The Universality of Beauty: Accounting for Differences in Taste

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In the first section of the Critique of the Power of Judgment, Kant offers his account of judgments of the beautiful. In this account he claims that judgments of beauty are not only subjective (as we commonly view them) but also universal. This claim to universality is often understood to mean that we will (or should) all make the same judgments concerning what we find beautiful. This raises the question: if these judgments are universal, why do the judgments of people who clearly perceive and possess similar information about an object, not always concur?

In order to investigate how this is possible one must first understand the nature of aesthetic judgments as presented in the third Critique and how they differ from Kant’s conception of judgment as outlined in the Critique of Pure Reason. With this understanding in place, we will be able to see how contemporary attempts to reconcile the interpretive challenges surrounding Kant’s account of subjective universality, although they may account for differences in judgments in general, fail to also account for Kant’s conception of the ‘universal human sense’ which is an important underlying feature of all aesthetic judgments. From here, I will argue that an alternate approach to the relation between pleasure and reflection, presented by Melissa Zinkin, will highlight the underlying conditions for universality in judgments of beauty by proposing a necessary relationship between cognition and the feeling of pleasure. This account will provide a ground for an investigation into how it is possible to retain Kant’s claim to universality while also exposing how judgments of the beautiful can differ among individuals.

With this grounding in place, I will use a re-working of Kant’s conception of the imagination, presented by Samantha Matherne, to show that
these differences can be accounted for without appealing to the uncertainty in
our understanding of how our faculties function, but, instead, in the way the
imagination forms images in perception.

1. Kant’s Aesthetic Judgments

In the Critique of the Power of Judgment, Kant introduces us to a new
conception of judgment that differs in kind from the judgments typically
associated with his systematic theory. Judgment, in the Critique of Pure Reason,
is subsumed under the faculty of understanding. This means that the faculty of
understanding (governed by its a priori concepts) provides information that
judgment needs in order for it to do its job. The job of judgment, then, is merely
to determine whether an object falls under one of these concepts. Simply put,
judgment determines that it is the case that such-and-such satisfies the criteria to
fall under a particular concept. This occurs any time we encounter an object in
our experience and recognize it. In order for this to happen, according to Kant,
our cognition must perform certain operations that make that recognition
(perception) possible. Suppose, for example, there is a pink sphere sitting on the
table in front of us. First, the sensible representations that we receive are shaped
by our faculty of intuition into a manifold schematized in space and time. These
schematized representations are commonly referred to as ‘intuitions.’ Second,
their faculty of understanding presents us with a concept that matches this
particular manifold, in this case the concept of a pink sphere. Finally, our
cognition synthesizes the manifold (of sensible representations) in accordance
with this concept, thus determining (judging) the object as a pink sphere. This
process would likewise be the same with the table it is sitting on. The
imagination participates in this process by serving as a go-between for the
faculty of understanding and the schematized manifold we are given by our
faculty of intuition. On this view, judgment is not governed by its own a priori

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principles or concepts, it only utilizes those of the understanding. As human beings, we all possess the same cognitive system, the same \textit{a priori} concepts, and the same faculty of understanding. Because of this, we all 'handle' appearances of the outside world in the same way. Consequently, we all also ground our judgments of objects in the same way, by determining that it is the case that a particular object falls under a certain concept; this concept being the same in all people. This creates universality in objects of our experience and universality in our judgments, i.e. we will all see and recognize the object in front of us as a pink sphere sitting on a table.

At this point, it is important to note, that Kant's purpose for writing the \textit{Critique of the Power of Judgment} is to address a new (or previously unrecognized) \textit{a priori} principle. This new principle is said to govern the 'reflecting power' of judgment. In doing this he is making two contributions to his overall systematic theory. First, judgment can now be viewed as having two powers, \textit{determining} (as outlined in the \textit{Critique of Pure Reason}) and \textit{reflecting}. Second, in addition to introducing a new power of judgment, this power is now transcendently grounded in its own \textit{a priori} principle, 'purposiveness.'\(^1\) This means that the reflecting power of judgment no longer needs to look to the understanding for rules to guide it; it now has its own.

