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THE FINAL ISSUE

# The American Society for Aesthetics Graduate E-Journal

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## **Editors**

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# Letter from the Editors

Dear ASAGE Readers,

We thank you for your support of the *American Society for Aesthetics Graduate E-Journal*, which is in its fourteenth, and final edition in 2022. This is our most difficult editor's letter to publish because it is our last. Our editorial period began during the tumultuous summer of 2020—a summer that seems yet to have quelled two years later. As graduate students, it has been a genuine pleasure getting to experience academic philosophy from a different perspective.

Our primary aim was to advance the concept of a graduate journal to meet the needs of future graduate students. We did this through a revision of the submission formats and the journal format itself and by increasing the presence of the journal beyond the ASA's boundaries. Over the last two years, we are proud to have published four full-length articles, four fast philosophy pieces with replies, and one book review, as well as to have featured artwork from our scholarly peers. Our list of contributors comprises a cosmopolitan set of aesthetically oriented graduate students and faculty members. We are grateful to have interacted with all the contributors who submitted and published their innovative work in ASAGE.

This issue contains three papers.

The first paper by Emilie Claire Belkessam (University of Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne) is a blend of art-historical and philosophical work entitled “On Doxastic: Emmanuelle Villard and the Twenty-First Century's Aesthetic.” In this work, the author proposes a new aesthetic concept: *the doxastic*. The doxastic is then illustrated and built upon through an in-depth aesthetic analysis of the work of French artist Emmanuelle Villard (1970-).

The second paper by Hyo Won Seo (Texas A&M University) is entitled “What Art(ists) Demand of Us.” In this paper, the author draws from the work of Linda Martin Alcoff on racial embodiment, and Mikel Dufrenne on the phenomenology of aesthetic experience, to argue that “there is no perception of the visible, aesthetic or bodily, that is not imbued with racialized value.”

The third paper by Enoch Yim (University of California, Santa Cruz) is entitled “In Defense of Kant's Deduction of Pure Aesthetic Judgments.” The paper defends Kant's deduction of the subjective, universal validity of pure judgments of taste from Paul Guyer's influential criticism in *Kant and the Claims of Taste*. The author's alternative reading makes way for a novel interpretation of Kant on which judgments of beauty “can be construed as the smallest unit of or initial stage in making any type of judgment.”

We want to thank everyone who has supported the journal over the years that it has been in publication. ASAGE has been a place for graduate students to share their new ideas, further develop them, and engage in written dialogues with other graduate students. Making ASAGE useful to graduate students in aesthetics has been our perduring primary goal—a goal that entails that we always

look to the future. With that in mind, we, along with the ASA officers and trustees, made the difficult suggestion to cease publication of ASAGE. Given the rapidly changing landscape of academic philosophy, a graduate student journal seems to us a suboptimal medium for meeting the needs of the ASA's student community. The ASA officers and trustees will meet this November at the annual meeting in Portland, Oregon to discuss viable alternatives to ASAGE. Your input on such alternatives is strongly encouraged. Please do not hesitate to contact us at the addresses below. It is our conviction that this meeting will result in myriad opportunities for graduate students to develop their career and research prospects, as well as foster community. We are grateful to the officers and trustees for placing ASAGE's well-being in our hands these past two years.

Finally, we would like to express our gratitude to you, the reader. ASAGE has largely been a passion project nestled between coursework, teaching assistantships, department workshops, and all the other elements that make up the graduate student life. None of this would be possible without your readership.

Once again, and for the final time, thank you for reading.

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# On Doxastic: Emmanuelle Villard and the Twenty-First Century's Aesthetic

Emilie Claire Belkessam



Figure 1. *Nice to Meet You*, 2007, mixed media, various sizes, Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Nice, France.

The concept of doxastic derives from the ancient Greek term *doxa*, which in Greek antiquity designated popular cultures or even opinions; the latter being specific to the Sophists—those orators whom recent historical-philosophical studies have considered to be vile characters, quick to deceive their interlocutors for the simple pleasure of winning a discussion.

In view of the sources that have come down to us and the interpretations that have been made of it, *doxa* therefore appeared to have been disregarded by philosophers such as Parmenides and Plato, and was thought to be going against all forms of truth—to be understood as absolute, one, and indivisible—and all form of reason. Indeed, we inherited this view and even more so when we think about the fact that Plato was considered and is still considered a pre-Christian; his writings therefore influenced church thinkers, particularly at the time of the creation of universities in Europe.

However, there are illustrious thinkers who belonged to this movement of sophistry against which philosophy would have developed, like Protagoras or Gorgias. If the collective unconscious has made this concept of *doxa* a paragon of lies, thinkers such as Pierre Bourdieu or Edmund Husserl have been able to grasp the issues and the interest that are brewing therein—in particular from the point of view of the meaning that one discovers there, ways in which opinions and the system of representations are determined there, far from the sciences.

According to Edmund Husserl, and later Alfred Schütz in *The Phenomenology of the Social World*,<sup>1</sup> *doxa* is a pre-reflexive disposition of knowledge. Husserl calls *doxa* he calls pre-predicative, and it is made up of judgments and implicit expectations that most frequently go from the group to the individual. *Doxa* is a belief, a consciousness of something or an intentional consciousness that Husserl himself does not oppose to science, contrary to the well-known dichotomy of belief and knowledge. Pierre Bourdieu in the *Pascalian Meditations* (1997)<sup>2</sup> endeavors to reformulate this thought of stereotypy through his discipline, sociology: *doxa* would thus be the common sense at work, at to know that doxastic adherence to the social world is found in dichotomies such as individual and group, objectification and incorporation, sociological determinisms and social practices. *Doxa* in Bourdieu finds communication between individuals and inscribes the social order in each one, while structuring the social world from the inside therefore: “the first experience of the world is that of the *doxa*, adherence to the relationships of order which (...) are taken for granted.”

Doxastic makes possible a dialogue between individuals on the non-established, on the feeling, of which the particularity is to move in the time which itself passes through each one. Doxastic in aesthetics would thus be paradoxical, in that it gives us to understand, without the tools of reason. Thus, this phenomenon, not relating to the analytical or rational order, must be made intelligible within an extrinsic, synthetic relationship.

From the order of practical reason dear to Immanuel Kant, doxastic thus appears as a logic of plausibility, it is true opinion (or to put it in Greek: *alèthès doxa*). We find it in Plato identified with politics, with the fruit of commerce between men within the city, with disciplines if not vile, at least of second order. For want of method and emanating from a form of likelihood, *doxa* as we understand it here, as an aestheticizing concept, is linked to a certain form of aestheticized opinion.

This aesthetic opinion is the starting point of Emmanuelle Villard's work. Her source of inspiration emanates from a certain imposed image, from what femininity is. An image that the artist perceives and questions through her plastic work, in terms of representations and injunctions. It is this ideology that we find in the *doxa*, on what a woman should look like, how she should behave, at work in everything that is likely to emanate from it, namely: advertising, education, toys, social roles, jobs, movies, dramas, and so on.

In short, what we propose here is an aesthetic concept, doxastic, appearing less as a prejudice on the femininity and as the sum of presumptions, various opinions, than as an aesthetic referent, whether it's legitimate or not, coming from common sense and that the artist has decided to question, stretch, inspect, making it her own, questioning it, and so on.

