

absolute and unbounded, of the will, which is contradicted by experience and by reason. Only by making the rational agent essentially and thoroughly mysterious are they able to make an equally mysterious doctrine appear appropriate. Frankly, I find the move most unhappy, for it apparently removes from the realm of rational inquiry the rational agent himself. I find that not only contradicted by what I believe are the principles of Being itself, but also a fruitless attempt, for the notion of freedom so purchased is completely unable to aid human understanding in any way whatsoever. As I have previously indicated that I am not entirely certain what is intended by the forementioned claim, I hope and trust that if I have misconstrued it in some way that its propounder will instruct me further in its meaning. This ends what I wish to say at this time about substance.

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Connecting Nature and Freedom in

Kant's Third Critique

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One of the express purposes of Kant's Critique of Judgment is to provide the all important ground of mediation between the two earlier Critiques. Indeed the ultimate success of Kant's critical philosophy itself may be said to hang with his ability to demonstrate that such a ground of mediation exists to unite the seemingly different realms of nature and of freedom. To view Kant as offering two worlds for our consideration, one (as in the first Critique) which stands only under the mechanical laws of nature and the categories, and the other (as in the second Critique) which stands only under the laws of freedom, is to recognize in Kant an uncomfortable dualism which, without making any allowances, we should find untenable.

Because our idea of philosophy as a system (and indeed of reality itself as unified) does not allow an absolute plurality with no ground of mediation from one to another, we are prone to reject as untenable any philosophy which suggests an absolute plurality. And yet we do discover in Kant a kind of absolute plurality in his separation of understanding from reason; a separation which, in turn, divides the theoretical from the practical, the realm of nature from the realm of freedom, and finally the territory of the first Critique from the territory of the second Critique.

Now I believe it is precisely because this separation is regarded as unavoidable and even necessary by Kant that the need for a ground of mediation becomes so pressing, and I hope to clarify in this paper the role of the third Critique in effecting this mediation. True to his method, Kant aims here at a synthesis of nature and freedom by introducing a "third thing" which will provide a common basis of unity; and in this case the "third thing" is simply an indeterminate condition for apprehending nature and freedom themselves.

It is right to begin this investigation by recognizing the bare pluralities which are explicit in Kant's philosophy. By the time of the writing of the third Critique it is clear that the legislation of reason results in at least two kinds of conditions: in its theoretical employment it results in the conditions of nature, and in its practical employment it results in the conditions of freedom. Now this double division of the legislation of reason (to which a third division will be added in the Critique of Judgment) cannot be reduced to an obvious unity according to Kant,

and he remarks caustically in the First Introduction to the Critique of Judgment that

philosophers who otherwise deserve unstinted praise for their profound way of thinking have tried to explain away this division as only apparent, . . . and yet it can be quite easily demonstrated that this attempt to bring unity into a plurality of faculties is futile.

In the Critique of Judgment Kant not only defends the double division of the legislation of reason, but also introduces and defends the existence of a third. The powers of the human mind, he argues, can all be traced back to three which are: the faculty of cognition, the feeling of pleasure and displeasure, and the faculty of desire. Understanding in this context is merely the cognitive faculty considered with respect to the capacity for cognition according to principles, and it provides the domain for the first Critique. Judgment likewise becomes merely the feeling of pleasure and displeasure considered with respect to the capacity for cognition according to principles, and it provides the domain for the third Critique. And finally, reason is merely the faculty of desire considered with respect to its capacity for cognition according to principles, and it provides the domain for the second Critique.

Completing this picture of a three-way division for our mental powers, Kant suggests that understanding is the capacity for knowledge of the universal, while judgment is the capacity for subsumption of the particular under the universal, and reason is the capacity for the determination of the particular through the universal.

