

Critique of Aesthetic Judgment (1790)
By Immanuel Kant
Translated by J. C. Meredith (1911)

**Explanations
and Questions**

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§ 43. Art in general.

(1.) Art is distinguished from nature as making (*facere*) is from acting or operating in general (*agere*), and the product or the result of the former is distinguished from that of the latter as work (*opus*) from operation (*effectus*).

Art requires action (i.e., it is purposeful)

By right it is only production through freedom, i.e., through an act of will that places reason at the basis of its action, that should be termed art. . . . But where anything is called absolutely a work of art, to distinguish it from a natural product, then some work of man is always understood.

Can non-humans create art? Are bird songs art?

(2.) Art, as human skill, is distinguished also from science (as ability from knowledge), as a practical from a theoretical faculty, as technique from theory (as the art of surveying from geometry). . . .

Art differs from science

(3.) *Art* is further distinguished from *handicraft*. The first is called *free*, the other may be called *industrial art*. We look on the former as something which could only prove final (be a success) as play, i.e., an occupation which is agreeable on its own account; but on the second as labor, i.e., a business, which on its own account is disagreeable (drudgery), and is only attractive by means of what it results in (e.g., the pay), and which is consequently capable of being a compulsory imposition. Whether in the list of arts and crafts we are to rank watchmakers as artists, and smiths on the contrary as craftsmen, requires a standpoint different from that here adopted – one, that is to say, taking account of the proposition of the talents which the business undertaken in either case must necessarily involve. . . .

Art differs from craft or skill. Art has its own finality (end) and is free by being intrinsically rewarding

§44. Fine art

. . . Where art, merely seeking to actualize a possible object to the *cognition*

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of which it is adequate, does whatever acts are required for that purpose, then it is *mechanical*. But should the feeling of pleasure be what it has immediately in view, it is then termed aesthetic art. As such it may be either agreeable or fine art. The description "agreeable art" applies where the end of the art is that the pleasure should accompany the representations considered as mere sensations, the description "fine art" where it is to accompany them considered as modes of cognition

Two kinds of pleasure

Art requires cognition to produce the pleasure

Agreeable arts are those which have mere enjoyment for their object. Such are all the charms that can gratify a dinner party: entertaining narrative, the art of starting the whole table in unrestrained and sprightly conversation, or with jest and laughter inducing a certain air of gaiety. Here, as the saying goes, there may be much loose talk over the glasses, without a person wishing to be brought to book for all he utters, because it is only given out for the entertainment of the moment, and not as a lasting matter to be made the subject of reflection or repetition. (Of the same sort is also the art of arranging the table for enjoyment, or, at large banquets, the music of the orchestra – a quaint idea intended to act on the mind merely as an agreeable noise fostering a genial spirit, which, without any one paying the smallest attention to the composition, promotes the free flow of conversation between guest and guest.) In addition must be included play of every kind which is attended with no further interest than that of making the time pass by unheeded.

The "glasses" are wineglasses

Decorations and background music

Entertainment (the agreeable) is defined

Fine art, on the other hand, is a mode of representation which is intrinsically final, and which, although devoid of an end, has the effect of advancing the culture of the mental powers in the interests of social communication.

The universal communicability of a pleasure involves in its very concept that the pleasure is not one of enjoyment arising out of mere sensation, but must be one of reflection. Hence aesthetic art, as art which is beautiful, is one having for its standard the reflective judgment and not organic sensation.

Because cognition is involved, we have a certain universality that mere sensation does not guarantee

§45. Fine art is an art, so far as it has at the same time the appearance of being nature.

A product of fine art must be recognized to be art and not nature. Nevertheless the finality in its form must appear just as free from the constraint of arbitrary rules as if it were a product of mere nature. Upon this feeling of freedom in the play of our cognitive faculties – which play has at the same time to be final rests that pleasure which alone is universally communicable without being based on concepts. Nature proved beautiful when it wore the appearance of art; and art can only be termed beautiful, where we are conscious of its being art, while yet it has the appearance of nature. . . .

Kant introduces a paradox for art

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Hence the finality in the product of fine art, intentional though it be, must not have the appearance of being intentional; i.e., fine art must be clothed *with the aspect of nature*, although we recognize it to be art. But the way in which a product of art seems like nature is by the presence of perfect exactness in the agreement with rules prescribing how alone the product can be what it is intended to be, but with an absence of *labored effect* (without academic form betraying itself), i.e., without a trace appearing of the artist having always had the rule present to him and of its having fettered his mental powers.

§46. Fine art is the art of genius.

