

Knowledge, education and aesthetics

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ABSTRACT

The philosophy of Immanuel Kant has been important in education theory, especially in the historical context of the Enlightenment and its legacies on contemporary understandings of global education. Particular reference is given to Kant's writing on Enlightenment thinking and especially to his 1803 *Über Pädagogik/Lectures on pedagogy* whose groundwork tends to be thought from an empirical anthropology. This paper aims to question education, though from the perspective of a Kantian understanding of aesthetic experience, a perspective developed initially from my reading of Denis J. Schmidt's *Lyrical and Ethical Subjects* (2005). In the *Critique of Judgement* (1986), Kant develops an 'Analytic of the Beautiful' that offers transcendental grounds for the possibility of aesthetic experience. In doing so, he discusses, somewhat briefly, training in the fine arts and even more briefly offers, somewhat indirectly, a far-reaching transcendental ground for pedagogy. It is these two brief accounts that form the substance of this paper, requiring a somewhat extended introduction to Kant's *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement* in order to develop its analysis. From this analysis, two key questions arise: if fine art cannot be learned, and if imitation would ultimately aim at producing an objectively determinable rule— via a determinable concept—for the production of art works, how does one proceed with education in the fine arts? And, secondly, as a corollary, if genius is reserved for precisely what cannot be learned but yet can be conceived and communicated, what possible purpose is served by aesthetic ideas with respect to cognition itself?

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Introduction

In a 2005-edited collection, *Lyrical and Ethical Subjects*, the American philosopher, Dennis J. Schmidt (2005) engages the complex relations between aesthetic experience, ethical agency and instrumental knowledge. His philosophical engagements are especially with the frameworks developed by Immanuel Kant in *The Critique of Judgement* (Kant, 1986). In summary, Schmidt suggests:

In aesthetic experience, we are poised on the axis of a paradox since it is the perfect incompleteness, the inaccessibility of the symbol that becomes the axis of an extension of the realm within which we may come to understand ourselves and others. It is a paradox that replicates the central paradox of taste as Kant analyses it; namely, that in it one finds a claim to subjective universality. (Schmidt, 2005, p. 17)

My aim is not to rehearse or critically assay the movement made in Schmidt's writing, a movement that essentially brings a Heideggerian understanding to the 'paradox' emphasised above by Schmidt with respect to a Kantian framework for aesthetic experience (Heidegger, 1999). I am rather

more interested in defining how in *The Critique of Judgement*, and in relation to this paradox emphasised by Schmidt, Kant—when discussing the education of aesthetic experience—reaches an impasse or corollary of this paradox. This impasse is in bringing education and aesthetic experience into any relation, notwithstanding the seemingly insistent imperative of universality and communicability with respect to aesthetic experience itself. It is this *impasse* that I want to explore in order that an understanding of such paradox—or impasse—may lead, I think, to a more rigorous questioning of what constitutes the groundwork for education as such. This aims to complement and extend extant research on education that takes a Kantian perspective (Moran, 2015; Munzel, 2012; Procee, 2006; Tauber, 2006; Vanderstraeten & Biesta, 2001). Though, my particular focus coincides with the question asked by Vanderstraeten and Biesta constituting the title to their 2001 essay: ‘How is education possible?’ Their recourse to Kant is especially to a Kantian emphasis on ‘free thinking’, emphasised by Kant in both his essays ‘An answer to the question: what is Enlightenment?’ (Kant, 1992), and his *Über Pädagogik—Kant on education/Kant’s lectures on pedagogy*, 1803 (Kant, 1900). They do not reference Kant’s *Critique of Judgement* (1986), which, to my mind, considerably extends Kant’s understanding of freedom in thinking.