Now one may ask here, in a spirit of parsimony, just why such divisions need exist at all in Kant's philosophy? Is not reality, not to mention the soul itself, one rather than many? For Kant's answer to this question, a quite significant yet deceptively simple passage from the First Introduction to the Critique of Judgment will have to suffice. He says

. . . there is always a great difference between (considering) representations so far as they, related merely to the object and the unity of (our) consciousness of it, belong to knowledge, and referring them to the faculty of desire through that objective relation in which they are regarded as the cause of the reality of the object. This latter case is further distinct from considering representations merely in relation to the subject, in which case they afford their own grounds for maintaining their existence in the subject and are regarded in relation to the feeling of pleasure.

In other words, objectivity and the unity of our consciousness provide a condition for considering representations as synthesized into "nature" and as yielding theoretical knowledge; while at the

same time, representations (as desires conditioned by the moral law) must be considered as actually creating the objectivity of free human action (the objects of practical reason). And finally representations may be considered in their own right as being related to a subject and, as such, admitting of the feelings of pleasure and pain.

Someone may deny one or another of these pure possibilities in the consideration of representations as outlined by Kant, but the price is high. For in doing so one denies the reality of either nature, freedom, or feeling; and although such denials are common enough nowadays (it is especially common to encounter denials of freedom and feeling), my own guess is that these three pure possibilities given by Kant will continue to raise themselves in the face of such denials. More needs to be said here but such a discussion must be postponed for purposes of this paper.

Suppose then for present purposes that Kant is justified in asserting this three-way distinction. It should then be asked what is the special significance of feeling, that is "representations considered merely in relation to the subject," regarding the preceding two possibilities, viz. the realm of freedom and the realm of nature? Is there a special role played by the aesthetical, the feeling of pleasure and pain, regarding freedom and nature; and does this special role offer a ground of mediation between the first and second Critiques?

Providing an answer, I believe, requires first an understanding of the way in which judgment is intrinsically related to the feeling of pleasure and pain--something which is certainly not obvious at first glance--and secondly, a demonstration of how the a priori principle of purposiveness, required by judgment, actually effects such a mediation.

Now when the so-called "manifold" of feeling is regarded in the manner Kant has already suggested, that is as representations considered in their own right, it becomes fairly obvious that feeling is not being considered with respect to remote or universal concepts, but with the particular and immediate character of what is "here right now." We are concerned with what, if one will pardon the expression, is "right under our noses," and that which is right under our noses is called "feeling." Thus, understanding how judgment is related to feeling is no more difficult than understanding how judgment is related to the particular and immediate thing we are judging. Judgment subsumes the particular under the universal and, in an important sense, the ultimate particular is "feeling."

I think A. C. Genova is quite correct, however, in saying here that the manifold of feeling is a "peculiar" manifold for Kant. Genova points out in a recent article that the manifold of feeling is not a new territory, analogous to the earlier territories of freedom and nature, but a "dwelling place" (Kant's

own expression) of concepts. "Kant's material philosophy is completely exhausted by the theoretical concepts of nature and the practical concepts of freedom," Genova remarks, "but if it is a question merely of something that remains undetermined by reason or understanding, then, indeed, there is such an area manifested by the complex of objects of sense in their individuality and particularity."⁵ Considering the realm of nature, for example, it seems clear that in the first Critique Kant laid down the pure conditions for nature in general and experience in general, "but that this particular is connected with that, that this specific event is the event it is, can hardly be judged a priori."⁴

Kant believed that judgment actually has two sides, the determinate and the reflective, and it is the reflective judgment rather than the determinate judgment which presupposes an a priori principle and which takes first place in the discussions of the third Critique. Although a determinate judgment involves merely the determination "of a basic concept by means of a given empirical representation," reflective judgment involves the capacity of "reflecting on a given representation according to a certain principle, to produce a possible concept."⁵ "To reflect (or to deliberate)," Kant says, "is to compare and combine given representations either with other representations or with one's cognitive powers, with respect to a concept which is thereby made possible."⁶ One would be employing determinate judgment in saying "There must be some explanation of this," so that in this case the basic concept of "some explanation" is determined by the particular at hand; whereas one would be employing reflective judgment in saying "This pot looks like it's been used," so that in this case the reflection and deliberation over the given particular has produced the possible concept of "being used."

