and signifies a rule of the synthesis of the imagination with regard to pure shapes in space. Even less does an object of experience or an image of it ever reach [the universality of] the empirical concept, rather the latter is always related immediately to the schema of the imagination, as rule for the determination of our intuition in accordance with a certain general concept. The concept of a dog signifies a rule in accordance with which my imagination can specify the shape of a four-footed animal in general, without being restricted to any singular shape that experience offers me or any possible image than I can exhibit *in concreto*. (CPR A141/B180)

As a mediating representation between intuitions and concepts the schema is able to determine appearances as images of objects and generate representations as cognitions ('the schema of the concepts of pure understanding are the true and sole conditions for providing them with a relation to objects, thus with **significance**' (A146/B185)). Clearly this function of the imagination, which is the predominant one in the *Critique*, corresponds to its conceptual role, and is what Ginsborg takes to be characteristic of the imagination in its predominant function. Ginsborg's concentration on Kant's account of cognition as outlined in the first *Critique* however, limits her view of perception and imagination to Kant's overarching concern there, which is, as of course Ginsborg recognizes, to ground the possibility of the synthetic cognition through the function of the understanding. In looking to the *Jäsche logic* however we have seen that it is possible to generate a richer conception of how Kant understands the genesis of cognition for animal and human beings.

So although an autonomy of the imagination is rescued from the contention that the imagination cannot be a faculty where non-conceptual content is operative (as it isn't at all levels under the auspices of the understanding), it remains to be settled

whether this level of mental representation at the pre-conceptual level can offer any argument for the non-conceptualist in the sense of its being a cognitive state which is in some way importantly operative in our overall interaction with the world. I want to argue that the answer to this is in a way yes and no. I want to argue yes, there is a meaningful role for non-conceptual content at this earliest stage of cognition insofar as, as we have seen, it is this initial receptivity that acquaints us with the world (although not *as* a world) and which acts as the data upon which the understanding finds its application. On the other hand I want to argue that this account of initial receptivity isn't enough to secure an account of *meaningful* non-conceptual content since, as we have seen, on Kant's own account this representational content is empty, or without significance. It must be pointed out at this stage however, that Kant's own dismissal of any significance of representational content prior to the operation of the understanding isn't something that cannot and should not go unchallenged. In the first *Critique* Kant clearly had his focus on the genesis of synthetic cognition as determining an objective world of law governed experience, so that anything not contributing to this end, which emphatically demands the function of the understanding and the concept of the understanding, was found to be without significance. The role of non-conceptual data as operative in our basic cognitive acquaintance with the world is something that can be very meaningful just by making this acquaintance possible. Thus we need to separate what is meaningful to the critical enterprise as Kant conceived of it, and what is meaningful in a complete account of cognitive acquaintance. This subject will be discussed in later chapters where there is a more definite role for a non-conceptual content as making cognition possible. Becoming clearer as to what significance we can assign to the initial receptivity as accounted for in this chapter however, will be made more possible by turning to the Transcendental Aesthetic.

### *Imagination and the Aesthetic*

Insofar as the pre-conceptual synthesis we are concerned with has nothing to do with concepts, or an interaction with the understanding, but the imagistic synthesis that the imagination is responsible for in generating an intuitive content, then we are concerned not with what is general and mediate (in the case of concepts mediated through the intuition) but with what is immediate and singular, which is the intuition that is delivered through the receptivity of sensibility. Our sensibility however is only receptive because it is made up of pure forms of sensibility, which are space and time. Thus it is going to be the spatial and temporal elements of our

cognition (Time and Space are[...] two sources of cognition (A38/B55)) that can account for any meaningful cognitive orientation at a pre-conceptual level, and Kant states that there is this pre-conceptual representation when he writes,

Now that which, as representation, can precede any act of thinking something is intuition and, if it contains nothing but relations, it is the form of intuition. (CPR B67)

The *form of intuition* contrasts with the *formal intuition*, the latter of which, as will be discussed in the following chapter, is a unity generated through the understanding. Regarding the form of intuition Kant writes at the beginning of the Transcendental Aesthetic that, 'I call that in the appearance which corresponds to sensation its **matter**, but that which allows the manifold of appearance to be ordered in certain relations (*Verhältnis*) I call the **form** of appearance' (B34/A20). Form always has a matter, and it is the form that enables the matter to be taken up, or present in the first place, according to a certain unity or structure. The unification here though (the representation which is the intuition which Kant has told us at (B67) precedes thinking) isn't the unity of the formal intuition, which is the unity of space and time as pure intuitions, *as* the representation of space and time, but nevertheless a matter. The question is how does this matter stand before us? We know that it is nothing to us, and what Kant calls 'less than a dream' (after all dreams do represent objects as objects), but in what sense nothing to us? It is nothing to us because it isn't a meaningful experience where we are in cognitive relation to a world or environment and where our representations aren't brought under the 'I' that is generated through the first operations of the understanding on sensibility (through the unity apperception). Because there is no 'I' there is no self-conscious representation. As Lucy Allais points out however, Kant doesn't always clearly distinguish consciousness from self-consciousness and that self-consciousness is 'clearly his main concern in the argument of the deduction' (Allais (2009): 402). The conditions of unity in self-consciousness are not the same as the conditions of unity in consciousness, and indeed, as we have seen, Kant's second level of cognition in his levels of mental representations in the *Jäsche logic* states that it is 'to represent something with consciousness, or to *perceive*'. So we grant a unity of representation at a conscious level (and Kant is willing to say animals have conscious states) which although nothing to us in any meaningful sense as far as cognition and unity of self goes, may not be nothing as far as basic cognitive orientation is concerned. Immediately prior to telling us that, 'that which, as representation can precede any

act of thinking something is intuition and, if it contains nothing but relations, it is the form of intuition', Kant tells us,

that everything in our cognition that belongs to intuition[...] contains nothing but mere relations, of places in one intuition (extension), alteration of places (motion), and laws in accordance with which this alteration is determined (moving forces)[...] It is not merely that the representations of **outer sense** make up the proper material with which we occupy our mind, but also the time in which we place these representations, which itself precedes the consciousness of them in experience and grounds the way in which we place them in mind as a formal condition, already contains relations of succession, of simultaneity, and of that which is simultaneous with succession (of that which persists). (*CPR* B66-67)

Here Kant states that there are representations of outer sense which make up our representational contents and which *precede* a consciousness of them in experience. To be conscious of something in experience is equivalent to the self-consciousness of the fourth level of representation in the *Jäsche Logic*. This pre-self-conscious representational content then grounds the way in which these representations subsequently become a formal condition of experience, which is a more determinate form of experience. Yet this pre-conscious representational content *already contains* relations of succession, simultaneity and persistence, although these relations are not yet experienced as simultaneity, succession, persistence, i.e. not yet cognized, or associated with self-consciousness, and this is co-extensive with Kant's remark that we noted earlier (A124), that the intuition prior to apperception can acquaint us with the *shape* of figures in space, although this isn't yet reflected as an experience of objects as spatial entities. The formal intuition then is a more determinate form of experience which is only possible through a function of the understanding in application to the data of sense, i.e. the form of intuition. This intuitional state (form of intuition) therefore provides the brute spatiality that is requisite for standing in an interactive relation to an environment in the first place, and in the *Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics* Kant writes that,

The mere universal form of intuition called space is therefore certainly the substratum of all intuitions determinable upon particular objects, and, admittedly, the condition for the possibility and variety of those intuitions lies in this space; but the unity of the objects is determined solely through the understanding, and indeed according to conditions that reside in its own nature. (*Prolegomena* 4:322)

A cat can be said to make a kind of perceptual judgement in leaping from one platform to the next and it is a spatial sense that enables them to do so<sup>12</sup>. Because the form of intuition delivers the spatiotemporal substratum that is the base of intuitive representational content, then it is fundamental to life that is spatiotemporally conditioned.

What remains unclear however is the extent to which space and time as not brought under the auspices of the understanding (the form of space and time) is involved, if at all, in an active human cognitive life. Again this is not an issue Kant goes into any detail over, being concerned as he is with determinate forms of cognition. Consequently, although we have seen that there is room for an apprehensional content at a pre-conceptual level, a Kantian conceptualist can perhaps accept this without being much troubled. They may say that because there is nothing cognitively determinate about this account (in terms of our self-conscious/apperceptive relation to the world), so that we just seem to be speculating about infant or animal states of mind, then there is nothing especially interesting in this account, so that Kant himself states that such pre-conceptual representational states are effectively nothing to us. So signaling the presence within Kant's account of what he calls the form of intuition isn't necessarily a significant challenge to a conceptualist reading of the first *Critique*. However, as we will now go on to argue in our next chapter, although the *form* of intuition may not make possible a degree of intuitive content that can obviously count as providing for a meaningful cognitive engagement with the world, the next level of synthesis in Kant's account is a synthesis generated through the first act of the understanding in generating the *formal* intuitions of space and time. The spatiotemporal content located here is generated through the understanding, but not through the concept of the understanding, and therefore, I will argue, makes way for an important non-conceptualism within Kant's account.

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<sup>12</sup> Kant however, makes no definite commitment to animals having the same *a priori* forms of inner sense, although he does write at the close of the B-edition of the Transcendental Aesthetic that 'It is also not necessary for us to limit the kind of intuition in space and time to the sensibility of human beings; it may well be that all finite thinking beings must necessarily agree with human beings in this regard (though we cannot decide this)' (B72).



## Chapter 2

### Space and Time as Formal Intuitions

In our previous chapter we argued that in order to make sense of the emergence of apperceptive cognition, we need to posit a pre-apperceptive intuitive content of some kind, which we called a representational content in accordance with certain elements of Kant's account (Kant spoke of a *synthesis of representations* prior to apperception (A155/B194)). We saw however, that this content is not considered especially important or interesting in governing our day to day lives, insofar as Kant calls it a representational 'material' of some kind, but not 'cognition' (*Refl.* 4634, Ak. XVII. 616.). Cognition in a stronger sense requires the subsequent activity of the understanding in generating the potentially self-conscious unity that is a condition of such cognition. Contrary to what we might expect however, this is not the end of the line for a non-conceptualist argument, for there turns out to be an additional non-conceptualist position presented in the deduction of the first *Critique* and that concerns the generation of space and time as formal intuitive wholes, which play an important part in governing our cognitive relation to the world.

#### *Concept and Synthesis*

Throughout the first chapter reference was made to the fact that it is integral to the first *Critique* that Kant is operating with two senses of concept – two ways in which concepts are operative in cognition. As was seen, Kant states that 'The same function that gives unity to the different representations **in a judgement** also gives unity to the mere synthesis of different representations **in an intuition**, which expressed generally is called the pure concept of understanding' (A79/B105). The idea of the concept giving unity to the representation in an intuition is explicated under the heading of 'On the synthesis of recognition in the concept';

If, in counting, I forget that the units which now hover before my senses were successively added to each other by me, then I would not cognize the generation of the multitude through this successive addition of one to the other, and consequently I would not cognize the number; for this concept consists solely in the consciousness of this unity of the synthesis. The word

“concept” itself could already lead us to this remark. For it is this **one** consciousness that unifies the manifold that has been successfully intuited, and then also reproduced, into one representation. (CPR A103)

Clearly, Kant’s use of the term “concept” here isn’t a typical one, and Béatrice Longuenesse recognizes the peculiarity of this role of the concept, stating that,

This is a very unusual use of the term “concept”. It is clear that this “concept” is quite different from the “universal or reflected representation” defined in the *Logic*. Here, the concept is not a universal representation formed by the discursive acts of comparison, reflection, and abstraction, but the (clear or obscure) consciousness of the unity of an act of synthesis, and moreover, of the synthesis of a *whole*. (Longuenesse (1998):46).

The unity of an act of synthesis is, as a unitary consciousness, a function of the understanding that turns perceptions into experience, and this is the first application of the logical forms of judgement as outlined at (A70/B95) to the data of sense which generates the pure concepts of the understanding (the categories)<sup>13</sup>. This role of the concept is different from the discursive concept in that it is this initial act of seizing<sup>14</sup> or unifying the manifold that enables the representation to be reflected, insofar as this rule of synthesis is common to many sensible representations, under the discursive universal or reflected representation.

This consciousness of the unity of synthesis, which is the concept in application to the data of sense, is what enables cognition to arise in the first place and Kant writes that ‘All cognition demands a concept, though that concept may, indeed be quite imperfect or obscure’ (A106). The categories are thus operative at a fundamental level and have an important relation to the unity of apperception, and in the B-deduction, under the section (§20) heading ‘All sensible intuitions stand under the categories, as conditions under which alone their manifold can come together in one consciousness’ Kant writes;

That action of the understanding[...] through which the manifold of given representations (whether they be intuitions or concepts) is brought under an

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<sup>13</sup> This means that the categories originate in what Kant calls ‘original acquisition’, which is distinguished from innatism, which would see the categories as inherent, *a priori*, concepts in the mind. Only the logical functions are innate, and in this sense the understanding is a capacity to judge. The categories arise only when logical functions are brought into a relation with sensibility. See (Longuenesse (1998): 201-2)

<sup>14</sup> Longuenesse draws attention to the fact that in referring to the initial application of the concept Kant uses the German *Begriff* rather than the Latinate *concept*, where the former ‘carries the connotation of *grasping, seizing*.’ (Longuenesse (1993): 46)

apperception in general, is the logical function of judgements[...] [T]he **categories** are nothing other than these very functions for judging, insofar as the manifold of a given intuition is determined with regard to them. Thus the manifold in a given intuition also necessarily stands under the categories. (CPR B143)

We saw in Chapter 1 that although such a statement may appear to foreclose the possibility of any non-conceptualism whatsoever, insofar as it seems to suggest that everything I am sensibly presented with is under the categories, this isn't in fact the case, and that when Kant is stating that intuition is necessarily determined by the pure concept of the understanding insofar as it is anything *to me*, it is precisely this latter clause that is important. Something can only be anything to me if it is brought under the unity of apperception, and the action of bringing a manifold under this unity of apperception belongs to the function of judging<sup>15</sup>. Thus although any representation of which I am conscious, qua my representation, is under the pure concept of the understanding, there are nevertheless, as we saw earlier, representations which are not so unified but nevertheless possess what might be called a unified content of some kind so that they mean something to the animal or human mind in allowing it to navigate an environment. This then may appear to bring to a close our investigation of the role of concepts in the first *Critique*, insofar as we have determined at what stage the pure concepts of the understanding come in to play – namely in unifying all intuition that stands under the unity of apperception. However, although this conclusion initially seems to be borne out by the text itself, there is an important additional pre-conceptual unity operative within our cognitive sphere and which is crucial in understanding Kant's account of concept formation.

### *The Formal Intuition*

At section §26 of the B-deduction we find Kant's contention that there is a pre-conceptual unity which, although belonging to the understanding, nevertheless doesn't take place by means of the category. In this section Kant begins to consider the possibility of prescribing laws to nature and the role of the categories in this prescription, and here we see Kant return to issues first raised in the *Transcendental Aesthetic*. Here Kant wants to ask how the categories relate not to an intuition in

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<sup>15</sup> 'A manifold that is contained in an intuition that I call mine is represented as belonging to the **necessary** unity of self-consciousness through the synthesis of the understanding, and this takes place by means of the category'. (B144)

general, but to space and time themselves, as the forms in which things are given to us, and Kant writes,

We have **forms** of outer as well as inner sensible intuition *a priori* in the representations of space and time, and the synthesis of the apprehension of the manifold of appearance must always be in agreement with the latter, since it can only occur in accordance with this form. But space and time are represented *a priori* not merely as **forms** of sensible intuition, but also as **intuitions** themselves (which contain a manifold), and thus with the determination of the **unity** of this manifold in them. (CPR B160)

In the footnote to this passage, Kant tells us what kind of unity is in question here;

Space, represented as **object** (as is really required in geometry), contains more than the mere form of intuition, namely the **comprehension** of the manifold given in accordance with the form of sensibility in an intuitive representation, so that the **form of intuition** merely gives the manifold, but the **formal intuition** gives unity of representation. In the Aesthetic I ascribed this unity merely to sensibility, only in order to note that it precedes all concepts, though to be sure it presupposes a synthesis, which does not belong to the senses but through which all concepts of space and time first become possible. For since through it (as the understanding determines sensibility) space or time are first **given** as intuitions, the unity of this *a priori* intuition belongs to space and time, and not to the concept of the understanding. (CPR B161 n)

Thus although Kant is arguing persistently throughout the deduction that there is no unity in the manifold without the application of the category, we see here that there is a qualification to this, and that there are pure synthetic unities determined *by the understanding*, but not by the concept in the primary or first sense of conceptual operation which is the use of the category in bringing unity to the manifold. The difficulty in appreciating, or recognising this element in Kant's genesis of cognition is common, insofar as Kant tends to be focused on the seemingly conflicting claim that all unity of the manifold at any meaningful level is determined through the category. Indeed the pure intuitions of space and time play an especially important role insofar as in them a unity is generated that grounds all subsequent unity in the concept, and pure time is critical for the schematism chapter insofar as the pure intuition is, as sensible, homogenous with appearances, and yet as a universal, homogenous with the category (A138/B177). This difficulty of recognizing that there are pure non-conceptual intuitions of space and time is reflected in certain writers rejecting the idea that the intuition of space and time is apart from the concept, and

in maintaining that instead, the pure intuitions of space and time as wholes which make possible the representation of all their parts are in fact concepts of space and time. Lorne Falkenstein for instance sees an inconsistency in Kant's use of intuition as meaning that which is unified through the concept and that which is not yet brought under the concept, and from her conclusion that, 'Kant's views on the blindness of intuition and the necessity of intellectual synthesis for cognition[...] entail that even the perception of singular objects or mereological wholes must involve synthesis under the categories and so cannot be non-intellectual.' (Falkenstein (1995): 58), Falkenstein reaches the conclusion that space and time as wholes cannot be pre-conceptually unified intuitions but must be '*concepts* of the forms of intuition'. Heidegger, although arguing that the imagination has its own type of pre-conceptual unity, also seen the formal intuition as being determined by concepts<sup>16</sup>. Another example of a reading of this ultimately conceptualist unity of space and time is presented by Michel Fichant and challenged by Béatrice Longuenesse, who takes Kant to mean what he says when he says that the unity in question does not belong to the concept of the understanding, writing that, "I do not agree with Fichant when he claims that the formal intuition of the footnote to §26 [...] is a product of a derivative 'acquisition' in which 'the pure concepts of the understanding play a part'. (Longuenesse (2005): 70)<sup>17</sup>. The question remains however, how can there be a synthetic unity that is determined by the understanding but which doesn't belong to the concept of the understanding? As was mentioned in the first chapter, the only way this is possible is if the unity of apperception, as the first action of the understanding, is able to generate a spatial and temporal unity without this unity of apperception necessarily standing under the category. Although remarks throughout the B-deduction, as we have seen, may be thought to exclude such a possibility, so that the unity of apperception provides a unity only by means of the category, this cannot be the case if we are going to make sense of Kant's remarks regarding the pre-conceptual unity of space and time as pure intuitions<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup> Heidegger recognises Kant's distinction between form of intuition and formal intuition, but argues that it is only the former that is pre-conceptually composed. See Heidegger's *Phenomenological Interpretation of Kant's Critique of Pure Reason* (1997): §9.

<sup>17</sup> Longuenesse's reference to Fichant is to his article 'L'Espace est représenté comme une grandeur infinie donnée. La radicalité de l'Esthétique' (1997).

<sup>18</sup> The text at (B160-61) is not Kant's only reference to the pre-conceptual unity in question, and Longuenesse cites a text in which Kant responds to criticisms by Eberhard, where Kant writes; 'the formal *intuition* which is called space emerges as an originally acquired representation (the form of outer objects in general), the ground of which (as mere receptivity) is nevertheless innate and the

## *Synthetic and Analytic Unity*

In section §16 of the B-deduction Kant discusses what he calls the synthetic unity of apperception which he also variously calls pure, original or transcendental apperception: the latter term being used to 'designate the possibility of *a priori* cognition from it' (B132). After the preliminaries of §16 Kant goes on to outline the conditions that must be in place in order for thought to occur:

The empirical consciousness that accompanies different representations is by itself dispersed and without relation to the identity of the subject. The latter relation therefore does not yet come about by my accompanying each representation with consciousness, but rather by my **adding** one representation to the other and being conscious of their synthesis. Therefore it is only because I can combine a manifold of given representations **in one consciousness** that it is possible for me to represent the **identity of the consciousness in these representations** itself, i.e. the **analytical** unity of apperception is only possible under the presupposition of some synthetic one. (CPR B133-34)

To this piece of text Kant appended the following footnote:

The analytical unity of consciousness pertains to all common concepts as such, e.g., if I think **red** in general, I thereby represent to myself a feature that (as a mark) can be encountered in anything, or that can be combined with other representations; therefore only by means of an antecedently conceived possible synthetic unity can I represent to myself the analytical unity. A representation that is to be thought of as common to **several** must be regarded as belonging to those that in addition to it also have something **different** in themselves; consequently they must antecedently be conceived in synthetic unity with other (even if only possible representations) before I can think of the analytical unity of consciousness in it that makes it into a *concept communis*. And thus the synthetic unity of apperception is the highest point to which one must affix all use of the understanding, even the whole of logic and, after it, transcendental philosophy; indeed this faculty is the understanding itself. (CPR B133-34 n)

The analytical unity of apperception is the representation of the thinkers own identity in relation to all sensible representations, and Kant is telling us that this is only possible on the presupposition of some synthetic unity. As Wayne Waxman points out however, the analytic unity of apperception is more than just the thinkers

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acquisition of which long precedes determinate concepts of things that are in accordance with this form' (Longuenesse (1998): 222). See Kant's (*On a discovery* (1790): 222-3)

identity to all sensible representations, it is also what allows a representation to become a universal and therefore function as a concept: 'For Kant, the ability to represent one's identity in relation to all the manifold (self-consciousness) and the capacity for universal representation (concepts) are one and the same (= analytic unity of apperception)' (Waxman (1995): 827). Thus in attaching to any representation it enables that representation to be thought in connection with (as potential predicate or subject) any other. This combining activity, where concepts combine according to the form of judgement, depends upon a prior synthetic activity, and it is clear that Kant takes the synthetic unity to be the unity of given representations 'in one consciousness', and this is just to reiterate what Kant has already told us, that in order for any representation to be anything to me I must be able to combine a manifold of sensible intuition and be conscious of this synthesis. This is what the representation 'I' consists in, where this isn't any awareness of any 'I'ness, of any 'I' with a specific content, but where this 'I' is just what arises in the consciousness of the unity of the act of bring representations under apperception, and regarding this Kant writes;

this I is no more an intuition than it is a concept of any object; rather, it is the mere form of consciousness, which accompanies both sorts of representations and which can elevate them to cognitions only insofar as something else is given in intuition, which provides the material for the representation of an object. (CPR A382)

Although devoid of any content this representation is what enables the transformation of a representation into a universal. But how is this possible? We cited earlier Kant's remark at the opening of §16 that the 'I think' must be able to accompany all my representations for otherwise these representations would be nothing to me, and we have noted that the synthetic unity of representations in one consciousness generates the representation of an I (however empty this representation maybe, as merely the form of consciousness) to which all representations necessarily stand in relation. The consequence of this, as Waxman points out, is that,

The I think not only maintains an identity in relation to all the manifold, but also has a purview quite literally of *universal* scope. Nothing is thought in its representation save this universal relation to all the manifold as such; it is otherwise entirely devoid of content and determination. In consequence, however, any intuition of which I am conscious ipso facto partakes of the same universal scope which characterizes this consciousness of myself, and thereby acquires the form of a concept. (Waxman (1995): 830)

The I think, by bringing under it representations with universal scope thus represents the form of a concept (Kant also calls the I think 'the vehicle of all concepts whatever' (A341/B399)), and this is all that is required for universal representation, so that 'any representation of which I am conscious, by this mere fact alone, participates in the form of my identity, and becomes itself a consciousness (representable as) standing in relation to, and so *common* to, every possible manifold apprehended in empirical consciousness' (Waxman (1995): 831). Although every possible representation has universal scope, this doesn't mean however, that each and every representation is common to every apprehended manifold, and again as Waxman points out, it is through the very fact that I think a representation that it acquires *potential* application to every apprehended manifold, not actual application. What this can account for is our ability to combine every possible representation with another whilst these judgements remain false. Thus we can think of red unicorns and ten legged humans who walk on walls, and we are able to do this (analytic unity of apperception) because any representation we have has potential universal scope by being under the synthetic unity of apperception, even though the conditions of experience are required in order to generate true judgements rather than false ones.

The 'I think' then (as the form of consciousness which also acts as the form of a concept insofar as all representations must stand in relation to it to be anything to me) is just as important to the generation of the cognition of objects as the form of intuition which is the form of inner and outer sense. The *concept communis* that Kant refers to in section §16 is just the relation of the I think to all representations insofar as they thereby acquire universal scope. This merely logical consciousness is,

what must be added to intuited representations to transform them into fodder for analysis in the first place. The I think is thus the form of thought in much the same sense that space and time are forms of intuition: a form that precedes and makes possible the matter of conception, just as space and time precede and make possible the matter of perception. (Waxman (1995): 833)

Waxman's last remark here is crucial, for it helps us to see the intimate connection between the pure formal intuitions of space and time and the analytic unity of apperception. Pure space and time as intuitions are required in order for us to apprehend data of the senses as unified, and all spatial and temporal predicates are to be found in this spatial and temporal unity. Succession and juxtaposition experienced as such, for instance, are only possible on the ground that we possess pure *a priori* spatial and temporal relations, and this is what Kant effectively told us



in the aesthetic, although he was unable to tell us that this unity is generated through the action of the understanding on sensibility. And we learn at B136 that,

Space and time and all their parts are **intuitions**, thus individual representations along with the manifold that they contain in themselves (see the transcendental aesthetic), thus they are not mere concepts by means of which the same consciousness is contained in many representations, but rather are many representations that are contained in one and in the consciousness of it; they are thus found to be composite, *and consequently the unity of consciousness, as **synthetic** and yet as original, is to be found in them* [emphasis]. (CPR B136n)

There is therefore a particular kind of individuality belonging to space and time which we here learn consists in precisely that unity in space and time (original synthetic unity) which makes the analytic apperception (my identity in relation to all the manifold that comes before me) possible. Although any particular intuition, qua synthesised manifold, must be part of a conceptual generation, it is the unity of space and time as formal intuition that makes possible this synthesis, and is the ground of the possibility of their formation. By conforming to the unity of space and time, which any intuition must, any given data thereby conforms to an original synthetic unity which means that such data is capable of being intuited and of being synthesised in accordance with logical forms of judgement, thus acquiring (as brought under apperception) universal scope, so Waxman writes that,

Appearances, simply in order to be given, must conform to pure intuition of space and time; but pure space and time turn out, on examination, to be the very *a priori* synthetic unity of the manifold necessary for the analytic unity of the I think. Hence in conforming to space and time, data of perception necessarily conform to conditions for possible thought as well. (Waxman (1995): 835)

Space and time thus have a unity with which all data must agree to be possible at all as a representation, but by themselves have only singularity ('this **singularity** of theirs is important in its application' (B136n)) and do not yet embrace anything outside them, and in the *In the Anthropology* Kant makes apparent this condition of objective cognition when he writes,

The pure intuitions of space and time belong to the first form of presentation [the original presentation of productive imagination]; all others presuppose an empirical intuition which, when it is combined with the *concept* of the object, thus becoming an empirical cognition, is called experience. (*Anthropology* §28, 167.)

In addition to this, the examples given shortly after Kant introduces the formal intuition of space and time in the first *Critique*, are provided to illustrate the sense in which the synthesis of representation presupposes space and time as formally unified, and with reference to space Kant writes,

When, for instance, by apprehension of the manifold of a house I make the empirical intuition of it into a perception, the *necessary unity* of space and outer sensible intuition in general lies at the basis of my apprehension, and I draw as it were the outline of the house in conformity with this synthetic unity of the manifold in space. (CPR B162).

Thus it is only upon meeting with objects that an external (and categorical) component arises<sup>19</sup>, and our identity in relation to these externals is, as Kant told us, only possible on the presupposition of a synthetic unity, so that consequently our representing objects as having a universal scope, a *concept communis*, is a kind of extension of this original synthetic unity. This is what Waxman appears to mean when he states that 'The analytic unity of apperception must be recognized as the universal correlate to the individuality of pure intuition' and that consequently '*the I is nothing more than the universal (analytic) expression of the same original unity of which space and time are the individual (synthetic) expression*' (Waxman (1995): 839)<sup>2021</sup>.

### *Non-Conceptual Unity*

The unity of space and time as pre-categorical thus makes room for a an important non-conceptualist position within Kant's account of the genesis of cognition, and Longuenesse, who essentially is in agreement with Waxman, points out that the synthesis in question is generated by the imagination, and that this imaginative construct, 'is not empirically given but on the contrary imagined, and as such, it is

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<sup>19</sup> Kant will subsequently go on to show, that the apprehension of the house and the further example of the apprehension of the freezing of water in time are possible through conforming, respectively, to the categories of quantity and causality.

<sup>20</sup> This passage continues: 'Hence, even if it is impossible to conceive pure space and time in their own right, the unity they create of all representations in one consciousness (that is one sensibility, synthetic unity of apperception) finds its complete and adequate intellectual expression via consciousness of our own identity in respect of all the manifold (it is in this sense, I believe that Kant spoke of a "pre-established harmony" between sensibility and understanding).' (Waxman (1995): 839)

<sup>21</sup> Longuenesse makes more or less the same remark when she writes that, 'the capacity to form judgements, "affecting sensibility", generates the pure intuitions of space and time as the necessary *intuitive* counterpart to our discursive capacity to reflect *universal* concepts, concepts whose extension (the multiplicities of singular objects thought under them) is potentially unlimited.' (Longuenesse (1998): 224)

the condition for any intuition of an object in space. The representation of space as one and as infinite, is a representation of the imagination' (Longuenesse (2005): 73). If this is right, and I believe it must be since Kant himself states that 'Space is merely the form of outer intuition (formal intuition), but not a real object that can be outwardly intuited' (A429/B457n), then this is a further argument against Hanna Ginsborg's contention that any argument for non-conceptuality within Kant's account of the role of the imagination fails as everything the imagination synthesizes is brought under concepts. Again as Longuenesse points out, it is *within* this initial imaginative unity that a synthesis generating multiplicities occurs so as to make subsequent synthesis possible.<sup>22</sup>

Kant's argumentation regarding the importance of space and time as presented in the Transcendental Aesthetic is reiterated in the later stages of the deduction in order to provide a more complete account of how cognition, or thought, is possible. As already indicated, in the Aesthetic Kant had emphasised the importance of the representations of space and time in grounding cognition, where these pure representations were not yet able, as unities, to be attributed to an activity of the understanding, although this was subsequently made clear:

Time is a necessary representation that grounds all intuitions[...]. In it alone is all actuality of appearance possible. The latter could all disappear, but time itself (as the universal condition of their possibility) cannot be removed. (CPR A31/B46)

This *a priori* necessity also grounds the possibility of apodictic principles of relations of time, or axioms of time in general. It has only one dimension: different times are not simultaneous, but successive (just as different spaces are not successive but simultaneous)[...] These principles are valid as rules under which alone experiences are possible at all, and instruct us prior to them, not through it. (CPR A31/B47)

The principles or rules of space and time therefore are only possible under the presupposition of spatial and temporal unities, or pure intuitions, and these rules or

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<sup>22</sup> For Longuenesse this figurative synthesis which generates the pure intuitions of space and time is what accounts for their being able to lead to concept formation: 'Within these formal intuitions [of space and time] are achieved the figurative synthesis generating the given multiplicities that are to be reflected under concepts according to the logical forms of our judgements. Not only do these intuitions precede and *determinate* concept (whether empirical or mathematical), they also precede the universal concepts (the *categories*). For they are prior to (and a necessary condition of) each specific synthesis making possible reflection under one or the other of the logical forms of our judgements and thus, a fortiori, prior to the categories, "universal representations of synthesis."' (Longuenesse (1998): 223)

principles make experience possible at all. Although in the first chapter we recognized that there must be room for a purely brute, albeit unified, spatiality at the most basic level of perceptual experience and which must be in place in order for animals to have the experiences they do, it is the formal intuitions of space and time and not the sheer form of space and time which provides the spatial temporal framework that makes representations in a stronger sense possible. These pure intuitions make each and every representation possible by enabling the representation to be put into space and time in the first place, and in conforming to this unity conform with the original synthetic unity of apperception. They are thus able to be my representations possessing universal scope and thereby capable of being further unified through analytical unity in order to make concepts possible.

It thus becomes apparent that the functions of judgement and the categories are not primary in the generation of cognition and Waxman warns against identifying the unity of apperception with the logical functions:

It is not strictly accurate[...] to identify the I think, as analytic unity of apperception, with particular logical functions Kant listed in his table[...] Kant seems to have deemed it a contingent feature of our understanding, a peculiarity of its constitution, that they, and not other logical functions, are forms of analytic unity [see B145-6].[...] This suggests that in Kant's explanatory framework apperception stands on a higher plane of generality than logical functions, leaving open the possibility of apperceiving beings with a differently constituted understanding than ours[...] Accordingly, if we seek the primary meaning of concept and judgement in Kant's theoretical framework, we must not utilize notions like affirmation/negation or subject/predicate form, since these may be as dependent on the constitution of our minds as vision of touch, or as echo-sonar is on the constitution of bat minds. (Waxman (1995): 834)<sup>23</sup>

This reading is further borne out by the opening section (§15) of the B-deduction which, although not referenced by Waxman, has special importance for this

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<sup>23</sup> In a paper titled *Apperception and the Individuality of Space and Time* delivered in 2006 at the New England Colloquium in Early Modern Philosophy, Waxman succinctly states his position regarding the primacy and separateness of apperception from the categories and logical functions: 'Since my interpretation makes understanding, in its guise as a faculty of apperception, a condition of the possibility of the pure intuitions of space and time, it may be thought incompatible with Kant's express denial that concepts enter into the pure intuitions of space and time. In response I will argue that this objection draws its seeming force from the mistaken belief that the pure concepts of the understanding (the categories) are necessary, rather than merely sufficient, conditions for unity of apperception. There is ample textual evidence to show that apperception is the ground of the categories rather than vice versa, and that apperception is a more fundamental unity than that of either the categories or the logical forms of judgement'. (Waxman (2006): 3)

argument, and in addition provides support for the argument of our First Chapter. The relevance for the argument of our first chapter is with the opening sentence of this section, titled, 'On the possibility of a combination in general', where Kant writes:

The manifold of representations can be given in an intuition that is merely sensible, i.e., nothing but receptivity, and the form of this intuition can lie *a priori* in our faculty of representation without being anything other than the way in which the subject is affected. (CPR B129)

As Kant goes on to indicate that this receptivity is not a unified one insofar as it is not actively combined by us, this can be taken to indicate that although it is the form of intuition that makes such representations possible, this is not yet anything to us insofar as what we are presented with is not in agreement with the formal intuitions of space and time. What immediately follows from this sentence is especially relevant to the argument presented in this chapter, so I quote it at length:

Yet the **combination** of a manifold in general can never come to us through the senses, and therefore cannot already be contained in the pure form of sensible intuition; for it as an act of the spontaneity of the power of representation, and, since one must call the latter understanding, in distinction from sensibility, all combination, whether we are conscious of it or not, whether it is a combination of the manifold of intuition or of several concepts, and in the first case either of sensible or non-sensible intuition, is an action of the understanding, which we designate with the general title **synthesis** in order at the same time to draw attention to the fact that we can represent nothing as combined in the object without having previously combined it ourselves, and that among all representations **combination** is the only one that is not given through objects but can be executed only by the subject itself, since it is an act of its self activity... But in addition to the concept of the manifold and of its synthesis, the concept of combination also carries with it the concept of the unity of the manifold. Combination is the representation of the **synthetic** unity of the manifold. The representation of this unity cannot, therefore, arise from the combination; rather by being added to the representation of the manifold, it first makes the concept of combination possible. *This unity, which precedes all concepts of combination a priori, is not the former category of unity (§ 10); for all the categories are grounded on logical functions in judgements, but in these combination, thus the unity of given concepts is already thought [emphasis].* The category therefore already presupposes combination. We must therefore seek this unity (as qualitative § 12) someplace higher, namely in that which itself contains the ground of the

unity of different concepts in judgements, and hence of the possibility of the understanding, even in its logical use (*CPR* B129-131)

Kant here is making the crucial point that the logical functions of judgement as means of combining the manifold into a unity is only possible through a pre-categorical synthesis having first taken place by means of the understanding<sup>24</sup>. It becomes subsequently clear that this function of the understanding is the unity of apperception, and it is now apparent that the synthesis that must be in place in order for the combination through the concept to be possible is the same synthetic unity of apperception that pre-supposes the analytic unity of apperception that Kant refers to at B133 and B133-134n. What this synthetic unity combines, or acts upon is, as we have seen, the pure forms of space and time which in turn generates their formal intuitions. In telling us that this unity makes possible subsequent combination, through concepts, Kant is just telling us that all the data we synthesize must conform to a sensible unity which through its connection with the unity of apperception makes universal representation possible in the first place.