According to Kant, judgments of taste, in addition to being reflective, are also aesthetic.\(^2\) When we make aesthetic judgments, we do not relate the representation of the object to the cognition for determination (in a concept) but

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1 The \textit{a priori} principle of purposiveness in the \textit{Critique of the Power of Judgment} signifies that nature is conducive (purposive) to our cognitive faculties and to our judgment. Although it is an important idea, and is central to the \textit{Critique} as a whole, a full account of its significance is not presented in this paper.

2 Critique of the Power of Judgment (5:203).
rather to the subject and its feeling of pleasure and displeasure. This means that these kinds of judgments are not logical or cognitive, as is the case with determining judgments. This is to say that, in aesthetic judgments, we do not judge that such-and-such satisfies the criteria for a concept (through the understanding) but rather that such-and-such satisfies the criteria for the subject's feeling of pleasure and displeasure. Furthermore, the subject's feeling of pleasure and displeasure, in its relation to the representation, is able to tell us that such-and-such has aesthetic value or lack thereof. If, when encountering and cognizing the pink sphere, we were to sense a feeling of pleasure, the object will be judged to have aesthetic value. Simply put, taste (our ability to make aesthetic judgments) is considered, by Kant, to be our capacity to assess the beauty of a particular representation (object) "by means of feeling." Now, even though aesthetic judgments are not ultimately determined in concepts, this does not mean they do not have a determining ground. The determining ground for aesthetic judgment is not found in the understanding, but in the imagination. This means that the imagination is where aesthetic judgment decides that it is the case that such-and-such creates pleasure and displeasure for the subject. Note that the activity of imagination is necessary for all judgments, determining and aesthetic alike. In the next section we will look at what is distinctive about judgments of the beautiful in this process. A clear understanding of what occurs in this process will provide the ground for an investigation into how these judgments can vary among individuals and still maintain their claim to

3 Critique of the Power of Judgment (5:203).
4 Critique of the Power of Judgment (5:203).
5 Allison 73.
6 Critique of the Power of Judgment (5:203).
7 Matherne 739.
universality.

2. Judgments of the Beautiful

Judgments of the beautiful are aesthetic judgments, and thus fulfill the specifications outlined above. However, in addition to pointing to our capacity to assess beauty, they also point to the "factors relevant to such an appraisal or discrimination." In the 'first moment' of the "Analytic of the Beautiful," Kant presents us with the essential criteria of such judgments.

First, judgments of the beautiful are disinterested. Interest involves feeling satisfaction in the representation of an object based on the mere existence of the object. This interest, however, does not always have to be a positive interest. This means that if we care one way or the other whether an object exists (through the given appearance of it) and we get satisfaction or dissatisfaction from this appearance based on that fact, then we have an interest in that object. Suppose we have a beloved family member that has an affinity for pink spheres; this family member has paintings and figurines of pink spheres all around their house. Because of this, any time we see a pink sphere we think of our beloved family member, producing a feeling of pleasure. This would be an example of having an interest in the object. The pleasure we feel when encountering a pink sphere comes from our fondness for our family member and not from the act of reflecting on the sensible manifold presented to our cognition. Judgments of the beautiful do not contain this kind of satisfaction. If a judgment of taste is mixed with interest it is not a 'pure' judgment of taste. We can take this to suggest that judgments of the beautiful are, indeed, pure.