In ‘How is education possible?’, Vanderstraeten emphasises that the possibility of education lies in a communicability reacting ‘unto itself’ (p. 19), which is to say communication whose ‘message’ is nothing other than the intersubjectivity of communicability as such. Biesta’s emphasis is slightly different, though no less enigmatic. This emphasis is on the constitution of an ‘impossible space’. Referencing the work of Michel de Certeau (1984), Biesta emphasises: ‘... the conditions of possibility of education also designate the conditions of impossibility. Or, to put it differently, that the possibility of education is sustained by its impossibility’ (p. 16). My contention is that within Kant’s *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement* there is far-reaching discussion precisely on these notions of communicability and an ‘in-between space of intersubjectivity’ that Biesta nominates as ‘impossible’. Schmidt draws out and emphasises in the Kantian notion of subjective universality that ‘impossible’ space that constitutes in aesthetic experience communicability as such.

In this sense, I will be restricting myself to the close reading of a series of sections in Kant’s ‘*Critique of Aesthetic Judgement*’, the first Part of *The Critique of Judgement*, with the second Part comprising the ‘*Critique of Teleological Judgement*.’ My aim is not to provide a full commentary on the *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement* but rather to provide sufficient understanding of Kant’s notions of reflective judgement, judgements of taste, Kant’s understanding of nature and human production with respect to art, and importantly his understanding of training or instruction in aesthetic judgement, from the viewpoints of both reception and production of artworks. I do not, for example, draw differences between the beautiful and the sublime, as crucial as these are for Kantian aesthetics. In all of this, I stress the paradoxical notions that Kant develops, especially with respect to freedom and thought. They remain, in Heidegger’s term, what still calls for thinking (Heidegger, 1966, 1968).

Before commencing with a detailed engagement with the *Third Critique*, there are two further preliminary comments. Firstly, in terms of engagements with questions concerning education and pedagogy, Kant is better known for his 1803 *Über Pädagogik* (1900). Indeed, there is a major recent publication, *Kant’s conception of pedagogy* (2012) by G. Felicitas Munzel, that aims, according to Moran (2015) to ‘renovate [Kant] as a major pedagogical thinker advocating cultural action for freedom. [Munzel’s] exegesis of the formal transcendental principles for education for inner freedom as the condition and counterpart to external freedom attempts to construct Kant’s ‘missing’ transcendental treatise on pedagogy’ (Moran, 2015, p. 29). There are those who might claim that Kant’s *Third Critique*, in particular, the very difficult §59 and §60 of the *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement* presents such a formal transcendental principle for education. Tauber (2006) might well hold that the transcendental grounds for pedagogy are so significant in Kant’s notion of aesthetic judgement that it set in train Schiller’s 1793 essay *On the Aesthetic Education of Man* (1968), characterised by Tauber in these terms:

Schiller presented in his essay another argument [to that of Kant's relation between aesthetics and morality], according to which it is the constitution of an aesthetic experience within social and interpersonal relations that is the realisation of morality and human emancipation. This, I believe, is one of the most radical notions ever introduced in the history of politology (Tauber, 2006, p. 23)¹

This radicality is to be found in Schmidt's reading of Kantian aesthetic experience. He does not discuss Schiller at all, though draws out those radical implications from aesthetic judgement that we see Schiller extending.

The second comment concerns a contemporary critical approach to Kantianism and Enlightenment thinking as constitutive legacies of especially Eurocentric approaches to cultural analysis and theories of resistance. This concern is especially present in Moran's appraisal of Munzel's recent book on Kantian pedagogy. As with Rousseau, Kant is a thinker who considers education as that which moves humanity out of animal primitivism and towards a progressive development of humanity. One need only recall the opening of Kant's *Über Pädagogik*:

Man is the only being who needs education. For by education we must understand nature (the tending and feeding of the child), discipline, and teaching, together with culture [moral training]. According to this, man is in succession infant (requiring nursing), child (requiring discipline), and scholar (requiring teaching). (Kant, 1900, p. 1)

Moran particularly engages with an implicit Kantian 'theory of race' that especially subordinates the empirical conditions of particular humans to the transcendental conditions of humanity. Citing the work of Chad Wellmon (2010), he notes:

Wellmon argues that Kantian anthropology founders on the articulation of what is natural and what is acquired through human effort. That leads to Kant's notorious comments on Negroes, women, South Sea islanders, Indians etc., in his attempt to produce a popular science that would research beyond a small circle of scholars. (Moran, 2015, p. 33)