From the moment when mythology, not the artist's personal—here Emmanuelle Villard—but doxastic imposes itself on us, even emanates from it (from this unconscious that we have in common) and has an intrinsic verisimilitude, if not to say, a form of truth in that it speaks of our uses and the interpretation that we make of it, it then acts as a conceptual tool allowing us to understand the origin of the inspiration at work in the artefacts, her *poiesis*.

Emmanuelle Villard is a French artist (1970-) based in Montpellier, France who works on the subjects of seduction, femininity, and consumerism in sculpture using different artifacts, such as paint, beads, sequins, and fishnets. In Emmanuelle Villard's work there is a reciprocity between her pictorial and object-oriented research. Indeed, in her pictorial and object-oriented work, Villard

<sup>1</sup> Schütz will use Husserl's work on the *doxa* as a sociological interpretation reflecting individual assumptions and structuring our social world.

<sup>2</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Méditations pascaliennes* (Paris: Points, 2003). All translations of French sources are my own.

questions the attraction, both optical and haptic, of the gaze, the carnal and seductive vision to which the representation of the female body in our modern societies is usually lent. Whether in art or in areas considered more trivial, such as that of advertising and marketing, we notice this passage of the feminine from a thinking subject to a purely visual object.

Indeed, Villard is interested in the dual status of the woman's body, this objective subject rendered to the state of things, sometimes even plasticized, siliconized, transformed, on glossy paper or in the flesh itself, in order to correspond to an ideal for smooth, homogeneous and industrial texture. Villard's interest in the way femininity is perceived—a category that is vulgarly described as an aesthetic canon—goes beyond the sphere of reflection only to find itself caught up in the material of its plastic productions.

Thus, under aspects peculiar to painting, which are those of color, of matter, of its agglutinations and landslides, of forms and reliefs, Villard makes her work the place of gaze questioning, interrogating notions of purely visual attraction, seduction of the eye and will to contact, purely plastic representation and superficiality of the gaze.

This aesthetic is the result of an introspective inquiry of the artist, an introspection based on social conventions. She joins the feeling that every woman can have on bodily expectations. The feeling that woman are likely to have as to the question of the importance of the appearance—if not the preponderance.

Through abstract pictorial compositions, borrowing elements peculiar to the so-called sphere of the feminine—sequins, pearls, lace, make-up—the artist plays codes between disciplines, she borrows props that are usually used by hyper femininity (little girls, or even drag queens, such as sequins or pearls) bringing into the noble sphere of painting elements of the vulgar, of the common, which are these components intended for consumerist and more trivial use.

Villard works on the double status of her medium, through the realization of what she calls paintings—objects, which allows her to play on both tables, on the one hand on the aesthetic dimension proper to the pictorial representation and on the other hand, on the will of pure tactile attraction.



Figure 2. From the series *Objets visuels*, 2007-2011, mixed media, various sizes.

The doxastic aesthetic, which we propose to associate with the reasoning on the plastic production of Villard, would be in this sense a particular notion of aesthetics, whose interest would be focused on the apprehension of the beautiful by the common. Therefore necessarily on its reciprocity from one individual to another, forming a community of opinions that would be the



yardstick of an aesthetic based on a synthesis of points of view, close to the Kantian idea of a universality subjective and shareable.<sup>3</sup>

The common here would be this opinion, even this prejudice of the collective as of the individual—an individual who, according to Kant, places himself in the place of any other when he thinks of the beauty of an object—what is really aesthetic—and necessarily attractive. A true injunction to correspond, doxastic enjoins to conform our perception and our relation to the world of appearance, to others.

The interest of these reflections is to confront a notion—doxastic—presupposing an agreement of sensations, making undoubtedly reference to the Kantian theme and the idea of common sense.<sup>4</sup> But this in the context of a work, that of Emmanuelle Villard, which is the place of a questioning on the concept of personal mythology<sup>5</sup>. From a subjective relation to the aesthetic one.

Thus, it means to question the validity of the existence of the concept of personal mythology in art, and of putting it in parallel with the idea of doxastic in order to try to understand how one is impregnated with others. In short, what will be discussed in what follows will be Villard's report to the concept of personal mythology.

It means here to question this concept with the idea of a doxastic considered as an important part of an aesthetic, less subjective than it appears. This will allow us to understand how Villard's plastic production is situated within numerous confluences, but also to add an element and not least to the concept of personal mythology, that of doxastic.



Figure 3. From the series *VEniaiserie*, 2011, mixed media, diam. 150cm.

Initiated at the Villa d'Arcon, her work is part of the pictorial abstraction, except that her medium does not respond voluntarily to the demand for flatness that painting requires. Indeed,

<sup>3</sup> The faculty of aesthetic judgment, a concept we owe to Immanuel Kant, tends to demonstrate that aesthetics does not proceed from an objective principle, from the character of an object. It emanates from subjectivity, from sensations experienced by the subject(s). And it can be universalized because in the judgment of taste a form of sociability is actually played out: when I look at a rose, I accord my judgment with that which would be that of any other, because the interest which takes precedence here is that of get along, get along with others. There is a form of reciprocity between the subjective universality of Kant and the *doxa* (not according to Plato, who rejects it as approaching the probable when he is interested in the True, but more according to Bourdieu's sociology).

<sup>4</sup> See Immanuel Kant, *Critique de la faculté de juger*, trans. Philonenko Alexis (Paris: Vrin, 2000).

<sup>5</sup> According to Dr. David Feinstein and Dr. Stanley Krippner, "A personal myth is a constellation of beliefs, feelings, images, and rules—operating largely outside of conscious awareness—that interprets sensations, constructs new explanations, and directs behavior. ...Personal myths speak to the broad concerns of identity (Who am I?), direction (Where am I going?), and purpose (Why am I going there?). For an internal system of images, narratives, and emotions to be called a personal myth, it must address at least one of the core concerns of human existence." David Feinstein and Stanley Krippner, *Personal Mythology* (Santa Rosa, CA: Energy Psychology Press, 2008), 5–6. Personal mythology is used to describe the work of some contemporary artists, such as Louise Bourgeois, working on her childhood on her pieces of art, and Annette Messager.

the objects that the artist puts out have this strangeness; their materiality is understood in a voluntary transversality, between the artistic genres. The interest of its objects—paintings or paint—objects, results in the multiplication of planes; we can turn the object around. It's no longer a picture on the flat surface that the eye sweeps, but a multitude of facets that don't show each other at the same time.

Villard is interested in this practice in order to develop a painting which cannot be completely surrounded by the gaze; these paintings are not easy to see, we have to turn around the artifacts. They are monstrous, accumulating and then dissimulating as we venture to surround the whole object. Once the various facets are more or less surrounded, it necessarily emanates a haptic dimension, there is a desire to touch the objectal paintings that evade the appropriation of the viewer but calls out for contact. What we understand in light of the artist's discourse is that Villard's subjective relationship with her femininity is intruded.

This part of mystery that the paintings and objects preserve are many signs of this woman's body unveiled and put into an abyss, but never given. Her works fully play embody an ambiguous status between painting and painted sculpture, but also between strictly plastic research and real-world metaphor.

