

Beauty and Utility in Kant's Aesthetics: The Origins of Adherent Beauty

ROBERT R. CLEWIS*

ABSTRACT This paper describes one ancient model and three eighteenth-century accounts of the relation between beauty and goodness, including utility. Several modern philosophers, including Kant, can be understood in terms of these historical models. Like Hume and Sulzer, Kant distinguished two kinds of beauty: free and purpose-based. An examination of purpose-based beauty reveals how Kant handled the relation between beauty and utility. In all phases of his aesthetics, Kant's account is best characterized as "unificationist": beauty and utility are distinct concepts that can be conjoined or unified. Purpose-based beauty was central to Kant's earlier aesthetics and, even after a notable conceptual shift, was retained in the form of 'adherent' beauty in his later account; it continued to be important for his mature aesthetics, and indeed is appealed to in discussions in contemporary aesthetics.

KEYWORDS Beauty, utility, eighteenth-century aesthetics, conceptual beauty, Kant, Hume, Sulzer, Mendelssohn

WITHIN WESTERN PHILOSOPHY, THERE is a long and rich tradition of treating the beautiful and the good as closely related and mutually reinforcing.¹ Different models of the relation have been proposed. An 'identity' model can be seen in Plato's identification of the beautiful and the good in the *Symposium* and perhaps in the Greek notion of *kalokagathia* (i.e. beautiful-and-good).² Yet, according to Plato's *Republic*, the form of the good illuminates, and differs from, the forms of beauty and truth: "both knowledge and truth are beautiful things, but the good is other and more beautiful than they,"³ suggesting that beauty is a *mode* of the good. Likewise, according to Plotinus's chronologically first treatise, "On Beauty," the good is the source of the beauty of the Forms.⁴ Meanwhile, throughout *On the*

¹Robert Fudge, "The Beautiful and the Good," 1.

²*Symposium* 201c.

³*Republic* 508e.

⁴*The Enneads*, I, Treatise 6, Chapter 7.

* **Robert R. Clewis** is Professor of Philosophy at Gwynedd Mercy University

Divine Names, Pseudo-Dionysius uses the phrase “the Beautiful and Good,” and he claims that the beautiful is “identical” with the good.⁵ Aquinas likewise maintains that beauty and the good are co-extensive, differing only in aspect and in which faculties (the cognitive or the appetitive) are primarily involved: “the beautiful is the same as the good, and they differ in aspect only.”⁶ There is clearly a longstanding, venerable debate about the relation between beauty and goodness. Skipping to the eighteenth century, and over many disputes such as the one between the ancients and the moderns, one notices that one of the most contentious issues in the field that eventually came to be known as “aesthetics” was understanding the relationship between beauty and utility, or between beauty and the “good,” broadly understood to include—perhaps following Aristotle’s discussion of the good, pleasant, and useful⁷—both the morally and instrumentally good. Writers ranging from Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, Hume and Home, and Baumgarten and Mendelssohn, offered diverse views on the relation, with some authors making beauty and the good entirely independent or autonomous, others seeing them as interdependent, and still others seeing beauty as a mode of perfection or goodness.

Kant belonged to this longstanding tradition, and indeed contributed to the philosophical debate. The most familiar “Kantian” position is the one presented in §16 of *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (henceforth, third *Critique*), where Kant claims that “adherent” beauty is based on a concept of the object’s perfection or purpose. He distinguishes free or non-conceptual beauty from adherent beauty, and classifies free beauty as the “pure” kind and concept-based beauty as “not pure” (as in the title of §16). Significantly, he characterizes free beauty as “self-standing”:

There are two kinds of beauty: free beauty (*pulchritudo vaga*) or merely adherent beauty (*pulchritudo adhaerens*). The first presupposes no concept of what the object ought to be; the second does presuppose such a concept and the perfection of the object in accordance with it. The first are called (self-standing)⁸ [*für sich bestehende*] beauties of this or that thing; the latter, as adhering to a concept (conditioned beauty), are ascribed to objects that stand under the concept of a particular end. (*CJ* 5:229; cf. 5:245, 5:246)⁹

While this is the most familiar Kantian account, its historical context and origin have not been sufficiently studied. If we consider these, we will find that his view is more subtle than typically supposed. For his early view is that purpose-based,¹⁰ not

⁵*Divine Names*, Chapter 4, Section 7.

⁶*Summa Theologiae*, IaIIae, q.27, a.1, ad 3.

⁷*Nicomachean Ethics*, VIII.2, 1155b19.

⁸Although I use ‘self-standing,’ the following terms are also possible translations of *selbstständig*: ‘self-subsisting,’ ‘self-sufficient,’ and ‘independent.’

⁹Quotations from Kant’s works are from the edition published by the Königlich-Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin and then by Walter de Gruyter (1900–), with the two editions of the *Critique of Pure Reason* cited by the standard (A/B) pagination, and other works cited by (volume:page). References to Kant’s unpublished Reflections will be given with the numbers of the individual reflections provided in the volumes 16, 17 and 18 of the Akademie-Ausgabe. For the English translations, I will follow *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant* (1992–), sometimes with minor revisions (e.g. *selbstständig* as ‘self-standing’). When the Reflections are not there translated, I provide my own translations.

¹⁰The terms ‘concept-based’ and ‘purpose-based’ are related, for the particular concept that is at issue is that of the object’s purpose. ‘Concept-based’ has the wider extension. The terms are abbreviated ways of referring to more complex accounts of beauty.

free, beauty is “self-standing.” Moreover, when we examine his engagement with the philosophical debate, we find that Kant connects the notions of beauty and goodness to issues surrounding what makes artifacts and works of art “self-standing” in the sense of enduring and of lasting interest, and that he offers a rich account of how concepts inform our experiences and evaluations of aesthetic objects.

This philosophical approach is influential and relevant today. Thanks in large part to Kendall Walton’s article, “Categories of Art,” it is typical in contemporary discussions in aesthetics to take into account how concepts pertaining to an artwork’s genre, movement, style, or period shape appreciators’ experiences of the work.¹¹ The significance of the distinction between free and adherent beauty, therefore, goes (as one scholar puts it) “far beyond” issues “internal” to the third *Critique*.¹² This approach to the role of concepts (the good, purposes etc.) in the appraisal of beauty has precedents reaching back, if not to Plato or medieval authors, then at least to the eighteenth-century debates about beauty and utility. Contemporary theorists adopting this approach justly acknowledge Kant’s discussion in §16 as one of their influences.¹³ Nevertheless, the subtlety of the debate and the development of Kant’s position have gone largely unnoticed. Hence, an investigation of the eighteenth-century background is of both historical and philosophical interest, and has import far beyond Kant studies.

The topic of this paper, then, is the development of one of the most crucial concepts in the history of aesthetics: beauty. What is meant by the key term ‘self-standing’ (*selbstständig*)? On its own, it simply means what is independent of us, stable, lasting, and subsisting. In Kant’s pre-critical period (i.e. before 1781), ‘self-standing’ beauty is limited to ‘purpose-based’ beauty, the one grounded on or tied to ends. Yet, in the third *Critique*, Kant calls the latter kind ‘adherent’ (*adhärierend*) beauty (sometimes translated as ‘dependent’ beauty). In other words, ‘self-standing’ and ‘purpose-based’ beauty is a forerunner of ‘adherent’ beauty. How, to put it more provocatively, could “independent” beauty be a predecessor of “dependent” beauty? This remarkable conceptual shift merits both more attention and an explanation.

Even if the third *Critique*’s account of ‘adherent’ beauty—allotting it (by the very term) a secondary status—is often seen as an outgrowth of Kant’s aesthetic “formalism,”¹⁴ in fact it was central to his early aesthetics. It is likely on account of this history that Kant retains a version of adherent beauty in the third *Critique*.¹⁵

¹¹In addition to helping us understand a core aesthetic concept (beauty) in its eighteenth-century context, there are a number of philosophical issues concerning value theory and art appreciation that may be clarified by understanding the meaning and origins of adherent beauty.

¹²Paul Crowther, *Kantian Aesthetic*, 116.

¹³E.g. Noël Carroll, *Engaging the Moving Image*, 163n4. See also n. 95, below.

¹⁴For a survey of formalist readings of Kant, see Thomas Mulherin, “Kantian Musical Formalism?,” 36.

¹⁵Frederick Beiser criticizes adherent beauty as “inconsistent” on the grounds that Kant’s account of beauty excludes concepts of perfection, while adherent beauty requires just that (*Diotima’s Children*, 20). However, adherent beauty need not be considered inconsistent if there are several ways that a concept can be part of the experience of beauty without fully determining the aesthetic judgment (see sect. 4, below).

Moreover, the fact that adherent beauty is “ancillary” and is not identified as “self-standing” is not an indication that Kant considered it unimportant. To the contrary, Kant’s conception of adherent beauty continues to be significant for other areas of his value theory and aesthetics, viz. for his theories of human beauty, aesthetic ideas, and fine art,¹⁶ and, to the extent that adherent beauty is connected to moral ideas or can offer a “sensible representation” of morality,¹⁷ one of Kant’s deepest philosophical interests, it is important for his broader philosophical aims.

Further terminological clarification is needed. In Kant’s pre-critical aesthetics, ‘purpose-based’ beauties are those that fulfill the aim or function of the object in a manner that is aesthetically or sensibly pleasing. They can be a “means to the concept of the good” (*Refl.*, 639, 15:276), whether moral or instrumental. Kant called these beauties ‘self-standing’ (independent, stable, lasting). Kant’s early theory apparently made the inference that, since the instrumental or moral good in the object is somehow self-standing, any beauty connected to that good would also merit being called self-standing (~~enduring, independent, lasting~~). The claim that the good is “self-standing” can be understood in light of the traditional theory according to which the good is more stable than mundane events or things, as in neo-Platonic and Augustinian theories of evil as a privation of the good. In fact, along these lines, one of Kant’s lectures on philosophical theology¹⁸ states that “God is self-standing goodness [*selbstständige Güte*]” (*Lectures on Religion*, 28:1076, my translation). Likewise, around 1769–70 (1771–72?),¹⁹ Kant writes that “the good pleases steadily [*beständig*], the beautiful pleases everybody, even if not all the time” (*Refl.*, 1792, 16:117). A purpose-based beauty is “self-standing” because the basis in concepts (of purposes) contributes to the security or lasting quality of the judgment about the object’s beauty. A concept provides at least a partial basis for our aesthetically liking the object. Below, I maintain that while Kant had a consistent understanding of ‘self-standing,’ he applied it to a different class of objects. In the pre-critical period, the term referred to works and objects with purposes or ends, and in the third *Critique to free* beauties (or judgments thereof),²⁰ that is, objects that give rise to a free and harmonious play of the mental faculties independently of concepts, or at least after abstraction from them.

In addition to characterizing the debate about beauty and utility, I will thus track two key distinctions in Kant’s aesthetics: the one between free and adherent

¹⁶Although this is not my principal aim, my discussion of Kant’s early examples casts some doubt on the claim, implicitly accepted in much of the literature (though not without some textual support, e.g. *CJ* 5:311; 5:306), that there is a *necessary* conceptual connection between adherent (purpose-based) beauty and appraisals of fine art, i.e. that beautiful art must be adherent. Henry Allison, *Kant’s Theory of Taste*, 292, disputes the “necessary connection” position. Likewise, see also Donald Crawford, *Kant’s Aesthetic Theory*, 115; Alexander Rueger, “Beautiful Surfaces”; and Crowther, *Kantian Aesthetic*, 123.

¹⁷Paul Guyer, *Kant and the Experience of Freedom*, 36.

¹⁸They were edited by Pölitz (published first in 1817) and are based on a course Kant gave winter semester 1783/84.

¹⁹I follow and reproduce the date ranges and question marks supplied by Erich Adickes as found in the Akademie-Ausgabe.

