

MONISM AND PLURALISM: THE HISTORY OF AESTHETICS AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF ARCHITECTURE - PART I

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I. MONISM AND PLURALISM IN THE EARLY HISTORY OF AESTHETICS

One way to think about the history of aesthetics since its inception as a properly named subdiscipline of philosophy in the early eighteenth century is to think of it as a debate about the right way to understand the relations among the terms of the Neo-Platonist triad comprised by the true, the good, and the beautiful: do these terms designate three separate domains of human interest, the theoretical, the practical and moral, and the aesthetic, the boundaries between which must be sharply defined and maintained, or do they designate three aspects of human experience that can and should be fused in practice, indeed do they suggest that the distinctive function of art among human activities is precisely to fuse our natural love of beauty with our theoretical and moral concerns, to provide a kind of unity in human experience that we otherwise do not find?¹ Immanuel Kant might be thought to be the foremost of separatists rather than synthesizers in the modern history of aesthetics: his definition in the “Analytic of the Beautiful” in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* of the “judgment of taste” as “aesthetic,” where that means that it is neither cognitive nor practical, that on the one hand “In order to decide whether or not something is beautiful, we do not relate the representation by means of understanding to the object for cognition”² and that on the other hand “The agreeable, the beautiful, and the good...designate three different relations of representations to the feeling of pleasure and displeasure,” that “One can

say that among all these three kinds of satisfaction only that of the taste for the beautiful is a disinterested and *free* satisfaction; for no interest, neither that of the senses nor that of reason, extorts approval,”³ seems to assert that the experience of beauty has nothing to do with knowledge of truth or with practical interest of any kind, whether merely prudential interest in the gratification of the senses or a more elevated moral interest of some kind. By contrast, an author like Anthony Ashley Cooper, the third Earl of Shaftesbury, seems to assert an underlying identity or at least continuity among the true, the good, and the beautiful when he says things like “the most natural Beauty in the world is *Honesty*, and *Moral Truth*. For all *Beauty* is TRUTH,”⁴ and “since for our parts, we have already decreed that ‘Beauty and Good are still the same’”;⁵ in fact, we do not even have to add these two statements together to get a threefold equation of truth, goodness, and beauty, for although Shaftesbury continues the first of these statements by saying that “*True* Features make the Beauty of a Face; and true Proportions, the beauty of Architecture; as *true* Measures that of Harmony and Musick. In Poetry, which is all Fable, *Truth* still is the Perfection,”⁶ which might suggest that Shaftesbury has in mind some formalist conception of truth, perhaps as coherence in the case of faces, architecture, and music, and correspondence in the case of poetry, his opening statement had made it clear that he also considers honesty as a kind of truth, and thus does seem to think of all truth as having a moral dimension, thus of the true, the good, and the beautiful as truly coextensive or unified.

Kant’s position in aesthetics is actually more complicated than these opening remarks suggest: they are part of an initial analysis of the simplest experience of beauty, but by no means a complete statement of his account of art, a fortiori of architecture. But before I say anything more about Kant, I want to announce the thesis of this paper, which is that the history of modern thought about architecture is marked by the same kind of tension between separatist approaches on the one hand, which locate the value of architecture or even define it by a single aesthetic possibility, and synthesizing approaches on the other, which find in architecture the possibility of satisfying in a unified way a variety of human interests. And my further claim will be that even though there seems to be a powerful human tendency to prefer simplicity to complexity, not just in academic philosophy but in thought in general, there is rarely a good argument to be made for a separatist or reductionist approach as opposed to a synthesizing one: to put it simply, why should we ever prefer an impoverished to an enriched form of experience, at least as long as the latter does not simply become chaotic and overwhelming?

My plan for this paper, which will appear in two parts, is as follows. In the remainder of this section, drawing on my recently published *A History of Modern Aesthetics*,⁷ I will show how three different conceptions of the source of aesthetic value were introduced in the eighteenth century that were only partially synthesized by Kant, although they were more fully synthesized by several others, but separated again, in favor of a purely cognitivist approach to aesthetics, in the hands of German Idealists such as Hegel and Schopenhauer (only to be fully synthesized again by a few figures at the end of the nineteenth century, such as George Santayana, and then again by a number of the most interesting aestheticians of the twentieth century, such as Richard Wollheim, although I will not have room to discuss either of these figures here). In the second section, I will show how the separatist tendency of Idealists such as Hegel and Schopenhauer manifested itself in their thought about the specific case of architecture. In the final section of the paper, which will appear as Part Two, I will consider the synthesizing rather than separatist approach to architecture of John Ruskin in *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849), although to be sure to be of continued use to thought about architecture today Ruskin's views must be modernized in certain ways, some of which he himself at least grudgingly foresaw.

