



The official newsletter of
Fellowship of Reason, Inc.

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Immanuel Kant's Critique of Judgment (part II)

By
Martin L. Cowen III

Following is the conclusion of an essay begun in the December 2015 edition of *The Eudaimonist*:

Part IV: The First Moment

Now we begin the final section of the essay to discuss the assigned text.

We have not assigned, perhaps to the student's disadvantage, Kant's "Preface" or his "Introduction" to *The Critique of Judgment* (1790), which precede the assigned reading. The reading assignment is the ten pages of the First Division (Analytic of the Aesthetical Judgment), First Book (Analytic of the Beautiful), First Moment (of the Judgment of Taste according to Quality)

§ 1. The judgement (*sic*) of taste is aesthetical.

Moment simply means "category." We will learn that there are four "moments."

According to Kant the Object under consideration is referred not to the Understanding for cognition, but to the viewer's feeling of pleasure or pain. The judgment of taste is not a cognition or an abstraction for the purpose of converting the Object into concepts and it is not logical, that is, it is not subjected to logical analysis. The judgment of taste is aesthetical, says Kant, and is therefore *subjective*. Subjective means that the estimate is completely internal to the viewer and cannot be seen by an outsider, another person. Subjective also means that the effect is not present in the Object, unlike the observation that a ball is spherical. That a ball is spherical is objective in the sense that the feature is there in the real world to be seen by all. If the Object gives rise to a sensation of satisfaction, then this feeling is what we call subjective, being only in the viewer, only in us.

§ 2. The satisfaction which determines the judgment of taste is disinterested

If we see an object of our affection, say a boy/girlfriend or a spouse, and we experience satisfaction because the existence of that boy/girlfriend or spouse,

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Kant calls this satisfaction "interest." This satisfaction has reference to the faculty of desire (as opposed to the thinking faculty or the pleasure/pain faculty). In judging whether a thing is beautiful, satisfaction in the existence of the thing is not a proper question. Therefore, a person is disqualified from judging that his/her beloved spouse is beautiful. Kant gives a rare and appreciated example of what he is talking about by referring to a palace. Whether the palace is beautiful is a different question from questions about whether one approves of palaces on political grounds or on the grounds of housing needs. Kant says: "Every one (*sic*) must admit that a judgement (*sic*) about beauty, in which the least interest mingles, is very partial and is not a pure judgement (*sic*) of taste."

§ 3. The satisfaction in the PLEASANT is bound up with interest

Kant in §§ 3, 4, and 5 proceeds to differential three types of satisfaction, to-wit: the Pleasant, the Good, and The Beautiful.

The taste of peanut butter (for those who love it) pleases and it gratifies. We are drawn to eat peanut butter again.

§ 4. The satisfaction in the GOOD is bound up with interest

Kant says that a good thing can either be good *for something* (the useful) or good *in itself*. In either case, the idea of purpose is present with the good and, therefore, an interest. Recall that an *interest* disqualifies or sullies a proposed judgment that something is Beautiful.

Kant provides another rare and appreciated example to distinguish the Good from the Pleasant. Kant calls attention to a spicy dish (say chili) and suggest that while it may be Pleasant, it may not be, considering the after effects (indigestion), Good.

Kant provides another example that has modern political implications. One might think that having all the pleasantness of life is the highest good. Kant says, though, that Reason is opposed to this. The means are important: "whether it is obtained passively by the bounty of nature [or the welfare state or via inheritance] or by our own activity and work." Ayn Rand, are you listening? "Work is good," says Kant.

Both the Pleasant and the Good are bound up with an interest and are therefore different from the judgment of taste require to pronounce something Beautiful.

§ 5. Comparison of the three specifically different kinds of satisfaction

About the name
"The Eudaimonist"

A eudaimonist (pronounced "yoo-DIE-mon-ist") is one who believes that the highest ethical goal is individual happiness and personal well-being. The term derives from the ancient Greek word eudaimonia, which means, roughly, "well-being."



Disclaimer

The opinions expressed in the columns appearing in this newsletter are those of the author and not necessarily the views of the organization. The Fellowship of Reason, Inc speaks only through its Articles of Incorporation, the Bylaws, and the actions taken by the Board of Trustees as a board and recorded in the minutes of the corporation.