Thus, Villard chose the medium of painting first in her career, since it corresponds to a flowing matter that must be taught, representing in her eyes the inability to master everything in general and in life. Indeed, what interests her fundamentally is the subject facing her reality, her environment, her context. Her research may have been considered as strictly pictorial in its beginnings, but as the artist was able to advance, the foundations of her plastic peregrinations were uncovered.



Figure 4. From the exhibition *Peinture, arsenic et vieilles dentelles*, 2014, Galerie Les filles du calvaire, Paris.

If in her younger years, Villard was able to attach herself to the processes of creation, to her rituals, to the analysis of her gestures to the detriment of her personal relationship with her work. It was apparently an unconscious way of creating a distance between painting and herself as a person. This attachment form of plastic work did not come to her straight away, but ended up breaking through in spite of herself, as something necessary. Because it takes a while before giving oneself to art and revealing oneself in it. This practice is also quite recent. We have already observed it with Louise Bourgeois in her childhood memories illustrated by textile installations, like *Pink Days and Blue Days*, and also in her way of representing her mother by a gigantic spider (*Maman*). In this form of practice, the issue of art becomes irremediably crucial for the plastic artist, who delivers a part of herself to it.

The use of small objects to work emphasizes this direction, pipettes or other accessories have allowed her to protect her work from the intimate, her subjectivity, since they were themselves a form of the intimate of the order of the *poiesis*, of the creation process. Femininity as perceived in the collective unconscious is the same use of small objects, with the delicacy they require.

Her beginnings were fragile. If the artist has been able to hide behind the analysis of gestures and processes, today it's less emphasized. The subject of her work is now elsewhere, more in an exacerbation of aesthetics, in particular with regard to the term itself of aesthetics, wrongly synonymous with the term "beautiful" in everyday language. These prejudices and presuppositions which, as we shall see, are thought to be in a strict and subjective relation to femininity, instead give in to the collective.

There are several series in Villard's work. Numbers of objects painted, of suspensions, that the artist applies to chandeliers—vocabulary that we can't help associate with the decorative. One of these series, called *VEniaiserie*, plays paint codes without having a gram of paint present on the compositions, only acrylic gel sometimes. Acrylic that the artist associates with a substance of the order of the tinsel, the factitious, like the rhinestones, pearls and mirrors that mark out the compositions of this series, in opposition to the oil painting of the great masters.

The universe of the factitious is at the heart of its approach, insofar as it's a truly human activity, which has meaning. This is why it's not surprising to find that Villard never works with natural materials, nor anything precious, such as gold leaf, rubies, or pigments. Her materials and what results are kneaded of falseness, they mimic a certain idea which the artist of reality makes, as that which constitutes the world in a general way.

The evocation of false pretenses, an invitation to go beyond the surface, her paintings openly seduce; they shine and attract the eye. One who looks attentively at these productions, finds his image, his face, in the pieces of mirrors, either frankly reflected or somewhat distorted. These gaze traps, consisting of these small pieces of mirrors, lead the viewer into a game of false pretenses.



Figure 5. From the exhibition *Pleasuredome*, 2006, Galerie Les filles du calvaire gallery, Brussels.

This appeal to the visual and its reverberation, tinsel, opulence, accumulations and other overbites, is a direct reference to the Mannerist period in painting, during which the flesh was generous, the decorative elements ubiquitous and the general appearance somewhat superficial. Villard refers to a sublime preciousness in which the curves of women were highlighted, accentuated

by the presence of balconette, pearls, lace (...) These curves, deformed bodies and lascivious poses, are found in her paintings – objects, with round and opulent forms.

Villard speaks of these paintings as “made up like stolen cars [*maquillé comme une voiture volée*],” an undeniable reference to the artifices of an exacerbated femininity, where interest in the masquerade, the way in which individuals will be made through of appearance, imports if not prime. The artist’s singular and subjective interest in this state of affairs obviously resides in a personal, cultural, somewhat mythological relationship that she shares with the feminine.

We find such similarly intimate and universal evocations in the work of Louise Bourgeois, who recalls the traumas of her childhood, notably in the 1974 play *The Destruction of the Father*. A dark red-colored with intra-uterine atmosphere, punctuated with penises and teats in latex, plaster, wood, cloth, in which Bourgeois exorcises the domination of an authoritarian father and mocker. This, of course, echoes the idea, reiterated by psychoanalysis, that one must kill the father in order to become an adult. At first, the approach is akin to the singular, then to something broader. This approach is found in Villard or Bourgeois, but also Annette Messager who in 1988 created her *Petites effigies*, an installation composed of nineteen stuffed toys each with photos and texts, loaded with memories of her young age. There are thus “frogs – envy”, or other “elephants – pride”, thus personifying some of the feelings that evoke to her childhood.



Figure 6. From the exhibition *Posturale attitude*, 2007, Galerie Les filles de calvaire, Paris.

The term “mythology,” first described as modern of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, is mainly due to Roland Barthes<sup>6</sup>, who describes mythology as being a principle of the ideology in which the doxastic is the dogma. Thus, it can describe as belonging to the myth the Citroën DS, the tobacco, the colonial discourse, the oenology (...) Concepts that are seen to be augmented and defined, called daily mythologies, in 1964 at the Museum of Modern Art, during the first consequent exhibition of artists grouped under the aegis of Figuration Narrative, and eight years later, called mythologies by the art critic Harald Szeemann on the occasion of *documenta 5* in Kassel, West Germany in 1972.

One can understand this concept of personal or individual mythology, as the expression of the intimate, an aesthetic of self, sometimes also of the daily, conferring on the universal. That is to say, the influence of *doxa*, generally minimized in the definition of the concept of these mythologies (in the modern sense), should be considered with interest—interest in the subjective experience of the real, which is found in Villard’s work.

If by the 1960s artists were considered by the intensity of their subjectivity to make a universal feeling emerge, this was not the case after that. The minimalists, for example, went so far as to erase the artist from his production by granting the primacy of the project rather than its

<sup>6</sup> Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (Paris: Points, 2014), 217n4.

execution by an author, erasing at the same time all trace of signature. Conceptual art, on the other hand, has attached itself to the theme of reflection in its generalities, to the detriment of the nominal.

It's undoubtedly this taste of the anonymous which has prompted many artists to reinvest in the field of individuality, to go towards the subjective and the autobiographical. In this way, we find a number of narratives presented in the form of art, in keeping with Jean-François Lyotard's idea that the collective, which was structured by the great myths, is well and truly finished and now leaves room for self-narration, a sign of the transition to the postmodern era.

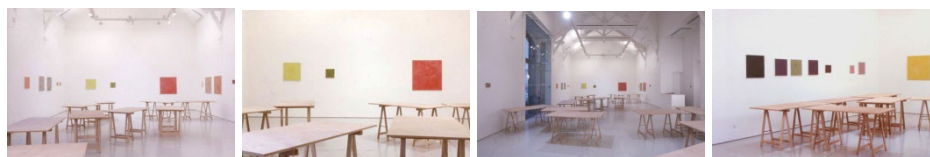


Figure 7. From the exhibition *Emmanuelle Villard*, 2002, La Criée Center for Contemporary Art, Rennes, France.