My general claim about the history of modern aesthetics goes like this. Although the field was only named by Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten in his 1735 master's thesis *Philosophical Meditations on some Matters pertaining to Poetry*,⁸ and the new name was not received into English until the early nineteenth century,⁹ this was an adult baptism: in some ways at least the field is as old as philosophy itself, beginning with Aristotle's response in the *Poetics* to Plato's attack upon the arts in the *Republic*, or even with Plato's own, perhaps anticipatory response in the *Symposium* to the argument of the *Republic*. In

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the *Republic*, Plato argued, in the name of Socrates but no doubt going well beyond anything the historical Socrates had held, that the arts should be largely (although not entirely) excluded from the education of the future rulers of the well-ordered states, because they are cognitively worthless, being at three removes from the truth, and morally deleterious, because without a sound cognitive content they do nothing but exacerbate emotional tendencies that the guardians instead need to learn to control.¹⁰ In the *Symposium*, by contrast, whether or not hewing more faithfully to the thought of the historical Socrates, Plato had argued that the appreciation of beauty in earthly things is the first step toward knowledge of the form of the beautiful itself,¹¹ and in the *Poetics* Aristotle famously defended the cognitive import of art by stating that “poetry is something more philosophic and of greater import than history, since its statements are of the nature rather of universals, whereas those of history are singulars.”¹² My thought is that this cognitivist justification of the value of art, the thought that the experience of beauty is actually the experience of something of the greatest cognitive import, perhaps the experience of a kind of truth that is not given to us otherwise than through the experience of beauty or is at least not given to us in such a palpable and moving form by anything other than the experience of beauty, remained the central idea of aesthetics throughout subsequent antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance, and continued to be a powerful presence throughout the eighteenth, nineteenth, and even twentieth centuries, where it remained the foundation of the very different aesthetic theories of, for example, Martin Heidegger and Theodor Adorno.

The cognitivist approach to aesthetics manifested itself in the eighteenth century in several forms. One form was the view that the essential function of art is imitation, with the underlying assumption that the function of imitation is information. That all fine art could be reduced to the single principle of imitation was of course the thesis of Charles Batteux, who argued in his work of 1746 whose very title promised the reduction of fine art to a single principle that “it can be shown from the inner nature of the human understanding that the imitation of nature is the common object” of all the arts “and that they are not distinguished from one another by anything except the means they apply toward the execution of this imitation,”¹³ and who explicitly opposed Plato’s worry that imitation could have a deleterious effect on morals with the argument (appealing to the authority of Horace) that from imitations the best manners and morals can also be learned.¹⁴ But before Batteux, the German Christian Wolff had illustrated his idea that pleasure arises from the sensory perception of perfection with the case of painting, the perfection

or function of which consists in imitation: “If I see a painting that is similar to the object that it is to represent, and contemplate its similarity, then I take pleasure in it. The perfection of a painting consists in its similarity” to its object. “For since a painting is nothing other than a representation of a certain object on a tablet or plane surface, so is everything in it harmonious if nothing can be distinguished in it that one does not also perceive in the object itself.”¹⁵ Wolff’s follower Baumgarten might also be thought to have taken an essentially cognitivist approach to aesthetics, in spite of his subtle transformation of Wolff’s formula “sensory perception of perfection” into the formula “perfection of sensory cognition as such,”¹⁶ which might seem to foreground the representation or medium of a work of art over its object or content, when he begins his great unfinished work the *Aesthetica*, the first philosophical treatise to be so entitled, with the topic of the “beauty of cognition,” and lists as the first of the beauties of cognition the wealth of material or content in a work of art, *ubertas aesthetica*.¹⁷ It is this aspect of art that is reflected in Baumgarten’s conception of a poem or other work of art as a cognitively dense representation, one that is “extensively clear”¹⁸ or packs a great deal of content into a pregnant image rather than separating content into its constituents as scientific analysis does.

A fuller reading of the *Aesthetica*, however, shows that Baumgarten was not just even a subtle follower of Wolff, but that he had integrated into his outlook a second major approach to aesthetics, one that overtly rejected Plato’s suspicion of the arousal of emotions through the arts and instead saw the arousal of emotion as the essential aim of art. An early but influential advocate of this new approach was the French Abbé Jean-Baptiste Du Bos, who in his widely read *Critical Reflections on Poetry, Painting, and Music* of 1719 asserted that “The soul hath its wants no less than the body; and one