Genius is the talent (natural endowment) which gives the rule to art. Since talent, as an innate productive faculty of the artist, belongs itself to nature, we may put it this way: Genius is the innate mental aptitude (*ingenium*) through which nature gives the rule to art.

Whatever may be the merits of this definition, and whether it is merely arbitrary, or whether it is adequate or not to the concept usually associated with the word genius (a point which the following sections have to clear up), it may still be shown at the outset that, according to this acceptance of the word, fine arts must necessarily be regarded as arts of genius.

For every art presupposes rules which are laid down as the foundation which first enables a product, if it is to be called one of art, to be represented as possible. The concept of fine art, however, does not permit of the judgment upon the beauty of its product being derived from any rule that has a concept for its determining ground, and that depends, consequently, on a concept of the way in which the product is possible. Consequently fine art cannot of its own self exclude the rule according to which it is to effectuate its product. But since, for all that, a product can never be called art unless there is a preceding rule, it follows that nature in the individual (and by virtue of the harmony of his faculties) must give the rule to art, i.e., fine art is only possible as a product of genius.

From this it may be seen that genius (1) is a talent for producing that for which no definite rule can be given, and not an aptitude in the way of cleverness for what can be learned according to some rule; and that consequently originality must be its primary property. (2) Since there may also be original nonsense, its products must at the same time be models, i.e., be exemplary; and, consequently, though not themselves derived from imitation, they must serve that purpose for others, i.e., as a standard or rule of estimating. (3) It cannot indicate scientifically how it brings about its product, but rather gives the rule as nature. Hence, where an author owes a product to his genius, he does not himself know how the ideas for it have entered into his head, nor has he it in his power to invent the like at pleasure, or methodically, and communicate the same to

Finality (purpose) is present and yet the object does not appear to be directed by rules for achieving that finality

Genius is innate

The Latin root term meant an animating spirit

Although Kant links fine art and genius, he does not say that each particular work of art must show genius

Because it has a purpose, art must follow rules

The important faculties here are imagination and understanding

To avoid being rule-bound, originality must be allowed

Originality allows us to produce nonsense, too

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others in such precepts as would put them in a position to produce similar products. . . .

§47. Elucidation and confirmation of the above explanation of genius.

Every one is agreed on the point of the complete opposition between genius and *the spirit of imitation*. Now since learning is nothing but imitation, the greatest ability, or aptness as a pupil (capacity), is still, as such, not equivalent to genius. . . .

Seeing, then, that the natural endowment of art (as fine art) must furnish the rule, what kind of rule must this be? It cannot be one set down in a formula and serving as a precept – for then the judgment upon the beautiful would be determinable according to concepts. Rather must the rule be gathered from the performance, i.e., from the product, which others may use to put their own talent to the test, so as to let it serve as a model, not for *imitation*, but for *following*. The possibility of this is difficult to explain. The artist's ideas arouse like ideas on the part of his pupil, presuming nature to have visited him with a like proportion of the mental Powers. For this reason, the models of fine art are the only means of handing down this art to posterity. This is something which cannot be done by mere descriptions (especially not in the line of the arts of speech), and in these arts, furthermore, only those models can become classical of which the ancient, dead languages, preserved as learned, are the medium.

Despite the marked difference that distinguishes mechanical art, as an art merely depending upon industry and learning, from fine art, as that of genius, there is still no fine art in which something mechanical, capable of being at once comprehended and followed in obedience to rules, and consequently something academic, does not constitute the essential condition of the art. . . . Now, seeing that originality of talent is one (though not the sole) essential factor that goes to make up the character of genius, shallow minds fancy that the best evidence they can give of their being full-blown geniuses is by emancipating themselves from all academic constraint of rules, in the belief that one cuts a finer figure on the back of an ill-tempered than of a trained horse. Genius can do no more than furnish rich *material* for products of fine art; its elaboration and its *form* require a talent academically trained, so that it may be employed in such a way as to stand the test of judgment. But, for a person to hold forth and pass sentence like a genius in matters that fall to the province of the most patient rational investigation, is ridiculous in the extreme. One is at a loss to know whether to laugh more at the impostor who envelops himself in such a cloud – in which we are given fuller scope to our imagination at the expense of all use of our critical faculty – or at the simple-minded public which imagines that its inability clearly to cognize and comprehend this masterpiece of penetration is due to its being invaded by new truths en masse, in comparison with which, detail, due to carefully weighed exposition and an academic examination of root

How can artists learn to create art without turning art into craft?

The kind of rule that art allows is that of a model or precedent (rather than verbal rules)

Artistic rules only emerge in hindsight

Why artistic nonsense is too often valued

Artists require training in order to better give form to content

How the nonsense of artists fools the general public

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principles, seems to it only the work of a [beginner].