However, although we have emphasised the importance of a pre-conceptual unity delivered by the understanding in allowing any representation to acquire the form of universality, we must remember that this isn't yet arriving at a concept, and that representations must be in conformance with the logical forms of judgement before any conceptual content is generated. Thus an account of the analytic unity of apperception would be incomplete if we were to overlook this concept generating element (being brought under the logical form of judging), which is, as it were, the second condition that must be in place for any representation to become a concept,

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<sup>24</sup> Longuenesse essentially maintains this view when she writes, 'as I understand Kant's view, according to him the representation of space and time as infinite does not follow from the application of the categories of quantity. Rather, it is the precondition of any application of the categories of quantity. As such, it depends on the same act of the mind (the original effort to judge, applied to the pure forms of intuition) that generates the categories of quantity in their various applications', and in support of this view writes;

representing space and time as one (as intuitions) and as one whole within which all appearances ought to be situated and ordered, depends on the original effort of the mind that eventually makes it possible to synthesize particular manifolds under the guidance of the categories – and in the first place, the categories of quantity. This does not mean that the pure intuitions of space and time are themselves generated by a successive synthesis of homogenous units (space and time themselves cannot be measured). But they are the one formal whole within which any collection of homogenous units can be recognized, any spatiotemporal magnitude can be delimited, any arbitrary choice of unit can be made, or any measurement can be taken. (Longuenesse (2005): 47-8)

the first being that it can acquire the form of a universality by virtue of its being my representation. Both activities are so closely arranged so that it appears artificial to discuss them as though there were a clear gap between the two activities, and it is clear in the example Kant himself uses when discussing analytic unity of apperception - where he uses the example of *red* as a representation feature which 'as a characteristic mark can be met with in something or combined with other representations' (B133n) - that the analytic unity of apperception will be attached to a conceptual content through this content having conformed with the logical form of judging. What it is important to emphasise though is that the difference in the activities is one of different kinds, and that one must be in place in order for the other to become possible. It is because of the spatial and temporal (aesthetic) unity with which all objects must agree, qua spatially and temporally located, that the object is even capable of acquiring conceptual content, and this is just what Kant means when he states that 'the *analytic* unity of apperception is possible only on the presupposition of some such synthetic unity' (B133). Although the spatial and temporal unity is ascribed to the understanding, as synthetic unity of apperception, it is because of its non-conceptual unity that it is able to allow for subsequent conceptual unity, and this is to emphasise the prerequisite of aesthetic for discursive representation.

### *Spatiality and Temporality*

As a result of this analysis it is apparent that there is a further development within Kant's account for what we may call a meaningful non-conceptualism, and that this is going to be grounded in the aesthetic, as the sensible dimension of our cognition. In the first chapter we saw that there must be a brute spatiality which has unity of some kind in order to be a representation according to the first levels of representation as outlined in the *Jäsche logic*, and this must play some role in subsequent representational content. It must play this role because what it is to be presented with perceptual particulars is simply to be affected by objects where these objects stand in a spatial relation to us. To be sure this representational content is not anything to us just as the fence isn't anything to the ox, although it nevertheless is part of the ox's representational framework that determines its engagement. These spatial and temporal representations, as not being determined through a unity of space and time as *a priori* intuitions can play little role in our cognitive framework in terms of contributing to spatial and temporal relations as spatial and temporal (although as was argued, pure relationality is a feature of brute spatial

representation). So what we have are two different stages or elements of spatiotemporal perception. The first stage is that of our first chapter, which although not presenting a representational unity in the stronger sense that Kant typically means by unified representational content, is a content of some kind, where this isn't just raw data, which would possess no unity and wouldn't even put us or the animal in a relation to its environment as something it could navigate. These are primitive spatial and temporal representations which partake of the *form* of intuition, but not the *formal* intuition, and this reading is borne out by what was quoted earlier that,

Space, represented as **object** (as is really required in geometry), contains more than a mere form of intuition, namely the **comprehension** of the manifold given in accordance with the form of sensibility in an **intuitive** representation, so that the **form of intuition** merely gives the manifold, but the **formal intuition** gives unity of the representation. (*CPR* B160 n)

The formal intuition as a pre-categorical unity generated under the unity of apperception has a much greater determinate content than the spatial and temporal representations not yet acted upon by the understanding, and as Kant says, contain those *a priori* laws and principles which find their use in experience (Hence Kant's remarking that this singularity of space and time as unified wholes is 'important in its application'). So there are important consequences of this pre-categorical spatial unity for our experience, and this is importantly revealed in certain aspects of Kant's philosophy, where although in the genesis of cognition concepts are involved in making even perception possible (with the qualification of Chapter 1 as to how this perception is to be understood), there is nevertheless a unity of sensibility that is always present in a non-conceptually important way. This has important ramifications for further aspects of Kant's theory of cognition, and I believe that this is especially true of Kant's account of *aesthetic experience* (where by this we mean aesthetic experience in its usual sense of the term (i.e. beautiful nature and art)). In order to investigate this significance however we will turn to the *Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics* and the *Inaugural Dissertation*, where this spatiotemporal autonomy comes to the fore and is important to explore for this reason.

### *Space and Time in the Prolegomena and Dissertation*

In the official 'First Part' of the *Prolegomena* titled '*How is pure mathematics possible?*' Kant is concerned with showing that space and time are forms of sensory intuition, as opposed to independently existing entities, and that it is because of this that we



are able generate mathematical and geometrical constructs and demonstrate their validity on *a priori* grounds. In section 13 Kant presents what he calls a 'paradox' for those who would see space and time as qualities attaching to things in themselves rather than our form of representation, which is the paradox presented by the phenomenon of what he calls incongruous counterparts. This phenomenon is where we are presented with two objects (counterparts) that are 'fully the same (in all determinations belonging to magnitude and quality) in all the parts' but that are different in that they are mirror images of each other so that there 'is such a difference in outer relation that one cannot in any case be put in the place of the other' (*Prolegomena* (4:285-6). Kant illustrates this phenomenon with reference to instances taken from 'ordinary life':

What indeed can be more similar to, and in all parts more equal to, my hand or my ear than its image in the mirror? And yet I cannot put such a hand as is seen in the mirror in the place of its original; for if the one was a right hand, then the other in the mirror is a left, and the image of the right ear is a left one, which can never take the place of the former. Now there are no inner differences here that any understanding could merely think; and yet the differences are inner as far as the senses teach, for the left hand cannot, after all, be enclosed within the same boundaries as the right (they cannot be made congruent), despite all reciprocal equality and similarity; one hand's glove cannot be used on the other. (*Prolegomena* 4:286)

Of perhaps equal importance, although frequently neglected, is Kant's account of temporal orientation, that in the *Inaugural Dissertation* (where in a manner similar to the *Transcendental Aesthetic* he lays out the principles of space and time as intuitions) acts as the temporal counterpart to the spatial incongruence of counterparts;

If you think of two years, you can only represent them to yourself as being in a determinate position in relation to each other; and if they should not immediately succeed each other, you can only represent them to yourself as joined to one another by some indeterminate time. But among different times, the time which is *earlier* and the time which is *later* cannot be defined in any way by any characteristic marks which can be conceived by the understanding, unless you are willing to involve yourself in a vicious circle. The mind only discerns the distinction between them by a singular intuition. Moreover, you conceive all actual things as situated *in* time, and not as contained *under* the general concept of time, as under a common characteristic mark. (*Dissertation* 2:399)

With the case of the incongruence of counterparts, in stating that there are no differences that the understanding could determine Kant means that no matter how we describe one hand (without making reference to spatial incongruence), what holds for one hand, descriptively by means of concepts, also holds for the other (assuming for a moment qualitatively identical hands), and that as a result the actual incongruence can only be made intelligible through a kind of sensory awareness that acts independent of the concept of the understanding. In the temporal case the orientation between earlier and later, can only be made representable by 'the mind' through pure temporal intuition, not through any 'characteristic marks' or concepts. Trying to explicate the phenomena by any characteristic marks involves us in a vicious circle because, I presume, we will never be able to explicate the phenomena without at some point needing to make reference to a 'sense' of earlier and/or later, as opposed to a conceptual explication of it.

However, although Kant is arguing for an important autonomy on behalf of sensibility, a concern with this account is, again, with an ambiguity and complexity in Kant's use of the term 'concept'. It might well be maintained that although no concept determines the actual difference (incongruence) in question, there is nevertheless a role for the concept as active in generating the representation in the first place so that concepts are playing a role after all. What Kant would here be indicating is that concepts as reflected representations don't dominate all cognitive activity, so that although there is an important role for the sensible, aesthetic aspect of our representations, this doesn't provide an argument for a strong non-conceptualist position.

The argument we are putting forward in this chapter however, is that although it is correct to see Kant as operating with two different senses of concept, where the first operation of the concept is what Kant calls the unity of the act that brings a synthesis to our representations in the first place, there is nevertheless an important pre-conceptual role active in the genesis and function of cognition. It must be conceded however, that at the perceptual level there is a conceptual activity involved in generating the perception insofar as this perception is anything to me, and this to acknowledge that John McDowell is quite correct in maintaining that not only determinate perceptual representations involve the use of a concept, but that very indeterminate representations, *thises or thats*, also involve a use of the understanding in order for them even to become representational demonstratives<sup>25</sup>. Our point

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<sup>25</sup> McDowell in his 1997 Woodbridge Lectures states that 'intuitions in the dominant Kantian sense are representations of *thises* (or *thats*); more fully of *this-suches* (or *that-suches*), which makes

however, is that although a conceptual activity governs our representational life insofar as we are perceptually aware, this isn't to say that there cannot therefore be a non-conceptually determined aspect of our cognition which, in acting as a substratum of all cognition, has a presence within our representational cognitive sphere. This is just to affirm an autonomy of space and time as non-conceptual formal wholes, *even though* in unifying any given manifold concepts are present. It has perhaps been a mistake of the literature to see the conceptual/non-conceptual debate as thinking of the emergence of cognition as a kind of strictly linear stop/start process, where because there is a conceptual determination operating at the very beginning of a representational genesis, the possibility of a meaningful non-conceptualism is effectively closed down, so that conceptualism is the only real option. It is instead perhaps more plausible so see Kant's overall account of this genesis as being more open so that certain faculties remain operative in their own unique way even though subsequent operations are requisite in performing a more exact function. Thus space and time as formal non-conceptual wholes are continuously present in an autonomous way even though their operation serves a further end through further involvement with the understanding in generating spatiotemporal perceptions. What may be thought to undermine this idea is Kant's remark that intuitions without concepts are blind, and that the intuitional faculty is only operative, in any meaningful way, when the faculty of concepts (the understanding) is also in operation. It is instead the case however, that there is a complex interaction between the two components of cognition and that the intuitive element can and does retain a function that the understanding as a generator of concepts doesn't have any concern with, which is just that element of 'sense' which underpins our sensing that two objects are incongruent, for instance. Although the perception of my hands is only possible through the operation of concepts upon the data of sense, the recognition of the incongruence of fit between the counterparts is purely a spatial sense. In this second Chapter it has been shown that there is a pure spatial and temporal synthesis that although generated by the understanding, as synthetic unity of apperception, isn't a synthesis generated through the concept, and it is this pre-conceptual unity as the fundament of all cognition, that accounts for there being a pure spatial and temporal sense that makes possible representational experience. What the examples of the *Prolegomena* and the *Dissertation* show is that these purely spatial and temporal intuitive components are the only features of our cognitive repertoire that can account for the existence of certain representational

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it unavoidably clear that even though they are immediately of objects, such representations already involve the understanding'. (McDowell (1998): 460)

phenomena, where even though the *perception* of incongruence is through a cooperation with the understanding in making the experience of it possible, its unified spatiotemporal nature can only be accounted for because of a non-conceptual dimension within our cognitive sphere.

### *Theoretical Applications - Aesthetic Creativity*

According to our thesis then, it turns out that the unities of space and time as formal intuitions, although in cooperation with the understanding in generating cognitions, nevertheless play an important role in accounting for the spatial and temporal aspects of this cognition, where this is apart from the operation of concepts. Clearly then the application of this thesis is broad, as it indicates that all experience insofar as it is sensible will have an important non-conceptual dimension, and this is because we have discounted a linear account of conceptualism, whereby the application of concepts at a very early stage in the genesis of cognition, which is above all true of Kant's account, doesn't thereby indicate that all subsequent experience need be thought of as conceptually determined in an absolute sense. However, what is more interesting and important for the application of this thesis is not so much the general significance of this thesis for day to day experience, but rather its application to particular instances or phenomena, where the non-conceptual component plays a key determining role in making these phenomena possible, thereby accounting for their particular character. This is just what the examples from the *Prolegomena* and the *Dissertation* show - viz. that there are certain phenomena that can only be accounted for by, and thereby highlight, a certain spatiotemporal *sense*, which is apart from the operations of the understanding understood as the faculty of concepts. My concern in this section is with a particular element of aesthetic creativity (which as we will subsequently in later chapter's see is also important to Kant's aesthetic theory) which will highlight the special role that the unities of space and time have in within our cognitive sphere, and it is the talent or aptitude for *drawing* that is important here.

With regard to the ability to draw, it is possible, and quite common, that one can draw primarily or exclusively through the application of concepts or conceptual rules. But this must be qualified by what was just stated, that the unities of space and time underpin all cognition and therefore make spatial and temporal relations possible, and that this is an important non-conceptual aspect of cognition. This aside, it is sometimes thought that the distinction between being able to draw well and not

being able to draw well comes down to a heightened spatial sense which is apart from the application of concepts or conceptual rules. There is no such thing however, as not being able to draw at all. As schematising beings we necessarily have a certain imagistic ability, which makes experience possible in the first place; and in possessing the schema for a dog I can portray this imagistically, in however a crude a manner, as a creature with four legs, a certain shape, ears of a certain character, and a tail. This schema already presupposes the concept however, and all (naturalistic at least) representation presupposes a schematising ability, just as much as the possession of concepts. Thus through being able to schematise we can make quite complex pictures full of figures and incident. It is also true that we can represent spatial relations just through our day to day experience with the world (cows in the foreground appear larger than the buildings behind them), and we can generate quite complex perspectival images through the use of perspectival rules and various other rules of thumb. I would maintain however that such spatial arrangements can be taught as conceptual rules (rules of thumb) by a teacher, and do not presuppose a certain gift or talent for intuiting spatial relations.

However, in drawing well, or having a talent for drawing, it is not enough to conceptually grasp that in realistic representation there are certain rules that need to be obeyed. An aptitude for drawing consists in a further ability to place an object or set of objects in space and to do this convincingly and intuitively (apart from concepts) on a two dimensional surface. This talent consists in being able to 'feel' the space in which we place things, and this is where the important role of spatial orientation comes in, just as it does with the incongruence of counterparts. The difference between being able to draw moderately well and being an excellent draughtsman, in part comes down to this talent. In drawing very well one is able to feel, intuitively the sense of correctness or incorrectness of an items location/placement. Thus in drawing a building one wants to put it on a ground with solidity, with a feeling of space around it and in doing so literally projects three-dimensionality into two-dimensionality (creating the *illusion* of space). Whilst it should be admitted that a lot of the desired effects in drawing can be created through the use of perspective rules and other further rules of thumb (and it is true that one gets an art education to learn many of these rules), the correct use of such rules by themselves are not sufficient, or even necessary, for a pictures qualifying for merit. For example, in drawing or painting a vase of flowers on a table I must be able to represent the flowers and table as sitting in a space, and we literally want to put the flowers into an environment. This involves feeling ones way around the object and its placement, and trying to translate this sense of spatiality so that the image

has conviction. Although a certain conceptual knowledge is requisite for this act of drawing (a knowledge that the vase is rounded for instance) a certain non-conceptual sense of congruence and placement is requisite in being able to convincingly transcribe space.

A further example of the sense for spatial congruence<sup>26</sup> that is required by the talented draughtsman is to do with measuring. It is common to represent a person drawing by showing them with an arm extended in front with their thumb some way up the pencil, one eye closed and performing some kind of measurement on the object they are drawing. What is happening here is that person is determining a standard of measurement (a human head for example) and seeing how many of these heads the body's length contains. Thus there may be six further heads in the rest of the body making for a total length of seven heads. The person drawing then puts down eight marks where one serves as the base upon which the person stands. The top segment receives the head. The person drawing again then uses their pencil as a measure and looks to see where the second head's length lies on the body, which turns out to be from the top of the neck to the armpit. The second segment is thus filled and the process continues till the whole body is represented. This method can be used to draw any object, where one just has to determine a standard of measurement and apply it to the whole object. This is one way of drawing, and although beginners tend to use it, some continue to use it throughout their drawing practice. What is interesting is that one activity (drawing) can be undertaken in two very different ways. There is a different way of drawing that involves no such technique and which essentially involves just the ability to *see* the correctness of proportions where this is an intuitive grasp that cannot be taught but just developed through practice. Being able to draw in this intuitive way, where one draws a building or a figure in its correct proportions from the subject, is a further component in what makes up the talent for drawing. The thumb-and-pencil method employs what is essentially a conceptual substitute for the intuitive grasp that is the draughtsman's art. Thus a necessary component of being able to draw well is being able to portray the relations and proportions directly that is independent of any measuring devices, and this depends on a sense of spatiality that is apart from the

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<sup>26</sup> I use 'spatial congruence' here to mean just the fittedness of a representation, as it seems to me the most appropriate term to use for what the draughtsman is trying to achieve in getting the placement right. Thus I am not referring here to the examples of the *Prolegomena* in using this term, although the relevance of these examples are of course related.

application of concepts, *even though* concepts are required for us to be presented with an object, as an object, in the first place<sup>27</sup>.

The last example I would like to give in illustrating the particular talent for drawing (which again will become more relevant to the later chapters of our thesis), which I am arguing, depends upon an *a priori* spatial framework and a special non-conceptual talent for navigating this framework, is the draughtsman's sense of placement. This ability, as in the other two examples, requires the trial and error of experience before becoming fixed, but which cannot be taught by any rule and which must be felt through a spatial sense. In coming before his object the draughtsman begins at a point and works up the composition. The starting point is crucial, as it determines the overall composition in terms of what occupies the picture space. Knowing where to start in order to represent all that is desired requires a refined spatial sense of awareness, that beforehand knows how the composition will be best managed in generating the optimal pictorial unity or gestalt. It is not only knowing where to put the first marks on the surface, but also where one should position oneself in relation to the object (or vista), in order to obtain this gestalt<sup>28</sup>. As in the case of the incongruence of counterparts, no conceptual component accounts for our sense of spatial aptness or inaptness that is intuitively felt in constructing the pictorial representation. Because space as formal intuition generates the unity of representation that makes this sense of aptness possible, our spatial sense can here be said to be here apart from (or not concerned

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<sup>27</sup> It is true however that measuring devices were often employed by the greatest draughtsman as a kind of regulation. This regulation was often used to ensure exact reproduction of proportion and used as an ideal standard for the creation of figures. The artists of the renaissance were in particular fond of using measuring devices for accurate reproduction and for determining the ideal standard of human proportions and rules for their portrayal, and Leonardo da Vinci's Vitruvian man is the most famous instance for the presentation of rules of this kind, where there is a whole list of them. So although a great draughtsman may well be greatly concerned with rules for the portrayal of figures it nevertheless remains true that they must, in order to be skilled, be able to draw in the manner indicated, viz. through the intuitive grasp and portrayal of the correctness of proportions and relations.

<sup>28</sup> The one exception to this account is naive art, which makes a virtue, as it were, of drawing idiosyncratically, according to one's unlearned understanding and abilities (although this can of course be feigned). With naive art however, the criterion of evaluation is not the ability to draw well, but to draw according to one's unlearned ability yet with integrity. It is the honesty and the innocence of the portrayal, in addition to the ability to portray pictorial harmony (balancing colours, lights and darks, etc), that engages us and constitutes the picture's charm. This is to say then that skilled drawing isn't a necessary condition for making a great work of art. A talent for drawing however, which is what I am here concerned with, does, as a necessary requirement, require the ability to grasp spatial location in the way I am arguing for.

with) the concept of the understanding, although, as stated, our intuitions are in cooperation with the understanding in generating the image in front of me.

In summary, what we are arguing for is that a role be assigned to the formal intuitions of space and time in making a certain aspect of representational life possible. In truth though, because the spatiotemporal governs all representational content, then the formal intuitions of space and time, as a spatiotemporal substratum, are present in an important way in all representational experience. Because this element of cognitive unity underpins all experience then we might say that there is a non-conceptual element of cognition that pervades all intuitional experience, and not just particular phenomena. What we have aimed to demonstrate however is that there are particular occurrences that by themselves can only be accounted for through an intuitive sense of space and time that is itself the result of our having generated the formal intuitions of space and time in an original apperceptive act (synthetic unity of apperception). Thus just as with the recognition of incongruence, the ability to transcribe the spatial dimension onto a three-dimensional surface requires a certain sense that is non-conceptually determined. If this was an exclusive ability that only a few persons were capable of then we would have good reason to doubt that a non-conceptual spatiotemporal sense is really what determines this ability, as this spatiotemporal sense is universal and not exclusive to a few. What we say however is that an ability to draw space is something that is learned through practice, so that anyone can learn to transcribe space. This can be learned in either of two ways however: either through conceptual measurement and construction (rules of perspective) or through learning to *see* the spatial construction and arrangement that is before us and representing it accordingly. Through practice progress in both methods is possible. What we are maintaining however is that drawing as a talent, has limits to what can be conceptually taught, and there remains an irredeemably spatial component that makes for the extra-conceptual component in pictorial construction. This is just the ability to *see* the space and to *feel* it (again something everyone possesses although to differing degrees), so that one can transcribe it convincingly. This talent is what might be called a heightened spatial sense or sensitivity, and one has this sense better developed than another, just as some have a special talent for navigating or judging space, or moving through space at high speeds, for instance. Analogously, just as everyone without a serious cognitive defect is capable of employing discursive concepts, some are more able (more talented) in their conceptual understanding and manipulation than others.



Thus the two strands of our cognition turn out to have varying degrees of development in the individual, and this can be a difference between a particular conceptual or non-conceptual (spatiotemporal) aptitude. The importance of this account with further reference to aesthetic experience will become apparent as this thesis progresses.

## Chapter 3

### Kant on Reflective Judgement

So far in our analysis of Kant's account of the genesis of cognition, we have been primarily concerned with the genesis of cognition at the transcendental level, where at this level he is concerned with the formal conditions under which objects can be experienced or cognised by us, within a spatiotemporal framework, and we have seen that the unity of apperception has been fundamental here as the first action of the understanding that allows sensible data to become a sensible representation for me and thereby acquire universal scope. Indeed it was crucial for Kant to establish the fact of apperception in order to ward off what Henry Allison calls 'transcendental chaos', which Kant describes as the possibility that 'Appearances might very well be so constituted that the understanding should not find them to be in accordance with the conditions of its unity' (A90/B123). This 'spectre' of transcendental chaos, as Allison calls it, was warded off on the grounds that appearances, in order to be appearances, must be subject to the unity of apperception as the condition, or ground, of their unity, so that 'the possibility that appearances are not so constituted is ruled out on the grounds of its incompatibility with the conditions of the unity of apperception' (Allison (2001): 38). However in the first chapter of *Kant's Theory of Taste*, titled 'Reflective Judgment and the Purposiveness of Nature' (the analysis of which will form an important part of this chapter), one of Allison's central points, and upon which his argument is based, is that although in the first *Critique* the spectre of transcendental chaos was warded off, the spectre of empirical chaos remained a real possibility, and that it wasn't until the third *Critique*, the *Critique of Judgement (CJ)*, that Kant came to deal with this threat. Allison characterises this threat as 'a scenario in which the uniformity that nature necessarily exhibits in virtue of its conformity to the transcendental laws imposed by the very nature of the understanding does not translate into an empirically accessible uniformity, understood as one which could support induction and analogy' (Allison (2001): 38). Although we can be sure that there will be a unity of experience at some level since the understanding imposes unity upon appearances - so that for instance, through the category of causality it is guaranteed that our experience of an external world is a one where causality necessarily holds (event-a necessarily precedes and determines event-b in accordance with a rule) - our transcendental laws cannot

guarantee a cognisable order at the empirical level, so that it cannot guarantee, regarding causality, that we will not be met everywhere with accidental succession rather than genuine causality (and can never thereby arrive at a connected empirical order). As Allison argues, warding off empirical chaos involves invoking a special *a priori* principle that nature is purposively or systematically ordered or arranged, a principle which Kant allocates to reflective judgement. This much however can be discerned from the *Critique of Judgement*, where in both the published and unpublished introductions Kant goes to lengths to provide such an argument, as obscure in its details as it may be. What Allison is really aiming to do in 'Reflective Judgement and the Purposiveness of Nature' however, is connect our need for a special *a priori* principle regarding nature's purposiveness with Kant's account of concept formation, where the formation of empirical concepts requires such a principle governing its activity. This account of the genesis of concepts, in appealing to the capacity of reflective judgement makes it especially important for our purposes, for the faculty of reflective judgement is foundational to Kant's theory of taste, which will form the topic of this thesis from the next chapter forward.

### *Reflection and Schema*

In understanding Kant's account of concept formation, Allison, like Waxman, turns to the *Jäsche Logic*, where Kant distinguishes between the matter and the form of a concept and where he is considering the formation of particular concepts. Regarding this concept formation Kant writes;

To make concepts out of representations 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 the generation of every concept whatsoever. 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 what 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. (*JL* 9:94-5)

As Allison points out, this account of concept formation is highly problematic, for apart from the implausibility of the chronology, this account of concept formation is 'hopelessly circular'. For the concept of 'tree' is supposedly arrived at through reflection upon those constituents – the trunk, leaves and branches - that account for the recognition of a tree in the first place. Thus we supposedly select and abstract

certain tree-constituting features in the formation of the concept which pre-supposes the concept of a tree in the first place, which is what is supposed to be explained not presupposed. Longuenesse also finds this account problematic, stating that comparison cannot be prior to reflection and abstraction, but presupposes the initial effort to '*reflect* the similarities among the elements compared and *abstract from* (leave out) their dissimilarities'. For Longuenesse this process of arriving at the empirical concept shouldn't be considered linear, but as operating simultaneously, so that 'only insofar as comparison is conjoined with the two other operations can it be geared from the outset towards universal representation, that is, the production of a concept' (Longuenesse (1998): 116). It is in fact this 'universalising comparison' (Longuenesse's term) that Longuenesse sees as what is essentially formative in Kant's account of concept formation, and we have seen in Chapter 2 that being taken up into apperception enables any representation to become a universal. This universalising comparison is directed from the outset toward a detection of common marks or features in what is given through sensibility and to this extent all concept formation contains a 'moment' of reflection<sup>29</sup>. Kant's account of comparison generally speaking is a complex one, in so far as there are many different 'acts' of comparison taking place throughout Kant's theoretical writings. In the Amphiboly chapter of the first *Critique* for instance Kant distinguishes three different kinds of comparison or reflective acts. There is a *logical reflection*, which is a comparison of concepts formed by the understanding, there is an *aesthetic* comparison of objects delivered through the sensible given, and then there is what is called *transcendental reflection*, which aims to determine the 'relation of given representations... to one or the other of the two kinds of cognition' (A262/B138). This transcendental reflection is performed through what Kant calls concepts of comparison,

The interrelations of given representations can be determined only through transcendental reflection, that is, through their relation to one or the other of the two kinds of cognition. Whether things are identical or different, in agreement or opposition, etc., cannot be established at once from the concepts themselves by mere [logical] comparison, but solely by means of

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<sup>29</sup> Thus Longuenesse sees it as mistaken to read Kant's account of judgement in the first *Critique* as being solely determinative, as may be thought to be given the distinction between determinant judgement and reflective judgement as Kant presents it in both introductions to the third *Critique*. Because *all* judgement involves a moment of reflection, it is not that there are determinant judgements without reflection, even though there can be such a thing as a *merely* reflective judgements. For Longuenesse it is the judgement as *merely* reflective that determines the particular character of aesthetic and teleological judgement. Later in the chapter we will examine Rudolf Makkreel's arguments against Longuenesse's conception).

transcendental reflection, through distinction of the cognitive faculty to which they belong. (CPR A262/B138)

Longuenesse relates this kind of reflection or comparison to a further, fourth kind of comparison, which is that act of comparison referred to already, that one as presented in the *Jäsche Logic*. Longuenesse further identifies this fourth kind of comparison with transcendental reflection (Longuenesse (1998): 112-5), and insofar as this comparison is geared toward concept formation, this is only possible if governed by the norm of universality. What is especially important for our purposes is that transcendental reflection as Kant accounts for it presupposes an aesthetic reflection, or comparison. The material that the universalising comparison operates with must itself be universally oriented so that it can subsequently be compared as to sameness and difference with other representations and not be thought of as a rule common to its synthesis, and Longuenesse appeals to a *reflexion* in making this perspicuous where Kant writes that ‘we compare only what is universal in the rule of our apprehension’ (*Refl.* 2880, Ak. XVI, 557). Both Longuenesse and Allison argue that in stating that what is compared is the rule of apprehension, what Kant is in effect stating is that what is subject to universalising comparison is a *schema*. (Allison (2001): 24), Longuenesse (1998): 116). It is through the comparison of schema that concepts, through the recognition of what is universal in the apprehension, are able to be formed. The initial problem with this account however, is that it appears to be in direct opposition to Kant’s account of the schematism as Kant outlines it in the first *Critique*. There the issue was how a concept which we are already in possession of relates to the sensible given, and the schema was introduced to answer this, where it operates as the ‘presentation’ of the concept in enabling its application. Here however the schema is being introduced to account for the generation of the concept in the first place, and in explaining the sense of this Longuenesse argues that if one approaches the relation between schema and concept from the perspective of the deduction the relation is reversed, and that,

If one inquires, as the deduction does, into the formation or acquisition both of “rules for the determination of our intuition” and of concepts (“representing” these rules, which in turn “present” them in intuition: are their “schemata”), it seems clear that the “rules for the synthesis of intuition” must first have been *acquired* at the outcome of the operations described in the A deduction (apprehension, reproduction, and recognition), in order to be *reflected* as discursive concepts, “universal or reflected representations.”. (Longuenesse (1998): 116n)

The schematism in the sense of the deduction is the sensible representation of the act governing an initial grasping of the manifold in intuition. At the same time, this rule of apprehension is the concept, in the first sense of a concept as a rule of synthesis, and in this sense although we are arguing that the schema here precedes the concept, this is a preceding of the empirical concept, which in no way must be pre-supposed for the schema to be possible<sup>30</sup>. Nevertheless the schema as concept must have been formed through a comparative act of what is not yet schematised, and it is this initial formation that can help us make sense of Longuenesse's account of an initial, pre-conceptual schematism formation, which is obscure in the sense that she states that 'To compare representations in order to form concepts is therefore to compare schemata. And to compare schemata, by means of the three joint acts of comparison, reflection, and abstraction, is first of all to *generate* these schemata. Thus the schemata result from the very acts of universalising comparison of which they are the object' (Longuenesse (1998): 116-7). Longuenesse's argument appears to be that in order to generate schema as a rule of apprehension there must be an initial universally directed act which generates each representation as to its particular form, and that it is only upon this particular form being analogous in terms of structure to a different form that schemata are formed, hence 'several representations must be compared with one another so that different schemata, rules for apprehension, may arise in them and be reflected as concepts' (Longuenesse (1998): 117). This is to say then that an aesthetic comparison must serve as the basis for the universalising comparison that is directed to the formation of empirical concepts, and in reconsidering the account of concept formation as it is presented in the *Jäsche Logic*, Kant is able to avoid the problems raised by Allison and Longuenesse regarding the apparent circularity of this account, where it seemed we already assume the concept in recognising the marks that make up its concept in order to reflect and abstract from them<sup>31</sup>. As Allison puts it, in comparing the various trunks, leaves and branches of a tree, 'what one is really comparing are the patterns or rules governing

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<sup>30</sup> In Chapter 2 of *Kant and the Capacity to Judge* Longuenesse highlights the sense in which this first sense of concept, as Kant uses it, is also, as a sensible synthesis, a schema, writing that, 'The concept is a rule insofar as it is the consciousness of the unity of an act of sensible synthesis or the consciousness of the procedure for generating a sensible intuition. This first sense of *rule* anticipates what Kant, in the Schematism of the Pure Concepts of the Understanding, calls a *schema*. Kant also makes this relation between the rule of synthesis as concept and schema apparent when he writes '[The] representation of a universal procedure of imagination in providing an image for a concept, I entitle the schema of this concept... it is a rule of synthesis of the imagination, in respect to pure figures in space'. (A140/B180)

<sup>31</sup> Allison also provides an account of how Hume, and the empiricist more generally, fell prey to such circular accounts of concept formation. See Allison (2001): 22-25.

the apprehension of these items, that is, their schemata. And it is reflection on what is common to these patterns of apprehension or schemata, combined with an abstraction from their differences, that one arrives at the (reflected) concept of a tree.’ (Allison (2001): 25). Insofar as the universalising comparison is governed by the concepts of comparison it is rule governed. Yet the aesthetic comparison isn’t so governed, or directed by the concept and its schema, and this point, which both Longuenesse and Allison argue for, has important consequences. In a *Reflexion* Kant poses the following question:

Question: could we, from an intuition alone, without comparison, abstract something in order to subordinate other things to it if they presented themselves? (We can become conscious solely of the activity of the imagination, i.e., of the combination of representations either with one another, or with our sensibility, without considering what is combined and its own marks, for example, a house. But a concept becomes clear only through its application in a comparison). (*Refl.* 2878, Ak. XVI, 556-57)

It is only through the comparison, reflection and abstraction of the *Jäsche Logic* that a comparison as to what is universal in the rule of apprehension, that is the schema, can be operative, in generating the concept. Without this *kind* of comparison, which is the ‘universalising comparison’, there is nevertheless *another* kind of comparison, which Kant is here telling us takes place without regard to detecting the universal through marks, but solely with regard to what is sensible. This is of course the aesthetic comparison. This comparison, as a comparison of intuitions, is directed towards what is spatiotemporal, and in the *Jäsche Logic* Kant provides an example of such comparison (although not explicitly referring to it as aesthetic comparison) through an elaboration of his house reference of the *Reflexion*,

If, for example, a savage sees a house from a distance, whose use he does not know, he admittedly has before him in his representation the very same object as someone else who knows it determinately as a dwelling established for human beings. But as to form, this cognition of one and the same object is different in the two cases. In the former it is *mere intuition*, in the latter it is simultaneously *intuition* and *concept*.<sup>32</sup> (*JL* 9:33)

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<sup>32</sup> This passage is often appealed to in arguing for a non-conceptualist reading of Kant, as Kant is explicit in stating that it is possible to be in possession of an intuition without possessing the concept corresponding to it. As already discussed, everything comes down to what sense of concept Kant is referring to when he states that there can be a mere intuition without a concept, and it is the concept in the second sense, as a universally reflected discursive representation (concepts in the common sense) that Kant must be referring to here, insofar as we have seen that the perception of something of which we do not possess the discursive concept (house, tree, etc) nevertheless must be governed, in

It is Longuenesse's argument that not only does the savage not possess the concept of a house, as a dwelling place for human beings, he also doesn't possess the rule of apprehension as it is common to a number of representations. In this sense he also doesn't possess the schema of a house. This is to say that there is no rule of apprehension governing the synthesis of a house as a house, although there are rules governing the synthesis of it as an object, and a whole array of further concepts must be present in the perceptual recognition. If a computer were to find itself transported back to an earlier epoch, they would recognise an object with certain tactile and structural properties without having the rule of apprehension governing this object *as* a computer. There is thus a conceptual content within any representation of which we do not possess the concept but for any concept to be formed it must be governed by the 'logical act' of a universalising comparison, so that it is, 'Only the "application in a comparison," that is, the gradually dawning consciousness of a "rule of apprehension" common to the representation of various objects serving the same purpose, would pick out analogous marks and bring forth the concept of a house.' (Longuenesse (1998): 118). It is not only the empirical concept however that is generated as to its form, but also the category itself, and for Longuenesse, one of whose main tasks is to emphasise and explicate the epigenetic account of the categories as made, it is only through the application in comparison that the categories themselves are generated as to their form,

To be sure, Kant maintains that the categories are *a priori* concepts. Yet, like any other concept, they can be recognised in the sensible only through "application in a comparison"... like other concepts they are *made* as to their form (generated as "clear representations" through "comparison, reflection and abstraction"). (Longuenesse (1998): 121)

In order for these comparing procedures to take place, so that either the form of the empirical concept or category can be made, there must be an act of comparison which again, must be governed by the norm of universality in order to subsequently be picked up as common to many representations. Insofar as aesthetic sensible representations are brought to consciousness through an awareness of a rule of

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order to a perceptual synthesis of an object as an object, or of a *this* or *that*, by the concept in the first sense as Kant uses it, which is the rule governing the apprehension, or synthesis, and which is performed through the logical forms of judgement in relation to the unity of apperception. In addition, we have seen in Chapter 2 that Kant makes explicit reference as to how the apprehension of a house is made into a higher level perception, and that it is through the category of quantity that I 'draw as it were the outline of a house' (B162). Consequently the appeal of the non-conceptualist isn't successful in locating an argument for absolute non-conceptualism in this passage, yet as has been argued so far, this doesn't preclude a non-conceptual argument *per se*.



apprehension governing this act, this awareness, as again Longuenesse points out, presupposes 'that the sensible representations *lend themselves* to such a rule', and in a further *Reflexion* Kant, when referring to the concept as community of representations writes

This community of representations under one mark presupposes a comparison, not of perceptions, but of our apprehension, insofar as it contains the presentation of an as yet undetermined concept, and is universal in itself (*Refl.* 2883, Ak. XVI, 558)

The apprehension, as Kant is referring to it here, must be a synthesised content guided by the logical form of judgement insofar as its representation, or presentation, is governed by the norm of universality: universality being the form of a concept, which is said here to not yet be determined. It is not determined insofar as it is not yet reflected as a discursive representation, that is, there hasn't yet been the comparing, reflection and abstraction that generates the discursively reflected concept. Yet in order for the synthesis in the apprehension prior to the universalising comparison that lead to the empirical concept to be universal in itself, and contain an undetermined, or 'obscure' concept, the representation must be have been brought under the unity of apperception, since as was seen in Chapter 2, it is only by being brought under this unity that any representation can acquire the form of a concept in the first place, and we have seen that this is what Kant means when he states that the analytic unity of apperception presupposes a synthetic unity. Because what stands before me belongs to my representation it must be present as a synthesised manifold, which depends both upon the data before us being spatiotemporally unified and its acquiring the form of universality. In this case the *indeterminate concepts*, which can be said to be present in an unreflected state, become determinate through the logical act of universalising comparison and thereby acquire the form of an empirical concept.