²⁰The question of whether the free/adherent distinction is one between two kinds of “beauties,” or between two ways of “judging them” (both of which enjoy textual support), does not directly bear on the present argument and can be left aside here.

beauty, and the one between ‘self-standing’ and what is not ‘self-standing’ beauty (i.e. the contrast class or term complement). I argue that Kant retains the same general understanding of self-standing beauty, but that it undergoes a shift that results from claiming that purpose-based or adherent beauty is not as enduring or of lasting interest in comparison with free beauty. This shift is largely, if not solely, caused by Kant’s “discovery” of an a priori principle of taste and justification of the universal validity of pure judgments of taste, combined with a new moral-teleological orientation.²¹

Accordingly, I will first sketch the eighteenth-century debate on beauty and utility. Making use of Kant’s publications, handwritten Reflections (*Reflexionen*), and student lecture notes, I then examine the beauty/utility relation throughout the various stages of his aesthetics.²² Finally, I offer an explanation of the aforementioned conceptual-philosophical shift. It is thus to an account of the eighteenth-century historical models that I now turn.

I. THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY DEBATE: UTILITY AND BEAUTY

In addition to the ancient and medieval “identity” model mentioned above, three eighteenth-century models were available. One could call them the autonomist, blocking-unificationist, and containment accounts.

1. *Autonomist*: beauty and perfection/utility²³ are distinct concepts and cannot be united: increase in one has no effect on the other. Utility is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition of beauty.
2. *Blocking-unificationist*: beauty and perfection/utility are distinct concepts yet can be united or unified. An object’s dysfunctionality blocks or acts as a constraint on its beauty. Increased utility can entail increased beauty, and decreased utility can entail decreased beauty.
3. *Containment*: beauty is a form or mode of perfection/utility (the good).

Although these three descriptions are simplified, various eighteenth-century writers can be interpreted in terms of these accounts. As will be elaborated in a moment,


²¹Several publications have helped reconstruct a more coherent understanding of the free/adherent beauty distinction. In addition to studies already noted above, see Guyer, “Free and Adherent Beauty.” This paper contributes to this project by looking at the eighteenth-century context, Kant’s publications, and relatively overlooked sources such as his lectures and unpublished literary remains. Since Kant never published on aesthetics or taste between his 1764 treatise *Observations* and the third *Critique*, his lectures and Reflections on anthropology and logic are a key source here. One editorial note in the Cambridge translation of the third *Critique* comments on the conceptual connection between self-standing and adherent beauty (CJ 371n36). Yet (to my knowledge) no study, neither recent nor classic (e.g. by Paul Menzer, Alfred Baeumler, or Otto Schlapp), has characterized self-standing beauty or explained Kant’s remarkable conceptual shift. While there has been extensive study of Kant’s distinction between free and adherent beauty, no study has highlighted the importance of his notion of *selbstständig* beauty to this distinction, or the fact that his view of whether adherent or free beauty was *selbstständig* reversed at some point in the 1780s. Understanding this conceptual shift also offers insight into the genesis of the third *Critique* and the eighteenth-century debate about beauty and utility.


²²I proceed chronologically, as this seems to be the most straightforward way of examining the origins of adherent beauty.

²³This formulation is intentionally permissive; the conceptual relation between perfection and utility is beyond the scope of this paper.

Shaftesbury (on the reading that he defended “disinterestedness”), Hutcheson, and Burke accept a version of the first position. Shaftesbury (on another reading), Hume, Berkeley, Home, Sulzer, and Kant take up a version of the second. Writers in the broadly Leibnizian traditions adopt the third approach. (To my knowledge, no eighteenth-century thinker defended a conceptually possible alternative, viz. that *dysfunction*, or a decrease in utility, is a sufficient cause of beauty.)

The modern debate about utility and beauty commenced with Shaftesbury.²⁴ Intended or not, one consequence of Shaftesbury’s *The Moralists* was to persuade his successors that the response to the beauty of an object had to be independent of possession of that object. Nevertheless, in a passage in *Characteristics*’ concluding “Miscellaneous Reflection,” Shaftesbury stated that “beauty and truth are plainly joined with the notion of utility and convenience.”²⁵ This would appear to make it an instance of the unificationist theory, but he did not explain *how* they were conjoined, which may be one reason interpreters often viewed Shaftesbury as adopting an autonomist position.

In *An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (1725), Hutcheson insisted on the difference between utility and beauty. The nature of beauty, understood by Hutcheson as “uniformity amidst variety”—a formula that Kant cited in his anthropology lectures (e.g. “*Anthropology Mrongovius*,” 25:1228)—itself precluded any connection between this response and the recognition of utility generally. In the third dialogue in *Alciphron* (1732), Berkeley rejected Hutcheson’s position: the feeling of beauty (in response to “proportions”) was dependent on and very closely connected with the recognition (by reason) of the object’s utility or “end for which it was made.” “Proportions, therefore, are not, strictly speaking, perceived by the sense of sight, but only by reason through the medium of sight. . . . Consequently beauty  is an object, not of the eye, but of the mind.”²⁶ In the fourth edition of the *Inquiry* (1738), Hutcheson responded to Berkeley by insisting that there was no direct connection between the utility and the beauty of objects or between our responses to these distinct properties. In *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757), Burke sided with Hutcheson by arguing that an object’s utility was neither a cause of its beauty nor sufficient condition for beauty, since many features or characteristics that, at least to their possessor, are highly useful (e.g. the snout of a swine), are not beautiful and are even ugly or appear ridiculous.

In *A Treatise of Human Nature* (henceforth, *Treatise* ) which the first part was published in 1739), Hume first appeared to split the difference between Berkeley and Hutcheson. Yet he ultimately sided more with Berkeley, maintaining that the majority of the cases of beauty are actually cases of the beauty of utility rather than the beauty of mere species or appearance. “Handsome and beautiful, on most occasions, is not an absolute but a relative quality.”²⁷ Hume tried to resolve the debate by accepting both sides and recognizing two varieties of beauty, one of which

²⁴My account is indebted to Guyer, “Beauty and Utility.” See also Guyer, *Modern Aesthetics*, 39–42.

²⁵Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, 415.

²⁶*Alciphron*, 129–30.

²⁷T III.iii.i. References to the *Treatise* are to the Book, Part, and Section.

depends on the appearance of utility (which he discussed more than “absolute” beauty) and the other that is unrelated to utility. Accordingly, Hume distinguished the beauty of “mere figure and appearance” from that of “convenience” and utility. “The order and convenience of a palace are no less essential to its beauty, than its mere figure and appearance. In like manner the rules of architecture require, that the top of a pillar should be more slender than its base, and that because such a figure conveys to us the idea of security, which is pleasant.”²⁸ Two key aesthetic principles at work in the *Treatise* are, first, the idea that beauty is based on interest or utility (“convenience”), and, second, the notion that when we are not the owner of the object in question we can at least sympathize imaginatively with its owner (through “fancy”), feeling something like the proprietor’s pleasure. Finally, Henry Home (Lord Kames) held that an object’s utility increases the pleasure in its beauty. Even if Home did not exclude the possibility of absolute beauty, he considered beauty without utility to be rare.

On the European continent, aesthetic theory developed within the framework established by Leibniz and Wolff. The key to this framework was the idea that beauty is an intuitive perception of the perfection of its object: the “anschauenden Erkenntniß der Vollkommenheit,” as Wolff put it in §404 of *Vernünfftige Gedanken von Gott, der Welt und der Seele des Menschen* (1720).²⁹ The Leibnizian-Wolffian conception of perfection left plenty of room for the notion of utility: perceiving an object’s utility counted as an instance of perceiving its perfection. Since taking pleasure in the clear, but confused, perception of utility was just as good a case of beauty as any other kind, authors such as Wolff or Christoph Gottsched saw no special reason to distinguish our pleasure in beauty from that in utility. Baumgarten considered utility and beauty³⁰ to be two kinds of “perfection.”³¹ At §662, Baumgarten defined beauty (*pulchritudo*) as a phenomenon’s perfection observable to taste, and ugliness (*deformitas*) as observable imperfection. In “On Sentiments,” Mendelssohn argued that beauty and reason are not antithetical, and that reason is useful as well as a source of aesthetic pleasure. He conceived of beauty as a kind of perfection. In “On Evidence in Metaphysical Sciences,” Mendelssohn wrote of the “perfection, beauty, and order” perceived in an object to which one is drawn. “By ‘perfection,’” Mendelssohn claimed, “I understand also the utility and sensuous pleasure that the object promises us since both belong to the perfections of our intrinsic or extrinsic condition.”³² Finally, in *Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste* (1771–74), Johann Georg Sulzer distinguished between ‘proper’ and ‘improper’ beauty in a way that runs parallel to the third *Critique*’s

²⁸ *T* II.i.viii. See also the section, “Some Farther Reflections Concerning the Natural Virtues” (*T* III.iii.v).

²⁹ *Vernünfftige Gedanken*, §404, 247. This text is cited according to the sect. number and page in the 1751 edition.

³⁰ *Metaphysica*, §§336–40 and §662. The text is cited according to sect. number.

³¹ When Kant started teaching an anthropology course in 1772/73, he used the “Empirical Psychology” section from Baumgarten’s *Metaphysica*. Since this section included topics from Baumgarten’s aesthetics, Kant’s anthropology course is an important source for understanding the present topic.

³² *Philosophical Writings*, 297. Both “On Evidence in Metaphysical Sciences” and “On Sentiments” can be found in Mendelssohn, *Philosophical Writings*.

free/adherent distinction. Notably, Sulzer ultimately unified them under the notion of perfection.³³

2. KANT'S EARLIEST ACCOUNTS

Kant's popular pre-critical treatise, *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime* (1764), contains little that we would today consider aesthetics, but it does offer three passages relevant to our theme.³⁴ First, Kant presupposes a beauty/utility distinction when he asserts that some people “prefer the beautiful to the useful” (*Observations*, 2:229). He adds that the facility with which an “action” is carried out is a necessary condition of its beauty. “For the beauty of all actions it is requisite above all that they display facility and that they seem to be accomplished without painful effort” (*Observations*, 2:229). Since, from a consequentialist perspective, an action produced with painful effort and one produced with “facility” would have the same degree of utility, this passage implies that beauty and utility are distinct.

The second passage suggests that Kant's position is best classified as unificationist:

It is indeed customary to call **useful** only that which can satisfy our cruder sentiment, what can provide us with a surplus for eating and drinking, display in clothing and furniture, and lavishness in entertaining, although I do not see why everything that is craved with my most lively feeling should not be reckoned among the useful things. (*Observations*, 2:226).

The quip at the end need not be read as mere jest, but may imply that whatever evokes the “lively feeling” (including beauty)³⁵—namely the lavish display or radiance—can itself be considered to be useful.

Third, and most significantly, Kant attributes the utility of an upbeat or humorous entertainment to its having “real content.” He praises “the taste for an entertainment that is certainly cheerful, but must also have real content, that is humorous but must also be useful because of serious conversations” (*Observations*, 2:242n). The humorous discourse's “real” content is a source of its utility, which in turn is derived from fulfilling its aims.³⁶ The notion of the ‘real content’ of the conversation appears to be close to the conceptual content in “self-standing” beauty, even if Kant does not use ‘self-standing’ here. And although he does not explicitly mention ‘beauty,’ such entertainment with “real content” seems to be Kant's earliest published passage concerning an aesthetic feeling based partially on concepts.

Kant's Reflections help us understand this rich aesthetic phase.³⁷ According to a Reflection written in his personal copy of Baumgarten's *Metaphysica* in 1769,³⁸

³³Sulzer, *Allgemeine Theorie*. See Rueger, “Beautiful Surfaces,” 538.

³⁴Kant's aesthetics developed in at least three main stages. See Guyer, “Beauty, Freedom, and Morality,” 142–57. For his earlier discussion, see Guyer, *Kant and the Claims of Taste*, 12–28.

³⁵From the rest of the treatise, it is clear that “lively feeling” includes *beauty*: “the lively sentiment of the beautiful announces itself through shining cheerfulness in the eyes” (*Observations*, 2:209).

³⁶The *Observations* implies that some instances of “humor” would count as instances of “lively feeling” and taste. See also a Reflection from 1776–78: taste is “as it were courteous and humorous” (*Refl.*, 1856, 16:138).