§48. The relation of genius to taste.

For *estimating* beautiful objects, as such, what is required is taste; but for fine art, i.e., the *production* of such objects, one needs genius. . . . A beauty of nature is a beautiful thing; beauty of art is a beautiful representation of a thing. . . .

Where fine art evidences its superiority is in the beautiful descriptions it gives of things that in nature would be ugly or displeasing. The Furies, diseases, devastations of war, and the like, can (as evils) be very beautifully described, nay even represented in pictures. . . . The art of sculpture, again, since in its products art is almost confused with nature, has excluded from its creations the direct representation of ugly objects, and, instead, only sanctions, for example, the representation of death (in a beautiful genius), or of the warlike spirit (in Mars), by means of an allegory, or attributes which wear a pleasant guise, and so only indirectly, through an interpretation on the part of reason, and not for the pure aesthetic judgment.

So much for the beautiful representation of an object, which is properly only the form of the presentation of a concept and the means by which the latter is universally communicated. To give this form, however, to the product of fine art, taste merely is required. By this the artist, having practiced and corrected his taste by a variety of examples from nature or art, controls his work and, after many, and often laborious, attempts to satisfy taste, finds the form which commends itself to him. Hence this form is not, as it were, a matter of inspiration, or of a free swing of the mental powers, but rather of a slow and even painful process of improvement, directed to making the form adequate to his thought without prejudice to the freedom in the play of those powers.

Taste is, however, merely a critical, not a productive faculty; and what conforms to it is not, merely on that account, a work of fine art. It may belong to useful and mechanical art, or even to science, as a product following definite rules which are capable of being learned and which must be closely followed. But the pleasing form imparted to the work is only the vehicle of communication and a mode, as it were, of execution, in respect of which one remains to a certain extent free, notwithstanding being otherwise tied down to a definite end. So we demand that table appointments, or even a moral dissertation, and, indeed, a sermon, must bear this form of fine art, yet without its appearing *studied*. But one would not call them on this account works of fine art. A poem, a musical composition, a picture-gallery, and so forth, would, however, be placed under this head; and so in a would-be work of fine art we may frequently recognize genius without taste, and in another taste without genius.

The reception of art is contrasted with its creation

Art beautifies

The furies were ancient Greek goddesses who lived in the darkest region of the underworld

Here, Mars is the Roman god, not the planet

Taste judges form

Good artists must critically evaluate their own work in the process of creating art

Because taste is critical and genius is productive, they often diverge

§49. The faculties of the mind which constitute genius.

Of certain products which are expected, partly at least, to stand on the footing of fine art, we say they are *soulless*; and this, although we find nothing to censure in them as far as taste goes. A poem may be very pretty and elegant, but is soulless. A narrative has precision and method, but is soulless. A speech on some festive occasion may be good in substance and ornate withal, but may be soulless. Conversation frequently is not devoid of entertainment, but yet soulless. Even of a woman we may well say, she is pretty, affable, and refined, but soulless. Now what do we here mean by 'soul'?

'Soul' (*Geist*) in an aesthetical sense, signifies the animating principle in the mind. But that whereby this principle animates the psychic substance ... – the material which it employs for that purpose – is that which sets the mental powers into a swing that is final, i.e., into a play which is self-maintaining and which strengthens those powers for such activity.

Now my proposition is that this principle is nothing else than the faculty of presenting *aesthetic ideas*. But, by an aesthetic idea I mean that representation of the imagination which induces much thought, yet without the possibility of any definite thought whatever, i.e., *concept*, being adequate to it, and which language, consequently, can never get quite on level terms with or render completely intelligible. It is easily seen, that an aesthetic idea is the counterpart (pendant) of a *rational idea*, which, conversely, is a concept, to which no *intuition* (representation of the imagination) can be adequate. ...

Such representations of the imagination may be termed *ideas*. This is partly because they at least strain after something lying out beyond the confines of experience, and so seek to approximate to a presentation of rational concepts (i.e., intellectual ideas), thus giving to these concepts the semblance of an objective reality. But, on the other hand, there is this most important reason, that no concept can be wholly adequate to them as internal intuitions. The poet essays the task of interpreting to sense the rational ideas of invisible beings, the kingdom of the blessed, hell, eternity, creation, etc. Or, again, as to things of which examples occur in experience, e.g., death, envy, and all vices, as also love, fame, and the like, transgressing the limits of experience he attempts with the aid of an imagination which emulates the display of reason in its attainment of a maximum, to body them forth to sense with a completeness of which nature affords no parallel; and it is in fact precisely in the poetic art that the faculty of aesthetic ideas can show itself to full advantage. This faculty, however, regarded solely on its own account, is properly no more than a talent' (of the imagination). ...