Now insofar as the reflection and deliberation does not occur unaided and, as it were, in a vacuum, Kant suggests that there must be a principle which serves as a guide to such reflection. This principle is that of "purposiveness," and it alone claims title to the a priori condition of all reflective judgment.

When first encountering the so-called principle of purposiveness, one's impulse is to cry "foul!" and ask why reflective judgment must assume the existence of a single concrete purpose anywhere; after all, couldn't nature be perfectly mechanical and still yield herself to our judgment? But this is not Kant's meaning at all and, indeed, he convincingly makes the point that nature may be purely mechanical in his own "Critique of Teleological Judgment."

What Kant means is not that intuition couldn't yield itself to our cognitive faculties if nature were purely mechanical, but that we must suppose that intuition will actually yield itself to our cognitive faculties. Just this and nothing more. That what we are judging is capable of being judged, that it fits and will yield to the aims of our cognitive faculties, is the meaning of the

indeterminate principle of purposiveness. We assume that nature is purposive with respect to our cognitive faculties and that it will display a systematic and logical unity; this is not concrete purposiveness, such as one might attribute to the acorn on its way to becoming an oak tree, but a formal purposiveness which assumes that nature was "made to fit" our ideas about her--a little like assuming that a shoe will fit one's foot.

But since it is an assumption that a particular shoe will fit one's foot, the principle of purposiveness in the third Critique, cannot be one which determines nature and, instead, is an indeterminate concept which must take nature "as if" she were perfectly suited to our cognition. The indeterminate principle or purposiveness conditions no new realm of objectivity as did the principles of the two earlier Critiques. Assuming that nature is, like a piece of art, designed for our cognitive faculties, may be necessary for the purposes of reflective judgment, but it leaves open the real possibility that nature may not be like art at all. Even the categorical conditions given to nature in its generality in the first Critique do not rule out the possibility that it is so chaotic in its particularity as to frustrate understanding. Kant remarks that

. . . although experience forms a system under transcendental laws, which comprise the condition of the possibility of experience in general, there might still occur such an infinite multiplicity of empirical laws and so great a heterogeneity of natural forms in particular experience that the concept of a system in accordance with these empirical laws would necessarily be alien to the understanding . . .⁷

And again

. . . for the variety and diversity of the empirical laws might be so great that, while it would be in part possible to unify these empirical laws themselves under a common principle, were it the case (which is perfectly possible a priori) that the variety and dissimilarity of these laws, and also of the corresponding natural forms, were infinite and that we were confronted by a crude, chaotic aggregate totally devoid of system, even though we had to presuppose a system in accordance with transcendental laws.⁸

The representation of nature as art is a necessary and unavoidable assumption, but it is nonetheless an Idea, and as a principle of our investigation is thus subjective.

It should be noted that, where I have presented the concept of purposiveness as it already occurs participating in the system of Kant's philosophy, Kant himself offers independent grounds for the existence of this principle in the third Critique. Although I will not be able to offer a complete account of the way in which Kant offers his justification, it is extremely important to

recognize that independent grounds do exist for this principle, and perhaps a brief sketch will help.

In brief, Kant finds the clue which leads to the justification of the principle in the apparently conflicting claims made by the apprehension of beauty. The aesthetic feeling connected with the apprehension of a beautiful object is at the same time subjective and objective. It rests apparently on feeling which is merely subjective; yet it claims objectivity in its demand for universal assent, and, indeed, we regard a truly beautiful object as beautiful for everyone. Kant thus faces the problem that beauty must, on the one hand, involve a concept so as to claim universality and necessity, and yet, on the other, involve no concept insofar as it rests on mere subjective feeling. The resolution of the problem lies, of course, with the discovery of the indeterminate concept of formal purposiveness; a discovery which makes beauty understandable by basing its feeling on the harmony of understanding and imagination, and which discloses the transcendental ground for aesthetic feeling.

Likewise, with regard to the teleological judgment, Kant demonstrates the way in which our attribution of concrete inner purposiveness to objects of nature (as an acorn is purposive), which we do even in light of the possibility that nature may be entirely mechanical, can only rest on the a priori principle of purposiveness which, in this case, is borrowed by judgment from reason as a regulative idea.