The *Third Critique* is not immune from this criticism of an implicit racial theory, and goes to the core of the difficulty in demarcations between the empirical and the transcendental constituted in anthropology. Inasmuch as Schmidt engages the most radical aspects of Kant's transcendentalism in the 'Analytic of the Beautiful', he does so from a decidedly Heideggerian reading of Kant, a reading that aimed, for Heidegger, to radically rethink humanist anthropology in Kantian transcendental schematism, evidenced, for example, in the 'Analytic of Dasein' in Heidegger's *Being and Time* (Heidegger, 1996. See also Heidegger, 1982, 1990, 1997).

Kantian Critique

Kant is credited with originating a 'Copernican revolution' in philosophy, which is to say, with providing a corrective to those philosophers preceding him who supposed that it was a world of things that determined our knowing of them. Rather, it is this subject of knowing who determined things, though essentially things as *experienced* and never *in themselves*, or apart from experience. For this reason, Kant establishes a long tradition of idealism, as distinct from realism, the latter supposing access to things themselves. Yet, if experience mediates knowing, and experience is individuated—we each experience things differently—how is it possible for there to be the certainty of knowledge? Thus Kant develops what he terms critical philosophy, which is to say, enquiry as to the conditions of possibility of knowledge in general, producing in 1781 his first Critique, *The Critique of Pure Reason* (Kant, 1985), aimed at establishing how it is possible for knowledge in general. To do this, Kant recognises that our human perceiving and thinking, the very ways in which we come to reason the understanding of our world, have a series of structures that necessarily must precede the actual encounter of empirical experiences. Hence, in order to experience, we must have a faculty of receptivity of sense data. By 'faculty', Kant means we have a capacity for or potential for the reception of things, a possibility for reception. But, equally, in order to think the things so received we must have a capacity for giving categories to things thus thought. These are the most general

types of categories, such as the very notion of quantity, or quality, or relation, or modality as in how something is capable of modification. These structural understandings do not come from experience by rather shape and define our understandings of things experienced. As well, we experience things spatially and temporally. Hence, prior to experience as such we must have an intuition of spatiality and temporality such that always already when we perceive things they are spatialised and temporalised.

These are peculiar structures. Kant called them *transcendental* structures or faculties that constitute not what we do know but the very conditions of possibility for knowledge in general. In that sense, and in each account of transcendental structures there is an implied universality such that each experiencing subject is provided a rule whereby the universality of knowledge is determinable. Kant always intended to write two *Critiques*, one for the conditions of possibility for knowledge and the other for the conditions of possibility for the universal principle of moral action, the *Critique of Practical Reason* published in 1788 (Kant, 1997). Again, Kant works from developing the transcendental structures that govern a priori, or prior to experience, the maxims and principles of moral order such that each experiencing subject has a universal rule. Two points are important here: Kant considered practical reason to be more significant than pure reason, which is to say that how we act in the world to be of more importance than what we know of this world. The second point, and this is crucial, is that Kant conceived of the relation between pure and practical reason, between theory and practice, to be a non-relation. Nothing short of an abyss separated them. And yet they were both possible within the transcendental structures of human experience.