³⁷These forerunners of the free/adherent distinction in Kant's marginal Reflections are interesting not only for their content, but also since they were written after the *Observations* yet before he began lecturing on anthropology in 1772/73.

³⁸Reflections from this year were thus composed shortly before the publication of the *Inaugural Dissertation* (1770), where Kant claimed that mathematics contained a priori laws for sensibility.

“self-standing beauty must be grounded on a lasting [*beständig*] principle; now no cognition is unalterable but the one that reveals what the thing is; hence it is a combination with reason” (*Refl.*, 635, 15:275, my translation). Self-standing beauty is thus the kind that is grounded on a lasting “principle,” or something stable, enduring, or substantial. But beyond the fact that “what the thing is” relates to an object,³⁹ the meaning of the claim that a cognition reveals “what the thing is” remains obscure. It does not specify whether it is a claim about classes and kinds (as in conceptual and purpose-based beauty), or about what it means to be an object as such (as in Kant’s theoretical philosophy).

In a Reflection from 1769, if not earlier (1764–68?), Kant introduces the idea that poetry evokes a harmonious *play* of thoughts or motion of the mental powers not “necessitated by an end.” Echoing a Berkeleyan worry about blocking, *viz.* there may be so much disutility in the object that we simply cannot feel any pleasure of beauty in response to it, Kant adds the condition that the mental play of thoughts “not be a hindrance” to reason. Yet the “harmonious play” also cannot have the particular end of promoting reason either, that is, cannot be merely instrumental. Poesy (i.e. poetic invention) has the “end” only of setting the mental powers into play, and this is a process that requires it to have mental “content.”

Poesy has neither sensations nor intuitions nor insights as its end, but rather setting all the powers and springs in the mind into play; its images should not contribute more to the comprehensibility of the object, but should give lively motion to the imagination. It must have a content, because without understanding there is no order and its play arouses the greatest satisfaction. (*Refl.*, 618, 15:266–67)

This passage reveals that a theory of imaginative and mental play (though not yet the theory of a free harmonious play *between* the imagination and understanding) appears in Kant’s theory in the late 1760s. A poem’s conceptual or intellectual content provides order, while the imagination is enlivened. Kant distinguishes beauty related to an “end” from beauty that merely concerns the harmony between the object’s “look” and the state of mind:

In all products of nature there is something that is related merely to the end, and something that concerns merely the correspondence of the appearance with the state of mind, i.e. the manner, the vestment [*Einkleidung*]. The latter, even if one does not understand any end, often counts for everything. E.g. figure and color in flowers, tone and harmony in music. Symmetry in buildings. (*Refl.*, 618, 15:266–67)

With the “latter,” or sensible beauty, Kant has in mind something close to what Hume called ‘absolute beauty.’ The examples of sensible or pure beauty come from architecture and music, not only from nature; the crucial feature seems to be the symmetry or harmony they provide, not whether or not they are human-made artifacts. A Reflection from 1769 provides an instance of the unificationist model.

The inner perfection of a thing has a natural relation to beauty. For the subordination of the manifold under an end requires a coordination of it in accordance with common laws. Hence the same property through which an edifice is beautiful is also compatible with its goodness, and a face would have to have no other shape for its end than for its beauty. Of many things in nature we cognize beauty, but not ends;

³⁹*Refl.*, 1829, 16:130 (1772–75): “what the thing is (this relates to the object).”

it is to be believed that the satisfaction in their appearance is not the aim, but the consequence of their aim. (*Refl.*, 628, 15:273–74)⁴⁰

In another note from the same period (though this note may have been written as late as 1775), Kant claims that “the utility of cognition is not beauty” (*Refl.*, 1811, 16:124), echoing Burke’s point that utility is not a sufficient cause of beauty, and distancing himself from the German aesthetic tradition (and its containment model) even as he employs its terminology. Likewise, a Reflection from 1769–70 states that “self-standing” beauty can serve to make “general concepts intuitive”:

Logical perfection with regard to form consists in truth (in concepts) and its means.
Aesthetic perfection with regard to form consists in graspability in intuition.

The form of sensibility that facilitates the perfection of the understanding is the self-standing [*selbständig*] beautiful, which can serve to make general concepts intuitive [*anschauend*] and prepares appearances for distinctness through general concepts. (*Refl.*, 1794, 16:118)

Kant is not very clear about the specific roles of sensibility and understanding in the latter kind of beauty,⁴¹ nor about what is meant by “general” concepts. But this passage could be read as dealing with three kinds of form: that of logical and aesthetic perfections, and a third kind, a form of sensibility, that unites the aesthetic and logical (or conceptual) perfections. According to this reading, while aesthetic perfection with regard to intuitive, sensible form constitutes beauty in general, the form of sensibility that also facilitates the understanding’s perfection and makes concepts intuitive would constitute self-standing beauty. Another Reflection (from 1769) makes this reading even more plausible. After separating utility (or the mediate good) and beauty, Kant does not leave them as exclusive disjunctions, but reunites them. He distinguishes between sensible (*sinnliche*) and self-standing beauty, which is defined as a “means” to the concept of the good.

The sensible form (or the form of sensibility) of a cognition pleases either as a play of sensation or as a form of intuition (immediately) or as a means to the concept of the good. The former is charm, the second the sensibly beautiful, the third self-standing [*selbständige*] beauty. (*Refl.*, 639, 15:276)⁴²

Self-standing beauty, here contrasted with the sensibly beautiful, is a “means” (in the sense of a *vehiculum*)⁴³ to the concept of the good, that is, an aesthetic or sensible response to the good. This kind of beauty is not itself the instrumental or moral good, but is nevertheless tied to it, qua its sensible presentation. In contrast, an object is sensibly beautiful or “pleases immediately in the intuition if its form fits with the law of coordination among appearances and facilitates sensible clarity and

⁴⁰Cf. the following Reflection from 1769: “The beauty of cognition which is to the benefit [*be-förderlich*] of reason and the evidence of the understanding is called self-standing [*selbständig*]” (*Refl.*, 629, 15:274, my translation).

⁴¹Guyer, *Kant and the Claims of Taste*, 18.

⁴²An editorial note in Kant’s *Notes and Fragments* (614n40) states: “In characterizing our response to the good as one to ‘self-sufficient beauty,’ Kant here uses the term ‘beauty’ more broadly than he usually does.” Although this is not incorrect, the topic calls for a more comprehensive examination.

⁴³See also *Refl.*, 119, 15:11; and *Refl.*, 197, 15:75.

magnitude. Like symmetry in buildings and harmony in music.”⁴⁴ But “the object pleases in the intuitive concept [*im Anschauenden Begriffe*] if its relation to the good can be expressed through a concept that pleases in sensible form. (Conventional or natural taste.)” (*Refl.*, 639, 15:279). Thus, in self-standing beauty, the object pleases in the intuitive concept. Its sensible form is found to be pleasant, while at the same time, “a concept” (i.e. not the understanding in general) expresses the object’s relation to the good. As the reference to “conventional” taste might indicate, the good associated with that object may be understood relative to a shared set of practices and conventions. In a Reflection from 1769–70, Kant likewise claims that whereas beauty is perceived immediately and through the faculty of sensibility, reason recognizes “utility,” which “consists in the relation of something as a means to what pleases, whether it gratifies or appears only beautiful. . . . Here there is a maximum, or rather a unity, of satisfaction [*Wohlgefallen*]. . . . An end in general is the object” (*Refl.*, 678, 15:300).⁴⁵

The anthropology (and logic) lectures⁴⁶ from this period (1772/73) agree with these Reflections and help clarify Kant’s account.⁴⁷ In a February 1772 letter to Marcus Herz, Kant stated that he planned to write a treatise that was to include, among other things, an examination of the “principle of taste” and its effect, “the beautiful” (AA 10:129).⁴⁸ The Collins transcription (1772/73) states that, whereas feeling is produced by stimuli and emotion, in the case of “pure” (*reine*) beauty (“beauty merely as beauty”) one judges “not in accordance with feeling, but in accordance with appearance” in comparison with feeling (“*Anthropology Collins*,” 25:178), so that a comparison between the feeling and the appearance is a component of the judging activity. Here Kant contrasts beauty and utility (“*Anthropology Collins*,” 25:181). He claims that “beauty pleases immediately” (“*Anthropology Collins*,” 25:176), and then—as if anticipating a worry expressed

⁴⁴On symmetry and harmony in art/artifacts, cf. a Reflection from approximately 1776–78 (1773–75? 1775–77? 1769?): “The play of intuitions is found in edifices, furnishings, dress, gardens” (*Refl.*, 807, 15:359).

⁴⁵Cf. *Refl.*, 1813, 16:125 (ca. 1770–71 or 1772–77).

⁴⁶Unless otherwise noted, quotations from the anthropology lectures are from Kant, *Lectures on Anthropology*. When possible, lectures are referred to by the name (and volume:page) used in the Akademie-Ausgabe (AA), e.g. “*Anthropology Pillau*,” 25:788. When a lecture is not published in AA, references are to the manuscript page number, e.g. “*Anthropology Brauer*,” 130.

⁴⁷Despite the growing amount of scholarship on Kant’s lectures, no study (to my knowledge) has examined them to characterize the development of the notion of adherent beauty or paid sufficient attention to self-standing beauty. Nevertheless, on aesthetics in the lectures, see Guyer, “Play and Society,” 223–41; Guyer, “Beauty, Freedom, and Morality,” 135–63; and Alix Cohen, “Kant on the Possibility of Ugliness.”

⁴⁸When using the lecture notes, we should bear in mind that Kant himself did not write the transcriptions and that they are not verbatim recordings of Kant’s words, but student notes written and prepared months, even years, afterwards. They should be read in light of relevant published works, correspondence, and Reflections; this is what I propose to do. On the use of the lecture notes, see my editor’s introduction, in Clewis, *Reading Kant’s Lectures*, 1–29. Paul Menzer subscribes to a once common, but now dated, view that the lecture notes are unreliable on the grounds that there are problems with dating and authorship. Menzer, *Kants Ästhetik in ihrer Entwicklung*, 23 and 207. While this criticism may apply to the editions Menzer mentions (e.g. “*Jäsche Logic*”), the state of research on Kant’s lectures has changed considerably following the publication of vol. 25 of AA (1997) and the availability of digitized versions, in large part made possible by Werner Stark’s careful editorial work.

by commentators⁴⁹—inquires whether beauty that is tied to the purposes of an object could still be beauty at all, given that those purposes are the means to some end. This issue leads him to the notion of a “thorough” liking. Unlike useful or instrumental goods, beauty is easy to give up, but “if beauty is united with utility, the liking for it becomes more thorough [*gründlicher*] and enduring. Just the same, pure [*reine*] beauty, which is only for taste and furnishes a certain pure gratification, remains void of all utility” (“*Anthropology Collins*,” 25:176).⁵⁰ Kant reunites beauty and utility (and other kinds of goodness or perfection) (“*Anthropology Collins*,” 25:177). This concept of goodness includes morality, as his comment on Sulzer’s Preface to *Allgemeine Theorie* reveals: “The entire utility of the fine arts is that they present the moral principles of reason in full splendor and buttress them forcefully. Sulzer demonstrates this very clearly” (“*Anthropology Collins*,” 25:33, my translation). The following passage from Collins provides a good summary of the foregoing points:

Logical perfection constitutes self-standing beauty. Otherwise there can indeed be varnish there, but one nonetheless sees genuine beauty is missing. If in the wrong room, the most beautiful paintings are useless and poorly displayed. The understanding must make the foundation, and then the beauty can be spread out over it.—Beauty and colors presuppose a substance, on which they are applied. No writer who lacked self-standing [beauty] was admired for his taste for very long. Wherever this kind of beauty is found, there too is the admiration enduring. (“*Anthropology Collins*,” 25:193, my translation)⁵¹

A transcription from the same source lecture (1772/73), manuscript “*Anthropology Hamilton*,” contains the point that if beauty is secondary to the understanding, the result is longer lasting.⁵² The Hamilton transcription then states that one must have thorough cognitions (*grundliche Kenntnisse*) in order to bring about something in the beautiful sciences or arts. “Beauty is lasting; one finds therefore no better historian than Hume” (“*Anthropology Hamilton*,” 25:193). Hume’s writings are not the only ones to exemplify this kind of beauty. The manuscript claims that “the

⁴⁹E.g. John Zammito, *Genesis*, 126. See also Beiser, in n. 15, above.