Now one might say that it is a "happy accident" that we discover in the world things that are beautiful, things that are sublime, and things that are organized so as to be understandable only through teleology; and this would be quite right. Indeed, neither the a priori conditions of freedom and nature, nor the indeterminate principle of purposiveness, requires that such things exist, and one can imagine a world perfectly fit for our cognitive faculties in which there were no organized beings, no beauty, and nothing to give rise to the feeling of the sublime. And yet it is quite a happy accident that such things exist for their mere existence offers objective evidence of a sort for the employment of reflective judgment's subjective principle. It is only the existence of beautiful objects which gives rise to the problem of aesthetical judgment, the solution to which provides independent grounds for the principle of purposiveness itself.

And even more than this, Kant discovers a kind of symbolism in the beautiful and the sublime. It is a symbolism which seemingly issues from nature, while yet reminding man of the Good and of his moral destiny, one which offers one a glimpse of the possible unity of nature and freedom. It is because the standard of beauty is in ourselves, and not objectively present in nature, just as the moral law is in ourselves, that one begins to see the symbolical function of beauty as representing the Good. Nature, through her beautiful objects, harmonizes spontaneously with the

subjective needs of our cognition in such a way that the resulting aesthetic feeling of pleasure is conditioned a priori and not a posteriori, just as the immediate satisfaction of the moral agent is conditioned a priori by the mere form of moral maxims. The beautiful is especially suited to a symbolical representation of the good because both the beautiful and the Good are determined apart from any existing interest, both result in pleasure, and both claim necessity and universality while not admitting of proof.⁹ Through her beautiful objects, through what is, nature offers us concrete examples of what ought to be, and in doing so, offers us a symbolical kind of assurance that she is suited to the concepts of our moral freedom. Thus beauty is said by Kant to be a symbol of the Good.

The connection already established between nature and freedom is extended through a recognition of the sublime as a symbol for man's moral destiny. Although occurring under almost opposite conditions than the beautiful, the spiritual feeling of the sublime happens precisely because reason has demanded so much of aesthetical imagination that aesthetical imagination becomes frustrated and, in relieving the frustration, can point only to the absolute grandeur or reason with respect to any aspect of nature. The rational idea demanded of our aesthetical imagination, as when we attempt to comprehend the vast grandeur of an Arctic wasteland, becomes its own object of praise following the frustration of imagination. Even nature's own presentation of power and vastness must be regarded as taking second place to the power of reason as it secures man's freedom, and to its vastness of scope in assuring man's destiny. So the sublime is a symbol of man's moral destiny in much the same way that beauty is the symbol of the Good.

Nature thus demonstrates an analogy to freedom through the principle of purposiveness insofar as the a priori satisfaction of, say, a beautiful object may be recognized as similar to the disinterested satisfaction of a moral agent. The principle of purposiveness provides a ground of mediation for our thought between the realms of nature and of freedom because, on the one hand it concerns what is, i.e. the particular as the subject of judgment, while at the same time prescribing what ought to be, i.e. a conformity with our ideas of reason. The is of the first Critique is thereby connected, if only through an analogy, with the ought of the second Critique through the indeterminate concept of purposiveness.

An important door has thus been opened by the special principle of reflective judgment which confirms the practical possibility of our access to a designed and unified nature which perfectly suits our practical ends. Kant remarks in his first introduction to the third Critique, concerning the concept of purposiveness, that we are concerned with nothing less than the possibility of experience as a system according to empirical laws. This possibility is far more elegant than it might at first appear since, under its

condition, we can imagine experience coming, as it were, fitted for our cognitive faculties, tailored as an elegant, uniform and simplified system, and offering immediate apprehension in accordance with purposiveness itself. We may say that reason is hoping, necessarily, to discover her ideals in the particular, and that, insofar as her ideals must be presupposed by reflective judgment, a door is opened to that actual possibility.