Fellowship of Reason, Inc.

Mission Statement

The Fellowship of Reason® is dedicated to the personal flourishing of our members through reason.

Fellowship of Reason, Inc. is a Georgia nonprofit corporation and a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) corporation

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According to Kant both the pleasant and the good please because the Object exists. "On the other hand the judgement (*sic*) of taste is merely *contemplative*." The viewer is indifferent to the existence of the Object. "That which GRATIFIES a man is called *pleasant*; that which merely PLEASES him is *beautiful*; that to which is ESTEEMED [or *approved*] by him, i.e. that to which he accords an objective worth, is *good*."

Kant concludes:

"EXPLANATION OF THE BEAUTIFUL RESULTING FROM THE FIRST MOMENT"

"*Taste* is the faculty of judging of an object or a method of representing it by an *entirely disinterested* satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The object of such satisfaction is called *beautiful*." Emphasis in the original.

Conclusion

Thank you for reading to the end. Kant is quite difficult to understand and many philosophy professors have spent their entire careers trying to understand Kant's philosophy. Our goal is more modest than that of those hearty Kantian scholars. We simply want to enhance our understanding of The Beautiful in order that we might ourselves act more beautifully in our daily lives.

One way to think about what we have just learned—a judgment of taste should be *disinterested*—is to consider a court of law. We expect our judges to come to our cases without an interest in the outcome. An owner of Coca-Cola® stock should not be judging a patent dispute between Coke® and Pepsi®. The best friend of a divorcing woman should not act as the trial judge in her alimony claim against her soon-to-be ex-husband.

We have not quite seen this yet, but the satisfaction in the presence of The Beautiful is, according to Kant, precisely the capacity of the reflective Judgment to "see" in the instance of the Object under scrutiny the suggestion of a Universal rule, principle or law, as yet unknown. We have, in judging The Beautiful, the suggestion of a glimpse beyond the "phenomenon" to the "thing in itself." It is Marine Jack Sully's discovery of the luminescent night on Pandora. It is hearing "the song within the silence." It is seeing "the beauty when there's nothing there." From the song *December Prayer* by sung and written by Idina Menzel from her album *Holiday Wishes*." Many artists are fully acquainted with The Beautiful. Now it is our turn.

Saint Thomas Aquinas reduced The Beautiful to: *wholeness, harmony, radiance*. In the case of The Beautiful, there is *something ... just there....* We will learn to "see" it, too.

Does Reason Work?

By Martin L. Cowen III

Your executive committee meets occasionally to discuss the products and services that the Fellowship of Reason® offers to its members and to the public. At a recent meeting of the Board of Trustees we discussed what new “product” might be FOR’s new “Apple® watch.” The subject “Does Reason work?” came up.

The Fellowship of Reason® has existed now for over 16 years. Our first meeting was on Sunday, November 1, 1998. We have found over the years that there are some subjects that it is better just not to discuss. Politics is an area that we tend to avoid. On social policy we are fairly unified. On economic policy, not so much. We have scientific differences. We have philosophical differences. We are completely unified in our wish that all people, worldwide flourish.

We have often said that we have never converted anyone to our group. People join us because we fit their already formed opinions. People leave us when they learn that some subset of us does not agree with their already formed opinions. The question is: “Can anyone be persuaded to a new opinion?” After a certain age, say 30 years, people seem to be pretty fixed in their views.

Therefore, your leadership would like to conduct an experiment. On Saturday, February 7, 2015, at 3 p.m. at the San Francisco Coffee Roasting Company, at 676 N. Highland Ave. NE, Atlanta, we will host a new Meetup® with the title “Does Reason Work?” We will not resolve that BIG question on that day. Rather, we will explore possible topics for discussion and identify strategies for reaching agreement. We will schedule a future Meetup®, perhaps Saturday, March 14, 2015, at 3 p.m. to reconvene and seek agreement on the question. We want to determine whether in a single case, with deliberate effort, we can come to agreement on some subject.

