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This topic has festered in the peripheral sightline of my mind since I returned to the states last year. After being elsewhere for over a decade, returning to California in 2017, the year Donald Trump took office, was something of a culture shock. After adapting to the new smells on the public footpaths and the shortfall of public housing, I began to look more closely at the ‘average’ people walking around. California, even northern California, is favored with endless sunshine. I had not seen three days of sunshine in a row since leaving many years before. However, I will gladly admit that the pleasure of such weather rapidly wears thin, particularly with weeks of days in the high 30s, tipping over to the 40s; and naturally when the wildfire season sets in — but that is the topic of a different article. All of this sunshine informs the range of acceptable clothing, and items that I have previously considered undergarments, are worn openly in public. Short trousers, tank tops, flip-flops, and bennies seem to be a staple. Ok, perhaps that is not fair, not everyone wears flip-flops and bennies; but most do show a significant amount of skin; and upon this skin are countless tattoos.

At first, I only noticed the tattoos on hipsters at posh cafes. Once I became more adapted to my new settings, I started to notice tattoos on almost everyone, regardless of the other social grouping indicators. Tattoos showed up on many; such as the mother of three in the waiting room at the vet with multiple tattoos; the businessman in the car next to mine at the red light; the volunteer docent at the botanical garden in his 60s; the doctor at the medical centre; the sorority sisters jogging along in the park with ponytails and pastel colored jogging gear; the women sitting next to me at the opera, and so forth. It is rarely one tattoo, but multiple tattoos; often sleeves covering an entire arm or a piece covering the entire back, chest-plate, or neck. I began to wonder how people who have had tattoos for decades and had been identified as

barbarians, misfits, rebels, or gangsters felt about this increasing popularity of tattoo culture. Did it somehow depreciate the value of their own tattoos? Moreover, if so why? With popularity comes an explosion of reincarnations of a theme; and with that comes short-cuts, marketing, profit-led campaigns harnessing the popularity, then the misguided manifestations of the original style — which become more commonly encountered than well-done versions, and then people sour towards the style as a whole. Yet what does one do with tattoos - with the permanent images pricked into one's body — when this trend is over?

According to a 2017 US survey, 42% of American adults between the age of 18 and 69 have at least one tattoo; with more than half having several.¹ One school of thought is that the popularity of tattoos is related to our collective western-led culture's obsession with the image.² Another is that it is a reaction, either intentional or non-intentional, towards the impermanence of the digital image. That as our daily embodied lives are dominated by flickering, ever-changing images, our reaction is to obtain something permanent. To grasp the images liked and hold them still with our skin. Alternatively, there is the thought that because of the culture of the ever-changing image and general lack of permanence, that people have lost an understanding of what permanence itself entails. That people are getting tattoos because they are fun now, but cannot project themselves into their future selves five, ten or twenty years from now. This line of thinking is somewhat reinforced by the increase of tattoo removal services and the development or prototyping of non-permanent inks and other non-permanent tattoo-like options such as digitally projected tattoos or prolonged fake tattoos.

It may be objected that these musings have more to do with the motivations and justifications of individual people getting tattoos than the question of those tattoos' claim to artistic status in light of their ever-increasing popularity. However, I sit firmly in the camp of Kant's later critical and post-critical period. Much of what Kant wrote can be taken out of context and often is as Kant's context is usually quite wide. While much of his premises out of context can seem utterly out of date, conservative or even silly; I believe that his philosophy uncovers something radically fresh and vital to understanding and engaging the world. Kant's third *Critique* has been taken as an afterthought; a bit easier, or softer, or more even feminine than the properly brute instruments of the first and second *Critiques*.³ People have suggested that Kant lost his mind later in life and the final decade produced little of worth and should be disregarded from his canon (particular his work on Ether as published in the *Opus Postumum*). However, recent decades have breathed new life in to the third *Critique* and later period, led by the excellent scholarship contributed by Hannah Ginsborg, Henry Allison, Karl Ameriks, Paul Guyer, and Eckart Förster.⁴ Specifically, secondary literature began to appear for the *Aesthetics* in the late 1970s and the *Critique of Teleology* in the 1990s.⁵ However, this only begins to rectify the