Thus, and according to Lyotard, it would be the subjective that would provide the myths necessary for the identity of the collectivity. There would thus be a correspondence between the subjective and the collective, from the individual to the mass, and the concomitant elaboration of common myths. What is more clearly understood by Barthes, who explains in his *Mythologies*<sup>7</sup>, is that the process of modern mythology aims at a collective reappropriation of reality by means of a narrativization of the everyday.

The material for the construction of collective narratives is that of the real, passed by the prism of the individual, Barthes develops what Paul Ardenne calls the “aestheticization of existence.”<sup>8</sup> The artist disseminates an intimate relation to the world, as Villard has seen, painting her singular vision of femininity, as the artificial itself, and the factitious. According to Barthes, the myth drawn from the singularity of the artist “is a depoliticized word [...], [it] does not deny things, its function is on the contrary to speak of it; it purifies them, innocents them, founds them in nature and eternity, gives them a clarity which is not that of explanation, but that of observation.”<sup>9</sup>

The doxastic is the result of a disinvestment by the artist and her uniqueness, which once exposed through this common material that is intimacy, falls into the collective, thus transmitting an image illuminating the world of its meanings. Walter Benjamin, in his text entitled *The Storyteller*<sup>10</sup>, agrees in this sense and explains that “the art of storytelling is losing itself. It's increasingly rare to meet people who can tell a story. It's as if we had been deprived of a faculty which seemed to us inalienable, the most assured of all: the faculty of exchanging experiences.”

This was raised by Lyotard, who deplored the absence of dialogue between art and its viewer, and by association the absence of links. What is not the case with this art proper to personal mythologies that continually dialogues with the collective, in a clean exchange where doxastic and

<sup>7</sup> Barthes, *Mythologies*, 217n4.

<sup>8</sup> Paul Ardenne, Pascal Beausse, and Laurent Goumarre, *Pratiques contemporaines – L'art comme expérience* (Paris:Dis voir, 1999), 19.

<sup>9</sup> Barthes, *Mythologies*, 217n4.

<sup>10</sup> Walter Benjamin, “Le conteur. Réflexions sur l'œuvre de Nicolas Leskov,” in *Œuvres III*, trans. Maurice de Gandillac and Pierre Rusch (Paris: Gallimard, 2000), 114-51.

intimate atmosphere mix. At Villard, it's an exhibition of the sense conferred on the intimate, dialoguing with the collective opinion that no one has in common and exchanges with others as regards the feminine.

To question the concept of personal mythology, it is possible to account for the importance of the influence of doxasticism on the work of the artist in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries in general, and here especially in Villard, as regards her relation to the feminine. Rethinking the concept of personal mythology is essential in view of the importance that the *doxa* occupies in the minds of both *quidam* and artists. Thus, this a priori purely subjective artistic concept has its basis in the collective, nourishes and enriches it.

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# What Art(ists) Demand of Us

Hyo Won Seo

*In The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience, Mikel Dufrenne argues that the aesthetic object is dependent on a public audience to come into its full existential reality. A work of art demands to be realized as an aesthetic object by way of being aesthetically perceived and evaluated by one or more spectators. It expects of the public the recognition and consecration of its value as a work with more than mere ontic value. In this view, a painting insists that we give ourselves over to be haunted by its colors, all the more because it has gone to the effort of arranging itself under our gaze. This paper considers Dufrenne's personification of the work of art in relation to what appears to be a tangential work—Linda Martín Alcoff's "Towards a Phenomenology of Racial Embodiment"—to suggest that there is no perception of the visible, aesthetic or bodily, that is not imbued with racialized value.*

In Chapter 3 of *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, Mikel Dufrenne argues that the aesthetic object relies on a public audience to come into its full existential reality. Specifically, the work of art *demand*s to be realized as an aesthetic object by way of being aesthetically perceived and evaluated by one or more spectators. Moreover, it *expects* of the public the recognition and consecration of its value as a work with more than mere ontic value. This paper examines Dufrenne's personification of the aesthetic object alongside a seemingly unrelated work—Linda Martín Alcoff's "Towards a Phenomenology of Racial Embodiment." I pair Dufrenne with this piece, which advances a theory of racialized perception, to illustrate that his notion of the aesthetic object can be brought to bear on race as it is lived in each of our bodies. I begin by establishing that Dufrenne is largely speaking of the aesthetic object as interacting with audiences both of its own accord and owing to its creator. In doing so, Dufrenne does not attend to the question of how an object is capable of acting on the individual, of demanding that its invitation to be experienced as a work of art be accepted. I argue that this lack of disambiguation gives rise to the more interesting question of how a demand to be perceived can come from something that is neither straightforwardly subject nor object. I turn to Alcoff to show us how racially embodied beings, like the aesthetic object that is not yet a work of art, long to be recognized yet have certain expectations thrust imposed on them by the white Other. By bringing Dufrenne's concept of the aesthetic object to an interpersonal register, I hope to instantiate Alcoff's claim that there can be no perception, or in our case viewing of something created by an artist, that is not racialized.

## Dufrenne on the Work of Art

Dufrenne begins the chapter, "The Work and Its Public," by asserting that the aesthetic object exists to be spectated; it cannot come into its full reality on its own, so the public must do it the favor of attesting to its existence. By bearing witness to its sensuous qualities, the public bestows on the work the only value that it could possibly have. The colors of a painting, for instance, are colors "only

through and for whoever perceives them”<sup>1</sup>; when a painting ceases to be contemplated, its colors recede to their ontic status as mere chemical and light reactions. The painting, however, does not sit idly by as it awaits this judgment. All the while, “Every object demands to be perceived and to effect a convergence upon itself.”<sup>2</sup>

The spectator helps facilitate a work’s completion by serving as a performer and as a witness. When the work is framed by a traditional performance, the spectator functions primarily as a performer within the audience. Here, the “total event”<sup>3</sup>—the buzz of anticipation emanating from the audience in addition to the main event—is a work of art. The spectators as audience form “a backdrop of pure silence, a human silence charged with attention...to create the most favorable climate for aesthetic perception.”<sup>4</sup> This atmosphere of attentiveness allows the colors of a painting or the actors in a play to better convey their works’ calls to be aesthetically perceived.

The spectator maintains a more intimate relation with the work in their capacity as witness, which does not require a traditional performance space. The emphasis from performer to witness shifts “according to whether or not a given work of art requires a performance which is separate from its original creation.”<sup>5</sup> While the spectator as attentive performer pays “homage” and “docility” to the work as its assistant, the work for the witness is “a forceful lover who draws the spectator to precisely those points where he must place himself in order to become a witness.”<sup>6</sup> The performer may choose whether to commune with a performance, but the witness is no more than a “registering apparatus.”<sup>7</sup> The work glues the witness to the perspective from which it is most expressive. A painting “compels us to assume” the space that awaits our aesthetic perception.<sup>8</sup> Dufrenne writes from the perspective of the witness that

I have derealized myself in order to proclaim the painting’s reality and that I have gained a foothold in the new world which it opens to me, a new man myself...in making myself unreal, I forbid myself any active participation. By becoming disinterested in the natural world which I have left, I have lost the ability to be *interested* in the aesthetic world. I am within it but only to contemplate it. Moreover, this is all that the work expects of me—that I stay in it and get to know it from within...it expects him to play the game.<sup>9</sup>

Having undergone the process of deconstructing oneself, the witness is rewarded with a new footing in the aesthetic world. As Dufrenne states, this is only possible if the witness plays the “game” in the role of registering apparatus assigned to them. Yet, Dufrenne also maintains that a painting is *created* to be seen from a certain perspective. He claims, for example, that a sculptor decides the best vantage

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<sup>1</sup> Mikel Dufrenne, *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, trans Edward S. Casey (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 48.