In order to frame the first Meetup® on Saturday, February 7, 2015, we decided to present this short Oratory. We will present eight ideas to think about prior to our meeting in one month. They are: (1) pick a small topic, (2) learn facts first before discussing policy, (3) avoid confirmation bias, (4) the problem of motivation (who cares whether reason works?), (5) which moral code to apply, (6) let’s do philosophy not sophistry, (7) we will have to avoid politically incorrect topics, and (8) some suggested topics. Here we go.

Idea I

Ron suggests that in selecting a topic that we go small. We need to have an issue that is of manageable size.

We cannot resolve big problems, like God or not, in this environment. We cannot resolve big problems, like Utilitarianism or Duty Ethics, in this environment. We cannot resolve big problems, like Socialism or Free Enterprise, in this environment. We have to proceed with a simple and carefully narrowed

Does Reason Work?

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Regular membership:
\$35 per year

Contributing membership:
\$70 per Year

Lifetime membership:
\$700

and defined problem.

Idea II

Because we have been interest in Kant lately, we have learned that Kant divides the mental faculties into three: the understanding, judgment, and reason. The Understanding seeks to learn what the facts are. This function is scientific. Judgment makes determinations of taste: What is The Beautiful? What is Sublime? Reason makes moral judgments. This tripartite division is useful and corresponds well to another Ron Menich suggestion and that is to learn the facts before arguing policy.

We have butted heads about Climate Change, for instance. Ron insists that before we can have a fruitful discussion that others need to learn some basic Climate facts. Ron is correct and Kant's division of cognitive faculties into Understanding, Judgment, and Reason supports Ron's position.

Therefore, we hope our Meetup® attendees will endorse and participate in some fact finding missions.

Idea III

Related to fact finding is another problem Ron Menich has brought to our attention, the problem of Confirmation Bias, the tendency to search for or to remember instances of one's own opinion. We notice and read stories about government corruption. A favorite movie genre is the dystopian disaster film, like *Hunger Games* or *Divergent* or *Water World* or *Children of Men* or *The Book of Eli* or *Fahrenheit 451*.

We are particularly susceptible to Confirmation Bias and we will have to watch ourselves.

Idea IV

A big problem that we anticipate is: "Who cares?" Many of us have been outside the mainstream of thought on most topics for our entire lives. Nobody agrees with us on anything. Basically, we have arrived at the point where we, generally, do not care.

Some believe in Freewill. Others do not. We do not care.

Some are non-theists. The world population is 7.125 billion as of 2013. Seven billion of those people are theists, we suppose. We live in the South. Many are quite used to being in the tiny minority of non-theists.

Some are Libertarians. Only 1.2% of votes were cast for the Libertarian Presidential candidate in 2012. The Libertarian Party was formed in 1972. Only now, 40 years later does the Libertarian Party get mainstream media interest.

Contact Information

To talk to somebody about Fellowship of Reason call:

Martin at 770-471-9800
Susan at 678-358-8415

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We will have, one hopes, “academic” interest in our question, “Does Reason work?”

Idea V

Another problem with whatever problem we choose might be the moral system of the participants.

Basically, there are three main moral systems: Utilitarianism, Duty Ethics, and Virtue Ethics. Utilitarianism looks for the greatest good for the greatest number. Spock in the *Wrath of Khan* (1982) takes it as an ethical axiom that “the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few, or the one?” Duty Ethics, which most religious ethical systems are, hold that obedience to an authority (God in the case of religion) requires that you obey the God-given rules. Virtue Ethics, such as the Ethics of Aristotle, require that one enact The Beautiful.

We might anticipate that any resolution of our topic of discussion might depend upon the ethical systems of the participants. We may find that no agreement is reached because of fundamental ethical differences.

Idea VI

Since Socrates and Plato there has always been a division between sophistry and philosophy. Sophistry is false argument designed to fool an opponent. Philosophy, which means love of knowledge, seeks to find the truth for all engaged in philosophy. Socrates and Plato disapproved of the Sophist.