of the greatest wants of man is to have his mind incessantly occupied,”¹⁹ or to avoid ennui, and then argued the arousal of our passions by affecting works of art, such as tragedy, is so to speak the most cost-effective way to avoid boredom, because art, unlike say gambling, as a result of which we usually end up losing our money, excites only “artificial passions, sufficient to occupy us while we are actually affected by them, and incapable of giving us afterwards any real pain or affliction.” “Painters and poets,” Du Bos says, “raise...artificial passions within us, by presenting us with the imitations of objects capable of exciting real passions,”²⁰ and indeed the only difference between “artificial” and real passions is that the former do not have the same after-effects and costs as the latter. Baumgarten then quickly took this idea up by arguing that since what really moves us to pleasure or displeasure is passions, poems or other works of art are most effective when they offer not just cognitively dense images but dense images of affecting objects: “Since affects are noticeable degrees of displeasure and pleasure, so are their sentiments those that represent something as good and bad,” although in the “confused manner” of the cognitively dense rather than analytically separated. “Hence it is *poetic*,” he continues, “to arouse affects.”²¹ From the age of twenty-one, then, Baumgarten’s approach to art was actually to synthesize the idea that art is a vehicle for a pleasing form of cognition with the idea that art is also a vehicle for a pleasing arousal of our emotions.

Yet a third approach to aesthetic experience in the eighteenth century is the one that we typically associate with Kant but which was actually introduced in Scotland, especially by Alexander Gerard in his prize-winning 1759 *Essay on Taste*, the idea, namely that aesthetic experience is a pleasing form of the free play of our mental powers with our representations, even ones with cognitive and emotional significance, where however the primary source of our enjoyment is the mind’s play with those ideas and not their contents. Gerard shares Du Bos’s idea that the mind must be occupied, but begins from the idea that it can be pleasingly occupied by its own activity and does not need either emotional arousal or cognitive payoff to enjoy its activity. Thus the first of the “simple principles” of taste that he enumerates is our enjoyment “Of the sense or taste of novelty,” the “pleasant sensation” we have “whenever the mind is in a lively and elevated temper,” to be had especially when it overcomes “moderate difficulty, such as exercises the mind, without fatiguing it” and thus gives “play to our faculties.”²² This was the idea that was then taken up by Kant in the argument of the “Analytic of the Beautiful” that the state of mind that could satisfy the dual constraints inherent in the idea of a judgment of taste, that it be based on a subjective experience of pleasure on the

one hand yet speak with a “universal voice” on the other, that is, postulate or even demand consent from all, is not the state of actual cognition but the state of the free play of our cognitive powers of understanding and imagination, a state in which “no determinate concept restricts them to a particular rule of cognition” but which is nevertheless a state of the “animation of both faculties...to an activity that is indeterminate but yet, through the stimulus of the given representation, in unison” or “harmonious” (*einbellig*).²³

But the “Analytic of the Beautiful” is only Kant’s analysis of the logic of the judgment of taste and the experience of beauty that makes such judgment possible, not his theory of fine art. That comes later, presented (following Baumgarten) in the form of a theory of the artist, that is, the genius, and when it comes it actually represents a synthesis of the new theory of free play with the traditional cognitive approach to art: Kant’s idea is that the “spirit” of a work of art, whatever its medium, comes from “the presentation of *aesthetic ideas*,” representations that “one the one hand... strive toward something lying beyond the bounds of experience, and thus seek to approximate a presentation of concepts of reason (of intellectual ideas),” to which, “on the other hand...because no concept can be fully adequate to them,” can only be intimated by “a representation of the imagination that...by itself stimulates so much thinking that it can never be grasped in a determinate concept, hence which aesthetically enlarges the concept itself in an unbounded way,”²⁴ a representation, in other words, that stimulates a free play of our cognitive powers.

Thus Kant’s theory of fine art represents a synthesis of the traditional idea of beauty as a form of cognition of the highest things with the new theory of beauty as that which occasions a free play of our mental powers. Indeed, one might

suggest that because Kant assumes that the ideas presented by works of art are morally fraught ideas such as “rational ideas of invisible beings, the kingdom of the blessed, the kingdom of hell, eternity, creation, etc., as well as...death, envy, and all sorts of vices, as well as love, fame, etc.,”²⁵ ideas that are ordinarily accompanied with great emotional impact, he must be on his way toward a synthesis of all three approaches, the traditional cognitive approach to art, the new theory of free play, and the idea of the emotional impact of art, which Baumgarten had synthesized only with the first but not the second of these approaches. However, since Kant is throughout at such pains to argue that any genuinely aesthetic experience is *disinterested* and produces only a simple feeling of pleasure but not any more particular emotion, I count him as someone who was willing to countenance only a twofold synthesis of approaches to aesthetics, not a threefold synthesis: he was willing to combine the traditional theory of cognition through art with the new theory of mere play with our cognitive powers, but always strove to keep the emotional impact of art at arm’s length.