offense of its predominant neglect for the prior two centuries. I have read Kant's philosophical project as one that questions how best to motivate people to care for the self, to reflect upon their comportment to the world such that they may better take part in the world. Being politically influenced by Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778), who argued that all people needed to advance, not just the geniuses; Kant directed his energies to a didactical theory applicable to all humanity.⁶ I take Kant as seeking a means by which he could contribute to the health of humankind via the *Critiques*, as the three *Critiques* together strategically compose a didactical theory for the cultivation of the self. When seen with this motivational angle, Kant's *Critiques* take on a radically alternative manner to the predominate scholarly trend of emphasizing the pursuit of rationality for freedom.

In short, the *Critique of Pure Reason* seeks to limit people's claims of knowledge so that the messy art of metaphysics can be practiced. Kant claims the practice is impossible if we do not separate the ideas of reason from the concepts of the understanding.⁷ The faculty of reason can produce wide ranges of possibilities that go beyond the reach of knowledge. Ideas of reason are not ideas of what one knows. Reason can free the understanding of the otherwise necessary bondage that knowledge of the understanding has to experience. Reason can extend the ideas beyond the purely empirically but only at the cost of rendering the ideas illusory. Thus ideas sprung from reason are not justification for actions, but points for inquiry. Reason must learn to discipline itself, to spare itself delusional conclusions. For example, Kant attempts to rid his reader of the desire to find the transcendent as an element of knowledge.⁸ The transcendent may be reached by faith, imagination, hope, card games, tea leaves, and the likes. However, and ideas can never be taken as knowledge, for knowledge must have a sensory basis. Therefore no one, (including church, state or market) may have a greater claim to knowledge of the transcendent.

With *The Critique of Practical Reason* (1788), Kant sets out categorical and hypothetical imperatives which should lead to ethical behavior by developing the often wayward faculty of desire and use of reason.⁹ Published between the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785) and *The Metaphysics of Morals* (1797) the trio establishes his moral groundwork.¹⁰ With the second *Critique*, Kant demonstrates how one can live morally, i.e., what it is to be a mature human being.¹¹ The second *Critique* produces lessons in how to come up with the laws and codes of how to live according to our teleological purpose and thus to be moral beings who warrant happiness, but with this one must be interested in being moral. The second *Critique* is a conditional claim: if you are committed to living morally, then here is how you go about it.¹² The moral laws and maxims of the second *Critique* are merely derivative ideas teased out from a more primordial force or will. The endless debates in the secondary literature regarding clever wordplay or logical games are radically missing the point. Such critiques are akin to debates over where

various passengers may stand on a ship when attempting to discern the direction the ship sails. In other words, they are minimally consequential issues, which show themselves as irrelevant when taken in the context of the third *Critique*. Moral freedom is both; the freedom from causation by the lower sensuous desires and the freedom to act in accordance with a law of practical reason that we give to ourselves as rational beings.

The *Critique of the Power of Judgment* seeks to account for how and why we are able, to some extent, to successfully engage with the world. In other words, of how we can have a firsthand confirmation of our individual experience of the world, which is shaped and temporized through embodied human faculties, matching up with objects and horizons independent of our existence. As Kant often pointed out, something about the way we perceive the world is matching up with the world itself, for we are not merely “groping about” in the dark.¹³ The third *Critique* provides the why of the *Critiques*' paideia. The second *Critique* develops laws of morals and the third *Critique* explains why — why this happens — why a person works to shift their habits from "radically evil" behavior to earnest practices of "goodwill".¹⁴ The third *Critique* is not what it is to moral, but what brings on the commitment to being moral, to study and practice goodwill, to cultivate judgment, or to try. It is a meditation on the causal experience of why someone would seek out morality. For we know Kant held two temporally antithetical beliefs: that man's behavior is radically evil and that humanity is capable of creating a “Kingdom of Ends” on earth, i.e., a situation in which all life treats all life as ends in themselves rather than as means to ends.¹⁵

In the third *Critique*'s introduction, Kant positions the faculty of judgment as bridging “the great gulf” between the concept of nature and that of freedom.¹⁶ The presence of aesthetic objects and horizons afford the opportunity to exercise the skill to judge reflectively. In the second part of the third *Critique*, Kant argues that we must act *as if* a circular causal relationship between means & ends (whereby the means cause the ends, and the ends ground the means) is a transcendental principle, while at the same time acknowledge that we can never know this to be true. This teleological relationship is the grounding for a reflective power of judgment capable of engaging, but to never fully understand, the vibrant and reverberant world. Regardless of its desirability, we are embodied human beings that cannot logically prove the existence of anything outside our care to wonder and engage. In the end, the closest we come to lifting the veil of Iris is in the aesthetic event.