Indeed, this possibility bears direct significance not only for the apprehension of nature considered by itself, but also for nature insofar as it must be compatible with our concept of freedom. The products of freedom, the objects of practical reason, are meant to take their place as a part of the natural realm--actions and their effects are meant to be introduced as actualities in nature--and it thus becomes necessary to presuppose the possibility of a nature compatible with our moral ends. Man is a member of both the intellectual and empirical realm, and in order to assure the possibility of his empirical character as being in accordance with the moral law, it is necessary to suppose that nature itself will conform to the moral law's dictates. The necessity is, of course, a practical necessity, but it is a necessity nonetheless. Judgment's special concept thus guarantees our interpretation of particular objects as purposive both for the conditions of the transcendental unity of nature, and for the categorical imperative.

It now should be fairly obvious that the possibility of the summum bonum required by practical reason and discussed in the second Critique, elicits a confirmation from the principle of reflective judgment itself. Since the principle of reflective judgment requires the suitability of nature to our moral ends, it leads inevitably to the concept of the summum bonum in nature, and particular objects must be judged reflectively as according with this summum bonum. This is nothing less than the practical demand for the perfect harmony of feeling, of nature, and of freedom; here reflective judgment has guaranteed the possibility of such an end on independent grounds.

Throughout this essay I have tried to show why, in my opinion, Kant is successful in providing a ground of mediation between the realms of nature and freedom. Kant's own assumption that reason indeed has two separate employments in the theoretical and the practical, along with his tripart division of the soul into cognition, feeling, and reason (in short, his assumptions of plurality which require eventual unity if his philosophy is to be a system), have been taken more or less for granted in this paper. I will have to leave it for the reader to satisfy himself of the very great importance of these distinctions, which Kant claims. At any rate, it seems reasonable to say that Kant's special place in philosophy, as neither a realist, nor idealist, nor empiricist, nor rationalist, rests heavily with the mere existence of these distinctions.

But I hope that I have succeeded in showing why, given Kant's own distinctions and, in particular, his elaborations of the realms of nature and freedom in the first and second Critiques, that there is no absolute dualism infecting his philosophy. Although both nature and freedom can only be regarded as objective insofar as they are conditioned through their separate and unique principles, one discovers in the domain of the particular (that is, the realm of immediacy and feeling) the single key which permits a mutual access between nature and freedom. This key, namely purposiveness as the principle of reflective judgment, can be used only on the condition that nature is purposive with respect to our judging faculties, and this assumption when it is spelled out means the necessary conformity of practical with theoretical reason, and of the is with the ought.

Particular events and objects must be judged, then, according to the principle of reflective judgment and judged "as if" the ought and the is coincided. The ought (used in this sense as the Ideas of reason in general) must coincide with the is (used in this sense as the objects of cognition in general) in order for judgment reflectively to subsume the particular under the universal. Put in another way, the practical requirement for the activity of reflective judgment, namely the purposiveness of nature, must be regarded as a theoretical actuality in nature. It is thus possible, through purposiveness, to think the transition from nature to freedom, and indeed, to think of the possible underlying transcendental unity of the two realms.

Moreover, the existence of beauty and the sublime in nature, as "happy extras," helps to provide further evidence for the ground of mediation between freedom and nature. It is the existence of beautiful objects, especially in nature, which leads to the discovery of the principle of purposiveness on independent grounds, and it becomes possible to understand beauty and the sublime in nature as symbols of man's freedom.

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NOTES

¹Kant, I., First Introduction to the Critique of Judgment (Bobbs-Merrill Co.: New York, 1965), p. 12.

²Ibid., p. 10.

³Genova, A. C., "Kant's Complex Problem of Reflective Judgment," Review of Metaphysics, XXIII:3 (March 1970), p. 454.

⁴Ibid., p. 455.

⁵Kant, p. 16.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid., p. 9

⁸Ibid., p. 14.

⁹Genova, A. C., "Kant's Transcendental Deduction of Aesthetic Judgments," Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, XXX:4 (Summer 1972), p. 472.