Kant then saw a necessity for a third Critique, published in 1790, *The Critique of Judgement* (Kant, 1986), divided between two notions of judgement—aesthetic and teleological—that aimed at a transcendental explication of the notions of finality and end. With the *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement*, in particular, Kant saw a possibility for construing a bridge that spanned the abyss separating knowing and acting, or science and moral order. But what is ‘judgement’ and why judgement as that constituting such a bridge? In general, and as discussed in Kant’s first Critique, judgement is a faculty, potential or capacity for bringing individual empirical encounters under the sway of universal concepts, perhaps in the juridical sense that within a courtroom, any individual case with its unique circumstances must be brought before a law that is universalising and that constitutes the possibility for its jurisdiction. Law does not modify itself to fit the uniqueness of a case but rather a case is argued within the structures or domain of law. Hence, for Kant, empirical intuitions of receptivity of sensations are brought under the jurisdiction of universal concepts—those of quantity, quality, modality and relation—in order that something is determined objectively. Kant calls this a *determinant* judgement and Kantian philosophy installed mathematical science as the most determinable of determined knowledge. For this reason, Kantian Critique ushers in science as the locale of first philosophy. However, as what one knows has no bearing whatsoever on how one acts, our moral order or practical reason is guided by the universality and unconditionality of the moral law, understood not as empirical encounter but as transcendental structure. The influence of Kantianism during the nineteenth century led, on the one hand, to the development of technological science, guaranteed in the predominance of science as ground for knowing with mathematical sciences at its apex, and on the other hand, to an ends-means instrumentalism that was able to divorce scientific development from the ethical or moral implications of its applications. This constituted the notion of ‘value neutrality’ of knowledge, so discussed by Max Weber, in terms of a nineteenth century split between fact and value, or between knowledge and belief, or faith and reason that marked the crisis of neo-Kantianism at the beginning of the twentieth century that, in part, precipitated Edmund Husserl’s phenomenological enquiry and his book, *Crisis in European Science*.²

Kantian aesthetics

It is not difficult to see the extent to which fundamental concerns with child education from the beginning of the nineteenth century, or the education of a labour force, divided itself between concerns with facticity, with knowledge of the world of things, and with installing precepts as to behaviour or acting in the world according to a grounded moral order. Two kinds of rule, or two kinds of regulating intersect here, one concerned with the universalising though anonymous guarantees of determinant judgement: What are the conditions of possibility for knowing—how does one instruct in learning to learn? The other is concerned with the moral imperative such that one's actions have an unconditional regulating, according not to empirical circumstances but to a transcendental and universal order—how does one instruct to be morally good? They intersect inasmuch as education is a practice—hence instruction is always already imitation—though the means to a better life through knowledge and the ends of a better life in morality will be tactically separated within the overall mimetic strategy of education.³ But what of aesthetic experience, how has this had a bearing on education? Has aesthetic education ever constituted itself as a so-called *bridge* spanning the abyss between knowing and acting in the sense that Kant infers or in the ways in which techno-scientific instrumentalism has come to dominate the rationality of our last two centuries?

Aesthetic experience is peculiar. The word is Kant's. He emphasises just how peculiar aesthetic experience is when compared to understanding and moral reasoning. §32 and §33 of the *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement* are titled respectively, 'First peculiarity of the judgement of taste,' and 'Second peculiarity...'. §32 commences: 'The judgement of taste determines its object in respect of delight (as a thing of beauty) with a claim to the agreement of *every one*, just as if it were objective' (Kant, 1986, p. 136). That is to say, the pure subjectivity—'pure' because it is transcendental and not empirical—of an individuated feeling of pleasure occasioned by a singular empirical encounter of something, is determinable, in a judgement of taste to be a rule that ought to be adhered to universally, as if everyone should agree and too have that same subjective feeling. Kant recognises how absurd this sounds. §33 commences: 'Proofs are of no avail whatever for determining the judgement of taste, and in this connexion matters stand just as they would were that judgement simply subjective' (p. 139). What kind of judgement is this 'judgement of taste'? In what manner is it a 'judgement' with universal applicability, and why is it termed 'taste'?