In this way Jupiter's eagle, with the lightning in its claws, is an attribute of the mighty king of heaven, and the peacock of its stately queen. They

Soul (*Geist*)

Animate = Alive

If the play of mind is final, it requires no exterior/ulterior purpose

Aesthetic ideas as the 'soul' of art

Concepts organize our understanding

An 'intuition' is perceptually unified

Like concepts, aesthetic ideas help us to organize our thinking. But they are aesthetic because their basic organization is perceptual (e.g., a poem is constructed around an organizing image to convey love)

Jupiter's eagle is a creature of myth

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do not, like logical attributes of an object, represent what lies in our concepts of the sublimity and majesty of creation, but rather something else – something that gives the imagination an incentive to spread its flight over a whole host of kindred representations that provoke more thought than admits of expression in a concept determined by words. They furnish an *aesthetic idea*, which serves the above rational idea as a substitute for logical presentation, but with the proper function, however, of animating the mind by opening out for it a prospect into a field of kindred representations stretching beyond its ken. But it is not alone in the arts of painting or sculpture, where the name of attribute is customarily employed, that fine art acts in this way; poetry and rhetoric also drive the soul that animates their work wholly from the aesthetic attributes of the objects – attributes which go hand in hand with the logical, and give the imagination an impetus to bring more thought into play in the matter, though in an undeveloped manner, than allows of being brought within the embrace of a concept, or, therefore, of being definitely formulated in language. ...

Aesthetic ideas encourage imaginative association that is too rich to fully describe or paraphrase

In a word, the aesthetic idea is a representation of the imagination, annexed to a given concept, with which, in the free employment of imagination, such a multiplicity of partial representations are bound up, that no expression indicating a definite concept can be found for it one which on that account allows a concept to be supplemented in thought by much that is indefinable in words, and the feeling of which quickens the cognitive faculties, and with language, as a mere thing of the letter, binds up the spirit (soul) also.

Kant summarizes the doctrine of aesthetic ideas

The mental powers whose union in a certain relation constitutes *genius* are imagination and understanding. Now, since the imagination, in its employment on behalf of cognition, is subjected to the constraint of the understanding and the restriction of having to be conformable to the concept belonging thereto, whereas aesthetically it is free to furnish of its own accord, over and above that agreement with the concept, a wealth of undeveloped material for the understanding, to which the latter paid no regard in its concept, but which it can make use of, not so much objectively for cognition, as subjectively for quickening the cognitive faculties, and hence also indirectly for cognitions, it may be seen that genius properly consists in the happy relation, which science cannot teach nor industry learn, enabling one to find out ideas for a given concept, and, besides, to hit upon the expression for them – the expression by means of which the subjective mental condition induced by the ideas as the concomitant of a concept may be communicated to others. This latter talent is properly that which is termed soul. For to get an expression for what is indefinable in the mental state accompanying a particular representation and to make it universally communicable – be the expression in language or painting or statuary – is a thing requiring a faculty for laying hold of the rapid and transient play of the imagination, and for unifying it in a concept (which for that very reason is original,

Genius is now equated with soul

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and reveals a new rule which could not have been inferred from any preceding principles or examples) that admits of communication without any constraint of rules.

If, after this analysis, we cast a glance back upon the above definition of what is called genius, we find: *First*, that it is a talent for art – not one for science, in which clearly known rules must take the lead and determine the procedure. *Secondly*, being a talent in the line of art, it presupposes a definite concept of the product as its end. Hence it presupposes understanding, but, in addition, a representation, indefinite though it be, of the material, i.e., of the intuition, required for the presentation of that concept, and so a relation of the imagination to the understanding. *Thirdly*, it displays itself, not so much in the working out of the projected end in the presentation of a definite concept, as rather in the portrayal, or expression of aesthetic ideas containing a wealth of material for effecting that intention. Consequently the imagination is represented by it in its freedom from all guidance of rules, but still as final for the presentation of the given concept. *Fourthly*, and lastly, the unsought and undesigned subjective finality in the free harmonizing of the imagination with the understanding's conformity to law presupposes a proportion and accord between these faculties such as cannot be brought about by any observance of rules, whether of science or mechanical imitation, but can only be produced by the nature of the individual.