8 Allison 73.
9 Critique of the Power of Judgment (5:204).
10 Critique of the Power of Judgment (5:205).
judgments.

Second, Kant contrasts judgments of beauty with objects we find agreeable. An object that pleases in sensation is agreeable. This is to say that if our satisfaction arises out of the sensible content (matter) of the object it cannot be a judgment of beauty.\textsuperscript{11} For instance, if we were to find the color pink pleasurable and thus find satisfaction in the pink sphere based on this consideration alone, the sphere would be considered agreeable. Instead, judgments of the beautiful are based on the form of the object. The form of an object is “that which so determines the manifold of appearance that it allows of being ordered in certain relations,” and must correspond to the \textit{a priori} concepts of the understanding.\textsuperscript{12} This can be contrasted with, or placed in opposition to, the matter of an object which is what we are given in sensation. This is analogous to the difference between the arrangement or ordering of the sensible data and the data themselves, i.e. color or tone.\textsuperscript{13} For our purposes, the form of an object should be understood as the pattern of appearances produced by the imagination that allows them to be utilized by our cognition for the purpose of determination in a concept. When we find something agreeable, we become distracted by the matter of an object, and judge the matter instead of judging the synthesized arrangement of sensible content at the heart of the object, its form. The agreeable is directly connected to desire, and is thus always attached to interest.

Finally, judgments of the beautiful are not attached to the concept. To illustrate this Kant contrasts judgments of beauty with judgments of the morally good: The good pleases by means of reason alone and therefore judgments of

\textsuperscript{11} \textit{Critique of the Power of Judgment} (5:205).

\textsuperscript{12} \textit{Critique of Pure Reason} (A20/B34), Caygill 203-205.

\textsuperscript{13} Allison 136, \textit{Critique of the Power of Judgment} 5:224.
this kind must be based on a previously formed concept. Judgments of the good are also always attached to interest, the interests of reason, thus do not concern the beautiful.

Each of these criteria could provide explanations for why people often make different judgments regarding what they consider beautiful. Since the representation of an object is related only to the subject and its feeling of pleasure and displeasure, it is plausible that we all find pleasure in different things; we have different interests and find different things agreeable or not agreeable. It is for this reason aesthetic judgments are considered subjective. However, aesthetic judgments also lend themselves to universality because all subjects have the same cognitive system, the same a priori principles, and require the same conditions for pleasure and displeasure. Since the universality Kant is proposing is based on the claim that all human beings have the same cognitive system, that functions the same way in all individuals, any interpretation of the universality presented in Kant's aesthetic theory will ultimately depend on an account of its relationship to cognition.14

In all aesthetic judgments, when presented with the form of an object, the imagination works with the understanding to shape the schematized sensible content from the intuition in the same way it does in regular cognition, but instead of leading to the determination of the object falling under a concept, it initiates an act of 'mere reflection.' The imagination and the understanding, in mere reflection, engage in an activity Kant calls free play.15 This is often taken to mean that aesthetic judgments involve a relation between the imagination and the understanding that is not considered objectively (as belonging to an act of cognition), but subjectively whereby “we consider the relation as one that can be

14 Palmer 1.
15 Critique of the Power of Judgment (5:217).
sensed." In 'free play,' the imagination is not subject to the constraints of the understanding in the same way it is in regular cognition. Although the imaginative activity is beholden to general rules of cognition, it is not beholden to the particular rules set by the concepts of the understanding. Kant suggests that the faculties of the imagination and the understanding fully engage with the purpose of determining objects in concepts, yet do not achieve their aim of arriving at a particular concept. This is a departure from the way the functioning of these faculties is typically discussed within Kant's system. In the Critique of Pure Reason, he suggested that experience itself depends on our ability to successfully attain the goals of regular cognition. If these goals are not achieved, there would be no experience. If I do not determine the pink sphere in front of me as falling under the concept of a pink sphere, I would have no experience of it – it would be as if it did not exist. However, Kant seems to be claiming that in aesthetic judgment we can have an experience, that is, we can sense the relation between the imagination and the understanding, without having an experience of the object that occasions it. Kant characterizes the relation between the faculties in ‘free play’ as one of cooperation and amicability in that it promotes "the ideal, frictionless harmony, which maximally facilitates cognition," even though no concept is determined. This relationship is often likened to a 'friendship' between the faculties where they "serendipitously function smoothly together." Kant considers this harmony to be our 'mental state' in aesthetic judgment.

16 Allison 52, Critique of the Power of Judgment (20:223).
18 Allison 75.
19 Allison 50.
20 Palmer 1.
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Pleasure is then associated with this harmonious activity in some way, although it is unclear exactly how.