Perhaps a better model for a thoroughly synthetic rather than separatist approach to art in the eighteenth century is the 1762 work by another Scot, Henry Home, Lord Kames, modestly entitled *Elements of Criticism*, not “The Elements of Criticism,” to signal that the arts offer us numerous possibilities of pleasure, which cannot be reduced to a single avenue or even exhaustively enumerated.²⁶ Kames begins with what seems like an emphasis on the free play and emotional impact aspects of aesthetic experience: his first chapter concerns “Perceptions and Ideas in a Train,” and argues that “we are framed by nature to relish order and connection”²⁷ even when perceived without overt regard to truth, while his second, very large chapter concerns “what power the fine arts have to raise emotions and passions,” and argues that “The principles of the fine arts, appear in this view to open a direct avenue to the heart of man.”²⁸ But there is a cognitive dimension to both of these as well: in the first chapter Kames argues that “Every work of art that is conformable to the natural course of our ideas, is so far agreeable; and every work of art that reverses that course, is so far disagreeable,”²⁹ which suggests that we enjoy not just the orderly play of our ideas but correspondence between those suggested by art and by nature, or between representation and object, which is the essence of cognition; and Kames continues our quotation from the second chapter by stating that “The inquisitive mind beginning with criticism, the most agreeable of all amusements, and finding no obstruction in its progress, advances far into the sensitive part of our nature; and gains imperceptibly a thorough knowledge of the human heart, of its desires, and of every motive to action,”³⁰ thus implying

that the arousal of emotions by works of art is enjoyable not just in its own right but as a source of self-knowledge. Kames goes on to enumerate many more “principles” or sources of pleasure from art: beauty, grandeur and sublimity, motion and force, novelty, resemblance and similitude, uniformity and variety, congruity and propriety, dignity and grace, and more, a list that suggests that art offers us the possibility of free play with formal aspects of its objects, e.g., uniformity and variety; of emotional and moral response, for example to propriety and dignity; of cognitive discovery, e.g. of novelty, and so on. There is no suggestion that these need be separated from each other, let alone that any one is more important to the other; on the contrary, the suggestion is always that the more “elements of criticism” a work of art affords us, the fuller and more pleasurable our experience may be -- though at the same time, Kames never makes an argument that the pleasures in these different dimensions of art are strictly additive, that a work of art that exploits more of these dimensions is always more pleasurable than one that exploits fewer. The list of elements of criticism is not intended as a rule of addition. Yet this qualification being noted, it seems safe to say that Kames offers a richer model of the possibilities of aesthetic experience than Kant’s merely twofold synthesis does.

Both Kames and Kant raise the question of how architecture, with its inescapable concern for the intended function of its products, is to be fitted into an account of art that stresses any combination of cognition, free play, and emotional impact, none of which are overtly connected to functionality. They both remain within the Vitruvian tradition of combining *utilitas* and *venustas* (in my opinion, two ends to be supported by an underlying foundation of *firmitas* as a means) by seeing the intended function of a structure as providing constraints within which the other aesthetic goals identified by their theories for all arts can also be pursued: as Kant famously

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says in his account of “adherent beauty,” “One would be able to add much to a building that would be pleasing for the intuition of it if only it were not supposed to be a church”;³¹ but that also implies that there is much that can be added to a building -- on Kant’s theory, the expression of an aesthetic idea -- that is consistent with its intended function as a church. But I am not going to expand on this point here,³² for what I now want to argue is that what followed the period of Kames and Kant was not a continuation of their synthesizing strategies, but a return to a single-minded cognitivism in the aesthetics of German Idealism that took the better part of the nineteenth century to recover from within philosophical aesthetics, and, in a very general way, with however one major exception, perhaps even longer within architectural theory and practice.

II. A MONISTIC APPROACH TO AESTHETICS AND ARCHITECTURE: GERMAN IDEALISM

One might have thought that, particularly with the example of the syncretic or even eclectic approach to aesthetics of Kames before them, the response of Kant’s successors to the twofold synthesis of cognitivist aesthetics and the aesthetics of free play represented by his theory of “aesthetic ideas” would have been to lift his ban on the emotional impact of art and give that its proper due. Indeed, it might even be argued that the Germans had a domestic model for that in the versions of Kantian aesthetics developed by Friedrich Schiller and the lesser known Karl Heinrich Heydenreich,³³ the latter in his own *System of Aesthetics*³⁴ published in 1790, the same year as Kant’s third *Critique*, and Schiller in his unpublished “*Kallias* letters” of 1793 as well as the *Letters on Aesthetic Education* of 1795.³⁵ However, the German Idealists instead rejected Kant’s theory of the free play in order to focus exclusively on the intellectual content of art: in other words, they largely removed from Kant’s concept of aesthetic ideas the element that he thought was distinctively aesthetic and returned to the cognitivism of Aristotle’s response to Plato, or perhaps better, given the pronouncedly metaphysical character of their conception of the content of art, to the response of Plato’s *Symposium* to his own *Republic*. This turn also had pronounced results for their treatments of architecture.