<sup>2</sup> Dufrenne, *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, 46-47.

<sup>3</sup> Dufrenne, *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, 48.

<sup>4</sup> Dufrenne, *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, 49-50.

<sup>5</sup> Dufrenne, *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, 48.

<sup>6</sup> Dufrenne, *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, 51.

<sup>7</sup> Dufrenne, *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, 55.

<sup>8</sup> Dufrenne, *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, 57.

<sup>9</sup> Dufrenne, *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, 57-59.



point from which to have spectators view their work: “With respect to a piece of sculpture, there are likewise, as Waldemar Conrad states, ‘privileged perspectives’ on which the sculptor has decided.”<sup>10</sup> Does the work of art exist for others of its own volition or can its demands simply be ascribed to its creator? If the latter is the case, then on what grounds does Dufrenne refer to the aesthetic object and the artist interchangeably?

In the opening footnote of the chapter, Dufrenne states that he will not be investigating the psychology of creation, i.e., the motivations an artist might have for creating. He does share, however, that “even if the artist creates for himself, that is, tries to solve his own artistic problems in becoming an artist, his work, once it has been completed, detaches itself from him. It is a rare artist who decides of his own free will to remain his work’s only spectator.”<sup>11</sup> Here, both the artist and the object somehow willingly detach from one another so that the object can find others to attest to its qualities. The artist, on the other hand, experiences “the anguish of self-doubt...No matter how great his self-confidence he is well aware that he cannot be both judge and client, that he is never the wholly impartial spectator of his work, and that only the verdict of the public matters.”<sup>12</sup> Although it is the artist who, having laboriously created the object to recruit spectators, undergoes agonizing doubt that the object will be ratified into a work of art, Dufrenne inexplicably traces the demand for the object to be perceived to the object itself. We might wonder, then, whether the expectations of the artist and the object refer to the same phenomenon. Without an account of how the aesthetic object’s desire to be perceived coheres with the artist’s selfsame desire, there is room to speculate that it is simply the creator who demands that his work be allowed to effect a self-convergence.

Rather than pursuing this interpretation so as to fill in the gap in Dufrenne’s exposition, I wish to sit for the remainder of this essay with the very indeterminacy of the desire for self-determination. What is potentially disclosed in the ambiguity itself is the articulation of an entity that is at once ontic and ontological, an entity that is forever denied the possibility of self-convergence. What Dufrenne offers us is not a theory of mere aesthetic perception, but an intimate theory of the relation between an object as forceful lover and the perceiver who may choose to withhold intimacy. We are dealing, that is, with an ontic object created by an ontological being that is somehow compelling spectators to assume a designated space in their world. I turn now to Alcoff’s piece on the phenomenology of racial embodiment to shed light on the incoherence of an object that asks to haunt spectators with its sensuous colors.

## Alcoff on Racialized Subjects

Alcoff begins her piece by motivating a contextualist approach to race. She observes that there have been concerted efforts to denounce the past and current realities of race, with a complete nominalism on one end and a universalism on the other. Contemporary critical race theory has worked to do away with such notions of race while acknowledging that race still permeates our political, sociological, and

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<sup>10</sup> Dufrenne, *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, 56.

<sup>11</sup> Dufrenne, *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, 46n1.

<sup>12</sup> Dufrenne, *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, 46-47.

economic lives. Race may not correspond to human biology, they claim, but it remains tied to our lived realities which determine our perceptual practices and what we take to be visible. Therefore, rather than avoiding the use of racial concepts altogether or treating race as an essential component of identities, Alcoff suggests that we view race metaphysically as “socially constructed, historically malleable, culturally contextual, and produced through learned perceptual practice.”<sup>13</sup> Racial identities are as real as they are the products of our cultural perceptual practices. Moreover, “race operates pre-consciously on spoken and unspoken interaction, gesture, affect and stance,”<sup>14</sup> which is why it has proven so difficult to pinpoint and transform. One’s habitual posture, even once recognized, cannot be altered overnight. Alcoff invokes Merleau-Ponty to argue that “racialization structures the visual sphere and the imaginary self, and can block the development of coherent body-images.”<sup>15</sup> Although it operates in the backdrop of lived experience, race permeates the realm of the visible. This is why, for Alcoff, the phenomenological approach is useful; considering the way that each individual distinctively experiences race and harbors tacit knowledge about race in their bodies helps keep the notion that racism is the natural consequence of human cognition at bay.

Provided that racialization saturates our visual spheres, Alcoff makes the compelling case that “there is no perception of the visible that is not already imbued with value.”<sup>16</sup> There is no perception of aesthetic objects, then, that is not racializing, i.e., is not an operation of particular sedimented racializing habits. “The process by which human bodies are differentiated and categorized by type,” Alcoff writes, “is a process preceded by racism...the experience of race is predicated first and foremost on the perception of race.”<sup>17</sup> Here, race is constitutive of perception and forms the background from which the sensuous qualities of things stand out. Again, this operation escapes critical reflection, for perception “represents sedimented contextual knowledges”<sup>18</sup>—i.e., racial knowledge lurks at the level of common sense.

To demonstrate the logic of racist perceptions, Alcoff has us consider Jack Kerouac’s mentality as he takes a stroll in the predominantly Black and Mexican neighborhoods of Denver. In his journal entry of that evening, Kerouac expresses a desire for a place in the non-white world since he feels that he does not belong in the world assigned to him. Since his non-white body image does not align with his white body, he is unable to actively choose who he takes himself to be. Alcoff suggests that more and more whites are experiencing the corporeal malediction of Kerouac “as they come to perceive the racial parameters that structure whiteness differently in different communities...and may find that none of these can be made coherent with their own preferred body or postural image.”<sup>19</sup> An important point to consider, however, is that this white corporeal malediction is the result of an internal mismatch between one’s white body and their own perceived postural image. The white body feels foreign to itself with its non-white body image, but it is ultimately able to freely move about in both white and non-white worlds. Those who call the white world home will always be perceived as embodying the true signification of white existence. Perception of the white body does

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<sup>13</sup> Alcoff, “Towards a Phenomenology of Racial Embodiment,” 17.

<sup>14</sup> Alcoff, “Towards a Phenomenology of Racial Embodiment,” 17.

<sup>15</sup> Alcoff, “Towards a Phenomenology of Racial Embodiment,” 18.

<sup>16</sup> Alcoff, “Towards a Phenomenology of Racial Embodiment,” 19.

<sup>17</sup> Alcoff, “Towards a Phenomenology of Racial Embodiment,” 18, 20.

<sup>18</sup> Alcoff, “Towards a Phenomenology of Racial Embodiment,” 18.