This section of the original text contains several interpretive challenges. The exact nature (and functioning) of the cognitive activity in aesthetic judgments, and the connection between this activity and the feeling of pleasure, is not entirely clear. On one interpretation of Kant's sometimes vague, incomplete and conflicting views, our feeling of pleasure is caused by the harmony of the faculties. On this view we are never fully aware of the harmony, only the pleasure it creates and our judgments are based solely on that of which we are aware.\(^{21}\) This implies that we can never know if we have successfully made a judgement of the beautiful because, as we have seen, not all pleasure is connected to the functioning of our cognitive faculties.\(^{22}\) The inherent uncertainty about how our cognitive faculties function, and the role of pleasure in this process, are often taken to explain the difference in kinds of judgments – one distinguishes the pleasure provided by the harmony of the faculties from the pleasure produced by our interest in the object. However, Kant believes that the faculty of judgment acts as a 'faculty of feeling' and that taste is a "universal human sense," suggesting that judgments of the beautiful are indeed possible and do occur.\(^{23}\) This indicates that the universality Kant is proposing is not that we all will make the same judgments of taste, only that if the conditions are such that our cognition engages in free play of the faculties we will all feel pleasure. Because of the connection between cognition and the feeling of pleasure this will be the case in all human beings. Therefore, the universality in these judgments ultimately rests on our ability to feel pleasure in such conditions.

\(^{21}\)Ginsborg 34-39. This speaks to Paul Guyer's 'two acts' view.

\(^{22}\)Allison 108.

\(^{23}\)Allison 69, Zinkin 434.
3. 'Subjective Universality' - Necessary View

Melissa Zinkin proposes that in order to account for the universality claim Kant is implying, there must be a necessary connection between pleasure and the harmonious activity of our cognitive powers, that is free play of the faculties necessarily involves a feeling of pleasure. To uncover this relationship, Zinkin points out, we must first understand what Kant means when he talks about 'pleasure' and 'reflection' in the third Critique.

Kant describes pleasure as "the consciousness of the causality of a representation with respect to the state of the subject, for maintaining it in that state." Kant is not making a statement about how the pleasure feels but rather describing it as a kind of consciousness. This means that pleasure is the conscious awareness of the causal property of a representation (its form) that maintains the subject in the mental state they are in.

In the Critique of the Power of Judgment, Kant says to "reflect" "is to compare and to hold together given representations either with others or with one's faculty of cognition, in relation to a concept thereby made possible." By characterizing reflection in this way, Kant is suggesting that there two distinct acts in regular cognition, an act of reflection (where a concept is made possible), and the final act of normal cognition (where the concept is determined). Thus, in determining judgments (normal cognition), both reflection and determination are needed in order to construct a concept that is universal. The reflective process makes the concept possible by sorting through and holding together given particular sensible representations (that have been schematized by the intuition).

24 Critique of the Power of Judgment (5:220), Zinkin 435.
25 Critique of the Power of Judgment (20:211), Zinkin 436.
and is carried out by the imagination in its mediating capacity. These possible concepts are then determined through the influence of the understanding. Additionally, reflection is part of the cognitive process as a necessary step in all cognition. Thus all aesthetic judgments are made in reflection and this is the same reflection that makes our determining (objective) judgments possible. All cognition goes through a 'moment of reflection.' Reflection, however, can occur separately from this process of concept determination (normal cognition). In the case of judgments of the beautiful, our cognition is brought into a state of 'mere reflection.' In making an aesthetic judgment we 'perceive' the harmony of the faculties in mere reflection as a feeling. Zinkin proposes that it is the harmony of the faculties in reflection that is necessarily connected to our feeling of pleasure. Although Kant never explicitly and necessarily links the act of reflection to the feeling of pleasure, this connection is needed in order to explain how all human beings are capable of feeling pleasure when presented with the form of an object.