I will illustrate this development with the cases of Hegel and Schopenhauer who make the Platonic and therefore cognitivist affinity of their thought explicit. Hegel asserted that “the beautiful is...the pure appearance of the Idea to sense”³⁶ without accepting the idea that the mind of the subject of aesthetic experience can play freely with the form of the sensory appearance of the Idea or with the indeterminate relation

between the form of appearance and its content. For this reason Hegel can say that “fine art [is] truly art, and...only fulfils its supreme task when it has placed itself in the same sphere as religion and philosophy, and when it is simply one way of bringing to our minds and expressing the Divine, the deepest interests of mankind, and the most comprehensive truths of the spirit.”³⁷ This might sound like a ringing endorsement of the enduring importance of all forms of art, but in fact it is the premise that leads directly to Hegel’s notorious thesis of the “end of art,” the thesis that “art, considered in its highest vocation, is and remains for us a thing of the past,”³⁸ because Hegel’s view is that art is actually competing with religion and philosophy to express the same content, but is doomed by the indeterminacy of its means of expressing this content: art is essentially cognitive but essentially inadequate as cognition. Thus for a philosophical enlightened age such as Hegel’s own, art is doomed to irrelevance, doomed to serving as a reminder of our more primitive past but as nothing more.

And architecture is Hegel’s poster-boy for this argument. Hegel is actually responding to a fact that has been emphasized in some of the best recent writing on architectural theory, namely that the existence of determinate sets of forms within some architectural styles, such as the existence of the columnar orders in classical and neo-classical architecture, cannot justify the interpretation of architecture as a language, because without any determinate semantics for reference to ideas outside of itself, the use of such forms to organize the design of structures cannot really count as a linguistic *syntax*;³⁹ for Hegel, architecture is the paradigmatic art of the earliest phase of art, the “symbolic” phase, in which the Idea that “in itself...is still abstract and indeterminate”⁴⁰ seeks expression in forms that, as symbols, would in any case be too indeterminate to express even a more

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determinate content, the more fully developed understanding of the spiritual nature of reality that Hegel means by “the Idea.” Hegel’s view is that it is the essence of a symbol that it “should not be wholly inadequate to its meaning” but that “still conversely, in order to remain a symbol it must not be made entirely adequate to that meaning”; in symbolic art “the content remains also indifferent to the shape which portrays it, and the abstract determinacy which it constitutes can equally well be present in infinitely many other existents and configurations,”⁴¹ and conversely “the look of a symbol as such raises at once the doubt whether a shape is to be taken as a symbol or not, even if we set aside the further ambiguity in respect of the specific meanings which a shape is supposed to signify amongst the several meanings for which it can often be used as a symbol through associations of a more remote kind.”⁴² Hegel then illustrates this thesis with such examples as the pyramids⁴³ and labyrinths⁴⁴ of Egyptian architecture, which are forms too abstract to express any very definite ideas about divinity, or the attempt of Indian architecture to represent the “procreative force” of the Absolute through buildings in the shape of “generative organs” with numerous “solid phallic columns.”⁴⁵ And what we might have thought would count as one of the pinnacles of architectural accomplishment, the Greek temple, is in fact nothing more than the form of an ordinary house⁴⁶ writ large as a house for the statue of a god: it is only in the statue that it houses and not in the structure that houses it that art can make manifest “the free spirit” as “spiritual individuality equally determinate and inherently independent,” only the representation of a god in human form that “constitutes the centre and content of true beauty and art”⁴⁷ —although on Hegel’s account the classical representation of divinity in strictly human form will also turn out to be inadequate. Thus architecture plays a strictly supporting role in housing a form of the representation of the spirit that will itself turn out to be inadequate and that needs to be superseded by a purely philosophical rather than artistic understanding of reality. That there might be other values in housing as such, independent of the function of housing a god, plays no role in Hegel’s assessment of architecture. Architecture therefore enjoys a very lowly place in Hegel’s strictly cognitivist hierarchy of the arts, which themselves enjoy only a lowly place in the hierarchy of forms of cognition more generally.