Kant reviews four major points

Genius, according to these presuppositions, is the exemplary originality of the natural endowments of an individual in the *free* employment of his cognitive faculties. On this showing, the product of a genius (in respect of so much in this product as is attributable to genius, and not to possible learning or academic instruction) is an example, not for imitation (for that would mean the loss of the element of genius, and just the very soul of the work), but to be followed by another genius – one whom it arouses to a sense of his own originality in putting freedom from the constraint of rules so into force in his art that for art itself a new rule is won – which is what shows a talent to be exemplary. Yet, since the genius is one of nature's elect – a type that must be regarded as but a rare phenomenon – for other clever minds his example gives rise to a school, that is to say a methodical instruction according to rules, collected, so far as the circumstances admit, from such products of genius and their peculiarities. And, to that extent, fine art is for such persons a matter of imitation, for which nature, through the medium of a genius gave the rule.

An artwork that displays original aesthetic ideas becomes a model for other artists (i.e., genius is exemplary)

Each genius inspires a distinct school of art

But this imitation becomes aping when the pupil copies everything down to the deformities which the genius only of necessity suffered to remain, because they could hardly be removed without loss of force to the idea. This courage has merit only in the case of a genius. ... Mannerism is another kind of aping – an aping of peculiarity (originality) in general, for the sake of removing oneself as far as possible from imitators, while the talent requisite to enable one to be at the same time exemplary is absent.

Aping

Mannerism

...

§50. The combination of taste and genius in products of fine art.

To ask whether more stress should be laid in matters of fine art upon the presence of genius or upon that of taste, is equivalent to asking whether more turns upon imagination or upon judgment. Now, imagination rather entitles an art to be called an *inspired* (*geistreiche*) than a *fine* art. It is only in respect of judgment that the name of fine art is deserved. Hence it follows that judgment, being the indispensable condition (*conditio sine qua non*), is at least what one must look to as of capital importance in forming an estimate of art as fine art. So far as beauty is concerned, to be fertile and original in ideas is not such an imperative requirement as it is that the imagination in its freedom should be in accordance with the understanding's conformity to law. For, in lawless freedom, imagination, with all its wealth, produces nothing but nonsense; the power of judgment, on the other hand, is the faculty that makes it consonant with understanding.

Successful fine art involves formal achievement and not just originality

Therefore, taste (critical judgment) is indispensable to the creation of fine art

Taste, like judgment in general, is the discipline (or corrective) of genius. It severely clips its wings, and makes it orderly or polished; but at the same time it gives it guidance directing and controlling its flight, so that it may preserve its character of finality. It introduces a clearness and order into the plenitude of thought, and in so doing gives stability to the ideas, and qualifies them at once for permanent and universal approval, for being followed by others, and for a continually progressive culture. And so, where the interests of both these qualities clash in a product, and there has to be a sacrifice of something, then it should rather be on the side of genius; and judgment, which in matters of fine art bases its decision on its own proper principles, will more readily endure an abatement of the freedom and wealth of the imagination than that the understanding should be compromised.

Elaboration of what taste contributes to fine art

The requisites for fine art are, therefore, imagination, understanding, soul, and taste. ...

§51. The division of the fine arts.

Beauty (whether it be of nature or of art) may in general be termed the *expression* of aesthetic ideas. But the provision must be added that with beauty of art this idea must be excited through the medium of a concept of the object, whereas with beauty of nature the bare reflection upon a given intuition, apart from any concept of what the object is intended to be, is sufficient for awakening and communicating the idea of which that object is regarded as the expression.

Kant's theory emphasizes the expression of ideas, not emotion

Accordingly, if we wish to make a division of the fine arts, we can choose for that purpose, tentatively at least, no more convenient principle than

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the analogy which art bears to the mode of expression of which men avail themselves in speech with a view to communicating themselves to one another as completely as possible, i.e., not merely in respect of their concepts but in respect of their sensations also. Such expression consists in *word, gesture, and tone* (articulation, gesticulation, and modulation). It is the combination of these three modes of expression which alone constitutes a complete communication of the speaker. For thought, intuition, and sensation are in this way conveyed to others simultaneously and in conjunction.

Expressive speech has three dimensions of communication

The fine arts sometimes isolate them, sometimes combine them

Hence there are only three kinds of fine art: the art of *speech, formative* [visual] art, and the art of the *play of sensations* (as external sense impressions). This division might also be arranged as a dichotomy, so that fine art would be divided into that of the expression of thoughts or intuitions, the latter being subdivided according to the distinction between the form and the matter (sensation). It would, however, in that case appear too abstract, and less in line with popular conceptions.

The three "kinds" here are the three most general kinds

(1) The arts of speech are rhetoric and poetry. Rhetoric is the art of transacting a serious business of the understanding as if it were a free play of the imagination; poetry that of conducting a free play of the imagination as if it were a serious business of the understanding.