Teleology grants a purposiveness to nature that is not governed by rules or concepts of our understanding, which nevertheless affords our comprehension of parts of the world. In other words, the human power of judgment is afforded comprehensibility of nature, by nature's ruleless purposiveness. Subjective purposiveness is something that can be felt but not used as a measure;

it is what Kant calls lawlikeness.¹⁷ Lawlikeness is something that only acts like a law but is not a law itself, because laws are merely things that human-type beings can understand. Nature must have something beyond human understanding: a lawlikeness. Nevertheless, even with a subjective purposiveness, nature is not an intelligent being as far as we are justified in knowing.

At its core, the third *Critique* asks us to act as if there is a subjective purposefulness to all matter. Interestingly the strength of Kant's logical argument did not alter his notorious faith-based behavior. After he had set aside his earlier Christian god discourse, Kant's project of persuading people to cast off the false tutelage to the church and free them from necessarily believing in an all-powerful Christian god, existed side by side Kant's own ardent and relentless presumption of a god.¹⁸ Kant comes to understand something more fundamental about the world as a primordial force or style of existence. This he more often than not called the “techniques of nature”.¹⁹ These techniques of nature are what affords a unity to sustain itself and to thrive. The unity or thing can be at any and all scales, such as a painting on the wall, a building in a city, a natural reserve, a planet such as earth, the solar system, a universe, and beyond or likewise, scaled down to the microbes within our bodies, atoms and such. It can even be a tattoo on a back. Drawing from the second book of the third *Critique* these things or object have their own subjective purposiveness and thrive when they practice the techniques of nature. These techniques are most directly discussed as a causal nexus with ascending and descending relationships (a nexus finalis).²⁰

1. Tattoos are things with their own subjective purposefulness.

To recap, a reading of Kant's critical period suggest that aesthetic experiences serve as a means of bringing us closer to something primordial about the world: a technique for thriving. When we as people witness and behold objects practicing these techniques, it can motivate us to also practice these techniques and in this way try to behave more ethically. In part, this impact of an object upon a viewer is due to our embodied system of coping with the world. This system of coping has afforded us (as a species and as individuals) to gain knowledge of nature. The short and long-term pragmatic style in which we learn and engage the world is through the feelings of pleasure and displeasure, which guide our faculty of reflective judgment. When we echo the internal and transient relationships within the material bodies before us, we experience pleasure. Likewise, when we fail to echo the vibrant matter, we feel displeasure, which subtly guides us to match up our perception with the existent material objects and horizons about us. In this sense, we do not need to always employ concepts in order to engage the world.²¹

When I moved back to the States, the objects, people, and images I encountered radically changed. The various habits of my perception needed to adapt to my new surroundings. In part,

this is why it took so long for me to see the tattoos on everyone around me, because I did not expect them to be there, and with the efficiency of my embodied engagement, as I glanced about my surroundings, my horizons filled in with exceptions of what there ought to be; until one day when a beautiful tattoo caught my gaze.