According to Zinkin the causality of a representation is not a property of the representation itself. Instead, the causality that maintains our current mental state comes from a form of our own consciousness of the representation. This form of consciousness is the feeling of pleasure. Zinkin suggests that if we are to view this pleasure as having a functional role in our cognition we will be able to see how it's possible for it also to be a necessary condition of our ability to reflect. In turn, if the pleasure is not felt, reflection would not be

26 Zinkin 436.
27 Zinkin 436.
28 Zinkin 437.
29 Zinkin 437.
30 Zinkin 443.
Kant claims that there are three aspects of a single activity by which we sort through and organize a variety of representations in order to form an empirical concept. In addition to reflection, there are also acts of abstraction and comparison. In comparison, we note similarities among representations and in abstraction we note their differences. For example, when encountering a pink rose, we note similarities in instances of softness and smoothness of the petals, as well as discerning the differences between the hardness of the stem and the thin, fragile representation of the leaves. In the third Critique, comparison and reflection are very closely related. In a sense, to reflect is to compare representations. The pinkness, smoothness and softness of the rose are held together to form the appearance of the petals. Likewise, the hardness, greenness, and sharpness are held together to form the appearance of the stem and leaves. Zinkin argues that the activity of reflection in the third Critique is responsible for not only holding together various representations in an attempt to form empirical concepts, but also for holding together our cognitive faculties themselves. The holding together (harmony) of the faculties allows us to attend to and focus on the redness, smoothness, hardness, sharpness, greenness, and softness in order to synthesize the relevant representations so that a rose in its entirety will appear as an empirical object. Our attention, thus, makes the representation clear and allows us to be conscious of it. To bring an unclear representation to consciousness takes time, it is not instantaneous, therefore...

31 Zinkin 443.
32 Zinkin 443.
33 Zinkin 444.
34 Zinkin 445.
35 Negative Magnitudes (29:878), Zinkin 444.
reflection is needed.\textsuperscript{36}

Zinkin proposes that pleasure is what maintains our attention, thus sustaining the reflective process. If we did not feel pleasure in the reflection, we would not linger on the manifold long enough to bring unclear representations to consciousness. Zinkin is not claiming that our motivation for paying attention to something is so that we feel pleasure. She is, instead, claiming that the feeling of pleasure is what keeps us in the mental state we are in. Because of the pleasure we feel, we focus more of our attention on the various aspects present in the manifold. It is the pleasure we feel that captivates our attention and focuses it on the manifold in the first place. This necessary relationship between the feeling of pleasure and reflection ensures that all human beings are capable of feeling pleasure if we focus our attention on the manifold for long enough.

In judgments of the beautiful, the judgment is made in 'mere reflection.' In this case the endeavor to bring a representation to consciousness is not necessarily an exclusive component of empirical concept formation.\textsuperscript{37} Thus, attention is independent of the cognitive process that leads to determining judgments (normal cognition). According to Zinkin we can focus our attention on the manifold given to us by the pink rose without recognizing it as such, i.e. the rose can captivate our attention even before we know what it is. However, her view does not rule out the possibility of attributing a judgment of beauty to a representation that will be subsumed under a concept later. If after spending some time in reflection (and feeling pleasure) we ultimately perceive the object for what it is, a pink rose, we could then claim that the rose is beautiful. Zinkin concludes that, for Kant,

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[A]nyone who is capable of reflection must therefore also be
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\textsuperscript{36} Zinkin 446.
\textsuperscript{37} Zinkin 447.
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capable of the feeling of pleasure in 'mere reflection' that is the pleasure in the beautiful, since this feeling is a condition of it. But if all reflection requires the feeling of pleasure, and reflection is necessary for the concept formation involved in all cognition, then it would seem that the very same pleasure that is the pleasure of taste is also involved in all cognition.38

According to Zinkin, however, not everything is beautiful as the pleasure felt in reflection is quantitative.39 The amount of time spent in reflection determines the amount of pleasure felt. In normal cognition less time and attention is paid to the manifold and therefore the subject feels pleasure to a lesser degree. Once a representation is determined in a concept the reflection and the pleasure stop. If the concept is determined quickly pleasure will be felt for a shorter length of time than it would be if it required more reflection. Alternately, one could determine the concept of the rose quickly and yet still not have a clear and distinct representation of the petals. In this case, one could recognize the rose as a rose and still reflect on other objective features of the object, prolonging the pleasure. If one lingers in reflection for an extended amount of time the pleasure becomes "stronger and more intense."40 In normal cognition the pleasure is not as strong and therefore may go unnoticed. This also implies that it is possible for us to find something beautiful (linger in reflection on a manifold for an extended amount of time) that we then ultimately determine it in a concept where the pleasure then stops.