Verbal art

Thus the orator announces a serious business, and for the purpose of entertaining his audience conducts it as if it were a mere play with ideas. The poet promises merely an entertaining play with ideas, and yet for the understanding there enures as much as if the promotion of its business had been his one intention. The combination and harmony of the two faculties of cognition, sensibility and understanding, which, though doubtless indispensable to one another, do not readily permit of being united without compulsion and reciprocal abatement, must have the appearance of being undesigned and a spontaneous occurrence – otherwise it is not fine art. For this reason what is studied and labored must be here avoided. For fine art must be free art in a double sense: i.e., not alone in a sense opposed to contract work, as not being a work the magnitude of which may be estimated, exacted, or paid for, according to a definite standard, but free also in the sense that, while the mind, no doubt, occupies itself, still it does so without ulterior regard to any other end, and yet with a feeling of satisfaction and stimulation (independent of reward).

sensibility = sensory perception

The orator, therefore, gives something which he does not promise, viz., an entertaining play of the imagination. On the other hand, there is something in which he fails to come up to his promise, and a thing, too, which is his avowed business, namely, the engagement of the understanding to some end. The poet's promise, on the contrary, is a modest one, and a mere play with ideas is all he holds out to us, but he accomplishes something worthy of being made a serious business,

Why poetry is a "serious" activity

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namely, the using of play to provide food for the understanding, and the giving of life to its concepts by means of the imagination. Hence the orator in reality performs less than he promises, the poet more.

(2) The formative [visual] arts, or those for the expression of ideas in *sensuous intuition* (not by means of representations of mere imagination that are excited by words) are arts either of *sensuous truth* or of *sensuous semblance*. The first is called plastic art, the second painting. Both use figures in space for the expression of ideas: the former makes figures discernible to two senses, sight and touch (though, so far as the latter sense is concerned, without regard to beauty), the latter makes them so to the former sense alone. The aesthetic idea (archetype, original) is the fundamental basis of both in the imagination. ...

Visual art

Something is "plastic" if we can change its shape or form for our own purposes

To plastic art, as the first kind of formative [visual] fine art, belong sculpture and architecture. The first is that which presents concepts of things corporeally, as they might exist in nature (though as fine art it directs its attention to aesthetic finality). The second is the art of presenting concepts of things which are possible *only through art*, and the determining ground of whose form is not nature but an arbitrary end – and of presenting them both with a view to this purpose and yet, at the same time, with aesthetic finality. In architecture the chief point is a certain use of the artistic object to which, as the condition, the aesthetic ideas are limited. In sculpture the mere expression of aesthetic ideas is the main intention. Thus statues of men, gods, animals, etc., belong to sculpture; but temples, splendid buildings for public concourse, or even dwelling-houses, triumphal arches, columns, mausoleums, etc., erected as monuments, belong to architecture, and in fact all household furniture (the work of cabinetmakers, and so forth – things meant to be used) may be added to the list, on the ground that adaptation of the product to a particular use is the essential element in a work of architecture. On the other hand, a mere piece of sculpture is made simply to be looked at and intended to please on its own account, ...

Sculpture and architecture

Notice that the contrast of architecture and sculpture parallels the earlier contrast of rhetoric and poetry

Architecture combines art and function

Painting, as the second kind of formative art, which presents the *sensuous semblance* in artful combination with ideas, I would divide into that of the beautiful portrayal of nature, and that of the beautiful arrangement of its products. The first is painting proper, the second landscape gardening. Painting gives only the semblance of bodily extension; whereas landscape gardening, giving this, no doubt, according to its truth, gives only the semblance of utility and employment for ends other than the play of the imagination in the contemplation of its forms. The latter consists in no more than decking out the ground with the same manifold variety (grasses, flowers, shrubs, and trees, and even water, hills, and dales) as that with which nature presents it to our view, only arranged differently and in obedience to certain ideas. The beautiful arrangement of corporeal things, however, is also a thing for the eye only, just like painting – the sense of touch can form no intuitable representation of such a form, In

Painting and landscape gardening

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addition I would place under the head of painting, in the wide sense, the decoration of rooms by means of hangings, ornamental accessories, and all beautiful furniture the sole function of which is to be *looked at*; and in the same way the art of tasteful dressing (with rings, snuffboxes, etc.). For a *parterre* of various flowers, a room with a variety of ornaments (including even the ladies' attire), go to make at a festal gathering a sort of picture which, like pictures in the true sense of the word (those which are not intended to *teach* history or natural science), has no business beyond appealing to the eye, in order to entertain the imagination in free play with ideas, and to engage actively the aesthetic judgment independently of any definite end. No matter how heterogeneous, on the mechanical side, may be the craft involved in all this decoration, and no matter what a variety of artists may be required, still the judgment of taste, so far as it is one upon what is beautiful in this art, is determined in one and the same way: namely, as a judgment only upon the forms (without regard to any end) as they present themselves to the eye, singly or in combination, according to their effect upon the imagination. The justification, however, of bringing [visual] art (by analogy) under a common head with gesture in a speech, lies in the fact that through these figures the soul of the artists furnishes a bodily expression for the substance and character of his thought, and makes the thing itself speak, as it were, in mimic language—a very common play of our fancy, that attributes to lifeless things a soul suitable to their form, and that uses them as its mouthpiece.