I have already introduced the notion of a determinant judgement, whereby an empirical intuition comes under the jurisdiction of a universal concept such that a universalising rule determined the grounds for facticity. This brings our faculty of understanding, with innate concepts, into relation with our faculty of imagination that schematises intuited sense data. That 'relation' is a faculty or capacity for judgement. In the *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement* Kant poses another kind of judgement than that of determinant judgement. What happens, for example, when we have an intuition occasioned either by an empirical encounter with something, or as something purely from our faculty of imagination—a capacity to schematise or imagine—for which we cannot seem to find a concept? That is to say, what happens when we experience something for which there is no definite concept by which to define it: our thinking goes in search, but no concept is adequate? Kant suggests something peculiar happens. Within our pure subjectivity, or transcendental structures, our judgement, aimed at bringing an intuition under a definite concept, recognises that our entire faculty of understanding is capable of being in relation to our faculties of intuition or imagination, though in this instance no particular concept is locatable. This is hence not a determinant judgement, producing knowledge, but a reflective judgement producing a feeling of *pleasure* at the recognised harmony of our faculties or transcendental capacities. Kant suggests that such pleasure *quicken*s our thinking, is a boon to thinking itself. Such things, whether empirical or entirely intellectual, that occasion such a feeling, Kant calls beautiful. The judgement is aesthetic, and the thing a work of art. For the most part, such things occasioning aesthetic judgements are works of nature, while there are also things made by human beings—artworks. Though clearly difficulties arise if this thing is made by a human being, as one imagines the human who made it had a definite

concept or end in mind when making it that would curtail, limit or over-determine any notion of reflective judgement. I will discuss this further.

Aesthetic ideas, in this sense, have no concept, no determination. Thus, they are free. In fact they constitute the radical freedom of the human—in imagination—with respect to this being's finality or end. Kant defines these as 'fine arts' in distinction to 'mechanical' (or 'mercantile') arts, the latter always involving some utility, some determinable end or interest. Inasmuch as such ideas are without determination, and are essentially a feeling—or the peculiar synthesis of a feeling and an idea—there is no determined *interest* in the thing-as-idea. It is purely subjective—transcendental—a condition of possibility for what we yet take to be a universally applicable rule that others ought to follow. We are really indifferent as to whether or not this thing actually exists, though solely with respect to this thing as aesthetic idea or as a thing of beauty, or as a work of art. Clearly, what *must* exist is the pure subjective feeling and aesthetic idea as transcendental condition of possibility for any work of art as such. For this reason, my subjective feeling with respect to this aesthetic idea becomes a rule that *ought* to hold universally, though clearly for no good reason that can be determined. Kant suggests:

Hence, in a judgement of taste, what is represented a priori as a universal rule for the judgement and as valid for everyone, is not the pleasure but the *universal validity* of this pleasure perceived, as it is, combined in the mind with the mere estimate of an object. A judgement to the effect that it is with pleasure that I perceive and estimate some object is an empirical judgement. But if it asserts that I think the object beautiful, i.e. that I may attribute that delight to everyone as necessary, it is then an a priori judgement. (Kant, 1986, p. 146.)

This 'thing' may also be encountered as a determinant judgement or within the orbit of a moral order, for which there are definite interests, and therefore objective rule and, for the most part, such things are so determined, causing no end of difficulty in providing limits to the fine arts outside of empirical and intellectual interests. Though within the domains of knowledge and morality any question of beauty—and the peculiar notion of freedom associated with it—cannot arise. Beauty is without purpose, use or end. Though, inasmuch as it *is*, this aesthetic idea is *purposive*—it has finality though no particular end. Such purposiveness is intriguing, and presents Kant with further peculiarities with respect to aesthetics and the work of art. We will presently look at some of them.

Firstly, why taste—why is this so named a judgement of *taste* as distinct from a judgement of understanding or judgement of reason? Kant explains:

For a man may recount to me all the ingredients of a dish, and observe of each and everyone of them that it is just what I like, and, in addition, rightly commend the wholesomeness of the food; yet I am deaf to all these arguments. I try the dish with *my own* tongue and palate, and I pass judgement according to their verdict (not according to universal principles) (Kant, 1986, p. 140.)