Most public debate is sophistic. In public debates there are at least two explanations for the positions taken, to wit: the rationale and the reason. Legislators commonly claim that the proposed legislation is “for the good of the children.” “The good of the children” is the rationale. The reason is usually the needs of a moneyed constituency. For instance, some governments regulate hairdressing for the sake of the children, when their true motive is to protect the profits of the established and politically connected hair salons.

Therefore, our goal in deciding “Does Reason work?” will not be to persuade by sophistry, rather our goal is to reach true agreement and mutual understanding. No rhetorical tricks allowed.

Idea VII

Even among our group there are some topics that cannot be discussed. We will not mention them here. To give an example of the type of subject, we relate this high school episode. A student in a speech class during the 1960s undertook the class assignment, Eulogy. He gave an excellent and truthful eulogy withholding to the end the name of his subject. The student had been telling about Adolph Hitler. The student’s goal was NOT to support or rehabilitate Hitler. His goal was to demonstrate in a dramatic fashion just how the speech form Eulogy might be abused. The student simply omitted all the horrible facts about Hitler, including

FOR’s mission is to promote the personal flourishing of our members through reason.

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only good information. The teacher exploded and sent the student to the principal's office. The student was punished, but allowed to graduate. Remember that in the 1960s World War II was just 20 years, in the past. The horrors of WWII were fresh on the minds of the teachers in the 1960s, if not the high school juniors who had not been alive during the war.

Subjects that are *verboten* change with the times.

While it is tragic that many subjects cannot be discussed at all, that is not a problem that we propose to solve.

Idea VIII

So what Ideas might we discuss: political, economic, scientific, religious, or philosophical?

Philosophical topics are the safest, least likely to be politically incorrect and therefore punishable. Free will v. Determinism is a topic that we have commonly discussed over the years. If Determinism is true, we cannot here and now or then and there influence our choice of this issue. What will be will be.

If Free Will is true, we will here and now and then and there discourage revisiting this topic. Been there. Done that. Also, perhaps it is too big.

Another philosophical topic that is current is the role of The Beautiful in morality. Since this is the current project within the Fellowship of Reason, perhaps we should preserve this debate for Sunday school and the occasional Larry Woods' rebuttal in Oratory.

Religious topics are a possibility. The Georgia Objectivists, when they used to meet, always talked about the existence or non-existence of God. After years, that topic, too, became tiresome and we created the Fellowship of Reason with the question: "What would happen if we won the "God-no God" debate? What would we do then?" We might discuss, "How many angels can dance on the head of a pin?" Or not.

Scientific topics offer greater opportunity than religious topics. Scientific topics lend themselves to Ron Menich's advice to learn the facts first. We might divvy up the factual problem among the participants and return to a second meeting with useful information.

Climate change is a topic well suited to factual investigation. This topic has also been a subject of debate between Ron Menich and others.

Another scientific topic is that of pollution. Everybody wants clean air and water. We also want to be able to throw out our trash and power our homes. We might be able to move the ball forward on this question within our little group.

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Political topics are often fraught with the problem of political correctness. Some topics simply cannot be discussed in today's caustic political environment. Nevertheless, we have discussed current events such as Obamacare and the minimum wage among ourselves. We also have some members who are invested in these topics and who are well equipped by experience and prior research to discuss them. Our Liberal and Libertarian wings might bring some enthusiasm to a debate on these two issues. We will have to be careful, though. We do not want to offend anybody and lose them from the group because of our taking up of any issue.

Economic topics, in general, might provide a source of potential topics for debate. Politics and economics are closely allied intellectual domains, of course. Rent control, the Welfare State, the effect of foreign aid in Africa on local farmers are all lush economic topics for investigation.

Our participants will certainly have other great topics for possible debate. We suggest these only to encourage some thinking in advance of our meeting on Saturday, February 7, 2015, at 3 p.m.

Conclusion

In conclusion, whether our exploration of "Does Reason Work?" will become FOR's new Apple® watch remains to be seen. We have little hope for the Apple® watch. We have much more hope for our project "Does Reason Work?"

We have suggested eight (8) ideas in order to provide material for pre-Meetup® thought. Those ideas are: (1) pick a small topic, (2) learn facts first before discussing policy, (3) avoid confirmation bias, (4) the problem of motivation (who cares whether reason works?), (5) which moral code to apply, (6) let's do philosophy not sophistry, (7) we will have to avoid politically incorrect topics, and (8) some suggested topics.