Interior decorating

A parterre is a garden arrangement of flower beds and paths

Formal arrangement are analogous to bodily expression

What about dance?

(3) The art of the beautiful play of sensations (sensations that arise from external stimulation), which is a play of sensations that has nevertheless to permit of universal communication, can only be concerned with the proportion of the different degrees of tension in the sense to which the sensation belongs, i.e., with its tone. In this comprehensive sense of the word, it may be divided into the artificial play of sensations of hearing and of sight, consequently into music and the art of color. It is of note that these two senses, over and above such susceptibility for impressions as is required to obtain concepts of external objects by means of these impressions, also admit of a peculiar associated sensation of which we cannot well determine whether it is based on sense or reflection; and that this sensibility may at times be wanting, although the sense, in other respects, and in what concerns its employment for the cognition of objects, is by no means deficient but particularly keen. In other words, we cannot confidently assert whether a color or a tone (sound) is merely an agreeable sensation, or whether they are in themselves a beautiful play of sensations, and in being estimated aesthetically, convey, as such, a delight in their form. ... According to the interpretation [that music involves the play of forms], alone, would music be represented out and out as a fine art, whereas according to the other [that music is a play of agreeable sensations] it would be represented as (in part at least) an agreeable art.

The play of sensations (the art of tones)

Musical tones or visual colors

Music that lacks interesting form is not fine art

§52. The combination of the fine arts in one and the same product.

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Rhetoric may in a drama be combined with a pictorial presentation as well of its subjects as of objects; as may poetry with music in a song; and this again with a pictorial (theatrical) presentation in an opera; and so may the play of sensations in a piece of music with the play of figures in a dance, and so on. Even the presentation of the sublime, so far as it belongs to fine art, may be brought into union with beauty in a tragedy in verse, a didactic poem or an oratorio, and in this combination fine art is even more artistic. Whether it is also more beautiful (having regard to the multiplicity of different kinds of delight which cross one another) may in some of these instances be doubted. Still in all fine art the essential element consists in the form which is final for observation and for estimating. Here the pleasure is at the same time culture, and disposes the soul to ideas, making it thus susceptible of such pleasure and entertainment in greater abundance. The matter of sensation (charm or emotion) is not essential. Here the aim is merely enjoyment, which leaves nothing behind it in the idea, and renders the soul dull, the object in the course of time distasteful, and the mind dissatisfied with itself and ill-humored, owing to a consciousness that in the judgment of reason its disposition is perverse.

Song, Opera,
and Dance

Handel's *Messiah*
is a famous
oratorio

By themselves,
entertaining
sensations are
dulling

Where fine arts are not, either proximately or remotely, brought into combination with moral ideas, which alone are attended with a self-sufficing delight, the above is the fate that ultimately awaits them. They then only serve for a diversion, of which one continually feels an increasing need in proportion as one has availed oneself of it as a means of dispelling the discontent of one's mind, with the result that one makes oneself ever more and more unprofitable and dissatisfied with oneself. With a view to the purpose first named, the beauties of nature are in general the most beneficial, if one is early habituated to observe, estimate, and admire them.

Without moral
content, art is
reduced to
entertainment

§53. Comparative estimate of the aesthetic worth of the fine arts.

Poetry (which owes its origin almost entirely to genius and is least willing to be led by precepts or example) holds the first rank among all the arts. It expands the mind by giving freedom to the imagination and by offering, from among the boundless multiplicity of possible forms accordant with a given concept, to whose bounds it is restricted, that one which couples with the presentation of the concept a wealth of thought to which no verbal expression is completely adequate, and by thus rising aesthetically to ideas. It invigorates the mind by letting it feel its faculty – free, spontaneous, and independent of determination by nature – of regarding and estimating nature as phenomenon in the light of aspects which nature of itself does not afford us in experience, either for sense or understanding, and of employing it accordingly in behalf of, and as a sort of schema for, the supersensible. It plays with semblance, which it produces at will, but not as an instrument of deception; for its avowed pursuit is merely one of play, which, however, understanding may turn

An art form is
better when it
involves aesthetic
ideas rather than
pre-determined
concepts

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to good account and employ for its own purpose. Rhetoric, so far as this is taken to mean the art of persuasion, i.e., the art of deluding by means of a fair semblance (as *ars oratoria*), and not merely excellence of speech (eloquence and style), is a dialectic, which borrows from poetry only so much as is necessary to win over men's minds to the side of the speaker before they have weighed the matter, and to rob their verdict of its freedom. Hence it can be recommended neither for the bar nor the pulpit.