### *Synthetic Unity*

Thus the importance of synthetic unity in relation to subsequent acts of analysis is again reiterated in coming to understand Kant's account of concept formation, and the importance of recognising the two different senses of concept as Kant uses them again comes to the fore. *Only* because I can combine representations through an initial act of synthesis can objects come before me in the first place, so that, as rules of apprehension, they can be both generated and reflected through acts of

universalising comparison. Being able to have an intuitive representation before us however, depends upon the objects being possible as a spatiotemporal intuition in the first place, and this is only possible on the pre-supposition of an original synthetic unity of the space and time that makes up the representation. This original synthetic unity precedes the category but, as belonging to the unity of apperception must, insofar as an object is met with, be under the logical forms of judgement, so that it is upon meeting with these objects that this logical form can be exercised and generate categories, as the concepts under which the data of sense is brought. We saw in Chapter 2 that the formal intuitions of space and time, as *a priori* unities generated in imagination provide the framework for spatial and temporal intuitions. But the intuitions themselves, by conforming to this unity and by being representable only on the presupposition of it, themselves have an intuitive combination, or synthetic unity that must be in place in order for what is similar within these representations to become reflected as similar, or the same (or according to any other of the concepts of comparison). It is because of this intuitive combination that something is always exclusively sensibly determined in the representation, even though the representation itself may be fully reflected under concepts. In original synthetic unity we are able to aesthetically compare the content of any representation, where insofar as this content is under apperception it possesses the form of universality, and is thereby able to be subsequently codified as schemata. Insofar as something becomes a rule of apprehension it also becomes the concept that functions as the initial seizing act, and thus the categories themselves are generated through the act of comparison/reflection/abstraction *in relation to* the formal spatiotemporal in synthetic unity. Indeed insofar as the category of unity itself presupposes an initial act of non-categorical synthesis (B131), we can only make sense of this arising of the category on the assumption that the logical form of judgement (or the capacity to judge) acts upon the sensible given in generating what is universal in the spatiotemporal<sup>33</sup>.

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<sup>33</sup>In response to Longuenesse's obscure remark as to how the schemata can themselves provide the terms for a universalising comparison and be the product of such a comparison Allison writes, 'If I understand her correctly, the gist of Longuenesse's answer is that this comparison does not begin with a blank slate. This is because the mind, in its universalising comparison, is guided by the very same concepts of reflection that are operative in the comparison of schemata that leads to the formation of reflected concepts. Presumably, at this level, however, the comparison leads the mind to seek similarities and differences, which can be codified as schemata governing apprehension and then reflected as concepts. And this is possible, according to Longuenesse, because this comparison is oriented from the beginning toward the acquisition of concepts applicable in judgement.' (Allison (2001): 27). Comparison can also be said not to begin with a blank slate insofar as there is a spatiotemporal unity within original apperception.

### *Purposiveness and Universality - Allison*

As was mentioned at the opening of this chapter, Allison's central argument in Chapter 1 of *Kant's Theory of Taste* is to relate Kant's account of concept formation, as it has been outlined so far, with Kant's further argument as it occurs within the third *Critique* - that the formation of an empirical experience (through empirical concepts) depends upon a special *a priori* principle unique to judgement. This principle as Kant accounts for it, states that nature is systematically ordered, or arranged, and is supposed to guide our *reflective* judgement upon the natural (empirical) world, where, 'To reflect (or consider) is to hold given representations up to, and compare them with, either other representations or one's cognitive faculty, in reference to a concept that this makes possible' (*FI* 20:211). The concept (of the purposiveness of nature) here makes the reflection *possible*, in arriving at a coherent empirically ordered construct, and it thus becomes apparent that Kant's account of empirical concept formation and the resulting ordering (systemising) of nature is not yet fully in place as of the first *Critique* nor fully accounted for in the *Jäsche Logic*<sup>34</sup>. Reflective judgement is different from *determinative* judgement in that only the former has an *a priori* principle unique to it, which is to say that although determinative judgement brings a content to experience through rules or concepts already in the understanding's possession, this kind of content is insufficient for, or underdetermines the content met with in the empirical realm. This is because the pure concepts of the understanding and their application to the sensible given concern solely the formal conditions under which a spatiotemporal world of objects can be experienced, and as was noted this formal aspect of cognition, where anything in order to be a representation for me must be unified through apperception, foreclosed the prospect of what Allison called 'transcendental chaos'. Thus through the act of determinative judgement in determining the spatiotemporal we do not arrive at anything like the experience we do in fact possess, and this is because,

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<sup>34</sup> Allison points out that empirical concept formation is itself a form of systematicity insofar as the formation of such concepts involves a taxonomical classification into genera and species. The concept 'gold' for instance functions both as a species and a genus, and is 'at once a species 'of yellow objects, of metal, and things soluble in *aqua regia*, and so forth. But at the same time the concept also functions as a genus under which different types of gold (or of things composed of gold) are to be distinguished as species'. Allison also references Ginsborg in discussing how searching for the universal for the particular (which is what is characteristic of reflective judgement) can take the form of searching for both empirical concepts and empirical laws, and in stating that these are both part of the same quest for empirical systematicity. (Allison (2001): 30-38)

It is quite conceivable that, regardless of all the uniformity of natural things in terms of the universal laws, without which the form of an empirical cognition in general would not occur at all, the specific differences in the empirical laws of nature, along with their effects, might still be so great that it would be impossible for our understanding to discover in nature an order it could grasp, i.e., impossible for it to divide nature's products into genera and species, so as to use the principles by which we explain and understand one product in order to explain and comprehend another as well, thereby making coherent experience out of material that to us is so full of confusion (though actually it is only infinitely diverse and beyond our ability to grasp). (*CJ* 5:185)

Thus it is apparent that in order to ward off 'empirical chaos' and enable the possibility of the formation of empirical concepts the fact of reflective judgement must be established.

Apart from Allison's convincing point that Kant's account of empirical concept formation must be supplemented with his account as presented in the third *Critique*, there is, I think, nevertheless a problem in the way Allison aims to connect the account of concept formation as a comparison of schema (as discussed above) and the principle of the purposiveness of nature. In drawing out this connection Allison appeals to a passage already quoted and which Longuenesse appeals to in arguing that it is the schema, as the rule of apprehension, that is compared in a universalising comparison and that generates the empirical concept. This is one of Kant's *Reflexions* where, in reference to the concept as a community of representations, Kant stated that,

This community of representations under one mark presupposes a comparison, not of perceptions, but of our apprehension, insofar as it contains the presentation of an as yet undetermined concept, and is universal in itself. (*Refl.* 2883, Ak. XVI, 558)

Allison, in appealing to the significance of this remark for the comparison of unformed schema (as aesthetic comparison), sees a special importance in Kant's contention that the apprehensional content contains something 'universal in itself', stating that this,

may reasonably be taken to refer to the schemata, since a schemata must have a universal nature if it is to serve as the exhibition of a concept. But it may also refer to the apprehended content on the basis of which the schemata themselves are formed, insofar as this content is to provide the foundation for a universalising comparison. (Allison (2001): 28)

Allison takes the last point in this remark to 'indicate both the need for and the nature of the principle to which judgement must appeal in its logical reflection directed toward the acquisition of empirical concepts for use in judgement', and that this reflection must assume that 'there is something 'universal in itself' encoded, as it were, in our experience, which provides the basis for the formation of both schemata and reflected concepts (Allison (2001): 28). It is natural to be sympathetic to Allison's argument insofar as there is a need to specify how both the aesthetic and universalising comparison lead to empirical concept formation given that such concept formation depends upon a unique *a priori* principle concerning nature's systematicity. I believe that Allison's way of drawing this connection however is somewhat strained however, insofar as the universality Kant is referring to doesn't seem to be that which is arrived at through a principle regarding nature's systematicity, but appears to be the universality generated through any representations belonging to me and thus acquiring the form of a concept. We have argued that it is insofar as a representation is brought to apperception that it acquires the form of universality, and it is true of the object which is subject to the aesthetic comparison here in question. It is because of this universality that a comparison is possible, and in this sense can be said to make the schema possible as the rule of apprehension common to the sensible synthesis taking place through the initial act of the understanding in relation to the data of sense. Consequently it does not seem quite right to pinpoint Kant's passage from the reflexion as specifying an explicit connection between Kant's insistence upon the importance of universality being normative in guiding concept formation insofar as it constitutes the form of a concept, and the principle of purposiveness as a principle of judgement.

Although I have here discounted Allison's attempt to link aesthetic and universalising comparison with the principle of purposiveness, it remains true however that there must be such a link if Kant's account is to remain coherent. It is a strength of Allison's argument that it is within an initial account of reflective comparison that such a link aims to be forged, as the principle of the purposiveness of nature is itself a principle relevant to reflective judgement. Indeed the most coherent way to forge the link in question is precisely through this connection, and it may be true (and must be true for Kant) that aesthetic and universalising comparison, in generating the empirical concept does exploit the principle of the purposiveness of nature. Exactly how this is done however remains ambiguous, and Kant's remark in the *reflexion*, I believe, doesn't provide sufficient grounds for establishing the link in question.

## *Makkreel on Reflective Judgement*

In discussing Allison's account we have assumed that the reflection of the *Jäsche Logic* and the reflective judgement of the third *Critique* amount to the same thing, and this assumption arises from both Allison's and Longuenesse's maintaining the identity in question, with Longuenesse stating that the application of the categories to experience presupposes 'a progress from sensible representations to discursive thought: the formation of concepts through comparison/reflection/abstraction, which is just what *reflective* judgement is' (Longuenesse (1998): 164-5). This identity, and the consequent claim that it is the reflective judgement as outlined in the third *Critique* that enables determinant judgement in the first place, is precisely what Rudolf Makkreel has found susceptible to doubt, stating that 'the reflective judgement appealed to in the *Critique of the Power of Judgement* is not the logical reflection that Longuenesse sees at work in empirical concept formation and in the inductive procedures grounded by the *Critique of Pure Reason*' (Makkreel (2006): 232).

For Makkreel, determinant judgement is indeed only arrived at through the reflective acts as outlined in the first *Critique*, but *reflective* judgement is not concerned with a reflecting upon the sensible given in order to arrive at either empirical concepts or categories, but rather with reflecting upon what has already been arrived at determinately in some way (although with regards to what is contingent reflective judgement is needed to arrive at an order). In this sense, reflective judgement for Makkreel, is 'meta-experiential' and 'instead of regarding reflective judgement as proto-experiential or subservient to the conceptual needs of the understanding, it should be considered as meta-experiential', so that with regards to a judgement of taste as a paradigm instance of reflective judgement, this kind of judgement 'attempts through a process of coordination to complete our experience and thus partly fill in the total system of experience that ideas of reason can only project abstractly. Being meta-experiential, reflective judgements about art are often parasitical on background determinant judgements' (Makkreel (2006): 242-3)<sup>35</sup>. In addition 'reflective judgement is not so much about objects per-se as about their relation to us' (Makkreel (2006): 223).

There is a temptation to side with Makkreel in his contention that 'an intersection of reflective and determinant judgements should not be seen as supporting the

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<sup>35</sup> In this sense, Makkreel holds a 'metacognitive' account of Kant's account of the harmony of the faculties, where 'The aesthetic judgement transforms an empirical determinant judgement about an object into a disinterested reflective judgement that expresses a subjective assessment' (Makkreel (2006): 233). We will return to this issue in Chapter 4.

conclusion that their judgemental functions merge' (Makkreel (2006): 223), insofar as in both the published and unpublished introductions to the third *Critique* Kant tends to refer to each kind of judgement as a distinct faculty. Although both kinds of judgement are concerned with bringing the particular under the universal, they do so in autonomous ways: determinant judgement seeking the particular for the universal, and reflective judgement seeking the universal for the particular. Nevertheless, I believe Makkreel is mistaken in seeing the determinant judgement as itself not being governed in part by the act of reflective judgement. So for Makkreel 'when Kant speaks of reflection in relation to the formation of empirical concepts, this is not yet reflective judgement' (Makkreel (2006): 225), this cannot be quite right, insofar as for Kant, in the published introduction to the third *Critique*, it is the case that the apprehension of the manifold itself first requires an act of reflective judgement:

For that apprehension of forms in the imagination can never take place without the reflecting power of judgement, even if unintentionally, at least comparing them to its faculty for relating intuitions to concepts. Now if in this comparison the imagination (as the faculty of *a priori* intuitions) is unintentionally brought into accord with the understanding, as the faculty of concepts, through a given representation and a feeling of pleasure is thereby aroused, then the object must be regarded as purposive for the reflecting power of judgement. (CJ 5:190)

Clearly, Kant is here drawing the link between reflective judgement and the harmony of the faculties. But what is relevant for our purposes is that all judgement, insofar as it requires intuitions (either pure or empirical) being brought to concepts, must be governed by a reflective aspect, where this is *reflective* judgement (the reflecting power of judgement) as presented in the third *Critique*. The explicitness of the role of reflective judgement in the formation of the empirical concept is further elaborated in the first Introduction (the first, lengthy and unpublished introduction to the third *Critique*), where Kant writes,

To every empirical concept, namely, there belong three actions of the self-active faculty of cognition: 1. The **apprehension** (*apperception*) of the manifold of intuition; 2. the **comprehension**, i.e., the synthetic unity of the consciousness of this manifold in the concept of an object (*apperception comprehensive*); 3. the **presentation** (*exhibitio*) of the object corresponding to this concept in intuition. For the first action imagination is required, for the second understanding, for the third the power of judgement, which, if it is an empirical concept that is at issue would be the determining power of judgement. (FI 20:220)

The last statement clearly indicates that the determinant power is concerned with empirical concept formation and that there are two conditions of this judgement being possible. We also have seen in the published Introduction that the apprehension of forms in the imagination 'can never take place' without the reflective power of judgement and that comparing these forms with reference to the faculty of exhibition as such is what reflective judgement engages in. Insofar as this act of judgement precedes and makes possible the determining power of judging, it seems that Makkreel is mistaken in stating that these judgemental functions don't merge. In fact if we are going to make sense of determinant judgement as generating a determinant empirical concept, then this will only be possible through its connection with reflective judgement, since as we have seen, reflective judgement not only makes the systemisation of empirical laws and concepts possible, but makes empirical concept formation possible in the first place. Consequently, insofar as we are determining the contingent we are at the same time employing reflective judgement, which, with its unique principle regarding the purposiveness of nature, brings coherence and order to our empirical experience.

The ambiguities however stem from Kant's account itself, and the problem seems to be that reflective judgement is allocated a number of roles. Insofar as it is said to make possible the apprehension of forms in the imagination, then it does indeed appear to be synonymous with the acts of reflection in the *Jäsche Logic*, which Longuenesse sees as just reflective judgement. Here reflective judgement is comparing the faculty of intuitions with the faculty of concepts, but doesn't yet subsume anything under the (determinate) concept. It is the task of presentation to subsume under a determinate concept. This presentational task for Longuenesse is what is essentially characteristic of Kant's account of reflection in the Transcendental Deduction, even though the reflective aspect is the same, with the difference that in the Transcendental Deduction 'this reflective procedure, unlike the third *Critique's* "merely reflective" judgements, is *determinative* as well: first, because it consists not only in forming empirical concepts [through the concepts of comparison] but also *applying* them (remember a concept becomes clear only when it is applied in a comparison)" (Longuenesse (1998): 165). Clearly this account sees not only a close relation between reflective and determinate judgement, but a dependence relation. If this account is essential to the formation of determinate empirical concepts as such then it appears that there is a subsequent 'cognitive' form of reflecting judgement, which acts upon already determinately arrived at concepts, and 'in contrast' to the account where determinate concepts are not given,



If empirical concepts and even empirical laws are already given in accordance with the mechanism of nature and the power of judgement compares such a concept of the understanding with reason and its principle of the possibility of a system, then, if this form is found in the object, the purposiveness is judged **objectively** and the thing is called a **natural end**, whereas previously things were judged as indeterminately **natural forms**. The judgement about the objective purposiveness of nature is called teleological. It is a **cognitive judgement**, but still belonging only to reflecting, not to the determining power of judgement. For in general the technique of nature, whether it be merely **formal** or **real**, is only a relation of things to our power of judgement, in which alone can be found the idea of a purposiveness of nature, and which is ascribed to nature only in relation to that power. (*FI* 20:221)

Clearly in such judgements the concept of the understanding is already given, and this is compared with 'reason and its principle of the possibility of a system'. In the aesthetic case reflective judgement was called reflective insofar as 'no determinate concept of the object at all is required'. In the teleological case the judgement is called reflective and not determining insofar as a determinate empirical concept is given but the judgement that nature is objectively purposive is not a constitutional but regulative idea of reason.

Clearly then, searching for a unanimous definition of reflective judgement is highly problematic and unobtainable, since it appears to be operating at many various levels of cognitive activity.<sup>36</sup> Insofar as the reflecting in teleological judgement already has a determinate empirical content then it is understandable that Makkreel argues that the reflecting judgement of the third *Critique* isn't that of the first *Critique* since a determinate content is already arrived at – pre-reflecting judgement. So in one sense Makkreel is right. As discussed though, this doesn't reflect the entirety of Kant's arguments regarding reflective judgement, and insofar as the reflecting judgement in aesthetic cognition is an element of cognition, this must be in place in order for determinant judgement (presentation)<sup>37</sup> to occur. In addition it is highly

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<sup>36</sup> Longuenesse recognises the complexity of Kant's account of 'mere reflection' in a footnote when she writes 'The "merely reflective" use of the power of judgement thus concerns aesthetic judgement, teleological judgements, and the representation of nature as a system ("subjective purposiveness" of nature). "Merely reflective" means in all three cases reflective *and not* determinative, but this general description covers three specifically different "merely reflective judgements." The third kind is the condition for all *empirical* judgements, that is, a condition for all judgements where judgement is "*in its reflection at the same time determinative*." (xx: 212). This last case, I think, can already be found in the first *Critique*.' (Longuenesse (1998): 164 n.47)

<sup>37</sup> Although in order to avoid the objection that in that case everything can be said to be beautiful insofar as a comparison in imagination is a precondition of all determination in the concept, it will

significant that Kant remarks that in aesthetic judgement we schematise without a concept (*CJ* 5:287). Insofar as the imagination is engaged with an apprehension prior to any empirical concept determining activity, and insofar as reflecting judgement is concerned with this activity, we can make sense of Kant's account. We have seen that generating schemata, as rules of apprehension, are a pre-condition of universalising comparison and determinate concept formation. With aesthetic judgement however it is not the case that we are involved in the exhibition or presentation of the determinate concept, for this would be objective judgement and would be cognitive, and the schematisation isn't engaged in this kind of subsumptive task (even though a conceptual content can be present in the perception). As Allison puts it, with this kind of schematisation, what is yielded is 'what might be described as the exhibition of the form of a concept in general (but not any concept in particular)' (Allison (2003): 171). In this sense we make sense of Kant's remark which was quoted earlier (*CJ* 5:190) that with aesthetic judgement the *faculty* of intuitions (imagination) is compared with *faculty* of concepts (understanding) in general, rather than specific intuitions being compared with and brought to concepts. Although we will go into the details of Kant's aesthetic theory in the next chapter, the point here is that making sense of Kant's remarks that there can be a schematisation without concepts involves appreciating that there is an activity of reflective judgement which is only intelligible in a stage or activity of judgement, which itself is only intelligible upon its orientation within an overall account of the merging of reflective and determinant judgement.

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have to be shown that there is something special or particular about the reflecting judgement in aesthetic judging that accounts for its character. This will be discussed in Chapter 4.

## Chapter 4

### The Harmony of the Faculties and the Role of Concepts

In our first three chapters we have carefully considered the role of concepts in Kant's account of cognition, and have explored the ways in which a Kantian non-conceptualism can be defended. Now that we have a more definite understanding of the relations between the understanding and imagination as such, and how they relate to each other with regard to the generation of representations, we are now in a position to explore the central argument of Kant's aesthetic theory - his account of the harmony of the faculties. It is well established that Kant's account here is a non-cognitive one, insofar as Kant himself tells us that in aesthetic judging we are not concerned with the application of concepts, but with reflecting on the sensible data before us with regard to its purposivity, or counter-purposivity for the faculty of judgement as such. What is a contentious issue in Kant's account however, is the exact nature of the role of concepts in the relations between the imagination and the understanding in determining aesthetic response, and this has led to an array of varying and conflicting interpretations regarding Kant's account of the harmony of the faculties. More recently, one of the most prominent commentators on Kant's third *Critique*, Paul Guyer, has provided a categorisation of what he considers the three most prominent ways in which this account gets interpreted by its various readers and commentators. Using Guyer's categorisation as a kind of template, we will ourselves examine Kant's account of the harmony of the faculties in exploring not only the three categories themselves, but the merits of this categorisation. Using the arguments of our previous chapters we will argue that although there is some merit in Guyer's categorisation and in his own 'metacognitive' reading of Kant's account, there are further considerations in the other readings which demand a broadening, or revision, of Guyer's interpretation. It is important to emphasise however, that the main focus of this chapter is upon reaching an adequate understanding of Kant's account and the extent to which concepts are operative in aesthetic experience.

### *Guyer's Categorisation*

Paul Guyer, in various books and articles, has argued for a certain way that Kant's account of the harmony of the faculties should be read, and in doing so has diagnosed three different ways in which this account tends to be interpreted by its various commentators. Guyer's categorisation is determined upon how a commentator reads Kant's general account of determinate concept formation and at what stage such formation is established relative to Kant's idea that in aesthetic experience there is a formal play between the imagination and the understanding. For Guyer, those who adhere to a 'precognitive' account see the imagination engaged in a synthesis *prior* to determinate concept formation, so that the imagination, performs a schematisation as it were, that the understanding finds harmonises with its subsumptive (bringing under concepts) aspect. A 'multicognitive' account is somewhat similar to the precognitive account in that it is an activity that occurs prior to determinate concept application, but that rather than the object that stimulates the imagination suggesting *a* possible simplicity of fit under a determinate concept, it suggests *many* possible fits, so that it is simply that the object is purposive for cognition in a general way, suggesting many possible schematisations or potential determinations through concepts, without being determined by any particular one. A 'metacognitive' account, which is what Guyer offers as the best way to read Kant's account, argues that it is mistaken to see any account as talking about an activity of the imagination prior to determinate concept formation, since our sensory empirical based experience is determinately governed, so that conceptual determination must be prior to, and a condition of, recognizing a particular harmony that this determinate cognition offers. Guyer's idea is that the aesthetic judgement 'goes beyond' the determinate empirical judgement or recognition that makes up the conceptual component of perception, but that this conceptual determination must be in place in the first place:

On such an approach, the free and harmonious play of imagination and understanding should be understood as a state of mind in which the manifold of intuition induced by the perception of an object and presented by the imagination to the understanding is recognized to satisfy the rules for the organization of that manifold dictated by the determinate concept or concepts on which our recognition and identification of the object of this experience depends. (Guyer (2005): 98-99)

Towards the end of the last chapter it was pointed out that Rudolf Makkreel does in fact hold a metacognitive position insofar as he is arguing that determinant and

reflective judgement are two distinct kinds of judgemental acts whose functions do not merge, and where determination of the empirical has to be in place before reflective judgement (as that which 'is not so much about objects per se as about their relations to us' (Makkreel (2006): 223)) has anything to act upon<sup>38</sup>. Since aesthetic judgement is a paradigm instance of a reflective judgement, it turns out that determination must be in place prior to this subsequent reflective activity, and again, 'The aesthetic judgement transforms an empirical determinant judgement about an object into a disinterested reflective judgement that expresses a subjective assessment' (Makkreel (2006): 233). Clearly then, with any approach to and interpretation of Kant's account of the harmony of the faculties, a great deal hinges upon the exact relations between determinant and reflective judgement and whether there can be a 'merely' reflective judgement, prior to and independently of determination. What is clear from the outset however, is that Kant's own account that the judgement of taste *is* in some sense non-conceptually determined (the aesthetic judgement being a 'judgement on the purposiveness of the object which is not grounded on any available concept of the object and does not furnish one' (CJ 5:190)), needs to be accounted for. For by becoming clear in what sense this kind of judgement and its resulting phenomenological character doesn't involve concepts as its determining ground, we shall be able to be clearer as to the extent of determination that must be in place before a judgement of taste is possible.

### *Aesthetic Non-Cognitivism*

Key to this task is understanding the exact sense in which imagination and understanding can be said to be in a harmony with each other when determining the aesthetic response. It is clear that the understanding is the faculty of concepts, as this is how Kant characterises it at (CJ 5:190). In this section Kant also referred to the imagination as 'the faculty of *a priori* intuitions'. Given that the content of an intuition insofar as it is conditioned by what is outside of us is empirical, what is *a priori* in our intuition must be what is generated through the active faculty in intuition, which (as was noted at the close of the last chapter), in the third critique

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<sup>38</sup> In *The Harmony of the Faculties Revisited* (2005) Guyer, categorises Makkreel, based upon his 1990 book, as a 'precognitivist', which in his 2006 article, Makkreel objects to, stating that Guyer's 'metacognitive interpretation of Kant's aesthetic harmony... has some parallels with my meta-experiential approach.' For Makkreel's full objection see (Makkreel (2006): 242, fn.69).

Kant often refers to as *apprehension*<sup>39</sup>. Because of this reference to apprehension, there is perhaps a temptation to locate this activity of the imagination in a highly pre-conceptual activity governed by the synthesis of apprehension and the synthesis of reproduction of the A-deduction. In our discussion of this however, we noted that although there may be a sense in which the syntheses of apprehension and reproduction may generate a kind of representational content apart from being brought under a concept (recognition), this kind of content wouldn't be *actual* experience, as Kant accounts for it (we noted that Kant states that it must only be *possible* for the 'I think' to attach itself to our representations, not that it must *actually* accompany them). In order for a representation to be so determinate as to be able to an actual one, i.e. an object before me which I can respond to, then it must be subject to the unity of apperception which is an act of the understanding. Insofar as the object or intuition is given empirically, or even constructed *a priori*, then it must involve a synthesis under the concept so that it can be my representation. Consequently, when Kant refers to the imagination as apprehending the object, we have good reason for thinking that this cannot be taken to mean an apprehension prior to the concept, but must be an apprehension made possible through the concept.

To this extent we are in agreement with Karl Ameriks arguments against a strongly non-conceptualist reading of Kant's account of aesthetic cognition. In *Interpreting Kant's Critiques*, Ameriks indicates that he actually regrets Kant's remarks that an aesthetic judgement pleases without a concept, as he sees such remarks as having caused a confusion that can mislead interpreters in attempting to ground a synthesis in the imagination that isn't determined by concepts<sup>40</sup>. In our study so far we have seen that there is no making sense of the idea that there can be a perceptual content (not the (animal) perception of the *Jäsche Logic*, but the perception on the first

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<sup>39</sup> This is also perspicuous in the first Introduction, where in relation to the role of concepts in his account Kant writes, 'A merely *reflecting* judgement about a given object, however, *can be aesthetic* if (before its comparison with others is seen), the power of judgement, which has no concept ready for the given intuition, holds the imagination (merely in the apprehension of the object) together with the understanding (in the presentation of a concept in general) and perceives a relation of the two faculties of cognition which constitute the subjective, merely sensitive condition of the objective use of the power of judgement in general (namely the agreement of those two faculties with each other)'. (*FI* 20:223-4)

<sup>40</sup> This is what Paul Guyer has taken Fiona Hughes to task for in *Kant's Aesthetic Epistemology: Form and World* (2007) (about which more will be said toward the end of the chapter), and likewise what Karl Ameriks has taken Hanna Ginsborg to task for in *The Role of Taste in Kant's Theory of Cognition* (1990). Ameriks criticises Ginsborg for on the one hand recognising the conceptual nature of ordinary perception and on the other hand defending a strong non-conceptualism with regard to Kant's aesthetic theory. See (Ameriks (2003): Chapter 13)

*Critique*) that isn't determined by the concept. We have argued that the formal intuition of space and time as formal intuitions are non-conceptual constructs, yet at the same time space and time as formal *a priori* intuitions are not perceptions, but are the pre-condition of spatial and temporal constructs and which are a product of the imagination. For Ameriks it is an orthodoxy for staying loyal to the text of the third and first *Critique*'s that such writers go astray, and asks whether a 'mild-revisionism' isn't needed in order to maintain an intelligible position that keeps in mind the role of concepts at some stage in the aesthetic response. Ameriks is undoubtedly right to maintain the need for recognizing that concepts must be present at some stage, and we have seen that this must be the case in having an object stand before us in the first place. What I question however, is whether in recognizing the role of concepts in aesthetic cognition, we really need to construe this recognition as entailing a mild-revisionism. If it is integral to an account of perceptual synthesis that concepts are involved in making such a synthesis possible, then this is an orthodox Kantian position which must be prevalent in the aesthetic case no less than any other. Again, the problem that the 'orthodox' would have is that insofar as the apprehension of imagination is said to involve a conceptual determination, this then blurs or annuls Kant's distinction between the imagination as the faculty of intuitions and the understanding as the faculty of concepts. Insofar as imaginative syntheses involves recognition in the concept then it is an act of the understanding. It might perhaps be conceded along with Ameriks that Kant, 'might have gone a little overboard in discouraging talk of concepts' (Ameriks (2003): 314), insofar as this may push one into what Ameriks again calls a 'radical' interpretation regarding pre-conceptual syntheses<sup>41</sup>. In order to make sense of Kant's account however, we can acknowledge the conceptual constraint upon imaginative content and argue that when imagination interacts and harmonises with the understanding in aesthetic cognition, the understanding here is thought of *differently* from the way it is thought of when it is active in synthesizing the manifold in imagination (which, in this initial case we may think of as the pre-condition of perception as such). It is this subsequent (second stage) activity of the understanding which the imagination isn't governed by

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<sup>41</sup> Malcolm Budd, in 'The Pure Judgement of Taste as an Aesthetic Reflective Judgement' (2001), also signals the potentially misleading language of Kant's formulations (especially *FI* 20:224) in suggesting a quite radical non-conceptualism (or precognitivism according to Guyer's classification). Budd however argues that Kant's maintaining that the aesthetic judgement is not concerned with the concept does not thereby commit him to the radical non-conceptualism in question. For it is also apparent that the objects being something of a certain kind doesn't preclude our abstracting from this with regard solely to its form, where responding to the form is not a concern with the particular concept(s) that makes up the recognition of the object as a particular thing (Budd (2001): 253). The importance of this point will become obvious later in this chapter.

in so far as it is apart from this faculty, and it will be this relation that will account for the special character of aesthetic judgement and that will also account for the sense in which aesthetic judgement can be said to please universally without a concept. How is this can occur will become apparent as we progress.

*An 'aesthetic judgement of reflection'*

As indicated, the importance of the role of reflective judgement in Kant's account of the harmony of the faculties is prevalent throughout both introductions to the third *Critique*, and we have noted that section VII of the first Introduction is important for Kant's making apparent the fact that aesthetic judgement is a species of reflective judgement. At the close of the last chapter we quoted a passage where Kant announces the 'three actions of the self-active faculty of cognition', (*apprehension, comprehension and presentation (FI 20:220)*), and we pointed out that the apprehension of forms in the imagination 'can never take place without the reflecting power of judgement, even if unintentionally, at least comparing them to its faculty for relating intuitions to concepts' (*CJ 5:190*). In the language of the first introduction this is possible because, 'in the mere reflection on a perception it is not a matter of a determinate concept, but in general only of reflecting on the rule concerning a perception in behalf of the understanding, as a faculty of concepts.' (*CJ 2:220*) The generating of 'a rule', is the generating of a schema, as it is only the schema that, as a product of the imagination can provide an intuitive content which the understanding can respond to and which possesses something universal so that reflection is possible ('we compare only what is universal in the rule of our apprehension' (*Refl. 2880, Ak. XVI, 557*)). In this sense the schema mediates between intuition and concept *in a certain way*, and where, as remarked previously, because no determinate concept is involved, in this kind of reflection we can be said to schematize without a concept.

Subsequent to the passage just remarked upon however (*FI 20:220*), Kant for the first time states that this kind of reflecting judgement, where we reflect on a general rule on behalf of the understanding, is an aesthetic one, and Kant writes,

If, then, the form of a given object in empirical intuition is so constituted that the **apprehension** of its manifold in the imagination agrees with the **presentation** of a concept of the understanding (though which concept be undetermined), then in the mere reflection understanding and imagination mutually agree for the advancement of their business, and the object will be



perceived as purposive merely for the power of judgement, hence the purposiveness will itself be considered as merely subjective; for which, further, no determinate concept of the object at all is required nor is one thereby generated, and the judgement itself is not a cognitive judgement. Such a judgement is called an **aesthetic judgement of reflection**. (FI 20:220-21)

Again the fact that no determinate concept is involved in the apprehension being brought into accord with the understanding is emphatically emphasized, and is something we need to bear in mind when discussing the cognitive nature of the aesthetic experience. We also learn, that it is the *form* of the object that conditions the aesthetic response. This is significant insofar as it is the form of the object that is what can be said to agree with the presentation of a concept so that it is the relevant content in the imaginations generating of a rule. It is in this sense also what is deemed as purposive for judgement (or purposive 'merely for the power of judgement'). Because it is the form that determines the aesthetic response and is purposive for judgement, it is the spatial-dimensional element that we are responding to insofar as the objects spatial configuration is what can successfully agree with the faculty of exhibition or presentation.