2. Beautiful Tattoos

Discussing topics such as judgment, formal, beauty, and art within our field may appear trite. However, the impression diminishes upon attending to the use of these terms. For instance, form is not like a still cube but rather a moving wave; like a sound wave which affects the manner of vibrations of the matter it encounters.²² Likewise, Kant argues for a formal purity, but that purity is based on teleological judgments of mean & ends, such that aesthetic objects transparently express causal relations known as a nexus finalis. Most simply put, this is a positive feedback loop in which the means cause the ends, and the ends ground the means. Hence, Kant's formal purity is one that affords the perceiver to uncover a consensual, circular, causal relationship in which the thing is both the cause and effect of itself and is not one of dematerialized austerity or typology; but one closer to the ideas of Arne Naess' deep ecology in which things are causally connected as parts within a dynamic system.²³

As beauty is our window to nature's techniques, it is primordial, as such it is our guide to that which is, regardless of the normative determining concepts of a given political, economic, historical regime. Therefore, beauty is not subjective to the individual beholder; it is something existent independent of the perceiver. In short, beauty is an event in which the faculties of the mind can playfully compose the representation of an object because that object itself is composed of dynamic parts playfully and harmoniously relating to each other. That which affords an aesthetic event of beauty is that which expresses its subjective teleological relationship and in an aesthetic event the individual judges that expression.

For Kant, aesthetics is not the study of specific types of subjective pleasures derived from art. It is a study of what objectively informs our subjective awareness of art. An individual may have a highly developed library of concepts or an adeptness at employing reason, but to cultivate aesthetic judgments demands attentiveness to the present material situation. Kant's theory of the power of judgment proposes that when the individual is emerged in aesthetic events, the faculties of mind attentively engage with the immediate present. Sublime horizons challenge and stretch the imagination, revealing its gumption to behold both the vastness of nature and the insignificance of individuality. Objects of beauty afford the imagination a playfulness by the multitude, richness or thickness of their perspectives. Beauty is an event; it is an individual and first-hand experience of perceiving an object composed of dynamic parts in formal, harmonious

relationships of subjective purposefulness.²⁴ Moreover, beauty is an experience that is universally and objectively afforded by such objects for those willing to experience the object afresh and without preconceived labels or reflection upon one's subjective gains.

Kant claims beauty and sublime are something both in us and beyond us. They transcend our experience but are only apprehensible as a feeling, in particular, the feeling of pleasure arising when mental faculties engage with each other harmoniously or with gumption (respectively.) For Kant, the essential way that we can know we are experiencing beauty and witnessing a beautiful object is when the faculties of imagination and understanding relate to each other harmoniously while beholding a beautiful object. In short, an aesthetic event awakens reflective judgment in the presence of transparent teleological objects, living things, or organic matter.

The next relevant perplexity exposes itself in regards to how our presupposed ideas about objects may block us from experiencing them as beautiful. Kant's nuanced understanding of this has raised debate regarding whether there is room for beautiful tattoos (or architecture) within his theory of aesthetics.²⁵ The following passage from §16 of the *Critique of the Aesthetic Power of Judgment* helps to fuel the contention:

In the judging of a free beauty (according to mere form) the judgment of taste is pure. No concept of an end for which the manifold should serve the given object and thus which the latter should represent is presupposed, by which the imagination, which is as it were at play in the observation of the shape, would merely be restricted.

But the beauty of a human being (and in this species that of a man, a woman, or a child), the beauty of a horse, of a building (such as a church, a palace, an arsenal, or a garden-house) presuppose a concept of the end that determines what the thing should be, hence a concept of its perfection, and is thus merely adherent beauty, which properly concerns only form, hindered the purity of the judgment of taste, so the combination of the good (that is, the way in which the manifold is good for the thing itself, in accordance with its end) with beauty does damage to its purity.

One would be able to add much to a building that would be pleasing in the intuition of it if only it were not supposed to be a church; a figure could be beautified with all sorts of curlicues and light but regular lines, as the New Zealanders do with their tattooing, if only it was not a human being; and the latter could have much finer features and more pleasing, softer outline to its facial structure if only it were not supposed to represent a man or even a warrior.²⁶