⁵⁰Cf. “*Anthropologie Dohna-Wundlacken*,” 171; and Kowalewski, 208. The “*Anthropologie Dohna-Wundlacken*” manuscript is worth citing since it gives variants of crucial passages in *Collins*. It can be found at *Kants Vorlesungen über Anthropologie* at http://www.online.uni-marburg.de/kant_old/webseite/ gt_h0304.htm#variant2 [accessed 24 October 2017]. A version of the transcription is published in *Die Philosophischen Hauptvorlesungen Immanuel Kants* (edited by Kowalewski), but not in AA vol. 25 (Kant’s anthropology lectures). The page number (e.g. 171) given after “*Anthropologie Dohna-Wundlacken*” refers the manuscript page reproduced online; the one following “*Kowalewski*” refers to the page in *Die Philosophischen Hauptvorlesungen Immanuel Kants*. Although its mixed provenance is rarely recognized, the Dohna-Wundlacken anthropology lecture derives in part from a 1772/73 source lecture and not only from the 1790s. See editor’s introduction, AA 25:CXLVI. Given its content and similarity to the one in Collins, the present Dohna-Wundlacken passage evidently comes from the 1772/73 lecture.

⁵¹Cf. “*Anthropologie Dohna-Wundlacken*,” 193–94; Kowalewski, 225.

⁵²Passages in the “*Anthropologie Hamilton*” transcription differ occasionally from the corresponding texts in “*Anthropologie Collins*” and “*Anthropologie Parow*,” and textual variants in Hamilton are placed in footnotes throughout AA vol. 25, containing these transcriptions. While many of the variants are negligible and only a few lines long, some of them (like this one) are interesting and noteworthy. The Hamilton transcription is found in AA vol. 25 not in its entirety but only in instances of meaningful alternate readings of the related manuscripts.

English *Spectator* is the best weekly,” and still speaking of Joseph Addison’s *Spectator* (1712), continues, “One does not know if one should marvel at the beauty or at the thoroughness of the thoughts. One cannot learn beauty from any model, if one has does not have a thorough cognition of the thing” (“*Anthropology Hamilton*,” 25:193).⁵³ Thus, self-standing beauty is the kind of beauty used to characterize the beauty in writings with intellectual content—including disciplines such as metaphysics⁵⁴—that is, writings containing a thorough cognition yet presented in a manner pleasing to the imagination.

After claiming that we should pay attention to an author’s aim (*Endzweck*), the Parow manuscript (still from 1772/73) states, “In each thing, we observe some self-standing beauty; just the same, it is plainly seen that the things that do not have anything that is self-standing, also lack self-standing beauty, since their possible charm is nothing self-standing. E.g. fashion” (“*Anthropology Parow*,” 25:383–84, my translation).⁵⁵ According to the lecture notes, the judgment of the beauty of a face depends on our knowledge of whether a man or a woman is being represented. “One cannot take a thing to be beautiful until one knows what kind of a thing it is supposed to be. One must therefore always presuppose the idea of the thing” (“*Anthropology Parow*,” 25:384, my translation; cf. “*Anthropology Collins*,” 25:193). In fact, the lecture makes an even stronger claim: with respect to the thing, the correspondence of emotion with the idea of the thing (what kind of object it is) is *true (wahre)* beauty (“*Anthropology Parow*,” 25:384).⁵⁶

In short, in this earliest aesthetic phase, the kind of beauty that is self-standing (lasting, independent) is the one tied to purposes and/or concepts, including intellectual content. Kant subscribes to a “blocking-unificationist” model according to which the failure to be a good instance of a kind can hinder our feeling beauty in response to it, and in which the object’s showing itself to be an excellent instance of its kind, or performing its function well, can further add to our aesthetic pleasure in the object:

All conveniences and stimuli that go against the purpose of the thing are opposed to the sufficiency [*dem selbstständigen*] of beauty; hence one cannot say that a really tight piece of clothing is beautiful, since a piece of clothing should aim for leisure. Fashions that have a lot of discomfort [*Peinlichkeit*] cannot be enduring. (“*Anthropology Parow*,” 25:385, my translation)

Self-standing beauty can be a response to intellectual content that is presented in a sensibly (imaginatively) pleasant manner. Kant’s favorite examples are Hume and Addison.

In a speech [*Rede*], self-standing beauty is the relation between sensibility and thoroughness [*Gründlichkeit*] and truth. Knowledge of human beings and familiarity with the sciences provide the substance on which we can spread beauty. Beauty that

⁵³Cf. “*Anthropologie Dohna-Wundlacken*,” 193; Kowalewski, 225.

⁵⁴According to Herder’s metaphysics lecture notes, Kant claimed that metaphysics should be thorough yet beautiful (“*Metaphysik Herder*,” 28:6).

⁵⁵Cf. “*Anthropologie Dohna-Wundlacken*,” 192; Kowalewski, 224.

⁵⁶Cf. “*Anthropologie Collins*,” 25:193; *Refl.*, 628, above.

runs counter to the understanding is not lasting. . . . When one reads David Hume . . . and an English *Spectator*, one does not know whether to evaluate the beauty or the thoroughness and insights. (“*Anthropology Parow*,” 25:385, my translation)

The intellectual content functions as the concrete matter (*Stoff*) providing substance to the writing or discourse. The version of this passage in the Brauer transcription (based on the 1772/73 course) is truly remarkable in light of our theme: “And when beauty is made *secondary* to the understanding, there is something lasting [*Und wo Schönheit dem Verstande secundirt, da ist etwas dauerhaftes*]” (“*Anthropology Brauer*,” 130). For ‘secondary’ simply means ancillary, in other words, adherent. Concept-based beauty, or the kind in which sensible beauty is made secondary to the understanding, is thus characterized as ‘lasting.’ According to this early account, then, it is conceptual or intellectual beauty that is the self-standing kind.

3. BEAUTY IN KANT’S NEXT PHASE (MID- TO LATE--1770S)

In a noteworthy Reflection from the next phase of his aesthetics, Kant claims that “what the art of intuition reveals clearly” is beautiful, and contrasts it with the response to objects where purposes are determined by reason. This is reminiscent not only of Kant’s earlier distinction between pure and purpose-based beauty, but also of the distinction between the immediate and relative beauty presented by Hume and Sulzer.

Ars aspectabilis est pulchritudo. [Art that is worthy of being seen is beautiful]. What the art [*Kunst*] of intuition presents clearly and readily is beautiful. Hence the art must not be cognized through reason, thus insofar as the object is considered as a means, but in the thing itself. Regularity, proportion, measured division. A regular polygon. A pure color; the distribution of colors for charm (tulips, pheasants). Proportionate tone. The agreement (relation) of *phaenomeni* with an idea in general (**überhaupt**); to beauty there belongs understanding. The agreement of the *phaenomeni* with the essential end [*wesentlichen Zwecke*] is the higher [*obere*] beauty. The art in appearance. All pure colors are beautiful, because their being unmixed already indicates art. (*Refl.*, 871, 15:383)⁵⁷

This is a difficult yet important Reflection. What it would mean to cognize art in “the thing itself” is puzzling, especially if we have the first *Critique* (1781/87) in mind. However, rather than having in mind something like the critical thing in itself (*Ding an sich*), Kant apparently means that an aesthetic contemplation that does *not* attend to ends set by reason, is one that focuses on features that are in the object or thing itself: regularity, proportion, measured division. In the beginning lines above, Kant appears to subscribe to a position close to Hutcheson’s unity-in-variety theory by claiming that art should be cognized and enjoyed not insofar as it satisfies purposes, but only for displaying features such as regularity and proportion. But according to the passage’s second half, there can be an agreement between the appearances and an idea provided by the understanding or reason (“the essential end”). This would count as purpose-based beauty. Strikingly, Kant

⁵⁷The note is from the middle of the 1770s. Adickes gives different ranges for it: 1776–78, 1772–75, and possibly 1773–77.

goes even further: the agreement of the phenomena with “the essential end” is the *higher* kind of beauty.⁵⁸ Thus, it would appear that this Reflection mentions both kinds of beauty but ultimately privileges the Berkeleyan side of Kant’s account. While the passage is vague about the specific roles of sensibility (intuition) and understanding (and about “an idea in general”), Kant plainly distinguishes pleasure in the beautiful object’s agreement with its “essential end” from pleasure stemming from a clear presentation in intuition.⁵⁹

Kant’s account in the mid-1770s introduces a new concept into the previously noted discussion about lasting beauty with intellectual content: the hypostatic. The term derives from Aristotle: the ‘hypostatic’ refers to a substance as a material substratum underlying change.⁶⁰ An example of hypostatic cognition, for Kant, is a literary passage or discussion containing significant intellectual content. According to the Friedländer transcription (1775/76),

Our cognitions can have clarity in the understanding and intensity in sensation. In the presentation, we can differentiate the emphatic and hypostatic cognitions. This classification is taken from Aristotle. . . . What produces an intensity of sensation, would therefore be emphatic and, where there is a self-standing beauty, it would be hypostatic. The English *Spectator* has self-standing beauty; the embellishing of speech with images belongs to emphatic beauty. (“*Anthropology Friedländer*,” 25:485)⁶¹

Kant thinks that the intellectual content (“clarity in the understanding”) can give an object or work enduring beauty, and he aligns the substantial (hypostatic) and the “self-standing,” thereby confirming the proposed construal of ‘self-standing’ as independent, enduring, or stable.

A prominent theme in the anthropology lectures (including the published version of 1798) is that of “adhering representations.” At first glance, this might strike readers of the third *Critique* as a potential forerunner of adherent beauty. Although the terms used are the same (*adhaerirende*, *angehörigen*, *anhängenden*), the pre-critical and critical concepts are not equivalent in either intension or extension. According to the Friedländer notes, Kant discussed a “dry” sermon that is enlivened or made more interesting:

We must consider every representation in its bare state and separated from everything, or examine it with certain representations that belong [*angehörigen*] and adhere [*anhängenden*] to it, and give it a certain accompaniment, and we must indeed do so in order to stir up attentiveness and increase the intensity of the impression. . . . Where the main representation is not filled in with adhering representations, the representation is dry. This dryness of the representation is often necessary in order to present the main representation all the more clearly and to have insight into it, since

⁵⁸Likewise, lecture notes from this phase read: “*True* beauty consists in the agreement of sensibility with the concept” (“*Anthropology Friedländer*,” 25:655, emphases added).

⁵⁹Cf. *Refl.*, 1814, 16:125 (1770–1771? 1772–77?): “Beauty is self-standing where the sensibility harmonizes with *perfection* regarding reason in accordance with universal laws” (emphasis added).

⁶⁰“To sum up, some of the phenomena which occur in the air are merely appearances [*kat’ emphasin*], while others have actual substance [*kath’ hypostasin*]” (Aristotle, *On the Universe*, 395a29–30).

⁶¹Cf. “*Anthropology Parow*,” 25:385; “*Anthropology Mrongovius*,” 25:1228; and “*Anthropology Busolt*,” 25:1443.

the main representation is obscured by the adhering representations. (“*Anthropology Friedländer*,” 25:491)⁶²

Why would ‘dryness’ sometimes be necessary in a discourse? In the case of a sermon, it is needed not only so that the churchgoers can understand the lesson clearly, but also so that they do not attend merely to be entertained by ancillary embellishment, namely, the anecdotes and stories. The dry intellectual content of the sermon constitutes its main representation (*Hauptvorstellung*). The conceptual content is not (as in the third *Critique*) what renders the discourse “adherent,” but rather creates a need for embellishment by secondary representations.