Schopenhauer’s cognitivism takes a different form than Hegel’s, but results in an equally lowly status for architecture. Schopenhauer’s aesthetics might be thought to be a development from Kant’s conception of the disinterestedness of aesthetic experience and the judgment of taste, but Schopenhauer has no more room for the idea of free play than

does Hegel,⁴⁸ and looks to the experience of art only for a momentary release from the frustration of the ordinary life of the will, comprised as it is either by desires that go unsatisfied or that, even if satisfied, soon lead to more unsatisfied desires. For Schopenhauer, aesthetic experience is an intuition in which the individual “has lost himself” and become “the pure, will-less, painless, timeless subject of cognition,” and this state is induced by the contemplation of an object, or the artistic representation of one, that has lost its own individuality and manifold connections to the world of will and use, and become only “the Idea of its species.”⁴⁹ By contemplating the essences of the species of things — in Schopenhauer’s metaphysics, the characteristic forms of the different degrees of the “objectification of the will” that underlies all reality — or what he calls “Platonic Ideas,” notice, *not* “aesthetic ideas,” the human subject becomes detached from her own individuality and its woes, and enjoys if not positive pleasure then at least momentary respite from pain. “In this state, pure cognition draws towards us, as it were, to deliver us from willing and the stress of willing...but only for a moment: we are always torn back again from peaceful contemplation by willing, by the memory of our personal aims,”⁵⁰ and ultimately need to turn from art to ethics to achieve a more enduring transcendence of our own painful individuality. Thus in Schopenhauer’s philosophy, as in Hegel’s, the value of art and aesthetic experience as a whole is subordinate to that of a form of philosophy, although in this case to ethics rather than metaphysics.

And even within the sphere of the arts, the value of architecture is minimal, because within Schopenhauer’s cognitivist aesthetics what architecture represents is the most elementary forces of nature, but nothing about the human will, which is our only real clue to the ultimate character of reality. “The only intention we can attribute to”

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architecture, Schopenhauer argues, “is that of bringing some of the Ideas at the lowest levels of the objecthood of the will more clearly into intuition, namely: gravity, cohesion, rigidity, hardness, these universal qualities of stone, those first, simplest, and dullest visibilities of the will, the sounds of the ground bass of nature; and then, alongside these, light, which is in many respects their opposite.”⁵¹ For Schopenhauer, architecture does not attempt, as a symbol, to give us knowledge of the Spirit, but fail at that; rather, through its structure, its solids and voids, through light and dark, it offers us Platonic Ideas of natural forces, but these forces are only the “ground bass” of nature, and do not seem very important. In particular, while no contemplation of Platonic Ideas can release us from pain for very long, architecture is decidedly inferior to music, where, paradoxically, we get the greatest release from the painful demands of our individual wills by contemplating as directly as we can the essential forms of willing as such.⁵² On Schopenhauer’s account, architecture does give us some genuine knowledge, but not very important knowledge; and if knowledge is the only source of value in art, then architecture is not very important —“the objective significance of what architecture reveals to us is relatively small.”⁵³

Indeed, Schopenhauer does not merely ignore other sources of potential value in architecture, its value for housing a variety of human functions, as does Hegel, but specifically rejects such “other, practical purposes” of architecture as “foreign to art itself.” The “great merit of the architect consists in carrying through the purely aesthetic goals” of architecture, the exhibition of Platonic Ideas of gravity, rigidity, and so on, “*in spite of* their subordination to foreign ones.”⁵⁴ Schopenhauer must argue this, because on his theory of human willing in general, the attempt to fulfill specific practical purposes through architecture, as in any other way, is doomed to lead to failure and frustration in either the short or long run: either the work will fail to achieve its intended purpose, and thus frustrate anyone involved with it, whether directly or even only sympathetically, or even if it does fulfill its intended purpose, that will either just lead to satiety and boredom or else to other, frustrated desires. Functionality can never be an enduring source of pleasure in Schopenhauer’s pessimistic view of human existence, so whatever value architecture might have has to be in spite of its functionality, not in addition to or in conjunction with its functionality.

We now have some examples of how the one-sided cognitivism of German Idealist aesthetics led to reductionist conceptions of architecture and in turn to negative assessments of the value of architecture. I think

it could readily be shown that many twentieth-century conceptions of architecture, particularly the linguistic models of architecture so effectively attacked by Richard Hill and Edward Winters but also forms of structuralist rather than programmatic functionalism, to borrow a distinction from Viollet-le-Duc,⁵⁵ are versions of this one-sided cognitivism; and even if they have not led to overtly negative evaluations of architecture of the sort we have found in Hegel and Schopenhauer, they have at least sometimes led not only to simplified theories but to unsatisfying architecture. But rather than pursuing that argument, I will, in Part Two, turn to one nineteenth-century treatment of architecture that is pluralistic rather than monistic and thus in at least some ways points to the possibility of a more satisfying aesthetics of architecture. I refer to the theory of architecture adumbrated by John Ruskin in *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, which even though it must be shorn of some of the Romantic assumptions long ago pointed out by Geoffrey Scott,⁵⁶ nevertheless offers at least a model for a synthesizing rather than separatist approach to architecture.