<sup>19</sup> Alcoff, “Towards a Phenomenology of Racial Embodiment,” 20.

not determine its fate or worth—the white experience is perceived as “full self-presenting”<sup>20</sup> and so need not ask to effect any convergence on itself.

Compare Kerouac’s experience to the obstruction of the development of coherent body-image for the Black body, as illustrated in George Yancy’s “White Gazes: What it Feels Like to be an Essence.” This piece conveys that unlike the white body, the Black body is not perceived as fully presenting. Instead, spectators have to doubly work to penetrate the value laden essence of the Black body in order to get at the body as existence. Yancy alludes to the fact that he need not utter a single word to be perceived as already anti-white, beast-like, and thirsty for violence. Each click of a car door locking as he walks by is a laceration, rendering his body “the site of microtomy and volatility.”<sup>21</sup> This echoes Alcott’s saying that the materiality of the body is volatile, for racializing factors do not merely represent, but “actively produce the body of a determinate type.”<sup>22</sup> Each click of a car door Yancy hears materializes an entity unrecognizable to Yancy himself. Yancy’s experiences of being gazed at in a Black body have made him to feel reduced to an essence, “ontologically flat, mere things awaiting on the will of white people, that is, those possessing the only true power of transcendence and the true capacity to *know*.”<sup>23</sup> Indeed, he knows that his image as a monster was sealed before he ever stepped on to the elevator with the white woman. It precedes him everywhere he goes. Articulated in terms of Dufrenne’s work, the Black man in possession of the essence of the Black object longs for recognition and to commune with his fellow beings. Others will not bestow their perception on his mere thing, and so because the work of art is an aesthetic object only if it is experienced, the Black body will not be allowed to take up space in the field of visibility. Insofar as the white gaze never penetrates beyond its fixed essence of hostility, it may never stand out as ontologically salient; it is not allowed to embody its meaning, for it is virtually invisible. Recall what Dufrenne says in regard to the colors of a painting:

What happens to the colors in a painting when they are no longer reflected in a look? They return to their ontic status of things or ideas; they become chemical products or light vibrations and are no longer colors. They are colors only through and for whoever perceives them, and the painting is truly an aesthetic object only when it is contemplated.<sup>24</sup>

If we take “color” in this passage as referring to the Black subject, then Dufrenne’s theory of aesthetic perception is compatible with a theory of a racially saturated fields of visibility. When the Black body is withheld value and consecration via perception, it remains a mere ontic thing. Its demands for public perception go unheard. In an earlier article, Yancy shares an experience with a former white math teacher in which he felt “ontologically locked into my body...He did not ‘see’ me, though. Like Ellison’s invisible man, I occupied that paradoxical status of ‘visible invisibility.’”<sup>25</sup> Yancy was seen *as*

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<sup>20</sup> Alcott, “Towards a Phenomenology of Racial Embodiment,” 18.

<sup>21</sup> George Yancy, “White Gazes: What it Feels Like to be an Essence,” in *Living Alterities: Phenomenology, Embodiment and Race*, ed. Emily Lee (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2014), 48.

<sup>22</sup> Alcott, “Towards a Phenomenology of Racial Embodiment,” 19.

<sup>23</sup> Yancy, “White Gazes,” 53.

<sup>24</sup> Dufrenne, *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, 48.

<sup>25</sup> George Yancy, “Whiteness and the Return of the Black Body,” *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 19, no. 4 (2005): 219.

not fully presenting, which means that his lived reality—covered up by his “hyper-visible”<sup>26</sup> Black sensuous quality—failed to be witnessed. It is a condition of the Black body that it is not ratified by public judgment; its demands to be contended with perpetually go unheard and it is granted existence only through and for the witness. The status of the Black body correlates to what Dufrenne calls “ambiguous status of the aesthetic object, which exists both for us and in itself.”<sup>27</sup>

## Conclusion

This essay has considered what of Dufrenne’s theory of aesthetic perception can be used in support of a theory of racial embodiment and fields of visibility. I found it somewhat suspect that Dufrenne says little on the matter of the artist’s desires for their work of art yet attributes the capacity to demand and exert power over others to inanimate objects. Rather than attempt to locate the boundary between the artist and their work, I argued that it is this very incoherence of desire that makes Dufrenne’s work relevant to our being in a world permeated with racial identity. Specifically, the aesthetic object in its efforts to become a work of art resonates with the struggle of the essentialized Black subject to be registered in its existence. With the perspectives of Dufrenne and Alcoff combined, we can see that the ambiguous status of the work of art pertains in an unexpected way to the mediation of perception through our sedimented racializing habits.

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<sup>26</sup> Yancy, “Whiteness and the Return of the Black Body,” 219.

<sup>27</sup> Dufrenne, *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, 71.

# In Defense of Kant's Deduction of Pure Aesthetic Judgments

Enoch Yim

*In Kant and the Claims of Taste*, Paul Guyer contends that Kant's deduction of judgments of taste given in §38 of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* fails to establish the universal validity of such judgments. In this essay, I will defend Kant's theory of taste against Guyer's criticism by giving an alternative reading of the deduction. On the alternative reading, the judgment of taste is interpreted as that which sets up the tone of normativity during the cognitive process; as such, the judgment of taste (particularly, of beauty) can be construed as the smallest unit of or initial stage in making any type of judgment. In the first two sections, I will concisely present Guyer's criticism, offer the alternative reading, and explain how this reading can defend Kant's theory of taste. In the last section, I will briefly comment on the implication of my view, particularly in regard to the problem of rule-following that Saul Kripke raised; I will suggest that the notion of pleasure developed through the alternative reading may either refine or replace that of inclination, a kind of psychological state Kripke identifies as the bedrock of normativity.

In *Kant and the Claims of Taste*, Paul Guyer contends that Kant's deduction of (or justification for) judgments of taste given in §38 of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*<sup>1</sup> fails to establish the universal validity of such judgments.<sup>2</sup> In this essay, I will defend Kant's theory of taste against Guyer's criticism by giving an alternative reading of the deduction, which interprets the judgment of taste as that which sets up the tone of normativity during the cognitive process; as such, the judgment of taste (particularly, of beauty) can be construed as the smallest unit of or initial stage in making any type of judgment. In the first section, I will concisely present Guyer's criticism. In the second section, I will offer the alternative reading and explain how it can defend Kant's theory of taste. In the third section, I will briefly comment on the implication of my view, particularly in regard to the problem of rule-following that Saul Kripke raised; I will suggest that the notion of pleasure developed through the alternative reading may either refine or replace that of inclination, a kind of psychological state Kripke identifies as the bedrock of normativity.

## I

In Kant's theory of taste, the judgment of taste (particularly, of beauty) is that in which a certain way of judging (or consciously experiencing) the object, viz., as beautiful, is *expected* to be universally valid, i.e., to be accepted as the right way of judging (or responding to) the object. Since this judgment is made without any reference to determinate concepts, however, its sense of normativity is not objective

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<sup>1</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, ed. Paul Guyer, trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 5: 289-90.