What is striking in Kant's language within this passage and throughout the introduction is that it is not that any *particular* intuition is brought to the understanding, so that there is a resulting harmony based upon this imaginative exhibition (although we do respond to a particular object), but rather that the *faculty* of intuitions is brought into an accord or mutual agreement with the *faculty* of concepts, and that in this harmonious meeting the object is perceived not as purposive for any particular judgement, but as purposive for the power of judgement as such. This does indeed appear to argue against a precognitive reading of the harmony of the faculties (as Guyer characterises it), insofar as this precognitive interpretation is one would see the *particular* intuition as being good for a particular concept subsumption, but stops short of this actual subsumption. Thus it is as though a particularly beautiful flower were purposive for judgement and is easily brought under the concept as a particularly clear example of its concept, but stopped short of this subsumption. Of course, such an account appears unreasonable since it is highly implausible that we could recognize a flower and stop short of its subsumption under a concept (since the recognition entails this anyway). However, If anyone were to maintain such a position, the problem wouldn't only this objection to the position but the fact that it sees the harmony in question as occasioned in individual rather than general terms. Of course it is the particular object that

occasions our response, but in responding to the form our pleasure is determined not by the fit between this flower and its resulting concept, but by the objects generating a harmony between the faculty of intuitions and the faculty of concepts generally speaking, which this particular flower instantiates.

### *Aesthetic Pleasure*

It is not until section VIII of the first introduction however, that the *aesthetic character* of this kind of judgement is accounted for, which is that its response is determined by the feeling of *pleasure and displeasure*. In this section Kant highlights the ambiguity that the term aesthetic brings with it. On the one hand aesthetic, for Kant, signifies that aspect of cognition whereby through the forms of our sensibility we stand in relation to objects, so that aesthetic indicates the sensory, spatiotemporal aspects of a cognition of a world of appearances (hence the *Transcendental Aesthetic* of the first *Critique*). There is also however the more typical, present day sense of aesthetic as we understand it, whereby aesthetic indicates that kind of response that is determined by the feelings of pleasure and displeasure. As a subjective response to our being affected by an object, this kind of response is non-cognitive insofar as it is not concerned with cognising any objective property of the object, but has *sensation* as its determining ground. Further on in the text Kant distinguishes between two kinds of aesthetic judgements (judgements based upon a response to pleasure or displeasure). There are aesthetic judgements of sense, and aesthetic judgements of reflection. The former is not connected with the faculty of cognition at all, and is 'related immediately through sense to the feeling of pleasure' (*FI* 20:224), and an example of such a judgement would be the agreeableness or disagreeableness of the taste of wine. An aesthetic judgement of reflection on the other hand, because it is 'to be regarded as grounded in special principles of the power of judgement' (*FI* 20:224), has a special reference to our cognitive powers.

As far as the non-conceptualist/conceptualist debate goes, in a certain sense the non-conceptuality of aesthetic cognition is indisputable, insofar as what determines such a response, or grounds such judgements is a *feeling* of pleasure or displeasure. Were it the case that such a judgement was determined through a concept (of what the object is supposed to be), 'in that case the judgement would not be made in relation to pleasure and displeasure, hence it would not be a judgement of taste' (*FI* 20:225). This feature of aesthetic judgement - its determination through feeling - is what has lead Robert Hanna to declare that aesthetic judgement as such can be said to indicate

that there is a meaningful non-conceptual content within this sphere of cognitive activity<sup>42</sup>. This level of non-conceptual activity is here what Hanna calls 'moderate', insofar as accounting for the total phenomenon (the perceptual experience) is determined at some stage by concepts. Very strong conceptual content for Hanna would be a cognitive activity that could be accounted for as a phenomenon completely without reference to concepts, and he considers an intuitive content prior to a concept to be such an example. Earlier on we noted that Karl Ameriks challenges the non-conceptualist of Kantian aesthetic judgement to specify in what sense non-conceptualism is operative and to recognize that total non-conceptualism is inherently untenable, or 'radical', insofar as it fails to acknowledge or account for the conceptual element that is necessarily involved in the representation of an object in the first place. Hanna does in fact meet this requirement of Ameriks insofar as Hanna sees the non-conceptualism involved in aesthetic experience as moderate, arguing that even though a given object falls under some concept (qua perceptually apprehended), 'this conceptual fact is wholly irrelevant to its being beautiful, since its being beautiful consists merely in the relation between its phenomenal form and the pleasure we experience in the harmonious interplay of our cognitive faculties' (Hanna (2005): 266). Indeed for Guyer, it is likely that Hanna would turn out to be, like himself, a metacognitivist, since Hanna sees concepts involved in aesthetic cognition (like Guyer he uses Kant's example of perceiving a rose as beautiful). The particular character of the response however, is determined by something apart from (something going *beyond*) the conceptual instantiation, which must be a fittedness of the intuitive content presented by the form for the understanding as the faculty of concepts.

I believe that Hanna is right in seeing the pleasure in aesthetic response, insofar as it is what determines this response, as what accounts for a non-conceptuality of aesthetic judgement, and to my mind, this can be conceded without resorting to any mild-revisionism. However, in acknowledging this it is important to recognize the character of this pleasure as the determining ground of aesthetic response. As noted, with an aesthetic judgement of sense, i.e. the taste of wine, the judgement isn't related to the faculty of cognition, so that it is just a modification of our state, whereas the aesthetic judgement of reflection does relate to the faculty of cognition and its special principles (of the power of judgement). These special principles insofar as they belong to the power of judgement can only be principles of purposivity, and in terms of the difference between the two kinds of aesthetic

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<sup>42</sup> See Hanna's 'Kant and Nonconceptual Content' (2005).

judgement it matters whether the reflection on a representation precedes the feeling of pleasure or whether the pleasure precedes the reflection:

For if the reflection on a given representation precedes the feeling of pleasure (as the determining ground of the judgement), then the subjective purposiveness is **thought** before it is **felt** in its effect, and to this extent, namely in terms of its principles, the aesthetic [reflecting] judgement belongs to the higher faculty of cognition and indeed to the power of judgement, under whose subjective but nevertheless still universal conditions the representation of the object is subsumed. (*FI* 20:225)

Kant thus highlights the priority of the reflecting act itself in relation to the feeling of pleasure, which indicates that reference to the feeling of pleasure and displeasure alone would not be adequate in accounting for the particular nature of aesthetic reflecting judgement. Only insofar as this relation is in place can there be any hope of securing a universal claim for any given aesthetic reflective judgement, and to this end Kant states that, 'for if the aesthetic judgement carries such a claim with it [universal validity], then it also makes a claim that its determining ground must lie **not merely in the feeling** of pleasure and displeasure alone, but **at the same time in a rule** of the higher faculty of cognition, in this case, namely, in the rule of the power of judgement' (*FI* 20:225). Consequently, understanding the kind of non-conceptualism of Kant's aesthetic account must also recognize the cognitive priority (the thought) which must precede and determine the aesthetic judgement of reflection (the feeling).

The sense in which a subjective purposiveness is connected with the pleasure we take in an object as occasioning such purposiveness is developed in sections VI and VII of the published introduction. In section VI Kant makes an important remark regarding the connection between the subjective purposiveness experienced in aesthetic judgement and the special *a priori* principle unique to judgement. Kant writes that,

The attainment of every aim is combined with the feeling of pleasure; and, if the condition of the former is an *a priori* representation, as in this case a principle for the reflecting power of judgement in general, then the feeling of pleasure is also determined through a ground that is *a priori* and valid for everyone; and indeed merely through the relation of the object to the faculty of cognition, without the concept of purposiveness in this case having the least regard to the faculty of desire, and thus being entirely distinct from any practical purposiveness of nature. (*CJ* 5:187)

Although Kant at this stage is referring to reflective judgement generally, i.e. insofar as it is concerned with both aesthetic and teleological judging, Kant's point is that it is the aim of our judgement, through its special principle, to find an orderliness in nature that once found is the source of a pleasure. If we find nature counter-purposive, i.e. not adapted to our search for order or systematicity, then this is the source of a displeasure. What is important for Kant is that this pleasure is determined by the *contingency* of the order that we find in nature, and as Kant accounts for this, it seems that the pleasure obtained through this contingency is due to the fact that we are actually able to cognize order in what seems inherently chaotic, or at least so diverse as to threaten to overwhelm our desire to grasp it according to some order. Thus whereas unifying the data of the senses in accordance with the categories is not the kind of thing that determines a pleasurable experience, since the understanding here proceeds 'unintentionally, in accordance with its nature' (CJ 5:187), with reflecting judgement there is a more of a conscious aim which is aware of the fact that there is a potential for failure. It is because of the intentional as opposed to unintentional act of finding order in the contingent that the consciousness of potential failure or potential disorder, when not experienced, so that order is found (our aim is achieved), that there results a noticeable pleasure.<sup>43</sup>

Although Kant has been referring to the purposiveness of nature insofar as it is common to both teleological and aesthetic judgement, section VII is concerned solely with the aesthetic representation of the purposiveness of nature. As noted this representation of purposiveness is aesthetic insofar as it is concerned with the feeling of pleasure or displeasure. What is important here is that we are not concerned with any determinate cognition, and we cannot be since, as Kant points out, it is precisely because of the aesthetic character of the experience that the experienced purposiveness cannot be predicated of nature as a property of nature. In this sense Kant states that the purposiveness precedes the actual cognition of an object, and in this since it isn't denied that an actual cognition of an object takes place. It is just that the purposiveness of the object, in the aesthetic case, isn't derived from the actual cognition. Thus it is as though we weren't actually concerned with what the object is, but just with the purposiveness exemplified in the 'mere apprehension of the form', so that aside from any concern with determinate cognition we enjoy just the fact that it is purposive for cognition in the first place.

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<sup>43</sup> Although Kant acknowledges that the pleasure of discovering that nature is orderable into species and genera becomes dulled after we have become used to it, we can, through 'study' or reflection experience this pleasure again.

## *Free Play*

So in aesthetic reflective judgement we are experiencing an element of cognition whereby we are not concerned with the application of concepts with regard to determinate cognition, but with a sensation, whereby through this sensation we can be said to be aware that what we are experiencing is itself purposive for cognition. This however is just to say that in aesthetic experience we experience a purposiveness or harmony between the faculty of the imagination and the faculty of the understanding insofar as the former is concerned with the apprehension of objects as spatiotemporally unified, and the latter is concerned with bringing this intuitive content under concepts – although of course no actual subsumption need be required and is irrelevant to the actual experience in question. We have argued however that it would be mistaken to read this account as allowing a scenario whereby no determinate content, as conceptually determined, is involved in the representation, so that the harmony of the faculties thereby be read as a scenario where the apprehensional content is entirely conceptually undetermined and purposive for cognition just insofar as it stops short of any actual cognitive application. In this sense it is perhaps natural to adopt Guyer's position who, as we have seen, offers an account of the harmony of the faculties which he calls 'metacognitive', whereby the harmony of the faculties, in their free play, 'goes beyond' the determinate concept in accounting for the phenomenology of aesthetic experience. Although Kant is explicit in stating that aesthetic reflective judgement isn't concerned with determinate cognition, for Guyer it would miss Kant's point to say that determinate concepts aren't involved in the aesthetic experience at all, for although they are present, it is just that they are not relevant to the particular character of aesthetic judgement. The trouble with Guyer's account however is that in putting forward the metacognitive approach, he seems to maintain that quite *highly determinate* empirical concepts are *always* involved in cognition, and hence always present within any aesthetic experience. In arguing this Guyer appeals to the fact that Kant, in his examples of aesthetic judgements, always uses examples with determinate conceptual content, such as roses, hummingbirds, and crustacea, and he argues that,

The ordinary assumption about judgements of taste, which Kant clearly shares with the rest of us, is that the objects of such judgements must be identified by means of particular empirical concepts and that we must be cognizant of the application of such concepts to them in order to make such judgements, just as is the case with any other kinds of judgements about

objects, in spite of whatever features are distinctive of aesthetic judgements.  
(Guyer (2005): 94-95)

In developing this argument Guyer proceeds to argue that in making an aesthetic judgement we do not make an indeterminate reference but always a determinate one, stating that, 'An aesthetic judgement does not have the form "This is beautiful" but rather "This *F* is beautiful": this hummingbird, this sunset, this painting, this symphony, [etc,]', and thus we need to individuate each object we come across empirically so that we can 'assess our aesthetic responses to objects or even respond to them at all' (Guyer (2005): 95).

There are number of things to be said about Guyer's argument. The first is that it strikes as inaccurate to state that aesthetic judgements never have the form 'This is beautiful', but rather 'This *F* is beautiful'. To be sure, it may well be the case that in the majority of cases where we predicate beauty of something the subject has a highly determinate conceptual content. But this can hardly said to be always the case, and it is perfectly reasonable to believe that we can have an aesthetic response to a whole host of representations that are, to a large degree, conceptually indeterminate. If we were to travel through regions of space for instance, there would be a great deal of phenomena for which we would not possess the concept and to which we could have a genuine aesthetic response. In such a scenario (an interplay of various bodies for instance) we would just say 'this is beautiful', or 'that is beautiful', and if pushed as to what we were referring to we would just say something along the lines of "I don't know what it is, it's just that *thing*", or even just "that *thing*" (or collection of things). Of course, in referring to a thing we are in effect referring to a subject of which we are predicating that it is beautiful, and so in this sense the judgement does have the form 'This *F* is beautiful'. Nevertheless this doesn't concede Guyer's argument since in stating 'This is beautiful' we are referring to a content, and adding 'thing' is superfluous in terms of adding anything to this statement, and so if Guyer's second kind of statement ("This *F* is beautiful') is to be substantively different from the first it must be only insofar as the predicate holder (the *F*) is a more determinate concept than 'thing' would indicate. What 'thing' in fact signifies is just an indeterminate concept (although this isn't necessarily the case as we may refer to something as 'thing' knowing fine well what it is), and we do have plenty of indeterminate representations (remember Kant's example of the savage and the house). It is true however that a more determinate conceptual understanding of what is in front of us can change our initial aesthetic response, and Kant's examples within the text of third *Critique* testify to this; where, for instance, a

building might be ornamented so as to encourage a pleasant aesthetic response and perhaps ordinarily would, except that the building is a church; and a human body might be tattooed with all kinds of wonderful designs which we would ordinarily respond well to, except that it is human being whose dignity (for Kant) is violated through tattooing. So although it would be right to point out that our aesthetic responses can be and often are changed depending upon the degree of determination in our representations, it is wrong to argue, as Guyer does, that we are unable to have an aesthetic response to something that doesn't have a highly determinate conceptual content.

We say 'highly determinate' here because we do of course recognize that there must be a degree of determinacy in any representation, qua represented. This really seems to be Guyer's point as he appeals to Kant's theory of knowledge as outlined in the first *Critique* in arguing that any representation must be determined conceptually. Guyer's mistake seems to be that in recognising that any representation must be empirically determinate to some degree, the representation is also therefore empirically determinate in a full degree as a reflected representation. We have seen however that empirical concept formation comes only through subsequent acts of the understanding where through the comparison/abstraction/reflection of the *Jäsche Logic* we form more determinate empirical concepts (just as we have argued that some principle unique to judgement enables this formation). Prior to this more determinate conceptual representation it is possible to have representations which are still conceptually determinate, and we can have an aesthetic response to a particle collider if it stands before us, without having the least clue what it is, other than a 'thing', i.e. something with substance, extension, colour, etc. Consequently, although it is true that we 'must' determine any representation before us through concepts, the degree of determinacy mustn't necessarily be at the high level Guyer argues must be present in order for us to have an aesthetic response in the first place.

Consequently, there is a definite appeal to the metacognitive approach insofar as it argues that a *degree* of determinacy must be present in any representation, and a reading of this kind forecloses the possibility of any precognitive reading which would see the relevant activity of the imagination as occurring at the pre-conceptual level, where it would be generating content through some non-conceptual means and instantiating a harmony insofar as this particular content is purposive for the initial act of the understanding in providing a first determination for this content. Although Kant repeatedly emphasizes that in mere reflection we are not concerned with determinate cognition, this nevertheless doesn't preclude the possibility, and



the fact of, there being a determinate content in the aesthetic representation. The point is that in accounting for the harmony in question and its phenomenological character we are looking for something very different, that does indeed 'go beyond' a question of determinacy.

### *Longuenesse and Conceptual Indeterminacy*

By way of contrast it is interesting to compare Guyer's account of the harmony of the faculties with Béatrice Longuenesse's, since where for Guyer the level of determinacy (and our going beyond it) is an important feature of aesthetic judgement, for Longuenesse it is essentially the *indeterminacy* of aesthetic judgement that is of key importance. This aspect of her argument stems from her understanding of Kant's account of the role of reflection in cognition generally, so that for Longuenesse, although a unique faculty of reflective judgement becomes an explicit concern for Kant only by the time of the third critique, this shouldn't blind us to the fact that an important role for reflection has always been present in Kant's account of the genesis of cognition and concept formation. What is characteristic of the third critique's account of reflective judgement, isn't the fact that it postulates a faculty of reflective judgement as such, as a special act that enables us to arrive at universals, but that there is such a thing as a *merely* reflective judgement, and we have seen in the introductions to the third critique that Kant's reference to a *merely* reflective judgement is often, and clearly important to his account of the character of aesthetic judging. However, there is a difficulty in Longuenesse's argument that might make it appear that she is offering a precognitive account of the kind that Guyer has criticised as being misinformed, and which Allison has also criticised as being flawed<sup>44</sup>. Makkreel's criticisms of Longuenesse's account of reflective judgement does in part also appear to be motivated by the fact the she appears to offer a kind of precognitive (Makkreel uses the term 'proto-cognitive') account of the harmony of the faculties (Makkreel (2006): 241-44), and so it is important to explore her argument with an aim to clarification.

We have seen that it is only with reference to Kant's account of reflection that anything like an adequate account of concept formation is possible. Of course it wasn't enough just to appeal to an act of reflection in arriving at an empirical concept without begging the question as to how any particular instance was recognized as having the marks that already pick out this object as an instance of a

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<sup>44</sup> See (Allison (2001): 354, n.2)

particular kind. Thus, in following Allison and Longuenesse we saw that a more sophisticated argument was needed in grounding Kant's account of concept formation, and that it was necessary to appeal to various acts, such as aesthetic reflection, transcendental reflection, and pre-conceptual schemata, in order to provide this. Indeed, this provided a phenomenological apparatus for pre-discursive cognition insofar as there turn out to be various stages of cognition which can be present without an overt recognition (through a rule common to apprehension) of what is before us, and we saw that there is good reason to suppose that when a savage has a mere intuition of a house, not only does he not possess the concept of what is before him, but also doesn't possess the schema, as a reflected content. So reflection turns out to be necessary for more determinate cognition, and for the function of determinant judgement. A difficulty with Longuenesse's account however, is that she appears to locate the particular character of aesthetic judgement in just this successional account of the arrival at determinate cognition, and in fact sees the aesthetic judgement as a *failed* attempt to arrive at a conceptual determination. Thus with reference to *merely* reflective judgements Longuenesse writes that,

This restrictive modifier [*merely*] is meant to deny that these judgements are in any sense determinative; they are *purely* reflective. They differ in this regard from other judgements relating to the sensible given, which are not *merely* reflective, but determinative *as well*. What makes judgements *merely* reflective is that in them, the effort of the activity of judgement to form concepts *fails*. And it fails because it cannot succeed. This is the case in "merely reflective" *aesthetic* judgement, where the agreement of imagination and understanding is of such a nature that it cannot be reflected under any concept. (Longuenesse (1998): 164)

As Longuenesse has pointed out, it obliges us to recognise the *merely* reflective judgement as key to accounting for the particular character of aesthetic judgement. The fact that it is *merely* reflective indicates that what is especially characteristic of such judgement is the fact that there is an aspect of determination (as Kant persistently indicates) that is essentially irrelevant in accounting for its particular character. Longuenesse's ambition is locate the particular character of aesthetic judgement in just this feature of reflective judgement, going so far as to argue that an actual determination is entirely irrelevant to the phenomenon of the harmony of the faculties. It must be asked however, at what level of determination is Longuenesse arguing the aesthetic reflective judgement doesn't reach? In the section just quoted Longuenesse states that the restrictive modifier denies that aesthetic reflective

judgements are in *any sense* determinative, whereas in the following sentence Longuenesse states that in this sense these judgements differ from other judgements that *relate to the sensible given*, insofar these other judgements are determinative as well. We know by now however that the sensible given is not the sensible given of the empiricists, but is constructed through the synthetic activity of the agent, so that in this sense a degree of determination is present in the perceptual recognition of aesthetic judgement. This degree of determinacy does in fact become apparent when Longuenesse is drawing a comparison or likeness between aesthetic reflective judgements and the "judgements of perception" of the first *Critique*. This kind of judgement contrasts with the categorical application that goes on in "judgements of experience" (which for Longuenesse are arrived at through the acts of comparison/reflection/abstraction and concerns the application of the categories as universal reflected representations as discussed in the previous chapter), so that,

[Here we have] another dimension to the "application" of the categories [...] For although judgements of perception do not *apply* categories in the sense that they do not subsume empirical objects under categories understood as "universal and reflected representations" (Kant's definition for *concepts* in general), they nevertheless do presuppose *synthesis according to the categories*, those "blind" syntheses of imagination that the categories, as full-fledged discursive *concepts*, "universally represent." (Longuenesse (1998): 165)

Thus it is apparent that when Longuenesse sees aesthetic reflective judgement as non-determinate this isn't a complete indeterminacy, since as perceptual constructs perceptions must have a synthetic unity arrived at through the sortal functions of the categories. However, although Longuenesse is arguing for a degree of determination in the aesthetic reflective judgement, it is not clear that it matches up with the actual nature of our aesthetic experience. This is because, as discussed, aesthetic judgement, although not as necessarily determinate as Guyer argues for, does have a fairly high degree of determinacy in its perceptual recognition. Thus it may seem odd to think that the aesthetic judgement has failed at determination insofar as I see that what I am calling beautiful is a bunch of lilies, and not just a conceptually indeterminate sensible given. This feature of Longuenesse's account is what has lead Allison to object to it, asking in what sense can an aesthetic judgement be a failed one when it is not aiming at determination. Longuenesse has responded to Allison's criticisms in a separate article, and one of the merits of this dialogue is that it helps us attain a precision with reference to Longuenesse's position.

In responding to Allison's criticism that the aesthetic reflective judgement cannot be said to fail since it isn't aiming at determination, Longuenesse states that she agrees, but that nevertheless a sense of failure is still appropriate. In explaining she highlights one of the most appropriate passages that Allison writes in stating his overall position with regard to his understanding of Kant's account of the harmony of the faculties, where Allison, in *Kant's Theory of Taste*, writes

The function attributed to the imagination in mere reflection is not that different from the one assigned to it in cognition [...]. The difference is only that in the mere reflection involved in a judgement of taste, the imagination does not exhibit the schema of a specific concept under which the object can be subsumed in a determinative cognitive judgement. Instead, it exhibits a pattern or order (form), which suggests an indeterminate number of possible schematisations (or conceptualisations), none of which is fully adequate, thereby occasioning further reflection or engagement with the object (Allison (2001): 51)

It is apparent why Longuenesse is in agreement with Allison on this account, for Allison here states that the object is not subsumed under a determinate concept, but has an indeterminacy that allows for a kind of open-ended reflection or engagement with the objects formal properties. What is more is that the object suggests an indeterminate *number* of possible schematisations, so that according to Guyer's classifications, Longuenesse, insofar as she is in agreement with Allison on this point, appears to be putting forward something of a multicognitive account, whereby the object is purposive for an indeterminate amount of conceptual fits but not any particular one. Again however, the problem becomes apparent: if there is no subsumption under a particular concept, how is it that with the aesthetic reflective judgement we are invariably aware of what it is we have having an aesthetic response to? This of course is Guyer's criticism of the multicognitive approach, where the argument is that this account fails to see that the aesthetic judgement is already at a quite high degree of conceptual determination, and is not at some precognitive stage in its manifestation. However, although it is perhaps tempting to concede Guyer's argument here, it is important to recall the way Kant has phrased his argument regarding the harmony of the faculties;

If, then, the form of a given object in empirical intuition is so constituted that the **apprehension** of its manifold in the imagination agrees with the **presentation** of a concept of the understanding (though which concept be undetermined), then in the mere reflection understanding and imagination mutually agree for the advancement of their business, and the object will be

perceived as purposive merely for the power of judgement [...], for which, further, no determinate concept of the object at all is required nor is one thereby generated, and the judgement itself is not a cognitive judgement. (*FI* 20:220-21)

We can see here that Kant is explicit in stating that no determinate concept is generated in the aesthetic reflective judgement, and nor is one required, for it is not concerned with this kind of judging at all (determinate judgement). What becomes apparent then is that the aesthetic reflective judgement is a specific kind of judgement or reaction that is altogether of a *different kind* from determinant judgement. Even though there is usually a high level of determination making up the perceptual content of the aesthetic judgement, this is essentially another *matter*, so that the concern of the aesthetic judgement is with, quite literally, another matter, viz. the formal properties of the object, which are suggesting schematisations without being restricted to any particular one. Thus what we are saying is that a use of multicognitivist terminology isn't by itself enough to put one into the false position Guyer ascribes to it. Guyer sees the language of the multicognitive approach as committing itself to a position whereby the pre-conceptual intuition is suggesting a number of possible fits without settling on any, whereas on his account, the concept is already determined or arrived at, with the free play going beyond this determinate concept in its purposiveness for judgement as such. However, the aesthetic judgement is an aesthetic response regardless of the degree of conceptual determinacy that makes up our recognition of the object, and our aesthetic response is in no sense diminished just because we do not know what we are responding to. This highlights the fact that the aesthetic judgement, just as a pure aesthetic reaction, is not concerned with the determination in the judgement at all. Thus where Guyer states that the nature of the aesthetic judgement is that it *goes beyond* the conceptual determination that makes up the perceptual recognition, it really seems more correct to say that we have an aesthetic reflective judgement *regardless of the fact* that there is a degree of conceptual determinacy making up the perceptual recognition. Thus it is not with the object as a particular *kind* of object that the character of the aesthetic judgement is to be characterised (and the going beyond this), but just with the formal configuration of the object, which happens to be a bunch of flowers.<sup>45</sup> Where the problem with Longuenesse's account might be thought to lie however, is with her continued insistence that the aesthetic reflective judgement is a *failed* one. In her

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<sup>45</sup> This is not to say that the fact that it is a particular kind of object is not important to an overall aesthetic assessment, where the importance of an object as a symbol for instance, comes into consideration.

response to Allison, Longuenesse states that aesthetic reflective judgement is a failed cognitive one because 'aesthetic judgement *starts* where the search for concepts *collapses*' (Longuenesse (2003): 146) , again making it apparent that Longuenesse sees the aesthetic reflective act as part of an overall task of concept formation. Through our evaluation however we can attain a clearer sense in which the aesthetic judgement can be said to fail, even though there will be a degree of determinacy and therefore conceptual *success* in the perceptions having been formed, and this is because the aesthetic reflective judgement is concerned with something other than the determinate conceptual content that governs our perception of what the object is. This is to say that the aesthetic reflective judgement is performed *regardless of the fact* that a determinate content has already been obtained. Thus if an object briefly flits before my vision this is often enough to judge determinately what the object is, insofar as I possess the schema for it. Thus I may have briefly seen a chair. This by itself however may not be enough for us to be able to pass an aesthetic judgement on it, and we may feel that in order to make an aesthetic evaluation we need to spend some time reflecting upon the object, taking in its formal configurations and certain elements of its detail before we are in a position to pass an aesthetic judgement. Thus the aesthetic judgement is a specific kind of activity where the faculty of judgement continues to engage with the object even though categorisation is already obtained through the same reflective act that continues to reflect upon the objects form. Out of a kind of cognitive habit the mind always approaches objects with an aim towards objective determination, but soon finds itself engaged in another activity. In the first *Critique* Kant testifies to this continuous engagement with objects, where he writes that, 'Sensibility gives us forms (of intuition), but the understanding gives us rules. It is always busy poring through the appearances with the aim of finding some sort of rule in them' (A126). Longuenesse's position is essentially that with the aesthetic reflective judgement this searching for a rule on behalf of the understanding fails, so that 'some sort of rule' is not found, but that instead we find a purposiveness for the faculty of rules as such, so that the failure to find a rule or concept is 'a welcome failure [where] knowing becomes an inferior goal, enjoying [] the superior one: the "purposiveness without a purpose" of aesthetic judgement' (Longuenesse (2003): 146)<sup>46</sup>.

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<sup>46</sup> In spite of my defence of Longuenesse here, and the sense in which the aesthetic judgement is a failed cognitive one, I still think that the choice of the term 'failed' is somewhat misleading, insofar as we have argued that the aesthetic judgement is concerned with something other than determinate content. What I have tried to show is what I think Longuenesse is trying to say in saying that the

### *Issues with Guyer's Account*

Although we have criticised certain elements of Guyer's classification this isn't to say that we are in a complete rejection of it, for there are elements of it that certainly seem valid as far as categorisation goes, and we have recognised the good sense of his metacognitive approach. In fact, our own argument and defence of the multicognitive approach draws very close in certain respects to Guyer's metacognitive account. Thus although we argued that it is perhaps more accurate to state that with aesthetic reflective judgement we are engaged with the object in a certain way *regardless of the fact* that a level of determination is involved in our recognition of what is before us (as opposed to Guyer's *going beyond* the determinant judgement in making an aesthetic judgement), there is still a common ground in our readings. The disagreement is really with his account of what level of determinacy must be involved in a perceptual content, so that Guyer in his eagerness to refute the precognitive and multicognitive accounts has overstated the case when, as was discussed earlier, he argued that the aesthetic judgement always has a high level of determinate empirical content. We saw that this is not always necessarily true, so that my aesthetic judgement doesn't always take the form 'this F is beautiful', but might just take the form 'this is beautiful', without our having the least clue what it is we are responding to other than a thing of some kind. An account such as Longuenesse's can accommodate this fact much easier because her account does not stipulate that such a level of determination is necessarily involved in the aesthetic reaction, so that the 'savage' or person who has no sense of what is before him is still able to have a legitimate aesthetic response<sup>47</sup>. The point with the aesthetic reaction is that it is engaged with the object in spite of the fact that it may already have a highly determinate conceptual content, and this is because it is in the nature of the understanding to engage and re-engage with the object reflectively, with the aim of finding some sort of rule.

Consequently what we find through our analysis is a kind of synthesis of the various readings of the harmony of the faculties. We have reached this conclusion however through a criticism of Guyer's arguments, whilst at the same time embracing certain aspects of his metacognitive account. We indeed agree with Guyer that the best way to characterise aesthetic reflective judgement is through recognising that a degree of

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aesthetic reflective judgement in a sense fails, as this carries the sense of her argument, which ultimately I think is correct.

<sup>47</sup> In coming to possess the concept however, our aesthetic evaluation is liable to change, just in so far as our recognition of the objects having to satisfy a certain end in its existence or function is prevalent.

empirical determination is usually present, and that the aesthetic judgement must in some sense be said to *go beyond* this content in accounting for its particular character. We also agree with Guyer (and Ameriks) that an account of the harmony of the faculties that located the relevant determinant of the aesthetic response at a highly indeterminate level of conceptualisation (so that for instance, no conceptualisation at all has been obtained, and an entirely pre-conceptual content is purposive for cognition as having suggestiveness of fit), is mistaken. One of the major problems with Guyer's account however is due to his specific understanding of what conceptual determination for Kant means, so that Guyer sees those writers who argue that the aesthetic judgement may or may not be (empirically) determinate as failing to see that all perceptual recognition, for Kant, has a determinate content. We have argued however that this is a mischaracterisation, for there is often a recognition of what determination means for Kant<sup>48</sup>. Thus Guyer in 'The Harmony of the Faculties Revisited', states that Malcolm Budd 'may also suggest the multicognitive approach when Budd writes that "the imagination's freedom consists in its not being adequate to some particular empirical concept - all that is necessary is that it should be adequate to some empirical concept of other."' (Guyer (2005): 86, n.2). It is apparent however that Budd is not advocating a multicognitive approach as Guyer characterises it. Budd recognises that the perceptual content involved in the recognition of the object is conceptually determined, qua Kant's definition of perception, and that consequently the aesthetic judgement does have a conceptual content (Budd (2001): 249-50). Budd can maintain this without having to subscribe to the level of determination that Guyer sees as necessarily involved in aesthetic response, so that Budd isn't suggesting that in free play the imagination plays with an entirely conceptually undetermined content which is purposive for the faculty of concepts. Thus what is apparent is that an interpreter may appear to offer a multicognitive approach in their stipulating that in aesthetic judging the imagination suggests an indeterminate number of fits, or a fittedness as such (or any other multicognitive terminology), but that they are just as close to a metacognitive reading than Guyer supposes. Thus in discussing the issue of the extent of conceptualisation in aesthetic judgement Budd writes:

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<sup>48</sup> I am here of course referring to Kant's statement in the first *Critique* that 'The same function that gives unity to the different representations **in a judgement** also gives unity to the mere synthesis of different representations in **an intuition**, which expressed generally, is called the pure concept of the understanding. The same understanding, therefore, and indeed by means of the very same actions through which it brings the logical form of a judgement into concepts by means of the analytical unity, also brings transcendental content into its representations by means of the synthetic unity of the manifold in intuition in general'. (CPR A79/B105)



[T]he only viable interpretation of Kant's view is that in judging an item's beauty, although it may well be recognised as being something of a certain kind, its being an instance of that kind must not be allowed to figure in the process of reflection, which must focus solely on the object's form. In fact, it is easy to see that the reflection involved in a judgement of taste must allow the subject to abstract from what the object is seen to be. For to perceive the object's form it is necessary to perceive the formed matter that composes the object, which (for visual perception) will involve seeing the distribution of apparent colours (chromatic or achromatic) across its facing surface, seeing it *as being* red here and white there, say. (Budd (2001): 253).

Such a statement makes it apparent that Budd comes closer to our metacognitive reading - whereby the aesthetic reflective judgement takes place regardless of the fact that a level of determination is reached - than to Guyer's multicognitive account. It is again apparent that this distinction between multicognitive and metacognitive is somewhat strained insofar as someone subscribing to the latter view may use terminology of the former view (according to how Guyer characterises it). This just signals however that the problem lies with Guyer's characterisation of the various readings, rather than with the categorisation itself. It also signals a misunderstanding of what determination means for Kant, so that if an object does not have a high degree of determinate content and is an unknown quality, Guyer's definition of aesthetic judgement as going beyond the determinate concept cannot be applied, for there is no determinate concept for the reaction to go beyond, and this just highlights that the aesthetic reaction is with something entirely other than the object's determinate empirical content, which it doesn't need to have in responding to the object's form<sup>49</sup>.