Zinkin's view is compelling in that it establishes an underlying universality in aesthetic judgments: all human beings are universally capable of pleasure in reflection because pleasure is a necessary condition for reflection. We can now reinforce Kant's claim that we must all be capable of feeling

38 Zinkin 448.
39 Zinkin 449.
40 Zinkin 449.
pleasure when our faculties engage in harmonious activity of free play. This provides a base for a discussion on how our judgments of beauty can differ among individuals: What causes the representations of some objects to linger in reflection and while others do not? Although I believe this is the correct way to approach this problem, I disagree with where she claims reflection occurs.

In the following section I will argue that reflection (and thus the necessary connection) must occur after the imagination forms an image of the object, not during this process, as Zinkin has proposed. Additionally, I will show that the contributions of the imagination in perception can account for differences of judgments of the beautiful, while still maintaining their claim to universality, by being able to explain why some representations of objects are reflected upon for an extended amount of time and others are not.

4. The Imagination in Perception

As we have seen, the imagination engages in several processes that make our experience, and knowledge, of the outside world possible. It, through the guidance of the understanding, synthesizes sensible representations in an endeavor to bring unclear representations into consciousness and aids in empirical concept formation through acts of comparison, abstraction, and reflection. Traditionally, in these instances, the role of the imagination has been reduced to a mere mediating faculty that is only discussed in terms of its relationship to the intuition and the understanding. However, Samantha Matherne claims that Kant is committed to the position that the imagination also plays a significant role in the way we perceive the world and if we are to understand fully the contribution of this particular faculty a "richer, more nuanced framework" is needed.\footnote{Matherne 741.}

Matherne proposes that Kant is working with a 'phenomenological
view' of image formation as opposed to the 'imaginary' or 'snapshot' view that is sometimes attributed to him. This means that images are not just picture-like representations of something we are not currently encountering (or perhaps never have), such as when I visualized my friend's bouquet of roses solely on her description.\textsuperscript{42} Nor are they mental snapshots that reflect a single spatio-temporal instances of what I see in front of me as if when I gaze upon the Peninsula Park Rose Garden on a sunny day, the representation I produce in my mind would be like a photograph that captures that precise moment in time.\textsuperscript{43} They are instead holistic and complex representations that represent multiple spatio-temporal instances.\textsuperscript{44} The implication here is that when we are presented with one view of an object, the imagination constructs an image that also includes other views of the object, i.e. the front, back and sides. When I look at the dead pink roses in the vase on my kitchen table, I not only have a representation of the dried up roses that are facing me but also the representation of the wilted and brown-tinged petals that are on the other side as well. This kind of phenomenological image formation certainly plays a role in fantasy and dreaming\textsuperscript{45} but also in ordinary perception as well.\textsuperscript{46} According to Kant, there are two categories of sensible representations, given and made. Given-representations arise in us when we are affected by objects. This category of representations occurs in us passively – I do not have to do anything in order to be receive them, I see a rose without having to do anything but look. Made-

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Matherne 745-747.
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\item Anthropology (7:168), Matherne 746-747.
\item Matherne 747.
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representations, on the other hand, arise from "the spontaneity of the mind." Kant identifies a 'formative power' in the construction of these images. This 'formative power' is the imagination.

The imagination is able to construct a number of made-representations. These include forming images from the past, future, and the present. In our memory, the imagination operates as a 'faculty of imitation' forming 'imitates' of objects we have perceived in the past. For example, the rose I see now is held in relation to what I saw a moment before. The imagination also operates as a 'faculty of anticipation' as I expect more rose as I turn it in my hand, and as a 'faculty of illustration' aiding us to bring appearances of all sides and views of the rose into a holistic illustration of the object. It is this holistic image of the object which the mind "has before it while it runs through the manifold."