Closer to the end of this phase, the Pillau lecture (1777/78) states that the beautiful arts are distinguished from the useful. The transcription contains many interesting statements concerning rhetoric and poetry, but what is noteworthy for us is that the play in rhetoric can be an *aesthetic* play with the conceptual content expressed in an idea shaped by the speaker’s ends and intentions (“*Anthropology Pillau*,” 25:760). In addition, the Pillau transcript contains a passage in which ‘self-standing’ is understood as passing the test of time or enduring through the ages. Since taste, unlike fashion, is steady or lasting (*beständig*), “Homer pleases us and has always pleased us” (“*Anthropology Pillau*,” 25:788, my translation).⁶³ This makes sense of why Kant had claimed that the *Spectator* contained or evoked “hypostatic” beauty. The *Spectator* was not merely following fads and fashions, but rather expressed intellectually interesting ideas that gave it an enduring appeal.

4. THE 1780S AND THE CRITICAL TURN

I now turn to Kant’s account in the 1780s (i), before examining the third *Critique* (ii).

In the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781/87), Kant claimed that we should attempt to make the “sensible world” agree as far as possible with the “moral world” (A 808/B 836). He develops this theme in the third *Critique*, where this task of fashioning the sensible into the moral world informs and combines with a vision to connect aesthetics and teleology. Joined with the “discovery” of an a priori principle and justification of pure judgments of taste, this moral-teleological orientation in turn influences the conceptual-philosophical shift with regard to whether free or instead purpose-based beauty is called independent and self-standing. This reversal and corresponding prioritization of free beauty (especially that of nature) occur at some point during the 1780s, most likely toward the end the decade.

The *Menschenkunde* lecture (1781/82) reveals that Kant employs a blocking-unificationist model. Beauty and the mediate good (utility) are distinct, but can be connected: “The beautiful and agreeable rest on sensations: the good on concepts. The beautiful stands in a natural connection to the good, even if they are not the same” (“*Anthropology Menschenkunde*,” 25:1100, my translation). The

⁶²Cf. “*Anthropology Parow*,” 25:266; “*Anthropology Mrongovius*,” 25:1256; *Anthropology*, 7:138.

⁶³Likewise, a later logic lecture (likely mixed with views stemming from the 1790s) contrasts “the self-standing beautiful” with “what is alterable in accordance with the variety of taste following fashion” (“*Logik Dohna-Wundlacken*,” 24:714, my translation).

good (here, health; cf. *CJ* 5:208) is not determined by the senses but “belongs” to a “judging of reason.” Kant asks if the beautiful must always go together (*hängt zusammen*) with what is purposive (*Zweckmässigen*). He answers that while the senses do not make a judgment about a thing, “all beauty must have a relation to the good” (“*Anthropology Menschenkunde*,” 25:1100, my translation). The good form of the human body requires a useful and functional relation of the parts, or at least one that does not block utility. Perhaps alluding to Hume or William Hogarth,⁶⁴ Kant gives the corresponding standard example from architecture (i.e. columns should be broader at the base), and comments, “everything must be aimed at the useful; otherwise it would not please [*gefallen*].” The passage concludes: “One thus nevertheless sees that we find here a unification of nature and taste, [a unification] of the good nature seeks to bring about, and the beautiful” (“*Anthropology Menschenkunde*,” 25:1101, my translation). Hence, despite some conceptual twists and turns in which Kant appears to subscribe to an *autonomist* model (citing as examples: annoying weeds that flower beautifully; cows and donkeys which, though useful, do not typically strike us as beautiful [*Anthropology Menschenkunde*,” 25:1101]), his overall strategy here is to distinguish beauty from utility, but then to recombine them. In other words, he adopts an unificationist model.

In the next set of lecture notes, the model is clearly unificationist. In a lecture from 1784/85, Kant makes the familiar distinction between the agreeable, beautiful, and good (“*Anthropology Mrongovius*,” 25:1316, 1325, 1331).⁶⁵ Among Rousseau-like admonitions about not letting beauty prevail over the good, we find the claim that “the beautiful can be reconciled with the useful and good,” even as beauty and utility are distinct. Such combination or unification is an indication of “purified taste” (“*Anthropology Mrongovius*,” 25:1327). If the beautiful is contrary to the useful or “mediate good, . . . it is not even beautiful” (“*Anthropology Mrongovius*,” 25:1332). This is the familiar case in which an object’s dysfunctionality blocks its being perceived as beautiful. Nevertheless, “Beautiful and good come into affinity. . . . I can therefore paint [*malen*] the good beautifully, but not as agreeable, not as charming; otherwise virtue becomes a coquette. —The beautiful serves for the recommendation [*zur Empfehlung*] of the good. The human being becomes refined [*verfeinert*] the more he finds taste in the beautiful” (“*Anthropology Mrongovius*,” 25:1332, translation modified). Kant claims that sentiment allows us to depict virtue more beautifully, with lively colors, and can make virtue more intuitable (*anschaulicher*) through the use of history and stories (“*Anthropology Mrongovius*,” 25:1333). Beauty can indirectly promote the good and has an affective value (*Affektionspreis*). Note that Kant’s claim is that through “taste” the human being becomes (culturally) refined, but not necessarily morally edified. The focus seems to be more on entertainment than on morality. The lecture states that “the aesthetic worth of a cognition is entertainment; for example, well-written novels, poems, and the like, entertain us while we read them” (“*Anthropology Mrongovius*,” 25:1228).

⁶⁴William Hogarth, *The Analysis of Beauty*, 14. Cf. Hume, *TII*.i.viii, quoted in sect. 1, above.

⁶⁵Cf. *CJ* 5:204–11; “*Anthropology Collins*,” 25:167, 175; “*Anthropology Parow*,” 25:367; and “*Anthropology Pillau*,” 25:788.

In such experiences the logical (conceptual), and the aesthetic, are combined harmoniously: “In some cognitions, logical and aesthetic worth are found together. Thus Horace says: *Suaviter in modo, fortiter in re*. Pleasing in manner and important in content. One also calls the latter hypostatic self-standing[,] and the former emphatic” (“*Anthropology Mrongovius*,” 25:1228).⁶⁶ The anonymous-Dingelstaedt (from a lecture given around 1784–85)⁶⁷ likewise reads, “Within cognition, we can in general distinguish the hypostatic⁶⁸ or self-standing, and the emphatic or aesthetic. When it comes to cognition, the manifold’s dressing [*Einkleidung*] is the most entertaining. Unity in the manifold is the hardest, but also at the same time an important end of all our cognitions” (“*Anthropology Dingelstaedt*,” 15).

Finally, the end of the 1780s, when Kant was composing the third *Critique*, brings us to a distinct phase in Kant’s aesthetics. For our purposes, a significant feature of this phase is that Kant now gives a prominent role to the concept of freedom, in particular the freedom of imagination. In §59 of the third *Critique*, Kant holds that the freedom of the imagination can act as a symbol of the freedom of morality (*CJ* 5:354), and in §42, he argues that we can take a morally based or intellectual interest in the experience of beauty (*CJ* 5:300). The claim that judgments of taste, while disinterested and distinct from judgments of the morally good, can nevertheless support our moral development precisely *because* of the analogy with morality, seems to appear only toward the end of the 1780s. Kant combined his view that taste, precisely because of its disinterestedness, could actually promote morality, with his belief that pure judgments of taste lay on a justifiable a priori principle that nevertheless would not make them determinate judgments. This combination appears to be one of the insights that suddenly put him in a position to write a third *Critique*.⁶⁹

In a Reflection from 1780–89 (1776–79?), Kant discusses three arts (poetry, oratory, eloquence) in terms of their distinct aims or ends, reflecting the aforementioned emphasis on the freedom of imagination while at the same time connecting this to “the presentation of concepts”: “Beauty of cognition is the correspondence of the freedom of the imagination with the lawfulness of the understanding in the presentation of concepts. The poetic art has the first as its purpose, oratory [*Beredsamkeit*] the second; eloquence [*Wohlbredenheit*] has both” (*Refl.*, 1923, 16:158).⁷⁰

The Busolt anthropology lecture⁷¹ (1788/89) reveals a blocking-unificationist model, interpreting goodness as the morally as well as the instrumentally good. The transcription contains themes that are prominent in the third *Critique*: the experience of beauty is “disinterested,” the beautiful object pleases with regard to

⁶⁶On *suaviter in modo*, see also *Refl.*, 618, 15:267 and the [Reichel-anthropology lecture](#), 66.

⁶⁷There is some uncertainty surrounding the lecture’s dating; it might also derive from 1788–89.

⁶⁸The manuscript actually reads “hypothetical,” apparently a typographical error introduced by the note transcriber.

⁶⁹Guyer, *Notes and Fragments*, 481.

⁷⁰Cf. “*Anthropology Busolt*,” 25:1494, which states that, in evaluating (*beurtheilen*) a discourse (*Rede*) aesthetically (as involving free play), we need to have an idea (*Idee*) or concept serving as a rule (*Regel*) by which to judge it. Cf. *CJ* 5:327n.

its “form,” and the appreciator is “indifferent” to its existence (“*Anthropology Busolt*,” 25:1508; cf. 25:1510). With “things of art,” the transcription states, the beautiful can be united with the good (“*Anthropology Busolt*,” 25:1510). The purposiveness of a thing is the (mediate) good, and whatever goes against the utility of a thing also contravenes its beauty. “The thing must always be suited to the purpose. Sensibility must concur with the understanding and its concepts. In the case of beauty we do not look at utility, but the thing must still not go against the thing’s usefulness” (“*Anthropology Busolt*,” 25:1510, my translation). In what appears to reveal an increasingly prominent moral orientation in Kant’s aesthetic theory, the lecture states that, unlike the merely sensory gratification of the agreeable, taste promotes the faculty of understanding and encourages *moral* gratification (*moralische Vergnügen*) (“*Anthropology Busolt*,” 25:1511).

With the various stages of the development of purpose-based beauty in place, we can now examine the more familiar and widely discussed critical account of free and adherent beauty, although space limitations require the discussion to be more abbreviated than the topic deserves. I will focus on the role of concepts in adherent beauty, since, as many commentators have noted, one of the most pressing questions when it comes to adherent beauty is the following: How, if adherent beauty incorporates or appeals to concepts (including concepts of ends), can it be a form of beauty at all, if beauty is to be free of particular concepts? After showing three ways in which concepts can play a role, I will note how the third *Critique* account differs from Kant’s earlier theories.

First, we should remember that, for Kant, judgments of perfection are judgments of an object’s “goodness” in relation to the concept of its end.⁷² This goodness can be understood as either the moral or instrumental good (utility). An adherent judgment of beauty is purpose-based or “conditioned” by a concept of the object’s end.

But the beauty of a human being (and in his species that of a man, a woman, or a child), the beauty of a horse, of a building (such as a church, a palace, an arsenal, or a garden-house) presuppose a concept of the end that determines what the thing should be, hence a concept of its perfection, and is thus merely adherent beauty. (*CJ* 5:230; cf. *CJ* 5:229, quoted above).

On my reading, a concept of the object, that is, of its kind, purpose (including its moral purpose), or function (“perfection”), is attended to or plays some kind of role in the act of judging it to be (adherently) beautiful.⁷³ This is what makes this kind of beauty “conditioned.” Surprisingly, the connection to the concept of

⁷¹The Naumburg manuscript (presently in the Marburg university library, but not mentioned in AA vol. 25) is a relative of the Busolt and likewise based on an anthropology course given in the late 1780s. Unfortunately, it provides little material on aesthetics and nothing on adherent beauty.

⁷²Crowther, *Kantian Aesthetic*, 128.