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<sup>49</sup> Rachel Zuckert in *Kant on Beauty and Biology* argues for a sense in which the conceptual recognition involved in a perception of the object can be conceptual, without being concerned with a determinate empirical conceptualisation, even though the object may well be empirically determined. Thus Zuckert writes that, '[The] presence of conceptual description in appreciation of beautiful form does not, however, render aesthetic judging of form a conceptually determined judgement[... S]uch 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 judgement that the object is (to be categorised as) yellow. More significantly, however, we use concepts or identify properties in our estimation of beautiful objects in a way contrary to the way we usually, "logically," use them, in classifying objects or making objective judgements.' (Zuckert (2007): 199). In maintaining that there is a presence of 'conceptual description' in aesthetic judging, Zuckert posits a 'metacognitive' account since she recognises that perceptual recognition always has a degree of conceptually determinate content ('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.' (Zuckert (2007): 200)). Zuckert however seems to share the same sense of the judgements taking place *regardless of the fact* that a determinate empirical content is present in the recognition of what the object is, where the concepts are used to a different end ('Rather, [in aesthetic

Another example of Guyer's misunderstanding is reflected in his criticism of Fiona Hughes for what he sees as an illegitimate moving between two different accounts of the harmony of the faculties, so that he sees her as offering both a precognitive account and a version of his own metacognitive account. The reason he sees Hughes as offering a precognitive account is because she sees the aesthetic judgement as occurring prior to any determinate concept formation (Guyer (2009): 212). The reason he sees Hughes as offering a metacognitive account is because Hughes recognizes that concepts are a pre-condition of any experience whatsoever, and that the aesthetic judgement is just 'a heightened version of the pervasive coordination of the faculties necessary for any judgement [whatsoever].' (Hughes (2007): 155). Because Hughes appears to present these supposedly divergent strands of argumentation he essentially sees Hughes's overall account as confused, with unresolved tensions. Hughes account however is only confused if it is really the case that in her 'precognitive' account she sees Kant as positing the idea that in aesthetic experience the imaginative perceptual content that is stimulating the response is of a pre-conceptual kind which is found to be pleasing in its formal aspects just insofar as it is purposive for the faculty of concepts. Hughes however is quite aware that this is never really a possibility, for in her discussion of the threefold synthesis she highlights that although it may appear that Kant is suggesting an account whereby there can be a representational content not governed by concepts, this isn't really the case, and that 'Kant closes down this possibility [of pre-conceptual synthesis] in later versions of his argument, arguing that even apprehension requires unification under a concept' (Hughes (2007): 126). In addition, Hughes recognises that although the second edition of the deduction may appear to make room for an imaginatively apprehended content which may in turn make room for a aesthetic precognitivism, this is again only apparent, so that '*all* sensory apprehension is cognitive' (Hughes (2007): 139). Hughes doesn't seem to be unsure about the fact that all representational content for Kant is governed by the application of concepts, and the confusion really seems to come from Guyer's failure to recognise that in a representations having a determinate content it doesn't thereby have to have a highly determinate empirical content, so that it can be quite indeterminate as far as a schematised representation

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judging] 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 (CJ 5:286).' (Zuckert (2007: 199)) . Thus the conceptual content that is used in aesthetic judging is concerned with something other than objective categorisation even though this categorisation may be arrived at, as an objective determining judgement.

goes. Hughes choice of language is perhaps unfortunate in her stating that in aesthetic judgement we 'stop short' of conceptual determination, but her essential point seems to be that in aesthetic judgement we continue to engage with the object regardless of the fact that a level of determination has been reached. Here the understanding continues to engage with the object in a continuing search for rules, but finds a new kind of pleasure in finding that the object is just purposive for the faculty of rules, or concepts (the understanding) as such.

Thus once we begin to recognise that for these writers there is a recognition of what is involved in a objects being represented (viz. that a level of conceptual determination be involved), then these writers elude the straightforward classification that Guyer offers, and conform closer to the conclusions of the metacognitive approach than Guyer realises (although as we have just seen, Guyer acknowledged the metacognitive aspect of Hughes's account). Guyer's classification is valid just for those accounts that do want to maintain that a pre-conceptual imaginative content is present in the aesthetic response, whether they are precognitive (the intuition being purposive for a particular concept under which it is not yet subsumed), or multicognitive (the intuition being purposive for an indeterminate number of conceptual possibilities). Insofar as we have called Longuenesse's and Budd's account 'multicognitive' however, we are saying that they are not to be equated with Guyer's account of what multicognitive implies, so that a recognition of a level of determination in the perceptual content *is* prevalent. These accounts have agreed with our own metacognitive reading, and it remains to re-iterate the nature of the play in question: insofar as Kant is explicit that it is not the purposiveness of the intuition for any particular concept, but just a purposivity for the faculty of concepts *as such*, then there is an indeterminacy in the playfulness of aesthetic judgement so that it suggests many (multi) possibilities of schematic ordering. There may be a more or less determinate conceptual content in the recognition of what the object is, but we respond to the object regardless of this determinate conceptual content, in responding to the objects formal properties, which may be found to be more or less purposive for cognition (the faculty of concepts) as such.

## Chapter 5

### The Mathematical Sublime and the Role of the Infinite

This chapter provides an analysis of Kant's account of the mathematical sublime, as it is presented within the First Section of the Second Book (the Analytic of the Sublime) of the *Critique of the Aesthetic Power of Judgement*<sup>50</sup>. In this Chapter I will focus closely on Kant's idea that our experience of the infinite is an important determinant of this kind of experience of the sublime, and I will look especially at Paul Crowther's argument that Kant's account of the role of the infinite is in fact superfluous to his account. I will challenge Crowther's argument on the grounds that I believe that the role of our experience of the infinite is in fact essential to our being able to have the relevant aesthetic response, and I will argue further that this is importantly connected with the way the imagination operates in being confronted with vast magnitudes; a feature of Kant's account that is quite neglected in the literature. In addition I will discuss further criticisms of Kant's account which stipulate that the experience of the sublime is too conceptually loaded, or determined, to be a purely aesthetic judgement. I will here argue that a resolution to this issue must be found in understanding that for Kant it is predominantly indeterminate, and not determinate, ideas of reason that influence our aesthetic response. At the end of this chapter I will discuss and highlight an interesting relation between Kant's account of the unity of space and time as infinite wholes, as presented in the Analytic of the Sublime, and our analysis of Chapter 2 regarding space and time as formal intuitive unities.

#### *The Mathematical Sublime*

The peculiarity of the aesthetic judgement of beauty was that even though it possesses a determinate conceptual content (and thus has a cognitive/conceptual component), it is the relation of the intuition to the faculty of concepts as such that

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<sup>50</sup> Kant's division within the *Critique of the Aesthetic Power of Judgement* (which is the first Division of the *Critique of the Power of Judgement* as such) between two 'Books', the Analytic of the Beautiful and the Analytic of the Sublime, has caused much confusion, not least because of his placement of his discussion of fine art and genius within the Second Book. See (Zammito (1992): 124-136).

determines the particular character of our aesthetic response or reaction, and not to its being brought under any particular concept. This purposiveness of the faculty of intuitions for the faculty of concepts as such is a *felt* purposiveness, which is just to say that what is characteristic of aesthetic judgement is its non-cognitive character, where the feelings of pleasure and displeasure, as feelings, determine or make up our response. As we saw however, what makes an aesthetic judgement of sense different from and aesthetic judgement of reflection is the fact that the feelings of pleasure and displeasure maintain an important relation to the faculty of concepts, and the sublime, like beauty also has a relatedness to concepts which plays an important role in determining the particular aesthetic character of such judgements.

Kant is quick to highlight the similarities between the two kinds of aesthetic response, and at the opening of the *Analytic of the Sublime* Kant makes apparent this similarity between the two kinds of judging:

The beautiful coincides with the sublime in that both please for themselves. And further in that both presuppose neither a judgement of sense nor a logically determining judgement, but a judgement of reflection: consequently the satisfaction does not depend on a sensation, like that in the agreeable, nor on a determinate concept, like the satisfaction in the good; but it is nevertheless still related to concepts, although it is indeterminate which, hence the satisfaction is connected to the mere presentation or to the faculty for that, through which the faculty of presentation of the imagination is considered, in the case of a given intuition, to be in accord with the **faculty of concepts** of the understanding or of reason, as promoting the latter. (*CJ* 5:224)

It is thus clear that it is a purposiveness for the *faculty of concepts* as such that, as in the case of the beautiful, determines the nature of our response to the sublime; and we now learn that there are two different ways in which this purposiveness can be operative: either the intuition is purposive for the faculty of concepts of the *understanding*, or for the faculty of concepts of *reason*. As has been shown, in judgements of beauty it is the purposiveness of the intuition for the faculty of concepts of the understanding that determines our response, where the imagination is engaged with an object the form of which is amenable, or purposive for, the categorisational or sortal function of the understanding, as that which is capable of bringing a more determinate content to our representations. With the sublime however, there is quite a different cognitive story to be told, insofar as here the intuition is purposive for the concepts of *reason* rather than the understanding. What is peculiar about this relation however, is that the intuition is purposive for reason insofar as it is *counter-purposive* for the understanding, and this marks what Kant

calls 'the most important and intrinsic difference between the sublime and the beautiful' (CJ 5:243).

Kant's account of the sublime has a complexity that his account of the beautiful does not, insofar as Kant distinguishes between two experiences of the sublime – the mathematical sublime and the dynamical sublime; where the former is concerned with vast magnitude and the latter is concerned with vast power in nature. However, in the general definition of the sublime that opens the *Analytic of the Sublime*, Kant argues that the counter-purposiveness with regard to the faculty of the understanding has its origins in what is essentially the *formlessness* of objects in nature<sup>51</sup>. Thus vast objects whose magnitude we cannot comprehend are said to be formless insofar as they cannot be easily taken up as single unified representations, and in this sense overwhelm the imaginative function. It is important to note however, that this general account of the sublime seems to accord principally with what Kant calls the mathematically sublime, insofar as this aspect of the sublime is concerned with a magnitude that is too large for presentation, as a singularly comprehended intuition<sup>52</sup>. It is in fact this aspect of the sublime that is the most complex in Kant's analysis, where the role of the infinite with regards to the comprehension of vast magnitude is ambiguous, and which has led to diverse and conflicting commentaries in the secondary literature.

Kant opens his discussion of the mathematical sublime with a distinction between simply saying that something is great, i.e. great without qualification, and saying that something is absolutely great (what Kant calls 'sublime'). With the former kind of judgement Kant argues that it is made without reference to any objective

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<sup>51</sup> Although Kant is explicit in limiting his account to the sublime in nature, as we will see, he uses examples of the sublime in art (the pyramids, St. Paul's cathedral, etc).

<sup>52</sup> Even in Kant's account of the dynamical sublime, where it is the power in nature that determines our response, the mathematical sublime appears to be in some sense operative as a condition of this experience. Thus, in his discussion of the dynamical sublime Kant speaks of 'Bold, overhanging, as it were threatening cliffs, thunder clouds towering up into the heavens, volcanoes with their all-destroying violence, hurricanes with the devastation they leave behind, the boundless ocean set into a rage, a lofty waterfall on a mighty river, etc.' (CJ 5:261) With such examples of the dynamical sublime however, it is clear that magnitude plays a role, for here the sheer magnitude, *in addition* to the sheer force, is what overpowers us. Interestingly the same object can act as the grounds of both kinds of the experience, and Kant elsewhere speaks of the calm ocean 'bounded only by the heavens' (CJ 5:270), where it is clear that this unboundedness and vastness stimulates an experience of the mathematical sublime. In this case however power is not operative in stimulating our response, and thus the relation between the two doesn't work both ways, unless we also construe sheer magnitude as power (which doesn't appear to be the way Kant intends it). Thus Kant's account of the sublime as two distinct kinds of experience is more complex than he would lead us to believe, with at least the mathematical sublime being constitutive of our experience of the dynamically sublime in nature.

standard, but solely with reference to a subjective one. Although Kant isn't very clear on what this amounts to, it appears that with this kind of judgement there is not some determinate standard or set before us, such as horses of particular sizes, against which we judge the greatness of a particular horse, but that there is some standard in our mind such as the general size of horses against which we make our judgement. Consequently there is not some conceptual measure in mind when we make such a judgement, and in this sense Kant refers to this estimate as an 'aesthetic' one, which subsequently serves as a ground of universal communicability (*CJ* 5:249). By contrast, in saying that something is absolutely great, i.e. great beyond all comparison (i.e. sublime) we make a judgement that presupposes no standard outside of it, but must be sought entirely within itself. With reference to objects in nature, because, as physically limited items, they can always be compared to something greater, it is clear that they belong to the first kind of judging, so that something's being simply great, or small is always referred to a subjective standard. If the sublime is that which is absolutely great then it is clear it is not to be sought in things of nature, and thus, so Kant concludes, that it is only through *ideas of reason*, insofar as they do not presuppose any standard outside of them, that something can be called absolutely great, i.e. sublime.

The role of the aesthetic, understood as the sensory, non-conceptually determining aspect of measurement, is important to Kant's next stage in his analysis of the sublime, and here Kant remarks upon the primacy and significance of the aesthetic with reference to mathematical estimation or measurement. Kant initially argues however, that when presented with any vastly great object there are two ways in which we can estimate its magnitude. Either we can obtain a determinate measure through the use of mathematical concepts, or we can make an estimation aesthetically, by eye as it were, judging by how many units one thing would fit into another. Although these are two different ways of measuring magnitude, Kant highlights the primacy of the aesthetic in all estimation or measurement, for he argues that with mathematical estimation we make use of units, and define units by other units, and that any unit can only have sense for us, as a measure, insofar as we can grasp it aesthetically. There would be no sense in our estimating something to be 10ft long if we did not know by eye how long a foot was, or if needed the initial measures that make up a foot<sup>53</sup>. Kant's whole point here is to draw a fundamental

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<sup>53</sup> There is something of a resemblance between Kant's discussion in this section and his discussion of the incongruence of counterparts in the *Prolegomena*, which was a subject of discussion in Chapter 2. Just as in that text Kant here emphasizes the fundamental non-reductive aspect of the aesthetic in our spatial experiences. The non-conceptuality here also consists in the fact that although the perceptual

difference between aesthetic and mathematical estimation in order to highlight that the essential determinant in the mathematically sublime is the failure of our ability to grasp aesthetically vast magnitudes, and this leads to an important further distinction between the activities involved in taking up a quantum into the imagination:

To take up a quantum in the imagination intuitively, in order to be able to use it as a measure or a unit for the estimation of magnitude by means of numbers, involves two actions of this faculty: **apprehension** (*apprehension*) and **comprehension** (*comprehension aethetica*). There is no difficulty with apprehension, because it can go on to infinity; but comprehension becomes ever more difficult the further apprehension advances, and soon reaches its maximum, namely the aesthetically greatest basic measure for the estimation of magnitude. (CJ 5:251-2)

Comprehension becomes more difficult when in surveying a great object or vista, what we have apprehended falls out of view as we proceed to take up more of the object aesthetically, so that comprehension 'loses on one side as much as it gains on the other, and there is in the comprehension a greatest point beyond which it cannot go' (CJ: 5:252). The feeling of the sublime becomes felt when this greatest point is either reached or surpassed, although for Kant it is ambiguous whether both kinds of experience (failed comprehension and successful comprehension that nevertheless strains this faculty to the limit) can trigger the sublime or just that experience of failed comprehension. Thus in the examples that follow the passage just quoted, Kant refers to an experience of the sublime that is got through entering St. Peter's in Rome. Here the sheer vastness of the internal space overwhelms the imaginations attempt at comprehension, whereby the imagination 'reaches its maximum and, in the effort to extend it, sinks back into itself, but is thereby transported into an emotionally moving satisfaction' (CJ 5:252). What is most peculiar here is that this example contrasts with the one immediately before it, in the sense that this prior example locates the optimal emotional experience in the *successful* comprehension in one intuition, and Kant refers to Nicolas Savary's observation in his report on Egypt that 'in order to get the full emotional effect of the magnitude of the pyramids one must neither come too close to them nor be too far away' (CJ: 5:252). Thus there is an ambiguity in what sense the sublime accompanies the experience of the vast

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object must have a conceptual content, qua perceptual, there is an inherent non-conceptual element which is just that element delivered through the space as a formal intuition. Any object must be described conceptually within this space, but this space itself, as that which makes spatiality possible is originally and principally non-conceptual in character.



magnitude, and whether it can be triggered not only by failed comprehension, but also successful comprehension that nevertheless pushes the limits of what can be taken up in a single act.

### *Kant on the Role of the Infinite*

If there is an ambiguity or difficulty with this stage in Kant's argument however, there is an even greater one when it comes to clarifying the role of the infinite in our experience of the sublime. The problem is with the exact role Kant assigns the infinite in determining the nature of our phenomenological (aesthetic) experience and the fact that it doesn't fit easily into Kant's analysis, and can perhaps even be read as non-necessary in satisfactorily explaining (philosophically) such experiences. In the second section of §26, the role of infinity in the experience of the sublime comes more into the fore, and at the opening of the second paragraph Kant writes that;

The imagination, by itself, without anything hindering it, advances to infinity in the comprehension that is requisite for the representation of magnitude; the understanding however, guides this by numerical concepts, for which the former must provide the schema. (*CJ* 5:253)

Kant doesn't tell us why the imagination, 'without anything hindering it, advances to infinity', and this is presented just as a fact about the imagination. Nevertheless, I believe that Kant's argument here can be supported with his account of inner sense as it presented in the first *Critique*, for there we learned that time is directional and proceeds in accordance with the analogy of drawing a line, which if it were to represent time most accurately would be a never-ending line (the disanalogy with a line is that a line is a determinate measure, whereas time is a continual progression). Given that inner sense is the basis of intuition as such it is then not surprising that the imagination would, if unchecked, proceed indefinitely. The understanding however, through the concept of the understanding, provides a determinate mathematical content in the estimation of magnitude, and because of this conceptually determining activity 'there is certainly something objectively purposive in accordance with the concept of an end (such as all measuring is), but nothing that is purposive and pleasing for the aesthetic power of judgement' (*CJ* 5:253). Mathematical estimation itself is also the kind of thing that can proceed indefinitely, and given any particular measure, from one that can be taken up in a single intuition (such as a foot) and one that can't (such as the 'diameter of the earth'), we can

continue proceed unhindered *in apprehension* (logical comprehension but not aesthetic comprehension), to infinity.

However, our minds are not of the kind that are satisfied with infinite progression, where due to the nature of this progression there would be no closed series and thus no totality or completeness of magnitude. Here the importance of the role of reason comes into play, as that which,

Requires totality for all given magnitudes, even for those that can never be entirely apprehended although they are (in the sensible representation) judged as entirely given, hence comprehension in **one** intuition, and it demands a **presentation** for all members of a progressively increasing numerical series, and does not exempt from this requirement even the infinite (space and past time), but rather makes it unavoidable for us to think of it (in the judgement of common reason) as **given entirely** (in its totality).  
(*CJ* 5:254)

The paragraph following this harks back to the discussion that opened the sublime regarding the role of an absolute measure in comparison with which everything (in nature) is small, and Kant here is explicit in telling us that it is the infinite comprehended as a whole that plays this role (of absolute measure), which is also what Kant called the sublime as such. Of course the idea of grasping the infinite as a whole is impossible, as this would require a determinate measure, which can never be given. For Kant however it is '**even to be able to think** the given infinite without contradiction' that is of special significance here, for this 'requires a faculty in the human mind that is itself supersensible' (*CJ* 5:254). The only way in which we can coherently think of the infinite as a whole, given that we cannot think of it as a mathematically unified concept, is as the substratum of the phenomenal world. This substratum must of course be located in a noumenal realm, and in this sense infinity is comprehended as a 'pure intellectual estimation of magnitude **under** a concept' (*CJ* 5:254) (i.e. the concept of a supersensible substrate or underpinning of the phenomenal realm), and is thus made more determinate.

Here Kant has been referring to the infinite as an absolute measure, which is only a measure that reason can generate and in comparison with which everything else is small. The problem is with how infinity as a measure gets into the experience of the sublime and how it operates in determining our response.

### *Crowther - the Superfluity of the Infinite*

Paul Crowther is one of the main commentators on Kant's discussion of the sublime and he is critical of Kant's account, or what he sees as Kant's account, of the role of infinity in our experience of the sublime. Crowther, in his book *The Kantian Sublime* (and subsequently in his later book *The Kantian Aesthetic*), argues that Kant is actually operating with two differing and conflicting lines of argument in his account of the mathematical sublime. There is both what Crowther calls a *baroque* line of argument, and an *austere* line of argument. Crowther sees Kant as running both arguments together which in turn leads to the confusion and complexity of the mathematically sublime, but that when it comes down to an intelligible and plausible philosophical position it is only the austere approach that offers itself. For Crowther, The baroque line of argument sees Kant as arguing that when faced with an object of vast magnitude we are somehow prompted to appeal to infinity as an absolute measure against which the phenomenal object is compared, and in trying to form this absolute measure we find our imagination overwhelmed in the attempt. Imagination thus experiences a humiliation in the attempt to satisfy a demand of reason yet in doing so also finds an exaltation in the fact that there is nevertheless a demand of reason which itself points to a supersensible substrate within us and which enables us to transcend the phenomenal<sup>54</sup>. The austere approach on the other hand, doesn't appeal to any of the architectonics of infinity as a measure as prompted by an experience of the sublime, but just locates the feeling of displeasure in our imaginative inability to comprehend in one intuition a vast object. The feeling of pleasure instead is located in the fact that reason 'requires totality for all given magnitudes' (CJ 5:254), and that although we cannot grasp in intuition such a totality we nevertheless possess the idea of such a totality. The pleasure is in recognising that as noumenal beings who possess such ideas, we have a faculty that transcends the sensible. On this line of argument the infinite as a measure is not operative, so

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<sup>54</sup> Crowther summarily expresses the argument thus: (i) In our encounter with vast formless objects, we are led to estimate the greatness of their magnitude by reference to the absolute measure – namely infinity as a whole. (ii) Yet in searching out this fundamental aesthetic measure imagination is led into a regress that quickly overwhelms its powers of comprehension. It is totally unable to present the measure in terms of the single intuition which reason demands. (iii) Despite this, the felt frustration of imaginations inadequacy gives way to a feeling of pleasure at the fact that – in accordance with our ultimate vocation – reason has triumphed over sensibility and shown, thereby, that we have a faculty that transcends the limitations of our phenomenal being. (Crowther (1991): 100)

that 'there is no reason why infinity should play any necessary role in the experience of the sublime' (Crowther (2010): 179)<sup>55</sup>.

The austere line of argument as Crowther presents it, does have a neatness that matches Kant's more straightforward account of the dynamically sublime, and offers an account that appears to match straightforwardly our phenomenological experience of the sublime. However, it is questionable whether the baroque thesis as Crowther presents it is in fact the way Kant presents his argument, and thereby really captures the role that Kant assigns to the infinite.

The most controversial aspect of Crowther's reading of Kant and his baroque account is to be found in what exactly the role of infinity as a measure is supposed to be playing. Crowther reads Kant as offering a somewhat peculiar account of this, where in stipulating that we are driven to recognize infinity as an absolute measure, we are using this measure as a measure against which the vast phenomenal object is compared, and Crowther writes,

Now, of course, in judging magnitude one can do so either by calculating how many times the relevant unit of measure will fit into the object measured, or by taking a measure which is greater than the measured item and judging how many times the item would fit into it. Kant assumes (without explanation) that it is the latter strategy which holds in the case of vast phenomena. (Crowther (2010): 176)

As mentioned earlier, it is in the effort to grasp the infinite as an absolute measure that the imagination is overwhelmed, and we learn subsequently that this effort is made so as to find an absolute measure against which the phenomenal item can be compared as a unit that fits into infinity as a measure. The reason this account is so peculiar is that, as Crowther points out, that it appears as philosophically superfluous phenomenologically speaking, in the sense that there appears to be no introspective accord between the explanation here offered and the relatively instant experience of the sublime in nature. In addition, it also seems bizarre to postulate

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<sup>55</sup> Crowther does argue however that the infinite may play some role in an overall experience of the sublime, stating with reference to infinity that 'It may be that on occasion vast objects do suggest the idea of infinity to us, but even then this might be explained more economically than in terms of the baroque thesis'. Crowther goes on to argue a vast object may seem infinite and thus be compared to what it may be like to comprehend the idea of infinity as a whole, so that 'On these terms, the suggestion of infinity would be regarded as a by-product of the way the object overwhelms the senses, that is as something which will intensify or enhance the experience of the sublime, rather than something which is necessarily involved in its production'. (Crowther (1991): 105).

that we try to arrive at a measure of the infinite as an intuitive whole against which other unities, or measures, are compared, which in itself is impossible (being only possible as an idea). There would be no way of seeing how many times a vast phenomenal object could fit into something that is itself unbounded.

It should be granted that, due to the difficulty of Kant's argument at this stage of the mathematical sublime, it may indeed appear that he presents his argument in this way, and Crowther sees the passage immediately prior to the one which sets up the distinction between apprehension and comprehension (5:251-2) as especially indicative of this view. Here Kant writes, 'Now for the mathematical estimation of magnitude there is, to be sure, no greatest (for the power of numbers goes on to infinity); but for the aesthetic estimation of magnitude there certainly is a greatest; and about this I say that if it I judged as an absolute measure, beyond which no is greater subjectively (for the judging subject) possible, it brings with it the idea of the sublime' (CJ 5:251). It is certainly not unambiguous however that Kant intends his argument as it is interpreted by Crowther, for, contrary to what Crowther maintains, Kant nowhere actually mentions the attempt to measure the intuition against infinity, as a unit that would fit into it so many times. It *is clear* however that infinity as a supreme measure is supposed to play an important role in determining our aesthetic response. It is also apparent that the sensible object is involved in somehow triggering the experience of the infinite, and after arguing that the infinite is only possible as an idea of reason Kant tells us that, 'Nature is thus sublime in those of its appearances the intuition of which brings with them the idea of its infinity', and that 'the latter cannot happen except through the inadequacy of even the greatest effort of our imagination in the estimation of the magnitude of the object' (CJ 5:255). The closeness of the relation between our experience of the sublime and the experience of the infinite is here apparent, for it is only insofar as an object invokes infinity that the sublime is experienced<sup>56</sup>. But this is only possible if the imagination finds itself inadequate in successfully comprehending an object. Yet the question remains why must our failing to comprehend in a single intuition what is before us prompt a cognitive move towards the infinite.

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<sup>56</sup> The strength of this claim leads Crowther to essentially ignore its importance, for it goes beyond what the austere version maintains.

Certain writers have appealed to the importance of this stage in Kant's argument in their interpretation of the mathematically sublime, just as they have been dismissive of Crowther's austere recommendation and his ambition to limit the role of the infinite as a determinant of aesthetic response, and Patricia Matthews argues that the infinite is invoked because an object *seems* to be infinite when it cannot be taken up in a single act of comprehension:

When Kant speaks of using imagination to comprehend the infinite, he is speaking of the infinite as the object in nature that we are trying to measure. From a subjective point of view, this object *seems* infinite. We are not trying to measure the infinite independently of the object in nature. There is not one view according to which imagination attempts to comprehend the infinite as a whole and use it as a measure in estimating the object (the baroque thesis), and another view according to which the imagination attempts to comprehend the object as a whole (the austere thesis). Further, the reference to reason's idea of the infinite is not gratuitous, but is implied when the object that imagination tries to grasp as a whole seems infinite. (Matthews (1996): 173)

For Matthews then the idea of infinity is prompted when, as far as we can tell, the phenomenal object seems to go on forever, as unbounded. Because this thought strains the imagination, as it were, in an attempt to represent it, we experience a displeasure. But we experience a pleasure when we nevertheless recognize that we possess the idea (of reason) of the infinite, and thereby partake of the noumenal, as well as the sensible realm. On this account there is no postulating of the idea that we search out the infinite as a measure against which we compare the phenomenal object (the baroque thesis), yet the infinite is assigned a key role insofar as through the object it triggers the experience of the sublime<sup>57</sup>.

I believe Matthews account to be closer to the actual text of the mathematical sublime, insofar as it recognizes the importance of Kant's contention that nature is sublime in those of its appearances which brings with them the idea of its infinity. The infinite on this account doesn't look to be a strained additive inserted for both

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<sup>57</sup> Henry Allison essentially offers the same point, stating that when confronted with the overwhelmingly vast 'the imagination finds itself stretched beyond its natural limits, unable to comprehend in a single intuition the magnitude that is appearance suggests. In other words, such objects present themselves to the imagination *as if* they were absolutely great. (Allison (2001): 232)

architectonic and historical reasons<sup>58</sup>, but a more intuitive feature of what we do experience in incomprehensible vastness, viz. its neverendingness. Nevertheless, there remains something unsatisfactory about the idea that phenomenal vastness just seems to be infinite, for as Crowther points out in response to Matthews,

a phenomenon can surely be experienced as *overwhelming* per se without appearing to be infinite. Indeed, if one person insists that the infinite must be involved, then another, with equal validity, can claim that this is not the case, in so far as they can find no introspective evidence that it figures in their own experience of the sublime. (Crowther (2010): 181n)

However, if we can locate the move towards infinity as a necessary feature of the way we negotiate the vastly overwhelming in nature, then even if it is not immediately (phenomenologically) obvious that the infinite is a determinant in an experience of the sublime, there may be some argument for grounding its role in determining this response<sup>59</sup>.

Perhaps the only way of grounding such necessity is in appealing to what Kant states as a fact about the way the imagination functions, and this is the passage discussed earlier at (*CJ* 5:253) where Kant stated without explanation that, 'The imagination, by itself, without anything hindering it, advances to infinity in the composition that is requisite for the representation of magnitude'. Although Kant goes on to discuss this with reference to the role of the understanding as guiding this progression determinately through numerical concepts, it nevertheless tells us something about the imagination as it functions of its own accord in representing magnitude. Thus if it is a necessary feature of the imagination to run to infinity unchecked (and remember we supported this claim with Kant's account in the first *Critique* whereby it is the essential character of inner sense to run on in analogy with a never-ending line and is in liaison with the understanding in generating a synthesis through concepts), then insofar as we are experiencing something unbounded (overwhelmingly vast) that aesthetically does not limit the intuition, then there is a sense in which the imagination is unhindered in its attempt to comprehend the item. If the intuition was bounded there would clearly be no need for the imagination to advance beyond its comprehension, but because it is unbounded the imagination runs onwards. Here it needn't be maintained that the object actually seems to be infinite (Matthews), but just that the object isn't limited

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<sup>58</sup> See (Crowther 1991: 105-6) for his arguments as to why he thinks that Kant aimed at making infinity a key determinant of sublime aesthetic response.

<sup>59</sup> This is say that perhaps other introspective, or philosophical analytic, evidence can be located for supporting the argument.

by an act of comprehension, and so prompts an experience of the minds running on to infinity (we don't thereby say that the object as such appears to be infinite, but that the experience of infinity is stimulated)<sup>60</sup>. On this account the displeasure arises from the frustration of trying to form a sensible idea of this as a totality, whereas the pleasure arises from being able to grasp it as an idea of reason, so that,

Just because there is in our imagination a striving to advance to the infinite, while in our reason there lies a claim to absolute totality, as to a real idea, the very inadequacy of our faculty for estimating the magnitude of the things of the sensible world awakens the feeling of a supersensible faculty in us. (CJ 5:250)

Thus there is no grasping of infinity as in some sense a determinate measure against which we measure the vast object, which in turn stimulates an experience of the supersensible (Crowther). It is rather that infinity is stimulated through the experience of unbounded phenomena, and because reason demands totality in the presentation of magnitude, the *idea* of infinity as a whole (an absolute measure - noumenal substrate) is generated, thereby showing that we are at least able to think of infinity as a whole even if we cannot grasp such an idea aesthetically.

In support of this argument it should be noted that towards the end of the section on the mathematical sublime Kant further elaborates upon the differences between apprehension and comprehension with reference to the difference between a temporal and an instant synthesis of spatiality. These remarks are important and much neglected in that they make reference to the function of inner sense in the measurement of space, which we have argued is important in making sense of Kant's contention that the imagination proceeds unchecked to infinity, and Kant writes that,

The measurement of a space (as apprehension) is at the same time the description of it, thus an objective movement in the imagination and a progression; by contrast, the comprehension of multiplicity in the unity not of thought but of intuition, hence the comprehension in one moment of that which is successfully apprehended, is a regression, which in turn cancels the

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<sup>60</sup> In *The Sublime in Kant and Beckett* Bjørn K. Myskja sides with Matthews against Crowther's reading of the mathematical sublime. In agreement with what we have stated Myskja states that it is not quite precise to say that the object we are calling sublime *seems* to be infinite but that 'at most, it seems limitless' (Myskja (2002): 135). As we are arguing, what the sublime does is lead the imagination to an idea of reason, which in this case is the infinite. Myskja however leaves his account there and doesn't discuss why the imagination operates in this manner.



time-condition in the progression of the imagination and makes **simultaneity** intuitable. (*CJ* 5:258-9)

The taking up 'in one moment', i.e. in an instant, of an intuition does what Kant calls 'violence' to the faculty of inner sense, insofar as this latter faculty proceeds successively. It may be thought that Kant's argument at this stage invalidates the argument I have just put forward, insofar as inner-sense is thwarted by the comprehension of magnitude. But the point is that with the overwhelmingly vast we are unable to take up an intuition 'in one moment' so that the imagination as temporally progressive, doesn't find the 'time condition' to be cancelled, but finds it to be opened as it were, insofar as there is no bounds to limit its movement. Thus although in engaging with everyday objects we put a check upon inner sense every time we successfully comprehend (take up in one moment) an object, with the overwhelmingly vast we free-up this faculty so that it will advance towards infinity, in turn bringing about the experience of the sublime. Because we possess reason however our mind 'requires totality for all given magnitudes, even for those that can never be entirely apprehended although they are (in the sensible representation) judged as entirely given' (*CJ* 5:254). Thus even though there is an open-ended infinite progressing in the synthesis of time, reason demands that even this movement towards the infinite be thought of as a totality, so that the positing of a noumenal supersensible substrate (infinity as an absolute totality) is necessitated.

On this account of the sublime then we have rejected Crowther's reading of the mathematical sublime to the effect that the 'baroque' line as he presents it isn't really Kant's position at all. We have also rejected his austere reading insofar as, although presenting a neatly straightforward account, it is too far away from Kant's actual line of argument where the infinite is indeed presented as playing a necessary role in determining aesthetic response (of the mathematically sublime kind). This hasn't been however just to satisfy architectonic concerns, for it has turned out that Kant has a good reason for positing the move towards infinity as an aesthetic measure we cannot grasp intuitively, and this comes from the fact that inner-sense, when uninhibited, will run onwards towards an infinite synthesis in the imagination. Thus we have been able to develop and sustain Kant's notion, which Matthews, Allison and Myskja have supported, that 'Nature is thus sublime in those of its appearances the intuition of which brings with them the idea of its infinity'.

### *Sublimity and the Role of Concepts*

Where the concept of 'play' seemed well fitted to an analysis of the beautiful, it is less obviously well fitted to an analysis of the sublime. In experiencing the beautiful we are experiencing a phenomenal order that is well adapted, or purposive, for the faculty of cognition as such (as the faculty of concepts) where this sensible content is independent of, or apart from, determination under a particular concept. In this sense, conceptually speaking, there is an indeterminacy about the experience, for in any representation there remains an irredeemably aesthetic component, and where this is of a particular formal arrangement, the intuition is in a playful rapport with the faculty of concepts, as offering easiness and suggestiveness of fit, even though, as was discussed in the previous chapter, the intuition is brought under some, more or less determinate, concept(s).

With the sublime however, that the imagination and reason, as opposed to the imagination and understanding, are supposed to be in play (CJ 5:258) is more difficult to appreciate. Here the imagination isn't suggesting possible schematisations, or the intuition's fittedness for the subsumptive function of the understanding, and, as we have seen, a necessary determinant of the experience of the mathematically sublime is that the object be found actually counter-purposive for the faculty of the understanding. Thus the relevant purposiveness, insofar as there is a one determining the experience of the sublime, is the imaginations being purposiveness for the faculty of reason. That the faculty of the imagination is *purposive* for the faculty of reason is perhaps easier to appreciate than that the cognitive relation between them is one of *play*. The purposiveness here however, as Kant tells us, is born out of a *conflict* between imagination and reason rather than a harmony, and, with the mathematically sublime, this consists in our having,

a feeling that we have pure self-sufficient reason, or a faculty for estimating magnitude, whose preeminence cannot be made intuitable through anything except the inadequacy of that faculty which is itself unbounded in the presentation of magnitudes (of sensible objects). (CJ 5:258)

Because we can form the idea of the infinite as a supersensible totality, as an idea of reason, our interest in the overwhelmingly vast is awakened and maintained. It is also apparent that this awakening of reason has an important moral significance (insofar as reason is the source of moral ideas), and that the relation of reason to the sensible is somehow purposive for this moral experience, and 'produce[s] a disposition of the mind which is in conformity with them [viz. ideas of reason] and

compatible with that which the influence of determinate (practical) ideas on feeling would produce' (CJ 5:256). The trouble with Kant's account of the sublime however, is that in arguing that the purposiveness in question is a purposiveness for ideas of reason, here, unlike with our experience of the beautiful, it appears that our aesthetic experience in being determined, essentially lies in the generation of quite determinate concepts, so that our experience of the sublime is less an aesthetic experience but more akin to a determinate moral experience.