Importantly, such judgement is immediate, without the mediation of logical judgement, and applies only to a singular instance. As Kant emphasises, to say 'all tulips are beautiful' is to apply a logical judgement constituting beauty as a predicate to an object—in this case tulips. A judgement of taste is an immediate and entirely subjective judgement of *this* tulip at *this* instance, constituting delight in a mere estimate of the object without a concept of it (p. 140–141). Yet, its subjective validity extends to everyone *as if* it were an objective judgement based on cognition and demonstrable proof (p. 141). This then suggests taste comprises the communicability of a subjective feeling that has no concept, in short, communicability without communication in any conventional understanding of the term. Kant discusses this in §40 under the notion of *sensus communis*, or the notion of a 'common sense'. There is something quite startling here: 'I say that taste can with more justice be called a *sensus communis* than can sound understanding; and that the aesthetic, rather than intellectual judgement can bear the name of a public sense' (p. 153). What Kant is so emphasising here is the freedom inherent in judgements of taste that are without the constraints of definite concepts: 'Only when the imagination in its freedom stirs the understanding, and the understanding apart from a concept puts the imagination into regular play, does the representation

communicate itself not as thought, but as an internal feeling of a final state of the mind' (p. 154). To return momentarily to Schmidt, he is adamant that there is a conviction with these Kantian claims that beauty opens our existence to an insistent ethical sense that would otherwise be inconceivable. This ethical sense is discussed by Kant in sections following his discussion of the *sensus communis*, with the introduction of a notion of *interest* in two senses—empirical and intellectual—into what is essentially, with judgements of taste, a radical disinterest.

Aesthetic and moral feeling

Empirical *interest* in the beautiful—which, by definition, is without interest—is constituted in the *nature* of humankind to exist sociably: 'The empirical interest in the beautiful exists only in *society*' (Kant, 1986, p. 155). Inasmuch as judgements of taste ought to be universally communicable, such communicable feelings ought to promote the natural inclination of humans towards sociability. Yet this *empirical* interest is, for Kant, 'of no importance for us here' (p. 156). Of more crucial importance are the intellectual—or transcendental—interest in the beautiful, and the narrowing of concern with the beautiful that points to how Kant conceives of *nature* in relation to the human as essentially an ethical relation. This ethical relation goes by way of an unsayable—ineffable—communicability, at the core of the concerns expressed in Schmidt's reading of Kant, not only to a radical approach to beauty and aesthetic ideas with respect to the ethical, but also to the opening of the word—the poetic—as communicability without concepts. So, what is intellectual interest in the beautiful, which is to say purely—transcendentally— subjective interest? For Kant, *interest* means a concern with ends that are objectively determinable by rule. The ultimate end of humanity, without question for Kant, is the morally good. This is Kant's predominance of practical reason over pure reason. Hence, we saw with empirical interest, a concern with humanity's sociability as an end. So, too, with intellectual interest is the moral interest of one's self a concern, as in what constitutes one's own ultimate end. Here, Kant immediately draws a distinction between judgements of taste concerning the beautiful of art and those concerning natural beauty.

For the most part Kant sees intellectual interest in *works of art* (as distinct from the disinterest in an estimate without a concept) more often as 'vain, capricious, and addicted to injurious passions' and not leading to 'moral principles' (p. 157). In radical distinction, he sees an immediate interest in *natural beauty*, especially when habitual, indicative of one who already has a moral disposition. His reasoning defines the close proximity of aesthetic feelings and moral feelings. The aesthetic feeling we attain in making an estimate of an object, without a concept, and hence without interest—and in its universal communicability not producing any interest—may be fruitfully compared to our faculty of intellectual judgement for the mere form of practical maxims that determines an a priori delight—a pleasure in their adherence—which without interest we make into a universal rule, as we do with judgements of taste. That is to say, we take pleasure in the good. However, this *rule* produces an interest in the moral good, which is to say a definite end. This producing of interest separates taste from moral feeling.

Kant goes so far as to suggest that works of art are for the most part *deceptive* of the immediacy of delight in nature, as there can only be the mediation of a definite end in their production, in their imitation of nature as things produced. Though, Kant will come to mitigate this judgement when he carefully discusses the differences between art and nature. The crucial distinction will be between *taste* and *genius* as each comes to determine its essential—and paradoxical—relation to nature. But it is here that Kant begins to indirectly discuss aesthetic ideas and education. The discussion commences in §44 with a fundamental distinction between science and fine art: 'There is no science of the beautiful, but only a Critique. Nor, again, is there an elegant science, but only a fine art' (p. 165). A science of the beautiful would require determination by means of proof and would then fail to be a judgement of taste. Equally, as Kant says: 'As for a beautiful science—a science which, as such, is to be beautiful is a nonentity' (p. 165). These distinctions are already contained in the fundamental distinction between determinant and reflective judgement, as discussed earlier. Kant

also makes a distinction between 'agreeable' art and fine art. Agreeable art concerns the taking of pleasure in the *sensation* of an object, the immediate delight of an empirical sensation, while fine art concerns a mode of cognition with respect to delight in an aesthetic idea for which there is no adequate concept—'reflective judgement and not organic sensation' (p. 166).