⁷³Thus, the free/adherent distinction does not rest on ontological properties distinguishing and picking out different kinds of objects, but rather on what is in fact bracketed out by the judge (e.g. *CJ* 5:231). (Kant may have thought *human* beauty was an exception to this, *however*, i.e. that moral constraints necessarily apply to it.) For similar positions on “bracketing,” see James Kirwan, *The Aesthetic in Kant*, 46; Rueger, “Beautiful Surfaces”; Rachel Zuckert, *Kant on Beauty and Biology*, 207n49; Crowther, *Kantian Aesthetic*, 118; and Crawford, *Kant’s Aesthetic Theory*, 116.

perfection is sometimes denied. For instance, Geoffrey Scarré claims that, for Kant, adherent beauty has no connection to the concept of perfection; rather, the point is that the apprehension of *free* beauty is *restricted* by a judgment as to whether it is morally appropriate for the object in question to be beautiful or not.⁷⁴

Notwithstanding Kant's numerous references to perfection in §16 (and §17), there is some merit to Scarré's reading (though it should be broadened to include *non-moral* appropriateness too). For restriction or constraint is the first of the ways a concept of the object's purpose or perfection can affect, combine with, or be incorporated into aesthetic judgments of it. Synthesizing various interpretations of the role of concepts in adherent beauty, I describe three possible ways concepts can be at work in adherent beauty. Since they appear to be compatible, fortunately, there is no need to settle which is the single "right" way.⁷⁵ In all three cases, there is a free play of the imagination or mental capacities: the concept (end) of the object does not "determine" the aesthetic judgment. The three ways can be summarized as follows:

Constraint: The purpose or function of the object limits or restricts the aesthetic judgment of the object's beauty.

Addition: The function or perfection (for objects of its kind), adds to, or combines with, the object's aesthetic qualities.

Interaction: The function or perfection interacts with the object's formal-aesthetic properties.

In *Constraint*, the pleasure felt in response to the object is a pleasure in the free play of the cognitive faculties that the object's form induces while under constraints placed on it by the object's purposes. In this case, a functional or moral failure of the object, or its being a poor specimen or instance of its "kind" (in a broad sense), "blocks" the aesthetic judgment of it as beautiful. Dysfunctionality, inappropriateness, or even immorality, can prevent the pleasure in what would otherwise be the object's beauty. In such cases, feeling aesthetic pleasure in response to such and such an object would be inappropriate or indecorous, or unethical or unjust, for a phenomenon or being of that type. That is, it would be inappropriate in relation to the kind of activity, or being, that it is. To use Kant's examples: a church's religious functions limits what can be done in its design and decoration. A human person's status as a moral being endowed with dignity restricts in what ways or to what extent a person may be "beatified" or decorated by lasting markings or tattooing. Another (by now familiar) example of blocking is "when a column is thicker above than it is below," rendering the column less suited to fulfill its purpose (*Anthropology Mrongovius*, 25:1332). An instance of when the functionality is *not* blocked, moreover, would be found in an aesthetically appealing lamp that works as a light source just fine, but which is unexceptional in the way it serves its purpose. In terms of the noted eighteenth-century models, this first way would constitute the "blocking" element in the blocking-unificationist model.

⁷⁴Geoffrey Scarré, "Kant on Free and Dependent Beauty."

⁷⁵Guyer, "Free and Adherent Beauty," 137–38; and Guyer, *Modern Aesthetics*, 439.

In *Addition*, the object's fulfillment of its purpose or perfection can bring about a pleasure that is conjoined with, or contributes to, the aesthetic qualities of the object whose beauty independently brings about aesthetic pleasure. An example of this would be a Ming vase that is successfully re-fitted to function as a lamp and source of light. The "additive" model can be instantiated in cases of exemplary specimens and instances, too. In such cases the fact that the specimen (e.g. rose) is exemplary, that is, has its definitive properties more completely than most other instances of its kind, combines with the fact that it is sensibly-aesthetically pleasing and well-balanced.⁷⁶ In terms of the eighteenth-century models, this way would constitute the "unification" aspect of the blocking-unificationist model.

Finally, in *Interaction*, the object's function and its form can interact in ways that are themselves found to be aesthetically pleasing. The concept of the purpose of the object does not merely constrain the imagination, but also guides aesthetic reflection. Such an ideal was widely defended by twentieth-century design theorists (though it need not be limited to this context). For instance, a gleaming and well-designed modern Italian lamp, or a Bauhaus chair, unites form and function in an aesthetically pleasant manner. In the case of artifacts or works of a certain genre or kind, the object's functional properties interact with its pleasing sensible or formal-aesthetic properties in imaginatively interesting ways. Unlike the second way above, this is not simply a matter of combination or addition, but of interaction. The functional properties that render the object perfect are (as Rachel Zuckert puts it) "taken up" as part of the play of properties in beautiful form.⁷⁷ This way is best characterized as belonging to the "unification" element of the blocking-unificationist model.⁷⁸

These three roles for concepts reveal the richness of Kant's brief account of adherent beauty (§16). Of the three eighteenth-century models (autonomist, blocking-unificationist, containment), the third *Critique* account is most accurately characterized as belonging to a blocking-unificationist model. Unlike Plato (i.e. in the *Symposium*), Pseudo-Dionysius, and Aquinas, Kant does not subscribe to an "identity" model. In fact, Kant even employs the word 'unification' (*Vereinbarung*): taste "gains" by a "combination of aesthetic satisfaction with the intellectual," where there are, if not rules of taste, then at least "rules for the unification of taste with reason, i.e. of the beautiful with the good" (*CJ* 5:230).

How does the third *Critique* account relate to Kant's earlier ones? The kind of beauty felt in a response to an object in which the "good" (perfection, purpose) is expressed through a concept that pleases in sensible form (e.g. *Refl.*, 639, 15:279), is clearly a precursor to adherent beauty, which incorporates the perfection or ends of the object into the aesthetic experience. As we have seen,

⁷⁶Describing a "combination" or "logical hybrid" of judgments of perfection and of beauty, Paul Crowther recognizes this second way (*Kantian Aesthetic*, 120, 127). Similarly, John Zammito claims that adherent beauty contains two separate judgments (*Genesis*, 126).

⁷⁷Zuckert, *Kant on Beauty and Biology*, 204.

⁷⁸Guyer initially emphasized the first interpretation (*Kant and the Claims of Taste*, 219–20) but later noted all three ways. Malcolm Budd and Zammito emphasize the second one. Allison, inter alia, emphasizes the third interpretation. Several commentators explicitly or implicitly recognize all three ways, e.g. Crowther, Guyer, and Zuckert.

the early accounts called such purpose-based beauty “self-standing.” This allows for the remarkable shift to occur in the third *Critique* (explained below). Second, Kant’s early accounts of human beauty differ in significant ways from the parallel discussions of the ideal of beauty (§17), which, since it is based on the perfection of the human being, counts as a kind of adherent beauty, and which, he claims, comes from “reason’s indeterminate idea of a maximum” (*CJ* 5:232). For even if we find precursors to this idea in his early anthropology lectures, they neither reflect his morally-oriented teleology and defense of an a priori principle of taste, nor his mature theory of reason as a conative faculty seeking the “unconditioned.” Third, the third *Critique* argues that beauty can promote, at least indirectly, our moral edification by depicting or presenting sensible images of moral ideas. A taste for (natural) beauty can support morality, even if only “indirectly” (which entails that it neither replaces nor grounds morality). This connection to morality goes beyond the earlier view that taste for beauty can merely refine us. Finally, in the third *Critique* Kant takes a term from his anthropology—“adhering” (as in “adhering representations”)—and uses it in his aesthetic theory, giving it the sense of “secondary” or “ancillary.” According to Kant’s critical account of adherent beauty, a concept (of perfection) is a necessary element in our experiences of this kind of beauty. A concept thus renders “adherent” any partly intellectualized beauty that would be felt in response to sensible presentations of that concept. By contrast, according to the earlier anthropology lectures, (dry) conceptual content creates a need for ancillary embellishment; it is not itself what makes the beauty adherent or ancillary.

After the publication of the third *Critique*, Kant continued to discuss aesthetics in his lectures. The *Reichel* manuscript (1793–94) distinguishes beauty from the good or useful. “If the house is therefore considered in light of its symmetry, it is beautiful but not useful; if I see it in terms of its durability, spaciousness, and the like, then it is good, i.e. useful” (“*Anthropology Reichel*,” 83).⁷⁹ While clearly incompatible with a containment model, these claims might sound as if they belonged to an autonomist model. The passage gives the impression that an exclusive disjunction applies: the house is either beautiful or useful. In the end, however, Kant reunites beauty and utility. The reference to the “good” and the “concept” in the title of the section is significant: “On the Good that Pleases *through* the Concept” (emphasis added). Kant unifies beauty and utility in a way that reflects the latest phase of his aesthetics, for he connects beauty to the morally good: “The beautiful, even if distinct from the good, has a relation to it; it has a proximity to the morally good; for he who has taste in the beautiful is closer to the moral than he who enjoys merely sensible gratifications. . . . Beauty is richer in freedom and meritorious” (“*Anthropology Reichel*,” 83). Kant’s use of the unificationist model reflects a moral-teleological vision that characterizes beauty as a kind of freedom. Beauty stands in “relation” to the good in general and in “proximity” to the morally good in particular.

⁷⁹Like several other anthropology manuscripts not included in AA, “*Anthropology Reichel*” is available online.

5. PHILOSOPHICAL-CONCEPTUAL REASONS FOR THE
SHIFT TO FREE BEAUTY

I owe the reader a richer explanation of why, in the third *Critique*, Kant moved to an account according to which free beauties are said to be self-standing, thereby allotting free beauty at least as much significance as adherent beauty and perhaps even giving it priority—giving rise, intentionally or not, to varieties of “formalisms” (strict, moderate, thick, enhanced) in aesthetic theory in Kant’s wake. Given space limitations, the explanation must be brief.

If free beauty is not restricted to nature and adherent beauty is not restricted to art,⁸⁰ there are actually two moves to be explained: (i) the shift from adherent to free beauty as “self-standing,” and (ii) the shift of emphasis from art to nature (since in the early Reflections and the lectures, the beauty of nature plays a relatively subordinate role). Since (ii) presupposes that free beauty may legitimately be regarded as self-standing, that is, that Kant has the resources to justify labeling free beauty as self-standing, we should examine (i) first.⁸¹

It seems plausible to suppose that in the earlier phases Kant called purpose-based or conceptual beauty “self-standing” because the basis in concepts (of ends) added to the security or enduring quality of judgments of taste. Consider: “Self-standing beauty must be grounded on a lasting [*beständig*] principle” (*Refl.*, 635, 15:275). According to a Reflection of 1769–70, when a thing pleases as a means to some end, then “there is a maximum, or rather a unity, of satisfaction” (*Refl.*, 678, 15:300). Judgments of conceptual or purpose-based beauty make only a hypothetical claim on others: *if* one shares my concept of this object’s kind, purpose, genre etc., then one ought to find this object (conceptually) beautiful (cf. *CJ* 5:231).⁸² As long as Kant had not found a way of justifying the claim to universal validity of “pure” judgments of taste, he may have thought that beauty combined with usefulness had a more secure (hence, “self-sufficient”) claim to validity than beauty without usefulness. Sometime in the 1780s, and likely toward the second half of the decade, Kant thought he had found such a justification: a “deduction” of “pure” judgments of taste (*CJ* 5:289–90).⁸³ In judgments of free beauty, we make “justified claims to universal assent” because we employ a “universally valid a priori principle.”⁸⁴ In other words, Kant eventually discerned a non-sensory, universally valid, a priori basis for judgments of pure beauty.⁸⁵ With the discovery of the proper role of “intersubjective validity in aesthetic judgment,” the bold claim that he had “discovered a new sort of a priori principles,” which he announced in a 1787 letter to Reinhold (see below), could

⁸⁰See n. 16, above.

⁸¹I am indebted to an anonymous reviewer for suggesting the distinction between (i) and (ii) and points developed in the following paragraph.

⁸²Zuckert, *Kant on Beauty and Biology*, 208.

⁸³See also §21; §§30–37; and *Refl.* 992, below. The literature on the published Deduction of judgments of taste is vast, but see especially Guyer, *Kant and the Claims of Taste*, 248–93; Allison, *Kant’s Theory*, 160–92; Zuckert, *Kant on Beauty and Biology*, 321–67; and Paul Crowther, *Kantian Aesthetic*, 89–115. It is beyond the scope of this paper to examine the argument of the Deduction.

⁸⁴Zuckert, *Kant on Beauty and Biology*, 208.

⁸⁵Robert Wicks, *Kant on Judgment*, 9.

finally be defended.⁸⁶ With this justification in place, he was then able to claim “self-standing” status for free beauty, whether in nature or art.