The fact that the man, horse, or building is tethered to presupposed concepts of their ideal forms blocks the imagination's opportunity to play with various compositions. According to this

observation, the type of object which has a dominating idealized form is blocked from awaking an aesthetic event. Updated examples might be the female body, a car, and perhaps still buildings. I think this is at the heart of the issue for normalizing patterns of identity and thereby the role of tattoos within our culture. Marginal practices can present anxiety or just mere indifference as they fail to meet presupposed expectations. For decades in Western-led cultures, the tattoo has been granted the status of deviant as barbarian, misfit, rebel, sailer, or gangster.²⁷ When the tattoo was encountered, it was seen as merely a branding, a stamp of one's social classification.²⁸ Research addressing tattoos and attitudes towards tattoos take a tattoo, *as a tattoo*. That is to say; there is rarely a distinction in surveys or publication as to the particularities of the tattoos. However, this phenomenon of judgement the object by how well it matches with an ideals form would be devastating towards my reading if Kant had not qualified the above claim with the possibility that individuals may put aside such presupposed ideal concepts and engage the object afresh *as if* it is a free beauty:

A judgment of taste in regard to an object with a determinate internal end would thus be pure only if the person making the judgement either had no concept of this end or abstracted from it in his judgment.²⁹

Hence, although the "normal idea"³⁰ of how a man, horse, or building ought to look — an idea that is composed by the imagination's act of superimposing examples upon each other which renders an average³¹ — can commonly dominate a judgment of taste, if the individual can 'abstract' this idea from their act of judging, then the object may warrant free beauty. Hence, the man, horse or building can be beautiful within Kant's aesthetic theory.

In other words, Kant incorporates the notion of 'no interest in the object' of beauty through the ideas of free beauty and adherent beauty. Free beauty has no concept of what the object ought to be. His examples of free beauty include flowers, birds (along with their colorful plumage), crustaceans, foliage (in garden borders or wallpaper), and music fantasias.³² Adherent beauty has a concept of what an object ought to be or the perfection of its form and presupposes a concept of the object's end; Kant's examples are humans, horses, and buildings.³³ Because adherent beauty contains a presupposed end, the individual's reflection upon the object's various vantage points in the causal nexus is unbalanced as the end vantage point is artificially favored.³⁴ This unbalance hinders the power of reflective judging, unless the individual is either ignorant to the normative hierarchies of the idealized forms, or if the individual can bracket off the social-economical-historical-political concepts of ends intentionally. It is an object's inherent teleological relationship (a relationship that rests on a circular movement between the means & ends) that evokes aesthetic events. Here, we see that adherent beauty's teleological

relationship is unbalanced because of its focus upon the ends, thereby such objects are not harmonious and do not express free beauty.

3. Kant's Art

Kant shows little interest in attending to the popular view of the artist or in defining which objects are art, but rather is concerned with why it makes sense to structure ideas in certain ways, and what beauty can lead to in society. Kant's artist is someone who brings out the material purposiveness, through objects, which are in turn works of art. In other words, an artist engages with matter in a style which aids the matter to express its own causal nexus. However, this definition differs radically from the accepted view of the artist in late eighteenth century Prussia or our contemporary global society. These latter two understandings of the artist are perhaps more in line with each other than Kant's with his contemporaries — in that both popular views of the artist afford an artistic expression of concepts. For the sake of clarity, Kant's classification of art "in the proper sense of the term" will be dubbed as aesthetic art.³⁵ Aesthetic art is created with the power of aesthetic judgment; it involves imagining, understanding, spirit and taste.³⁶ Moreover, it must have purposiveness of form and must be free from constraints of arbitrary rules, as if it were a product of nature without a designer.³⁷

The art that Kant is often noted for dismissing as mere representations of nature is best called referential art. This style of art is created by the artist acting as a rational being outside of nature.³⁸ Such works are often called art in general society and can claim the more common understanding of the term. Referential art calls upon the power of determining judgment in connecting various concepts or ideas to the object. It is the type of art Kant refers to with the popularly cited line of: "A beauty of nature is a beautiful thing; the beauty of art is a beautiful representation of a thing."³⁹ The pleasure in witnessing such an object of art comes from matching up various concepts to the object. Referential art can sometimes result in new ideas or connections for the perceiver, but the experience is inherently conceptual and culturally embedded. It may warrant a determining judgment of adherent beauty, but never that of free beauty. It is referential to past experiences and normative ideas; often playing with past ideas to bend convention and relay an interesting insight into the individual's society. Thus it needs not warrant the techniques of nature which afford cultivation. For Kant the consequential difference does not lie between art and nature; it is between aesthetic and referential art.