Again, this distinction is contained in the separation Kant makes between the empirical and the transcendental. Though with respect to fine art, the human making of a work of art, Kant presents something of a paradox:

A product of fine art must be recognised 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. (pp.166–167)

This presents something of a crisis concerning the intentionality in producing an artwork. It would be as if there was no intentionality at all inasmuch as the sole concern in a judgement of taste is an estimate of an object with neither sensation nor concept having a role. Hence, with respect to taste, there is indifference as to whether or not an object is a work of nature or a product of fine art, though Kant has already emphasised nature as a ground in the free-play of judgements of taste. How, though, does nature become such a ground for products of human making? It is here Kant introduces the notion of genius: '*Genius* is the talent (natural endowment) which gives the rule to art' (p. 168). Kant is aware of the possible inadequacy of this word, and perhaps we also acknowledge its inadequacy given how Romantic aesthetics seem to privilege rarefied souls by such a notion, with ensuing notions of elitism and exclusion. By the term, Kant infers something quite different that goes to the core of asking what exactly are aesthetic ideas and how is one educated through them.

Education and aesthetic ideas

The key notions for Kant with respect to the difference between science and fine art are *imitation* and *following*. All education is based on imitation, in the sense that determinant judgement is based on the discerning of necessary laws that are ultimately laws of nature. The issue, thus, is not how intelligent we are but whether or not something can be learned. If something can be learned it is done so by imitation:

So all that *Newton* has set forth in his immortal work on the Principles of Natural Philosophy may well be learned, however great a mind it took to find it out, but we cannot learn to write in a true poetic vein, no matter how complete all the precepts of the poetic art may be, or however excellent its models. (pp. 169–170)

Kant discounts quickly an over-valorising of the ineffable nature of genius as compared to the talent for science. This is on two counts. On the one hand, there is continual advancement in the perfection of knowledge—'scientists can boast a ground of considerable superiority over those who merit the honour of being called geniuses' (p. 170)—and on the other hand, unlike the accumulation and inheritance of knowledge, genius dies and with it dies its nature. This speaks to the finitude of human existence. As well, Kant offers a further comment, curious and somewhat dark: '... genius reaches a point at which art must make a halt, as there is a limit imposed on it which it cannot transcend. This limit has in all probability been long since attained' (p. 170). There is an ambiguity in this that amplifies the finitude to humanity with respect to its existential being but also the limits to art as human production.

Two questions arise: If fine art cannot be learned, and if imitation would ultimately aim at producing an objectively determinable rule—via a determinable concept—for the production of art works, how does one proceed with education in the fine arts? And, secondly, as a corollary, if genius is reserved for precisely what cannot be learned but yet can be conceived and communicated, what possible purpose is served by aesthetic ideas with respect to cognition itself? This second question will return us to our starting point in the work of Schmidt. But, first, how is one trained in the fine arts?