On this view, perception requires images and the imagination is a necessary component of perceiving an object. Images (synthesized representations) are said to "draw the shape" of the object as the imagination combines and organizes the sensible content within the manifold in processes of the imagination which Kant calls 'apprehension' and 'reproduction'. Synthetic imaginative synthesis takes up representations of the object from all sides and points of view and "hold[s] onto representations from the past and bring[s] them to bear on the present." On certain occasions the understanding will take up what the imagination has synthesized and determine it under a concept, allowing

47 Matherne 747.
48 Matherne 747.
49 Matherne 748.
50 Metaphysics Lectures (28:236), Matherne 749.
51 Matherne 753.
52 Matherne 759.
us to perceive the object we encounter. On this view, images are what guide further synthesis of the manifold toward a complete, and successful, perception.

Judgments of the beautiful are made by contemplating the form of the object. Form, according to Kant, is "identified with the arrangement of the sensible material produced by the imagination in its apprehension of the object." The form of an object includes, but is not limited to, the object's spatiotemporal configuration and must "stimulate the exhibition of a concept," i.e. must allow for utilization by our cognition for the purpose of determination in a concept. If this is the case, the image produced through imaginative synthesis in perception is, in fact, the form of the object. It is only after the imagination brings together these representations together, to 'draw the shape' of the object that we can then judge its form. And the reflective process Kant says goes into making making aesthetic judgments takes place only after the image has been formed. Thus, the necessary relationship between pleasure and reflection needed to account for the 'universal human sense' must also occur after (and based on) this image formation, yet before determination of the object in a concept of the understanding.

Differences in judgments also occur in this process of image formation in perception. When the imagination forms an image of an object and we attempt to form a holistic view of the object, the image generated from the synthesis of these representations will either be conducive to reflection or it will not. If individuals have their own collection of past experiences that influence

53 Matherne 760.
54 Allison 137.
55 Allison 137.
56 This is in contrast to Zinkin's account in that the judgment is made after the synthetic imaginative synthesis.
current holistic image formation in perception, it would make sense to assume that the construction of these images can vary to some degree among individuals. Most individuals will perceive the form of that image in the same way and thus determine these objects in a concept quickly, requiring little reflection. This would, in turn, create a small unnoticeable amount of pleasure. But some with different past experiences (or anticipated future experiences) would construe the image differently. For example, in the museum as I contemplate Renoir's painting *Discarded Roses* by Renoir, the colors and shapes on the canvas are schematized as a representation in space and time and synthesized by the imagination (working with my faculty of understanding) in an effort to make the representation clear and bring it to consciousness. But I may also have in mind the image of the roses my friend got for her birthday, the vase of dead roses on my kitchen table, etc. These images can present a form of the object to our cognition that will require more reflection, that may or may not lead to determination in a concept. I propose it is these differences in image formation in perception that ultimately create differences in our judgments of beauty.

**Conclusion**

Kant's account of judgments of the beautiful in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* are described as having subjective universality. This is often interpreted as meaning that these judgments 'demand agreement' from others, that when we make judgments of the beautiful we feel others should also agree. However, this claim becomes problematic when we consider that different people often disagree on what they consider beautiful. I have argued the claim to universality is not that we all will (or do) make the same judgments, but rather that we all possess the universal ability to feel pleasure in the cognitive process of reflection. This 'universal human sense' requires a necessary connection.
between pleasure and reflection which allows us to account for differences in judgments of the beautiful by investigating why some representations of objects are reflected upon (creating pleasure) and others are not. We are able to account for these differences by using a more robust account of the imagination and how it forms images in perception. I argue that it is the act of imaginative synthesis in perception that ultimately determines whether an object is conducive to reflection, and thus a harmonizing of the faculties, or it is not. This account makes it possible for judgments of the beautiful to retain their claim to universality while also being able to account for the differences in judgments between people without appealing to the inherent uncertainty in Kant’s account of aesthetic judgments.

Bibliography