Part II of this essay will appear in Vol. 1, No. 2 of Architecture Philosophy.

ENDNOTES

1. Frederick C. Beiser stresses the importance of the Neo-Platonic triad, what he calls the “classical trinity,” to what he considers the rationalist tradition in eighteenth-century aesthetics in *Diotima’s Children: German Aesthetic Rationalism from Leibniz to Lessing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 41-44.
2. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, edited by Paul Guyer, translated by Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), §1, 5:203 (p. 89).
3. Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, §5, 5:209-10 (p. 95).

“ WITHIN SCHOPENHAUER’S COGNITIVIST AESTHETICS WHAT ARCHITECTURE REPRESENTS IS THE MOST ELEMENTARY FORCES OF NATURE, BUT NOTHING ABOUT THE HUMAN WILL, WHICH IS OUR ONLY REAL CLUE TO THE ULTIMATE CHARACTER OF REALITY ”

4. Anthony Ashley Cooper, Third Earl of Shaftesbury, *Sensus Communis, an Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humour*, Part IV, section III, in *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, edited by Philip Ayres (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), vol. I, p. 77.
5. Shaftesbury, *The Moralists, a Philosophical Rhapsody*, Part III, section II, in *Characteristicks*, vol. II, p. 112.
6. Shaftesbury, *Sensus Communis*, Part IV, section III, in *Charackeristicks*, vol. I, p. 77.
7. Paul Guyer, *A History of Modern Aesthetics*, 3 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).
8. Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, *Meditationes philosophicae de nonnullis ad poema pertinentibus/Philosophische Betrachtungen über einige Bedingungen des Gedichtes*, edited and translated by Heinz Paetzold (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1983); *Reflections on poetry: Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten's Meditationes philosophicae de nonnullis ad poema pertinentibus*, translated, with the original text, by Karl Aschenbrenner and William B. Holther (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1954). The discipline of aesthetics is defined in §CXVI of this work as *episteme aisthetikē*, the logic of *aisthetá* or the objects of the senses.
9. The earliest occurrence of the word “aesthetics” recorded in the *Oxford English Dictionary* is in an 1830 entry in the *Penny Cyclopaedia* (I.156), where it was defined as “the designation given by German writers to a branch of philosophical inquiry, the object of which is a philosophical theory of the beautiful.”
10. The argument for the cognitive worthlessness of art is made above all in Book X of the *Republic*, where it provides a foundation for the exclusion of most poetry from the education of the guardians previously developed in Books II and III (376d-403c). Alexander Nehamas has discussed the connection between Plato’s argument in Book X, which is overtly concerned with painting, with the case of poetry in “Plato on Imitation and Poetry in Republic X,” in his *Virtues of Authenticity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), pp. 251-78, and Stephen Halliwell has demonstrated that Plato’s argument in Books II and III is really directed against allowing the young guardians to perform roles that exemplify the kind of emotional abandon that they will have to learn to control; see *The Aesthetics of Mimesis: Ancient Texts and Modern Problems* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).
11. See Socrates’s recounting of what he was told by Diotima at *Symposium* 201d-212c.
12. Aristotle, *Poetics*, chapter 9, 1451b5-7; translation by Ingram Bywater in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, edited by Jonathan Barnes (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), vol. II, p. 2323.
13. My translation from Charles Batteux, *Einschränkung der schönen Künste auf einen einzigen Grundsatz*, translated by Johann Adolf Schlegel (Leipzig: Weidmanns Erben und Reich, 1770), p. 8.
14. Batteux, *Einschränkung*, pp. 34-5.