It [the rule] cannot be one set down in a formula and serving as a precept ... 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*. (p. 171)

If this distinction seems enigmatic, Kant agrees. He immediately notes: 'The possibility of this is difficult to explain' (p. 171). The difficulty essentially arises in the requirement that, as a product, fine art must in one respect be defined by a definite end, and not as a mere product of chance. Yet, that definite end cannot be determining in a judgement of taste. Hence, while academic training in producing fine art is essential, it of itself cannot be determining as transcendental condition for reflective judgement. But this question of educating artists is secondary to the other: the possible role of aesthetic ideas in cognition itself, in the making knowable our world. Kant offers two notions, one concerning *taste* as capacity for *estimating* an object in a free-play unbounded by a definite concept and the other concerning *genius* as capacity for *producing* an object unbounded by a definite concept. The aesthetic idea, representing the free-play of the imagination for which there is no expression of a definite concept—'indefinable in words' (p. 179)—for Kant 'quickens the cognitive faculties' (p. 179), which is to say is a call to *thinking* itself as that which in itself has no definite end. Kant is even more explicit when it comes to the producing of fine art:

Now, since the imagination, in its employment on behalf of cognition, is subjected to the constraints 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. (p. 180)

This is a succinct account of that paradox outlined by Schmidt concerning subjective universality at the core of Kant's notion of aesthetic ideas. It also describes the *impasse* with respect to knowledge, education and aesthetics, an impasse that would make a simple analogy between science and art meaningless. Yet, on all accounts, it is precisely the free-play of imagination in aesthetic ideas—as construal of such an impasse—that calls us to thinking, to a quickening of our cognitive faculties without any particular end, and to a potential, within the silence of what is ineffable, to open us to *expression* itself—that admits of communication without any constraint of rules' (p. 180).

Conclusion

This summation returns us to the initial impetus for this paper, to question what might constitute a groundwork for education as such. Certainly, Munzel's analysis of Kant's *Über Pädagogik* went in search for such transcendental grounds for education, as do Vanderstraeten and Biesta who each settle on enigmatic though essential pronouncements concerning communicability and an 'impossible' possibility that I read in terms of subjective universality. Though, neither takes recourse to an analytic of reflective judgement in the beautiful. While Henk Procee (2006) does engage with reflective judgement, he does not directly broach aesthetic judgement, favouring a more inclusive notion of Kantian judgement that downplays any fundamental distinction between determinant and reflective judgements. The result here is an emphasis on epistemology that is somewhat blind to the genuine radicality of the ontological or transcendental implications of aesthetic judgement with respect to thought as such in its freedom. Earlier in the paper, I asked if aesthetic education has ever been considered as bridge between instrumental knowledge and moral order, between theory and practice. Inasmuch as education essentially calls for thinking in search of concepts yet to be thought, perhaps the very grounds of knowing and acting have only ever been determinable from this between of aesthetic experience.

In that initial citation from Schmidt, he refers to ‘the inaccessibility of a symbol that becomes the axis of an extension of the realm within which we may come to understand ourselves and others’ (Schmidt, 2005, p. 17.). That symbolic dimension, emphasised by Kant in the final sections of the *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement*, §59 and §60, and the central focus for Tauber’s paper on Schiller and Kant, comprises the kernel of a groundwork for a Kantian transcendental pedagogy, in construing an analogical though ultimately undecidable relation between the radically inner experience of aesthetic judgement, that nonetheless demands universal accord—subjective universality—and the radically external and objective regulation of law that nonetheless demands subjective determination by free will. Within the symbolic dimension of such an analogical relation, what is perhaps expressed is a call to thinking unencumbered by determinant judgement, though yet vested in a responsibility to question what it is to be human. This symbolic dimension is, perhaps, ontological or transcendental ground, not for education as empirical fact, but for its possibility to be.

Notes

1. Tauber further notes: ‘Kant’s pedagogical approach in the lectures on *Education* (published in 1803) is entirely different to the pedagogical view expressed in *Critique of Judgement*. In fact, these lectures never mention any of the pedagogical ideas appearing in §59 and §60. According to the “lectures,” moral education is supposed to occur through internalisation and practice of maxims, through obedience and voluntary obedience, punishments, etc.’ (Tauber, 2006, n. 31 p. 44)
2. For an excellent discussion on Weber, instrumentalism and the notion of value neutrality, see David A. Kolb (1986) and Edmund Husserl (1970).
3. For an especially thorough reading of the emergence of compulsory education in the Great Britain context of moral education of the early nineteenth century, see Jones and Williamson (1979). The birth of the schoolroom. *Ideology and consciousness* 6, 59–110.

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