Even if Reason does not work in our instance, we are hopeful that we may achieve some insights as to why it has failed again. Even if Reason does fail, we can continue as we have for 16 plus years, to tolerate our differences, celebrate our diversity, and enjoy those many things that we share in common: love of life, love of learning, love of our children, and love for one another.

Events

For detailed info on all upcoming events, visit
<http://www.meetup.com/fellowshipofreason>

Adult Sunday school at FORum: 1st Sunday 10 a.m.

Members and friends of FOR are invited to attend Adult Sunday School before FORum on the first Sunday of every month at 10 a.m. at the Atlanta Freethought Hall, located at 4775 N. Church Lane, Smyrna, GA 30080.

Martin Cowen coordinator: 678-641-9321

FORum: A Celebration of Human Achievement: First Sunday 11 a.m.

FOR's premier event. Meet and greet at 10:30 a.m. The program starts at 11 a.m. Presided over by FOR's President, members give presentations such as Celebration of Freedom and Celebration of Talent. A 15 to 20 minute Oratory on an ethical subject highlights the program. A short conversation called FORum during which audience members share their thoughts concludes the program at 12 noon sharp. We enjoy post-program conversation at local restaurant for further fellowship. Children's Program babysitter from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Martin Cowen director: 678-641-9321.

FOR Runners: Sunday 8 a.m.

We meet every Sunday morning at 8 a.m., except FORum Sundays, near Candler Park at the Flying Biscuit, 1655 McLendon Avenue Northeast, Atlanta. Breakfast at the Flying Biscuit follows at 9:15 a.m. Breakfast lovers, walkers, and joggers welcome! Martin Cowen: 678-641-9321

Taped Lectures/Discussion Group: 1st / 3rd Tuesdays 7:30 p.m.

A small group of friends listens to taped lectures in a private home on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of each month. Free.

Sally Hull coordinator: 404-257-0454

Fiction Book Club: 2nd Tuesday 7:30 p.m.

Fifteen members and friends of FOR meet on the 2nd Tuesday of every month at an undisclosed location.

Sally Hull coordinator: 404-257-0454

Fiction Book Club—Saturday Edition: 2nd Saturday of even numbered months 11 a.m.

Members and friends of FOR meet at 11 a.m. on the 2nd Saturday of every EVEN month at Susan Menich's house to discuss a Literary Classic.

Remember it is potluck so bring some breakfast food or drink to share.

Susan Menich, coordinator, 770-396-0483

Poetry Club: 4th Saturday, 3:00 p.m.

Members and friends of FOR like to meet on the 4th Saturday of every month at a local coffee shop to share their enjoyment of poetry.

Trent Watkins, coordinator

Ulysses Study Group: 5th Tuesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. Potluck

Members and friends of FOR are invited to attend a years-long study group of James Joyce's *Ulysses*. We meet at Sally's house on the 5th Tuesdays of months with a 5th Tuesday.

Remember it is potluck so bring some breakfast food or drink to share. Martin Cowen: 678-641-9321

**Join us for our
next monthly
FORum:**

**4775 N. Church
Lane, S.E., Smyrna,
GA 30080**

**February 1,
2015**

Sunday 11 a.m.

(Meet, Greet at 10:30 a.m.)

**FOR Children's
Babysitter**

from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
Organized Educational
Program from 10:30 a.m. to 11
a.m.

Adult Sunday school
10 a.m. to 10:45 a.m.

Birthdays

- January 8 Lance Gatlin
- January 30 Mark Sulkowski
- January 31 Sally Hull

- February 2 Wendell Bettis
- February 5 Michael Norman
- February 23 Ellen Lewit

Celebratory Announcements

Do yourself a favor and remember a good thing that happened to you this month:

Please, write it down: _____

Now do the membership of FOR, Inc. a favor by relating this fact during FORum next month!

Fellowship of Reason

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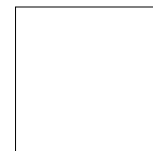
A Reason-Based Moral
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