In Kant's terms of a non-pluralist understanding of art: aesthetic art must be freely made and beautiful. Kant is surprisingly direct in prescribing a need for freedom while creating art, in his words, "only production through freedom, i.e., through a capacity for choice that grounds its actions in reason, should be called art."⁴⁰ This is the freedom of cultivated maturity by rejecting

false knowledge from one's political, social, economic, and historical milieu. It is the capacity to willfully cast aside the pre-determined categorizations of the world ready to hand and to allow one's solitary powers of apperception to render the possibilities of one's horizon freshly. This line of thinking could be seen as a glorification of the human mind and reason, yet in the context of the *Critique of Judgment*, it is a means of decentering, dispersing and un-'blocking' power, by claiming that individuals have immediate and primary access to the world (without need of church, state, or market).⁴¹ In the context of the artist, this immediate access must be employed during the act of creation.

Skilled tattoo artists understand and describe their practice as an event of art. When advising new people as to what to consider when seeking a tattoo, top artists stress the importance of having a good relationship with the tattoo artist - often claiming that the feeling or energy of the event is manifest in the tattoo. That people can have famous tattoo artists or great looking tattoos, but if the process of getting it was unpleasant, the person will never like that tattoo.

However, tattooing is also a business so that the objection can be raised regarding Kant's distinction between art and handicraft. If someone creates an object without freedom, then it is either a handicraft or a product of nature. A handicraft is created without freedom, in the sense of being produced without moral intentionality.⁴² At the concrete and practical level, what this means is that while the product is being made, no ad hoc choices are being made. There must be an act of intentionality, a will that drives the action, or a faculty of spirit that shapes the process of creation. Thereby, the human being who manufactures a handicraft object, may structurally have the possibility of employing reason, they just do not employ it at the moment due to various circumstances; be them ethical, social, economic or historical. At base, aesthetic art requires an open individual agency in the present material moment, both in the act of judging and shaping.

A skilled tattoo artist, like many artists, is devoted to the moment. Such artists describe the process of tattooing as one of adaption and counter movements to the medium as it evolves. Art is that formative aspect of nature as it inspires an individual in a moment of presence — in a moment void of reflection upon what could be or what once was, but in reflecting with what is, and in that moment creating something that did not need to be (made). There must be the freedom of choice in the moment of choice, as that choice is not about what could be, but what is presently becoming.⁴³

Aesthetic art is the event of the creation, not the remnant of the event. That is, the presence of creation, of engaging with the materials, being taken over, willing, aiding, and lingering in the making, is itself the art. Like music is the event of music being played in a room and not the record of the event or the digital sound-bites. The object left behind is the evidence of an event of art. However, the object is also the recipe for an aesthetic event. As an organic body or

organized object, the material aesthetic object harbors both these events. As such, art exists as a larger material system of the object. The tattoo itself is seen as something alive, that must grow and age with time and the person's comportment toward the world.

Beauty is absent when forms have been classified so completely that our habit is to label before appreciating afresh. That is when the understanding steps in too soon and does not give the imagination the opportunity to play with other representations. Before the popularity of tattooing, often a simplistic reaction of either 'cool' or 'yikes' to any tattoo was a commonly acceptable reaction. Beauty also steps aside when the object is too far removed from the supersensible, i.e. when it becomes an artifact. In such objects, the matter has been composed poorly, abused, or treated as a means to an end, with efficient cause, such that the object itself is worn out as it drifted from the replenishing loop to the uni-directional nexus effectivus and no longer forms itself via the patterns of the supersensible substratum. This can be seen with tattoos pursued for their ephemeral popularity; such tattoos merely brand the individual to their social-historical-economical-political identity. In short, it is too derivative. It no longer operates with nature's techniques, nor does it express the formative power of nature. Such objects are mere artifacts created in vain. Nature creates nothing in vain, but perhaps living beings do when employing abstracted rationality without limits. The artifacts created have nexus effectivus, and merely afford a label, not an aesthetic event. When living beings act *as if* they are not a part of nature, they can then produce objects which fail to afford free beauty.