<sup>2</sup> Paul Guyer, *Kant and the Claims of Taste*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 274-88.

as there is no definite rule by which the necessity of the assent to its verdict is to be justified.<sup>3</sup> The question is then how the judgment of taste, in the absence of any determinate concepts, can maintain its normative force, or universal validity. Based on Henry E. Allison's interpretation<sup>4</sup>, Kant's deduction of (the universal validity of) judgments of taste could be reconstructed in the following three steps:

- (a) Since the pleasure we feel in a judgment of taste (e.g., that this flower is *beautiful*) is connected with the mere judging of its form, it is the subjective purposiveness for that judgment which we sense as connected with the representation of the object (i.e., the flower in reaction to which we have the feeling of pleasure).
- (b) Since the formal rules of judging (that this flower is beautiful or, more precisely, that the term 'beautiful' is to be predicated of the subject), in the absence of any sensation or concept, can only be drawn out of the subjective conditions involved in producing the judgment, to the extent that these conditions can be presupposed in other people (as the necessary conditions for the possibility of cognition in general), the judgment that is produced through these rules ought to be accepted by everyone.
- (c) The pleasure we have in a particular judgment of taste, the subjective purposiveness of that judgment (i.e., the formal rules of judging in the absence of any sensation or concept), is expected to be universally valid, or normative.

In Kant's terminology, the purposiveness of the form of an object (or the way in which the object is to be perceived) is the formulation (or, in Kant's own word, "constitution") of the object that is possible only in accordance with a concept as its end. For instance, the form in which an object is to be perceived as a hammer is possible only in reference to the concept, or for the *purpose*, of hitting a nail as its end. As such, purposiveness provides the principles (or rules) for judging an object.<sup>5</sup> In the absence of (determinate) concepts, the subjective conditions involved in producing the judgment themselves (i.e., the psychological state a person is in during the cognitive process) supply purposiveness whereas, in §35, Kant identifies this state as the harmony (or proportional balance) between imagination and understanding.<sup>6</sup> In turn, pleasure is what one feels of the given representation of an object in relation to this psychological state.<sup>7</sup> In other words, pleasure is the impression one has of an object when its representation is in agreement (or compatible) with the harmony, in respect to which the person judges the object to be beautiful.

Guyer's criticism is that, even if we can attribute to someone the subjective conditions, i.e., the psychological state in which (or, the inner capacity through which) the harmony between imagination and understanding takes place, we cannot infer from this assumption that pleasure (or, as Guyer puts it, "aesthetic response") or, more precisely, the capacity to *feel* (or detect) the harmony can also be attributed to the person.<sup>8</sup> The inner capacity for working out the harmony is itself "the general

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<sup>3</sup> 5: 203-44.

<sup>4</sup> Henry E. Allison, *Kant's Theory of Taste: A Reading of the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 175-76.

<sup>5</sup> 5: 180-81.

<sup>6</sup> 5: 238-39, 286-88.

<sup>7</sup> 5: 203-4.

<sup>8</sup> Guyer, *Kant and the Claims of Taste*, 284-88.

ability to unify a manifold under some empirical concept.”<sup>9</sup> It is not logically warranted to infer from this ability, Guyer argues, the additional ability to feel (rather than think of) the harmony; the separation of the process of the inner capacity and the ability to detect the product of this process (i.e., harmony) is meant to differentiate beautiful objects from objects of knowledge.<sup>10</sup> Allison expresses a similar concern when he remarks, “[T]he most persistent and widespread criticism of Kant’s deduction of taste is that ... it proves too much, namely, that every object must be judged beautiful[.]”<sup>11</sup> On behalf of Kant, Allison seeks to avoid the criticism by interpreting the harmony drawn in aesthetic responses as subjective conditions that involve “a suspension of our ... cognitive concerns with classification and explanation, as well as our sensuous and moral interests as rational agents.”<sup>12</sup> But Allison’s interpretation suggests that the subjective conditions (i.e., the inner workings of the interactions between imagination and understanding) involved in the judgment of taste and other types of judgment (such as moral and cognitive judgment) are different in kind. However, if so, it is questionable whether we can even attribute such subjective conditions to anyone at all since the reason why Kant thought that we could presuppose such conditions in everyone is because they are the necessary conditions for the possibility of cognition in general. It makes better sense to view the judgment of taste and other types of judgment as sharing the same (kind of) subjective conditions.

## II

Given that, for exegetical coherency, we must interpret the subjective conditions as the common denominator of all types of judgment, any attempt to defend Kant’s theory of taste against Guyer’s criticism should explain how the ability to detect the harmony could be inferred from the ability to work out the harmony. I will argue that we can make this inference because the ability to detect, i.e., the *feeling*, is what imputes normativity to (or, so to say, creates the tone of normativity in) the inner workings of the subjective conditions. In Kant’s theory of cognition, concepts are construed as rules for synthesizing intuitions whereas judgments are the phases in the cognitive process during which the subject applies the concepts to the intuitions, which result in conscious experience.<sup>13</sup> Within this formulation, concepts are supposed to be universally valid insofar as every rational agent has the faculty of cognition whose function is to apply or exhibit them. However, just because everyone happens to apply or exhibit the same concepts due to the contingent fact that he possesses some sort of faculty does by no means make those concepts any authoritative. Rather, what generates the sense of necessity in employing those concepts (through the interactions between imagination and understanding), i.e., the source of normativity, must be something attitudinal. It is in seeking to sustain

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<sup>9</sup> Guyer, *Kant and the Claims of Taste*, 287.

<sup>10</sup> Guyer, *Kant and the Claims of Taste*, 287-88.

<sup>11</sup> Allison, *Kant’s Theory of Taste*, 184.

<sup>12</sup> Allison, *Kant’s Theory of Taste*, 187.

<sup>13</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. and trans. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), A20/B34, A100-1, A78-79/B104, A100-10, 121, B130-31, 141-43, 163, A98-102; Jay Rosenberg, *Assessing Kant: A Relaxed Introduction to the Critique of Pure Reason* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 94-97; David Landy, *Kant’s Inferentialism: The Case Against Hume* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 121-22, 132-36; Hannah Ginsborg, “Kant and the Problem of Experience,” *Philosophical Topics* 34, nos. 1/2 (2006): 66.

as a unified operation the very inner workings of harmony one treats concepts as rules, or authoritative references.

Whether concepts are given or not, imagination and understanding continue to interact with each other as to produce schemata. If concepts are given, these schemata are fit into the rest of the judgments one already has. If not, these schemata become (empirical) concepts themselves serving as the rules (or samples for understanding) any similar patterns encountered in the future.<sup>14</sup> In the absence of any determinate concept, how do the inner workings of cognition operate as to discover the underlying principles in the manifolds of sensation through association rather than give up such an attempt? That is, in respect to what does the reflective power of judgment initiate the search for empirical concepts? Based on Béatrice Longuenesse's analysis of Kant's theory of cognition, Allison explains that, on Kant's view, it must be presupposed that there is something universal in itself about the manifolds of sensation in order to initiate the operation of the faculty of cognition to discover or exhibit underlying principles:

[For Kant,] the contents of these acts of apprehension contain something “universal in itself[,]” ... on the base of which the schemata themselves are formed, insofar as this content is to provide the foundation for a universalizing comparison ... Clearly, reflection, so construed, rests on the assumption that there is something “universal in itself” encoded ... in our experience ... [W]ithout this presupposition the process of reflection would never get off the ground.<sup>15</sup>

In other words, the ground on which the inner workings of the faculty of cognition (interactions between imagination and understanding) operate is the presupposition that there are underlying principles (to be discovered) in nature. It is in reference to this presupposition the inner workings impose the sense of necessity to the concepts that are involved in or produced by their operation. Whatever this presupposition consists in, it must precede not only all concepts, but also the very predilection to understand an object in reference to or by exhibiting some concepts. If so, this presupposition consists solely in some sort of aptitude to perceive things in terms of norms (or in a lawful manner). That is, it is a kind of attitude or stance one takes towards what he sees (viz., the manifolds of sensation) that there are right and wrong ways of taking them in.