As articulated in the literature, the criticism is that our experience of the sublime appears to be more like moral experience than aesthetic experience (and for Crowther this is especially true of the dynamical sublime), and that because quite determinate concepts are involved, the character of disinterestedness is essentially lost insofar as we take a strong interest in practical ideas of reason, thus again jeopardizing the sublime's aesthetic character. It should be remembered however, that as an aesthetic judgement of taste as opposed to an aesthetic judgement of sense, there must be something that grounds the universality inherent within such judgements, and that in the case of the beautiful the pleasure in the experience was grounded in a perceived, or felt purposiveness for the faculty of cognition as such. The pleasure in the sublime on the other hand is grounded in a felt purposiveness of the experience for ideas of reason, insofar as they are awakened and sustained, and the question is whether the right kind of indeterminacy, or non-cognitivism is here operative. What is essential then is the exact role of certain concepts in determining our response.

Concerning the role of concepts of reason determining our aesthetic response, Crowther writes;

In this respect, for example, we not only have to recognize the superiority of reason over imagination, but also to know that this is in accordance with the broader demands of reason. Our pleasure arises, we will recall, 'from the correspondence of this very judgement of the inadequacy of the greatest sensible faculty in comparison with ideas of reason, insofar as striving for them is nevertheless a law for us' [CJ §27]. This means that, in Kant's exposition, the sublime hinges on quite specific (morally significant) concepts concerning *the scope and significance of reason*. This determinate conceptual content, of course raises problems concerning the sublime's aesthetic status. (Crowther (2010): 180)

Not only are certain morally significant concepts here operative in determining our response to the sublime in nature but theoretically significant concepts of reason

must also be operative, insofar as the infinite as underlying supersensible substrate is central in determining the pleasure in the sublime<sup>61</sup>.

However, what should be noted first of all in response to Crowther's criticism is that these concepts are not determinate (a 'determinate conceptual content') but essentially *indeterminate*. Although there are facts of reason which determine and govern our actions and self-perceptions, for the most part these actions and self-perceptions do not consist in a determinate awareness of these determinants. One of the reasons Kant's account of the mathematically sublime is difficult to access is that it posits somewhat alien determinants in terms of what governs our response, and the average person standing in front of the supremely vast would perhaps never guess at the idea of infinity grasped as a noumenal substrate as being what is responsible for their pleasurable response (although a feeling for infinity of some kind may be felt, and the term itself is often appealed to in such experiences, albeit not necessarily in the way Kant elaborates upon it<sup>62</sup>). However, even here, the issue isn't that of any particular, even indefinite, concept determining our response in terms of accounting for our pleasure in the sublime, for Kant himself is explicit in arguing against such a view. Here it is helpful to appeal to the argument of our previous chapter, where we noted that what is essential in understanding the nature of the purposiveness in the experience of the beautiful is that the intuition is purposive for the *faculty* of the concepts of the understanding. By contrast, in the case of the sublime, the intuition is said to be purposive for the *faculty* of the concepts of *reason*. Thus it is not a purposiveness for any particular, even indeterminate concept that characterizes our response to the sublime, and about this Kant writes;

Thus, just as the aesthetic power of judgement in judging the beautiful relates the imagination in its free play to the **understanding**, in order to agree with its **concepts** in general (without determination of them), so in judging a thing

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<sup>61</sup> In addition to Crowther's arguments see (Myskja (2002): 115-149).

<sup>62</sup> In an interesting recollection by Thomas De Quincey in *Recollections of the Lakes and the Lake Poets*, De Quincey recalls a conversation with William Wordsworth whilst both were eagerly anticipating, at midnight, the delivery of a newspaper. A connection between vast magnitude and a sense of the infinite is apparent when De Quincey recalls Wordsworth as saying: ' [...] Just now, my ear was placed upon the stretch, in order to catch any sound of wheels that might come down upon the lake of Wythburn from the Keswick Road; at the very instant when i raised my head from the ground, in final abandonment of hope for this night, at the very instant when the organs of attention were all at once relaxing from their tension, the bright star hanging in the air above these outlines of massy blackness fell suddenly upon my eye, and penetrated my capacity of apprehension with a pathos and a sense of the infinite, that would not have arrested me under other circumstances'. (De Quincey (1970): 160)

to be sublime the same faculty is related to **reason**, in order to correspond subjectively with its **ideas** (though which is undetermined). (*CJ* 5:256)

It may be thought that this an inconsistency on Kant's part, for what his essential to his analysis of the mathematical sublime is that what is essentially responsible for determining our response is reasons idea of infinity as underlying noumenal substratum. However as we have noted, this idea is not pervasive in its effect upon our phenomenal experience. Although this idea is responsible for our experience, the phenomenal character of our experience is predominantly determined by the felt relation to the *faculty* of concepts of reason as such, where this is a felt purposiveness for the faculty of reason as such, as that which is the source of practical ideas (thus it is a felt purposiveness for morality as such). In order to account for the phenomenologically felt differences between the mathematically and dynamically sublime (although Kant was the first to recognize a distinction in kind here, and in common parlance there is no distinction), it must just be recognized that there are different operations of reason going on, although in both cases it is only through philosophical analysis that the differences become clear, and that phenomenologically speaking in both cases it is a purposiveness for the faculty of the concepts of reason as such (and by implication a purposiveness for the moral within us as such) that accounts for the felt character of our experience.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Myskja highlights the worry that because the determinant of the experience of the mathematical sublime is an idea of theoretical reason rather than practical reason, Kant cannot really claim that our experience of the mathematically sublime generates a feeling for our supersensible vocation (Myskja (2002): 141). In his 'General Remark on the exposition of aesthetic reflective judgements' however, Kant signals the connection between the theoretical and moral aspects of reason when he states that:

The object of a pure and unconditioned intellectual satisfaction is the moral law in all its power... and, since this power actually makes itself aesthetically knowable only through sacrifices (which is a deprivation, although in behalf of inner freedom, but also reveals in us an unfathomable depth of this supersensible faculty together with its consequences reaching beyond what can be seen), the satisfaction on the aesthetic side (in relation to sensibility) is negative... but considered from the intellectual side it is positive... From this it follows that the intellectual, intrinsically purposive (moral good), judged aesthetically, must not be represented so much as beautiful but rather as sublime, so that it arouses more the feeling of respect (which scorns charm) than that of love and intimate affection, since human nature does not agree with that good of its own accord, but only through the dominion that reason exercises over sensibility. (*CJ* 5:271)

Although Kant here indicates that there is a connection between the aesthetic and the moral experience, it must be conceded that Kant is sparing on the details as to how the relation between the experience of the infinite as supersensible substratum and moral reason is exactly to be characterised. However, just in so far as the experience of the mathematically sublime is characterised by a sense of humiliation at the inadequacy of our sensible self, and then an elevation and sense of reverence or

In a sense then it is not surprising that Kant should argue that the sublime requires a greater level of sophistication than the beautiful, for, as we have seen, experiencing the sublime pre-supposes a developed and refined feeling for morality, or a developed sense of what it means for reason to place demands upon our phenomenal selves. Thus Kant writes that,

There are innumerable things in beautiful nature concerning which we immediately require consensus with our own judgement from everyone else and can also, without being especially prone to error, expect it; but we cannot promise ourselves that our judgement concerning the sublime in nature will so readily find acceptance by others. For a far greater culture, not merely of the aesthetic power of judgement, but also of the cognitive faculties on which that is based, seems to be requisite in order to be able to make a judgement about this excellence of the objects of nature. (CJ 5:264)

However, it is important to notice that although an experience of the sublime requires greater culture, it is not elitist, or academic in acquiring this access. For although this greater culture essentially consists in the possession or development of 'moral ideas' (CJ 5:265), these ideas are not so determinate as to limit access to the sublime to an elite few, such as the fact that in moral action our decisions and actions are governed by universality as such, i.e. the categorical imperative, or that this thereby locates us in part in a noumenal realm insofar as we consider ourselves free agents. What is characteristic are that these ideas are *felt* rather than comprehended conceptually, and that it is because of this that access to the sublime is not restrictive. Thus Kant writes of the judgement of the sublime that 'it has its foundation in human nature, and indeed in that which can be required of everyone and demanded of him along with a healthy understanding, namely in the predisposition to the

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respect for what is absolutely great (the infinite), then there is an analogue with moral experience where our phenomenal, sensible self, which doesn't act in accordance with good of its own nature, is humbled by the demands placed upon by the moral law; the latter of which can only be located in a noumenal realm and identified through reason. Again a conceptual awareness of this relation is not what is determining the aesthetic response, for the sense of relatedness between the two experiences are beneath the surface as it were, and slightly earlier to the above passage Kant writes that: 'The satisfaction in the sublime in nature is thus only negative... namely a feeling of the deprivation of the freedom of the imagination by itself, insofar as it is purposively determined in accordance with a law other than that of empirical use. It thereby acquires an enlargement and power which is greater than that which it sacrifices, *but whose ground is hidden from it, whereas it feels the sacrifice or deprivation and at the same time the cause to which it is subjected*' (CJ 5:269 Italics my emphasis). I understand 'feeling' here to be opposed to cognising, which would make the judgement non-aesthetic.

feeling for (practical)ideas, i.e. to that which is moral' (CJ 5:265)<sup>64</sup>. What this indicates is a more aesthetic or non-conceptually based relation to the moral domain, and thus more of a felt (or non-cognitive) relationship between the intuition and reason. In addition, it is only through such an indeterminacy that the judgement of the sublime can be said to be a reflective one, insofar as the imagination remains undetermined by any conceptual content<sup>65</sup>, but can be said to reflect on the content with regard to moral significance (although as stated, of what exact kind remains undetermined). It is also only on this account that we can make any sense of the idea of play between imagination and reason. Because it is a felt purposiveness of the intuition for the faculty of the concepts of reason as such, the imagination can be said to engage and re-engage with the intuition, so that the experience is open-ended as it were.

### *The Unity of Space and Time*

Central to our earlier chapters, especially Chapter 2, was recognising the importance of space and time as formal wholes delivered through inner and outer sense and through which it is possible for us to place things in space and time and have spatiotemporal perceptions/experiences. Although this is of no central concern to the argument of the third *Critique*, as Kant is not concerned here with the conditions of cognition as such (which gave rise to recognising the importance of space and time as formal wholes), but with a particular kind of cognition (aesthetic and teleological), there is nevertheless an interesting resonance with his argument for the mathematical sublime. What makes for an arguable interconnection between the two accounts is that both place special emphasis upon space and time as unified wholes. The difference is that in the case of the first *Critique* the formal wholes of space and time were just delivered through inner and outer sense, whereas in the third *Critique* the significance of the whole of space and time as comprehended is something delivered through reason. This betrays a fundamental difference between what each

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<sup>64</sup> In relation to the connections between the sublime and morality more generally Paul Guyer has argued that the connections here are part of an overall task on Kant's behalf to show how aesthetic experience can help us realise our own moral autonomy without undermining its own uniquely autonomous (i.e. aesthetic) character (although Guyer is much more sympathetic to the dynamical, as opposed to the mathematical sublime in this respect). See Guyer's 'Bridging the Gulf: Kant's Project in the Third *Critique*' in *A Companion to Kant*, Edited by Graham Bird (2010).

<sup>65</sup> As Matthews points out, Crowther's austere reading of the mathematically sublime appears to amount to a determinate form of judgement rather than reflective, as we would no longer continue to reflect on the object causing the sublime experience when 'reasons idea of a totality completed the assessment for us'. (Matthews (1996): 174)

account aims to show. In the Transcendental Deduction of the first *Critique*, regarding the unity of space and time, Kant, it will be recalled, wrote the following;

Space, represented as **object** (as is really required in geometry), contains more than the mere form of intuition, namely the **comprehension** of the manifold given in accordance with the form of sensibility in an **intuitive** representation, so that the **form of intuition** merely gives the manifold, but the **formal intuition** gives unity of the representation. In the Aesthetic I ascribed this unity merely to sensibility, only in order to note that it precedes all concepts, though to be sure it presupposes a synthesis, which does not belong to the senses but through which all concepts of space and time first become possible. For since through it (as the understanding determines sensibility) space or time are first **given** as intuitions, the unity of this *a priori* intuition belongs to space and time, and not to the concept of the understanding. (*CPR* B160-1)

It is clear here that Kant is concerned with the generation of space and time as formal wholes as purely *a priori* cognitive entities, where this is a pre-conceptual synthesis essential to the worlds being represented as spatiotemporal in the first place. In the analytic of the sublime by contrast, the significance of space and time as wholes has what we might call an externalist rather than internalist import. The only way to comprehend the infinity of space and time as unified wholes is through the idea of their being a supersensible substrate operating as the basis of the phenomenal world. This clearly makes reference to a unified space and time apart from us and which we comprehend only through reason, and this is quite apparent when Kant, when discussing the estimation of magnitude, writes,

The mind hears in itself the voice of reason, which requires totality for all given magnitudes, even for those that can never be entirely apprehended although they are (in the sensible representation) judged as entirely given, hence comprehension in **one** intuition, and it demands a **presentation** for all members of a progressively increasing numerical series, and does not exempt from this requirement even the infinite (space and past time), but rather makes it unavoidable for us to think of it (in the judgement of common reason) as **given entirely** (in its totality). (*CJ* 5:254)

Grasping infinity here (the whole of space and past time) as intelligible substratum is clearly different from possessing space and time as formal wholes of inner and outer sense. It would be highly artificial however to construe an account of space and time as externalist that isn't somehow grounded in, or making reference to, Kant's internalist, or first *Critique* account, of space and time. This is because space and time, although predicated as external and as something in which we phenomenally



exist, is essentially generated *a priori* in inner and outer sense, so that it would be highly misleading, as far as reading Kant goes, to speak of a space and time apart from us. Thus as we have seen, it is the imagination that runs on to infinity because it is the nature of inner sense to do so when not held in check by the limiting function of the understanding and by successful comprehension in a single intuition. So although Kant makes reference only to reason as generating our comprehension of space and time as infinite whole, there must be some connection with the functions of inner and outer sense as making this recognition possible. Perhaps the natural way to make this connection is in seeing that the only way we can form the idea of infinity as a whole is if we somehow possess this capacity in the first place. We know that the time-condition in the progression of the imagination when not checked through successful comprehension will proceed towards infinity. Yet Kant also tells us that our mind demands the grasping of infinity as a whole in accordance with the higher demands of reason. The only way we can be said to make perform this second task is if space and time are already presented to inner and outer sense, as formal wholes in the first place. This is not of course an aesthetic presentation but an intuitive ground that makes the idea of infinity as a whole possible in the first place<sup>66</sup>.

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<sup>66</sup> The case here is somewhat similar with the 'absolute space' as Kant accounts for it in the *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*. Here Kant introduces the notion of space as an *idea of reason*, which contrasts with space as an intuition and space as a concept as they are accounted for the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Space as an idea of reason, or what Kant also calls 'absolute space', like other ideas of theoretical reason, makes reference to an incomplete totality of concepts, which here is the totality of all possible relative spaces. Relative space is the perceivable empirical framework whereby the motion and position of bodies and their structures may be detected. Yet this relative space is only conceivable in its being located in a larger space, which is itself another relative space. Because this regress of relative spaces goes on to infinity, the idea of an absolute space must be posited as that which must, contrary to relative space, be absolute and immaterial, insofar as if it were a material perceivable space we could only make sense of it within another spatial framework. Consequently this idea of an absolute space is '*in itself* nothing, and no object at all' and is a 'pure, nonempirical, and absolute space, with which I compare any empirical space, and in which I can represent the latter as moveable (so that the enlarged space always counts a immovable) (MFNS 4:481-2). As an absolute spatial framework, this idea of space bears some similarity with space as formal intuition. The difference is however that absolute space as an idea of reason is arrived at through a regress in spatial comprehension, whereas space as an intuition is presupposed as the possibility of the representation of space as such. Consequently absolute space as an idea of reason, just like the infinite space as supersensible substratum, is only possible only on the pre-supposition of the unity of space as formal intuition.

## Chapter 6

### Kant's Creation Aesthetic: Genius, Taste and Seeming Like Nature

So far in our discussion of Kant's account of the role of concepts in governing aesthetic experience we have focused on the issue of aesthetic responsiveness, and what it means to have an aesthetic response or reaction to a particular configuration that is before us. In terms of a distinction that is drawn in the literature, this means that we have been focusing on providing an account of a 'reception aesthetic', where we have been concerned with the conditions that must be in place in order to have an aesthetic response, and with explicating these conditions within a Kantian framework in order to provide a satisfactory theory and interpretation. There is another aspect of Kant's theory of taste however, that is concerned with what is called a 'creation aesthetic'. This further aspect of Kant's overall account of aesthetic activity is to be found in the latter stages of the third *Critique*, and is concerned with the conditions that must be in place in order to *create* rather than respond to an aesthetic product (i.e. work of art). It is clear that, in order to create a successful aesthetic configuration, it is not enough just to be able to have an aesthetic response, or a particularly heightened aesthetic sensitivity, and that something other than mere aesthetic responsiveness must be possessed in order to be able to create aesthetic works (although to be sure aesthetic sensitivity and responsiveness will be a necessary condition for aesthetic creation). What this something else is, and how this bears upon the both the intuitive and conceptual aspects of cognition, is the subject of this chapter. Of central concern is Kant's contention that 'Beautiful art is an art to the extent that it seems at the same time to be nature', and with exploring what it means for 'nature' to act through an individual in aesthetic creativity.

#### *Aesthetic Creativity*

Kant's discussion of art begins at section 43 under the title 'On art in general'. In this preliminary section, which precedes the more explicit focus on beautiful, or fine art, Kant begins to define art through distinguishing it from various other phenomena and human activity. Thus art is firstly distinguished from *nature*, as an intentional work is distinguished from an effect whose determining ground (i.e. the reason for

its existence) is not governed through intention (i.e. through an end determining the cause and subsequently the effect). Secondly art is distinguished from *science*. Kant accounts for the difference here as a distinction between a practical and a theoretical faculty, where the latter as opposed to the former is concerned with learning and applying theoretical principles. Already here it can be seen that there is a particular non-cognitive element to artistic creation, which is unique insofar as it is an ability that is never sure if it is equal to its end, with Kant stating that 'thus that which one **can** do as soon as one **knows** what should be done is not exactly called art. Only that which one does not immediately have the skill to do even if one knows it completely belongs to that extent to art.' (CJ 5:303-4). Third and finally, Kant distinguishes art from *handicraft*. Kant appears to present two reasons for this distinction, and the first, less convincing argument, is that with handicraft its production is burdensome, and is in itself only attractive because of its remunerative results, whereas the production of fine art is regarded as agreeable in itself, and not because of any remuneration. The second, more convincing argument that Kant gives for this distinction is that art is distinguished from handicraft because art requires more talent. What exactly this talent consists in is at this stage undeveloped, but it is apparent from Kant's subsequent discussion of this distinction that it is in its mechanical aspect that handicraft is distinguished from art, and that the latter is art precisely insofar as it has something free in it, which we will subsequently see means non-rule governed.

With the next section Kant begins his discussion of beautiful, or fine art, and what is most relevant for our purposes in this section is his distinction within what he calls aesthetic art (as opposed to mechanical art) between *agreeable art* and *beautiful art*. The former kind of art for Kant is that which 'is aimed at mere enjoyment', and comes down to a kind of skill in facilitating social gatherings, such as the art of 'telling entertaining stories, getting the company talking in an open and lively manner, creating by means of jokes and laughter a certain tone of merriment', etc. (CJ 5:305). The second kind of art however contrasts with agreeable art in that, as beautiful art, it 'is a kind of representation that is purposive in itself'. Because of the universality inherent within this purposiveness (being purposive for the faculty of cognition as such), '[this] universal communicability of a pleasure already includes in its concept that this must not be a pleasure of enjoyment, from mere sensation, but one of reflection; and thus aesthetic art, as beautiful art, is one that has the reflecting power of judgement and not mere sensation as its standard' (CJ 5:306). Thus beautiful art is beautiful precisely insofar as it engages the faculty of cognition in its reflective aspect (i.e. its judgemental aspect), where although not actually seeking a

determinate concept for the representation before us, we reflect upon its content as purposive for the faculty of concepts as such.

The particular cognitive aspect of our response to beautiful art Kant goes on to discuss in the next section, and something of the complexity of this kind of aesthetic response is noted insofar as with this kind of response we are responding to something that is intentionally produced through human means. This essentially means that in being faced with an artwork we are conscious of an intention on behalf of the artist in its production and existence ('In a product of art one must be aware that it is art' (CJ 5:306)). Kant's concern here is with highlighting the fact that the production of an artwork depends on certain rules for its production, and the representation of an end that brings the art work into existence (it doesn't just spontaneously appear). The worry here is that this rule based aspect of a work of beautiful art invalidates or corrupts what ought to be the non-cognitive aspect of our response to a beautiful object, where it is not through any particular conceptual recognition that our pleasurable response is determined, and Kant writes that,

**That is beautiful which pleases in the mere judging** (neither in sensation nor through a concept). Now art always has a determinate intention of producing something. If however this were a mere sensation (something merely subjective) that is supposed to be accompanied with pleasure, then this product would please, in the judging, only by means of the feeling of sense. If the intention were aimed at the production of a determinate object, then, if it were achieved through art, the object would please only through concepts. But in either case the art would not please **in the mere judging**, i.e., it would not please as beautiful art but as mechanical art. (CJ 5:306)

If the rule was the pervasive feature of the work, then the 'feeling of freedom in the play of our cognitive powers' would be hindered, and the judgement would be based on the perception of the successful execution of a rule for production (the successful production of the end – mechanical art). The paradox is how the purposiveness in the art work can be free (i.e. unintentional) although the representation of an end (and intention) governed the work's production. Kant's beginning of a solution to this problem begins by stating that with a work of art 'the purposiveness of its form must still seem to be as free from all constraint by arbitrary rules as if it were a mere product of nature' (CJ 5:306) (hence the section's heading that 'Beautiful art is an art to the extent that it seems at the same time to be nature'). The difficulty is then how artistic creation can seem to be like a non-intentionally governed act, i.e. as though created by nature.

Kant's means of solving this problem is through his introduction of genius, and with his introduction of this concept we make the move from a reception aesthetic, with reference to what it means to have a response to beautiful art, to a creation aesthetic, and the conditions that must be in place in order to create a work, or works, of beautiful art. Kant begins his discussion of genius with a preliminary definition which is immediately refined, so that the opening passage runs thus:

**Genius** is the talent (natural gift) that gives the rule to art. Since the talent, as an inborn productive faculty of the artist, itself belongs to nature, this could also be expressed thus: **Genius** is the inborn predisposition of the mind (*ingenium*) **through which** nature gives the rule to art. (CJ 5:307)

The introduction of this notion clearly offers a tentative solution to the problem as to how a work of art must seem both intentionally created and unintentional at the same time: it is because nature acts through the genius that nature manifests itself, as it were, in the work of art. Because the 'rule' is delivered by nature, somehow this satisfies the demand of an artwork not being conceptually governed. Kant's introducing here the notion of the genius making use of some kind of non-conceptually governed rules is quite striking, and regarding this Kant writes that,

The concept of beautiful art[,] does not allow the judgement concerning the beauty of its product to be derived from any sort of rule that has a **concept** for its determining ground, and thus has as its ground a concept of how it is possible. Thus beautiful art cannot itself think up the rule in accordance with which it is to bring its product into being. (CJ 5:307)

This notion is so striking because a rule tends to be thought of as something that is inherently conceptually determined, and in its being put to use proceeds according to determinate ends (I can't make bread unless I possess its concept). However, we have seen that the rule based element of artistic production threatens to rob beautiful art of its non-end based purposiveness, and mechanical art is not fine art precisely insofar as it embodies determinate rules in its presentation. This is just what Kant's notion of non-concept based rules is supposed to overcome: not only is our response to beautiful art based upon its embodying non-conceptually determinate rules, the creation of a work of art itself depends upon a special ability to employ non-conceptually-determinate rules in bringing about the end product. How exactly such rules come to be applied by the genius in artistic production is something Kant not elaborated in any detail, and there is an inherent obscurity in the notion and in the sense in which non-determinate rules interacts with determinate rules which govern artistic production. This is a difficult aspect of Kant's theory. For on the one hand the

genius, with nature acting through him, must make use of rules that do not have concepts for their determining ground, and Kant asks,

Since the gift of nature must give the rule to art (as beautiful art), what sort of rule is this? It cannot be couched in a formula to serve as a precept, for then the judgement about the beautiful would be determinable in accordance with concepts; rather, the rule must be abstracted from the deed, i.e. from the product, against which others may test their own talent, letting it serve them as a model not for **copying** but for **imitation**. (CJ 5:309)

On the other hand the genius must make use of determinate rules in order to maintain a level of *academic correctness*, and on this point Kant states that

There is no beautiful art in which something mechanical, which can be grasped and followed according to rules, and thus something **academically correct**, does not constitute the essential condition of the art. For something in it must be thought of as an end, otherwise one cannot ascribe its product to any art at all; it would be a mere product of chance. But in order to aim at an end in the work, determinate rules are required, from which one may not absolve oneself. (CJ 5:310)

It is clear that the rules in both a determinate and indeterminate sense as Kant is referring to them, concern the manner of presentation. On the one hand there must be a degree of academic correctness. Thus in drawing the artist must be *able* to draw, for without that ability anything put down on paper would be without discipline, and as Kant refers to it, a 'product of chance'. What was represented couldn't really be called intentional at all since there would be no method and thereby no means-end relation that is essential to artistic production. But the art work, insofar as it looks like nature, is not supposed to be unintentional in this way (i.e. badly or randomly executed), but is supposed to be unintentional insofar as the academic constraints (the conditions of artistic representation) aren't governing the overall presentation and merit of the work. In this sense Kant states that the art work should be 'without the academic form showing through, i.e., without showing any sign that the rule has hovered before the eyes of the artist and fettered his mental powers' (CJ 5:307). Thus the genius, as an original talent, must look beyond established academic norms for their manner of presentation, and the talent for doing this is something that is itself unable to be articulated or formulated according to rules, and in this sense it is a talent which cannot be taught.

A work of art looks like nature insofar as it doesn't look like artifice (the 'rule' hovering before the artists eyes). This is to define looking like nature in the negative

however, and more needs to be said of what it means to look like nature in a positive sense. What is clear though is that in order to look like nature the art work must embody a purposiveness for judgement which is the form of purposiveness as such, and this is a sense of what it means for the art work to look like nature, so that Kant writes that,

In a product of art one must be aware that it is art, and not nature; yet the purposiveness in its form must still seem to be as free from all constraint by arbitrary rules as if it were a mere product of nature. On this freedom in the play of our cognitive powers, which must yet at the same time be purposive, rests that pleasure which is alone universally communicable though without being grounded on concepts... art can only be called beautiful if we are aware that it is art and yet it looks to us like nature. (CJ 5:306)

Because the purposivity must be recognised as free in a work of art (not constrained by any concept), this means that the determining ground of our pleasurable response must to a degree be located in a formal purposiveness of the representation for the faculty of cognition. There are then conditions of an artworks representational aspect that are formally constrained. An added complexity of Kant's account however, is that although the formal purposivity is central to our response to the artwork as nature, the artwork is an artwork precisely insofar as its production is governed by an intention, and thereby isn't an arbitrary production. This means that the free play between the imagination and the understanding is in part characterised by a play between an intuitive content and a central or governing conceptual idea that it is the task of the genius to impart. Thus there are levels of complexity that govern our response to works of art, and the difficulty is in how to reconcile our response to the formal constraints governing the success of an artwork (as formally purposive for judgement), and the intellectual content that governs the artwork as artwork. In resolving this difficulty however, there are tensions with Kant's account of genius that must be resolved.

### *Taste and Genius*

Central to Kant's account of genius is his account of aesthetic ideas, and here the question of artistic *content* is introduced. Before his introduction to his account of aesthetic ideas however, there are further issues concerning the manner of artistic presentation, and Kant presents a section titled 'On the relation of genius to taste' (§48), where there are inconsistencies in this account that need to be explored. In this

section Kant wants to draw a distinction between taste and genius as between two quite different aptitudes or faculties, where the former is concerned with judging beautiful objects, whereas the latter is concerned with producing beautiful objects<sup>67</sup>. Here Kant is explicit that Genius as a productive faculty is productive of beauty, whereas taste is not a productive faculty of itself, but just a faculty for judging. This initial account however conflicts with Kant's subsequent discussion of the qualities of beautiful art, for he goes on to argue that taste as a faculty *can itself* be productive (In fact this notion becomes central to Kant's account of art, where an art work can be created in accordance with a standard of taste, yet fail as a work of art insofar as it lacks what Kant calls spirit). Thus after arguing that beautiful art functions by giving a pleasing form to things that in reality are ugly or displeasing (such as 'death' and the 'spirit of war'), Kant goes on to write,

So much for the beautiful representation of an object, which is really only the form of the presentation of a concept by means of which that latter is universally communicated. – To give this form to the product of beautiful art, however, requires merely taste, to which the artist, after he has practised and corrected it by means of various examples of art or nature, holds up his work, and after many, often laborious attempts to satisfy it, finds the form that contents him. (CJ 5:312)

Here Kant is quite explicit that the formal presentation of an idea itself requires 'merely taste', and since what is beautiful in a work is in a large part its presentation, in this sense taste is creative. Immediately after the paragraph containing the above section however, Kant goes on to seemingly contradict his account again, for he writes that,

Taste, however, is merely a faculty for judging, not a productive faculty; and what is in accordance with it is for that reason not a work of beautiful art, although it can be a product belonging to a useful and mechanical art or even to science, conforming to determinate rules which can be learned and which must be precisely followed. (CJ 5:313)

Whereas in the earlier paragraph taste could be said to be creative of a beautiful art work, Kant is here saying that by itself it cannot, and herein lies the tension. This tension can be ameliorated to a degree however through the recognition that Kant appears to be operating with two different senses of the word beautiful, and that taste, by itself, can be creative of beauty in art insofar as it is concerned with the

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<sup>67</sup> 'For the **judging** of beautiful objects, as such, **taste** is required; but for beautiful art itself, i.e., for **producing** such objects, **genius** is required' (CJ 5:311).



creation of *pleasing form*, which itself is beautiful; but that what we might call *true beauty*, or *profound beauty*, itself requires the addition genius. Introducing this twofold account of beauty would help us make sense of Kant's remark that,

One demands that table settings, or a moral treatise, or even a sermon must have in themselves [the] form of beautiful art, though without seeming **studied**; but they are not on this account called works of beautiful art. (CJ 5:313)

On this account although beauty is predicated of certain objects or products by virtue of their pleasing form, these products are not really beautiful *works of art* – they merely have the 'form of beautiful art', so that something else is required (genius) to make them truly beautiful works of art. However, although this resolves some of tension at this stage of the argument, the diminished or minor productive role with reference to creating beauty that is here assigned to taste is apparently reversed further on in the third *Critique*.

This turnaround in Kant's discussion follows upon his discussion of aesthetic ideas (the discussion of which we will come to), and comes under the heading 'On the combination of taste with genius in products of beautiful art' (§50). By this stage of his discussion Kant has assigned genius to the faculty of imagination and, for reasons already discussed, the faculty of taste to the power of judgement, and the turnaround in Kant's argument can be seen in the following opening section,

If the question is whether in matters of beautiful art it is more important whether genius or taste is displayed, that is the same as asking whether imagination or the power of judgement counts for more in them. Now since it is in regard to the first of these that an art deserves to be called **inspired**, but only in regard to the second that it deserves to be called a **beautiful art**, the latter, at least as an indispensable condition (*condition sine qua non*), is thus the primary thing to which one must look in the judging of art as beautiful art. (CJ 5:319)

Kant's previous argumentation that beautiful art is beautiful precisely insofar as it is the product of genius seems to be invalidated. For it is now on account of genius that a work of art can be said to be *inspired*, but not *beautiful*. For the creation of beautiful art *taste* is required, and the importance of the role of taste is apparent in the subsequent passage where Kant states that 'Taste, like the power of judgement in general, is the discipline (or corrective) of genius' (CJ 5:319). The importance of the role of taste in governing artistic production is so important that Kant states that if anything must be sacrificed in the production of art, it must be on the side of genius

rather than taste, for the latter is what keeps the presentational aspect of the artistic production in check, and this must mean that taste maintains the purposivity of the production for judgement. Kant's reasoning here is that taste has 'its own principles' with regard to the assessment of beauty in its presentational aspect and that to violate these is to violate the beauty in the work. The beautiful presentation in a work of art is its immediate and universal appeal and can be sacrificed less willingly than the intellectual and imaginative content that genius imparts to the work.

Although there are certainly inconsistencies in Kant's argumentation, and that this later section conflicts with the earlier in the importance assigned to the role of taste in the production of beauty, that Kant is nevertheless operating with a stronger and weaker sense of beauty is apparent. For although we might not now want to say that the beauty that taste is responsible for is a minor beauty (insofar as it is only with regard to taste that art 'deserves to be called beautiful art'), there is nevertheless a sense in which when taste is unified with genius in artistic production a more *profound beauty* will be generated. We can now see that genius and taste must be combined for the production of truly beautiful works of art, although taste by itself can be productive (for 'in one would-be work of beautiful art, one can often perceive genius without taste, while in another taste without genius' (CJ 5:313)). This is a corrective of Kant's initial contention that taste is a faculty only for judging beautiful works of art whereas genius is a faculty for their production, and the concluding line of section 50, which clearly shows that Kant amended his conception of the role of taste in the creation of artistic beauty reads: 'For beautiful art, therefore, **imagination, understanding, spirit** and **taste** are requisite'.<sup>68</sup>

### *Aesthetic Ideas*

That taste without genius offers an inferior artistic production opens Kant's discussion of what is essentially characteristic of genius, and Kant points out that there is a sense in which an artistic production can have a certain pleasing quality and be beautiful, yet be lacking in a certain respect. In this sense this lacking is felt as a lacking in *spirit*, and it is apparent that this is the quality that genius imparts to a work of art in order to impart deeper artistic value ('One says of certain products, of which it is expected that they ought, at least in part, to reveal themselves as beautiful

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<sup>68</sup> Interestingly enough, in a footnote to this sentence Kant remarks that the first three of these aptitudes receive their unification in the fourth, i.e. in taste. In this sense taste is a much more encompassing productive faculty than Kant makes out.

art, that they are without **Spirit**, even though one finds nothing in them to criticise as far as taste is concerned' (CJ 5:313)). Spirit is importantly connected with the ability to find and communicate aesthetic ideas, and Kant writes:

**Spirit**, in an aesthetic significance, means the animating principle in the mind. That however, by which this principle animates the soul, the material which it uses for this purpose, is that which purposively sets the mental powers into motion., i.e., into a play that is self-maintaining and even strengthens the powers to that end. Now I maintain that this principle is nothing other than the faculty for the presentation of **aesthetic ideas**. (CJ 5:313-4)

Spirit, in an aesthetic sense, is a kind of surging towards creation and an animating force. In order for it to be communicative however, and provide a content (a material) with which to work, a talent for presenting aesthetic ideas is required, which is just what spirit, in an aesthetic sense is.<sup>69</sup> Earlier on we noted that insofar as genius is a talent for giving the rule, where this rule is not conceptually determined, it is a special non-conceptually governed talent for recognising, intuitively, that a certain means of communication is appropriate. Kant himself recognised the obscurity in this notion, but that genius in its concept is precisely this unusual talent, and he signals the inspirational aspect of genius when he presumes that the German word *genie* is derived from the Latin *genius* 'in the sense of the particular spirit given to a person at birth, which protects and guides him, and from whose inspiration those original ideas stem'. (CJ 5:308).