It was perhaps also in part for expository or heuristic reasons that Kant emphasized free (pure) beauty. Kant’s analysis of beauty in the third *Critique* begins (in §2) with *pure* judgments of taste (*CJ* 5:205). Kant may have preferred to call pure and free beauties ‘self-standing’ because he considered the conceptual constraint in adherent beauty to constitute a more complex instance of the harmonious and free play of the faculties which was the core of his aesthetic theory and which he set out to characterize and defend. He was thereby better able to distinguish his position from the more conceptual or intellectualist accounts of his predecessors in the German scholastic tradition. Calling free beauty ‘self-standing’ allowed Kant to emphasize the clearest example of beauty (free beauty) that gave rise to harmonious, free play of the faculties in response to an object’s “form.”

I now turn to (ii) above, for which there may be more than one plausible explanation. Kant’s systematic aims seem to have played a key role in his emphasis on nature. We gain some insight into that role in Kant’s letter to Reinhold dated December 28 and 31, 1787 (which nonetheless reveals a conception of the planned work’s structure that differs from that of the published third *Critique*). Kant reports the discovery of a “systematicity” and relates that he is “at work” on the “Critique of Taste,” which he connects, albeit loosely, to “teleology.” Significantly, he claims to have “discovered a new sort of a priori principles” concerning “the faculty of feeling pleasure and displeasure,” having previously thought it impossible to find an a priori principle for it. (He does not explain what that principle is.) The analysis of the mental powers allowed him, he reports, to discover a systematicity that “put him on the path to recognizing the three parts of philosophy, each of which has its a priori principles . . . [viz.] theoretical philosophy, teleology, and practical philosophy” (*Correspondence*, 10:514–15). To be sure, the letter does not precisely indicate the structure of the published work,⁸⁷ for the third *Critique* devotes distinct parts to aesthetics and teleology. Given the content and structure of the completed third *Critique*, one might get the impression that Kant’s innovation—*after* the letter—was the separation of aesthetics and teleology. For in the third *Critique*, Kant claims that *only* taste (aesthetics) has its own a priori principle (FI 20:244,⁸⁸ cf. 20:228–29; *CJ* 5:169), whereas in the letter to Reinhold, Kant had attributed one to teleology (and he never mentioned “aesthetics”). In the third *Critique*, Kant holds that teleological (“logical”) judgments could just as well be discussed under the “theoretical part of philosophy” (*CJ* 5:170). In the First Introduction, Kant asserts that the possibility of a teleological judgment about nature can easily be shown without presupposing a special principle of the power of judgment, since it merely follows a principle of reason (FI 20:243–44). Nevertheless, despite such differences, the letter offers insight into Kant’s systematic aims and his plans to discuss teleology (presumably, teleology in nature).

⁸⁶Guyer, *Kant and the Claims of Taste*, 13.

⁸⁷I thank an anonymous reviewer for this point and for citing the relevant passages.

⁸⁸Kant wrote two different versions of the introduction to the third *Critique*. “FI” (First Introduction) refers to an unpublished draft of the introduction. Kant appears to have chosen not to publish the first, lengthier, version only because he considered it disproportionately long for an introduction.

A prominent focus on nature is evident in a key Reflection from around this time (1785–89), a draft of an outline of the “Critique of the Aesthetic Power of Judgment.” Kant states that, since in beauty and sublimity “there is subjective purposiveness of nature,” the cultivation of beauty and sublimity “in nature” is “preparation for moral feeling” (*Refl.*, 992, 15:436–37). (Kant may have mentioned “teleology” in his letter to Reinhold with this “purposiveness of nature” in mind.) Importantly, the Reflection provides textual support for the foregoing explanation of (i) above: Kant claims that a “universally valid” judgment “must have a principle” and he refers to a “deduction of the aesthetic power of judgment concerning the beautiful in nature.”

In the third *Critique*—to return to (ii)—Kant is interested in how the beauty of nature can be connected to natural purposiveness, revealing to us an apparent (but only apparent) “technique of nature.” In §23, Kant characterizes natural beauty as self-standing:

Natural beauty (the self-standing kind) [*die selbständige*] carries with it a purposiveness in its form, through which the object seems as it were to be predetermined for our power of judgment. (*CJ* 5:245). . . . The self-standing [*selbständige*] beauty of nature reveals to us a technique of nature, which makes it possible to represent it as a system in accordance with laws the principle of which we do not encounter anywhere in our entire faculty of understanding, namely that of a purposiveness with respect to the use of the power of judgment in regard to appearances. (*CJ* 5:246)

In the earlier phases of Kant’s aesthetics, beauty was not connected to natural teleology through a concept of purposiveness (even if purpose-based beauty is, by definition, connected to utility/functionality and therefore involves “teleology” in a very loose sense). Also significant in explaining (ii) is perhaps Kant’s conception of the “heautonomy” of the power of judgment (which might be able to be connected to the Deduction of pure judgments of taste⁸⁹). According to the notion of heautonomy, which seems suddenly to appear in the third *Critique* without a developmental history or trace in the Reflections, the power of judgment legislates not to nature, but to itself. The power of judgment “has in itself an a priori principle for the possibility of nature, though only in a subjective respect, by means of which it prescribes a law, not to nature (as autonomy), but to itself (as heautonomy) for reflection on nature” (*CJ* 5:185–86; cf. FI 20:225). This is presumably why (above, *CJ* 5:245) Kant writes that the self-standing natural beauty, in virtue of its “form,” seems to be “predetermined” for the power of judgment.

In the third *Critique*, Kant expresses a systematic aim to bridge a gap or gulf between nature and freedom (*CJ* 5:176; cf. 5:195–96; FI 20:244), where “nature” includes both outer or external nature as well as “inner” nature (e.g. inclinations and drives). This self-imposed philosophical goal is, I think, an important factor in his calling free (pure) natural beauty “self-standing.” As Zuckert notes, the “impurity” of judgments of adherent beauty renders them less central to Kant’s transcendental philosophical concerns.⁹⁰ In corresponding fashion, “purity”

⁸⁹See Allison, *Kant’s Theory*, 170, 173. I will not attempt to connect heautonomy to the Deduction here.

⁹⁰Zuckert, *Kant on Beauty and Biology*, 208.

would be more central. In other words, Kant may have recognized a need to find “purity” in our responses to external nature—the experience of free natural beauty being an exemplary case—in order eventually to connect his aesthetic theory to an account of teleology, according to which nature is viewed as a system of ends, and morality is seen as the “final end” of nature (*CJ* 5:435).

Kant probably thought that it was clearer to draw a connection between aesthetics and a morally-oriented natural teleology by focusing on the pure beauty of natural forms (where freedom of the imagination in the free play is itself taken as a symbol of moral freedom). Beauties considered independently of concepts, he seems to have reasoned, appear to be better symbols of freedom than conceptual-based ones. Kant may have thought that the beauty of nature, in addition to having a capacity to symbolize freedom, could be taken to be a sensible hint that nature would not thwart our ends in general and, in particular, our aims to be moral. Nature’s delightful forms, from the perspective of Kant’s broader philosophical aims, could more easily be seen as a confirmation of the agreement between our sensible and rational faculties on the one hand and nature on the other. Nature could thereby be more readily viewed as being in harmony with of our efforts to understand it and our endeavors to realize the “final end” of nature. When compared to natural forms, works of art and artifacts seem less able to give such hints, given a work’s conceptual constraints and origins in human intentions. In conformity with this, Kant states that the judging of artistic beauty will be considered as a “mere consequence” of the “same principles which ground the judgment of natural beauty” (*FI* 20:251).

Nonetheless, “adherent” beauties (§16) still appear to have some role to play in Kant’s systematic task of bridging the perceived gulf or gap between nature and freedom. It seems that Kant thought that adherent beauty—including the beauty of the human being (§17), the aesthetic judgment of which is partly subject to conceptual-moral constraints, though without losing the freedom of imagination or free play that makes this an aesthetic experience of beauty—could help bridge the gulf, at least to an extent. Kant thought that the aesthetic ideal of human beauty could represent “the uniqueness of morality as a necessary end” and the “primacy of practical reason.”⁹¹ In the case of adherent beauty, this assistance would occur not so much by acting as a sign of the amenability of nature to human ends, as by providing sensuous *representations* of moral ideas or ideals in poems, speeches, and paintings (which is not to reduce the value of art to moral value, but only to claim that art may have it), or in the proportioned and beautiful human form.⁹² Despite all of this, it may still have struck Kant as more transparent to apply the term “self-standing” to the pure beauty of natural forms, since the task he had given himself was to make a transition from nature to freedom, that is, by starting from nature in order to then pass over to freedom.

To document the emphasis on natural beauty, I quote one final passage that not only employs the concept of the *selbstständig*, but also ties together previously

⁹¹Guyer, *Experience of Freedom*, 36, 41.

⁹²For a similar argument, see Guyer, *Modern Aesthetics*, 458; and Christian Wenzel, *An Introduction to Kant’s Aesthetics*, 75.

discussed themes concerning conceptual content in beauty. Kant concludes §52 with this (*CJ* 5:326): “In general, the beauties of nature are most compatible with the first aim [genuine entertainment] if one has become accustomed early to observing, judging, and admiring them.” Natural beauty, in other words, is typically of more lasting interest than artistic beauty. When the fine arts are not combined with moral ideas, the spirit becomes “dull.” In fact, “moral ideas alone carry with them a self-standing satisfaction [*selbstständiges Wohlgefallen*]” (*CJ* 5:326). If fine art is to have a similar lasting effect and retain our interest, it must express a moral idea, which would function as the work’s conceptual content. However strong or weak this argument may be, it is a consequence of Kant’s moral-teleological orientation, and it reveals how much his account has changed since the *Observations*’ description of “entertainment” that has “real content” (sect. 2, above).

Therefore, a rich and complex confluence of factors led Kant to change his mind about what was properly to be called self-standing beauty, namely, free and natural beauty. These factors include: the discovery of an a priori principle of taste and justification of the claim to universal validity of pure judgments of taste; the conception of the harmony of the faculties as a kind of freedom and viewing aesthetic freedom as a way to unite beauty and morality through the idea that there was an analogy between the imagination’s freedom in the experience of beauty on the one hand and morality on the other; the self-imposed philosophical aims of connecting aesthetics and teleology and of bridging a perceived gap between nature and freedom; a desire to emphasize free beauty in his exposition; and perhaps even the sudden conception of the power of judgment as legislating for itself based on an object’s form (heautonomy).

CONCLUSION

Kant’s aesthetics is best described as “unificationist” throughout all of its phases, notwithstanding their fundamental differences. Even in his earliest phases, Kant described at least two kinds of beauty—one tied to the concept of the object (including its purpose, perfection, or utility), and the other a sensible, free, or pure beauty. In the late 1780s, Kant changed his mind about which was to be called “self-standing.” With his early theories of sensible-imaginative play and of a free harmonious play between the faculties, Kant distinguished his aesthetics from the more conceptually grounded aesthetics of his predecessors.⁹³ But with his theories of purpose-based beauty and adherent beauty, a more conceptualist approach was never very far away.

Along a spectrum of possible positions, Kant—early and late—lies close to Hume and Sulzer in accounting for both absolute/pure/sensible beauty and conceptual/intellectual/purpose-based beauty. It was possible for Kant to formulate a notion of the latter long before a confluence of factors (summarized in the previous section) came together in the late 1780s. For Kant only needed concepts of the beautiful object’s purpose (perfection) and of the utility (mediate good) it provided in fulfilling that purpose, and like Hume, Sulzer, and others before him, he had these

⁹³On this more intellectualist aesthetics, see Stephanie Buchenau, *Founding of Aesthetics*.

notions, and he had them quite early. Indeed, he had them decades before he began to write the third *Critique* in the late 1780s, when he suddenly “discovered” an a priori basis for pure judgments of taste.