This attitude or aptitude (the source of normativity) cannot be the ability to work out the harmony, or “unify a manifold under some empirical concept[,]” because, as explained above, it precedes that very predilection to exhibit some (empirical) concepts. In fact, it is by having this attitude towards the process of subsuming imagination under understanding that the conditions this process results in are taken as appropriate for cognition. Now, let us turn to what Kant means by ‘pleasure.’ Allison observes that Kant characterizes pleasure as the “feeling of [the promotion of] life” whereas (i) “life” refers to “the faculty of a being by which one acts according to the faculty of desire” and (ii) the latter faculty is that which “such a being has of causing, through its ideas, the reality of the object of these ideas.”<sup>16</sup> Accordingly, pleasure (or aesthetic response) is the feeling one has when the part of his cognitive faculty that drafts purposiveness is in proper action. In turn, the function of purposiveness is, so to say, to maximize one's understanding of an object by, as explained above,

<sup>14</sup> 20: 220, 5: 179-80, 351; Allison, *Kant's Theory of Taste*, 14-30.

<sup>15</sup> Allison, *Kant's Theory of Taste*, 28.

<sup>16</sup> 5: 204; Allison, *Kant's Theory of Taste*, 69.



providing a principle for or way of perceiving the object. Whether the cognitive process is going smoothly is assessed by how harmonious the interactions between imagination and understanding are. Yet, the interactions, or inner workings, do not themselves decide on what the harmonious conditions are supposed to be. Rather, this job is left to what we have identified as the aptitude to perceive things in terms of norms (or in lawful manner), or the stance one takes towards what he sees that there are right and wrong ways of taking them in, viz., the presupposition that there is something universal in itself about the manifolds of sensation.

Part of what make up such an attitude or stance must be how one *feels* about the outcome of the inner process. That is, without the ability to detect harmony or, more precisely, to appraise the interactions between imagination and understanding and appreciate them as being in proper conditions (for maximizing cognition), the subjective conditions do not amount to cognition in which concepts are imbued with authority. By having pleasure, i.e., judging that, e.g., this flower is *beautiful* (or, devising the term ‘beautiful’ as a predicate), the person is expressing that *there is a right way of perceiving this flower whatever it may be*. It is in reference to this specific feeling about the flower that his entire cognitive faculty sustains itself as capable of giving principles or rules for taking in *that particular flower*. In other words, as part of what constitute the aptitude to perceive things in terms of norms (or in lawful manner), pleasure (or aesthetic response) or, more precisely, the judgment of taste is that which sets up the tone of normativity.

Based on this analysis, it can be inferred that the function of the judgment of taste (or the meaning of perceiving something *as beautiful*), according to Kant, is to take in and convert (the representation of) a particular object into that to which concepts can be applied. Metaphorically put, by aesthetically responding to a single flower, a person is bringing (the representation of) that flower into the space of reasons in which (the intuition of) the particular flower gets to stand in various relations to other objects through general categories such as “flower,” “green,” etc. Pleasure provides the platform for this activity by generating the sense of normativity (by which concepts become authoritative) as a part of what sustains the inner process towards harmony *qua* process. Perhaps this is why, in Section VI of Introduction, Kant writes,

It thus requires study to make us attentive to the purposiveness of nature for our understanding in our judging of it, where possible bringing heterogeneous laws of nature under higher though always still empirical ones, so that if we succeed in this accord of such laws for our faculty of cognition . . . , *pleasure* will be felt.<sup>17</sup>

As such, the judgment of taste (particularly, of beauty) can be construed as the smallest unit of or initial stage in making any type of judgment because, whereas the subjective conditions are the common denominator of all types of judgment, pleasure (in respect to which a person perceives an object as beautiful) gets the process of these subjective conditions “off the ground.”

If the ability to feel or detect the harmony, viz., pleasure (the subjective purposiveness of the judgment of taste), is requisite for exercising the ability to work out the harmony, although it may be an additional capacity, it must be presupposed in everyone to whom the inner capacity to work out the harmony (to “unify a manifold under some empirical concept”) is attributed. Thus, in contrast to what Guyer argues, a person is *not* capable of knowledge if he is not also capable of detecting or being

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<sup>17</sup> 5: 187-88; The emphasis is mine.

“conscious of unity in a manifold without subsuming it under a concept.”<sup>18</sup> Therefore, in attributing the subjective conditions involved in making judgments, we can also attribute the capacity for making the judgment of taste because the ability to detect the harmony is indeed inferable from the ability to work out that harmony. If this is the case, which I hope to have demonstrated that it is so, Kant’s deduction of judgments of taste is successful.

### III

In *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language* (1982), Kripke raises the problem of rule-following that there is in principle no fact of the matter as to what rule-following, or normativity, comes down to.<sup>19</sup> Thus, Kripke identifies as the bedrock of normativity a type of psychological state he calls ‘inclination,’ a brute impulse to react to a cue in a certain way, which—according to Kripke—has no substantive content in itself apart from the endorsement by the community.<sup>20</sup> There are at least two ways my reading of Kant’s deduction above can respond to this problem. First, pleasure as a psychological state that has a substantive content (viz., setting up of the tone of normativity) may be applied to refine Kripke’s notion of inclination. Thus, in contrast to what Kripke argues, our impulse to react to a cue in a certain way is not at all brute, but is loaded with the aptitude to perceive things in terms of norms (or in lawful manner). Second, in case Kripke’s notion of inclination resists any substantiation, pleasure or the judgment of taste as interpreted in my reading can replace the inclination as the bedrock of normativity.

One of the problems with Kripke’s account of normativity is that it fails to expound on what this inclination consists in so that this psychological state (rather than, e.g., fear, happiness, etc.) can generate the sense of normativity and how the community decide on which inclinations to endorse. As a result, Kripke (rather unsatisfactorily) alludes to the mysterious Wittgensteinian notion of “forms of life” in discussing how normativity (as well as communicability) emerges through community agreements.<sup>21</sup> There may indeed be a way to work out some coherent theory of normativity within this *Kripkensteinian* framework. However, I think that my interpretation of Kant’s theory of taste provides an alternative way of approaching the issue, and to the extent that this approach could avoid obscure notions such as “forms of life,” I would like to propose that it is worth exploring solutions to the problem of normativity from the Kantian angle.

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<sup>18</sup> Guyer, *Kant and the Claims of Taste*, 285-86.

<sup>19</sup> Saul A. Kripke, *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language* (Cambridge: Mass., Harvard University Press, 1982), 7-54.

<sup>20</sup> Kripke, *Wittgenstein on Rules*, 87-98.

<sup>21</sup> Kripke, *Wittgenstein on Rules*, 97-98.

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