This aspect of recognising an intuitive appropriateness is also present in Kant's account of aesthetic ideas and expands what we might call the role of intuition in Kant's philosophy. An important aspect of the first *Critique* was Kant's notion that there are *ideas of reason* which are inherent to an understanding that operates in applying concepts of the understanding (categories) to experience, and an idea of reason is defined as a concept to which no intuition is adequate. This indicated the pervasiveness of concepts in our experience, in the sense that they ineluctably extend beyond what is intuitively given. In the third *Critique* however the pervasiveness of the intuitive aspect comes to the fore in the sense that it too presents an intellectual content, even though this content is not delivered by the concept of the understanding, although, as we will see, this content does have to *agree with* a discursive concept. Thus an aesthetic idea, as a 'pendant' or 'counterpart' to an idea

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<sup>69</sup> This is to say that there is non-aesthetic sense of spirit, just as we say that a person is spirited, where this doesn't mean that they are aesthetically productive.

of reason is defined as ‘that representation of the imagination that occasions much thinking though without it being possible for any determinate thought, i.e., **concept**, to be adequate to it, which consequently, no language fully attains or can make intelligible.’ (CJ 5: 314).

It is only inevitable then that as an intuitive product, the faculty for the presentation of aesthetic ideas is essentially an *imaginative* faculty and thus a product of the faculty of the imagination rather than the understanding. As has been shown in previous chapters, this distinction between imagination and understanding is fundamental to Kant’s account of how cognition is possible, and more or less important roles are assigned to either depending upon the particular cognitive phenomena in general. What is apparent however is a further development in Kant’s account of the role of the imagination, in the sense that the third *Critique* account goes beyond that of the first *Critique*, where the imagination is primarily defined as the faculty for unifying spatiotemporal intuitions. Although the imagination in the first *Critique* is said to be creative, in generating intuitions, the third *Critique* offers a much broader creative role to the imagination, and ‘imagination’ is thus used in its more common sense of being aesthetically imaginative or creative.

We saw however in our first chapter that there was a tension in Kant’s distinction between imagination and understanding precisely insofar as imagination, as an autonomous faculty, is supposed to be separate from the faculty of concepts, and yet appears to perform its synthesising operations through the concepts of the understanding (categories). There is a similar difficulty with the imagination/understanding distinction in Kant’s account of aesthetic ideas. The difficulty arises from the fact that there is an important relation between the imagination and the understanding with reference to the presentation of aesthetic ideas, where this is the relation between an intuitive representation which itself is not conceptually determinate (although possessing an intellectual content, i.e., a representation ‘occasioning much thought’), and a determinate concept of the understanding which governs the representations meaningfulness. Thus the imagination/understanding distinction is essentially a one between a intuitively active faculty and an conceptually active faculty, and the difficulty is in understanding to what extent the imaginative faculty can really be said to present a representation the communicates an intellectual content with an autonomy non-usurped by the faculty of concepts.

In understanding this relation between the imagination and the understanding in artistic production/appreciation, it is important to point out that although it may

initially seem that aesthetic ideas have no determinate conceptual content, there is nevertheless a sense in which there is a determinate conceptual content governing the particular artistic production. Kant sees the activity of the artist as being governed by what might be called a central or key concept; and with reference to the art of poetry (which for Kant is the highest art form), Kant sees the poet as '[venturing] to make sensible rational ideas of invisible beings, the kingdom of the blessed, the kingdom of hell, eternity, creation, etc., as well as to make that of which there are examples in experience, e.g. death, envy, and all sorts of vices, as well as love, fame, etc., sensible beyond the limits of experience' (CJ 5:314). This central or governing concept, as a (more or less) determinate conceptual idea<sup>70</sup> is a product of the understanding or of reason. The central concept however must be supplemented or expanded through a non-discursive means, and with reference to this Kant writes,

Now if we add to a concept a representation of the imagination that belongs to its presentation, but which by itself stimulates so much thinking that it can never be grasped in a determinate concept, hence which aesthetically enlarges the concept itself in an unbounded way, then in this case the imagination is creative, and sets the faculty of intellectual ideas (reason) into motion, that is, at the instigation of a representation it gives more to think about than can be grasped and made distinct in it (although it does, to be sure, belong to the concept of the object). (CJ 5:315)

The question is then, how does the imagination in a non-conceptual way, expand upon a central concept or idea. Although it is clear at this stage that it does so in an intuitive representational way, it is not until *The Dialectic of the Aesthetic Power of Judgement*, under the section (§59) 'On beauty as the symbol of morality' that Kant provides a solution to this problem.

### *Aesthetic Symbols*

Kant's discussion of the means of sensible presentation is very helpful in coming to understand how a concept can be explicated or illustrated, and there are two means by which sensible presentation can take place:

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<sup>70</sup> I say 'more or less' determinate conceptual idea since the artist may be operating with a central idea more or less consciously. This is to say that an artist can be consciously working on a theme, but they might not be, although some central idea does inform their activity.

All **hypotyposis** (presentation, *subject sub adspectum*), as making as something sensible, is of one of two kinds: either **schematic**, where to a concept grasped by the understanding the corresponding intuition is given *a priori*; or **symbolic**, where to a concept which only reason can think, and to which no sensible intuition can be adequate, an intuition is attributed with which the power of judgement proceeds in a way merely analogous to that which it observes in schematisation, i.e. it is merely the rule of this procedure, not of the intuition itself, and thus merely the form of the reflection, not the content, which corresponds to the concept. (CJ 5:351)

Thus there is something about certain intuitional representations that allow them to stand for a concept or idea which by themselves bring with them no schematic representation. What this certain something is that enables one representation to stand for another has to do with a certain structural analogue between the concept that is without a schematic intuition and the intuition that, although with a conceptual content, is used to stand as a presentation for a different concept (the concept without schematic presentation):

Thus a monarchical state is represented by a body with a soul if it is ruled in accordance with laws internal to the people, but by a mere machine (like a handmill) if it is ruled by a single absolute will, but in both cases it is represented only **symbolically**. (CJ 5:352)

An allegory can be said to present itself (in the imagination) when there is a sufficient or large degree of structural similarity in what we may call the rule of synthesis governing the respective cognitions. As was discussed extensively in earlier chapters, any synthesising operation, even at the perceptual level, requires both concepts and intuitions in order to operate, and thus it is important to acknowledge that although the imaginative representation is said to operate apart from any determinate concepts, it nevertheless has its schematising function by virtue of a structural analogue in a synthesis that is governed by concepts (the categories). Thus there is something about the way the despotic monarchical state is presented in the imagination that brings to mind the operations of a handmill, where this bringing to mind is just an awareness of a certain similarity in synthesis in the cognition. The imagination retains a distinctive role just because it is concerned with the spatiotemporal element of cognition, and the intuitions that it uses are able to function as a language (symbolically) just because the spatiotemporal orderings that govern synthesis speak not only for themselves but for other representations that have a similar structural analogue. In this sense the spatiotemporal configurations that are generated by the imagination outstrip what is discursively representable or

communicable, and 'occasion much thinking' (through association) without the use of determinate concepts.

What it is important to remember however, is that the *central concept*, or group of concepts, that is/are being illustrated can themselves be more or less conceptually determinate insofar as our grasp of certain concepts are more or less conceptually determinate. This generates another issue regarding conceptual determinacy. Thus it is not simply the case that we always have a *clear* central conceptual idea which we expand in an intuitive way through the presentation of intuitions which function as symbols. The central idea itself may be highly indeterminate and elusive, both for artist and audience. In the above example we have a highly determinate idea of a certain monarchical constitution, and we thereby have a clear rule of synthesis that governs this concepts formation. Although art may engage with more determinate concepts like this, often the idea that the artist is concerned with itself has a larger degree of indeterminacy. This is because the concern of the artist is often, as mentioned, for that which transcends experience (ideas of reason, 'the 'kingdom of the blessed, the 'kingdom of hell', 'creation', etc.), and their endeavour to present some palpable, intuitive, intimation of such ideas. Because these ideas are further grounded in those central ideas of reason that are concerned with 'God, freedom [of will], and immortality' (CPR B395), and their implications, there is a necessary transcendent aspect to artistic creation as it aims to explicate, or offer intimations of such ideas. The question is where do such ideas come from? To be sure, the Dialectic of the first *Critique* has illustrated how the concepts of the understanding transcend what is sensibly given and cause a dialectic (conflicting concepts that we cannot help but think). However, Kant's practical philosophy expanded upon the sense in which we can be said to have ideas of reason, whereby they are thrust upon us through our experience as moral agents. What we learned in particular is that not only are we constrained to think of ourselves as moral agents, but that we must actually posit a noumenal self insofar as we cannot but think of ourselves as free agents who remain undetermined (morally speaking) by the phenomenal world<sup>71</sup>. What is important here is that we are said to have *access* to (partake of) a supersensible (noumenal)

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<sup>71</sup> See for instance Chapter 3 of Kant's *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785) where Kant writes about the human being that, 'Consequently he has two perspectives from which he can consider himself and from which he can acknowledge the laws governing the use of his powers and consequently governing all his actions. He can consider himself *first* so far as he belongs to the world of sense, under laws of nature (heteronomy); and *secondly* - so far as he belongs to the intelligible [noumenal] world - under laws that are not empirical but, being independent of nature, are founded on reason alone. (*Groundwork* 4:452)

realm, so that there are two selves as it were, where the noumenal is causally efficacious in the phenomenal.

What is interesting here is that Kant's account in the third *Critique* expands upon his account of the role of noumena in the practical philosophy. Because we have access to a supersensible realm as the source of certain ideas of reason, we are able to present intimations of it. However because we have no direct acquaintance with any such realm, our ideas of such a domain have a limitedness and indeterminacy. Nevertheless, the sheer fact of noumenal participation, insofar as it is the grounds of all our moral experience and a large degree of the ground of our belief in the existence of a God (insofar as we are bound by laws of which we are not the author) provides a wealth of material for artistic creation, and it is the lot of the genius to both grasp this content and communicate it through intuitive means. How this content will be communicated depends of course on the artistic medium, and with reference to the art of poetry Kant writes that,

It expands the mind by setting the imagination free and presenting, within the limits of a given concept and among the unbounded manifold of forms possibly agreeing with it, the one that connects its presentation with a fullness of thought to which no linguistic expression is fully adequate, and thus elevates itself aesthetically to the level of ideas. It strengthens the mind by letting it feel its capacity to consider and judge of nature, as appearance, freely, self-actively, and independent of determination by nature, in accordance with points of view that nature does not present by itself in experience either for sense of for the understanding, and thus to use it for the sake of and as it were as the schema of the supersensible. (*CJ* 5:326-7)

It is because of the figurative quality of the imagination and its ability to communicate through intuitions that it is able to act as a 'schema of the supersensible'. It does this through a discriminate selection of representations that are able to function as symbols for something other than their original concept. In this sense Kant has an important 'symbolist' conception of artistic practice that is overlooked in the literature<sup>72</sup>, yet it is important to appreciate this aspect of his aesthetic theory as it is central to understanding how artistic production is able to communicate aesthetic ideas and provide a schema, as it were, for the supersensible.

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<sup>72</sup> Kant's aesthetics is often characterised as being 'formalist' and some times, with regard to his account of aesthetic ideas 'expressionist' (See Allison (2001): 286-290). But it seems to me that equally, if not more pervasive of Kant's account, is what we can call a 'symbolist' aesthetic. This is insofar as things in the world are used to stand as symbols for something else, and communicate much that is discursively ineffable.



The non-conceptual aspect in this mode of communication consists in the fact that symbolic representations are able to enliven or communicate an idea which transcends conceptual exhibition. It is important to remember however, that this could not occur if there were not a *content* to the idea, which qua discursively transcendent, has a strong element of conceptually indeterminacy (unable to be expressed through language). For it is only through the intimation of such a content that the art work engaged with such ideas succeeds. So although there is a degree of conceptual determinacy with reference to what the art work is engaging with (its content), there is nevertheless a degree of indeterminacy insofar as the ideas here are transcendent ideas, i.e. ideas that transcend what is given through experience and have their grounds in a noumenal as opposed to a phenomenal aspect of self-experience. So although the symbol functions through an analogy in the rule of synthesis, and represents through a similarity in comprehension, the content itself, although intellectual, has a degree of conceptual indeterminacy (we might say the grasp of it is fleeting and never determinate), which for its full expression requires the talents of genius.

#### *Giving 'the rule as nature'*

Earlier on in our discussion we saw that one of Kant's central claims regarding the nature of beautiful art, was that art, in order to be beautiful, must seem like nature. Because an artwork is an intentional production however, and is governed by the representation of an end in its formation, the only way in which an art work could be said to look like nature is if actual nature, as creative, is somehow acting through the subject. Because something can be said to look like nature just insofar as it embodies the form of purposiveness, as opposed to a purposiveness for something (which would make the judgement a conceptually determined one), or as Kant puts it,

In a product of art one must be aware that it is art, and not nature; yet the purposiveness in its form must still seem to be as free from all constraint by arbitrary rules as if it were a mere product of nature[...] art can only be called beautiful if we are aware that it is art and yet it looks to us like nature. (CJ 5:306)

then it appeared that a creative ability was a talent for presenting a certain configuration which by virtue of its formal properties was purposive for the faculty of judgement. Here the presented intuitive representation would be purposive for

the faculty of judgement as such, and the artist would be particularly adept at presenting such intuitive representations, that look like nature as it were. These representations would be recognised as art insofar as they embody something academically correct (and academic correctness could just be construed as being drawn/written/made in accordance with an academic standard). On this account however, artistic talent appears to have little concern with artistic *content*, and it wasn't until Kant's introduction of aesthetic ideas that the importance of a governing central concept and its presentation came to the fore. In this later development genius, as artistic talent, was connected with the ability to communicate *aesthetic ideas*, and what is important is that this ability is connected with Kant's initial claim that genius gives the rule to art. Thus in section 49, in his account of aesthetic ideas, Kant highlights some conclusions our analysis has drawn out: that genius involves not only an ability to present in an artistic way aesthetic ideas, but that they must first have a talent or aptitude for discovering them:

Thus genius really consists in the happy relation, which no science can teach and no diligence learn, of finding ideas for a given concept on the one hand and on the other hitting upon the **expression** for these. Through which the subjective disposition of the mind that is thereby produced, as an accompaniment of a concept, can be communicated to others. (CJ 5:317)

That the finding of ideas is essentially a concern with what is discursively transcendent is again apparent in what follows, as is identification of the talent for the presentation of the idea with 'giving the rule to art', and Kant argues that this latter talent,

Is really that which is called spirit, for to express what is unnameable in the mental state in the case of a certain representation and to make it universally communicable, whether the expression consist in language, or painting, or in plastic art – that requires a faculty for apprehending the rapidly passing play of the imagination and unifying it into a concept (which for that very reason is original and at the same time discloses a new rule, which could not have been deduced from any antecedent principles or examples), which can be communicated without the constraint of rules. (CJ 5:317)

The artist must first possess what 'is unnameable in the mental state', the idea, and then present this idea so as to make it universally communicable, which just means to give it artistic form. The presentation of these ideas, insofar as they are translated into a intuitive communicative form (through the use of symbols) is what discloses 'a new rule' insofar as it is original and not imitative of previous ways of communicating aesthetic ideas. It is the art of genius to unify the imaginative

representational content into or around a concept (idea), since it is only by having a conceptual content that the art work is recognised as intentional, and thereby, a work of art (having an intention as its determining ground). As discussed however, this concept itself can be more or less determinate (or general<sup>73</sup>), and its expansion through artistic representation expands upon this central concept so as to express what is connected with its idea, and in this sense communicates 'much that is unnameable' (CJ 5:316).

So the connection between the nature in the genius giving the rule to art and aesthetic ideas is made apparent, and the overarching concern of genius is the communication of ideas in a non-discursive way (because of the limits to discursive expression), i.e. aesthetically. However, there thereby seems to be a tension in this analysis, insofar as genius is defined as an aptitude for making art seem like nature where this is also an aptitude for giving the rule to art (i.e. a new rule which is original and exemplary). But because looking like nature has also been characterised as the ability to create a representation that is purposive in its form without the constraint of any 'arbitrary rules' (i.e. formally purposive for judgement), then it seems there is a conflict in what it means for a representation to look like nature. On the one hand it is the formal aspect of the work that consists in the artworks seeming like nature, whereas on the other hand it is the artworks embodying a content that is original and exemplary in its unification in a concept that appears also to consist in the artworks seeming like nature. Clearly then the issue is to how to reconcile this form-content issue, where, artistically, an ability to present representations that are purposive for the faculty of cognition is as important to making art seem like nature as is the communication of a meaning.

### *Form and Content*

On the face of things, given Kant's account of aesthetic ideas, and its relation to his account of genius, one might well read Kant as maintaining the idea that fine art is essentially concerned with communicating (expressing) a content rather than presenting a configuration that is purposive for judgement. This is because giving the rule to art isn't just a matter of presenting good form which is purposive for

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<sup>73</sup> We might say that a lot of artworks are variations on various themes. Thus a certain virtue, or the theme of virtue itself may be governing the general theme of the work, although it is illustrated or communicated in various different ways, according to the strength of the artistic idea. Thus any work can be insipid or profound, depending upon how successfully and richly the idea is communicated.

cognition but is a matter of presenting an intellectual content in a non-discursive way that is original and yet exemplary. The difficulty is in seeing how this intellectual content be presented in a way such that it looks like nature, when looking like nature is defined as looking as though free from any conceptual determination, and this is the difficulty we need to resolve<sup>74</sup>.

There are two positions that we need to consider in finding a solution to this difficulty. The first takes the lead from an argument proposed by Martin Gammon, who puts forward a solution to the difficulty generated by Kant's account of adherent beauty. The problem of adherent beauty is an issue disclosed in the *Analytic of Beauty* and is closely related to the problem we are discussing now, and this is the problem as to how a judgement of taste can said to be aesthetic when there are considerations regarding the objects purpose or concept that also determine our response to its presentation. A *pure* judgement of taste is a comparatively less common kind of aesthetic judging, and by far the most common kinds of aesthetic judgements are of the more complex kind, where concepts of the objects functionality or end govern our response. Judgements regarding fine art are, as shown, clearly of the adherent kind, since their content is governed by a conceptual content, and it is only insofar as the art work embodies some kind of intention on the part of the artist that the representation is recognised as a work of art (and not a product of mere chance). The problem is how the work of art retains a purposiveness for judgement as such in its presentation (looks like nature), whilst having a conceptual content. Gammon's solution to the adherence problem (which is essentially related to our argument of Chapter 4) is to see two separate acts in the judgement as it were, so that with adherent beauty there is a *pure* judgement of taste governing our response, and, separately (although it might not be experienced as such), a judgement conditioned by the conceptual content of the representation (Gammon (1999): 152). A response to an adherently beautiful object such as a picture frame for instance (which has a determinate function) can in part be characterised solely with reference to the purposiveness in its form, so that the purity in the judgement is pervasive. The overall assessment of course must make reference to the purpose of the frame, its concept, but the point is that the pure judgement can be abstracted from the purposivity. This way we are able to make sense of the phenomenon whereby we take a pleasure in an object whilst at the same time taking

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<sup>74</sup> Zammito has called this the 'grounding paradox of art': 'Fine art falls under artifice in general, yet it must not subordinate itself to a prescriptive rule. Kant has landed himself squarely in a paradox' (Zammito (1992): 134).

a dissatisfaction in the fact that the object isn't suited to its end<sup>75</sup> (so that we can 'run' two separate and judgements as it were).

With reference to our problem this account can take us some way to seeing how art can look like nature whilst embodying conceptual form. We might say that it is because there are two separate aspects to judgement (and creativity) that art can be said to look like nature in its freedom from arbitrary rules on the one hand, whilst at the same time embodying an intellectual content on the other. Insofar as the artistic representation embodies a formal purposiveness that can be abstracted from the intellectual content, then the purity of the aesthetic production can be said to come through, whereby the work can be said to look like nature (unconstrained by concepts, or rules, in its purposivity). The overall judgement however involves an overall recognition of the intentional content of the representation, and the extent to which the artwork communicates an idea. Although this takes us some way towards a solution, it does not translate straightforwardly towards a solution to our problem insofar as there is a greater complexity in Kant's account of artistic productivity whereby both aspects of artistic production (the formal constraint and the introduction of a concept) are both constitutive of what it means for art to look like nature, and thus components of a successful work of art. We thus need to look at another account in working towards a solution, whereby the aspects of form and content are brought closer together.

This other position is that put forward by Henry Allison, and is that which aims to bring together this closeness of form and content, so that purposivity in the form of the object is connected with its communicating a content, or ideas. Indeed this proximity is such that on this account the content just *is* the form (and form *is* content) that is the subject matter of any representation. There is in fact a strong appeal to this alignment, insofar as we naturally want to say that content is only communicated through a form so that there is a close alignment between the formal configuration and content (presentation of the idea). In addition, in Kant's account of symbolic representation, it is only through a structural analogue in the synthesis of the representations that an object can stand for something for which there is no direct intuition, and this lends very strong support to the identity. Because the synthesis of the object involves a synthesis of the spatial (through the operation of sortal concepts on intuition), then it is through the formal aspect that the object is said to be communicative (symbolically). Indeed there is good reason within the text

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<sup>75</sup> Of course the counter-purposiveness to its end can be so overwhelming that it overrides any pure aesthetic judgement.

of the third *Critique* for identifying form with content and in his remarks on music Kant writes,

Just as modulation is as it were a language of sensations universally comprehensible to every human being, the art of tone puts that language into practice for itself alone, in all its force, namely as a language of the affects, and so, in accordance with the law of association, universally communicates the aesthetic ideas that are naturally combined with it; however, since those aesthetic ideas are not concepts nor determinate thoughts, the *form* of the composition of these sensations (harmony and melody) serves only, instead of the form of a language, to *express*, by means of a proportionate disposition of them[...], the aesthetic ideas of a coherent whole of an unutterable fullness of thought, corresponding to a certain theme, which constitutes the dominant affect in the piece. (CJ 5:328-9 emphasis)

Here the *form* of the composition, as a kind of non-discursive or linguistic language, serves to *express* aesthetic ideas, so that the form is the content, as it were. In fact Allison, in his concern with resolving the compatibility of Kant's account of beauty as the expression of aesthetic ideas with the claim of the analytic that beauty is to be understood in terms of the purposivity of form, appeals to the above paragraph in arguing that resolving this tension requires a recognition of form as content. For Allison, Kant is able to maintain the idea that beauty is to be understood solely in terms of the purposiveness of form, because purposiveness of form is expression of ideas, and Allison writes that, 'purposive form and the expression of aesthetic ideas are strictly correlative notions for Kant. Just as there can be no successful expression and communication of these ideas without form, so there can be no aesthetically pleasing form apart from the expression of aesthetic ideas' (Allison (2001): 289). This is a strong claim on Allison's part, especially given that in the third moment of the analytic Kant is explicit that certain formal arrangements (such as 'designs *a la greque*' and foliage decorations) by themselves 'signify nothing' (CJ 5:229). The real trouble is however, how we can really be said to keep a hold of the purposivity of form for cognition as such, apart from any content, as determining our response, when the beauty in the object gets its quality from its expressive aspect (what the form serves to express). When the gap is closed between form and content, and purposivity of form is essentially found to be the same as the communication of ideas, it is then difficult to see how just the purposivity of form for the faculty of concepts as such, at any level of response, can be the determining ground of our response, as seems integral to Kant's account. What does determine our response becomes the symbolic repertoire built into the form, and even though a non-

determinate conceptual content is determining our response, it is nevertheless the purposivity of the content for delivering an intellectual content (ideas) that determines our response.

In spite of our initial reservations to Allison's account however, the proximity between form and content is a very important feature of Kant's account, which can only be ignored to the detriment of some of his most important insights. Thus there is further textual evidence for supposing that form is only form insofar as it delivers a content, and it is worthwhile to probe deeper into this puzzle that is generated by the text itself. Within his discussion of fine art, Kant makes a surprising claim given the formalist conception of natural beauty that was presented in the analytic. With the opening of section 51, 'On the division of the beautiful arts', Kant writes that,

Beauty (whether it be beauty of nature or of art) can in general be called the **expression** of aesthetic ideas: only in beautiful art this idea must be occasioned by a concept of the object, but in beautiful nature the mere reflection on a given intuition, without a concept of what the object ought to be, is sufficient for arousing and communicating the idea of which that object is considered as the **expression**. (CJ 5:320)

Here beauty in nature isn't defined just by the intuitions being purposive for judgement as such, but by its expressive aspect, where the intuition expresses, or communicates some kind of idea (without a concept of what the object ought to be, so that expression is apart from any question of adherence). Because Kant has characterised our response to natural beauty as a purposiveness for judgement, it is tempting, given these later developments regarding expression, to bring these two accounts together so that the identity between form and content is used to expand Kant's initial conception regarding the form of purposiveness. Natural beauty is then expressive of ideas not because of any overt content that the form represents, through an association of ideas as it were, but because of the form itself speaking directly (so that form itself is like an alphabet in a language).

Clearly however, such remarks inevitably lead to an expanded conception of the role of form in Kant's aesthetic. Form isn't just a formal configuration that our faculties find either purposive or counter-purposive for working with (bringing concepts to), but a whole language based upon the synthetic unity involved in each object as cognition. However, in order to recognise the importance of this aspect it must, in order to save the account of the analytic, be accommodated in such a way that the determining ground of our response to beauty isn't (at least solely) grounded in the

objects symbolic role (as representing ideas), but (at least in part) in the form of purposiveness for the faculty of cognition.

### *Two Senses of 'seeming like nature'*

With reference to our initial problem - the problem as to how art can look like nature when looking like nature is characterised as a purposivity for cognition as such (apart from any end) - we can now see that making art look like nature means making art communicative. This is because nature itself is communicative, and so the genius has to make the art work speak as nature speaks. This seems to raise to our problem over again (looking like nature not being grounded in the form of purposiveness), but the beginning of our solution (for this is what we now need to do) is to recognise that insofar as natural beauty is communicative and thereby brings with it a content, then there is what we might call a symbolic-meaningful element in our response. Thus the natural world is replete with symbolic meaning by virtue of structural analogue through form. Because all beauty is communicative then all beauty is what we might call meaningful (it signifies). What this means is not that a determinate end of what the object is supposed to be governs every representation, but that most, if not all, objects are able to carry a symbolic meaning with them by virtue of their formal structure. This can be true of a pure judgement of taste just as much as an adherent judgement, for the judgement by no means needs to have a determinate end in its presentation (something the object is supposed to be). The object may or may not have a determinate end, but insofar as an object can stand for something entirely different from what it actually is, then it is what we can call a *signifier*. Thus art seems like nature just insofar as it operates as nature does, through intuitive symbols, where a tree, a fence and a dead leaf can all stand for something symbolically.

However, something must be said for the purely formal elements in terms of the representations purposiveness for judgement as such, and this is where we must go beyond the letter of Kant and say that there must be *two* aspects of what it means for art to seem like nature. On the one hand art seems like nature just insofar as it speaks like nature does, through symbols, where the object speaks fluently and unconsciously as a sign for something else (intimations of the supersensible). On the other hand the representation must look like nature by respecting the purely formal constraint that governs the success of a representation in terms of its purposiveness just for cognition as such. This is to say that although a representation may speak by



virtue of its forms, this is *not enough* to secure its success as a representation, and the representation or object must be structured in such a way that it is readable, as it were, for cognition (something the faculty of concepts can seamlessly integrate with). A representation can be said to be *purposive* for cognition in the *first* place just insofar as the formal configuration before us is something that harmonises with the understanding as the faculty of concepts. In the *second* place, a representation can be said to be purposive for cognition just insofar as it stimulates the mind into grasping a content, and ugliness or inappropriateness (counter-purposiveness) of representation comes about just insofar as the wrong or inappropriate symbols are used in intimating aspects of the supersensible (which largely means the moral dimension of our existence). Thus just as there are two ways in which art can seem like nature, there are two ways in which the representation is purposive for judgement. Thus in being presented with a piece of nature we aren't just presented with a formal configuration, but with things such as trees, or buildings, and light effects, and each component in our representation is able to function as a symbol, as a kind of language, and thus communicate in some way (a change in light for instance, can by itself make a representation meaningful). In order for the representation to have a special attractiveness however, there must be something that appeals in the representations formal configuration by itself, where it is almost in abstraction from what is before us that the configuration works, as it were<sup>76</sup>. In artistic production the constraint on the representation being purposive for cognition as such (the formal) must be in place in order for the communicative aspect to be possible (for an initial failure here detracts from further interest in what the work communicates)<sup>77</sup>.

This reading of what it means for art to look like nature also helps to understand and appreciate another important aspect of Kant's account that was looked at earlier on in this chapter. Just as there are two elements to what it means for art to seem like nature, and two senses in which a representation can be purposive for cognition, there are, for Kant, two formative aspects to artistic creation itself, and, as we have seen, these are delivered through the two separate faculties of *genius* and *taste*. Earlier on we found that contrary to Kant's initial claim, taste is an important productive aspect of beauty in artistic creation, and with reference to the question

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<sup>76</sup> This distinction is well encapsulated in Maurice Denis's famous (formalist) remark of 1890 that 'Remember that a picture, before being a battle horse, a nude woman, or some anecdote, is essentially a plane surface covered with colours assembled in a certain order'. (See Bibliography for details)

<sup>77</sup> This point regarding the dependency of one form of artistic expression upon another will be a subject for discussion in our next chapter.

whether in artistic production it is more important whether genius or taste is displayed in artistic production, Kant gave the honour to taste. Genius gives the rule to art through the presentation of aesthetic ideas, and in doing so makes art seem like nature by speaking as nature does (through its forms which are symbolic). But there is a constraint upon this activity of genius, which is just that the objects it uses for its communication in a representation of some kind, are ordered in a satisfactory manner. Thus in order for the work to look like nature as a purposive for communicating ideas, it must first look like nature as purposive for cognition as such, and this is what taste delivers;

Taste, like the power of judgement in general, is the discipline (or corrective) of genius, clipping its wings and making it well behaved or polished; but at the same time it gives genius guidance as to where and how far it should extend itself if it is to remain purposive; and by introducing clarity and order into the abundance of thoughts it makes the ideas tenable, capable of an enduring and universal approval, of enjoying prosperity among others and in an ever progressing culture. (*CJ* 5:319)

We can read the sense in which genius is made to remain purposive as a remaining purposive for communication, and this is because taste in the first place maintains the purposivity of the representation as such. If it wasn't for this discipline of taste then the representations communicative and symbolic intention would be thwarted so as to lose all effectiveness. In this case, although a representation, or any work of art, may be rich in ideas, it fails as a work if the constraints on the form of purposiveness as such are not met. This is precisely why 'if anything must be sacrificed in the conflict of the two properties in one product, it must rather be on the side of genius' (*CJ* 5:319-20)<sup>78</sup>.

So the genius gives the rule by speaking through natural forms just as nature does, yet is only able to do this insofar as the first constraint (delivered by taste) on looking like nature is in place, which is that the representation be purposive for cognition by virtue of its form alone. Insofar as this element is governing any

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<sup>78</sup> Sarah Gibbons (*Kant's Theory of Imagination*) has emphasised what has become apparent in our reading, the sense in which there is a play between imagination and *reason* in responding to works of fine art, so that aesthetic judgements of beauty are not only governed by a play between imagination and understanding (Gibbons (1994): 111-17) . Indeed the distinction between the formalist and symbolic element of an art work as we have accounted for it maps well onto the difference between the role of the understanding and reason, and the role of taste and genius. The proximity between the operations of the understanding and reason are brought closer together however in recognising the proximity between form and content (although as we have seen, we refrain from saying that one collapses into the other).

representation, then, in accordance with Gammon's argument, there is always a sense in which a pure aspect of taste figures in all aesthetic response, operating as the determining ground of our initial response. We have said however that there is a sense in which any representation signifies (has meaning) just insofar as it has a symbolic function so that, in accordance with Allison's suggestion, it can communicate through its forms so that our response to the natural world is rich with symbolic meaning by virtue of the richness of our intellectual and moral life. Allison's argument as presented, regarding the collapsing of the content into the formal presentation, we were unable just to accept insofar as we have shown that it is important for the purely formal aspect of representational presentation to remain as what determines our response in the first place. A purely formal constraint underpins the representations success or failure, so that, as far as the deduction goes, the form of purposivity remains dominant as what it is that allows us to recognise beauty, even if a more complete or profound (or artistic) beauty involves the communicative power of aesthetic ideas (and thus the recognition of a form/content identity).

So as this rather complex chapter as shown, the role of concepts in Kant's account of aesthetic creativity turns out to be a complex one, and a one which has re-informed our initial account of aesthetic responsiveness. Not only does artistic production require an ability to order a configuration so that the faculty of intuitions are purposive for the faculty of concepts as such, it also requires a talent for the finding and presentation of aesthetic ideas. This talent turns out to require what might be called a certain intellectual intuitive ability, insofar as the artistic genius is someone engaged with reflecting upon aspects of existence which transcend what is phenomenally grounded. As we have discussed, this expands both Kant's account of the role of the imagination - as something that is able to symbolically portray that for which there is no discursive expression - and his account of the role of noumena. In the latter case, insofar as we are moral agents possessed with reason, then we most posit the reality of a noumenal self who is efficacious and present in the phenomenal realm. As the basis of our moral experience, the noumenal realm is also the basis of certain intimations that we are unable to fully express through discursive concepts, and it is the job of the genius to give symbolic form to these ideas through the use of symbols available in the natural world. Thus we saw that there is a kind of non-conceptualism in Kant's account just insofar as artistic production is concerned with the ineffable, or that for which no language is adequate. The peculiarity of this

however, is that we are nevertheless talking about an intellectual content, so that it turns out that a content can be expressed other than discursively<sup>79</sup>. However, insofar as objects are able to stand for something, or speak to us, through the synthesis in their formation as cognitions, then concepts are active in making the representation possible in the first place (through the operation of the categories on intuition). Thus the peculiarity of this kind of non-conceptualism is in recognising the importance of the concept in making a representation symbolic in the first place, even if what the object represents is by itself incapable of conceptual articulation. In addition we have discussed the importance of recognising that although in his account of fine art Kant presents both symbolist and expressionist conceptions of artistic production, there is nevertheless an important formalist conception that remains insofar as the artistic representation must satisfy the demands of formal purposivity that govern the success or failure of a representation in the first place. There are important ramifications of this point for the role of the intuition in artistic productivity (and the role of space as formal intuition), and this is the subject of our next chapter.

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<sup>79</sup> Conrad Fiedler, a relatively unknown yet interesting Post-Kantian philosopher, like Kant, recognised the sense in which an engagement with the aesthetic is a cognitive engagement, writing in *On Judging Works of Visual Art* that, "To remain at the stage of perception rather than to pass onward to the stage of abstraction [concept formation] does not mean remaining on a level which does not lead to the realm of cognition; on the contrary, it means to keep open other roads that also arrive at cognition. But if cognition attained by perceptual experience is different from cognition reached by abstract thinking, it can nevertheless be a true and final cognition' (Fiedler (1949): 35). Important to Fiedler's account is the difference between a conceptual activity such as science and a non-conceptual activity such as artistic creativity. In an Introduction to the 1949 text Henry Schaefer-Simmern argues that although Fiedler was grounded in the Kantian philosophy he developed Kant's ideas in an original way through applying Kant's epistemology to the domain of the visual arts (See (Fiedler (1949): Introduction)).

## Chapter 7

### The Role of Intuition in Artistic Creativity

In our last chapter we reached the conclusion that in order to retain the consistencies in Kant's account, there must be two ways in which beautiful art has the capacity to seem like nature. In the first place the artistic representation must be concerned with a formal purposiveness whereby the representation looks like nature because the representation has a purposiveness for cognition such that nature itself presents to us in our responses to the natural world. In the second place, insofar as the representation is said to look like nature through the genius giving the rule to art, then the representation is concerned with the presentation of a content and the communication of aesthetic ideas. The representation here seems like nature because there is no artifice governing the presentation, and the representation speaks as nature speaks, through nature's language, as it were. What is more is that we have stated that it is only insofar as the representation looks like nature in the first sense that it is possible for the audience to engage with it in the second sense. This is because in order to be receptive to an artwork in terms of what it has to say, it must first engage in a positive way our faculty of taste, and we saw that this accords with Kant's distinction between the presence of taste and genius as two essential ingredients to artistic production. If anything is to be sacrificed in the representation then for Kant it must be on the side of genius, rather than on the side of taste, and this clearly indicates the primacy of taste in artistic creation for making the representation approachable, or tolerable, in the first place.