Far from being an outdated relic, conceptual or purpose-based beauty is still employed in contemporary theories of aesthetic evaluation.⁹⁴ Aesthetic appraisers rarely ignore the genre and purpose of a work or artistic intentions and goals. Critics typically see a work of art not merely in terms of its formal-sensory qualities, but also experience, interpret, and evaluate it, at least partly, in terms of its place in art history and various institutional and historical contexts. Concept- or purpose-based beauty is employed in discussions of how a work of art fits into a genre or historical period or lives up to artistic intentions. It is alive and well in contemporary philosophical debates about aesthetic evaluation and appraisal.⁹⁵ Remarkably, Kant recognized the benefits of appealing to concepts in some judgments of taste: “taste gains by this combination of aesthetic satisfaction with the intellectual in that it becomes fixed and, though not universal,⁹⁶ can have rules prescribed to it in regard to certain purposively determined objects” (*CJ* 5:230). As one commentator noted, knowledge of art history and social history “forms a conceptual background against which taste becomes more ‘fixed’ (preserved and stable over time).”⁹⁷ The mention of preservation and stability over time is notable. As Kant recognized in his early accounts, purpose-based beauty can be lasting and enduring. Notwithstanding the remarkable conceptual-philosophical shift documented and explained in this paper, in the third *Critique* Kant continued to recognize that beauty could be partially governed by concepts such as genre and authorial intention, and that insofar as it was so governed, concepts could serve as the basis for rational discussions, providing a way to lift discussions of art and aesthetic objects out of depths of personal preferences and idiosyncrasies, and thereby to settle “many disputes” of taste (*CJ* 5:231). Although appraisers and critics may never be able to provide demonstrative logical proofs in matters of taste since rules remain unavailable (“but in this case these are also not rules of taste,” the passage at 5:230 continues), it may still be possible to discuss whether and how an aesthetic object or work of art is (or is not) an exemplary or successful instance of its kind, genre, movement, or period.⁹⁸

⁹⁴E.g. Carroll, *Engaging the Moving Image*, 163n4: “The evaluations discussed in this essay are what Kant might have considered to be judgments of dependent [i.e. adherent] beauty.” Likewise, to explain the role of “empirical conceptual judgment” in adherent beauty, Zuckert appeals to the notion of “standard” properties presented in Walton’s “Categories of Art” (*Kant on Beauty and Biology*, 206). On art forms and conventions, see Zuckert, *Kant on Beauty and Biology*, 211n55.

⁹⁵Kirwan, *The Aesthetic in Kant*, 107; and Rueger, “Beautiful Surfaces,” 552.

⁹⁶The contrast with “universal” supports the explanation of (i) given in the previous section: the discovery of a justification of the universal validity of pure judgments of taste.

⁹⁷Wenzel, *An Introduction to Kant’s Aesthetics*, 71.

⁹⁸I am indebted to numerous colleagues who provided comments on drafts or offered helpful remarks at some stage in the writing process. I would like to thank Paul Guyer, in particular, for an encouraging conversation about adherent beauty that took place toward the beginning of this project. For comments and suggestions, I would also like to thank Noël Carroll, Corey Dyck, Richard Eldridge, David Kim, Samantha Matherne, Colin McQuillan, Amanda Pirrone, Dennis Schulting, Michael Weiß, Günter Zöller, and Jack Zupko, and I am grateful to two anonymous referees with the *Journal of the History of Philosophy* for their extremely helpful feedback. I would also like to express my gratitude to **partici**

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND ABBREVIATIONS

- Addison, Joseph and Richard Steele. *The Spectator*. Edited by Alexander Chalmers. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1869.
- Allison, Henry. *Kant's Theory of Taste: A Reading of the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. [*Kant's Theory of Taste*]
- Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*. In *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, vol. 2, translated by W. D. Ross and edited by Jonathan Barnes, 1729–1867. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984.
- . *On the Universe*. In *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, vol. 1, translated by E. S. Forster and edited by Jonathan Barnes, 626–40. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984.
- Baumgarten, Alexander. *Metaphysica*, 4th ed. Halle: Hemmerde, 1757.
- Berkeley, George. *Alciphron, or the Minute Philosopher: In Seven Dialogues: Containing an Apology for the Christian Religion, Against Those who are Called Free-thinkers*. New Haven: Sidney's Press, 1803. [*Alciphron*]
- Beiser, Frederick. *Diotima's Children*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Buchena, Stephanie. *The Founding of Aesthetics in the German Enlightenment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013. [*Founding of Aesthetics*]
- Burke, Edmund. *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, edited with an introduction and notes by James T. Boulton. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1958.
- Cohen, Alix. "Kant on the Possibility of Ugliness." *British Journal of Aesthetics* 53 (2013): 199–209.
- Carroll, Noël. *Engaging the Moving Image*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003.
- Clewis, Robert R., ed. *Reading Kant's Lectures*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2015.
- Crawford, Donald. *Kant's Aesthetic Theory*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1974.
- Crowther, Paul. *The Kantian Aesthetic: From Knowledge to the Avant-Garde*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010. [*Kantian Aesthetic*]
- Fudge, Robert. "The Beautiful and the Good: Introduction." *Essays in Philosophy* 17 (2016): 1–4. ["Beautiful and the Good"]
- Guyer, Paul. "Beauty, Freedom, and Morality: Kant's *Lectures on Anthropology* and the Development of His Aesthetic Theory." In *Essays on Kant's Anthropology*, edited by Brian Jacobs and Patrick Kain, 135–63. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. ["Beauty, Freedom, and Morality"]
- . "Beauty and Utility in Eighteenth Century Aesthetics." In Guyer, *Values of Beauty*, 110–28. ["Beauty and Utility"]
- . "Free and Adherent Beauty: A Modest Proposal." In Guyer, *Values of Beauty*, 129–40. ["Free and Adherent Beauty"]
- . *A History of Modern Aesthetics*, vol. 1. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014. [*Modern Aesthetics*]
- . *Kant and the Claims of Taste*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- . *Kant and the Experience of Freedom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. [*Experience of Freedom*]
- . "Play and Society in the Lectures on Anthropology." In Clewis, *Reading Kant's Lectures*, 223–41. ["Play and Society"]
- . *Values of Beauty*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Hogarth, William. *The Analysis of Beauty*. London: Reeves, 1753.
- Hume, David. *A Treatise of Human Nature*. Edited by P. H. Niddich. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978. [T]
- Hutcheson, Francis. *An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*. Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2010.
- Kant, Immanuel. "Anthropologie Brauer." At http://www.online.unimburg.de/kant_old/webseite/nt_gt_ho304.htm#variant2
- . "Anthropologie Busolt." In Kant, *gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 25, 1431–531.

pants at Günter Zöllner's philosophy seminar at the University of Munich in 2013 and in David Kim's art history seminar at the University of Pennsylvania in 2015, and to participants at the 12th International Kant Congress in Vienna in 2015. For access to transcriptions of Kant's lectures, I am grateful to the Marburger Kant-Archiv (and to Werner Stark in particular), the Archiv der Berlin-Brandenburgischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, and Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin-Preußischer Kulturbesitz. This article was in part supported by a Fellowship from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation.

- . “Anthropologie Collins.” In Kant, *gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 25, 1–238.
- . “Anthropology Collins.” Translated by Allen W. Wood, in Kant, *Lectures on Anthropology*, 11–26. [“Anthropologie Collins”]
- . “Anthropologie Dohna-Wundlacken.” In *Die Philosophischen Hauptvorlesungen Immanuel Kants*, edited by Arnold Kowalewski, 67–376. München: Rösl and Cie, 1924. [Kowalewski]
- . “Anthropologie Friedländer.” Translated by Felicitas Munzel, in Kant, *Lectures on Anthropology*, 37–255. [“Anthropologie Friedländer”]
- . “Anthropologie Friedländer.” In Kant, *gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 25, 465–728.
- . *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*. Translated by Robert Loudon, in Kant, *Anthropology, History, Education*, 227–429.
- . “Anthropologie Hamilton.” In Kant, *gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 25.
- . *Anthropology, History, Education*. Edited by Günter Zöller and Robert Loudon. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- . “Anthropology Menschenkunde.” In Kant, *Lectures on Anthropology*, 281–334. [“Anthropologie Menschenkunde”]
- . “Anthropology Mrongovius.” Translated by Robert R. Clewis, in Kant, *Lectures on Anthropology*, 335–509. [“Anthropologie Mrongovius”]
- . “Anthropologie Mrongovius.” In *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 25, 1205–1429.
- . “Anthropologie Parow.” In Kant, *gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 25, 239–463.
- . “Anthropologie Pillau.” In *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 25, 729–847.
- . “Anthropologie Reichel.” On *Kants Vorlesungen über Anthropologie*, edited by Werner Stark, 2007. http://www.online.uni-marburg.de/kant_old/webseite/n/gt_ho304.htm#variant2 (accessed 29 November 2015)
- . *Correspondence*. Edited and translated by Arnulf Zweig. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- . *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. Edited by Paul Guyer and translated by Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. [CJ]
- . *Kants gesammelte Schriften*. Edited by the Akademie der Wissenschaften. Berlin: Georg Reimer (later Walter de Gruyter), 29 vols. 1900–. [gesammelte Schriften]
- . *Lectures on Anthropology*. Edited by Allen W. Wood and Robert B. Loudon. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- . “Logik Dohna-Wundlacken.” In Kant, *gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 24, 687–784.
- . “Metaphysik Hender.” In Kant, *gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 28, 1–166.
- . *Notes and Fragments*. Edited by Paul Guyer and translated by Curtis Bowman, Paul Guyer, and Frederick Rauscher. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- . *Observations on the Feeling of the Sublime and Beautiful*. Translated by Paul Guyer, in *Anthropology, History, Education*, 23–62. [Observations]
- . *Die Philosophischen Hauptvorlesungen Immanuel Kants*. Edited by Arnold Kowalewski. München/Leipzig: Rösl and Cie, 1924.
- Kirwan, James. *The Aesthetic in Kant*. London: Continuum, 2006.
- Mendelssohn, Moses. “On Evidence in Metaphysical Sciences.” In *Philosophical Writings*, 253–306.
- . “On Sentiments.” In *Philosophical Writings*, 7–95.
- . *Philosophical Writings*. Edited and translated by Daniel Dahlstrom. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Menzer, Paul. *Kants Ästhetik in ihrer Entwicklung*. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1952.
- Mulherin, Thomas J. “Is a kantian Musical Formalism Possible?” *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 74 (2016): 35–46. [“Kantian Musical Formalism?”]
- Plato. *Republic*. Translated by G. M. A. Grube, revised by C. D. C. Reeve. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1992.
- . *Symposium*. In *Plato: Complete Works*, translated by Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff and edited by John Cooper, 457–505. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1997. **Top of Form**
- Plotinus, *The Enneads*. Translated by Stephen MacKenna and abridged and edited by John Dillon. London: Penguin Books, 1991.
- Pseudo-Dionysius. *The Divine Names and Mystical Theology*. Translated by John Jones. Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1980. [Divine Names]
- Rueger, Alexander. “Beautiful Surfaces. Kant on Free and Adherent Beauty in Nature and Art.” *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 16 (2008): 535–57. [“Beautiful Surfaces”]

- Shaftesbury, Anthony Ashley Cooper. *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*. Edited by Lawrence E. Klein. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. [*Characteristics*]
- Scarré, Geoffrey. "Kant on Free and Dependent Beauty." *British Journal of Aesthetics* 21 (1981): 351–62.
- Sulzer, Johann Georg. *Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste in einzeln nach alphabetischer Ordnung der Kunstwörter auf einam der folgenden, Artikeln abgehandelt. In 2 Theile*. Leipzig: M. G. Weidmann, 1771. [*Allgemeine Theorie*]
- Walton, Kendall. "Categories of Art." *The Philosophical Review* 79 (1970): 334–67.
- Wenzel, Christian. *An Introduction to Kant's Aesthetics*. Malden: Blackwell, 2005.
- Wicks, Robert. *Kant on Judgment*. New York: Routledge, 2007.
- Wolff, Christian. *Vernünfftige Gedanken von Gott, der Welt und der Seele des Menschen*. Halle: Renger, 1751. [*Vernünfftige Gedanken*]
- Zammito, John. *The Genesis of the Kant's Critique of Judgment*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992. [*Genesis*]
- Zuckert, Rachel. *Kant on Beauty and Biology: An Interpretation of the Critique of Judgment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. [*Kant on Beauty and Biology*]