15. Christian Wolff, *Vernünftige Gedancken von Gott, der Welt, und der Seele des Menschen* (1719), fourth edition (Halle: Renger, 1751), §404.
16. My translation from Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, *Ästhetik* (1750-58), translated into German with facing Latin text by Dagmar Mirbach, 2 vols. (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 2007), §14, vol. I, pp. 20-1.
17. Baumgarten, *Ästhetik*, §115, vol. I, pp. 92-3.
18. Baumgarten, *Meditationes*, §XVII.
19. Jean-Baptiste Du Bos, *Critical Reflections on Poetry, Painting, and Music*, translated by Thomas Nugent, 3 vols. (London: John Nourse, 1984), Part I, chapter I, vol. I, p. 5. 41
20. Du Bos, *Critical Reflections*, Part I, chapter III, p. 22.
21. Baumgarten, *Meditationes*, §XXV, pp. 24-5.
22. Alexander Gerard, *An Essay on Taste* (London: A. Millar, and Edinburgh: A. Kincaid and J. Bell, 1759), Part I, section I, pp. 3, 7.
23. Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, §9, 5:217, 219, pp. 102, 104.
24. Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, §49, 5:314-15, pp. 192-3.
25. Kant, loc. cit.
26. Henry Home, Lord Kames, *Elements of Criticism*, sixth edition (1785), edited by Peter Jones, 2 vols. (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2005), Original Introduction, vol. I, p. 19.
27. Kames, *Elements of Criticism*, chapter I, vol. I, p. 26.
28. Kames, *Elements of Criticism*, chapter II, vol. I, p. 32.
29. Kames, *Elements of Criticism*, chapter I, vol. I, p. 27.
30. Kames, *Elements of Criticism*, chapter II, vol. I, p. 32.
31. Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, §16, 5:230; p. 115.
32. I have discussed this issue in “Kant and the Philosophy of Architecture,” *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 69 (2011): 7-19. For a more general discussion of Kant’s concept of “adherent beauty,” see “Free and Adherent Beauty: A Modest Proposal,” *British Journal of Aesthetics* 42 (October, 2002) 357-66, reprinted in my *Values of Beauty: Historical Essays in Aesthetics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 129-40. For another recent discussion of the implication for Kant’s aesthetics to the theory of architecture, see Edward Winters, *Aesthetics and Architecture* (London: Continuum, 2007), especially Chapter 2, “Modernism,” pp. 25-37.
33. On Schiller, see my *Kant and the Experience of Freedom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), chapter 3, pp. 116-30, and “The Ideal of Beauty and the Necessity of Grace: Kant and Schiller on Ethics and Aesthetics,” in Walter Hinderer, editor, *Schiller und die Weg in die Moderne* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neuman, 2006), pp. 187-204. On Heydenreich, see “The Perfections of Art: Mendelssohn, Moritz, and Kant,” in *Kant and the Experience of Freedom*, pp. 131-60, at pp. 144-7, and “Heydenreich, Karl Heinrich,” in Michael Kelly, editor, *The Encyclopedia of Aesthetics*, 4 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), vol. 2, pp. 400-1.

34. Karl Heinrich Heydenreich, *System der Ästhetik* (Leipzig: Göschen, 1790), facsimile edition with an afterward by Volker Deubel (Hildesheim: Gerstenberg Verlag, 1978).
35. See Friedrich Schiller, "Kallias or Concerning Beauty: Letters to Gottfried Körner," in J.M. Bernstein, editor, *Classic and Romantic German Aesthetics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 145-83, and *On the Aesthetic Education of Man in a Series of Letters*, edited and translated by Elizabeth M. Wilkinson and L.A. Willoughby (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967).
36. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, translated by T.M. Knox, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975) (based on the posthumous edition of 1835 by H. Hotho), vol. I, p. 111.
37. Hegel, *Aesthetics*, vol. I, p. 7.
38. Hegel, *Aesthetics*, vol. I, p. 11.
39. See Richard Hill, *Designs and their Consequences* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), chapter 5, "Meaning," especially pp. 109-116, and Winters, *Aesthetics and Architecture*, chapters 5-7, especially chapter 7, "Architecture and Semantics," pp. 84-91.
40. Hegel, *Aesthetics*, vol. I, p. 300.
41. Hegel, *Aesthetics*, vol. I, p. 305.
42. Hegel, *Aesthetics*, vol. I, p. 306.
43. Hegel, *Aesthetics*, vol. I, pp. 354-6.
44. Hegel, *Aesthetics*, vol. II, p. 647.
45. Hegel, *Aesthetics*, vol. II, p. 641.
46. See Hegel, *Aesthetics*, vol. II, pp. 662-3.
47. Hegel, *Aesthetics*, vol. I, p. 432.
48. For documentation of this, see my "Back to Truth: Knowledge and Pleasure in the Aesthetics of Schopenhauer," in Alex Neill and Christopher Janaway, editors, *Better Consciousness: Schopenhauer's Philosophy of Value* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), pp. 11-25.
49. Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, Volume I, translated and edited by Judith Norman, Alistair Welchman, and Christopher Janaway (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), Third Book, §34, pp. 201-2.
50. Schopenhauer, *World as Will and Representation*, Third Book, §51, p. 277.
51. Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, Third Book, §43, p. 239.
52. See Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, Third Book, §52, pp. 282-95.
53. Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, Third Book, §43, p. 241.
54. Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, Third Book, §43, p. 242.
55. See Winters, *Aesthetics and Architecture*, pp. 40-1.
56. Geoffrey Scott, *The Architecture of Humanism*, first edition 1914, second edition 1924 (New York: Scribner's, n.d.), especially Chapter V, "The Ethical Fallacy."