There is more to be said for this dependence of the presentation of ideas upon an initial success in the representations formal purposivity for judgement, and this involves a recognition of the importance of the role of intuition in making art seem like nature (in its purposivity for judgement). Our focus here is still on the conditions for aesthetic creativity, although there are inevitable concerns with the issue of receptivity, which presupposes the possibility of aesthetic creativity in the first place. For the purposes of our investigation we will restrict this focus on artistic creativity (and responsiveness) to the visual aspect of aesthetic responsiveness, which means to that area of aesthetics that is concerned with shape and form on both a two and three dimensional level. In doing this we will be able to highlight the

importance of the role of intuition and the feeling for space (as intuition) in both aesthetic response and creativity.

### *Intuition and Form*

With the visual in art, in making this art seem like nature in our first sense, we are, as seen, not saying anything more than that we are making the representation purposive for the faculty of judgement. What this means is that we are manipulating materials in such a way that we are making the intuition purposive for the faculty of concepts, so that the whole representation, as a successful artwork, can be said to be purposive for the faculty of cognition. Insofar as we are here concerned with the intuition, then we are thereby concerned with the form and thus the spatial aspect of nature. Thus visual art is concerned predominantly with the spatial, and the manipulation of form so that in its spatial configuration it is purposive for the faculty of cognition (as something that we can bring order to). This is only to be expected given the non-cognitive focus of Kant's aesthetic, where, as was seen in earlier chapters, the determining ground of aesthetic response is intuitional (formal, spatiotemporal) rather than conceptual. Non-cognitivism however, doesn't amount to a complete non-conceptualism, insofar as we have again seen in earlier chapters that concepts are pervasive in all perceptual experience, and that representations are always a representation for us just insofar as their presentational content is ordered and arrived at through the operation of concepts. Nevertheless, what subsequent analysis has shown us is that even though any configuration requires conceptual organisation insofar as it is perceived, there is nevertheless an emotional component to perceptual recognition, and that perceptions aren't taken up emotionally indiscriminately, but are responded to negatively or positively just insofar as the faculty of cognition is able to work with this content, as it were. Thus, as was seen in our fourth chapter, just as any representation has a determinate conceptual content, there is nevertheless a relation to the faculty of concepts as such which means any representation is susceptible in terms of aesthetic evaluation (pleasure, displeasure or indifference) just insofar as it is conceptually purposive or counter purposive for organisation at a further level.

Thus in terms of an ability for artistic creation, the artist must in the first place be competent in the manipulation of form so as to make it readable, and this involves

the manipulation of materials so as to render a representation formally purposive<sup>80</sup>. Because this manipulation involves a high level of perceptual organisation, concepts are inevitably productive in the organisation of the material. However, even granting the importance of the role of sortal-concepts in making this organisation possible, there remains an irredeemably intuitional-spatial element that accounts for the successful presentational aspect of the representation.

### *Drawing*

With artistic creation in the visual arts, the presentational aspect in the creation of a representation is essentially a concern with the *drawing*, as what delineates and generates form. Kant himself emphasises the essential role of drawing in the visual presentation of an idea when he writes that,

All form of the objects of the senses (of the outer as well as, mediately, the inner) is either **shape** or **play**: in the latter case, either play of shapes (in space, mime and dance), or mere play of sensations (in time). The **charm** of colours or of the agreeable tones of instruments can be added, but **drawing** in the former and composition in the latter constitute the proper object of the pure judgement of taste. (CJ 5:225)

In assessing and in creating a work of art, as a tasteful representation, the quality of the drawing is key to the representations success or failure. A badly drawing figure or object operates as a detriment to our engaging with the art work, and is the first obstacle to our being able to tolerate, let alone enjoy, the representation in the first place. Thus in the visual arts what is required is first and foremost the ability to draw, so that in accordance with Kant's distinction between taste and genius, a failure to show taste is less tolerable than a failure in genius (the presentation of the

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<sup>80</sup> The exception here, within the field of visual arts, is post-modernism, which is often (although not necessarily) unconcerned with the aesthetics of the representation (as a pleasing or beautiful representation, so that the representation might be counter-purposive for judgement, i.e. ugly/repellent). Here the concern is with the representations significance as a symbol (as saying something, thus looking like nature in the second sense). The fact that the object rejects, or is unconcerned with, the aesthetic element is itself significant in forcing the viewer to deal with the object/representation at just a symbolic level, in spite of initial resistance. This however accounts for a certain level of apathy towards post-modern or contemporary art, since there is not the initial attraction to the object by virtue of its purposive form (aesthetic beauty/attractiveness). Thus the accusation that post-modernism is academic or overly-intellectual, since its significance rests upon its (often esoteric or personal) symbolic significance (what it is saying).

idea)<sup>81</sup>. This significance of drawing is important for our argument. At the close of our second chapter we argued that the talent for drawing is largely in part a talent for a kind of spatial orientation or sense. There our argument was supported through Kant's argument in the *Prolegomena* for the incongruence of counterparts, where Kant argued that in perceptual orientation there is an aspect of the cognition that involves an intuitive aspect only and that remains undetermined by any conceptual activity, even though concepts are involved in the perception as such. Thus the recognition of incongruence between my left and right hands isn't achieved through some conceptual measure, but simply through the act of seeing that there is a spatial incongruence of fit. This irredeemably spatial aspect of the cognition was in turn used to support our argument that, contra the conceptualist argument, Kant maintains that there is an aspect of cognition that is completely apart from the concept of the understanding and that yet plays a part in the structuring of this cognition. This in turn was supported by Kant's contention that space and time themselves are intuitional formal wholes that precede and make cognition possible in the first place. Thus because we have the formal intuition (space and time) generated intuitively through the imagination, as a kind of structural matrix that makes object placement and discernment possible, we can be said to have a navigational and formational aspect governing the representation producing aspect of our cognitive orientation. Thus the talent for drawing was *in part* called a talent that originates from this *a priori* intuitional aspect of cognition. It is *in part* a talent of a spatial sense, since other, more conceptually determinate aspects, contribute to and constitute the ability to draw; such as an awareness of what grades of pencil will lead to the right tone and thus the presentation of a depth affect, or the methods for the construction of linear perspective (or even just the knowledge that the vase we are drawing is round, and what it means to portray roundness). What was pointed out however, was that even after the conceptual mastery of drawing has been achieved, there is an aspect to drawing that cannot be taught, but must be *felt*, where this is essentially a *feeling* for the space in the image. In a two-dimensional representation this special intuitive talent for drawing consists in the ability to transcribe space convincingly on a flat surface, so that the third dimension is seen and felt. In the third dimension (sculpture) this talent consists in the ability to transcribe space in a spatially contained and dimensional unit. With reference to

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<sup>81</sup> Another exception here, apart from that of post-modernism, is Naive Art, where, as mentioned in Chapter 2 (fn. 17), an academic weakness or ignorance in the drawing is part of the quality and merit of the work. Nevertheless, even here, a certain quality in the drawing (it's being done with an absolute sincerity) is necessary.



drawing, it may be thought that because a knowledge of linear perspective can, through a formulaic conceptual application of rules, successfully represent three-dimensional space on a two dimensional surface, then there is no need to postulate a separate talent responsible for the successful drawing in the representation. It is true that a successful representation can be constructed in this fashion, so that anyone can learn how to construct an image. However, we noted that this is one way of representing the object, but that the talented and skilled draughtsman will be able to represent what is before them without the aid of such devices. The further objection is that it is because the method for constructing linear perspective has been imbedded that the draughtsman is able to successfully represent what is before him in a spatially convincing way. However, our response here is that it simply isn't the case that an artist (and many of the best draughtsmen weren't trained in linear perspective) operates according to such rules in drawing, but instead operates according to the way the representation *looks*. The feeling for space as I am referring to it needn't be engaged with the kind of representation that involves deep perspective, and the feeling for the space in the representation is involved in the drawing of objects with a shallow perspective. Although it is possible to apply the rules of linear perspective to the drawing of a vase of flowers, this would be a suspicious as an act of representation as it would indicate a lack of any competence at all for drawing through looking and copying. A successful drawing of this nature will have a depth and spatial dimension that is achieved in part through the sheer feeling for the space in the object, and the ability to render this through materials. Thus the skilled draughtsman will not only have a highly developed conceptual knowledge of how to manipulate their materials and how to construct form, but will also have a *sense* of what is required for convincing form (so that is a talent that cannot be taught solely through rules). Thus in feeling the place of the vase on the surface the draughtsman wants to put this feeling of place into the drawing, so that they literally want to draw the space into the picture. That a certain leaf comes into the foreground and gives a dimensionality to the representation requires not only a knowledge that a heavier line can dimensionally more often than not bring something forward, but a sense of the spatiality and form of the leaf in relation to its surroundings, and its standing in a proximity relative to the viewer.

With reference to Kant's notion that beautiful art, in order to be beautiful, must seem like nature (in our first sense in which we understand this) we can now see the importance of the role of the intuition in artistic production in making this possible. Because the feeling for space and the possession of a spatial sense, is that aspect of intuition that makes drawing possible, it is an essential component of artistic

creation, which is firstly the ability to produce a representation such that it seems as though nature itself produced it (in its purposivity for judgement). What must be remembered however, is that any representation, qua spatial-intuitional, must involve our sense of space, so that just insofar as we possess the formal intuition, it will be governing all intuition based areas of our cognitive life. With drawing the point is not that some special faculty (space as intuition) finds operation where elsewhere it doesn't find operation, but that here the uniqueness of that faculty is made manifest and reveals its special non-conceptual character. All drawing, even that exclusively using mathematical measure depends upon a spatial sense (the faculty of intuition) for its activity, but as a special talent requires a certain ability in order to attain its excellence (i.e. its non-conceptually determinate aspect), and this is just the ability to feel the space in the representation and communicate this into (put this space into) a representation. To make art look like nature is to be able to order the representation as spatial phenomenon, so that the representation is purposive for cognition (we can read the space in it). To fail in making the representation purposive for judgement is to fail in the drawing, and although there are a number of ways the drawing can fail (a failure to understand pencil hardness for instance), one of these ways is a failure in communicating a convincing sense of space.

What our argument in this chapter is maintaining then, is that a failure in getting the intuitional aspect of the representation right (in visual art, the drawing) of necessity leads to a failure in further being able to communicate through the representation, so that the artwork looking like nature in the first sense must be in place so that the artwork can look like nature in the second sense. Looking like nature in the first sense is the representations being purposive for the faculty of cognition. Only when this is in place (the drawing is correct) is the artwork able to look like nature in speaking as nature does, through symbols (as a language) and not discursive concepts<sup>82</sup>. What this indicates is that a structural readability must be in order in the first place so that at a further level the art work is able to speak and present an intellectual content that can be read off this structural configuration. To be sure, the readability can be more or less difficult and a representation can be communicative symbolically even though the formal construction can be a failure. But when the

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<sup>82</sup> A good historical example of the idea that artist is concerned with the use objects as symbols (as a kind of language) can be found in the symbolist writings of G. Albert-Aurier where he states (1891) that, 'Indeed, in the eyes of the artist - that is, the one who must be the *Expresser of Absolute Beings* - objects are only relative beings, which are nothing but a translation proportionate to the relativity of our intellects, of Ideas, of absolute and essential beings. Objects cannot have value more than objects as such. They can appear to him only as *signs*. They are the letters of an enormous alphabet which only the man of genius knows how to spell'. (See bibliography for details).

representation is more difficult to read (so that as a representation it is not entirely purposive for cognition and cannot be said to facilitate a harmonious play between the faculties) then it is difficult to engage with in any absolute way. We cannot easily look at the picture but have to struggle with it, to see what the artist is trying to do, and thus the overall engagement with the representation suffers. Insofar as we have to struggle with the initial formal presentation of the artwork, then the artwork cannot be said to look like nature in the sense of a purposivity for judgement, so that it fails in our first sense of seeming like nature. The failure is such that we cannot read of it, at least not with the ease that should be present in a successful representation, and thus we cannot respond to it as something that aims to communicate a content - thus the failure in our second sense of seeming like nature.

Our thesis here has important ramifications for helping us understand how certain artistic activities are possible that historically were not practiced in Kant's time. When discussing visual art, Kant of course had in mind painting and sculpture as it existed in and prior to the later 18th Century. Here visual art is representational and presents its ideas through the use of recognised objects which are able to function as symbols. According to our argument, communicating at this symbolic level depends upon an accessibility, or readability, of the representation in the first place, so that the ability to make a picture work as a formal representation is essential, where this is a matter of getting the drawing (construction of form) right. Only then can one engage with the work of art, because one can read it, and see what the art work wants to say. What we want to suggest however, is that this dependence is not only true of the representational art that Kant was familiar with but is also true of more recent, modern forms of art.

### *Abstract Art*

Abstract art can either be representational or non-representational. Insofar as it is representational, then, like representational art generally, it exploits motifs from the world<sup>83</sup> (figures, buildings, light, etc.) to deliver a symbolic content. What we have argued has application here, viz. that the drawing (formal arranging) must be right for the viewer to be able to read the image so as to see what it wants to communicate, so that a failure in the drawing is a failure to engage the audience with reference to subsequent meaning (for they struggle to read the image in the first place). However, with non-representational abstract art there is a different concern

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<sup>83</sup> Fantastical objects also being based upon our experience of the world.

on the part of the artist. One of these key differences is that a more explicit concern with the formal conditions of successful (readable) representation has come to dominate. However, it is also true that the overall concern of the artist here is the aim to communicate aesthetic ideas. Indeed, without this latter aspect being a feature of the work then the artwork would be devoid of any deeper significance so that it could legitimately be a work of fine art. As Kant has shown, essential to the work in its success and existence as a work of fine art is not only its formal unity (the soundness of its construction, its being created with taste), but it's symbolic content in terms of its communicating aesthetic ideas. That aesthetic ideas seem only able to be delivered through a recognisable figurative content also in part accounts for the hostility to non-representational abstract art both now and when it first came to develop. The thought was that although the formal has been pushed to the fore, and makes a statement in its own right and perhaps has its own beauty because of this, this cannot be pursued to the detriment of a representational content of some kind (a recognisable symbol). The idea is that without some recognisable content there are no symbols that can function in the presenting of an idea (more or less determinate)<sup>84</sup>. The discovery of non-representational abstract art however, was finding that a representation can communicate exclusively through formal structures which are themselves non-figurative (non-representational). This is possible because shape and form are themselves a spatial quality, and are thereby the result, in their presence to perception, of a spatial synthesis. As was seen in our previous chapter, an object is able to act as a symbol by virtue of its structural analogue with a certain concept or idea. This analogue is found by virtue of a certain similarity governing the cognitive synthesis in the intuition of each representation. What non-representational abstract art recognises is that the rules that govern the synthesis of certain shapes, forms or configurative movements, can themselves function as symbols for something else with which they bear analogy in the rule of synthesis. What this something else is however, is more or less difficult to explicate, and this is in accordance with the indeterminacy of the idea that is being expressed, even though there is a certainly an intellectual content that is being communicated. We can however imagine that infinity, or calm or a particular transcendent attribute can

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<sup>84</sup> The American essayist and art critic Clement Greenberg (who was strongly influenced by Kant), in an essay titled "Abstract, Representational, and so forth," seen this hostility as being based on the assumption or prejudice that only a representational content and its concept can import meaning, which for Greenberg wasn't true. He seen non-representational art as offering a 'new language', which was not yet understood or seen just because it was new. Thus Greenberg states that 'the explicit content on a historical event offered in Picasso's *Guernica* does not make it necessarily a better or richer work than an utterly "nonobjective" painting by Mondrian.' (Greenberg (1961): 135).

be suggested through the manipulation of form. The drawing in the case of non-representational abstract art is the ability to configure the pictorial space so that the representation is able to work as a purposive arrangement in the first place, so that it can subsequently be read as communicating a content; and this is in agreement with our initial remark regarding the dependence of looking like nature in one (second) sense upon another (first) sense. Perhaps more than any other aspect of visual art, this purely abstract art, for its success, depends more upon what we have called the talent, or sense, for spatial configuration. This is because non-representational abstract art forgoes recognisable objects, which even in a failed work of representational art, lend the representation a kind of sturdiness or tangibility, as an intent on part of the artist in their aim to communicate. A failed non-representational work of art on the other hand, insofar as the drawing in spatial configuration fails (where the objects are able to speak by virtue of their synthetic unity), then the representation fails more dramatically, and there is little support upon which the representation can rely for subsequent communication.

If the communicable content of non-representational art were solely concerned with the readability of the picture plane as successful configuration, then the form would just become the content (in accordance with Henry Allison's views). I believe it correct however to maintain that non-representational abstract art aims at more than just this, although it is a large part of the concern of non-representational abstract art and in some cases may be the sole concern. What is crucial however, is *what* is represented - the structure and object in the picture. If this were different then the representation would be saying something else or nothing at all, yet the success of the picture as formal representation may to that extent be unaffected. Thus there can be abstract works that are successful just at the level of readability, but because they lack further content (or what we might call any significant, meaningful content), aren't significant as works of art (we might say they lack genius)<sup>85</sup>. The rule of

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<sup>85</sup> A more recent aesthetic theory by Richard Eldridge has much in common with (and an indebtedness to) Kant's theory, insofar as Eldridge (in 'Form and Content: An Aesthetic Theory of Art' (1985)) has argued for a non-recursive definition of art whereby an artwork is defined by the 'satisfying appropriateness' of its form to its content. A key feature of Eldridge's theory is that it aims to account for abstract painting as non-representational as a legitimate art form. Eldridge states that what non-representational art forms are about 'are the structures or forms which are capable of provoking absorption on the part of the audience. Their contents are the relations between...certain forms or arrangements of colours (which include hue, intensity, size, complementarities, etc.) on the one hand, and human experiences of absorption on the other' (Eldridge (1985): 310). 'Human experiences of absorption' are the relevant human experiences at a given time ('Human capacities for absorption evolve as sensibilities become jaded to certain forms'), so that the artwork is meaningful at

synthesis that governs their visual content doesn't offer itself to any deeper or profound symbolic significance, turning the image from a pleasing representation to a work of fine art. Thus although we might find that there is a greater closeness, or dependence relation, here between the form and the content than with representational art, the separateness between art work as a formally purposive representation and art work as communicating aesthetic ideas is important to bear in mind.

### *Intuition and Gestalt*

In affirming the importance of the act of spatial synthesis in artistic creation we affirm Kant's general account of the closeness and mutual dependence of intuition and concept. Even in the most abstract of representations, the concept of the understanding is present in making the perception possible, and this is just to reiterate what we have stated a number of times in accordance with Kant's remarks in the first critique, viz. that perception itself is only possible upon the operation of the categories upon intuitional content. In our first chapter however, we saw that there must be a gap between intuition and concept if the categories of the understanding are said to have anything to act upon i.e. a data for processing. Although we argued that this initial raw data is present and, as an aspect of a cognitive genesis, supported by the text of the first *Critique* itself, we saw that as far as cognition and our interaction with the world goes, it is fairly unimportant and uninteresting, hence Kant himself is not very concerned with this initial genesis. Nevertheless the gap between the intuition and the concept here becomes of some importance insofar as we are concerned with the creative act of artistic production.

Again, it is not that some pre-conceptual content finds itself expressed in the artistic production. Any content is co-ordinated through the operation of concepts upon the sensible data. What we are arguing is that what the artist does do however is *bear witness* to the birth of the interaction between the concept and the intuition at the creative level, so that a part of their task and endeavour is make palpable the way in which perception itself is creative in bringing cognitive conceptual organisation to bear upon the data of intuition<sup>86</sup>. What the artist does with a successful artistic

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its particular genesis (but presumably universally meaningful in the long run). it is the work of the abstract artist to embody this meaningfulness (content) in abstract form and structure.

<sup>86</sup> This element of my discussion in part takes its inspiration from aspects of Merleau-Ponty's theory of painting and Paul Crowther's reading of it. In Chapter 6 of *Art and Embodiment: from Aesthetics to*

production is testify to the organisational capacity of our cognitive capacities in generating optimal perceptual readability, or what we might call the generation of the *gestalt*. When an artistic representation is complete, it is dense with the struggle to find the best means of coordinating the material so that it is readable and thus purposive for cognition. The purposivity for cognition is the level or the result that the viewer engages with, just as when a perception is organised it is replete with the organisational activity imposed by the categories at a sortal level. We might then say that artistic creation acts as an analogue for perception, in showing the effort to obtain the readability or gestalt that makes subsequent interaction with the world possible<sup>87</sup>. Just as a perceptual content found in the ordinary environment can fail in portraying a optimal purposivity for judgement, an artistic representation can also fail in presenting a gestalt where optimal purposivity is portrayed. The difference is of course that perception is a basic cognitive capacity (being for Kant arrived at through cognitive organisation rather than merely given) that makes us acquainted with the world in the first place, whereas artistic activity is a supplement to human activity (although a basic one at that). As an imaginative activity however, artistic creativity mimics and learns from the perceptual act, so that it attains to provide an order that perception itself spontaneously arrives at. In being presented with a pleasing aesthetic cognition there is a stimulating of the imagination so that it finds before it what it itself would like to generate spontaneously. This recognition in the imagination is an interesting (and important for our purposes) aspect of Kant's account where in the *Analytic of the Beautiful* with reference to the harmony of the faculties he wrote that,

although in the apprehension of a given object of the senses it is of course bound to a determinate form of this object and to this extent has no free play (as in invention), nevertheless it is still quite conceivable that the object can provide it with a form that contains precisely such a composition of the manifold as the imagination would design in harmony with the **lawfulness of the understanding** in general if it were left free by itself. (CJ 5:240-1)

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*Self-Consciousness* Crowther argues that as he understands Merleau-Ponty's argument, the significance of Cezanne's work is that it returns us to a primitive, pre-reflective, primordial level of perception, so that In Merleau-Ponty's words Cezanne endeavors to 'make[] *visible* how the world *touches* us' (Crowther (2001): 107, see also Merleau-Ponty's 'Cezanne's Doubt' (1964)). For Crowther this account of painting has important phenomenological significance insofar as it discloses 'the mode of our insertion into the world' (Crowther (2001): 107)

<sup>87</sup> For an engaging account of how artistic creativity endeavors to achieve optimal readability or an optimal gestalt, see Rudolf Arnheim's *Art and Visual Perception: A Psychology of the Creative Eye* (1954), and his later *New Essays on the Psychology of Art* (1986), especially the essay 'The Double-Edged Mind: Intuition and the Intellect' which has a distinctly Kantian feel to it in terms of the distinction between intuition and concept, and perception as construct.

Thus, when faced with a pleasing aesthetic phenomenon it is as though it were something we ourselves would have made, through the free activity of our imagination (in accordance with the conditions of a perceptual optimum), even though we are bound to its actual formal existence. The imagination is thus responsive to that phenomena wherein it recognises the virtue of its own organisational efficacy, except that with the creative impulse it does not just want to respond to a determinate form, but create form through itself and its own organisational capacity.

There is thus an urge to creativity, brought upon by the imaginations own spontaneous activity, so that there is as it were, an impetus to generate representations that match those representations we find aesthetically pleasing (as bound to a determinate form). The effort to arrive at a gestalt in ordinary cognition however, is not a cognitively felt process, and phenomenologically there is no experience of an organisational activity being present in generating a perception. The perception is just there, and it was only until fairly recently that gestalt psychology discovered and investigated the mechanism at work in perceptual organisation<sup>88</sup>. With artistic creativity however, there is a distinctive consciousness in the effort to arrive at a successful representation so that it is only through much trial and error that a satisfactory result is obtained. This distinctive creative activity betrays an essential part of its own character in that it has a pleasure unique to itself (a pleasure distinct from the pleasure of aesthetic response). This pleasure of artistic creativity is a pleasure in witnessing the generation of the gestalt, so that out of nothing, as it were, a representation that is readable, or purposive for cognition, has been made. Here the organisational virtue of the imagination in perception finds itself spontaneously capable, so that it can create in accordance with the free lawfulness of the understanding when left to itself, and is just as capable of the generation of pleasing form as that form which is bound to a determinate existence<sup>89</sup>.

With this reference to a distinctive creative pleasure however, it is important to point out that although there is a further enrichment of the artistic experience from the

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<sup>88</sup> Kant is seen as an important precursor to Gestalt Theory. See B. R. Hergenhahn, *An Introduction to the History of Psychology* (2009), pg.457.

<sup>89</sup> What needs to borne in mind however, is that although we have argued that there is an artistic creativity which has its own distinctive pleasure in creating representations that are purposive for cognition, this activity itself, even when creating a readable image, doesn't yet thereby create a work of fine art. This is for the reason that a work a fine art requires more than just the capacity to exercise taste and unify a representation so that it has pleasing form, and we remember that Kant on this subject stated that a representation of any kind, in order to be a work of fine art, requires in addition to the creative component of taste the enriching power of genius (*CJ* 5:312-13).



receptive point of view, the aesthetic pleasure found in the aesthetic response is not in the *first place* that of the recognition of an analogue between artistic productivity and perceptual activity. If it was this would undermine Kant's account of the determining ground of aesthetic response, which, as we have seen, is to be found in the perceived purposivity of the intuition for the faculty of concepts. What the further recognition in the artistic production bearing witness to the unifying perceptual act can enhance, is the overall level of engagement with and understanding of the artwork. Our relationship to art can be further informed through the recognition of the artistic struggle to attain a style, and when we learn of an artist's struggle to arrive at their manner of expression we further deepen our sense of artistic appreciation. This needn't be an engagement with an artists' biography, but just a witnessing of the actual artistic development in time. Likewise, with the development of a historical style, we come to see how successive generations have sought to attain optimal perceptual readability. Here we can see a style unfold and mature, and in doing so we see the artist, or style, pushing towards an increased aptitude for representational communication, or successful gestalt. Thus although the pleasure in generating a gestalt is in the first place a pleasure unique to artistic creativity (and we ought to recognise that there is a unique pleasure here), there is nevertheless an important sense in which the artistic results, and the attempts along the way, enrich our engagement and experience with art. This is just insofar as the artist, through their faculty of the imagination, has tried to replicate the synthetic unity found in pleasurable aesthetic experiences that are bound to a determinate form. Because different artists and different eras are responsive to or inspired by differing external phenomena (or have different external realities), then we get a corresponding differing response in the imagination, which through the free creative act seeks to attain such a level of formal readability as it finds in the external world.

In bringing this chapter to a close what needs to be borne in mind and reiterated is the intuitional base upon which artistic creativity rests. We began by arguing that in order for art to seem like nature in the sense of being purposive for judgement in its formal aspect, we need to recognise that this means that there are certain conditions that obtain to a (visual) representations being found as satisfactory from a perceptual point of view. One of the key conditions here, of satisfactory formal representation, concerns a convincing sense of *space* qua two-dimensional representation which necessarily has spatial depth as a component of its appearance, or qua three-

dimensional representation which is located in space and has to satisfy conditions regarding its own contained presentation of spatial unity<sup>90</sup>. This sense of space, convincingly portrayed is a condition of representational and abstract art alike. It is only through being able to put something into space, representationally speaking, that a representation can really seem like nature, and thereby satisfy the viewer, so that as we said, a failure in the drawing in this respect is a failure in executing the representation. Only when art seems like nature in this first sense, can the artwork go on to seem like nature in the further sense of speaking through symbols in the way that nature speaks to us through symbols. The sense of space is not something arrived at through the intuition itself (although it is spatially conditioned) but is an innate representation (which Kant calls a formal intuition) which makes spatial representation and placement possible in the first place. This space (and time) is a non-conceptually determined quality of the faculty of intuition and is the base of all conceptual representations. The next stage of our argument was to show how the faculty of the imagination can be said to be inspired by the aesthetic data of the world, so that through the creative impulse it aspires to the same level of aesthetic beauty therein found. Because this is firstly an aspiring to the making of art that seems like nature in its formal aspect (thus always indicating the primacy of the objective world as the condition of representational satisfaction) it has the sense of space and spatial congruence as its fundamental concern. What the artist does here though, through the artistic creativity, is testify to the act as to how intuitions are generated as perceptual data through the same activity that makes perception possible in the first place, viz. through the application of sortal concepts to the non-conceptual data of sense. In this way the artist bears witness to the act of perception itself, insofar as perception itself is a creative act that has to work upon a content through cognitive operations in order to arrive at a coherent perceptual representation. Through both the arguments of this chapter then, we have aimed to demonstrate how the faculty of intuition in its non-conceptually determined capacity constitutes a fundamental component of artistic creativity, and how art can only be said to seem like nature just insofar as this capacity is in place.

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<sup>90</sup> Gestalt psychology in general has shown how a two-dimensional arrangement, no matter how basic, necessarily has a figure-ground relationship. So even a few marks on a page are perceived (through active perceptual operations) as lying on different planes. What will be perceived as figure and what as ground is determined in accordance with what in gestalt psychology is called a basic law of visual perception, viz. that 'Any stimulus pattern tends to be seen in such a way that the resulting structure is as simple as the given conditions permit' (Arnheim, (1954): 63). See also Max Wertheimer's 'Laws of Organisation in Perceptual Forms (1923), reprinted in *A Source Book of Gestalt Psychology* (1969).

## Conclusion

At the close of our first chapter we asked whether the pre-apperceptive representational unity (*synthesis of representations* (A155/B194)) that Kant makes room for in the first *Critique*, in any sense makes way for a position whereby we can be said to have a meaningful representational content in terms of acquainting us with an objective world of experience. Here we said that the answer to this question was in a way yes and no. 'No' insofar as Kant is explicit in arguing that it is only through the representations having been brought under apperception that the object can be said to be anything for us. We said that we can answer 'yes', just insofar as Kant in the first *Critique* was primarily concerned with the *a priori* validity of the category in relation to the objects of sensibility, and thereby perhaps overlooked the possibility of the importance of a representational content prior to conceptualisation. Exactly what role this representational content would play however was left unsettled, just insofar as Kant did not discuss such possibilities, but we stipulated that such content is perhaps importantly operational at an orientational level, and with the support of Longuenesse, we argued that it is reasonable to suppose that there are imaginative processes that are synthetically engaged without yet being brought under the further unifying function of the understanding. In addition we argued that it is only on the presupposition of such a pre-cognitive content that we can perhaps make sense of animal and infant cognition, which is itself orientational (i.e. not 'blind').

Whether this account of meaningfulness could be expanded through further investigation was left open, and in our last chapter we have seen how making room for this initial representational content helps us to understand an aspect of artistic creativity. Because artistic creativity is concerned with generating the representation as gestalt, then it has to learn from perceptions own conatus, as it were, whereby the organisational capacity which generates the gestalt in perception is itself active in the endeavour to create a representation that is well ordered in its purposivity for cognition as such. By making room for a pre-conceptual representational content we allow for a position whereby some material has to come to be structurally ordered, and this bears analogy with artistic creativity which has to create an order out of certain materials which by themselves suggest no order. Thus we have said that the artistic creative act bears witness to the perceptual act, and further enriches our appreciation of the individual art work or historical style. This argument therefore

has suggested a further way in which a pre-conceptual content can have a meaningful bearing upon further areas of our cognitive life (the artistic creative endeavour).

A further importance for pre-conceptual content could have been argued for if it had turned out (with regard to an analysis of Kant's account of the harmony of the faculties as presented in the third *Critique*) that either the pre-cognitive position or the multi-cognitive position as Paul Guyer has characterised these positions, were tenable. This is because a pre-conceptual unity belonging to the imagination would have been what engaged the faculty of concepts in stimulating the free play in the imagination that itself determines our aesthetic response. Through our analysis however, we have seen that because perceptual content always has a conceptual unity through the categories, there was no way in which we could talk about an apperceptive perceptual representational content as being pre-conceptual. We argued that the perception that determines the aesthetic response, by being focused, always has a determinate content (although as was discussed, not necessarily at the level of determination Guyer argues for), so that in being purposive for cognition the representation is not purposive for any particular concept(s), but is purposive just for the faculty of concepts as such<sup>91</sup>.

So although we have argued that there is room for developing an account of the importance, or meaningfulness, of a pre-apperceptive content, it nevertheless turns out that there are limits to this development, which stops just insofar as perceptual cognitive cognition requires the operation of concepts in being presented with an objective world of experience. However, through the analysis of our second chapter we have seen that although conceptualisation begins at an early stage of the cognitive process, there is nevertheless a sense in which this does not undermine a non-conceptualist position *within* conceptually cognitive experience. Here we discounted the tendency to view Kant's account of cognition as a stop/start process, where once concepts are in play, a non-conceptualist position becomes untenable<sup>92</sup>.

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<sup>91</sup> With Kant's account of the sublime however (Chapter 5), we faced the opposite risk - that what determined our response to the sublime was too conceptually loaded to allow for an aesthetic, rather than a morally or theoretically determining, response. Our response to this however was that because there is a relevant level of indeterminacy in what determines our response, the response is not a cognitive one, but a felt (aesthetic) one. In this sense the imaginative content was purposive for the faculty of reason, 'in order to correspond subjectively with its **ideas** (though which is undetermined)'. (CJ 5:256)

<sup>92</sup> Credit here must be given to Robert Hanna however, who as we have seen (Chapter 4), argues for various degrees of conceptualism within the various human cognitive operations as Kant accounts for them throughout his philosophy.

A further non-conceptualist position was thus argued for, where in following the lead of Wayne Waxman and Béatrice Longuenesse, we argued that space and time as formal intuitions are generated as formal unified wholes through the understanding, but not through the concept of the understanding. These formally unified intuitions through an original apperceptive synthetic unity, formed the base and possibility of any experience whatsoever, making even discursive representation possible. What was especially important for our purposes was that this feature of our cognition could account for certain phenomena that were themselves undetermined by concepts. It was not that concepts were not operative in making the perception itself possible (which they must be qua Kant's definition of perception as cognition) but that there is an element of the experience that cannot be accounted for through the operation of concepts. Kant's examples (in the *Prolegomena*) of the incongruence of counterparts served to demonstrate this, and we applied this aspect of Kant's theory to the possibility of drawing. This in turn had important ramifications to Kant's account of artistic creativity and the sense of what it means for art to be created so that it seems like nature. Because, in accordance with Kant's account, the drawing is what is essential in generating successful form (form that is purposive for cognition), the ability to generate a spatial congruence (fittedness/appropriateness) in drawing is crucial to the (visual) artistic creation insofar as it looks like nature in its success.

In addition to the importance of the unity of space, as spatial framework that makes placement in space possible in the first place, we have also seen that there is a kind of non-conceptualism within Kant's account of aesthetic ideas<sup>93</sup>. Here was a merging of our conceptual faculty with our intuitive faculty in making an kind of intellectual expression possible that transcended what was possible through conceptual articulation. This was Kant's account of symbolic representation, where an object or group of objects were capable of signifying something else through an analogue in the rule that governs the synthesis of the representations. The central concept or idea of reason that was being expressed may be more or less determinate (present to consciousness with artist and audience), but the expression of this idea, insofar as it is intuitive-symbolic, adds to this idea a richness and meaningfulness that transcends what can be expressed through concepts (the faculty of the understanding).

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<sup>93</sup> The term 'metacognitivism' would perhaps be more appropriate, insofar as we are talking of transcending what is discursively expressible, but because of Guyer's specific use of this term and the way we have employed it I have stuck with 'a kind of non-conceptualism'.

So where the worry was that there may be no interesting sense in which a non-conceptual content is importantly involved in human engagement, through our analysis we have shown that there are various levels in which aesthetic experience, both in receptivity and creativity, is non-conceptually involved. By beginning with an analysis of Kant's theory of cognition as outlined in the first *Critique*, we have been able to trace Kant's account of the genesis of experience, and the sense in which the emergence of perception became not just an orientational activity, but also became aesthetically involved. This analysis helped us to engage more thoroughly with Kant's account of reflective judgement (Chapters 3 and 4) and his account of the harmony of the faculties (with both the beautiful and the sublime), so that we could explore the sense in which aesthetic judgement could be said to be non-cognitive. This further allowed us to move on to Kant's creative aesthetic (Chapters 6 and 7) so that we could understand the sense in which art, in order to be art, must seem like nature. By adopting this method of exploration, we have been able to locate the relevant non-conceptuality that has enabled us to defend a form of Kantian non-conceptualism whilst at the same time recognising the highly conceptual nature of human experience.

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