Therefore a tattoo is beautiful if it is the manifestation of an event of art and affords those who engage with it afresh and without subjective profit in mind, the experience of beauty. In this way, the increasing popularity of tattoos offers the genera more artistic merit and statues. As tattoos are increasingly present and disassociated from a handful of stereotypes, the prior initial reaction of merely identifying the medium of art may be surpassed by engaging with the individual tattoos as something in it of itself. One must adapt and learn to distinguish within the genera. One must judge each tattoo individually. In other words, no longer is the mere typology or type of the category sufficient to make the judgment, now the individual token or manifestation must be considered afresh. It is in this sense that the increasing popularity alleviates the easy or lazy judgment of tattoos as either artistic or not; and warrants more of us each to individually judge the particular tattoo afresh.

Secondly, the increase in popularity of tattoos has diverted more resources to the art form and medium. New inks, tools, and techniques have been created; and a more comprehensive selection of human creative talent has come to the field. With more people attempting to learn the artistry of tattooing, more people reveal their natural atonements to the discipline or advance

their skills set. Such increase results in an overall increase of artist skills and manifestation of those skills upon countless bodies.

In short, some tattoos are art, they are the record of an event of beauty and afford their perceivers to reflect upon that beauty. Other tattoos are not; they are mere branding. They are a derivative stamp of a specific moment aligned to a particular social, economic, historical, and political identification. They are the permeant record of something taken as adherently beautiful in a given moment. They are thereby vulnerable to the derivative assertions that come with popularity and trend. Although these trending tattoos are currently shared in far more Instagram accounts; the door is properly open for tattoo artists to further develop and refine their art. In short, many new moments of beauty are afforded by these artists and their medium of ink and skin.

1 *Statistic Survey Tattoos, Piercings & Body Modification*. 2017.

2 Hauptmann and Radman, "Asignifying semiotics as proto-theory of singularity: Drawing is not writing, and architecture does not speak". 1-12.

3 Fellin and Blè. "The disease of Immanuel Kant. *The Lancet*".

4 Amongst many others see: Zumbach, Clark. *The transcendent science: Kant's conception of biological methodology*. Vol. 15.; Makkreel, Rudolf A. *Imagination and interpretation in Kant: The hermeneutical import of the critique of judgment.*; Zuckert, Rachel. *Kant on Beauty and Biology: An Interpretation of the Critique of Judgment*.

5 Ginsborg, Hannah, "Kant's Aesthetics and Teleology" and Ameriks, "On Paul Guyer's Kant and the Experience of Freedom".

6 John T. Goldthwait asserts Kant "states that Rousseau made him respect the masses; not the genius alone but all men are necessary to the progress of humankind"[Kant, *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime*, 11]. For further contextualization of self development through education and nature as examined through the theories of French thinkers such as Etienne Bonnot de Condillac, Helvétius, Jean le Rond d'Alembert, Diderot, Marie-Jean-Antoine-Nicolas Caritat, Marquis de Condorcet, the Physiocrats, the Idéologues, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau and their English counterparts John Locke, David Hume, James Mill, and Jeremy Bentham, see: Oliver W. Holmes: "Theories of Nature and Education in the Development of the Human Self in the Eighteenth Century." 2008.

7 Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics: And the Letter to Marcus Herz, February 1772*. 64 ff. §§40-1, 327 ff.

8 The clarity of this insight is indebted to Dan Robinson's lectures on Kant's Critique of Pure Reason, Oxford University, spring 2011.

9 Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*.

10 Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* and Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*. The second *Critique* provides arguments for how to act ethically, if and only if, one is already inclined to do so.

11 Kant's three *Critiques* do not numerically align with the three movements of cultivation of the self.

12 Akin to the Stoics and Epicureans philosophies for the *Care of the Self*.

13 Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, 14 §IV 20:210.

14 Wood et al., "Religion within the boundaries of mere reason." and Riley, Patrick. "The "Elements" of Kant's Practical Philosophy: The Groundwork After 200 years (1785-1985)".

15 Consider also Kant's assertion: "This is therefore the hardest task of all; indeed, its perfect solution is impossible; from such warped wood as is man-made, nothing straight can be fashioned." [Kant, *Perpetual peace and other essays*, 34 §Sixth Thesis 23]. For further consideration of Kant's claims of the evil nature of human beings see Kant's short and lively essay,

On the common saying: That may be correct in theory, but it is of no use in practice. [277-309 8:273-313], or the secondary commentary found in: Fenves, *Late Kant; Towards Another Law of the Earth.* 84ff.