...

After poetry, *if we take charm and mental stimulation into account*, I would give the next place to that art which comes nearer to it than to any other art of speech, and admits of very natural union with it, namely the art of tone. For though it speaks by means of mere sensations without concepts, and so does not, like poetry, leave behind it any food for reflection, still it moves the mind more diversely, and, although with transient, still with intenser effect. It is certainly, however, more a matter of enjoyment than of culture – the play of thought incidentally excited by it being merely the effect of a more or less mechanical association – and it possesses less worth in the eyes of reason than any other of the fine arts. Hence, like all enjoyment, it calls for constant change, and does not stand frequent repetition without inducing weariness. Its charm, which admits of such universal communication, appears to rest on the following facts. Every expression in language has an associated tone suited to its sense. This tone indicates, more or less, a mode in which the speaker is affected, and in turn evokes it in the hearer also, in whom conversely it then also excites the idea which in language is expressed with such a tone. Further, just as modulation is, as it were, a universal language of sensations intelligible to every man, so the art of tone wields the full force of this language wholly on its own account, namely, as a language of the affections, and in this way, according to the law of association, universally communicates the aesthetic ideas that are naturally combined therewith. But, further, inasmuch as those aesthetic ideas are not concepts or determinate thoughts, the form of the arrangement of these sensations (harmony and melody), taking the place of the place of the form of a language, only serves the purpose of giving an expression to the aesthetic idea of an integral whole of an unutterable wealth of thought that fills the measure of a certain theme forming the dominant affection in the piece.

...

If, on the other hand, we estimate the worth of the fine arts by the culture they supply to the mind, and adopt for our standard the expansion of the faculties whose confluence, in judgment, is necessary for cognition, music, then, since it plays merely with sensations, has the lowest place among the fine arts – just as it has perhaps the highest among those valued at the same time for their agreeableness. Looked at in this light, it is far excelled by the [visual] formative arts. For, in putting the imagination into a play which is at once free and adapted to the understanding, they all the while carry on a serious business, since they

Rhetoric inferior to poetry

What would Kant say about advertising? Or propaganda?

Instrumental Music

Music highlights emotional expression

Ideas are conveyed by association with the emotions

Lacking any words to limit our thoughts, instrumental music encourages rich associations

By another standard, music is of little value

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execute a product which serves the concepts of understanding as a vehicle, permanent and appealing to us on its own account, for effectuating their union with sensibility, and thus for promoting, as it were, the urbanity of the higher powers of cognition. The two kinds of art pursue completely different courses. Music advances from sensations to indefinite ideas: formative [visual] art from definite ideas to sensations. The latter gives a lasting impression, the former one that is only fleeting. The former sensations imagination can recall and agreeably entertain itself with, while the latter either vanish entirely, or else, if involuntarily repeated by the imagination, are more annoying to us than agreeable. Over and above all this, music has a certain lack of urbanity about it. For owing chiefly to the character of its instruments, it scatters its influence abroad to an uncalled-for extent (through the neighborhood), and thus, as it were, becomes obtrusive and deprives others, outside the musical circle, of their freedom. This is a thing that the arts that address themselves to the eye do not do, for if one is not disposed to give admittance to their impressions, one has only to look the other way. The case is almost on a par with the practice of regaling oneself with a perfume that exhales its odors far and wide. The man who pulls his perfumed handkerchief from his pocket gives a treat to all around whether they like it or not, and compels them, if they want to breathe at all, to be parties to the enjoyment, and so the habit has gone out of fashion.

Another flaw of music

Perfume

[Footnote: Those who have recommended the singing of hymns at family prayers have forgotten the amount of annoyance which they give to the general public by such noisy (and, as a rule, for that very reason, pharisaical) worship, for they compel their neighbors either to join in the singing or else abandon their meditations.]

Religious music

Among the formative [visual] arts I would give the palm to painting: partly because it is the art of design and, as such, the groundwork of all the other formative arts; partly because it can penetrate much further into the region of ideas, and in conformity with them give a greater extension to the field of intuition than it is open to the others to do.

A palm leaf is a traditional symbol of victory