16 Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 35 §IX, 195.

17 Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, 233 §61 5:359.

18 Jordan, *Philosophy of Religion: The key thinkers.* 77. For a particularly interesting interweaving of Kant's theory of sublime and reflections upon a god, see Paul Cobben's contribution to a recent collection of critique on the third *Critique*: in Loose, *The sublime and its teleology: Kant-German idealism-phenomenology.* p.133-158.

19 Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment.* 10 §II 20:205, 17 §V 20:214, 19 §V 20:215-6, 21-24 §VII 20:219-21, 35-36 §IX 20:235, 49 §XII 20:250, 129 §23 5:246, 233-4 §61 5:360-1, & 263 §72 5:391.

20 Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment.*, 192 §49 5:314-5.

21 This phenomenon is what leading Kantian scholar Hannah Ginsborg explains initially as "perceptual normativity" (2006) and later as "privative normativity" (2011). Ginsborg, "Aesthetic judgment and perceptual normativity." and Ginsborg, "Primitive normativity and skepticism about rules".

22 In Kant's terms, the beautiful object or thing, "if conceived as a series, [the thing] would carry with it descending as well as ascending dependency, in which the thing which is on the one hand designated as an effect nevertheless deserves, in ascent, the name of a cause of the same thing of which it is the effect." Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment.* 244 §65 5:373.

23 Naess, "The deep ecological movement: Some philosophical aspects." 402]

24 Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment.* 10 §II 20:205, 17 §V 20:214, 19 §V 20:215-6, 21-24 §VII 20:219-21, 35-36 §IX 20:235, 49 §XII 20:250, 129 §23 5:246, 233-4 §61 5:360-1, & 263 §72 5:391

25 Wilson, *The Other Tradition of Modern Architecture: the uncompleted project.* 16.

²⁶ Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment.* 114 §16 5:229.)

27 The 2012 article: "Who Gets Tattoos? Demographic and Behavioral Correlates of Ever Being Tattooed in a Representative Sample of Men and Women" offers an excellent survey of tattoo research as: "Most empirical research on tattooing to date has focused on either adolescents or prisoners. Studies in these populations have mainly reported the prevalence of tattoos (1-13) and motivations for getting them (14). In a number of studies, authors have also reported tattooing and body piercing to be associated with risk-taking behaviour. Among adolescents, tattooing has been associated with drug use (4, 12, 15-17) and alcohol use (4, 17, 18), increased levels of sexual activity (12, 15, 17), suicide ideation (15), and illegal/violent behaviour (12, 16). It has even been suggested that clinicians should use tattooing as an indicator for further investigation into risk-taking behavior in adolescents (12, 15-18)." p51 Heywood, "Who Gets Tattoos? Demographic and Behavioral Correlates of Ever Being Tattooed in a Representative Sample of Men and Women" p.51.

28 [Heywood et al., "Who Gets Tattoos? Demographic and Behavioral Correlates of Ever Being Tattooed in a Representative Sample of Men and Women".

29 Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment.* 115 §16 5:231, emphasis my own.

30 Ibid. 119 §17 5:235.

31 Ibid. 113-4 §15 5:234-5.

32 Ibid. 114 §16 5:229.

33 Ibid. 114 §16 5:230.

34 Ibid. 126 §'General remarks on the first section of the Analytic' 5:243.

35 Ibid. 50 §XII 20:251.

36 Ibid. 197 §50 5:320.

37 Ibid. 185 §45 5:306.

38 Ibid. 246 §65 5:375.

39 Ibid. 189 §48 5:311.

40 Ibid. 182, §43 5:303.

41 Blocking in the Foucaultian sense of normalised power relations created within subsections of society where blocks of pastoral power codify the means of individual's attempts to unite oneself with oneself — a self that is not a 'true transcendental self', but one willfully formed by the individual.

42 Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. 183 §43 5:304.

43 Ibid. 50 §XII 20:251.

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